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LETTER OF INTEREST

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- Topics:
1. National CCS legislation and public perception
 2. Financial issues of CCS
 3. Future directions for research and research cooperation on CCS
 4. Research, education and CCS prospects at Balkan Region

Two interactive panel discussions, co-organized by UNESCO, ENeRG (European Network for Research in Geoenergy) and Balkan Geophysical Society took place during the special event *Energy, Economy & Environment* (14-15 May, 2009, Međavnik, Serbia). The main theme was carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture and geological storage (CCS), a bridging technology that will contribute to mitigating climate change.

The first panel discussion (14h May) was devoted to national CCS legislation and national CCS research programmes as precondition for CCS success in the new EU members States and candidate countries and mainly in the Balkan Region. One of the aims was to encourage national ministries and governments to take regulations on CCS, to support CCS technology and to take decisions about exploration and CO₂ storage permits in their countries. Panel discussion helped to understand local national problems and associated challenges and show the way forward.

The second panel discussion (15th May) was devoted to the prospects and challenges for CCS implementation in the new EU members States and candidate countries with stressing on situation in the Balkan Region. The main objective was to discuss real situation with implementation of CCS in Balkan countries. The discussion included problems of CO2 geological storage capacity, risks, safety, monitoring and financial issues of CCS technology and possible international support of CCS projects.

Conclusion: CCS directive adopted by European Commission at the end of 2008 establishes a legal framework for the environmentally safe geological storage of carbon dioxide to contribute to the fight against climate change. It gives possibility and support to all European countries to start national legislation of CO2 geological storage (CGS), national research and education programmes, dissemination of information in press and media and to reach public perception of CCS technology. The implementation of CCS technology is also regulated by participation of the largest European industrial CO2 emitters in the EU Emission Trading Scheme. The high CO2 emissions taxes forced Energy industry to build new capture ready power plants at the time when they have lack of CCS information in their regions.

New EU members States and candidate countries started their research on CCS only a few years ago. In order to fill gaps in the regional CCS knowledge, CCS education and research programmes are urgently needed. That is why it was concluded that close cooperation related to CCS between UNESCO, other international organisations and Balkan countries is necessary – first of all, through research projects directed to governance, capacity building, feasibility studies that would lead to pilot projects, and to public private partnership initiatives. UNESCO`s guidance, coordination and financial support through the Venice office will be crucial for the future of CCS in the Balkan region.



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