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Practical work and environmental policy briefs

The environmental policy briefs support the Mouvement Écologique throughout the year. The scope is very broad: from local government policy to transport issues, including water protection.

It is precisely these issues that are particularly close to many people's hearts.



HOUSEEUROPE!: STOP DEMOLITION – PRIORITISE RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION OF HOUSING

... this was the slogan of a joint initiative led by numerous stakeholders from the fields of architecture, heritage conservation, academia and the environment, including Mouvement Écologique, etc.

The common goal: to drive forward renovation by significantly improving the framework conditions set by policymakers. Only by renovating more rather than building new can we achieve our climate targets and ensure the necessary conservation of resources. However, this must also be prioritised from a social, urban planning and cultural perspective.

The HouseEurope! initiative aimed to collect 4 million signatures across Europe to kick-start this crucial change and make renovation in Luxembourg and across Europe easier, more cost-effective and more accessible than demolition.

The event kicked off with a major joint event at 'Tramschapp', during which experts emphasised to an audience of over 250 people the importance of renovation – but also demonstrated just how attractive and modern it can be today.

Although it was not possible to collect the required signatures across Europe, the importance of renovation is now a hot topic. It is now essential to maintain this momentum.



NEW NATIONAL BUILDING REGULATIONS: THE GREEN TRANSITION AS A KEY ELEMENT

In 2024, the government presented its strategy entitled 'Build more and faster'. One of its key elements is a national 'building code', i.e. a national building code that will apply to all local authorities. Until now, each local authority had its own building regulations. The Ministry of the Interior is currently drafting a national building code that will apply to all municipalities.

For many reasons, the Mouvement Ecologique welcomes the creation and implementation of such national regulations (uniform standards across the country, in the interests of citizens, time savings for municipalities, planning certainty, etc.). Why – to cite just one frequently mentioned example – the distance at which a solar installation must be situated from a neighbouring building varies from one municipality to another is, in fact, no longer comprehensible, professionally justifiable or appropriate. Well-designed national regulations can therefore bring about substantial improvements and simplifications for everyone.

However, according to Mouvement Ecologique and Oekozenner Pafendall, it is essential that this process is not limited to non-technical adjustments and harmonisation, but that it also addresses **current challenges, namely: the urgent need for climate and biodiversity protection, adaptation to climate change, the transport transition, and the efficient use of resources.** Renovations must also be facilitated; the requirements imposed on them can no longer be the same as those applicable to new builds. The project must also be discussed with all stakeholders.

A joint position paper has been drafted and circulated to all stakeholders. It has received positive feedback and sparked numerous discussions.

GOOGLE DATA CENTRE: THE COMMITMENT CONTINUES

For a very long time, there was silence surrounding the 'Google data centre' in Bissen.

In 2025, however, Mouvement Ecologique was informed that the draft environmental impact assessment (albeit somewhat 'concealed' and under the name 'London Bridge') on the Ministry of the Environment's website. Statements from various ministries regarding this project were also available there.

These documents were highly revealing, as they highlighted several key points:

- For years, the Mouvement Ecologique had been pointing out that Google would require 10 to 15% of Luxembourg's annual water consumption for cooling, whereas this water was not available. How many times did we then hear from official sources: "We can manage it all; that's an exaggeration." ' And now? The facts prove Mouvement Ecologique right! Google is abandoning water cooling and has now opted for air cooling.

- The documents also show that Google must provide much more detailed information if we are finally to put an end to the lack of transparency in this case. Indeed, the dossier contains problematic passages and is characterised by a lack of transparency; amongst other things, it is not clear in detail how cooling will be provided, and there is a lack of concrete figures and specifications regarding energy consumption and the use of waste heat, etc. The liberal invocation of commercial confidentiality in the dossier is also questionable.

This is reason enough for Mouvement Ecologique to intervene with L. Delles, Minister for the Economy, SMEs, Energy and Tourism, and S. Wilmes, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, in order to once again draw attention to the importance of this dossier.

WATER MANAGEMENT, WASTE, NOISE, THE COMODO-INCOMODO CASE, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: A DAILY COMMITMENT

It is clear that environmental policy is the guiding principle of Mouvement Ecologique's work. Citizens are supported, for example, when they need information on air quality, wish to raise objections in the context of applications for operating licences, etc.

The limited nature of Luxembourg's water resources has also been a recurring theme – the fact that Luxembourg is currently and blatantly failing to meet its water management targets; issues regarding air pollution have also been raised, etc.

These issues are integrated into the day-to-day work of the Mouvement Écologique, through various policy statements, public consultations, etc.



FOR A FORWARD-LOOKING POLICY ON SPATIAL PLANNING, MOBILITY AND HOUSING

In various ways, the Mouvement Écologique campaigns for a different form of mobility. Promoting sustainable mobility and public transport is a priority. However, it is also a question of making private cars less attractive (for example, by limiting the number of available parking spaces). This perspective runs through the Mouvement Écologique's various positions and forms the basis of its work.

The same applies to spatial planning and housing policy. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that urban sprawl has not been curbed, that the housing crisis has long since reached dramatic proportions, and that **spatial planning** is more than ever relegated to **the background**. It is essential that spatial planning redefines the framework for housing and mobility policy and no longer merely chases after growth.

Discussions on spatial planning guidelines, on various aspects of housing construction such as the densification of town centres and new housing developments equipped with communal social and green spaces, as well as on the importance of **reducing** land consumption... are issues that feature daily in the Mouvement écologique's agenda.

Where do new housing developments make sense? How can an urban development project be made more sustainable? What does attractive, 'denser' and high-quality construction look like? How can we create **attractive public spaces that offer a good quality of life**? How much 'green' space should be preserved or newly created, and where? These questions, among others, occupied the Mouvement Écologique in 2025.

The Mouvement Écologique is also frequently approached by citizens who need help with construction and development projects in their local area. As a general rule, the Mouvement Écologique does not follow these cases in detail. There are simply too many of them. The main aim is to advise those concerned, with the aim of helping them to help themselves. However, in certain cases, Mouvement Écologique plays an active role, particularly when the matter has particularly significant consequences and there are regional representatives or active members in the local area or region.

LET'S GIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY THE PLACE IT DESERVES!

In the eyes of the general public, environmental policy is often associated with environmental offences, breaches of limit values (particularly regarding air quality) and the 'environmental scandals' that make the headlines.

In this context, particular attention must be paid to **preventive environmental protection**, which aims, on the one hand, to prevent such developments and, on the other, to guarantee citizens a high quality of the environment. Mouvement Ecologique works towards this in its daily activities.

THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GIVES LUXEMBOURG A POOR RATING!

At the end of September, the European Environment Agency published its 2025 report on the state of the environment in the European Union, which, in addition to a general analysis, also includes country-specific chapters on the various EU Member States. The analysis concerning Luxembourg is, unfortunately, rather disappointing: we are far from achieving our sustainability targets in many areas. The Mouvement Écologique has published this report.