

HITEC Retreat in Leuven, Belgium, 08.07.15 – 10.07.15

On Wednesday 25 PhD students from the Forschungszentrum Jülich and the RWTH Aachen departed to Leuven. We arrived at the Grant Begijnhof Congres Hotel at noon, where we stayed for two days. After a quick check-in, the first session in the Faculty Club next to our hotel started. In general, each attendee gave a twelve minutes talk about methods he or she mainly uses in their PhD, followed by three minutes of discussion. The discussion time was intensively used because several interesting questions among the PhD students came up. The sessions themselves were sorted by institute. To provide a better scientific overview, the first speaker of each session gave a short and precise introduction about their institute. In between sessions, the coffee breaks and lunch, which took place directly next to our session room, gave additional time to discuss methods further.



After finishing our last talks in the afternoons, we had time for social activities. On Wednesday we enjoyed a guided city tour through the beautiful old town centre. This gave us the possibility to learn more about the academic and secular history of Leuven. While we were visiting famous sights, we got even more in contact with our colleagues from different institutes. On Thursday we attended a brewery visit and learned about the complex chemical infrastructure in a global beer producing company.



After the social programs, the attendees were able to discover Leuven on their own. Friday was a day without any presentations. Instead, we formed spontaneous groups and interviewed each other about the methods introduced in the talks the days before. In doing so, we filled out useful methods lists that will be presented on the HITEC website. The list should help PhD students to expand their knowledge of available methods in all institutes related to energy and climate research. After a short feedback session about the HITEC Retreat itself, the Retreat was closed and the attendees were brought back to Aachen and Jülich. During the three days, we had many interesting discussions about diverse methods and the applications in our PhD projects. To conclude, it was an informative and enjoyable Retreat with lots of scientific exchange. Thereby, current and future PhD students might benefit from the list when searching for appropriate methods for their research.

