Fast-tracking Big Tech Power: How the tech industry is driving EU data centre policy

Responses to our analysis

In preparation to the article Fast-tracking Big Tech Power SOMO and Corporate Europe Observatory invited Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Siemens, Schneider Electric, the OVH Groupe, Deutsche Telekom, Equinix, QTS Data Centers, the European Data Centre Association (EUDCA), and the European Commission to respond to the findings. Where relevant, excerpts from their responses are included in the article and other adjustments were made based on the input received

You can find the full replies below, except where respondents asked us not to.

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Amazon

Thank you for reaching out. On record, please see below a statement that addresses your overall questions:

"Since 2010, Amazon has invested more than €270 billion across the European Union, and we now employ more than 150,000 people to serve our customers and support over 100,000 EU-based small businesses selling on Amazon. Amazon engages on issues that are important to our customers, sellers, and the diverse range of businesses we operate. This means we work with organisations like trade associations, communicate with officials at the European institutions, and submit public consultation responses. We update our entry in the EU Transparency Register in line with the guidelines." - an Amazon spokesperson

European Commission

- *First, the Commission is committed to inclusive and open stakeholder engagement. In the context of CADA, it has* ***engaged with civil society organisations, public authorities, researchers, and think tanks*** *throughout the preparation of the initiative, and since its adoption. As part of the study that supported the evidence base for CADA, two dedicated stakeholder workshops brought together representatives of national ministries and public authorities, universities and research institutions, independent think tanks, industry representatives and civil society organisations, including environmental organisations specifically focused on the territorial, water and energy impacts of data centre development. The participation records include BEUC, Beyond Fossil Fuels, European Digital Rights, ClientEarth, Open Markets Institute, OpenForum Europe, The Data Tank and Tu Nube Seca Mi Río, as well as academic and research institutions and public authorities from across Europe. Another full-day roundtable with more than 20 think tanks, academics and researchers, including SOMO, was recently organised.*

- *The figures presented on stakeholder engagement do not indicate which Commission services, meetings or policy initiatives they cover.* ***Registered meetings with interest representatives considered in your analysis do not provide a representative picture of all stakeholder engagement activities****. For example, meetings with public authorities, such as those with representatives from Member States, regions or cities impacted by data centre deployment, are not covered by the Transparency register. As a result, the methodology does not reflect these critical engagements.*

- *The Commission remains fully open to further engagement with stakeholders, including SOMO. To our knowledge, the Commission has never received a request for a bilateral meeting from SOMO.*

- *Second, the Commission is aware of lobbying campaigns, notably by large non-EU technology companies. In particular, the Commission's Better Regulation Toolbox clearly warns against treating public consultation responses as statistically representative, as they may be influenced by participation biases and coordinated influence campaigns. The consultation results are thus one source of evidence among many. Policy options were assessed against the available evidence, identified market failures and the wider public interest and policy objectives.*

- *Third, **on the substance of CADA**, several of the statements about the CADA provisions require correction:*
  *• **Environmental permitting**: Article 13(5) sets a 12-month maximum for the overall permit-granting procedure within acceleration zones, not a separate deadline for environmental authorisations. Article 13(3) clearly requires **all applicable environmental assessments at zone level before an aggregated baseline permit can be issued.***
  The acceleration framework does not remove existing environmental safeguards.
  *• Strategic projects: The proposal distinguishes between the treatment of projects in acceleration zones and the separate designation of strategic projects by the Commission (Article 14). Strategic projects must be selected through open calls and must meet at least two of the defined c**riteria relating to public interest, sustainability, innovation, energy systems, European technological supply chains or regional compute shortages.***
  These two mechanisms are distinct and should not be confused.
  *• **Sustainability requirements:** Article 11(1) requires Member States to use the EU's harmonised sustainability indicators when setting requirements in acceleration zones. This will allow for acceleration zone comparability and improved public scrutiny among local practices.*

