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COVID-19 in numbers:

**Ukraine**

**Worldwide**

Cases: 2,268,666

Deaths: 53,336

Recovered:  
2,198,220

Cases: 210,051,360

Deaths: 4,404,212

Recovered:  
188,186,868

Nord Stream 2

## Poland's Rau: Russia will use Nord Stream 2 for blackmail

By Daria Derevianchuk. Published Aug. 6. Updated Aug. 6 at 6:51 pm




 A pipelaying vessel constructs the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in the Black Sea near Visby, Sweden on Feb. 27, 2019. As of July 2021, the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is 98% complete and is set to be commissioned by the end of the year.

Photo by Axel Schmidt

Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau said that Nord Stream 2 pipeline will be used to blackmail Ukraine and most Central European countries, Polskie Radio reported on Aug. 5.

“For 18 years, all Polish governments knew that the Nord Stream is an instrument of Russian sabotage, designed to break the unity of the West, the European Union and NATO,” Rau said.

Earlier, Rau had already criticized the Russian project, calling it a European political and security crisis.

On July 21, Rau, together with Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, called on the U.S. and Germany to adequately address the security crisis in the region.

The statement was published soon after the U.S. and Germany reached an **agreement** that allowed the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to be completed.

Several U.S. senators expressed their opposition to the deal.

On Aug. 3, U.S. Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a **joint statement** on Nord Stream 2 with lawmakers from Ukraine, Poland, the U.K., Estonia, Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, and Lithuania.

“We consider Nord Stream 2 a geopolitical project geared towards expanding Russia’s influence on Europe by dominating the energy market,” the statement reads. “The completion of the pipeline will strengthen the impact of Russian gas in the European energy mix, endanger the national security of EU member states and the U.S., and

threaten the already precarious security and sovereignty of Ukraine.”

Armin Laschet, head of the Christian Democratic Union, who may become German chancellor after the upcoming September federal elections, threatened Russia with sanctions on Aug. 1, if the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline poses a threat to Ukraine.

However, **Bloomberg** reported citing unnamed German government officials, that Germany does not intend to shut down Nord Stream 2 even if Russia tries to use the pipeline to blackmail Ukraine.

Russia and Ukraine currently have a five-year agreement through 2024 that guarantees Russia will transport no less than 40 billion cubic meters through Ukraine each year and must pay Ukraine at least \$7.2 billion until 2024.

After losing the leverage of being a gas-transit country Ukraine is expected to have a harder time buying natural gas elsewhere.

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, occupied Crimea and the eastern part of Donbas. The Ukrainian government officials have expressed concerns that without Ukraine being a gas-transit country, Russia may further escalate the war.

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