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## Path clear for the OPAL

### Building permit granted for the southern part of Brandenburg / work on the natural gas pipeline progressing swiftly

**Cottbus/Kassel.** All the permits for the construction of the OPAL natural gas pipeline from Lubmin on the Baltic Sea coast to Olbernhau near the German-Czech border have now been issued. The Brandenburg State Office for Mining, Geology and Raw Materials (LBGR) in Cottbus concluded the planning approval process for the southern part of Brandenburg on Tuesday, 16 February 2010. The permit covers a 126-km-long section of the pipeline track in the districts Dahme-Spreewald, Teltow-Fläming, Elbe Elster and Oberspreewald-Lausitz as well as the compressor station OPAL-Mitte in Baruth, south of Berlin. The State Mining Office laid down all the details of the construction and subsequent operation of the OPAL (Ostsee-Pipeline-Anbindungs-Leitung – Baltic Sea Pipeline Link) in Brandenburg with the planning approval. The authority already issued the permit for the north of Brandenburg at the end of December. The construction work in south Brandenburg is expected to commence in the next few days.

Thrilled at receiving the permit documents, Bernd Vogel, Managing Director of OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH, said, “With this planning approval, we now have all the permits for the construction of the OPAL from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to Saxony”. OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH is a company of the WINGAS Group and will be responsible first and foremost for the technical network operations of the OPAL. “All the conditions are now in place for realizing the pipeline on schedule and for transporting the natural gas from the Nord Stream pipeline to other destinations.” The OPAL natural gas pipeline is currently the largest natural gas infrastructure project in Germany. The purpose of the long-distance pipeline is to connect the Nord Stream Baltic Sea pipeline to the European gas network. The OPAL pipeline route runs 470 kilometers from Lubmin near Greifswald to the Czech Republic. Here the OPAL will be connected to the local natural gas pipeline network.

Construction work has been taking place in several sections simultaneously in the states Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony and is progressing rapidly. The planning approval processes necessary for the construction work in these states were already completely successfully in summer 2009.

Now the topsoil has been removed from around 170 kilometers of the pipeline route here; almost 50 kilometers of pipes have been welded and around 20 kilometers of the pipeline string have already been laid. The pipeline is being built by WINGAS on behalf of OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH and E.ON Ruhrgas AG.

***OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH** will perform the tasks of network operator for the OPAL. It is part of the WINGAS Group, which, in addition to natural gas supplier WINGAS, includes WINGAS TRANSPORT. WINGAS TRANSPORT operates a gas pipeline network which is more than 2,000 km long and covers the whole of Germany. It is planned that the OPAL will be connected to the WINGAS TRANSPORT gas pipeline network.*

More information at **[www.opal-pipeline.de](http://www.opal-pipeline.de)**