

PRESS RELEASE

Belgium and Norway will work closer on cross-border transport and storage of CO₂

The Federal government of Belgium, the Walloon Region and the Flemish Region have now started formal negotiations with Norway for a bilateral agreement on the cross-border transport and storage of CO₂ on the Norwegian Continental Shelf, under the London Protocol.

The Prime Ministers of Belgium and Norway, De Croo and Støre, and the Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Terje Aasland met in Ghent today to discuss carbon capture and storage (CCS). The visit took place in conjunction with the North Sea Summit in Oostende.

When the Prime Ministers of Belgium and Norway, Alexander De Croo and Jonas Gahr Støre, met 23rd February 2022, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on energy cooperation related to the North Sea. This includes strengthened cooperation on CCS, hydrogen, and offshore wind. One of the objectives of the MoU is to prepare a bilateral agreement between Belgium and Norway to enable cross-border transport of CO₂ in view of permanent geological storage.

Belgium is located centrally in the industrial cluster of Northwest Europe and relatively close to major CO₂ storage locations in the North Sea basin. Wallonia and Flanders are therefore ideally placed to develop and roll out CCUS technology, as part of their CCUS strategy. At the same time, Flanders and Wallonia are working on a legal framework for CO₂ transport networks.

“I am happy that we can announce that the formal negotiations on a bilateral agreement between our two countries has started. Strengthened cooperation on CCS, offshore wind and hydrogen will be important for the achievement of our climate targets. The MoU with Belgium confirms our governments’ commitments to facilitate cooperation in these areas. I am confident that we will finalise a bilateral agreement on cross-border transport and permanent storage of CO₂ in the near future”, says Norwegian Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre.

“Cross-border cooperation is necessary for CCS to succeed as an efficient climate mitigation measure. I look forward to continue and expand the close cooperation with Norway on CCS. Our aim is to formalize a bilateral agreement on cross-border transport and permanent storage of CO₂ as soon as possible”, says Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo.

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) will be one of the measures to decarbonize specific industries and to mitigate climate change. With the start of the negotiations, Belgium and Norway take a crucial first step in the facilitation of cross-border carbon dioxide value chains. Once it has been signed and has entered into force, the bilateral agreement will allow for the transport of carbon dioxide from the Flemish and Walloon Region to Norway for permanent geological storage on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.

“Cross-border cooperation is necessary for CCS to succeed as an efficient climate mitigation measure. I look forward to continue and expand the close cooperation with Belgium on CCS. Our aim is to formalize a bilateral agreement on cross-border transport and permanent storage of CO₂ as soon as possible., says Norwegian Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Terje Aasland.

Vincent Van Quickenborne, Federal Minister of North Sea: *“Developing new methods to reduce carbon*

emissions is vital for the future of our planet. This is a promising climate technology. The sea can play a key role in this. Not only has it always been very important for regulating our climate, but it also offers opportunities for carbon capture and storage. In September, we concluded an agreement with Denmark to store captured CO₂ in their empty oil and gas fields. Today we are also taking an important step to do the same with Norway. We are aiming for an agreement by the summer.”

Zuhail Demir, Flemish Minister of Environment and Energy: “The capture, storage and reuse of CO₂ will play an important role in the future of Flanders. That is the reason we were determined to be the first region within Belgium with a strong and efficient regulatory framework for transport of CO₂. This in addition to the continuation of our strong policy on renewable energy and well-thought-out energy efficiency measures. Various companies in Flanders are already focusing on the rollout of CCUS to reduce their footprint. Our common goal of a bilateral agreement for cross-border transport and storage will facilitate the ambitions of the Flemish industry”

Philippe Henry, Walloon Minister of Climate and Energy: “We support many innovative industrial initiatives in Wallonia in terms of CO₂ capture. It is essential to also offer them storage solutions. This prospect of agreement between our regions and countries is a very important step in this direction.”