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Energy

Germany offers cooperation on renewables to defuse tensions with Russia

Reuters

2 minute read



German Economy and Climate Protection Minister Robert Habeck attends a session of the lower house of parliament Bundestag in Berlin, Germany, January 13, 2022. REUTERS/Hannibal Hanschke/File Photo

BERLIN, Jan 21 (Reuters) - German Economics Minister Robert Habeck wants to engage Russia economically by cooperating on renewable energy supplies to help de-escalate tensions over Ukraine, he told Der Spiegel magazine in an interview published on Friday.

"We should also think about new business areas that can help lead both sides out of this confrontational position," Habeck, who is also vice-chancellor, told the magazine.

The top Russian and American diplomats are due to meet in Switzerland on Friday to discuss heightened tensions over Ukraine after a flurry of meetings between officials on both sides in the last week produced no breakthroughs. [read more](#)

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German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called on Russia on Thursday to step back from escalating the situation, warning it faced a range of sanctions if it acted aggressively.

Germany is ready to defend fundamental values in the stand-off, even if this means paying a high economic price, Baerbock said in Moscow a day earlier. [read more](#)

On the possibility that Russia might be excluded from the Swift international payments system, Habeck, who is a member of the Greens, said there was no point in "enumerating sanctions in the abstract".

However, he added it was "the ultimate economic sanction" and that his goal was de-escalation.

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Reporting by Kirsti Knolle Editing by Mark Potter

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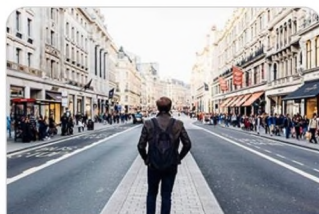


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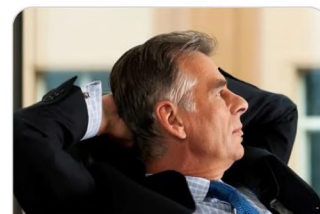
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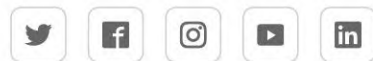
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WORLD

Germany's Olaf Scholz Arrives for Joe Biden Talks Under Pressure on Putin's Pipeline

BY **JACK DUTTON** ON 2/7/22 AT 6:57 AM EST



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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is visiting the White House on Monday to speak with U.S. President [Joe Biden](#) about averting a military invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The two men will also discuss how Nord Stream II — a key gas pipeline project that connects Russia and Western Europe — will impact the negotiations to end a possible conflict.

The controversial pipeline, expected to begin operating in the second half of this year, is set to be the second natural gas pipeline running directly from Russia to Germany through the Baltic Sea. It's controlled by Russian state-owned



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Nord Stream I, which is majority owned by Gazprom, became operational in 2011. It can supply 1.9 trillion cubic feet of gas per year. Nord Stream II will double this to around 3.9 trillion cubic feet.

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Russia's steady buildup of some 100,000 troops and artillery on its western flank with Ukraine has led to concern among the NATO allies and fears of an imminent war. Newsweek reported Monday that Ukraine had been conducting urban warfare training drills for national guard, nurses, and other first responders in the Chernobyl disaster zone, to prepare for a possible attack.

Germany and the United States issued a united threat to Russia at the end of January, saying that the \$11 billion pipeline would be targeted by sanctions should Russia decide to invade Ukraine.



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Aside from this, Germany has taken a lukewarm stance on Ukraine, and hasn't been willing to provide Kyiv with weapons in response to the growing threat of conflict with its neighbor. German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht told *Die Welt* on January 23 that Berlin would send a field medical facility to Ukraine in February, but that it wouldn't transfer weapons. This is different behaviour to other NATO members such as the United States and the U.K., which have provided weapons to Kyiv. Several Baltic states have also sent weapons to Ukraine as tensions have been rising.

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Nord Stream II pipeline, which Scholz previously insisted was "a business project."

Biden last year removed sanctions on the project, allowing construction to proceed. But he was criticized by several GOP lawmakers for the move, as they saw it as strengthening Moscow's hand at the negotiating table.

