

The industrial base in figures

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The image of Zug as a canton of letterbox companies obscures the size of its industrial base. In 2021, the secondary sector, industry and trades, employed 17.3 per cent of the canton's workforce and accounted for 9.2 per cent of its businesses.¹ In 2024, the canton counted 135,123 employees in 20,801 establishments, corresponding to 108,105 full-time equivalents. Of these establishments, 1,981, or 9.5 per cent, belonged to industry and trades.² The share is lower than the Swiss average, but in absolute terms the canton's industrial workforce is substantial and includes some of the most technologically advanced enterprises in the country.

The continuity with the industrial history described in Part A is direct. The largest industrial employers of the canton today are, in several cases, the successors of the enterprises that were founded in the town of Zug and in Cham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Landis & Gyr survives in two successor companies, the meter manufacturer Landis+Gyr in Cham and the building technology business of Siemens in Zug. The Metallwarenfabrik survives in V-ZUG and in the holding company Metall Zug. Others, such as the Spinnerei an der Lorze and the Papierfabrik Cham, have closed and seen their sites transformed. The story of these enterprises, a story of transformation under changing ownership, shows how the industrial and the fiscal economy of the canton became intertwined.

1 Notes

1. Zuger Kantonalbank, "Der Kanton Zug in Zahlen", edition 2023, zugerkb.ch: sector distribution in 2021: tertiary sector 81.3 per cent of employees and 87.8 per cent of businesses; secondary sector 17.3 per cent of employees and 9.2 per cent of businesses; primary sector 1.4 per cent of employees and 3.0 per cent of businesses. ↩

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2. Kanton Zug, Fachstelle für Statistik, "Industrie und Dienstleistungen – Betriebe und Unternehmen", zg.ch, accessed September 2026: in 2024, 135,123 employees in 20,801 establishments, 108,105 full-time equivalents; growth of 2.6 per cent in employees and 2.4 per cent in establishments; services 87.7 per cent of establishments (18,241), industry and trades 9.5 per cent (1,981), agriculture and forestry 2.8 per cent (579). ↩

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