

8th CO2GeoNet Open Forum on CO2 storage pilot projects held in Venice

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Researchers from all over Europe met in Venice on 9-11 April 2013 to present a scientific perspective on the way forward for the geological storage of CO2 in Europe and to discuss progress together with stakeholders.

The conference was co-organised by CO2GeoNet - a scientific association of 13 research institutes from 7 countries and CGS (a project funded within the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for coordination action on CO2 geological storage).

Pilot projects play a key role in the advancement of the CO2 storage-related research in Europe, which could bring a significant contribution to the innovation goals of the Horizon 2020 programme. The importance of pilot projects has been highlighted due to the strategic developments they can offer, at a moment when large demonstration projects are facing delays. Pilot projects will also provide vital information to enable wide deployment of CO2 geological storage.

The climatologist Hervé Le Treut, member of the IPCC panel, explained that the climate change patterns which are presently observed do correspond with the changes anticipated by models over the last three decades. This makes it all more important to pursue reductions of CO2 emissions.

"CO2 capture and storage can contribute 20% of the necessary reductions and combined with biomass energy it is the only carbon negative technology available" said Nick Riley, Chair of CGS Europe General Assembly.

The record low prices of EUAs (emission unit allowances) have undermined public efforts for supporting CO2 capture and storage demonstration and increased the uncertainty in investment planning. In this situation storage pilots remain the opportunity for different stakeholders to work together and further improve methodologies that can apply to specific geological aspects of storage sites.

"Each site is unique and requires individual evaluation. European researchers are developing tools and sharing knowledge that will enable safe and reliable CO2 storage in Europe" explained Isabelle Czernichowski-Lauriol, President of CO2GeoNet and Coordinator of the CGS Europe project.

A new paradigm for CO2 storage public involvement was proposed by Samuela Vercelli, CO2GeoNet Executive Committee member: "People should not find themselves in the position to 'accept' a storage site. If given the possibility to identify and understand the advantages of storing CO2 and hosting a storage site they will have their own reasons for doing it. Instead of looking for public acceptance, dialogue should be sought. Storage pilots can be an excellent opportunity to experience a dialogue approach with the population".

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