

The Urgent Case Against Data Centres in Europe

The rapid expansion of data centres across the European Union and worldwide is becoming one of the defining environmental and social challenges of our time. As fossil fuel-driven greenhouse gas emissions push global temperatures towards dangerous levels, underscored by the record-breaking climate extremes of summer 2026, the impacts on food security, water resources and public health are clear.¹

These pressures are particularly acute in regions where data centre development is concentrated. By one estimate, 37% of the world's data centres are in the United States,² with the EU second in data centre capacity. Many EU member states now have projects clustered around major metropolitan and tech hubs.³ At the same time, the EU's continued reliance on imported fossil fuels like expensive liquefied 'natural' gas (LNG)⁴ heightens its exposure to price volatility, geopolitical instability, and energy insecurity.⁵ A European data centre boom could create "new fossil dependencies",⁶ undermining a just and clean energy transition.

The EU has no comprehensive legal framework governing the environmental and economic impacts of data centres. In June 2026, the European Commission proposed the Cloud and AI Development Act as part of its Technology Sovereignty Package.⁷ While intended to strengthen Europe's digital independence (especially from the US), this regulation risks prioritising rapid infrastructure build-out without equivalent environmental safeguards, placing deregulation and industrial growth ahead of climate objectives and the public interest.⁸

As the EU seeks to become a global leader in AI and digital infrastructure, it should also learn from the experience of the US, where the rapid expansion of data centres has fueled growing public opposition over rising energy demand, water consumption, pollution and the concentration of environmental burdens on local communities.⁹ Similar dynamics are emerging across Europe, where the race to attract investment could disproportionately benefit US-based technology companies and investors at the expense of European communities and natural resources.¹⁰

Energy Footprint

Data centres, especially hyperscalers (massive data centres that specialise in providing enormous amounts of computing power), consume a mind-boggling amount of energy. In 2020, data centres globally consumed an estimated 223 terawatt-hours (TWh), equivalent to the electricity used by over 21 million US households. Even so, the International Energy Agency predicts that global data centre energy use will triple from these 2020 levels by 2030, thanks to developments in AI and cryptocurrency.¹¹ In Europe, the proposed Cloud and AI Development Act aims to triple the EU's data centre capacity in the next five to seven years.¹² Even without this aggressive growth plan, the region's data centre energy footprint is projected to exceed 110 TWh annually by 2030.¹³ This is equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of over 70 million EU households.¹⁴

AI technology in particular consumes an incredible amount of energy in every step – from microchip production to running AI programmes.¹⁵ Simple text searches on OpenAI's ChatGPT platform use nearly 10 times as much electricity as a non-AI search on Google.¹⁶ And creating images is thousands of times more energy intensive than text searches, sometimes using as much electricity per image created as it takes to charge your mobile phone.¹⁷

AI servers are increasingly housed in hyperscale data centres that can cover hundreds of hectares of land and consume five times more energy than pre-AI data centres.¹⁸ Just one hyperscale data centre built for AI can consume as much energy as 100,000 households – and the largest as much as 2 million households.¹⁹

In Ireland, which recently became a major data centre hub, energy demand from data centres increased 360% from 2016 to 2026 – now accounting for 23% of the country's power consumption.²⁰ As a result of this data centre boom, Irish households now face the highest electricity prices in the EU, paying €480 more per year than the regional average.²¹ Further, across the EU, households are being urged to use less electricity during peak hours to accommodate the increase in data centre energy demand.²² At the same time, recent draft proposals suggest that the EU may be loosening regulations around renewable energy certificates for data centres, making it easier for these facilities to skirt already insufficient renewable offset requirements.²³

New Driver of Fossil Gas Demand

As AI-driven data centres multiply, governments and the fossil fuel industry are increasingly turning to fossil gas to meet soaring electricity demand. In the US, where fossil gas already supplies over 40% of data centre power,²⁴ the Trump administration has openly promoted fossil fuel-powered AI.²⁵

