

FRIENDS OF THE BALTIC

Press-release

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Public Hearings on the Russian part of the Nord-stream project - 122 km of gas pipe-line in the Gulf of Finland

November 23, 2007 in Vyborg (Leningrad region, Russia) the public hearings on the Russian part of Nord-stream project was organized by local administration and Nord-stream company.

Nikolay Grishin, Norsd-Stream expert on international conventions, said, that transboundary EIA is starting now, all countries of ESPO conventions confirmed participation in it, including Russia, which didn't ratify convention. The transboundary EIA will be focused on the consideration of alternative routes, commercial fishing, destruction of the bottom, chemical weapons and risks of the accidents.

Grigorij Vilchek (Petergas company, contractor of Nord-stream) - has made presentation of Preliminary EIA of the Russian part of the project, made by the order of Nord-stream company. Since January 1st, 2007, according to the new Russian Law EIA of gas and oil pipelines on the land areas is not obligatory, but Nord-stream included their 1,5 km of coastal pipe-line to the EIA.

Environmental NGOs participated in the Hearing, had brought set of questions, prepares together with experts at the course of preparatory meetings.

Alexander Sutyagin made detailed analysis of the EIA documents and said, that many of statements, that project doesn't influence nature, are not confirmed with figures, results of investigation. In particular EIA said, that the pipe-line doesn't cross the nature protected areas, and project doesn't affect their ecosystems. But EIA doesn't include maps, which show shape of mentioned in the project nature reserve areas - Beryezovye ostrova, Kurgalskij, Prigranichnyi and Ingermanlandskij, so as sketch of pipe-line. The answer was, that most of land-scale maps are secret and institutions, with provided maps for the EIA, didn't give permission to show these maps for public.

Olga Senova, Friends of the Baltic, said, that according experts opinions, project will give various influences, including disturbing birds in their migrations, and roiling of water will sufficiently worsen conditions for invertebrates, ichthyo-fauna, and fishing. Also some results of EIA are not enough earnestly, if expected pollutions are calculated, taking as a background zero pollution before project starts. Really we have very polluted water and background pollutions must be taken in accounting.

Tatyana Artyemova, Association of Environmental Journalists, said that issue of chemical weapons must be included to EIA (now it is not mentioned in EIA), even if there is no weapon on the pipe-line rout. Company should prepare their technology for processing chemical weapon if will meet this problem by any accidents, storm or other cases.

Vera Ovcharenko, Green World, asked question about implementation condition of absence any project activities in the gulf within the spawning period - the answer was, that this condition is confirmed in EIA. Also she asked about situation with river Serga, mentioned in the CCB statement. The answer was that dregs and dredge, caused with project activities, will not reach that river.

Alexander Shkrebets, TEIA, said that nature reserve Ingermanlandskij should be considered in the project as an existing nature protected area (not as planned), because it is already designed and almost approved, more over it is situated extremely close to the pipe-line (8 km to the Fiskar island).

Local residents, pensioner from the rural settlement, said, that gas pipeline on the land area near his settlement, had destroyed melioration system, roads, natural streams - and nobody

improved situation., The answer was, that land part of the gas pipeline (excepting 1,5 km coastal line) belongs to Gasprom and Nord-stream company can't be responsible on it.

The decision of the Hearing was to take in accounting all NGO comments for preparing the Final EIA. Additional comments can be sent to Nord-stream in 30 days after Hearings.

At the Hearings NGOs passed to the Nord-stream company the **Memorandum on Social Responsibility**, where suggested company to show its social responsibility for losses, brought to nature by the projects, taking under its patronage establishing and support for **Ingermanland nature reserve**.

Olga Senova

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