

Communities and campaign groups plan Europe-wide action to stop “dirty” data centres

Civil society organisations, citizens and residents groups across Europe are planning actions to “stop dirty data centres” on 6 and 7 November.

Digital rights, environmental and community groups across the continent have joined forces, with 42 groups in ten countries planning mass demonstrations, local actions, public events, book launches and even cycle rides.

Groups from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom have signed up, with more expected to join ahead of the days of action.

The range and creativity of actions being planned reflect the many and varied reasons people oppose the rapid and unchecked expansion of hyperscale data centres.

Data centres are warehouses for computers – large-scale infrastructure facilities that house computer servers used to store and process vast amounts of data. Their rapid expansion, driven in part by growing demand for artificial intelligence, is increasing demand for water, energy and land.

StopDirtyDataCentres.eu is calling for moratoria on large-scale data centres at EU, national and local levels until their wide-ranging environmental, democratic and social impacts have been properly scrutinised.

Campaign groups and local communities are raising concerns about pollution, water and energy use, pressure on local infrastructure, and the overriding of planning rules and local democracy amid local housing shortages and rising energy bills. Campaigners are also highlighting wider concerns linked to the artificial intelligence (AI) these facilities support, including surveillance and privacy, securitisation and militarisation, involvement in severe human rights violations and genocide, and the impact of social media and AI on young people’s mental health.

Campaigners say fundamental questions remain: how many data centres are needed, what they are for, where they should be built, whether their vast resource demands can be met in a climate-constrained world, and how they can benefit local economies and communities.

Owen Espley, Coordinator of [StopDirtyDataCentres.eu](https://stopdirtydatacentres.eu), said:

“Communities across Europe have been challenging the imposition of energy, water and land hungry data centres where they live. By coming together, campaigns facing a David v Goliath struggle against big tech - too often backed by political decision-makers - are showing that they have the power to push back against the rush to build data centres. They are calling for political leaders to implement moratoria on large-scale data centres at European, national and local levels so their concerns can be addressed and the impacts of data centres properly scrutinised.”

Rosi Leonard, Data Centre Campaign Lead at Friends of the Earth Ireland (Ireland), said:

"Big data centre build out is taking a toll on communities in Ireland that we can no longer afford. We are seeing data centres come with massive fossil gas buildout, we are seeing them drive up our bills, we are seeing them divert public spending and clean energy away from climate action and real energy security. We are proud to join with countries across Europe to demand better for our communities, and say no more to Big Tech's power grab."

Niamh Fitzgibbon, Data Centre Awareness Kildare (Ireland), said:

"It's our land, our water, our electricity and our health. Groups everywhere are facing runaway large-scale data centre development. Too often each community fights this alone, but the same issues are showing up everywhere, from Kildare to the rest of the world. Today we're standing together, and if our representatives won't represent us, we'll represent ourselves."

Oliver Hayes, Head of Campaigns at Global Action Plan (UK), said:

“Data centre developers in the UK and Europe want to cash in on the AI goldrush whatever the consequences. But communities everywhere are fighting back. People from inner city London to the rolling hills of Devon are united in their resistance, seeing through Big Tech’s PR machine and calling this what it is - a massive grab of scarce land, water and power resources by Silicon Valley billionaires. With governments failing to answer very basic questions about how many data centres we need, what for, where, and how pollution will be avoided, the only reasonable course of action is an immediate moratorium.”

Lianne Marie Mease, a local campaigner with No Leeds Datacentre Campaign (UK), said:

"Local campaigns across Europe are connected by our desire to protect our local environment, local resources and the health and wellbeing of our neighbours. We will raise our collective voices together on 6 and 7 November to demand our governments press pause on the rush to mass-approve data centres. We'll be on the streets in Leeds demanding the UK government implement a moratorium until there's a proper strategy in place with UK digital sovereignty and our Net Zero commitments at its centre."

Lou Welgryn, Secretary-General of Data for Good (France), said:

"Data centres are ramping up in France in the name of sovereignty. Yet, 91% of them are operated by non-european actors. We are in fact reinforcing our dependency, while developing a trajectory that is incompatible with our climate objectives."

Kat Jones, Director of Action to Protect Rural Scotland (UK), said:

"This day of action has come at the right time for people in Scotland who are desperate to make their voices heard. Only this week a new application came in for a 1000MW data centre, bigger than any operating in the world at the moment in a direct challenge to Scotland's pause on planning decisions. We didn't ask for this, it's time for governments to listen to their people and not to Big Tech."

Sarah Chander, Director of Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice (Europe), said:

"Data centres are a major piece of the puzzle in Europe's wider militarisation moment. With more funding, infrastructure and political will for "sovereign defence" tech - Europe will spend billions on data centre build out. We need a Europe-wide movement to resist this war infrastructure and demand a redistribution of resources to things everyday people need."

Aurora Gómez, Tu Nube Seca Mi Río (Spain), said:

"This data centre industry uses all its centralised power – accumulated through historical colonialism – to steal our most precious resources, such as water. They rob us of the present by offering a promise of a future straight out of science fiction, but one with no basis in reality. The reality is that human beings and ecosystems cannot survive without water; that is why we must stand up as guardians of nature. That is why this moratorium is an opportunity for all of us – the groups affected by AI – to come together and hold the public debate needed to ensure social and climate justice for all."

