



# Inaugural meeting of the Expert Group on the Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide

## Report

On 10 April 2024, the European Commission (EC) services organised the inaugural meeting of the informal Expert Group on the Geological Storage of Carbon Dioxide. The meeting brought together the Competent Authorities (CAs) from Member States and European Economic Area (EEA) countries in Brussels and online. The objective of the meeting was an exchange of information on recent developments, both at level of European Union (EU) policies and at national level.

The meeting started with a high-level introduction by the EC, highlighting the importance of industrial carbon management (ICM) solutions for reaching climate neutrality by 2050, as well as the indispensable role of national CAs in supporting the large-scale deployment of ICM technologies throughout the single market. The introduction was followed by the formal adoption of the rules of procedure and agenda of the meeting<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission (DG CLIMA) provided the following updates:

- **Policy developments at EU level.** The Commission services presented the ICM Communication published on 6 February, with a focus on upcoming actions to be undertaken by the Commission and Member States. Participants raised questions, especially on further work to be done on carbon removals and carbon capture and utilisation (CCU), as well as on the upcoming framework on CO<sub>2</sub> transport infrastructure. Subsequently, it was agreed for upcoming meetings of the Expert Group to have a dedicated session on these topics. Several members mentioned that on CO<sub>2</sub> transport infrastructure, a joint meeting with energy transport regulators at European level would be useful.

The Commission services then presented political agreement on the Net Zero Industry Act (NZIA), focusing on the provisions relevant for the deployment of industrial carbon management solutions, including the EU target for CO<sub>2</sub> storage capacity by 2030. The discussion focused on upcoming tasks for CAs and contribution obligation for oil and gas companies that have had production in the EU. Questions from participants focused on the need to identify the obligated companies and the need to accelerate the relevant permitting timelines and milestones. The Commission services proposed a dedicated session on NZIA implementation in the next Expert Group meeting and suggested a possible a dedicated sub-group for permitting questions.

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<sup>1</sup> [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

- **Assessment of draft updated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and further updates.** The Commission services informed Member States about the EU-wide assessment of the chapters on carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) in the draft updated NECPs and explained the specific recommendations. The importance of including quantitative assessments in the NECPs, based on needs of local industry, was underlined, as well as that of including future plans in relation to CCUS. The Commission services also presented a planning of upcoming CO<sub>2</sub> storage permits across Member States and EEA countries, encouraging representatives in the meeting to update these plans.
- **Updated CCS Directive Guidance Documents.** The Commission services briefly presented the final drafts of the CCS Directive Guidance Documents, with a focus on several specific policy and permitting areas raised by Member States. The documents are now open for comments from Member States until the end of April, the intention of the Commission being to have them published in June. Capacity building workshops with both CAs and operators are envisaged for Q3.
- **Potential updates of national legislation transposing the CCS Directive.** With the streamlining in permitting put forward by NZIA, the Commission services mentioned that there is an expectation for national laws transposing the CCS Directive to be amended in the near future. Such expected amendments would aim to facilitate CO<sub>2</sub> storage permitting for obligated entities under NZIA. The notification procedure was briefly presented and the Commission services expressed their openness to support CAs in this endeavour, even in preparing such amendments.

During the *tour de table*, Member States informed and updated the group about the CCS chapters in their draft updated NECPs; progress in the development of national CCS strategies and studies (AT, CZ, DE, FR, IT); storage site explorations and storage permit applications; recent changes in regulatory frameworks; expected changes with regards to allowing CO<sub>2</sub> storage on their territories (AT, DE) and other recent developments. The Belgian representatives informed Member States about upcoming workshops on CCUS organised under the Belgian presidency and extended the invitation to all present.

Topics to be discussed in future meetings include:

- A dedicated session on NZIA implementation, including a possible sub-group with a focus on permitting processes
- A dedicated session on CCU and carbon removals
- A dedicated joint meeting on CO<sub>2</sub> transport infrastructure, with national energy transport regulators

Participants:

- Member States Representatives
- Commission services
- EFTA Surveillance Authority secretariat