

Anti-nuclear protest held in Switzerland

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Thousands of people have held a massive demonstration in northern Switzerland against a possible decision by the government to rely on nuclear energy.□

The demonstration, staged near the town of Doettingen and the Beznau nuclear power plant, was also attended by people from Germany, Austria and France, AFP reported on Sunday.

According to Maude Poirier, spokeswoman for Sortons du nucléaire, the rally was the biggest protest at nuclear power in Switzerland since the Fukushima accident in Japan.

On March 11, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake, off the northeast coast of Japan's main island, unleashed a 7-meter tsunami. The accident was also followed by more than 50 aftershocks.

The massive earthquake and ensuing tsunami set off a nuclear disaster by causing power outage in the cooling systems of the reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, causing radiation leaks.

"These thousands of people who have come are sending a strong signal to the Swiss authorities," Poirier said, adding "this shows that we are not a minority, that it's not only the Greens."

On Wednesday the Swiss government will decide on halting the activities of the country's five nuclear power plants.

Following the Japan's nuclear disaster, Switzerland was the first country to suspend replacing its age-old nuclear power plants.

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