

Metrological assessment of on-site geochemical monitoring methods within an aquifer applied to the detection of H₂ leakages from deep underground storages

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November 22, 2022

Abstract

To manage potential risks due to H₂ leaks into the near-surface geosphere from H₂ underground storages (e.g. salt caverns, aquifer), reliable monitoring methods along with a precise knowledge of the geochemical environmental impacts are necessary. Thus, the evolution of some prominent parameters in soil and aquifers can be determined: gas concentrations, redox potential, ionic balance and trace elements. As part of the ROSTOCK'H project, Ineris simulated H₂ leakage by injection of dissolved H₂ into a shallow aquifer (~20 m deep) in an experimental site within the Paris basin. This experiment aimed to testing advanced monitoring techniques and studying hydrogeochemical impacts at shallow depths. The aquifer water has calcium-bicarbonate facies and a neutral pH. Eight piezometers were aligned over 80 m according to the aquifer main flow (west-east). Hydrogeochemical monitoring devices were set up. One of the piezometers was equipped with a completion connected to a Raman probe and a specific Mid-IR cell for continuous measurement of aqueous gases. At the experiment outset, 5 m³ of water were extracted from the aquifer to be saturated with H₂ under atmospheric conditions, before being reinjected through the injection well. About 100 L^{STP} of dissolved H₂ (concentration of 1,8 mg/L) was injected in the aquifer. The H₂ injection was preceded by the injection of underground water containing tracers (He_(aq), uranine and LiCl) in order to warn the H₂ plume arrival in the piezometers located downstream of the injection well. The concentrations of aqueous gases (He, H₂, N₂, O₂, CO₂, H₂S and CH₄) were measured in a control piezometer (20 m upstream) and in six piezometers up to 60 m downstream. Thus, the maximum H₂ contents were detected up to 20 m downstream of the injection well: 0.6 mg/L at 5 m, 0.17 mg/L at 7 m then 1.8 µg/L of H₂ at 10 and 20 m during the first week. Following the H_{2(aq)} addition, the aquifer physico-chemistry has been modified: low increase in pH, high decrease in redox potential and O_{2(aq)}. These results confirm the feasibility of detecting and monitoring H₂ in shallow aquifers in very low concentration conditions and highlight the potential impacts. This is of first importance for establishing the surveillance and security aspects related to with H₂ storage.

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⁽¹⁾ Institut national de l'environnement industriel et des risques – Ineris, ⁽²⁾ GeoRessources (UMR 7359) - University of Lorraine, France

1. Context and research work objectives

The underground storage of hydrogen is being considered as a temporary storage solution for electrical energy. To manage potential risks due to H₂ leaks into the near-surface geosphere from H₂ underground storages (e.g. salt caverns, aquifer), reliable monitoring methods along with a precise knowledge of the geochemical environmental impacts are necessary. Thus, the evolution of some prominent parameters in soil and aquifers can be determined: gas concentrations, redox potential, ionic balance and trace elements.

The Géodénergies "ROSTOCK'H" research project studies these risks by developing monitoring methods and characterizing potential impacts of H₂ leaks.

2. Hydrogeochemical monitoring planned following the dissolved...

3. Geochemical baseline definition

- Physical chemistry (1)
 - pH of 7.3 ± 0.2 and temperature of 12.0 ± 1.8°C
 - electrical conductivity of 411 ± 20 µS/cm
 - positive redox potential
 - series of calcium-bicarbonate bases
- Baseline of dissolved gases acquired over 6 months (May-November 2019) (2)

4. Protocol validation by preliminary injection of water saturated with He

- He gas with a physical behavior similar to that of H₂
- Validation of the response obtained for the future H₂ injections (2)

The steps of this protocol are presented in the following figure and table.

5. Leak simulation by dissolved H₂ injection

- On-site injection
- Parameters of the Caumont site over a 100 m length (100 m)
- Dissolved H₂ transfer dynamics according to distance (2)

6. Scientific valuation of the project

Conclusions

- Successful of H₂ and other gases in soil and continuous monitoring by Fluorescence and FTIR spectroscopy:
 - Continuous results for the continuous monitoring of gases in aquifers by specific devices (completion, gas simulation, data, optimization) over a long period of time
 - Very good accuracy for the continuous detection of H₂ in aquifer (<0.02 mg/L)
- Successful of H₂ monitoring by degassing water samples.
- Under our experimental conditions, the physicochemical impact of a H₂ leak is moderate and <10 m.

