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France Urges Germany to Scrap Russia Gas Pipeline Over Navalny

By [AFP](#)
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Several European countries have criticized the pipeline, saying it will increase German and EU dependence on Russia for critical gas supplies. Clemens Bilan / EPA / TASS

France on Monday urged Germany to scrap a major gas pipeline project with Russia in protest over the detention in Moscow of opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

"We have always said we have the greatest doubts on this project in this context," European Affairs minister Clement Beaune told France Inter radio.

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Asked specifically if France wanted Berlin to drop the project, Beaune said: "Indeed, we have already said this."

The United States as well as several European countries such as Poland have criticized the Nord Stream 2 project, saying it will increase German and EU dependence on Russia for critical gas supplies.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has insisted on the project, and work resumed on it in December after nearly a year because of American sanctions.

Beaune said European leaders were weighing new sanctions against Russia over President Vladimir Putin's crackdown on the opposition led by Navalny, who was arrested in mid-January and faces a trial that could see him detained for years.

Thousands defied government warnings to protest across the country on Sunday in a second weekend of mass demonstrations against the arrest of Putin's most prominent opponent.

"Sanctions have already been imposed, we could do that but we have to be clear, they will not be enough," Beaune said.

"The Nordstream option is one under consideration," he added, while acknowledging that "it's a decision for Germany, because the pipeline is in Germany."

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