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**mouvement**  
**écologique**

## **Google Dossier: Instead of rolling out the red carpet for this company, the government must act in the country's interest!**

As a reminder, Google has been planning to build a data centre in Bissen for many years. For years, water cooling was planned, with Google refusing to publish concrete data. It was said that water consumption would represent around 10-15% of Luxembourg's total water supply, which was considered unacceptable, notably by the Mouvement Écologique.

After years of discussion, Google finally acknowledged this fact. The environmental impact assessment explicitly stated that Luxembourg's water resources would not be sufficient for the full cooling of the data centre. Much time was lost due to this apparent planning failure and lack of transparency.

The situation today is very different from what it was 10 years ago. Luxembourg is subject to new requirements in climate and energy policy, land use ("artificialisation") must be significantly limited according to the Programme directeur de l'aménagement du territoire... and above all, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as the election of Donald Trump, have led to a new assertiveness on the part of the EU. Becoming more independent from international and American corporations — whose practices are sometimes problematic from a data protection perspective — now dominates political discourse. The importance of "digital sovereignty" has gained considerable significance in this context.

It is therefore necessary to take a fresh look at the real added value that the Google project — planned decades ago — actually brings to our country today. How much tax revenue will it generate? How many jobs will be created and in which sectors? After all, the project is to be built on an extremely attractive site (next to one of Creos's most important substations), with the loss of 34 hectares of agricultural land and the sealing of 13 hectares.

**Such a project should, in line with a sustainable and ambitious energy and location policy, be absolutely exemplary and offer very strong added value.**

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Yet beyond these fundamental considerations and the question of whether Google's presence truly adds value for our country, it is incomprehensible why the Luxembourg government — and above all the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of the Economy — are currently failing to ensure that the Google project uses the "best available technique" as required by law. This is demonstrably not the case, as shown by an analysis from the Öko-Institut.

## The facts: the Ministry of the Environment is failing in its role

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- In March 2026, the **public inquiry on the legally required environmental impact assessment** took place. On 23 March 2026, the Mouvement Ecologique filed a 31-page objection highlighting serious shortcomings. The main criticism: the planned data centre is far less efficient than Google's other facilities, energy consumption would be considerable, and the consequences for people and the environment would be highly problematic.

Following the public procedure, the Mouvement Ecologique requested the conclusions drawn by the Ministry of the Environment. These were published on a sub-page of the ministry's website, which is not easy to find. The conclusion, broadly summarised: **virtually none of the suggestions made by the Mouvement Ecologique** — developed in collaboration with foreign experts — **nor those of other stakeholders were taken into account.**

- At the end of June/beginning of July, the **public procedure for the building permit** took place. Unlike many municipalities that make such information available online, the commune of Bissen required a prior appointment with its technical department, to be consulted on-site during regular working hours. This approach is particularly burdensome for working people, who must also wade through hundreds of pages and plans.

The building permit is just one piece of the puzzle in the overall authorisation procedure. From an environmental perspective, it is above all the operating permit (whose procedure is still pending) that is of fundamental importance. And yet: how can a building be planned if the technical installations have not yet been approved? Furthermore, the building permit application makes no mention of heat recovery and associated infrastructure, rooftop surfaces are only to be partially used for photovoltaic panels, and soil sealing is excessive. It goes without saying that the Mouvement Ecologique has also filed a detailed objection in this regard.

- Parallel to these procedures, **the Mouvement Ecologique's lawyer addressed two key legal aspects** of the dossier in a letter to the Ministry of the Environment. These two central points deserve to be highlighted:

### **Google's confidentiality clause is legally inadmissible**

Google invokes a confidentiality clause for commercial reasons. The legal analysis of the Mouvement Ecologique's lawyer is unequivocal: the "confidentiality" of certain data — in particular regarding energy and CO<sub>2</sub> balances — contradicts applicable law. The data in question contains precisely the information that is decisive for the public assessment of the

project from an energy and climate policy perspective: energy requirements, emissions and climate balance calculations. Such data cannot, according to the legal analysis, be classified as a trade secret; it is of considerable public interest.

