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Swedish Minister Finds Baltic Gas Pipeline Dangerous to Maritime Environment



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KALININGRAD -- Chemical weapons sunk to the bottom of the Baltic Sea could be touched and the ecological balance of the sea upset by the building of the North European gas pipeline, Swedish Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds said.

The Rosbalt agency reported Freivalds as saying at the opening of the Swedish consulate general in the Russian Kaliningrad enclave that such fears were voiced by Swedish environment specialists.

"This problem should be solved by joint forces of all the Baltic Sea countries although the gas pipeline project is carried out by Russia," Freivalds said.

Kaliningrad governor Georgi Boos, who also took part in the press conference, did not agree with the minister, pointing out that an international environmental survey had found the North European gas pipeline project to be safe to the environment.

"It is not carried out by Russia or Gazprom, but by an international consortium," he underlined, "Besides, it is mainly in the interest of European countries, whose economic growth depends on access to Russian natural gas. More than that, there are plans to clear the Baltic Sea of ships sunk during the war, ordnance and chemicals in the course of the building, and this will have a positive effect on the status of the maritime environment."

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