



## **Press release GEOTRAINET+ Meeting, 14 October 2011**

**Venue: EFG, C/O Geological Service of Belgium, Rue Jenner 13, 1000 Brussels**

Representatives from 10 different countries gathered on 14 October 2011 to discuss the future of the Geotrainet project that officially closed in February 2011 but is currently seeking a continuation particularly with a view to supporting the implementation of the EC's Renewable Energy Directive.

In consideration of the planned growth of the Renewable Energy share to 20% until 2020, Commission representative Adina Georgescu presented during the first session of the meeting the current status of the European-wide implementation of this directive that requires MS to ensure that certification and qualification schemes for equipment installers are available by the end of 2012 in the sectors of biomass, solar, shallow geothermal and heat pumps.

After a brief presentation of the principal Geotrainet project outcomes by Isabel Fernandez Fuentes and the resulting training frames for designers and drillers of shallow geothermal ([www.geotrainet.eu](http://www.geotrainet.eu)), the afternoon session tackled different options for the future of the Project.

EGEC President Burkhard Sanner introduced a proposal on the structure of a future Geotrainet Education Committee and Training Board that would be chaired by a European Education Committee (EEC) maintaining the quality standards of the training programme on an international level and managing all Geotrainet documents. The different National Training Boards (NTB) would be in charge of implementing the international quality standards on national level with respect to specific national conditions. Finally, the National Training Institutes shall be responsible of putting the training schemes into practice. Financially, this education structure should mainly be maintained by course fees, but sponsorships as well as public funds could complete the budget for a start.

As an example of an education board established on national level, Javier Urchueguia from the University of Valencia, Spain, presented Geoplat, a platform aiming to provide a framework for developing sustainable strategies for the promotion of geothermal energy. In Spain, the need for implementing education and certification schemes is vital because so far every engineer is authorized to sign geothermal project reports without specific training background. Based on the Geotrainet schedule, the training road map of Geoplat was approved in May 2011. The specificity of this project in distinction with Geotrainet is that the road map splits between designers (NTI's: Universities, training centers and companies) and drillers (NTI's Regional training centers, institutes) but on the contrary education and certification schemes are merged.

Finally, Gundula Tschernigg from AIT, Austria, presented an exhaustive proposal for a European certification framework aiming at increasing the confidence of customers and identifying competent specialists, who can design and install faultless and efficient GSHP systems. The aims of such a European Certification Board would be to certify trained installers, trainers active in the Geotrainet



activities and to maintain the quality of established standards. Some of the requirements addressed to this Certification Board are the need to maintain a close collaboration with the European Training Board, to ensure the continuation of the training activities accompanied by a continuous update of the programme.

The participants of the Geotrainet+ meeting gave unanimously a very positive feedback on the ideas and inputs delivered and it was decided to organize a kick-off meeting in March 2012 until which the new bases that is status and regulations of a new international non-profit association as well as a list of delegations per country shall already be defined.