

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Visits the Pipelay Vessel Solitaire**

**Zug, September 20, 2010.** VIP on board the Solitaire: The Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin paid a visit to the world's largest pipelay vessel Solitaire to inform himself about the progress of the pipe-laying works for the Nord Stream Pipeline. During his two hour visit and accompanied by Nord Stream's Managing Director Matthias Warnig, he toured some of the work stations on board such as welding and the quality control and testing stations, and he was informed about the progress of the demanding construction process.

Vladimir Putin also used this opportunity to talk to members of the staff and find out right at their working place about their working conditions and the atmosphere aboard. He also held a discussion with representatives of the Solitaire and Allseas, who informed the Prime Minister about the unique performance of the vessel and work in progress. Putin expressed a high opinion of the Nord Stream project implementation and the attention paid to its technical and ecological safety.

The Solitaire has been operating in Russian waters since 1 September and lays about 2.5 kilometres of the pipeline in the Gulf of Finland per day.

Pictures are available for download at Ria Novosti: <http://visualrian.com/images/item/763557>

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#### **Notes to editors**

**Nord Stream** is a natural gas pipeline that will link Russia and the European Union through the Baltic Sea. The European Union's annual natural gas imports in the year 2007 were approximately 312 billion cubic metres (bcm) and are projected to increase to 516 bcm by the year 2030. This means that by 2030, the EU's annual import needs will have increased by about 200 bcm (Source: IEA, World Energy Outlook, 2009). Nord Stream will meet about 25 percent of this additional gas import requirement by connecting the European gas pipeline network to some of the world's largest gas reserves. The project will be an important contribution to long-term security of supply and a milestone of the energy partnership between the European Union and Russia.



# Nord Stream

The new gas supply route for Europe

Nord Stream AG plans to have the first of two parallel pipelines operational in 2011. Each line is approximately 1,220 kilometres long, providing a transport capacity of some 27.5 bcm per year. Full capacity of about 55 bcm per year will be reached when the second line goes on stream. This is enough gas to supply more than 26 million European households.

**Nord Stream AG** is an international joint venture established for the planning, construction and subsequent operation of the new offshore gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea. Russian OAO Gazprom holds a 51 percent stake in the joint venture. The German companies BASF SE/Wintershall Holding GmbH and E.ON Ruhrgas AG hold 15.5 percent each, and the Dutch gas infrastructure company N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie and the French energy company GDF SUEZ S.A. each hold a 9 percent stake.

**Nord Stream is included in the Trans-European Energy Network Guidelines (TEN-E) of the European Union.** In 2006, the project was designated a “project of European interest” by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Nord Stream is, therefore, recognised as a key project for meeting Europe’s energy infrastructure needs.

**Construction of the Nord Stream Pipeline** started in April 2010, after completion of environmental studies and planning and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) along the entire pipeline route. Three pipelay barges have been commissioned to work on the project: Saipem’s Castoro Sei carries out the majority of the construction in the Baltic Sea. The Castoro Dieci operates in German waters, Allseas’ Solitaire handles construction in the Gulf of Finland as a subcontractor of Saipem. The first pipeline is scheduled to be operational in 2011, the second one in 2012.