



Nord Stream 2: A Closed Yet Convenient Case – Commentary Following the Decision of the District Court in Warsaw

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Regardless of the media resonance triggered by the decision of the District Court in Warsaw concerning the extradition to Germany of a Ukrainian citizen suspected of involvement in the damage to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, neither the verdict itself nor its reception by the German media will alter the current dynamics of Polish-German relations. Moreover, both developments prove advantageous to all parties involved. In this context, the question of whether the situation will lead to the postponement of the intergovernmental consultations between Poland and Germany, scheduled for November this year, becomes of secondary importance.

Announced on October 17, 2025, the decision of the District Court in Warsaw to deny the extradition of the suspect allegedly involved in damaging the Nord Stream 2 pipeline appears to be beneficial for all individuals and institutions with a stake in the case.

First and foremost, the Court distanced itself from the substance of the case. It stated that it was not tasked with assessing the likelihood of the alleged act, but rather with determining whether the documents submitted provided sufficient grounds to apply the European Arrest Warrant. **The refusal to extradite – being the essence of the ruling** – constitutes an important precedent that may be invoked in similar proceedings in the future. This precedent notably suggests that Poland is becoming a safe, or at least a friendly, territory from the perspective of Ukrainian secret services. Consequently, this development is likely to prompt reciprocal actions targeting Poland and its institutions responsible for internal security.

The Polish government, officially maintaining that it has little direct involvement in the matter, gains additional leverage in domestic political disputes as a result of the Court's decision. The accused will not be deported to Germany, a country not necessarily regarded as anti-Russian,

not only by Poland's right-wing parliamentary opposition. An open question remains, moreover, to what extent the Court's ruling will be leveraged by Polish authorities in direct relations with Ukraine and countries such as the United States.

Given the complexities of societal relations after several years of war, the strongly pro-Ukrainian character of the Warsaw Court's decision is also likely to have an impact on bilateral political and civic interactions, which could, in all likelihood, see improvement.

However, the reprisal should be expected. The Russian side is likely to undertake radical propaganda campaigns on social media, further provocations along the Polish-Belarusian border involving third-country migrants, and increasingly aggressive violations of Polish airspace by, for example, armed Russian unmanned aerial vehicles.

The cited wording of the ruling also coincided, in a striking manner, with two developments on the German political scene that cannot be described as overtly anti-Russian. On the day of the scheduled Court session, it was reported in the media that, in connection with the organization of a German-Russian forum, the Russian



ambassador was scheduled to speak there, regardless of any protests.

At the same time, during hearings in the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder once again defended his decision to proceed with the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline.

The events under discussion, as well as the ruling itself, carried added value for German foreign policy. It was, after all, a third country – Poland, not Germany – that blocked the extradition. Meanwhile, Germany continues discreet efforts to maintain dialogue with Russia, fully aware that its authorities issued the arrest warrant for the Ukrainian suspect accused of sabotage. Consequently, German authorities could anticipate, for example, economic concessions from Russia in exchange for their decision to appeal – or not appeal – the ruling. The stakes would, of course, be higher if a readmission agreement were reached. Ukraine would also need to be included among potential negotiators. However, such a scenario does not appear to be advantageous for the Polish authorities.

The potential extradition, on the other hand, would be convenient for neither Germany nor Russia. During the court proceedings, it might be necessary to provide a detailed account of the pipeline's destruction, which could have a more detrimental effect on Berlin's and Moscow's public image than a failed deportation.

In conclusion, the potential Polish-German conflict arising from the discussed situation ultimately provides the German government with advantages in its relations with Russia, and the Polish government with benefits in its relations with Ukraine. At the domestic political level, by maintaining a relatively restrained stance toward German extradition

demands, Prime Minister Tusk's government positions itself against the right-wing opposition. It takes over the rightist narrative, presenting itself as the defender of Poland's geopolitical interests, countering Russian-German dominance in energy policy.

In this context, the cancellation of the planned intergovernmental consultations in Berlin – even if accompanied by exceptional media exaggeration – will not alter the perception of bilateral relations. On the contrary, it is likely to generate political gains for both heads of government, namely Donald Tusk and Friedrich Merz. This refers to increased support among their respective electorates and, for example, in Poland, the forced demonstration of solidarity with the government by the right-wing opposition. The latter, regardless of visits by its representatives to Berlin, cannot suddenly begin defending German interests, as doing so would entail significant reputational costs.

It should also be noted that an event of greater significance for bilateral relations, rather than the issue of unexecuted deportations, was the visit of Germany's Finance Minister to the United States and his participation in the annual meetings of global financial institutions. The long-term development of both Poland and Germany will depend on such engagements, not on the more or less articulate political commentary on social media following the decision of the District Court in Warsaw. Neither the sabotaged pipelines nor potentially canceled intergovernmental consultations will alter this dynamic.

