

The domains of English and German

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The domains of the two languages can be described roughly. English dominates in the international companies, in the professional services that work for them, in the international schools, in the crypto industry and in parts of the hospitality sector. German and Swiss German dominate in the cantonal and municipal administration, in the courts, in the public schools, in local politics, in local businesses and associations, and in the churches. The two domains overlap in the banks, the law firms and the fiduciary companies, which serve both local and international clients, and in the shops and restaurants, which serve both residents and expatriates.

The boundary between the domains is not fixed. The cantonal administration has begun to offer information in English, particularly for companies and new residents. Local businesses use English in their marketing to reach international customers. Public schools teach English from primary school as the first or second foreign language.¹ In the other direction, many international companies offer German courses to their employees, and some expect managers who stay for several years to learn the local language. The domains are moving towards each other, with English gaining ground in the public sphere and German gaining some ground in the international sphere.

1 Notes

1. Canton of Zug, Direktion für Bildung und Kultur, Amt für gemeindliche Schulen, consultation report "Studentafeln des Kantons Zug zum Lehrplan 21" (consultation 20 September to 12 December 2016, for the school year 2019/20), on lvz.ch: English from the third class of primary school, French from the fifth class. The report is the consultation draft. ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/zug-the-domains-of-english-and-german