

## Retreat 2022, Leiden, the Netherlands

From July 20<sup>th</sup> to July 22<sup>th</sup>, an international group of 24 PhD students from climate and energy research at the Forschungszentrum Jülich had a wonderful retreat together in Leiden and Noordwijk, the Netherlands. It is the first HITEC retreat since the covid pandemic broke out in early 2020.

On the first day, we set out our journey in Jülich and Aachen. After a few hours of bus ride, we safely arrived at the Golden Tulip hotel around lunchtime. Shortly afterwards, we had a typical Dutch lunch together and then started our adventure in the city. The 24 participants were divided into two groups, each with a tour guide. In the following three hours, we saw various historical and touristic sites in the city and our enthusiastic guides showed us a comprehensive picture of the city of Leiden, including its history, traditions, its local culture and anecdotes. In particular, while showing enough respect for the local residents, we visited two historic ‘hofjes’, which were built to accommodate the poor in the 1600s and still do! We had great fun together and after the first day, we all got to know each other on a personal level.



Group 1



Group 2

The scientific sessions started on the second day. In the first session, two topics, namely eco-friendly ways of transportation and pros and cons of artificial intelligence, were given to the attendees who had been divided into six groups. The opinion of each group was presented after a group discussion. In the next part, the students were given two dilemmas that they might come across during their PhD. Following each dilemma there were four options. The students chose their preferences and then had an engaging discussion.



Session 1



Session 1

In the session 2 to session 4, each student presented their PhD work in 7 minutes which was followed by a 3-minutes discussion. In the last session named “find your collaborator”, every student, one by one, reiterated his or her work by two sentences and few key words. Then, they walked to their potential collaborators to discuss more about their common interests. The second day was given to a wonderful end by

scrumptious dishes in French cuisine banquet dinner (Bistro Lets Anders, Noordwijk).



Session 1-4



Session 5



French cuisine banquet dinner 21.07.22

On the last day, the students were left free for team building and recreation activities. We enjoyed our free time in our own ways until 11 am and then headed to the Noordwijk aan Zee beach. Upon arrival, some of us put on their swimming suit and enjoyed the waves in the Atlantic Ocean, while others had fun on the beach with a leisure walk on the wet sand and building sand castles.

During this retreat, the participants have had interesting and lively discussions, exchanged ideas in personal and professional life, built friendships and collaborations, and most importantly create memories together for a lifetime.





FZJ Jülich logo in sand

This retreat was well supported by Jean Pierre (our loving bus driver) and organized by Chenxi Qiu (IEK-7), Shivani Gonde (IEK-2), and Yufan Zhang (IEK-13).



HITEC Retreat Leiden: Organizing Team  
Chenxi Qiu (left), Shivani Gonde (center), and Yufan Zhang (right).