

Q2 2026 Insights

Opposition to data centre development across Europe

Quarterly intelligence on rejections, moratoriums, litigation, and regulation — country by country.



Opposition held at record levels — and moved up the stack

1

Volume stayed historic

After 70+ European projects were rejected or restricted between January and April — more than in all of 2025 — Q2 pressure shifted from town halls to courts, regulators, and parliaments.

2

Transparency became the battleground

MEPs accused the Commission of copy-pasting a Microsoft lobbying amendment into the EU data centre rating scheme, risking secrecy over facilities' energy and water data (27 May).

3

Grid politics hardened

Ireland's post-moratorium connection rules bedded in as its national debate grew “increasingly fractious”; new German connections now face waits of seven years or more.

4

The UK became the bellwether

Edinburgh advanced a temporary ban on AI data centres, the government conceded a legal error over the Iwer green-belt approval, and a record 1.5 GW campus was proposed in Devon.

UK: ministers push growth, communities push back

Edinburgh moves toward a ban

Councillors unanimously rejected the 210 MW “green” South Gyle scheme against officer advice, then voted to advance a temporary ban on AI data centres — pressing the Scottish Government to define what a “green data centre” actually is.

Green-belt litigation pays off

The government conceded in the High Court that the £1bn Iwer approval was granted in material legal error without a full EIA — vindicating Foxglove and Global Action Plan, who are now organising a national campaigner coalition.

New mega-proposals will test sentiment

Xlinks pivoted from its stalled Morocco cable to a 1.5 GW Devon campus — the UK's largest ever proposal — while a ~150 MW pivot near Norwich reopens planning debate in a region with little data centre footprint.

1.5 GW

Devon campus proposal — the largest in UK history, announced 29 June

“The lack of an environmental impact assessment is gobsmacking.”

— Action to Protect Rural Scotland, on South Gyle

Every case in this report, with sources

Country	Case	Status	Source
UK	South Gyle 210 MW “green” data centre, Edinburgh — unanimous refusal	Rejected	Data Centre Review
UK	Edinburgh temporary ban on AI data centres — motion advanced	Restriction	Data Centre Review
UK	Iver, Buckinghamshire £1bn campus — government concedes EIA legal error	Litigation	Stevens & Bolton
UK	Devon 1.5 GW campus (Xlinks) and Norfolk ~150 MW pivot — new proposals	Watch	DCD
Ireland	CRU final connection policy — bring-your-own-power criteria; Dublin constrained	Restriction	William Fry
Ireland	National grid debate — data centres at ~20% of electricity; moratorium calls persist	Watch	The Irish Times
France	Municipal election campaigns against data centres in 10+ towns (incl. Marseille, Bordeaux)	Restriction	Reuters
France	Telehouse Les Pennes-Mirabeau — residents' appeal after change of mayor	Litigation	DCD

Status key: Rejected / Restricted = decided against the project · Litigation = live legal challenge · Watch = proposal or process likely to draw opposition. Click a source to open it.