



## **Joint Statement by the Presidents of the Polish American Congress and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America on Nord Stream 2**

– July 29, 2021 –

The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), which represents some 30 national associations of Ukrainian Americans, and the interests of nearly 2 million Americans of Ukrainian descent, and the Polish American Congress (PAC), an umbrella organization representing over 10 million Americans of Polish descent, stand united in the wake of the official announcement of an agreement reached between US President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the completion of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project.

Following the Biden-Merkel announcement on July 21, PAC and UCCA were distraught to discover that neither President Biden, nor Chancellor Merkel reached out to their respective legislative branches before entering into negotiations on this issue. For the German side, it was equally rash to not have consulted with the EU Council, which has repeatedly called for stepping back from the current over-reliance on Russia-dominated energy routes. In this respect, we commend and support Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba's response to the EU, in which he pointed out that according to Article 274 of Ukraine's 2014 European Union Association Agreement, the EU and its member states are obliged to "consult and coordinate" with Ukraine on energy "infrastructure developments" and "shall cooperate on matters related to trade in natural gas, sustainability and security of supply."

In response to the Biden-Merkel announcement on July 21, the foreign ministers of Ukraine and Poland issued a joint statement lamenting that "the hitherto proposals to cover the resulting security deficit cannot be considered sufficient to effectively limit the threats created by NS2. We call on the United States and Germany to adequately address the security crisis in our region, that Russia is the only beneficiary to."

While every new administration looks to take a fresh approach to foreign policy, our constituents took President Biden at his word when he described the Nord Stream 2 pipeline as "fundamentally bad deal for Europe" specifically because, in his words, it would "lock in great reliance on Russia [which] will fundamentally destabilize Ukraine."

The only certain financial beneficiaries in Russia are Kremlin insiders, Gazprom's subcontractors and members of the European business and political elites who derive remuneration from their support for the project. Completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project will only serve to increase corruption in Europe and enhance Russian soft power inside the EU. A completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline would provide roughly 30% of Russia's GNP – money that Putin's Russia will undoubtedly use to continue its aggressive behavior and invasions of neighboring countries – not to mention their hybrid war tactics used against the west, including the United States.

Any attempts to agree on the future of energy relations and security of Europe without the participation of Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, and the Baltic Nations, whose security will suffer first once the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project is completed, must not become the norm in international relations between our respective countries. Such attempts undermine the stability of the entire transatlantic region and hurt trust between transatlantic partners.

The Nord Stream 2 project needs to be stopped. The United States should not only fully implement congressionally mandated sanctions against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, it should further sanction any of the subcontractors that work on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to ratchet up the pressure on Russia to finally leave Ukrainian territory. Together, we call on President Biden to maintain the commitments made to our allies in Eastern Europe and continue America's bipartisan record of support for Ukraine.

## **#StopNordstream2**

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