



Still from The Demolition Drama (s+ D-ARCH ETH Zurich, 2023)

## **How to house Europe?**

### **Within the existing!**

### **In Switzerland**

*This topic is aligned with HouseEurope! the European Citizens' Initiative for renovation and transformation. HouseEurope! advocates for EU-laws to make renovation more affordable, easy and social. Because the demolition of existing buildings (for new construction) is as outdated as food waste, fast fashion and single-use plastics.*

*As our latest film 'The Demolition Drama' illustrates, the renovation sector has significant potential for the social-ecological transformation of the existing building stock and the architectural profession. Currently, only 1% of Europe's existing buildings are renovated annually. At this rate, it would take us 100 years to renovate Europe's entire building stock, which is four times longer than the timeline agreed upon by EU member states to achieve the 2050 climate goals. For Switzerland, it will take 125 years to renovate its existing building stock, should our current approach remain unchanged.*

*For more information please visit [houseeurope.eu](https://houseeurope.eu)*



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**By 2050, Switzerland is anticipated to grow by 1 million people.**

**By 2050, Europe has agreed to achieve a climate-neutral building stock.**

Roughly 1 million more people are estimated to move to Switzerland by 2050.<sup>1</sup> For the Master Thesis topic 2024/2025 we invite the chairs to explore strategies to accommodate this population growth solely through the adaptive reuse and transformation of Switzerland's existing building stock. This task challenges us to integrate design and legislative proposals, aiming to unveil the latent capacity within the current building stock to meet future housing needs.

**How will we live together?**

**Who are we?**

**Why are we here?**

**What standards of living can we afford?**

The scope of utilizing the existing and 'building upon the built' spans a wide spectrum. From restructuring single-family homes to the conversion of second and holiday homes; from utilizing vacancies in offices and retail spaces; from modular extensions to structural adaptations; from programmatic shifts to legislative reforms.

Building upon the spectrum of architectural interventions, the design studios are encouraged to explore prototypical solutions that demonstrate the potential to scale, addressing the need to house an additional million people.

We want to acknowledge the concerns raised during the Unterrichtskonferenz. The complexity of this endeavor and the claim to house a million people in the existing may ignite discussions about feasibility and populist arguments, but we are confident that direct engagement with the subject is the only way to break down and tackle its difficulties and achieve meaningful insights and results. This master thesis can be a collective tool to explore the extent to which our expertise can influence policy-making - also by deploying the means of speculation.

A key prerequisite for our objective is to develop a diverse array of housing options tailored to various lifestyles, life phases, and financial capabilities. This goal is often met with resistance by the profit-driven real estate sector. Hence, we seek visions that are conscious of the ecological, economic, and social impacts.

In pursuit of comprehensive strategies, design studios shall delve into Switzerland's legislative and regulatory landscape to uncover opportunities for sparking change within the building industry. The process of exploring the adaptation, reinterpretation, or application of existing laws could be pivotal in determining the direction of design strategies.

