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Interview to Manuela Soares

GEO Co-Chair and European Commission's Director for Environmental Research

In recent years, the European institutions, and, in particular, the European Commission (EC) have been more and more involved in the activities of the GEO (Group on Earth Observation), which recently held its Eighth Plenary Session (GEO-VIII) in Istanbul. We put some questions about it to Manuela Soares, GEO Co-Chair from the European Commission and Director for Environmental Research for the EC.

Ms. Soares, the EC is deeply engaged in the GEO Work Plan and in the various processes it includes. What exactly is the role of your institution in this important area?

The European Commission has been one of four co-chairs of GEO since its creation and continues to fulfil this role in the recently elected Executive Committee (which also includes Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom among its members). Within the Commission, DG RTD ensures the coordination of GEO relevant issues with the other interested DGs (ENV, ENTR, DEV, INFOS, etc and the JRC). The Commission contribution to the GEO initiative is significant: it includes a major contribution from the FP7 Cooperation Environment theme in terms of R&D effort to provide GEO with the research elements necessary to develop the GEOSS. It also includes the support given through the Space Theme of FP7 to GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security).

This is a major contribution by Europe to GEO in particular in terms of space infrastructure. Other FP7 programmes also contribute, including the Information Society Theme and the Research Infrastructure programme. A significant contribution is also the INSPIRE Directive (Infrastructure for Spatial information in Europe) as it is a powerful tool to overcome major barriers still impeding availability and accessibility to Earth observation data in Europe. Finally the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission is strongly engaged in the development of the GEOSS COMMON INFRASTRUCTURE, which is the GEO information system enabling to access Earth Observation Datasets.

You recently took part in the Eighth Plenary Session (GEO-VIII) in Istanbul. What were the main results of this year's meeting?

In my view, the Eighth GEO Plenary session has made the right decisions to ensure the implementation of the GEOSS until the end of the current GEO 10 year implementation plan in 2015 and to prepare for the future of GEO beyond 2015. In practical terms, the participants accepted the new GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan which will ensure the sound implementation of GEOSS until 2015. They also welcomed the recent improvements to the GEOSS Common Infrastructure, which now provides access to millions of data sets and information products through the GEO Portal. This includes the GEOSS Data-CORE, a distributed pool of documented datasets with full, open and unrestricted access at no more than the cost of reproduction and distribution. Meanwhile, the Eighth GEO Plenary was an occasion to appraise the progress made by GEO flagship initiatives covering several GEO Societal Benefit areas such as the Supersites and National Laboratories initiative on geologically active regions, the Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON), the Global Agriculture Monitoring initiative (GEO GLAM), and the Global Forest Observation Initiative.



Manuela Soares
GEO Co-Chair and European Commission's Director for Environmental Research

CGS Europe Spring School on CO₂ Geological Storage



The first Spring School on CO₂ Geological Storage organised by CGS Europe (The "Pan-European coordination action on CO₂ Geological Storage, FP7 project) raised a big deal of interest.

Next March a group of professionals, researchers and scientists involved in international CCS programmes will develop the Advanced course on geological storage of carbon.

The application for this spring school is now closed. However, due to the interest received we inform that there will be a second Spring school in 2013. Please visit the CGS Europe web site: www.cgseurope.net

The goal is to provide students with diverse backgrounds a broad understanding of the issues surrounding CO₂ geological storage as an effective tool in a wide range of climate change mitigation options and encourage their active participation in this area.

The climate change issue is coined one of the most severe concerns of our time, and has brought leading nations into ambitious ventures in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The challenge is to provide enough power under a sustainable framework.

Up to now, no green energy source has been identified as being capable of providing very large quantities of "power on demand" at acceptable cost. Fossil fuels are likely to remain the prevalent primary energy source in the foreseeable future in Europe as well as the rest of the

world. In response to the climate change issue, however, the problem of increasing CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels must be resolved urgently.

In this endeavour it is expected that emerging carbon capture and storage (CCS) techniques will become part of the solution. CCS is one of the solutions to reduce carbon emissions and serves as a bridging technology towards a carbon free European energy market.

The course will give an introduction to:

Global warming and climate change, greenhouse gasses (methane, CO₂...), sources, capture (focus on CO₂), transport, trap types & storage options, coal seams, depleted hydrocarbon structures, enhanced recovery, deep saline aquifers; reservoir geology & rock properties, geological structure, rock type, cap rocks and reservoirs, mineralogy, porosity, permeability, capillary pressure and fluid distribution; basic reservoir concepts: reservoir pressure, reservoir temperature, storage capacity estimation, fluid flow through porous media; storage concept and mechanism: CO₂ plume, dissolution, diffusion, CO₂ solubility rate, mineralization, geochemical aspects, injection, pressure build up. CO₂ Storage Economics, cost; monitoring, numerical modelling, leakage, verification and legislation. Environment, health & safety; governing regulations, risk.

Target group basically post-graduate students (PhD and Post Doc) from Europe working on geological storage of CO₂. Spring school is organised by GEUS.

The Polish Geological Institute – National Research institute hosts the spring school at Leszcze (near Bełchatów) in central Poland. Teachers are from PGI-NRI, GeoEcoMar, GEUS, BRGM, TNO, BGR and IEAGHG.

CGS Europe: The "Pan-European coordination action on CO₂ Geological Storage", is a project funded within the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities. CGS Europe pools the expertise of the key research institutes in the area of CO₂ geological storage in European Member States and Associated Countries. It sets up coordination and integration mechanisms between the CO₂GeoNet Association - the European Network of Excellence on the Geological Storage of CO₂ - and 23 other participants, thus covering most of Europe with 24 EU Member States and 4 Associated Countries. CGS Europe provides an independent platform and reference source where national, European and international experts, institutes and regulators are able to access the most up-to-date results of CO₂ storage-related studies, share experiences and good practices, discuss the implementation of regulations, identify research needs to face upcoming challenges, and create new projects. ●