Across Europe, data centres face long delays in grid connections, a potential roadblock to the build-out.²⁶ However, Big Tech is finding ways to circumvent these concerns. In the United Kingdom, developers are increasingly pursuing off-grid, gas-fired facilities.²⁷ This risks locking the EU into continued LNG imports, particularly from the US, whose LNG exports to Europe more than tripled from 2021 to 2025.²⁸ Powering Europe's data centre boom with fossil gas could entrench dependence on highly unreliable, polluting, and expensive LNG imports²⁹ just as the EU is implementing its Methane Regulation, which introduces increasingly stringent methane emissions requirements for imported gas.³⁰ It would also risk pushing the EU's climate goals even further out of reach.³¹ According to a recent survey spanning multiple EU countries, nearly two-thirds of respondents oppose constructing data centres running on fossil fuels.³²

Increased Air Pollution

Data centres rely on back-up generators more than any other type of development, with some housing hundreds of generators.³³ Diesel generators emit harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NO_x) at levels 200 to 600 times higher per unit of electricity produced compared to newer gas plants.³⁴ NO_x, along with additional hazardous air pollutants like carbon monoxide and particulate matter, contribute to smog and exacerbate childhood asthma cases and elderly cognitive decline.³⁵

Marseille and the proliferation of data centres

In Marseille, France, one of Europe's major digital connectivity hubs, the rapid growth of data centres illustrates the sector's wider environmental footprint. Over the past decade, the city has become the world's sixth-largest data traffic hub, driving a significant expansion of data centre infrastructure, particularly around the port area. This development is taking place in a city already affected by severe air pollution from port and industrial activities. Investigations have shown that data centres are linked to continued leaks of fluorinated gases, which are highly potent and long-lived greenhouse gases.³⁶

Water Impacts

Water is another resource under threat from the data centre boom. Global data centre water consumption more than tripled between 2014 and 2023.³⁷ In Europe, data centre water use is projected to rise from 0.93 trillion litres in 2026 to 1.79 trillion litres by 2031, a 92% increase.³⁸

Data centres rely heavily on fresh water for cooling energy-intensive computing equipment, with much of this water lost through evaporation rather than returned to local water systems.³⁹ Data centres need clean, treated water to prevent mineral blockages and bacterial growth,⁴⁰ limiting opportunities for re-use.⁴¹ In 2024, only 21% of water used in Google's data centres was discharged back into the environment.⁴²

Industry claims suggesting that closed-loop cooling systems "consume zero water"⁴³ are misleading. While these systems can reduce water withdrawals, they still rely on either air cooling or evaporation and can lose significant volumes of water over time.⁴⁴ Closed-loop systems also require chemicals to prevent corrosion and bacterial growth, which can create water quality concerns when systems are flushed.⁴⁵ Finally, closed-loop systems that rely on air cooling end up consuming more energy as a trade-off, especially in hot climates.⁴⁶

Moreover, the direct water use of data centres represents only part of their overall water footprint. Much of the water impact occurs upstream through electricity generation, particularly where facilities rely on water-intensive energy sources. Natural gas and nuclear power generation consume enormous amounts of water – around 600 and 2,000 times more water per megawatt-hour, respectively, compared to wind power.⁴⁷

The European Environment Agency warns that the EU's water resources are already under "severe pressure", with one-third of the region's population and land affected by water stress.⁴⁸ Yet transparency remains limited: the European Commission recently proposed rules that restrict public access to information on specific data centres' operational information, reportedly using wording proposed by Microsoft in the drafting process.⁴⁹

From the Netherlands to Spain: water consumption and the growing opposition to data centres

Communities across Europe are increasingly pushing back on new data centre development over concerns about water competition and resource use.

The Netherlands provides one of the clearest examples of this growing resistance, with civil society organisations recently launching a petition calling for a halt to the construction of all data centres in the country until full transparency is achieved regarding their energy and water use.⁵⁰ This growing concern is reflected in several cases nationwide.