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Presented at:



1. Context and research work objectives

The underground storage of hydrogen is being considered as a temporary storage solution for electrical energy. To manage potential risks due to H₂ leaks into the near-surface geosphere from H₂ underground storages (e.g. salt caverns, aquifer), reliable monitoring methods along with a precise knowledge of the geochemical environmental impacts are necessary. Thus, the evolution of some prominent parameters in soil and aquifers can be determined: gas concentrations, redox potential, ionic balance and trace elements.

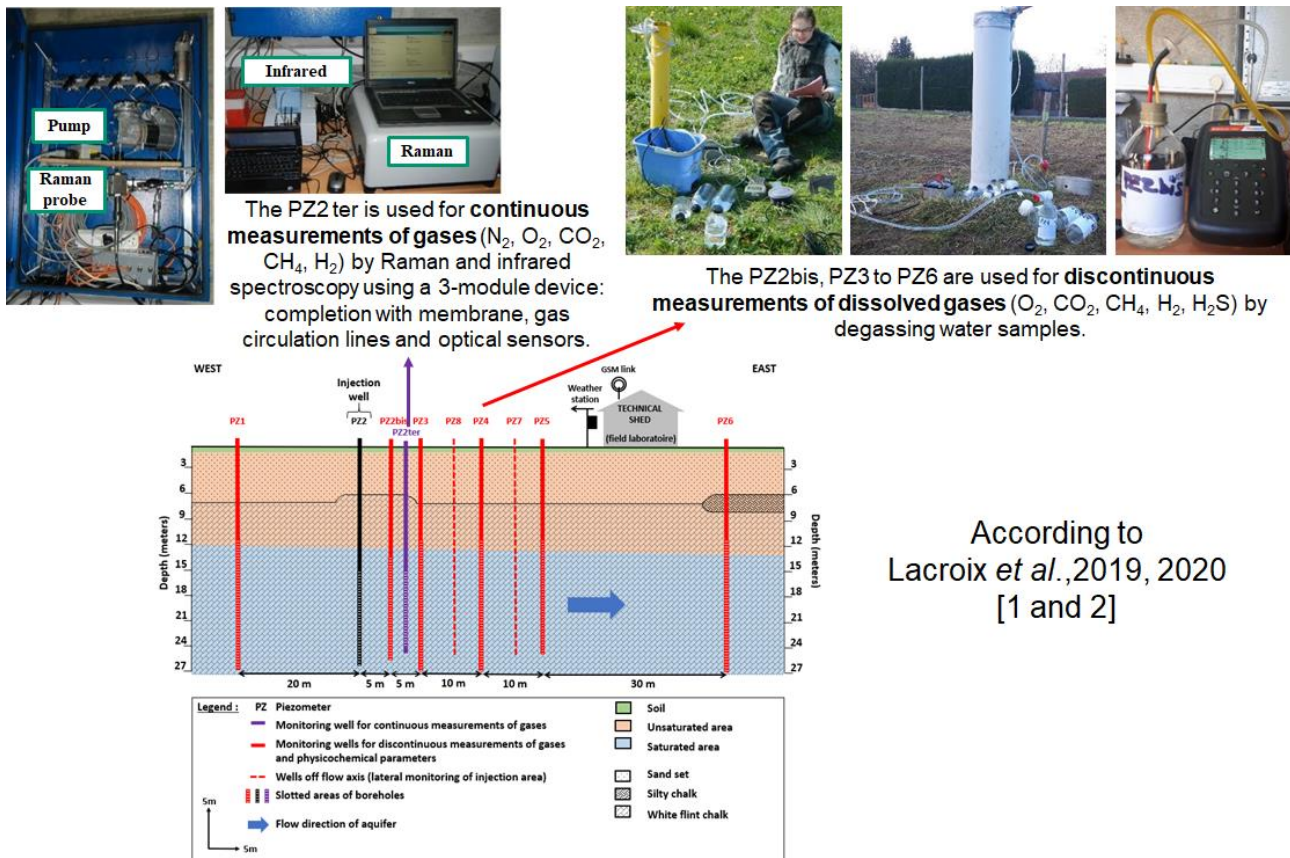
The Géodénergies "ROSTOCK'H" research project studies these risks by developing monitoring methods and characterizing potential impacts of H₂ leaks. A simulation of leak by dissolved H₂ injection into a water table in the Paris Basin was carried out.