Close Relationship With Putin

Scholz himself has been derided on social media and by critics for his apparent reluctance to make forceful statements on the Ukraine crisis. The chancellor has become as easy a figure to ridicule as his predecessor as chancellor in the Social Democrats, Gerhard Schröder, always made it known publicly he was friends with Vladimir Putin, and often jumped to his defense. On Friday, it was reported that Schröder had been nominated to join the board of directors at Gazprom.

The German press has also reported that Scholz hasn't always prioritized relations with Biden. *Der Spiegel* reported in late January that the chancellor had found no time in his busy schedule to meet with Biden, though those reports were quickly denied by the White House.

Adding to this, on January 22, Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach, the head of Germany's navy, resigned after coming under fire for arguing that Russia and Putin "deserved respect."



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According to the White House, Biden and Scholz will also discuss the COVID pandemic, climate change and promoting economic prosperity and international security.

If Russia decides to invade Ukraine, it won't be the first time. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, following protests in Ukraine that toppled the country's pro-Russian president. Since then, an estimated 14,000 people have been killed in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.



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By Reuters Staff



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FILE PHOTO: 3D printed Natural Gas Pipes are placed on displayed Gazprom logo in this illustration taken, January 31, 2022. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration

BERLIN (Reuters) - Gazprom has nominated former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to join its board of directors, the Russian energy giant said on Friday, amid tensions between Moscow and the West over whether Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine.

Gazprom said it had proposed Schroeder, who was Germany's chancellor during the early years of Vladimir Putin's presidency in Russia, as one of 11 candidates to be appointed at its annual shareholder meeting on June 30, 2022.

Schroeder is also a board member at Russia's top oil producer Rosneft and head of the shareholders' committee of Nord Stream, the Gazprom-controlled pipeline bringing gas from Russia to Germany.

Reporting by Zuzanna Szymanska; Editing by Mark Porter

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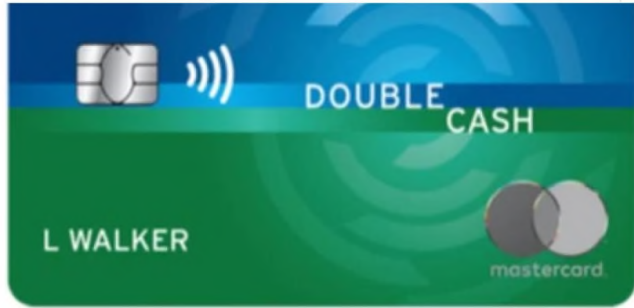
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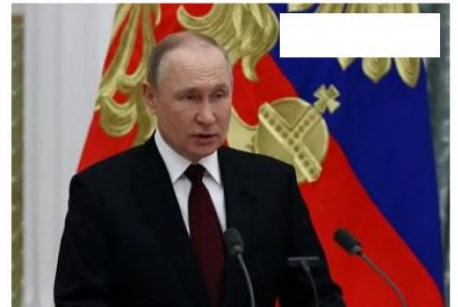
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The transit of natural gas through Ukraine's gas transmission system amounted to 1.664 billion cubic meters in January 2022, which was 57% less than in January 2021, Ukrinform reports, referring to the press service of the Gas Transmission System Operator of Ukraine (GTSOU).

"In January 2022, the transit of natural gas through the Ukrainian gas transmission system (GTS) amounted to 1.664 billion cubic meters, which was 57% lower than in the same period of 2021," the report says.

It is noted that the transit of "blue fuel" to Slovakia decreased by 53% to 1.04 billion cubic meters. The share of this direction in total transit was 62.5%.

At the same time, the transit of natural gas to Moldova increased by 1.3% to 398 million cubic meters.

In addition, gas transit to Romania was resumed in the amount of 116 million cubic meters (down 24.6% from January 2021).

Gas transit to Poland decreased by 66% to 110 million cubic meters.

It is noted that in January 2022 compared to January 2021, the average daily volume of Russian gas transportation through the territory of Ukraine decreased by 57% to 53.7 million cubic meters. The GTSOU stressed that this is significantly below the minimum reserved amount under the current gas transit agreement.

As reported, Russia in 2021 transported 41.7 billion cubic meters of gas through Ukraine, using the reserved capacity by 93.8% at the entry points and by 91% at the exit points.

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