

The town accepts Bitcoin

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On 1 July 2016, the town of Zug began to accept Bitcoin for the payment of fees at its residents' registration office, up to an amount of 200 francs. The project, a pilot limited to the end of 2016, was promoted by the town president, Dolfi Müller.¹ The president of the Bitcoin Association Switzerland, Luzius Meisser, saw in it a signal that the industry was welcome in Zug.²

The practical significance of the pilot was small because few residents paid their fees in Bitcoin and the amounts they paid were modest.³ Its symbolic significance was great. At a time when central banks, financial regulators and governments around the world warned against Bitcoin, a Swiss town declared that it would accept the currency for official payments. The international press reported the decision widely, in coverage that placed Zug on the map of the global crypto community. The town followed the pilot with other initiatives, including a digital identity for its residents based on the Ethereum blockchain and a test of voting with that identity.⁴

1 Notes

1. NZZ, "Stadt Zug wird weltweit zum Bitcoin-Pionier": from 1 July 2016 the town of Zug accepted Bitcoin for fees at the residents' registration office (Einwohnerkontrolle), up to CHF 200; city president Dolfi Müller; pilot project limited to the end of 2016. ↩
2. NZZ, "Stadt Zug wird weltweit zum Bitcoin-Pionier": Luzius Meisser, president of the Bitcoin Association Switzerland, noted that Zug signals to the industry that it is welcome. ↩
3. 20 Minuten, "Niemand will Bitcoins, aber Zug profitiert dennoch", 15 December 2016, 20min.ch: only twelve customers had paid their bills in Bitcoin since July 2016; the town council decided to continue the offer permanently. Also finews.ch, "Zug: Der schöne Schein des

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Bitcoin", 3 January 2017: around a dozen Bitcoin transactions at the residents' registration office since July. The total value of the payments is not stated in either source. ↩

4. Stadt Zug, news release "Blockchain-Identität für alle Einwohner", 7 July 2017, stadtzug.ch: blockchain-based digital identity using the uPort app on the Ethereum blockchain, verified by the Einwohnerkontrolle; e-voting consultative vote planned. Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, "Blockchain-basiertes E-Voting erfolgreich getestet", news.hslu.ch: consultative blockchain vote held from 25 June to 1 July 2018 with 72 participants holding the digital identity. ↩

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