

Demography, space and infrastructure

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The canton of Zug is small. Its territory of 239 square kilometres includes lakes, mountains, forests and farmland, and only a limited area is available for building.¹ Its population, which has grown steadily from about 100,000 in 2000 to about 134,000 in 2024, is expected by the cantonal planning to grow further.² The growth has increased the density of the towns, the pressure on housing and the traffic on the roads. The voters of the canton rejected a city tunnel for Zug in 2015, a project designed to relieve the old town of traffic.³ The rail connections to Zurich and Lucerne, which are among the busiest in the country, will have their capacity expanded only in the 2030s. The Swiss population as a whole is growing towards nine and a half million and may reach ten million in the 2040s. The popular initiative against a Switzerland of ten million, which the voters rejected in June 2026 as Part J described, reflected concerns about the consequences of this growth. In Zug, these concerns are acute, since the canton's growth has been faster than the national average and its space is more limited. The canton's future depends on its ability to manage growth: to build housing and infrastructure, to preserve the landscape and to maintain the support of its residents for an economic model that brings more people into a small territory.

1 Notes

1. Historical Dictionary of Switzerland (HLS), article "Zug (Kanton)", hls-dhs-dss.ch: area 238.8 km². ↩
2. HLS, article "Zug (Kanton)", hls-dhs-dss.ch: 100,052 inhabitants in 2000; Canton of Zug, Fachstelle für Statistik, "Bevölkerungsstand" and "Zukünftige Bevölkerungsentwicklung", zg.ch: 135,018 inhabitants in 2025 after growth of 1,279 in the preceding year (hence about 133,700 in 2024); BFS reference scenario about 157,400 inhabitants in 2055. ↩

3. Canton of Zug, Kantonsrat business register, "Stadttunnel Zug" (kr-geschaefte.zug.ch, Geschäft 526): cantonal vote of 14 June 2015, rejected by 27,898 to 16,534 votes; SRF, "Zuger Stadttunnel: Zu teuer, zu unrealistisch", srf.ch: 63 per cent No to the CHF 890 million project "Stadttunnel mit Zentrum Plus". ↩

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