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Construction work for the OPAL begins in Brandenburg

More than 1000 workers assigned between Prenzlau and Elsterwerda / Commissioning of the natural gas pipeline in fall 2011

Prenzlau. Construction work on the largest pipeline project in Germany, the OPAL natural gas pipeline, has now begun in Brandenburg near Prenzlau. “We have begun removing the topsoil from the pipeline track at the state border with Mecklenburg-Vorpommern,” Bernd Vogel, Managing Director of OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH, explains. OPAL NEL TRANSPORT GmbH is a company of the WINGAS Group and will be responsible for the network operations of the OPAL. “We want to bring the pipeline on stream in fall 2011; to achieve this, there will over 1000 workers on the pipeline track in Brandenburg alone during the peak phase of construction from May.” The OPAL pipeline will connect the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline through the Baltic Sea to the European gas transport network and covers 470 kilometers from the Baltic Sea coast to the Czech Republic, running through Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg and Saxony. In Brandenburg the pipeline will pass 270 kilometers through the districts Uckermark, Barnim, Märkisch-Oderland, Oder-Spree, Dahme-Spreewald, Teltow-Fläming, Elbe-Elster and Oberspreewald-Lausitz. The Brandenburg State Office for Mining, Geology and Raw Materials (LBGR) in Cottbus granted the final authorization for the section in Brandenburg in the middle of February.

Construction work has been taking place simultaneously in several sections in the states Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony. “Since construction work began, the topsoil has been removed from nearly 190 kilometers of the pipeline track; almost 50 kilometers of pipes have been welded and more than 30 kilometers of the pipeline string have already been laid,” Michael Muth, Chief Construction Manager at WINGAS, said commenting on the progress of construction work. In parallel with the construction work north of Prenzlau, workers began transporting the pipes to the pipeline track in the district of Kienbaum, east of Berlin, and preparing for excavation work in the south of Brandenburg near Finsterwalde. In addition, employees of the construction companies are currently clearing the site of the planned compressor station near Baruth. “The search for explosive

ordnance in Brandenburg has also made very good progress,” the WINGAS construction manager explained. “At the moment, the munitions disposal service is active in several areas between Prenzlau in the north and Elsterwerda in the south.” The disposal agency is examining around 1,500 square meters per day for ammunition left over from the Second World War. “We won’t begin with construction work on site until all explosive ordnance has been disposed of,” Mr Muth explained.

***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. The company plans to connect the OPAL to the WINGAS TRANSPORT gas pipeline network.*

More information at **www.opal-pipeline.de**