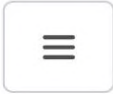


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News 2021.07.23 13:39

Deal on Nord Stream 2 ‘major victory’ for Putin, says Lithuanian FM

BNS
2021.07.23 13:39



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Nord Stream 2 / AP

The recent deal between the United States and Germany on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline was a “mistake”, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said on Thursday.

aA

"I believe it's a mistake and that mistake will cost dearly," Landsbergis told reporters in Vilnius on Thursday.

"I see possibilities to resolve that mistake, [...] if Ukraine was offered a NATO membership action plan or the launch of the gas pipeline was used as leverage to demand withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine's territories," he said.

The new gas pipeline is "a major victory" for Russian President Vladimir Putin, said Landsbergis, adding that "he needs to pay a really high cost for that victory".

As part of the agreement reached between the US and Germany on Wednesday, Washington will renounce plans to impose sanctions on companies taking part in the Nord Stream 2 project. The EU, meanwhile, keeps the right to impose sanctions on Moscow if it uses the pipeline for coercive means.

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The agreement also states the goal of preserving the existing gas transit via Ukraine.

Read more: [Greens around the Baltic Sea denounce Nord Stream 2](#)

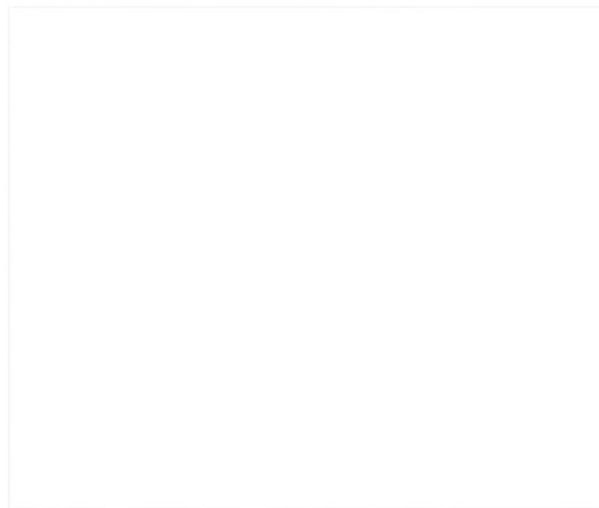
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Germany also vows to use all leverage to persuade Russia to extend by up to 10 years its gas transit agreement with Ukraine that is set to expire in late 2024.

Landsbergis says it shows that Germany is taking responsibility in this process but contracts might mean nothing for Russia.



"We know that Russia is not meeting contracts now. The very Druzhba oil pipeline in Lithuania that 'broke down' and that was it," he said in reference to the pipeline between Russia and Lithuania that had allegedly stopped working due to a technical fault.

"Also some gas pipelines to Ukraine might also 'break down'," the minister said. "It's quite possible, I think. Such key gas pipelines break down very much."

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Nord Stream 2 / AP

Ukraine's trust in strategic partners will go down because of the West's behavior regarding the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, Landsbergis says.

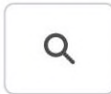
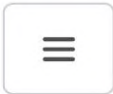
Ukraine's trust toward the EU and US will also decrease, Landsbergis added.

Kyiv had expectations for Western integration, especially to get a NATO membership action plan, which it was promised at the Bucharest summit 13 years ago.

"Instead of an action plan, they get Nord Stream 2. I would say it's a bad exchange," the Lithuanian foreign minister said.

The Nord Stream 2 project is expected to be completed this summer.

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Nord Stream 2 / AP

'No illusions'

Romas Švedas, Lithuania's former energy vice minister and an expert on energy security, said that there should be "no illusions" that Russia will continue using Ukraine for gas transit.

He also called the clauses in the US–German agreement under which the two countries commit to pressuring Russia to maintain its gas transit via Ukraine a "facade".

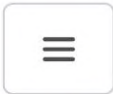
Švedas believes Kyiv should focus on the green energy fund, around 850 million euros, promised by Berlin to ensure its energy security.

"I would wish Ukraine to make maximum effective use of these funds, on its nuclear energy and have as little business with Kremlin companies as possible, and to start working independently," he said.

Read more: [Questions for Germany on Russia strategy – opinion](#)

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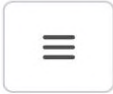


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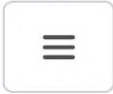
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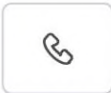
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