

Press release

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Electromobility comparison: the canton of Zug is the Norway of Switzerland

AutoScout24's cantonal comparison reveals the electromobility situation in Switzerland. The canton of Zug, in particular, is leading the way: it has the highest proportion of electric vehicles and a good public charging infrastructure. The canton of Basel-Stadt boasts an extensive charging network, and the canton of Zurich has the widest selection for anyone looking for an electric car. The canton of Uri, on the other hand, is bringing up the rear in many respects.

The number of electric vehicles on Swiss roads is increasing year on year. At the end of September 2023, the cumulative share of battery electric vehicles (BEV) among new registrations was 19.8%.¹ This figure was 31.3% for petrol cars and 8.5% for diesel cars.² Despite the success of electric cars, only 3.3% of passenger vehicles on Swiss roads were purely battery-driven. In comparison, petrol vehicles still accounted for 62% of the total stock, while diesel cars accounted for 26.8%.³ "This clearly shows that, despite the excellent progress, the transition to full electric mobility is a marathon that will take some time to achieve," says Alberto Sanz de Lama, Managing Director at AutoScout24.

The canton of Zug is in the lead, Uri is bringing up the rear

A comparison of the cantons shows that the transition to electromobility is making very different progress. At 6.8%, the canton of Zug has the highest proportion of electric vehicles in its passenger vehicle stock, thereby topping the cantonal ranking. "This is partly due to strong purchasing power and the well-developed public and private charging infrastructure in this region," says Sanz de Lama. With 155 public charging stations in an area covering 100 square kilometres, the canton of Zug is also among the leaders in the cantonal ranking. Peter Blass, Consultant Data & Energy at Swiss eMobility, adds: "The average strong purchasing power and good charging infrastructure are not, however, the only reasons. After all, people in Zug could also buy expensive petrol or diesel cars. Ultimately, it's probably down to a combination of many favourable factors and people's curiosity." The canton of Uri, on the other hand, is less successful in both respects. Its proportion of electric vehicles was just 2.2%, meaning that the canton is bringing up the rear. In terms of the number of public charging stations per 100 square kilometres, the canton of Uri has just 10, thereby putting it in the bottom three in the cantonal ranking.

¹ Source: Auto Suisse

² Source: Statista

³ Source: Federal Statistical Office, Road vehicles – Stock, level of motorisation

Basel-Stadt has the most extensive charging network

In terms of charging station density, no other canton can beat Basel-Stadt. With 600 public charging stations across 100 square kilometres, the urban canton has the most extensive charging network. This is followed by the urban canton of Geneva with 233 public charging stations. But the cantons of Bern, Zurich and Ticino are catching up, as eMobility Expert, Marco Piffaretti, says: "These three cantons are making good progress in terms of incentivising wall boxes because they're encouraging their installation. In Ticino, for example, there is a cantonal subsidy of CHF 1,200 for smart wall boxes with a centrally controlled charging management." The canton of Jura is at the bottom of the charging network ranking, with 8 charging stations per 100 square kilometres. Peter Grünenfelder, President of Auto Schweiz, is not surprised that urban cantons are leading this comparison while more rural cantons are performing less well: "Rural cantons and inherently less financially well-off cantons, such as Uri and Jura, are finding it much harder to establish good charging networks. This is because these are evolving in parallel to the development of the market: in areas with lots of electric cars on the roads, it's more likely that there will be investment in public charging infrastructure. And it's easier to set up this up in urban areas because the corresponding network capacities are usually available without requiring any major upgrades."

Zurich has the largest selection and the most searches

The difference between urban and rural areas can also be seen in terms of supply: from January to September 2023, only 112 electric vehicles were listed on AutoScout24 in the canton of Uri; only the cantons of Nidwalden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden had even less supply, with 110 and 48 electric vehicle listings, respectively. There was more choice in the canton of Zurich, where over 6,700 electric vehicles were available on AutoScout24 in the first nine months of this year. It is also the canton with the most electric car searches on AutoScout24. But people from Bern, Vaud and St.Gallen are also actively searching for electric vehicles on the platform. The cantons of St. Gallen and Aargau also had excellent supply, with around 4,300 and 3,800 electric car listings respectively.

Patchy funding – policy is required

The reason for these large differences is that every canton, and even every municipality and town in some cases, encourages the purchase of electric cars and the expansion of charging infrastructure to varying degrees. "In our view, it would make more sense to harmonise the way in which taxes are calculated. This would allow each canton to use a factor to determine the amount, as well as a possible electric car discount. However, many cantons don't want to be told what to do, making it virtually impossible for importers to apply for discounts for electric cars across Switzerland," says Peter Grünenfelder. It is also clear to Alberto Sanz de Lama that the transition to full electric mobility can only be achieved by means of a convincing, Switzerland-wide strategy. He sees particular potential in promoting domestic charging infrastructure: "Switzerland is a nation of tenants. And tenants don't have a right to domestic charging at the present time. Often, they cannot choose to install a charging point without relying on their landlord's goodwill."

Data basis

The information on the proportion of electric cars per canton comes from the Federal Statistical Office. To calculate the number of public charging stations per 100 square kilometres for each canton, the area in square kilometres was divided by the number of public charging stations. The information on public charging stations comes from the Federal Statistical Office. The number of all-electric cars (BEVs) listed on www.autoscout24.ch between 1 January and 30 September 2023 was used to calculate the supply data. This supply data was then broken down by canton. User searches made on www.autoscout24.ch during the period from 1 January to 30 September 2023 were also broken down by canton.

Media contacts



Nathalie Heim

Communications Manager & Media Spokesperson
nathalie.heim@swissmarketplace.group
+41 31 744 12 65



Artur Zazo

Senior Communications Manager & Media Spokesperson
artur.zazo@swissmarketplace.group
+41 79 766 50 83

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