

# meteoLCD Weblog

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[The Ewringmann report on pump tourism \(part 2\)](#) »

## The Ewringmann report on pump tourism (part 1)



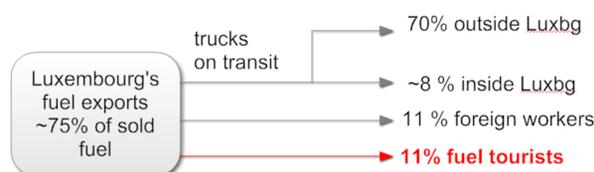
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### 1. Introduction

Dr. Dieter Ewringmann from the green-leaning [EiFA Institute](#) has delivered his long awaited report

what the Luxembourgers call "pump tourism". Luxembourg is situated at the crossroads of important North-South and to a lesser degree, East-West roads and has usually lower fuel prices than its neighbors. So not astonishingly trucks and cars running through Luxembourg fill their reservoirs here; on top of that about 150000 people come each day from abroad to their Luxembourg workplace, and as to be expected, fill up here. Finally a relatively small number of people living abroad in the boundary region drive to Luxembourg's fuel stations to buy fuel (and cigarettes, coffee and alcoholic beverages). All this makes that the major part of fuel sold in Luxembourg is exported, as shown in the following picture:



The expression "pump tourism" is usually applied to the 75% part of fuel exported, even if strictly speaking it should apply only to the 11%. The problem with this situation is the accounting scheme adopted in Brussels and Kyoto, where the CO2 emissions of a country are calculated from the fuel quantities sold in that country, independent from the fact that a more or less greater part is directly exported. I always recall my opinion that this is an idiotic accounting convention, which has not been applied to other situations of trans-border commerce. For instance the VAT taxes on e-commerce are now (rightfully in my opinion) calculated and paid at the buyers location, a fact that hurt Luxembourg badly as it lost for instance these taxes formerly paid by Amazon in Luxembourg.

Our Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has mandated Ewringmann to quantify the costs of this fuel situation, and to give the costs and benefits of a change through political decisions (what means in practice decreasing the price differential with the Luxembourg neighbors).

The Ewringmann report stands and falls with the notion of "external costs". He promotes that all costs from selling fuel should be accounted for by the seller; this is a standpoint that I can not accept. In my opinion the costs should be applied and accounted for at the place where they are caused by the consumption of goods. As an example, nobody would think to apply the diabetes-risk costs coming from the consumption of sugary pastry or the costs implicit in textile articles to Germany, when German shops sell these items in Trier to the many Luxembourg customers taking the articles back home. So as to be expected, his external costs are huge, so as to dwarf the benefits. Our news papers have reported mostly on this, as it makes for some good goose-pimp emotions.

I read the [full report](#) carefully several times. The style and presentations are clear and easy to understand; I found what I think is an important error in the calculation of the cost of pollutants. As the report has been mandated by a green ministry, there are many pages that are superfluous IMHO. Nevertheless I would suggest to read the full report, and not the [short version](#) that hides many important reflections.

I will give full citations as they are in the report, as most readers will probably be fluent in German language.

### 2. Shutting down? Examples where Ewringmann is right.

The report contains many places where the author insists on what are the consequences of shutting down the fuel exports.

- » *wenn Luxemburg seine Grenzen für ausländische Fahrer schliessen... würde, so träte eine echte Verringerung der externen Gesamteffekte... nur in dem Masse ein, in dem die bisher in Luxemburg tankenden Autofahrer künftig absolut weniger tanken und weniger Kilometer zurücklegen würden* (p. 9).
- » *...die gewonnen Ergebnisse sind vorsichtig zu interpretieren. Luxemburg kann nicht als Verursacher dieser negativen Gesamteffekte angesehen werden* (p. 20).
- » *Wenn dieselbe Treibstoffmenge im Ausland getankt würde, liesse sich weitgehend dieselbe Summe an externen Kosten berechnen* (p. 28).
- » *Die im Ausland anfallenden Kosten des Luxemburger Treibstoffverkaufs entstehen zwar durch Autofahrer, die in Luxemburg tanken, sie würden aber zu einem grossen Teil auch dann entstehen, wenn Luxemburg seine Tankstellen schliessen, für Ausländer sperren oder durch extrem hohe Steuersätze für Ausländer...unattraktiv machen würde* (p. 40).
- » *Ebenso falsch ist es, den totalen Ausstieg aus dem Treibstoffexport zu fordern und damit die Erwartung zu verbinden, alle am Export hängenden externen Kosten "vernichtet" zu haben...Solange (die ausländischen Fahrer) ihren Gesamtverbrauch nicht einschränken, spielt der Ort des Tankvorgangs keine Rolle* (p. 78).
- » *...ein im Regierungsprogramm erwähnter Ausstieg aus dem reinen Tanktourismus (führt) schon rechnerisch nicht zu einem wirklich relevanten Abbau der negativen Umwelt- und Gesundheitseffekten...* (p. 79).
- » *Beim Transitverkehr per LKW ist dagegen zu erwarten, dass trotz der Verlagerung der Tankvorgänge ins Ausland in starkem Masse die Luxemburger Autobahnen und Strassen weiterhin benutzt...werden* (p. 79).
- » *...die im Inland anfallenden externen Kosten (würden) zu 58% erhalten (bleiben)* (p. 80).

These are clear, intelligent and refreshingly sincere remarks, that seem to be ignored by agenda driven commentators.

In the next part 2 I will comment on the so-called "climate costs" and on the pollution attributed costs.

(end of part 1)

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