

A comparison with Geneva, Singapore and Dubai

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The comparison with other international centres shows different ways of dealing with the language question. Geneva combines French as the official language with English as the working language of the international organisations and businesses. Its international community is larger and more institutionalised than that of Zug, and the canton has a long tradition of hosting foreigners, but it faces similar tensions over housing, integration and political participation. The canton of Geneva gives foreign residents the right to vote at municipal level after eight years of residence, a step that Zug has not taken.¹ Singapore has made English one of its four official languages and the main language of administration, education and business. This decision, taken after independence, allowed Singapore to become an international business location without a linguistic divide between the economy and the state. Dubai uses Arabic as the official language but conducts most of its business in English. Its financial free zones operate under common law, with courts that work in English. Its expatriate population forms the large majority of residents and has no political rights. Zug lies between these models. It has not made English an official language, but it has integrated English into its economy and, increasingly, into its financial regulation and its courts.

1 Notes

1. Swiss Mission to the UN in Geneva (FDFA), "Droit de vote (Genève)", mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch: foreign nationals may vote in Geneva communes if they have resided legally in Switzerland for at least eight years; right granted by the canton in 2005. SRF, "Debatte um Ausländerstimmrecht – In diesen Gemeinden dürfen Ausländer abstimmen", 18 July 2019, [srf.ch](https://www.srf.ch): Geneva grants voting rights at communal level; Zug is not among the cantons listed. ↩

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