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Atlas

BKW and Wind

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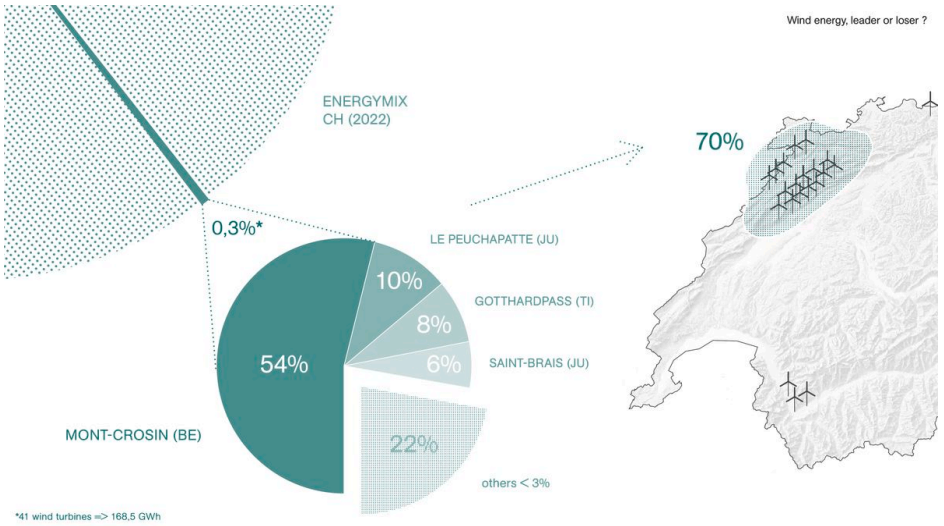
Switzerland’s wind energy sector is still in its nascent stages. Presently, our nation boasts a modest assembly of 41 wind turbines, contributing a mere 0.3 % to the Swiss national electricity output. In comparison to our neighbouring countries, we find ourselves trailing behind. Austria, for instance, has surged ahead with the installation of over 1,400 wind turbines, constituting approximately 13 % of their overall electricity provision.

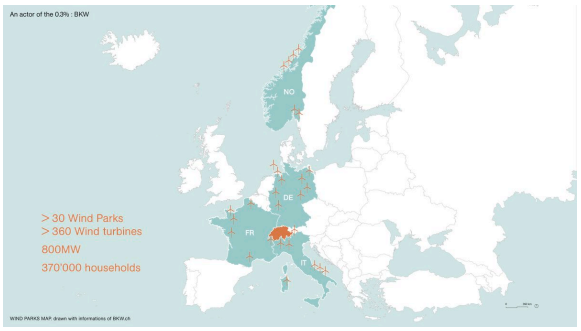
Presently, numerous wind turbine projects are in the pipeline. However, the intricate planning and approval procedures in Switzerland extend over a staggering 25 years, significantly impeding our progress. Consequently, a considerable sum of 338 wind turbines remains ensnared in the planning phase, awaiting fruition.

Numerous wind turbines are scattered across the Jura region, drawn by its consistent winds and, notably, its acceptence by the local populace.

In Switzerland, siting wind turbines presents a challenge as projects must garner approval from nearby communities. Aesthetic concerns often arise, with many individuals deeming wind turbines as detracting from the natural landscape. Despite their minimal environmental impact, regulatory constraints prevent their placement on geographically or nature protected areas.

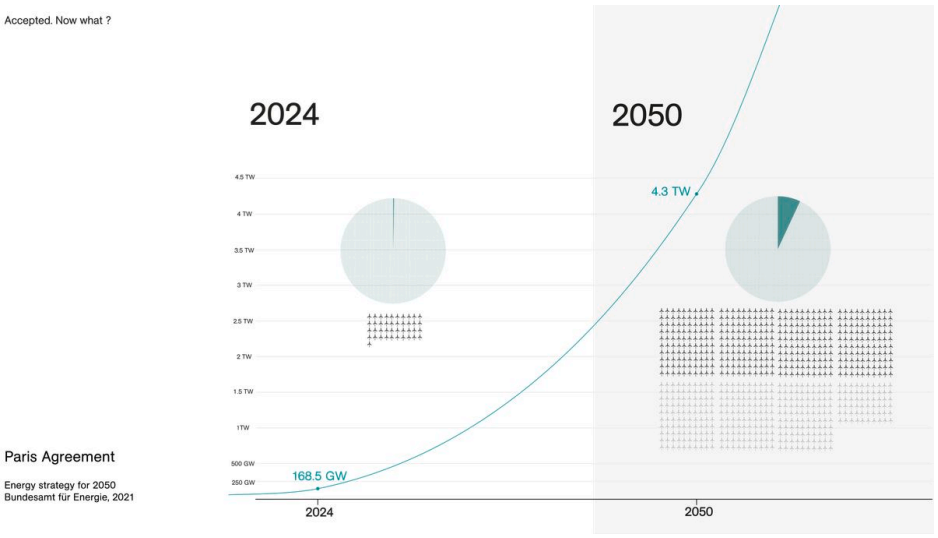


BKW, a prominent swiss cantonal energy provider, directs its investments towards wind farms both domestically and internationally. Ironically, while Switzerland sees limited wind turbine development, BKW, a swiss public entity, channels substantial foreign funds to realize wind farm projects.



By 2050, the Swiss Federal Office of Energy has established an ambitious goal: elevating wind energy production from a modest 0.3 % to a substantial 7 %. This aims to yield a total annual output of 4.3 TW solely through wind energy, necessitating the construction of 760 wind turbines.

However, in practice, the cumbersome planning and approval procedures extend approximately 25 years, rendering the realization of this target challenging. Realistically, we may only manage to erect around 400 wind turbines over the next 26 years, underscoring the arduousness of our regulatory framework.



In Switzerland we often talk about our untouched beautiful landscape, but we already have a lot of infrastructure spread across the whole country, from the cities to the mountains. A wind turbine will not change this fact.

This work by Melanie Meyer and Nils Tamm was created as part of the design studio Kraftwerk Schweiz at ETH Zurich in Spring 2024. The PDF is intended for educational purposes only. Its commercial distribution is strictly forbidden.

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