

Housing and the cost of living

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The international economy of Zug has made the canton one of the most expensive places to live in Switzerland. Average rents in Zug are the highest of all Swiss cantons.¹ The high incomes of employees in the international companies and the demand of wealthy residents drive up prices, while the canton's small territory limits the supply of new housing. Local residents with ordinary incomes have difficulty finding affordable housing. Many have moved to neighbouring cantons.

The housing question has become a political issue in the canton. Voters and parties have called for more affordable housing. The canton and the municipalities have taken measures to promote it, including the designation of zones for affordable housing and support for housing cooperatives.² The question is linked to the language question in an indirect way. The English-speaking international community is visible in the upper segment of the housing market. The perception that expatriates drive up prices contributes to tensions between them and the local population. The perception is only partly accurate, since wealthy Swiss residents and immigrants from Germany and other European countries also contribute to the demand, but it shapes the public debate.

1 Notes

1. Blick, "So wohnt die Schweiz: Wo kostet eine Mietwohnung am meisten?", 4 March 2025 (updated 3 April 2025), [blick.ch](https://www.blick.ch), on Federal Statistical Office data for 2023: average rent in the canton of Zug CHF 1,931 a month, the highest of all cantons, against a Swiss average of CHF 1,451. Property prices and their growth relative to incomes are not covered by this source. ↩

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2. Zug in der Welt, "Sozialer Wohnungsbau in Zug 2010–2023", zuginderwelt.ch: in 2009 the town of Zug introduced zones in which at least 50 per cent of the floor space was reserved for affordable housing (the canton later required the abolition of this special zone); about 1,900 dwellings, some 3 per cent of the stock, fell under the cantonal housing promotion law in 2023; at the end of 2019 cooperatives and public bodies provided 1,358 permanently affordable dwellings in the town; a cantonal initiative for 20 per cent affordable housing was rejected on 21 May 2017 with 65.9 per cent No, while the town initiative "2000 Wohnungen für den Zuger Mittelstand" was narrowly accepted on 18 June 2023 (4,541 to 4,507 votes). SRF, "Abstimmung Stadt Zug – Initiative will Grundstein für 2000 günstige Wohnungen legen", srf.ch: initiative launched by a committee led by the SP. ↩

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