In Zeewolde, sustained public and political opposition ultimately led to the cancellation of Meta's planned hyperscale data centre. Main concerns focused on the "heavy burden on energy supplies, fertile agricultural land and scarce freshwater supplies".⁵¹ Subsequent events reinforced these concerns. Elsewhere in the Netherlands, investigative reporting revealed that a Microsoft data centre vastly underestimated and underreported its water footprint. Although residents had been informed that the facility would consume relatively modest volumes of water, the company used over 83 million litres of water in 2021, more than four times the amount originally communicated by Microsoft and local authorities.⁵²

Similar concerns have emerged in Ireland, where the lack of transparent reporting has complicated efforts to assess the sector's true environmental cost. Irish Water estimated in 2021 that all data centres in the country consumed around 810 megalitres per year. Meta alone, however, reported that its data centres used 928 megalitres, highlighting the lack of transparency in data centre resource use.⁵³ Since then, water demand from the sector has continued to grow. In 2026, data centres in Ireland consume an estimated five megalitres of public water per day, equivalent to 1,745 megalitres annually.⁵⁴ These figures have become increasingly contentious as the country faces recurring water shortages.⁵⁵ During a recent "hosepipe ban", households in Ireland were asked to limit water use to essential purposes, while data centres were not put under any restrictions.⁵⁶

In Spain, concerns over water competition have become particularly acute in regions already experiencing severe drought.⁵⁷ In Aragón, where Amazon is seeking to transform the region into one of its largest computing hubs outside the US, several civil society organisations have filed a lawsuit targeting the company's expansion plans.⁵⁸ Concerns have arisen that the additional facilities would compete with agriculture for increasingly scarce freshwater resources needed by local communities and agriculture.⁵⁹

The Data Centre Boom: Concentrating Wealth and Power

The rapid AI rollout is being driven by expectations of future demand rather than by proven profitability. In the US alone, investment in data centres and related software accounted for nearly all the growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in the first half of 2025, while analysts estimate that meeting projected AI computing needs will require trillions of dollars in additional capital investments by 2030.⁶⁰

These trends have raised growing concerns that the AI sector is exhibiting characteristics of a speculative investment bubble, echoing previous technology-driven financial booms as well as the 2008 financial crash.⁶¹

While much of this investment originates in the US, its consequences are increasingly shaping digital infrastructure strategies worldwide, including in Europe. The continent's data centre expansion risks further concentrating wealth and market power in the hands of a small number of predominately US-based technology companies and investors. As of 2025, three US tech companies (Amazon, Microsoft, and Google) now control over 70% of the European cloud market, while the two largest European providers account for only 4% according to Synergy data,⁶² highlighting the EU's continued dependence on foreign digital infrastructure. Despite being framed as a pathway to European digital sovereignty, much of the planned infrastructure is expected to be financed by US capital and built to serve the computing needs of US tech behemoths.⁶³

This dependency extends beyond cloud infrastructure to the underlying technologies powering the AI boom. The European Commission's plans to invest €20 billion in new AI gigafactories aim to strengthen Europe's computing capacity, yet many analysts warn that such investments risk reinforcing reliance on US technology providers, particularly given chipmaker Nvidia's dominant position in the supply of advanced graphics processing units.⁶⁴

Aiding the tech oligarchy

In the end, the public bears the cost so that major tech companies can seek even more riches and further consolidate the market. This concentration of wealth is closely linked to the structure of the data centre market itself. Meta raked in record-high revenue and profit in the last quarter of 2025 – \$59.9 billion and \$22.8 billion, respectively.⁶⁵ Microsoft saw final quarter profits increase by 60% between 2024 and 2025.⁶⁶ In 2025, Nvidia, Microsoft, Apple, Alphabet (Google) and Amazon were the top five companies in the S&P 500 Index, making up nearly 30% of the entire index.⁶⁷

We Need a Moratorium on New and Expanding Data Centres

The harms caused by AI data centres cannot be resolved with piecemeal measures or vague promises from AI enthusiasts of a utopian future. While local restrictions have emerged in overstretched hubs such as Amsterdam,⁶⁸ Europe urgently needs a coherent EU-wide framework that puts people, climate and energy security before the interests of Big Tech.