2. Hydrogeochemical monitoring planned following the dissolved H₂ injection

Saturated area (S.A.)	
Effects of H ₂ arrival (leakage)	Sensors used and detection range
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of [dissolved H₂] - Decrease of [dissolved O₂] (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018). - Decrease of potential oxidation/reduction (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018). - Increase of pH (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018). - Reduction of nitrates to nitrite or to nitrogen or NH₄⁺ (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018). - Reduction of sulfates to sulfites or H₂S (Bai <i>et al.</i> 2014, Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018, Truche <i>et al.</i> 2009). - Reduction of Fe (III) in Fe (II) (Truche <i>et al.</i> 2010). - Dissolution of metallic trace elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 probes AMT of AquaMS (0-2 mg/L of H_{2(aq)}) : [dissolved H₂] measurements. - 2 portable analyzers (0-1000 ppmv H_{2(aq)}) by partial degassing : [gas H₂] measurements. - Multiparameter physicochemical probes: 0-50 mg/L for [O_{2(aq)}], ± 2000 mV for redox, 0-14 of pH. - Laboratory analyzes of major, minor and trace ions.
Production/increase of [CH ₄] due to biotic interactions: 4H ₂ + CO ₂ = CH ₄ + 2H ₂ O (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2014, Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018, Ebigo <i>et al.</i> 2013, Tarkowski 2019, Toleukhanov <i>et al.</i> 2015).	
Other possible interactions such as acetogenesis (4H ₂ + 2CO ₂ = CH ₃ COOH + 2H ₂ O) and acetotrophy (CH ₃ COO ⁻ + H ⁺ = CH ₄ + 2H ₂ O) (Berta <i>et al.</i> 2018, Ebigo <i>et al.</i> 2013).	

According to Lacroix *et al.* 2019 [1].

The Ineris experimental site in Catenoy (Paris Basin) is used to test direct and indirect near-surface monitoring methods relating to dissolved H₂ [2]:



According to Lacroix *et al.*, 2019, 2020 [1 and 2]

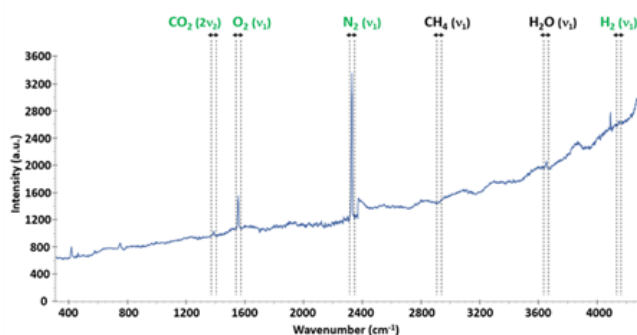
3. Geochemical baseline definition

⇒ **Physico-chemistry [1]:**

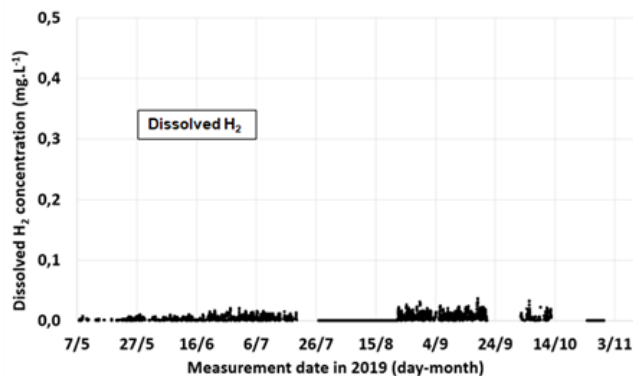
- pH of 7.3 ± 0.3 and temperature of $12.0 \pm 1.8^\circ\text{C}$
- electrical conductivity of $471 \pm 40 \mu\text{S/cm}$
- positive redox potential
- water of calcium-bicarbonate facies