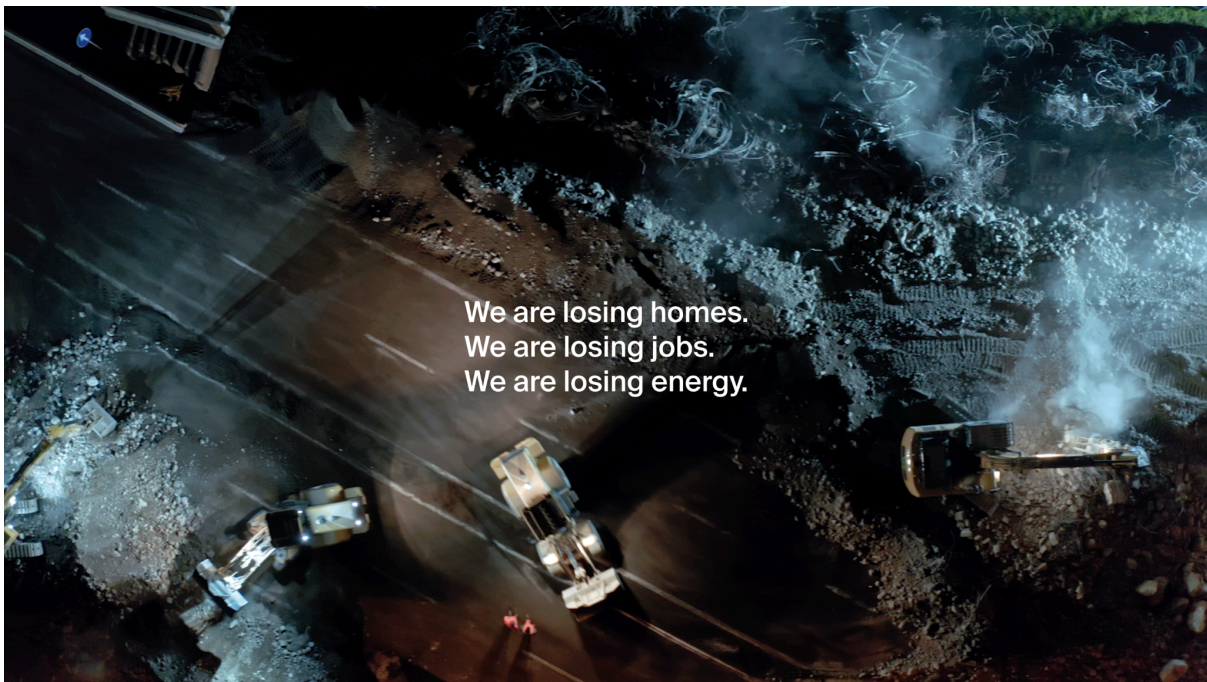
## **A Collective Effort**

Although we seek individual approaches and design solutions, we wish for the project to evolve into a collective endeavor. We aim to also explore the master thesis in an exhibition and show the various ways through which it might be possible to simultaneously reach both the societal goal of housing 1 million inhabitants while also meeting the ecological goals set for 2050.

To underscore the collective essence of the department's master thesis and its exhibition, we aim to more thoughtfully curate both the semester-long process and the final display. The constructive debate during the Unterrichtskonferenz on this matter, along with the willingness to reconsider or adapt the exhibition format, was greatly valued. Thus, we propose a two-phase approach: initially, for the autumn 2024 semester show in December, to craft a documentary film series showing the collective journey at D-ARCH.

*A detailed proposal shall be prepared by May 15th, outlining the concept and progression throughout the semester. This series is envisioned not only as a narrative thread for the final exhibition but also as a medium to articulate the process and dedication to external audiences.*

Looking ahead to the spring/summer 2025 show in May, we plan to revisit and potentially reimagine and/or expand the exhibition format. Details shall be shared in advance and we will extend an invitation for a collaborative discussion to determine the best format. There we can benefit from the knowledge of department members experienced in curation, ensuring that we all can leverage their expertise to enhance the exhibition's impact and reach.



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## Lecture and Inputs

Throughout the semester, a sequence of online and in-person inputs will be organized. We're considering a conference-like format to introduce the overarching theme and initiative, with a special emphasis on the legislative and political mechanisms at our disposal as architects—tools for design that extend beyond the built object. This approach aims to frame the initial stages of the master thesis within a broader, actionable context, making clear the critical levers we have to effect change in the building industry.

with

Enlai Hooi and Tamara Kalantajevska, Heads of Innovation and Urbanism SHL

Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou, Director Center Capitalism Studies UCL

Joanna Kusiak, Sociologist Cambridge University

Ruth Schagemann, President Architecture Council Europe

Alastair Parvin, Non-Profit Architect and Developer

Ann Pettifor, Economist and Political Advisor

## Questions

**If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to add them here or reach out directly. We are eager to include your feedback and provide the best possible answers to everyone.**

| Name | Question |
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The prediction that Switzerland will grow by about 1 million people by the year 2050 is based on data from the Federal Statistical Office. According to the reference scenario, the permanent resident population of Switzerland will increase from 8.5 million people in 2018 to 9.4 million in 2030, and further to 10.4 million by 2050. This corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 0.6%. More than 75% of this increase is attributed to migration. Various scenarios even discuss a population increase to up to 11.0 million people by 2050 under certain conditions, such as a higher migration balance. It is also noteworthy that a rapid aging of the population is expected in the next ten years, with a significant increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.

For further details, you can view the published reports and scenarios on the website of the Federal Statistical Office: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bevoelkerung/entwicklung.html>

Population Development and Future Development:

<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/content/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bevoelkerung/zukuenftige-entwicklung.html>