

Ophélie Day

A bit of History...

- 1995= the end of the Middle Ages for the Belgian Program, the end of a certain obscurantism in the R&D regarding deep disposal of MLW and HLW in the Boom Clay
- 1995= the Renaissance of the Belgian Program : creation of the Economic Interest Grouping PRACLAY between SCK.CEN and ONDRAF
- EIG PRACLAY commissioned by ONDRAF with the execution of the PRACLAY Project : demonstration of the feasibility of disposal of HLW in deep clay layers

A bit of Archaeology...

- Letter from ONDRAF to SCK.CEN 8th of August 1991 (JVM/BG/91/4336) : first mention of the mock-up of the PRACLAY-gallery for the testing of...
 - Conditions for the construction of the central tube;
 - Conditions for placing and hydration of precompacted bentonite blocks;
 - Placing and follow-up of instrumentation to control the behaviour of central tube, buffer material and... (concrete) gallery lining.

A bit of Archaeology

- Meeting report 91-0710 Management Committee of the HADES agreement:
 - Adjustment, optimization on scale 1/1, prior to installation in the underground PRACLAY gallery, of methods, techniques and materials (internal components of disposal system);
 - Heating period of three years, cooling period of two years;
 - Insertion test with pseudo-Cogema canisters;
 - Estimated period between end of mock-up exploitation and start of PRACLAY experiment =... 18 months (that's again history...).

Milestones

- 1995: launch of the OPHELIE mock-up project (On surface Preliminary Heating simulation Experimenting Later Instruments and Equipment)
- 2nd of December 1997: start of hydration
- 2nd of June 1998: start of heating
- A few months later: confirmation of the usefulness of this preparatory experiment with the detection of first instrumentation failures (moisture content sensors, pressure sensors, ...)

Milestones

- 2001: creation of the multidisciplinary working group “Dismantling of the OPHELIE mock-up” gathering experts from SCK.CEN, EURIDICE, CEA, CIEMAT, UPC, ULB, ULg, CEBELCOR,... and ONDRAF with the mission to maximize the scientific return on investment (such as extension to important chemical aspects)
- AND THEY DID IT, turning an initial disappointment into a true success!