

Blockchain in the cantonal administration

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The town's Bitcoin experiment of 2016 was followed by further steps in public administration. In 2017, the town of Zug introduced a digital identity for its residents based on the Ethereum blockchain. Residents could register an identity on a mobile application and have it verified at the town hall, after which the identity was used for pilot services, including a consultative vote held on the blockchain in 2018, with further uses such as the rental of bicycles planned.¹ Although the number of users remained small, the project served above all as a demonstration that a public authority could work with the technology and received wide international coverage.

The experiments had limits. Public administration in Switzerland is bound by strict rules on data protection, on the security of votes and on the equal treatment of citizens. A blockchain-based identity that only a few hundred residents used could not replace the official procedures. The federal government pursued its own electronic identity through a separate legislative process.² The town's projects nevertheless showed an attitude that the industry valued: the willingness of the authorities to try new tools themselves as well as to regulate them.

1 Notes

1. European Commission, Interoperable Europe Portal, "Swiss City of Zug issues Ethereum blockchain-based eIDs", interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu: pilot launched on 15 November 2017; partners Informatik Zug, the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ) of the Lucerne School of Business, ConsenSys-uPort and ti&m; planned services included bicycle rental, parking, library loans, fee payments and an e-voting consultation; about 150 registrations by February 2018. HSLU, "Blockchain-basiertes E-Voting erfolgreich getestet",

news.hslu.ch: consultative vote from 25 June to 1 July 2018 with 72 participants. ↩

2. Bundesgesetz vom 20. Dezember 2024 über den elektronischen Identitätsnachweis und andere elektronische Nachweise (E-ID-Gesetz, BGEID), title as given by the State of Fribourg, fr.ch, voting recommendation for 28 September 2025; approved in the referendum of 28 September 2025 with 50.39 per cent yes votes (en.wikipedia.org, "2025 Swiss referendums"). ↩

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