



News Report 6th-13th February 2016

By Sofia Majorova

- **Nord Stream 2 Pipeline Completion Approaches**
- **EU partially lifts sanctions against Belarus**
- **NATO to deploy patrols in the Aegean to tackle smugglers**

Nord Stream 2 Pipeline Completion Approaches

Heavily debated launch labelled as a geopolitical, rather than commercial project is set to deliver gas from St. Petersburg to the German northern coast. The biggest outrage has come from Poland, who has urged Brussels to review the political implications. The two main issues which divide EU countries is the increase in dependence on Russian energy imports and the increasing Russian influence in the Baltics, especially after the events in Ukraine. The EU Commission's vice President Maroš Šefčovič has expressed a [proposition](#) to impose boundaries on gas products and transits following the launch as well as to leverage the EU's internal rules to promote competition which is often curbed due to large dominating networks. The following months will show more clearly, what impact this project will have on the European energy security.

EU partially lifts sanctions against Belarus

The decision from Brussels has ended over 10 years of asset freezes and travel bans on [170](#) individuals, including the current Belarusian president Lukashenko as a means of improving relations between Belarus and the EU. The verdict has drawn initial criticism due to reports of human rights abuses and political repression within the country, often referred to as the „last European dictatorship.“ Some argue, that this is showing a green light to the president Lukashenko, who may feel more accepted by the EU leaders and might consequently be reluctant to pursue any political changes.

NATO to deploy patrols in the Aegean to tackle smugglers

NATO will be sending 3 warships to the Aegean Sea which will monitor illegal crossings and turn migrants back to Turkey as an attempt to contain the current crisis. What is being discussed, however, is that the increased naval presence might encourage even more people to attempt to cross in hope that help will be nearby, if their boat sinks. After an unusually rapid decision which only took [20 hours](#), the NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has stated that the patrols will contribute towards tackling of human trafficking following the meeting between defence ministers of Turkey, Germany and Greece in Brussels. The mission is also to [share information](#) between Turkish and Greek coastguards.