⇒ **Baseline of dissolved gases acquired over 6 months (May-November 2019) [3]:**

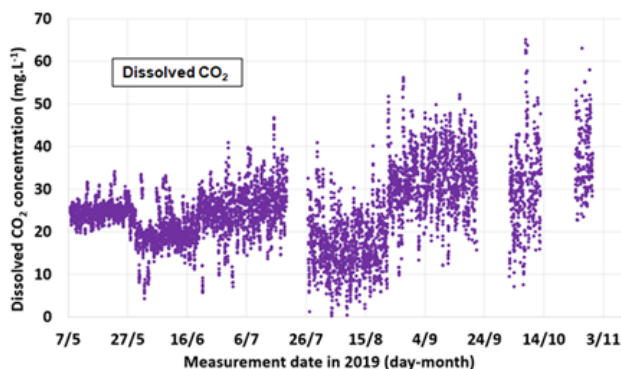
Statistical processing of **Raman** spectral data based on moving averages method (7966 spectra over 6 months)



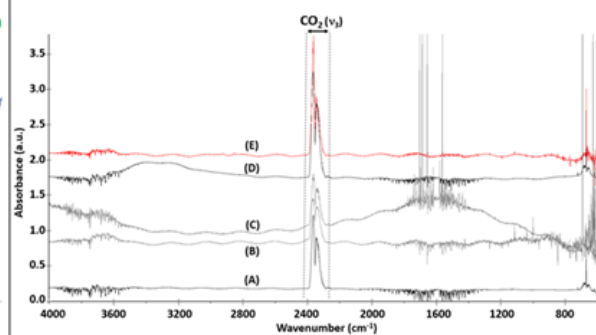
Average $[\text{N}_{2(\text{aq})}] \approx 17.0 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$
 Average $[\text{O}_{2(\text{aq})}] \approx 7.6 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$
 Average $[\text{H}_{2(\text{aq})}] \approx 0 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$



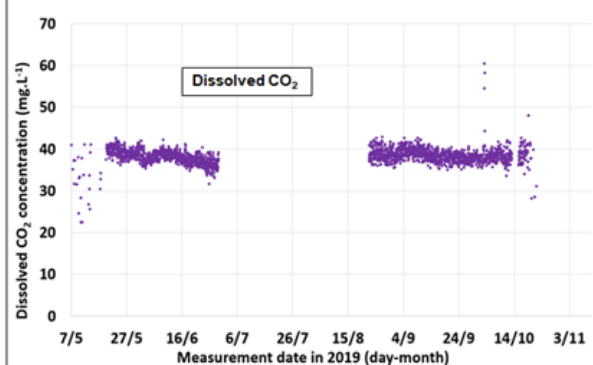
Average $[\text{CO}_{2(\text{aq})}] \approx 20\text{-}35 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$