"Esta industria de los centros de datos utiliza todo su poder centralizado y acumulado por el colonialismo histórico para robarnos nuestros recursos más preciados, como el agua. Nos roban el presente una promesa de futuro asociada a la ciencia ficción, pero sin base real. La realidad es que los seres humanos y los ecosistemas no pueden sobrevivir sin agua, por eso debemos erigirnos como guardianes de la naturaleza. Por eso moratoria es una oportunidad para unirnos todos los colectivos que estamos impactados por la IA, y tener el debate ciudadano necesario para garantizar una justicia social y climática para todos."

Enol Nieto, Spanish Strategic Litigation Group (Spain), said:

"A moratorium on hyperscale data centres offers a respite from the pace imposed by major tech companies. By putting projects on hold, citizens can deliberate and decide what kind of digital infrastructure they want. The aim is to move toward scenarios that are compatible with our lives and with the ecosystems we inhabit."

"La moratoria a los centros de datos hiperescalares supone un respiro a los ritmos impuestos por las grandes tecnológicas, que buscan acumular datos y capital. Partiendo de una pausa a los proyectos, la

ciudadanía puede deliberar y decidir el modelo de infraestructura digital que quiere. El objetivo pasa por dirigirnos hacia escenarios compatibles con nuestras vidas y con los ecosistemas que habitamos.”

Marina Otero, Spanish Strategic Litigation Group (Spain), said:

“We must stop an industry that despite knowing the harms it creates, pursues maximum profits whilst risking the future of the planet.”

“Tenemos que frenar a una industria que, aun conociendo los riesgos que genera, sigue avanzando en busca del máximo beneficio, poniendo en riesgo el futuro del planeta.”

Javier Morán, No es Sequía, es Saqueo (Spain), said:

“There seems to be an inevitability in the way data centres are occupying land and consuming resources throughout the world, we need to stop and reflect if there is a real need for all of this infrastructure, on how it's being developed and by whom. In Aragón we're confronting an amount of data centres that would consume at least more than twice the energy consumed by the whole region last year, this is outrageous.”

“Parece que la expansión de los centros de datos por todo el mundo, ocupando territorio y consumiendo recursos, se presenta como algo inevitable. Necesitamos detenernos y reflexionar sobre si realmente es necesaria toda esta infraestructura, cómo se está desarrollando y quién está detrás de su despliegue. En Aragón nos enfrentamos a una cantidad de centros de datos que consumirían más del doble de la energía consumida por toda la comunidad autónoma el año pasado. Es indignante.”

Agustí Emperador, Ecologistes en Acció (Catalonia), said:

“Data megacentres are not progress; they represent the plundering of the energy resources needed to decarbonise the country. Deploying energy-intensive infrastructure such as AI data centers in a country with such limited renewable energy generation is a crime against the planet, as it inevitably leads to the burning of fossil fuels and the resulting massive emissions, accelerating our path toward climate collapse.”

“Els megacentres de dades no són progrés, son espoli dels recursos energètics necessaris per poder descarbonitzar el país. La implantació d'infraestructures tan energívores com els centres de dades per IA en un país tan pobre en generació d'energia renovable es un crim contra el planeta, perquè té com a conseqüència inevitable la crema de combustibles fòssils i les conseqüents emissions massives, i ens fa avançar més ràpid cap al col·lapse climàtic.”

Fieke Jansen, Critical Infrastructure Lab (Netherlands), said:

“Groups across Europe are coming together to demand a halt to data centre expansion. We are concerned about the growing pressure that data centres are placing on our communities, land, energy grids, and water systems.

“In the Netherlands, much of the available data centre capacity is owned or rented out to a small number of Big Cloud and AI companies, resulting in the export of compute and profits to overseas territories, while local communities bear the environmental and social burden. We demand that people and planet are the first priority of governance, not the interest of cloud and AI companies.”

Christiaan van Veen, Leitmotiv (Netherlands), said:

“The industry likes to paint anyone who is critical about hyperscale expansion as 'cavemen' standing in the way of progress. But asking how much data centre capacity Europe actually needs, who benefits from this expansion, and how it affects our security and climate goals is not 'anti-progress'. In a functioning democracy, citizens get to ultimately shape the future of the digital economy, not be told by tech giants from far away to simply shut up.”

Notes to editors

Spokespeople are available for interview

Photography and video opportunities available

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StopDirtyDataCentres.eu is a growing pan-European coalition of 42 groups campaigning for moratoria on data centres at EU, national and local levels. On 6 and 7 November 2026 groups in ten countries are planning action across Europe to stop dirty data centres. More information, including an up-to-date list of supporting organisations, can be found at stopdirtydatacentres.eu.

Supporting organisations include: An Taisce; APRS Scotland; Ban Data Centres Epping Forest; BOLD Climate Action; Climate Justice Universities Union; Club de Permacomputació de Barcelona; Corporate Europe Observatory; Critical Infrastructure Lab; Data for Good; Devon Data Centre & BESS Action Group; elii [architecture office]; Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice; Extinction Rebellion Bristol; FIBER Festival; FOEDUNDALK; Fossielvrij Netherlands; Friends of the Earth Denmark; Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Friends of the Earth Europe; Friends of the Earth Ireland; Friends of the Earth Scotland; Fundacja "Mission Possible"; Global Action Plan; Green Web Foundation; Greenpeace Germany; GRÜNE LIGA e.V.; Institute for Postnatural Studies; Leitmotiv; London Permacomputing Club; Not Here Not Anywhere; People vs Big Tech; Podemos Fuenlabrada; Privacy Network; Racism and Technology Center; SOMO; Spanish Strategic Litigation Group (Observatorio BOIRA); Stop Datacentre; Stowarzyszenie Aktywnych Sąsiadów SAS; TITiPI (The Institute for Technology in the Public Interest); Tu Nube Seca Mi Río; Waag Futurelab; XR Namur.

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