Following the example set by our colleagues at Food & Water Watch, **we call for an immediate EU-wide moratorium on large data centres** until there is full transparency on their necessity, beneficiaries, energy needs, and social and environmental impacts. Before approving further expansion, the EU must demonstrate how data centre growth aligns with legally binding climate commitments, supports the deployment of new renewable energy and protects households from rising energy costs.

Europe's digital future must be shaped by the public interest and genuine societal needs, not by unchecked data centre expansion.

Endnotes

- 1 Lex Harvey, "Western Europe Breaks Temperature Record in Summer Plagued by Heatwaves and Wildfires," *CNN*, August 10, 2026; Hoesung Lee et al., *Climate Change 2023: AR6 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers* (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2023), 4–6.
- 2 Carla D. Walker and Ian Goldsmith, "From Energy Use to Air Quality, the Many Ways Data Centers Affect US Communities," World Resources Institute, February 17, 2026.
- 3 Servet Yanatma, "Which Country in Europe Has the Most Data Centres Driving the AI Boom?" *Euronews*, April 27, 2026.
- 4 Nora Buli, "Europe Set for Another Year of High Gas Prices as Reserves Hit Lows," *Reuters*, October 12, 2026.
- 5 Frank Elderson, "Europe's Fossil Fuel Dependence Poses Risks to Price Stability," *ECB Blog*, April 7, 2026.
- 6 Théophane Hartmann, "EU's AI Compute Build-Out Could Raise Energy Risk, Warns Think Tank," *Euractiv*, July 28, 2026.
- 7 European Commission, "Commission Proposes Tech Sovereignty Package to Strengthen Europe's Digital Autonomy and Resilience," news release, June 3, 2026.
- 8 Fieke Jansen et al., "Why the EU Commission's Plan for an AI Data-Centres Boom Is Short-Sighted," opinion, *EUobserver*, March 16, 2026; Elena Giordano, "Europe Must Choose Between AI and Climate Goals, Data Center Lobby Says," *Politico Europe*, June 17, 2026.
- 9 *The Urgent Case Against Data Centers* (Food & Water Watch, 2026), 3–6, 8–9, 13–14; Matt Loffman, "Voters Don't Like Data Centers. They Really Don't Like Them Close to Home," *PBS*, September 23, 2026.
- 10 Misa Norigami and Margarida Silva, "EU's Data Centre Expansion Will Fast-Track Profits and Power for US Big Tech and Investors," Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, July 14, 2026.
- 11 Dmitry Romanov et al., "Comparative Analysis of Scenarios of Data Center Waste Heat Utilization for District Heating Networks of Different Generations," *Energy Conservation and Management* 334 (2025): 1–2; "Electricity Consumption in US Homes Varies by Region and Type of Home," US Energy Information Administration, updated December 18, 2023, <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/use-of-energy/electricity-use-in-homes.php>.
- 12 European Commission, "Cloud and AI Development Act," June 3, 2026, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/policies/cloud-and-ai-development-act>.
- 13 European Commission, "In Focus: Data Centres: An Energy-Hungry Challenge," November 17, 2025, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/news/focus-data-centres-energy-hungry-challenge-2025-11-17_en.
- 14 "Electricity and Heat Statistics," Eurostat, updated September 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Electricity_and_heat_statistics.
- 15 Marcello Ruberti, "The Chip Manufacturing Industry: Environmental Impacts and Eco-Efficiency Analysis," *Science of the Total Environment* 858 (2023): highlights, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.159873>.
- 16 Evan Halper and Caroline O'Donovan, "AI Is Exhausting the Power Grid. Tech Firms Are Seeking a Miracle Solution," *Washington Post*, June 21, 2024.
- 17 Casey Crownhart, "AI Is an Energy Hog. This Is What It Means for Climate Change," *MIT Technology Review*, May 23, 2024.
- 18 Arman Shehabi et al., *2024 United States Data Center Energy Usage Report*, LBNL-2001637 (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, 2024), 37; Adam Barth et al., "The Data Center Balance: How US States Can Navigate the Opportunities and Challenges," McKinsey & Company, August 8, 2025; Felicity Barringer, "Thirsty for Power and Water, AI-Crunching Data Centers Sprout Across the West," Bill Lane Center for the American West, Stanford University, April 8, 2025.
- 19 *Energy and AI* (International Energy Agency, 2025), 13.
- 20 Benedict Collins, "Ireland's Data Center Electricity Consumption Rises 360% in Ten Years, and Is Set to Account for as Much Power as Every Home Combined – 23% of National Power Sent to Servers Despite Moratorium on New Data Center Grid Connections," *TechRadar*, July 13, 2026.
- 21 Collins, "Ireland's Data Center Electricity Consumption."
- 22 James Fernyhough, "EU Wants Households to Cut Peak Time Energy Use as Demand from Industry and AI Soars," *Politico Europe*, June 3, 2026.
- 23 Kenza Bryan and Ian Johnston, "EU Weighs Weaker Data Centre Climate Rules in Win for Big Tech," *Financial Times*, July 2, 2026.
- 24 Zlata Sergeeva, *Hungry AI: What Data Center Growth Means for Natural Gas Demand by 2030*, KS-2026-II02 (Kapsarc, 2026), 8.
- 25 Jennifer Dlouhy and Stephanie Lai, "Trump Hails \$92 Billion in Investments for AI, Energy Projects," *Bloomberg*, July 15, 2025.
- 26 Kate Abnett, "Power Grid Delays Challenge Amazon's Data Center Expansion in Europe," *Reuters*, February 3, 2026.
- 27 Emily Gosden, "UK Electricity Grid Delays Push Data Centres Towards Gas," *Times*, April 28, 2025.
- 28 Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, "European LNG Tracker," news release, May 2026.
- 29 Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis, "European LNG Tracker;" Oil Change International, "Pay, Baby, Pay: Trump's AI and Energy Dominance Agenda Means Costlier LNG for Europe," October 7, 2026; *LNG: The U.S. and EU's Deal for Disaster* (Food & Water Watch, 2022).
- 30 Selina Roman-White, "AI Data Centers, EU Methane Regulation, and the Future of U.S. Differentiated Natural Gas," *SLR*, June 2, 2026.