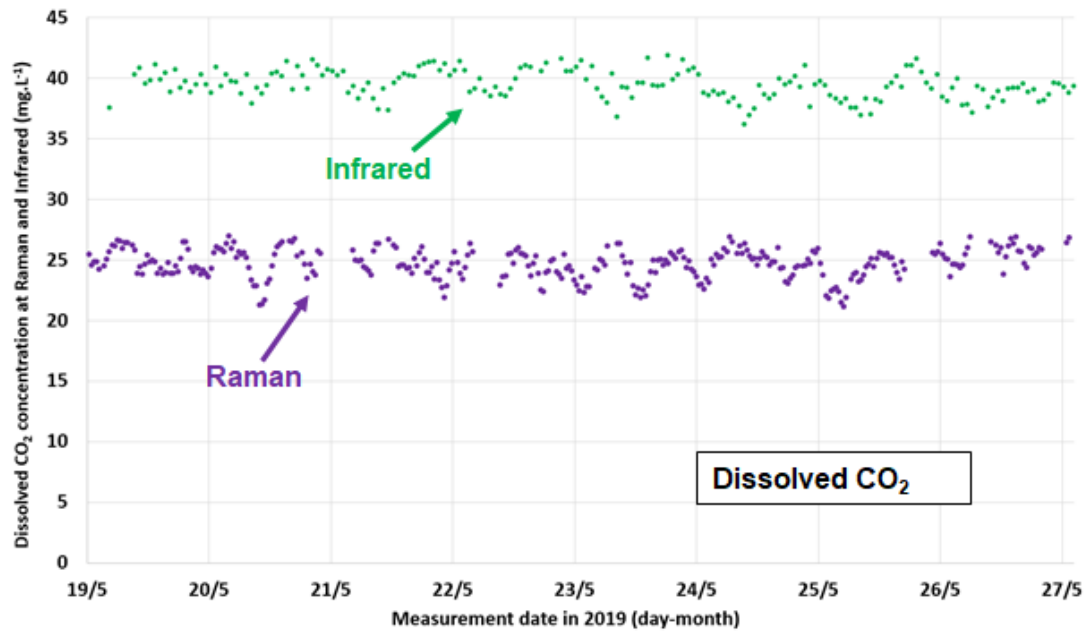
Infrared data processing by spectral profile analysis of ν₃ CO₂ band at 2400-2220 cm⁻¹. (3150 spectra over 6 months)



Average $[\text{CO}_{2(\text{aq})}] \approx 40 \text{ mg.L}^{-1}$



⇒ Combined Raman/Infrared metrology validated on site [3]:

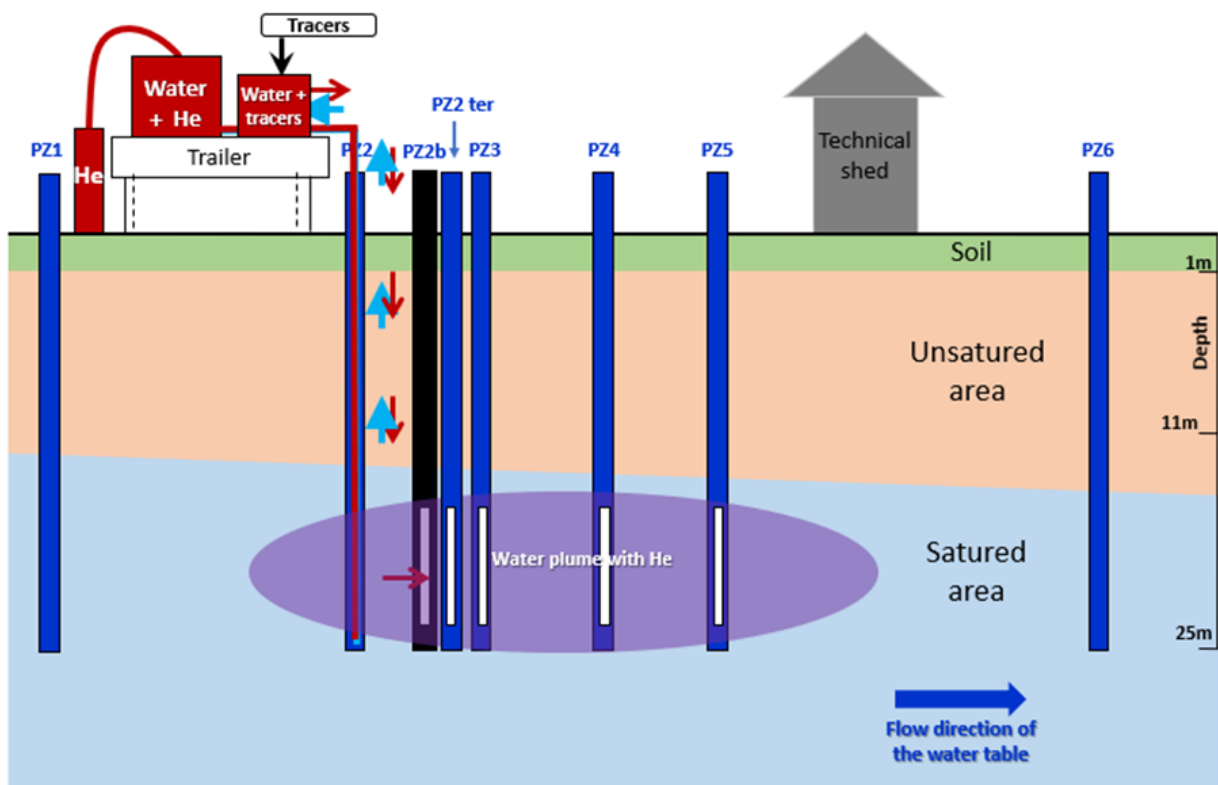


4. Protocol validation by preliminar injection of water saturated with He

⇒ He: gas with a physical behavior similar to that of H₂.