- *For these reasons, the proposal should not be seen simply as a tool to facilitate data centre expansion. It links capacity development with environmental sustainability, innovation, technological autonomy and the strengthening of the European cloud ecosystem. More broadly, describing CADA as mainly reflecting industry demands ignores key provisions on the public interest, environmental sustainability, and competition. Article 7 requires Member States to develop national cloud and AI strategies, including m**easures to support data centre capacity with significant economic and societal benefits and high environmental and energy-efficiency standards.** Article 11(2) explicitly **requires fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory access to resources** in acceleration zones and introduces safeguards against speculative reservation and foreclosure practices that could harm competition. These provisions, together with the criteria for identifying strategic projects, are directly relevant to the concerns raised in the analysis and should be reflected.*

- *Finally, the EU data centre sustainability rating scheme is a separate initiative under the Energy Efficiency Directive and should not be confused with CADA or presented as a direct result of lobbying on that proposal.*

European Data Centre Association (EUDCA)

EUDCA Reply to Draft Findings by the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations and Corporate Europe Observatory on Lobbying around the Cloud and AI Development Act

About EUDCA

The European Data Centre Association (EUDCA) was established in 2012 and represents the

European data centre operator community, together with equipment manufacturers, consultants and national trade associations.

Our purpose is to enable a dynamic, responsible European digital economy that serves the public interest. Our vision is to bring stakeholders in the digital infrastructure community, including businesses, academics and the public, together to inform and help shape Europe's future. Our mission is to help build a strong European digital industry and to engage EU policymakers in creating future-ready regulations that support innovation and investment, while setting clear standards, and proving our impact with real data and driving sustainability and social value.

EUDCA is a committed partner of the EU institutions. We take part in EU policymaking openly and offer operational expertise and evidence so that rules are practical, measurable and effective. For us, innovation and sustainability go hand in hand: data centre operators and trade associations built the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact in support of the European Green Deal.

We respond to the Corporate Europe Observatory statements below in this spirit and welcome dialogue to offer our advice or further clarification about EUDCA's participation in EU debates and policymaking.

Finding: The EUDCA's lobbying echoed the messages of its US hyperscaler members, especially when it came to advocating for easier permitting and fast-tracking projects. The association further defended that these incentives should also cover investments from outside the EU.

- EUDCA is a European industry association with a strong European membership base. More than 70% of our current 98 members are headquartered in Europe, including a network of 22 national trade associations representing data centre ecosystems across the continent.
- EUDCA's advocacy for a more supportive and efficient regulatory framework for data centre development *predates* the membership of US hyperscaler members, which first joined the association in 2025–2026.
- The EUDCA's 2024–2029 policy manifesto – published in 2024 - already called for greater regulatory certainty, the removal of unnecessary administrative burdens and workable rules that attract investment in Europe's digital infrastructure while advancing sustainability objectives.
- Since then, the EUDCA has consistently advocated that predictable permitting and high sustainability standards go hand in hand.
- Our policy positions are developed through established governance, providing opportunities for members across all membership categories to contribute their views and expertise. The EUDCA builds its positions through member consultation and consensus-building processes, reflecting the collective priorities of our diverse membership. Its mandate is to represent the wider European data centre ecosystem and contribute to policies that support its sustainable development and competitiveness in Europe.

  Requested clarification: EUDCA's positions are set collectively by its European and international members. The similarity between certain EUDCA policy positions and those of individual US-based members should not be presented as evidence that those

members determined EUDCA's positions, particularly where those positions demonstrably predate their membership.

Finding: The European Data Center Association (EUDCA) was one of the most active entities that sought to influence the development of data centre policies at EU level. Our research shows that between the start of the second Von Der Leyen Commission and the publication of the CADA proposal, the EUDCA held at least 13 meetings with high level Commission officials on this issue.

- The EU Cloud and AI Development Act is a strategically important legislative initiative for the future of Europe's digital infrastructure, competitiveness and sustainability. Transparent consultation with representative bodies is a normal and valuable part of EU policymaking. As the European association representing the data centre sector, EUDCA engages with EU institutions on policies directly affecting its members and the wider industry.
- EUDCA's engagement with the European Commission is publicly documented through the EU Transparency Register. **The meetings referred to were open, declared and wide-ranging across a number of policy issues,** including energy, grid integration and sustainability, and not all of them concerned CADA.
- Our engagement aims to provide policymakers with technical expertise, operational experience and evidence of the practical implications of proposed legislation, to help the EUDCA act as a partner to the EU institutions and to ensure the understanding of infrastructure development, energy systems and sustainability challenges.