**Under Luxembourg law, including that relating to access to environmentally relevant information, a confidentiality clause may not be used to withhold from citizens the essential environmental consequences of a project.** This is nonetheless what has happened, as these documents were not made available during the public inquiry. The Mouvement Ecologique therefore demanded the annulment of the public inquiry procedure and the publication of this data, through its lawyer. **The Ministry of the Environment has, however, confirmed this confidentiality for reasons that the Mouvement Ecologique finds incomprehensible... A capitulation before the multinational corporation?**

**The Mouvement Ecologique's lawyer has therefore approached the "commission d'accès aux documents" to request its opinion and to have it, if necessary, prompt the Ministry of the Environment to release the information. This request is recent and no response has yet been received.**

#### **Using waste heat rather than burdening the climate**

According to current plans, Google would release substantial quantities of waste heat into the atmosphere rather than putting it to good use. Modern data centres feed their waste heat into district heating networks, supplying residential areas, public buildings or industrial facilities.

Simply releasing this important energy into the environment — thereby contributing to the climate catastrophe — instead of using it sensibly is absolutely absurd.

Official sources do not dispute that the use of waste heat would be important and sensible. However, they argue that this use cannot be imposed on Google, as Luxembourg does not yet have a heat law that would explicitly regulate this. The Mouvement Ecologique's lawyer disputes this in a letter to the minister: existing legislation does indeed allow such conditions to be imposed under the "best available technique" requirement.

**The Ministry of the Environment did not respond to these arguments in any way.**

## **A new analysis by the Öko-Institut Berlin confirms: Google is far from using the best available technique!**

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In a fact sheet entitled "*Google in Luxembourg – Current Planning and Optimisation Potential in Bissen*", the Öko-Institut — which was actively involved in developing the German Federal Environment Agency's guidelines for sustainable data centres — analyses the situation. The key messages are clear:

## KEY MESSAGES

- The current planning status does not correspond to the state of the art.
- Annual greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by up to 97%.
- Waste heat can supply at least 20,000 residents as well as industry and commerce.
- Battery storage instead of diesel generators can prevent noise and diesel soot emissions.
- Natural refrigerants can replace environmentally harmful forever chemicals (PFAS).
- The use of nuclear power is not an environmentally compatible option.

The report is available in German, English and French at [www.meco.lu](http://www.meco.lu)

## Conclusions: a project fallen out of time...

The role of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of the Economy in this dossier is difficult to understand.

**The role of these ministries is to act in the public interest**, meaning:

- demanding that Google **comply with the best available technique** (as required by applicable law), in the interest of climate protection, forward-looking energy policy, heat supply for neighbouring communities, and protection against noise, air pollution and persistent chemicals;
- working towards **maximum transparency**, publishing all data in accordance with freedom of information legislation, opposing Google's legally highly contested confidentiality clause, and on this basis initiating a new public environmental impact assessment procedure;
- ensuring that **all aspects of the objections are taken into account** in the upcoming public operating permit procedure;
- openly disclosing in full transparency the **real added value of the implantation** of this American company: tax revenues, jobs;
- working within their means to promote **Europe's "digital sovereignty"** and reduce dependence on American and other international corporations;
- making **available land in designated activity zones** primarily accessible to promising companies, including those already established in Luxembourg that need room to grow, rather than to a large American corporation.

**None of this has happened to date!**

**It is incomprehensible that Luxembourg should effectively court a company like Google so that it can develop 34 hectares of valuable land at one of Luxembourg's best industrial sites, without the concrete added value being demonstrated — and this at a time when Europe wants to become less dependent on such companies and to give greater support to European firms.**

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It would be the last straw if the legally required public Commodo-Incommodo procedure — for the granting of the operating permit — were to take place during the summer months! **It is entirely plausible that Google would then submit hundreds of pages as part of the procedure.** The State must do everything possible to prevent such a situation.

**Google was planned over 10 years ago — the project has dragged on partly through its own fault. The Luxembourg government should take into account the fact that the world today is different... and so is the way we look at Google.**

July 9th 2026