

The tax law of 1947

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The post-war tax policy of the canton rested on a revision of the tax law that the voters approved on 16 March 1947 by 4,731 votes to 1,752. Only the commune of Neuheim voted against. The revision retained the holding and domicile privileges of the 1930 framework.¹ The margin of almost three to one, a clear endorsement of the canton's fiscal course, confirmed the pattern of 1922: the voters of Zug supported a business-friendly tax policy, while the resistance was confined to a single rural commune.

One of the public supporters of the revision was a young man who had worked as an intern in the cantonal tax administration: Hans Hürlimann, born in 1918, who later became a member of the Federal Council.² The career of Hürlimann, from the tax office in Zug to the federal government in Bern, illustrates the close connection between the canton's political class and its fiscal policy. The men who designed and administered Zug's tax regime were also the men who represented the canton in federal politics, which placed them well to defend the canton's interests when the federal framework came under discussion.

The significance of the law of 1947, which introduced no new privileges, lay in continuity. It confirmed the special regime for holding and domicile companies at a moment when international capital was about to flow again, signalling to advisers in Zurich, Basel and abroad that the canton intended to maintain its course. Stability of the tax framework is itself a factor of location: a company that establishes its seat in a canton needs to be confident that the terms on which it came will not be withdrawn after a few years. The vote of 1947 provided that confidence, which every subsequent confirmation of the canton's fiscal course by its voters reinforced.

1 Notes

1. Zug in der Welt, "Zug mit Steuern steuern": tax law revision approved on 16 March 1947 by 4,731 yes to 1,752 no votes; only Neuheim opposed; holding and domicile privileges retained from the 1930 framework; Sichtweisen Schweiz, "Wirtschaftskanton Zug: gelungene Transformationen dank stabilen Erfolgsfaktoren", sichtweisenschweiz.ch, accessed September 2026: in 1947 voters approved another tax law revision by a margin of three to one. ↩
2. Zug in der Welt, "Zug mit Steuern steuern": Hans Hürlimann (1918–1994), practicum intern at the tax administration and later Federal Councillor, publicly supported the 1947 law revision. ↩

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