⇒ Validation of the experimental protocol for the future H₂ injection [4]:

The steps of this protocol are presented in the following figure and audio



- success of this injection experimental protocol with monitoring of the He plume migration in the water table and up to 20 m downstream.
- choice of 2 hydrogeological tracers among the 5 used during this preliminar injection (uranine and lithium).
- characterization of the 2 distinct hydrodynamic regimes linked to a matrix and a fissure porosities.
- protocol adaptability: change in the injection preparation and modification of the monitoring organization.

5. Leak simulation by dissolved H₂ injection

⇒ On-site layout:

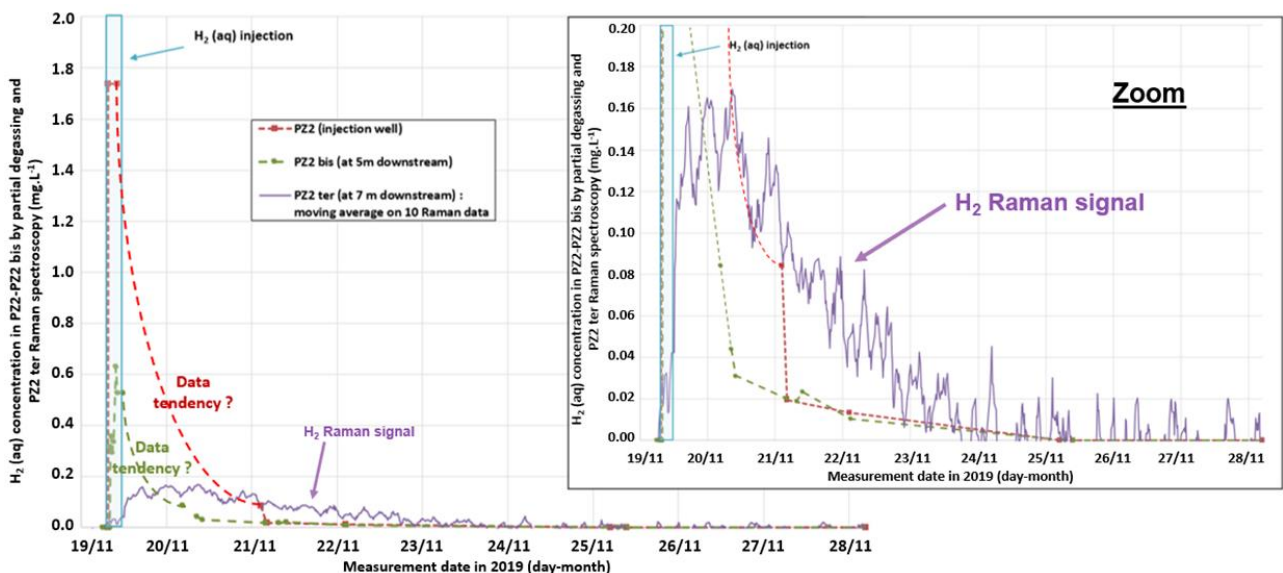


Panoramic view of the Catenoy site: over a W-E length of 80 m.

⇒ Dissolved H₂ transfer dynamics according to distance [2]:

- [H_{2(aq)}] max injected in the injection well (PZ2) is 1.78 mg.L⁻¹:

90% of theoretical saturation in 5m³ tank (after 16h of dissolution)



- 1114 Raman spectra acquired during the period following the H₂ injection from 19 to 30 November 2019.

