

Practitioner's note: advising an expatriate moving to Zug

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An adviser who assists an expatriate executive moving to Zug should address the language question as part of the relocation. The executive's employment contract, the lease and the relations with the bank can usually be handled in English. The registration with the municipality, the application for a permit, the tax return, the health insurance and the schooling of the children involve German-language procedures and documents, even if some information is available in English. The adviser should explain which documents are authoritative and which are only translations, and should arrange for support in German where needed.

The adviser should also discuss the executive's longer-term plans. An executive who plans to stay for several years, to acquire property or to apply for a permanent permit or naturalisation should be encouraged to learn German early, since the integration criteria for permanent permits and naturalisation include language skills. An executive who plans a short stay may rely on English, but should understand the limits of doing so, particularly in dealings with the authorities and in the event of a dispute. For families with children, the choice between an international school and the local public school has long-term consequences for the children's languages and for the family's integration.

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Online version: helveticaregister.com/zug-practitioner-s-note-advising-an-expatriate-moving-to-zug