- 31 Jill McArdle and Pierre Terras, *System Overload: How New Data Centres Could Throw Europe's Energy Transition Off Course* (Beyond Fossil Fuels, 2025), 14–16, 23.
- 32 Savanta, "Majority of Europeans Polled Want Rules to Limit New Data Centre Impacts on Energy, Water and Economy," prepared for Beyond Fossil Fuels et al., September 11–30, 2025, 3, https://beyondfossilfuels.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Summary_Data_Centre_Poll_Europe.pdf.
- 33 *Data Centers in Virginia* (Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission, Commonwealth of Virginia, 2024), 58–59, <https://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt598.pdf>; Lauren Hines-Acosta, "Potential for More Air Pollution from Data Centers Causes Concern in Virginia," *Bay Journal*, December 10, 2025.
- 34 Yuelin Han et al., "The Unpaid Toll: Quantifying and Addressing the Public Health Impact of Data Centers," *ArXiv* (2024): 4, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2412.06288>.
- 35 *Data Centers in Virginia*, 58; Ruijing Ni et al., "Long-Term Exposure to PM2.5 Has Significant Adverse Effects on Childhood and Adult Asthma: A Global Meta-Analysis and Health Impact Assessment," *One Earth* 7 (2024): 1959, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2024.09.022>; Caridad Lopez-Granero et al., "Particulate Matter in Human Elderly: Higher Susceptibility to Cognitive Decline and Age-Related Diseases," *Biomolecules* 14, no. 35 (2023): 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/biom14010035>; Brian M. Gentry et al., "Marginal Asthma Prevalence from NOx Emissions (MANE): A Model to Predict Pediatric Asthma Burden from Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides," *Environmental Science & Technology* 59 (2025): 10347, 10353–54, <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.4c09012>; Dylan Wood et al., "Exposure to Ambient Air Pollution and Cognitive Function: An Analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing Cohort," *Environmental Health* 23, no. 35 (2024): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-024-01075-1>.
- 36 Siam Spencer, "Digital Boom Makes Marseille a Global Data Hub – but at What Cost?" *RFI*, April 20, 2025; "Investigation: In Marseille as Elsewhere, Digital Infrastructures Are Taking Over the Territory," *La Quadrature du Net*, January 6, 2025, <https://www.laquadrature.net/en/2025/01/06/investigation-in-marseille-as-elsewhere-digital-infrastructures-are-taking-over-the-territory>; "Fluorinated Gas Emissions," US Environmental Protection Agency, updated March 10, 2026, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/fluorinated-gas-emissions>.
- 37 Shehabi et al., *2024 Data Center Report*, 55.
- 38 *Europe Data Center Water Consumption Market Size and Share* (Mordor Intelligence, 2026), <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/europe-data-center-water-consumption-market>.