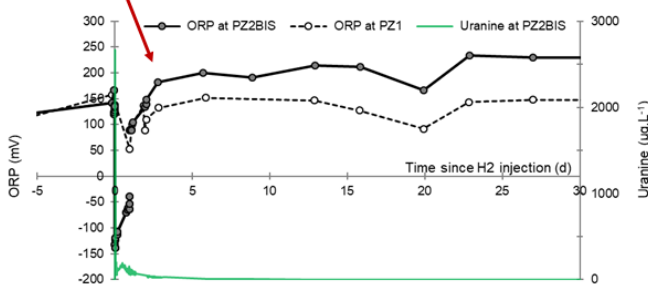
- Detection of $H_{2(aq)}$ up to 20 m downstream and at very low concentrations $1.8 \mu g.L^{-1}$

Piezometer	Distance from the injection well (m)	Breakthrough time after the start of the H_2 injection (hour)	$[H_{2(aq)}]_{max}$ detected
PZ1	-20	-	$0 mg.L^{-1}$ (DL of $H_{2(aq)} = 0,05 \mu g.L^{-1}$)
PZ2	0	0	$1,78 mg.L^{-1}$
PZ2 bis	+5	2	$0,6 mg.L^{-1}$
PZ2 ter	+7	≈ 10 and during 19 hours	$0,17 mg.L^{-1}$
PZ3	+10	71	$1,8 \mu g.L^{-1}$
PZ4	+20	90	$1,8 \mu g.L^{-1}$
PZ5	+30	-	$0 \mu g.L^{-1}$ (DL of $H_{2(aq)} = 0,05 \mu g.L^{-1}$)
PZ6	+60	-	$0 \mu g.L^{-1}$ (DL of $H_{2(aq)} = 0,05 \mu g.L^{-1}$)

⇒ Behavior of Redox and dissolved O_2 in PZ2bis (5 m downstream) monitored over 1 month [5]:

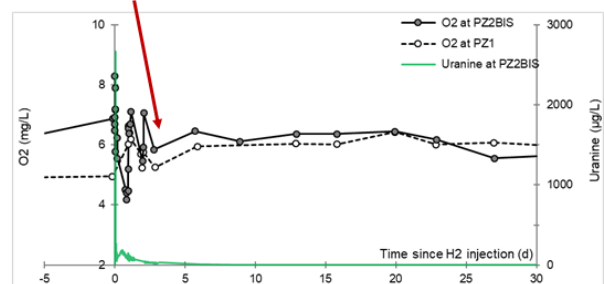
Redox evolution

Back to normal after 3 days following injection (similar to baseline)



Dissolved O_2 evolution

Back to normal after 3 days following injection (similar to baseline)



Conclusions

⇒ Successful of H_2 and other gases in-situ and continuous monitoring by Raman and FTIR spectroscopy:

- Conclusive results for the continuous monitoring of gases in aquifers by specific device (completion, gas circulation lines, optic sensors) over a long period of time.
- Very good sensitivity for the continuous detection of H_2 in aquifer ($<0.03 mg.L^{-1}$).

⇒ Successful of H_2 monitoring by degassing water samples.

⇒ Under our experimental conditions, the physicochemical impact of a H_2 leak is moderate and $<10 m$.

6. Scientific valuation of the project

[1] **Lacroix E.**, Lafortune S., De Donato P., Gombert P., Pokryszka Z., Rupasinghe S., Caumon M.-C. et Barrès O. (2019), *Développement d'outils de monitoring pour la surveillance des sites de stockage souterrain d'H₂ : premiers résultats de l'expérimentation de simulation de fuite à Catenoy (60)*. Poster presentation, colloque CNRS Miti « H₂ naturel », Paris, 10/10/2019.

[2] **Lacroix, E.**, Lafortune, S., De Donato, P., Gombert, P., Pokryszka, Z., Adélie, F., Caumon, M.-C., Barrès, O., and Rupasinghe, S. (2020), *Development of monitoring tools in soil and aquifer for underground H₂ storages and assessment of environmental impacts through an in-situ leakage simulation*, EGU General Assembly 2020, Online, 4–8 May 2020, EGU2020-17949, <https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu2020-17949>.

