

Traders, consumer goods and the definition of the cluster

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The statistics of the cluster depend on its definition. The cantonal economic promotion office distinguishes a commodities cluster of more than 200 enterprises from a consumer goods cluster of more than 1,700 companies with some 14,000 employees, which together, it states, contribute about one third of the canton's gross domestic product. The consumer goods cluster includes the international headquarters of companies in food and beverages, personal care, textiles and sporting goods and automotive supplies.¹ The historian Bomio, using a broader definition of international wholesale trade, counts some 2,000 companies with 25,000 employees and estimates their share of the canton's economy at 50 to 75 per cent of a gross domestic product of 22.5 billion francs in 2021.²

The differences between these figures result from the definitions used, which is why the reader should treat all of them as orders of magnitude. What they show consistently is that international trade, in commodities and in manufactured goods, is the largest single component of the economy of Zug, and that its contribution to the canton's output is disproportionate to its share of employment. The trading business generates high value added per employee, since its profits derive from global transactions managed by a relatively small staff.

1 Notes

1. Kanton Zug, Volkswirtschaftsdirektion, "Consumer Goods and Commodities": over 1,700 consumer goods companies employing approximately 14,000 people, contributing roughly one third of the canton's GDP; examples include Burger King, Coca-Cola HBC, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Galderma, Haleon, Kenvue, Canada Goose, Hugo Boss, Odlo, Specialized, LKQ Europe, Autoliv and Amag. ↩

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2. Zug in der Welt, "Der wichtigste Wirtschaftscluster im Kanton Zug": approximately 25,000 employees across roughly 2,000 companies; share of between 50 and 75 per cent of Zug's GDP of 22.5 billion francs (2021 reference year); about 20 per cent of cantonal employment compared with 4.8 per cent nationally. ↩

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