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CO₂ capture and storage experts launch programme to accelerate technology for combating climate change

A group representing scientists, industry and environmentalists today called on the EU to help implement full-scale demonstrations of a new technology that could play a critical role in halting climate change.

ZEP – the European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants – today launched “The EU Flagship Programme”, which envisages 10-12 industrial-scale demonstration projects of CO₂ Capture and Storage (CCS) up and running by 2015.

CO₂ (carbon dioxide) is a major greenhouse gas and contributor to global warming, and power stations burning fossil fuels produce roughly a third of the world’s man-made CO₂. Reducing CO₂ emissions while meeting rising energy demand is a key challenge of modern times.

ZEP argues that CCS, if fully developed and commercialised in all industrial sectors, could reduce CO₂ emissions in Europe by as much as 50%*. The technology is currently being developed, but funding is a key issue in its wide-scale deployment.

The goal of the EU Flagship Programme is to test and evaluate various types of CO₂ Capture and Storage technologies so that CCS can become commercially viable for fossil fuel power plants by 2020.

This is fully in line with the European Council Communiqué of March 2007, which recommended “the establishment of a mechanism to stimulate the construction and operation by 2015 of up to 12 demo plants of sustainable fossil fuel technology in commercial operation”.

ZEP, which was established by the European Commission in 2005 and comprises geologists, industry, scientists and non-governmental organisations, says this technology is essential if Europe is to meet its CO₂ emission reduction targets - together with renewable energies and energy efficiency measures. It could therefore provide the vital bridge between the fossil fuel era and a renewable energy future.

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Launching the Programme in Paris, Frederic Hauge**, President of The Bellona Foundation, said: "Getting *the EU Flagship Programme* up and running will be crucial in our struggle to combat climate change, not only in Europe, but also at a global level. When the Kyoto Agreement was negotiated, CCS was not an option. Today, CCS technology can allow the US, and at a later stage China and India, to commit to reversing CO2 emission levels. This fact injects a new dynamism into the multilateral negotiations at Bali in December. With the Flagship Programme on CCS, Europe can bolster its world leadership in fighting climate change. However, time is running out: ZEP therefore calls on the EU to support the Flagship Programme and ensure that the EU meets its CO2 emission targets."

* Compared with a strategy without CCS cf. Bellona Paper, August 2006,
http://bellona.no/artikler/notater_stangeland_solomon

** Frederic Hauge is Vice Chair of ZEP and Member of the ZEP Advisory Council. The Bellona Foundation is a multi-disciplinary international environmental NGO based in Oslo, Norway.

About ZEP

Funded by the European Commission, the European Technology Platform for Zero Emission Fossil Fuel Power Plants (ZEP) is a broad coalition of stakeholders united in supporting CCS as a key solution for combating climate change - including environmentalists, scientists, geologists, equipment suppliers and representatives from the oil & gas and power industries.

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