- 39 Pengfei Li et al., "Making AI Less 'Thirsty': Uncovering and Addressing the Secret Water Footprint of AI Models," *Communications of the ACM* 68, no. 7 (2025): 1, 3, <https://doi.org/10.1145/3724499>; Alexander Marchall, "How Much Does AI Pollute and Why? The Environmental Impact on Water, Energy and CO2 Consumption," *Journal*, September 25, 2024.
- 40 Manuel G. Pascual, "Artificial Intelligence Guzzles Billions of Liters of Water," *El Pais*, November 15, 2023.
- 41 Li et al., "Secret Water Footprint of AI," 3; Marchall, "How Much Does AI Pollute."
- 42 *Environmental Report* (Google, 2025), 110.
- 43 Ben Craske, "How Are Data Centres Shifting to Zero-Water Cooling Tech?" *Data Centre Magazine*, July 22, 2025; Steve Solomon, "Sustainable by Design: Next-Generation Datacenters Consume Zero Water for Cooling," Microsoft, December 9, 2024; "Breaking Ground on Our New AI-Optimized Data Center in El Paso," Meta, October 15, 2025; Pradeep Vincent and Ram Nagappan, "First Principles: Data Center Innovations to Power Gigawatt Scale Superclusters," Oracle Cloud Infrastructure Blog, October 14, 2025.
- 44 Sophy M. Laughing and Bo Erik Gustav Hollsten Ruvalcaba, *No, AI Doesn't Drink a Bottle of Water per Prompt: The Engineering Reality of AI Infrastructure* (Cobeal Group, 2026), 6–7; National Institutes of Health, "Closed-Loop Systems Water Treatment," *Technical Bulletin*, no. 135 (August 2023), 1.
- 45 Martin C. Offutt et al., *Data Centers and Their Energy Consumption: Frequently Asked Questions*, R48646 (Congressional Research Service, 2026), 8; Ganesh Hedge, "Closed-Loop Cooling: Water Saver or Chemical Time Bomb?" KETOS, June 11, 2025; "Chapter 32: Closed Recirculating Cooling Systems," in *Handbook of Industrial Water Treatment* (Veolia, n.d.), <https://www.watertechnologies.com/handbook/handbook-industrial-water-treatment>.
- 46 Laughing and Hollsten Ruvalcaba, *Engineering Reality of AI Infrastructure*, 9.
- 47 Andrew J. Kondash et al., "Quantification of the Water-Use Reduction Associated with the Transition from Coal to Natural Gas in the US Electricity Sector," *Environmental Research Letters* 14 (2019): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ab4d71>.
- 48 European Environment Agency, "State of Europe's Environment Not Good: Threats to Nature and Impacts of Climate Change Top Challenges," news release, September 28, 2025.
- 49 Marta Pacheco, "MEPs Accuse EU of Copy-Pasting Microsoft Lobbying into Data Centre Law," *Euronews*, May 27, 2026.
- 50 "Stop Nieuwe Datacenters," Fossielvrij NL, accessed August 12, 2026, <https://fossielvrij.nl/stop-datacenters>.
- 51 Tracy Brown Hamilton, "In a Small Dutch Town, a Fight with Meta over a Massive Data Center," *Washington Post*, June 1, 2022; Sebastian Moss, "Facebook Parent Meta Officially Kills Zeewolde Data Center After Pushback in the Netherlands," *Data Center Dynamics*, July 1, 2022.
- 52 Geert Van der Klugt, "Microsoft Data Center Guzzles Scarce Water Supply Amidst Heatwave," *Techzine Europe*, August 11, 2022.
- 53 Lois Kapila, "Does Irish Water Even Know How Much Water Data Centres Are Using?" *Dublin Inquirer*, June 26, 2026.

