

Davos by the Volcanoes

Laschamps is a tiny village close to Clermont Ferrand, the old capital of the French Auvergne. It is mostly known for the old volcanic forms on its vicinity, which inspire the names of its two open rural lodges.

A research team comprising the National Scientific Research Centre and the local public University (Université Clermont Auvergne) promoted a weekly Summer school dedicated to 'Integrated Assessment Models, Economics, Energy and Climate' - geared mostly at academics and other professionals, including PhD students, and conducted in English.



Speakers included both EU and French civil servants working on the area, as well as various academics and professionals. At the end of the fourth working day (Thursday) the Summer school included a round table animated by two former MEPs, Ilona Graenitz and myself.



The austere Laschamps lodges are the near perfect antithesis to the annual gatherings of the rich and powerful in Davos, and yet, I thought I learned much more there than I would have done in the Swiss resort. Mostly young (but also some less young) backpackers coming from Asia, Africa, Australia, America, Russia and the EU were not only computer and mathematics freaks; their vision, integrated knowledge and curiosity for the EU functioning were startling.

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(Paulo Casaca)