Requested clarification: It is inaccurate to present every meeting on data centre policy as relating to CADA, as our meetings with the EU institutions cover a wide range of EU policy initiatives, such as energy, grid integration and sustainability.

Finding: In June the chief of the European Data Centre Association publicly stated that the EU must prioritise AI over its climate ambitions, arguing that the EU must allow data centres to power their data centres with fossil fuels like gas.

- This does not reflect EUDCA's position. For accuracy, EUDCA's Board President Lex Coors did not state that AI should take precedence over the EU's climate ambitions.
- As per our public statement of 1 July 2026: https://www.eudca.org/blog/our-news-2/european-data-centre-association-reaffirms-its-commitment-to-a-sustainable-europe-24, the EUDCA has consistently maintained that Europe's digital competitiveness and climate ambitions ***must advance together***. It reiterates our commitment to climate-neutral, grid-integrated data centres, the elimination of operational emissions and the industry's ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2030.
- EUDCA also co-founded the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact and, in June 2026, joined the European Commission and energy-sector partners in signing a Declaration of Intent on the sustainable integration of data centres into Europe's energy system.

Requested clarification: This statement is not accurate and does not represent the EUDCA position. The claim that EUDCA advocates prioritising AI over climate objectives should not be presented as an established fact.

Finding: This was also the message the association was passing on to policy-makers behind closed doors. In October 2025, EUDCA lobbyists met with DG ENER and "noted the challenge of tripling the existing data centre capacity in the next five years, while meeting sustainability objectives" They then went on to discuss the "difficulties they have with certain indicators" on the rating scheme and minimum performance standards for data centres.

- **The EUDCA does not accept the suggestion that EUDCA was advocating behind closed doors for prioritising AI development over sustainability objectives**. Its message to the **Commission in meetings is the same as in public: digital growth and sustainability must advance together.**
- EUDCA's engagement with the Commission has **consistently focused on reconciling Europe's digital infrastructure ambitions with its sustainability objectives**, identifying practical challenges and promoting collaborative solutions.

Finding: In April 2026, its lobbyists met with DG ENER and opposed "mandated solutions (e.g. for onsite generation and for flexibility). The Commission officials agreed and stated that the approach would remain "voluntary, non-binding".

- EUDCA's position on this matter is clear and public: well-designed solutions deliver more than blanket mandates, which raise significant technical, contractual, permitting and environmental constraints.
- SOMO's characterisation **overlooks the specific context of this exchange with the Commission, which concerned the ongoing tripartite framework** for the sustainable integration of data centres into the electricity system, subsequently formalised through the co-signed Declaration of Intent.
- **EUDCA actively engaged in the tripartite initiative from the outset, in the spirit of voluntary cooperation and constructive dialogue**, with the objective of identifying practical solutions for the sustainable integration of data centres into the electricity
  system. The purpose of EUDCA's engagement with the Commission was to advocate for the voluntary, collaborative and evidence-based nature of the initiative, ensuring that it **translates** shared objectives into practical, achievable and proportionate solutions **reflecting** operational realities.

Finding: The EUDCA also publicly opposed developments with the EU's data centre rating scheme which it claimed would have "unintended consequences of which could damage Europe's competition and growth agendas in the digital era". One of its policy focus was the new requirements for Guarantees of Origin (Gos). The draft proposal stated that such schemes would only be accounted for if they originated from the same region and in the same time period.