- 54 Maeve McTaggart, "Data Centres Now Using Almost Five Million Litres of Public Water Per Day," *Irish Independent*, July 18, 2026.
- 55 David MacRedmond, "The Hosepipe Ban Has Led to Criticism of Ireland's Data Centres, but How Much Water Do They Use?" *Journal*, July 15, 2026.
- 56 MacRedmond, "The Hosepipe Ban."
- 57 Sergi Sabater et al., "Water Scarcity Challenges Water Security: A Case for Spain's Freshwater Ecosystems," *Environmental Research Letters* 20 (2025): abstract, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/adfbfc>.
- 58 Pablo Jimenez Arandia et al., "Litigating the Boom: Taking the Data Center Fight to the Courts," Environmental Reporting Collective, March 2, 2026.
- 59 Luke Barratt, "Revealed: Big Tech's New Datacentres Will Take Water from the World's Driest Areas," *Guardian* (US), April 9, 2025.
- 60 Nick Lichtenberg, "Without Data Centers, GDP Growth Was 0.1% in the First Half of 2025, Harvard Economist Says," *Fortune*, October 7, 2025; McKinsey & Company, "The Cost of Compute: A \$7 Trillion Race to Scale Data Centers," April 28, 2025; Paula Seligson, "The \$3 Trillion AI Data Center Build-Out Becomes All-Consuming for Debt Markets," *Bloomberg*, February 2, 2026.
- 61 Jefferey A. Sonnenfeld and Stephen Henriques, "This Is How the AI Bubble Bursts," *Yale Insights*, October 8, 2025; Roge Karma, "Something Ominous Is Happening in the AI Economy," *Atlantic*, December 10, 2025.
- 62 Kai Nicol-Schwarz, "These Four Charts Show How Reliant Europe Is on U.S. Digital Infrastructure," *CNBC*, February 13, 2026.
- 63 Norigami and Silva, "EU's Data Centre Expansion."
- 64 Peter Haeck, "EU Accused of Wasting €20B on AI Computing Dreams," *Politico Europe*, May 4, 2026.
- 65 Meta Platforms, Inc., "Meta Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2025 Results," news release, January 28, 2026; Todd Spangler, "Meta Rakes in Record Revenue and Profits for Q4, Details Massive AI Investments for 2026," *Variety*, January 28, 2026.
- 66 Microsoft, Inc. US Securities and Exchange Commission Form 10-Q, Commission File No. 001-37845, FY ended December 31, 2025, 3.
- 67 Charlotte Morabito, "The S&P 500 Is More Concentrated with AI Than Ever. Here's How to Manage Your Risk," *CNBC*, October 22, 2025.
- 68 "Where Are Authorities Restricting Data Centres Amid AI Boom?" *Reuters*, July 14, 2026.