

English in public procurement and state contracts

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The canton and the municipalities of Zug buy goods and services under the rules of public procurement. The intercantonal agreement on public procurement, revised in 2019, requires each tender to state the language or languages of the procedure and of the bids and requires publications outside the scope of international treaties to take account of the linguistic situation of the area.¹ For technical tenders in information technology and for international suppliers, contracting authorities may accept English documents. The formal procedure, the award decision and the contract are generally in German.

Public procurement is thus another area in which English enters the work of the authorities without changing the official language. International suppliers who wish to work for the canton must operate in German or through local partners who do. The situation contrasts with the private economy of the canton, in which English is the dominant language of contracts. It reflects a broader pattern: the public sector of Zug remains German-speaking, while the private sector has become bilingual.

1 Notes

1. Intercantonal Agreement of 15 November 2019 on Public Procurement (IVöB), text annexed to the Zurich accession act (LS 720.1, zhlex.zh.ch): Art. 35 lit. m (the tender states the language or languages of the procedure and of the bid), Art. 48 para. 4 (summary in a WTO official language for contracts within the scope of international treaties) and para. 5 (outside that scope, account is to be taken of the linguistic situation of the area). ↩

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