

## Finland and Estonia celebrated the commissioning of the Balticconnector gas pipeline

The commissioning of Balticconnector – a gas pipeline between Finland and Estonia – was celebrated in Finland and in Estonia today, 11 December 2019. In the spirit of good cooperation between the countries and the EU, the ceremonies held simultaneously in Helsinki and in Paldiski were linked via a live stream. President of the Republic of Finland Sauli Niinistö, Estonia's President Kersti Kaljulaid, Minister of Economic Affairs Mika Lintilä and Deputy Director-General Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, DG Energy, European Commission, were guests of honour at the event.

The construction work of the Balticconnector project was completed one month ahead of schedule – the pipeline could have been commissioned already in November 2019. The commissioning of the Balticconnector allows the opening of the Finnish gas market as scheduled on 1 January 2020.

The completed gas pipeline enables the connection of the Finnish and Estonian gas markets and integrates the countries in the EU's common energy market. The pipeline improves the reliability of regional gas supply and enables decentralised gas supply as well as, e.g., the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and biogas.

"The Balticconnector gas pipeline and the opening of the gas market for competition has been a demanding project, which has now been completed efficiently and on schedule. The financial support from the EU has enabled a physical integration of our gas infrastructure with the Baltics offering us additional alternatives for gas supplies. We are building a regional gas market which serves as an example for the rest of the Europe", estimates Mika Lintilä, Minister of Economic Affairs.

The project had a budget of EUR 250 million, of which 75 % was provided through investment aid from the Connecting Europe Facility – a financial instrument of the EU's energy sector. Good cooperation between Finland, Estonia and the EU has been the project's cornerstone.

"With the Balticconnector, we are entering a new era of gas supply, opening up the Baltic and Finnish gas markets for new trade opportunities. This is an important first step, and when the GIPL gas pipeline between Poland and Lithuania is completed in 2021, all countries will have access to the EU gas network," says Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, Deputy Director-General, DG Energy, European Commission.

Baltic Connector Oy has been responsible for the Finnish part of the project. A large number of decision-makers, developers, consultants, contractors and other stakeholders have been involved in the project implementation. The submarine section of the pipeline between Estonia and Finland is 77 kilometres long. The pipeline reaches land in Finland in Inkoo where the 21-kilometre underground pipeline connects to Finland's national transmission network. The pipeline's transmission capacity is 7.2 million cubic metres of gas per day.

"It is great that we are able to launch the pipeline on schedule. At the same time, we have prepared the ground for functioning gas markets. I would like to thank the skilled personnel in Finland and in Estonia as well as all contractors who have achieved this success through seamless cooperation," says Herkko Plit, President and CEO of Baltic Connector Oy.

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