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

Today, Prime Ministers Alexander De Croo and Jonas Gahr Støre, met in Ghent as part of the enhanced Belgium-Norway dialogue and cooperation on climate, energy, and industrial transformation. In preparation to the North Sea Summit in Ostend, the Prime Ministers stressed the importance to the long-standing cooperation between Norway and Belgium, based on shared values and interests.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Vincent Van Quickenborne, Tinne Van der Straeten and Terje Aasland, as well as key Belgian and Norwegian energy and industrial stakeholders, ArcelorMittal, Equinor, Engie, Fluxys and North Sea Port.

Prime Minister Alexander De Croo: *"Cross-border cooperation is necessary for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) to succeed as an efficient climate mitigation measure. I look forward to continuing to 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."*

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre: *"I am happy that the formal negotiations on a bilateral agreement on cross border transport and storage of CO2 between our countries have 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' shared commitment to facilitate cooperation in these areas. I am confident that we will finalize the bilateral agreement in the near future."*

### Green transition towards 2030

On 23 February 2022, the two Prime Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on energy-related cooperation in the fields of offshore wind energy, hydrogen, and CCS. With the MoU, Belgium and Norway intensified their bilateral cooperation on offshore wind energy, hydrogen, and CCS. Today's meeting was an important follow up of the MoU. It is necessary to develop sustainable technologies and markets, essential to speed up the green transition towards 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050.

Belgian and Norwegian high ambitions for low-carbon solutions, CCS, hydrogen, and offshore wind, are now being addressed by a robust regulatory framework, incentives, and concrete action, as well as focus on green shipping and minerals. Both countries underline the importance of facilitating opportunities for hydrogen production and CCS deployment across the whole value chain, as an important part of the path towards climate neutrality.

The meeting manifested that Norway and Belgium are partners in large and industry-scale decarbonization solutions in Europe, contributing to important industries, jobs, and the competitiveness of our economies. Several projects to this effect, involving Belgian and Norwegian stakeholders, are being developed, including the hydrogen backbone, the H2BE low carbon hydrogen project, a CO2 pipeline connecting Belgium with Norwegian CO2 storage, the Ghent Carbon Hub, and the Antwerp@C and Kairos@C carbon projects.

### Cooperation countries around the North Sea

The Prime Ministers confirmed the aim to further facilitate and support the development and deployment of offshore wind energy, hydrogen, and CCS. They stressed the importance of regional cooperation among

the countries around the North Sea in supporting cross-border energy infrastructure and subsea CO2 storage facilities and deployment, including renewable energy generation and transmission infrastructure.

One key objective of the MoU of 23 February 2022 is to prepare a bilateral agreement between Belgium and Norway to enable cross-border transport and permanent geological storage of CO2 on the Norwegian Continental Shelf, under the London Protocol. The Federal Government of Belgium, the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region have now started formal negotiations with Norway to establish such an agreement.

Carbon Capture and Storage 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 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.

Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister  
Rue de la Loi 16  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
+32 2 501 02 11  
<https://premier.be>  
[contact@premier.be](mailto:contact@premier.be)

BramDelen  
Spokesperson (NL)  
+32 497 30 82 05  
[bram.delen@premier.be](mailto:bram.delen@premier.be)

FrançoisBailly  
Spokesperson (FR)  
+32 488 07 05 12  
[francois.bailly@premier.be](mailto:francois.bailly@premier.be)