FACT SHEET

Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea

Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea

- Due to physical conditions in the Baltic Sea (low salt content, low species diversity, relatively low temperatures, low oxygen content, etc.), the decomposition of organic materials progresses slowly. Consequently, the preservation of **cultural heritage** – objects that represent evidence of past and present human activity – is exceptional, even on an international scale, and the **value and scientific potential are great**.

- The fact that the underwater cultural environment has been exempt from much of the exploitation that has taken place on land only adds to the potential archaeological value of the underwater cultural remains in the Baltic Sea.

- In the five countries whose waters the Nord Stream pipelines traverse, cultural heritage is **protected by legislation**. The authorities have developed procedures to avoid impact on cultural heritage.

- The maritime cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea primarily consists of two broad categories of underwater sites: shipwrecks, and submerged settlements and landscapes.

- Wrecks are prone to physical destruction by activities like trawling. But even highly degraded shipwrecks can yield valuable information after thorough investigation of hull remains, equipment, cargo and other artefacts belonging to the wreck.

Construction of Lines 1 and 2 – Experience with Cultural Heritage Artefacts

- For construction of Lines 1 and 2 of the Nord Stream Pipeline, **close cooperation with experts** ensured that the cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea was preserved.

- Scientists and researchers have provided expertise to make sure that objects of archaeological value would not be damaged during construction of the pipeline, or could be salvaged. In a **joint decision-making process**, it was decided how to proceed and best preserve and protect the artefacts.

- In the planning of construction of Lines 1 and 2 of the Nord Stream Pipeline, through extensive examination, the company has ensured that detailed knowledge and information has been gathered to locate known, previously unknown sites of potentially high cultural heritage value in the Baltic Sea.

- The **detailed seabed surveys** conducted were the most comprehensive ever realized in the Baltic Sea. Using Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) with cameras for visual inspection, side-scan sonar systems, as well as a gradiometer surveys, 2,500 square kilometres of the Baltic Sea bed were analysed.

- A large number of ship wrecks in the Baltic Sea are registered in wreck databases. Route survey information along the pipeline route corridor options were compared with desk studies of accessible wreck databases in order to get a total overview of ship wrecks near the pipeline.

- Nord Stream selected the pipeline route for Lines 1 and 2 in such a way to keep the impact on cultural heritage sites as low as possible or to avoid them wherever possible. Also, the company cooperated with the national and international authorities.

- The anchoring of the pipelay vessels during the installation works could also impact

the sites of cultural heritage value. To avoid disturbance to these sites by the anchors and associated anchor wires, special measures have been developed, for example establishing predefined anchor patterns and restriction zones around cultural heritage sites.

- Through its **commitment to archaeological, scientific and research projects**, Nord Stream also actively works towards preserving Baltic Sea cultural heritage.

Exemplary Approach to Cultural Heritage Finds Along the Route of Lines 1 and 2

- In the **Russian waters**, a total of 27 wrecks or parts of wrecks have been located. In July 2010, two admiralty anchors dating back to the 18th to 19th centuries were salvaged. The Historical Architectural Museum of Kronshtadt will study, preserve, and store them.

- Monitoring of cultural heritage in Russian waters showed that the construction activities and the presence of the pipeline on the seabed did not have any effects on the position and condition of the monitored wrecks.

- In the **Finnish EEZ**, a total of 56 wrecks or parts of wrecks have been located. A total of 25 wrecks were assessed to be of cultural heritage value and 2 are within 50 m of a pipeline.

- Through the construction period, 9 wrecks were monitored prior to and following the construction works to confirm that there was no impact resulting from works. During the construction one item previously identified as 'wooded logs' was reassessed to me a wreck of cultural heritage value.

- In the **Swedish EEZ**, a total of 12 wrecks or parts of wrecks have been located. A total of 10 wrecks were assessed to be of cultural heritage value and 2 are within 50 m of a pipeline.

- In the **Danish waters**, a historic rudder was found near the island of Bornholm. It was lifted in September 2009 and sent for preservation to the National Museum near Copenhagen in order to safeguard the rudder against potentially being damaged during construction works.

- In Danish waters monitoring of cultural heritage covered a survey of wrecks or shattered wreck pieces before and after installation of Lines 1 and 2. Monitoring showed there was no damage from construction activities.

- In the **German waters**, the pipeline route passes through the Bay of Greifswald, close to the German coast, where 20 ships were sunk during the Great Nordic War (1700–1721) to prevent enemy ships from entering the bay. The wrecks are historically important. One of the smaller wrecks was removed in a controlled manner to create a corridor wide enough for laying the pipeline. Its parts were archaeologically documented and investigated.

- After evaluating and documenting a wreck located on the pipeline alignment within the Bay of Greifswald in June 2010, its remnants were relocated approximately 100 metres away and buried one metre beneath the seabed to preserve them from destruction.

More information at www.nord-stream.com

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