- The quotation cited is not attributable to the EUDCA. It appears to derive from a Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact statement of 7 May 2026, which says the sector is "fully supportive of efficiency ratings for data centres" and is "not trying to advocate for lower targets".
- The interpretation of this statement as opposition to the EU Data Centre Rating Scheme is misleading and does not reflect EUDCA's position nor the CNDCP's. EUDCA has consistently supported the establishment of a harmonised EU sustainability rating scheme to improve transparency, comparability and

environmental performance across the sector. Its recommendations sought to strengthen the proposed methodology and ensure that the scheme is fair, technically feasible and consistent with existing EU legislation.
- EUDCA explicitly supported recognising advanced hourly or sub-hourly renewable energy matching when available as a voluntary sustainability indicator within the rating scheme. Its objective was to encourage ambitious renewable energy procurement while preserving a coherent EU regulatory framework and ensuring that sustainability requirements deliver measurable environmental benefits.

In Summary: EUDCA's engagement is open, evidence-based and aimed at making Europe's digital and sustainability ambitions work together.

Microsoft

Microsoft engages openly and transparently with policymakers on the Cloud and AI Development Act (CADA), including on the issues of energy policy and permitting. Our formal consultation submissions are publicly available.

We are advocating for more efficient, predictable, and harmonized permitting processes, focusing on clearer timelines, coordinated reviews and consistent requirements while maintaining strong environmental protections.

As part of CADA, the EU has set ambitious goals to expand its cloud and AI capacity. This requires predictable permitting and timely access to electricity grids.

Our CADA submission calls for a framework that "accelerates permitting, improves access to energy and grid infrastructure, and provides predictable, harmonized rules that attract long-term investment."

We also support strong sustainability requirements for datacenters that reward operators that invest early and go further. For example, we have recommended linking eligibility for acceleration zones to the sustainability indicators in the EU datacenter rating scheme, creating an incentive for best-in-class sustainable infrastructure based on sustainability criteria established by the European Commission.

When it comes to the disclosure of the environmental performance of datacenters, we have published metro-level energy and water use for our owned datacenter operations in our 2026 Environmental Sustainability Report.

We are transparent that growing cloud and AI infrastructure increases demand for energy, water and materials. Our focus is on reducing those impacts as we grow. In our last fiscal year, Microsoft-owned datacenters reduced water usage effectiveness by 25% against the 2022 baseline; Microsoft replenished more water globally than it withdrew; and we matched 100% of our annual global electricity consumption with renewable energy.

We believe Europe can increase the digital infrastructure needed for its economic and AI ambitions while maintaining high environmental standards. Our policy engagement is aimed at helping achieve both.

Annex

- CADA position 23 October 2026: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14628-AI-Continent-new-cloud-and-AI-development-act/F33580120_en
- CADA position 30 June 2025: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14628-AI-Continent-new-cloud-and-AI-development-act/F3571093_en
- 2026 Environmental Sustainability Report: Microsoft 2026 Environmental Sustainability Report — Responsibly building the AI future
- 2026 Environmental Sustainability Report Data Fact Sheet: Microsoft 2026 Environmental Sustainability Report — Responsibly building the AI future
- Environmental Omnibus position September 2025: Feedback from: Microsoft

OVH Group

As required, please find below some written element regarding your analysis and about what we discussed about the CADA proposal, in particular on the data centre deployment.

Our starting point is simple: Europe already has competitive cloud providers, and CADA should turn that capability into scale rather than reinforce existing dependencies.

- Sovereignty must be clear and earned, with credible and harmonised audits, so that a sovereignty label cannot simply be claimed (ie "sovereignty washing").
- Public procurement should build European demand. It must scale sovereign European solutions, by combining risk assessments, procurement obligations and union added value criteria, so to turn it into predictable demand for European services.
- Data centre deployment should be accelerated but should come with conditions. It should prioritise European-controlled capacity and sustainable projects, while strategic status should reward European value rather than size alone.

QTS Data Centers

A QTS spokesperson said: “As a significant investor across Europe, we regularly engage with governments, local authorities and communities to ensure data centres are developed in a way that works for all parties.”

Additional information

- Any engagement is done openly and in line with any transparency requirements, and we welcome the chance to contribute to policy that supports sustainable investment.
- In relation to the market conference, it was made clear during the same session that showing up, listening, and responding to local concerns is at the heart of QTS’ approach to projects where we live and work. Tag's comment was categorically not a dismissal of legitimate community debate about data centres, and it is important to include the relevant context.