[3] **Lacroix E.**, de Donato P., Lafortune S., Caumon M.-C., Barres O., Derrien M., Piedevache M. and Liu X., *Metrological development based on in situ and continuous monitoring of dissolved gases in an aquifer: application to the geochemical baseline definition for hydrogen leakage survey*. Analytical Methods. To be submitted.

[4] Lafortune S., Gombert P., Pokryszka Z., **Lacroix E.**, de Donato P., Nevila Jozja N., (2020), *Monitoring Scheme for the Detection of Hydrogen Leakage from a Deep Underground Storage. Part 1: On-Site Validation of an Experimental Protocol via the Combined Injection of Helium and Tracers into an Aquifer*. Appl. Sci., 10, 6058, <https://doi.org/10.3390/app10176058>

[5] Gombert P., Lafortune S., Pokryszka Z., **Lacroix E.**, de Donato P., Jozja N. *Monitoring scheme for the detection of hydrogen leakage from a deep underground storage. Part 2: Chemico-physical impacts of hydrogen injection into a shallow chalky aquifer*. Appl. Sci. To be submitted.

Disclosures

Images are author's own unless otherwise stated.

The images and objects in videos as well as the texts/paragraphs are the property of Ineris and Lorraine's University.

Author Information

Presentation :

Elodie Lacroix is PhD student in geosciences in the field of geochemical monitoring methods for the risk prevention of a future underground gas storage. During this doctorate, she carried out my research work on two main geographical sites: (i) at Ineris (institute and experimental site belonging to it: Catenoy in Oise department, next to Paris) and (ii) at the University of Lorraine (Nancy).

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Acknowledgments:

The results presented in this poster were acquired within the framework of the ROSTOCK-H research project funded by the Scientific Interest Group GEODENERGIES.

Thanks also go to the co-authors and people involved in this research subject such as Ineris without whom the on-site experiments wouldn't have taken place, the University of Lorraine and its subcontractor, the Solexperts company for technical development and scientific analysis tools but also the CETRAHE laboratories of the University of Orléans and Chrono-environnement of the University of Burgundy Franche-Comté for carrying out hydrochemical analyzes of the water samples taken.

Abstract

To manage potential risks due to H₂ leaks into the near-surface geosphere from H₂ underground storages (e.g. salt caverns, aquifer), reliable monitoring methods along with a precise knowledge of the geochemical environmental impacts are necessary. Thus, the evolution of some prominent parameters in soil and aquifers can be determined: gas concentrations, redox potential, ionic balance and trace elements.

As part of the ROSTOCK'H project, Ineris simulated H₂ leakage by injection of dissolved H₂ into a shallow aquifer (~20 m deep) in an experimental site within the Paris basin. This experiment aimed to testing advanced monitoring techniques and studying hydrogeochemical impacts at shallow depths. The aquifer water has calcium-bicarbonate facies and a neutral pH. Eight piezometers were aligned over 80 m according to the aquifer main flow (west-east). Hydrogeochemical monitoring devices were set up. One of the piezometers was equipped with a completion connected to a Raman probe and a specific Mid-IR cell for continuous measurement of aqueous gases.

At the experiment outset, 5 m³ of water were extracted from the aquifer to be saturated with H₂ under atmospheric conditions, before being reinjected through the injection well. About 100 L^{STP} of dissolved H₂ (concentration of 1,8 mg/L) was injected in the aquifer. The H₂ injection was preceded by the injection of underground water containing tracers (He_(aq), uranine and LiCl) in order to warn the H₂ plume arrival in the piezometers located downstream of the injection well. The concentrations of aqueous gases (He, H₂, N₂, O₂, CO₂, H₂S and CH₄) were measured in a control piezometer (20 m upstream) and in six piezometers up to 60 m downstream. Thus, the maximum H₂ contents were detected up to 20 m downstream of the injection well: 0.6 mg/L at 5 m, 0.17 mg/L at 7 m then 1.8 µg/L of H₂ at 10 and 20 m during the first week. Following the H_{2(aq)} addition, the aquifer physico-chemistry has been modified: low increase in pH, high decrease in redox potential and O_{2(aq)}. These results confirm the feasibility of detecting and monitoring H₂ in shallow aquifers in very low concentration conditions and highlight the potential impacts. This is of first importance for establishing the surveillance and security aspects related to with H₂ storage.

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