

Who came to the valley

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

The early population of Crypto Valley was international and young. Founders came from Germany, Austria, Canada, the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Israel, China and Singapore. Many were engineers without a background in finance, while some had made money in the first Bitcoin cycles and were looking for a stable place to build a company. The working language of the industry was English from the start, which fitted the English-speaking environment that the commodity traders and holding companies had created over the preceding decades, a point to which Part J returns.

Several motives brought them to Zug. The Ethereum Foundation gave the canton a name among developers, while the regulatory environment was known to be open. Taxes were low, both for companies and for individuals, with capital gains on private crypto holdings tax-free. The quality of life was high and Zurich airport was half an hour away. Word of mouth did the rest, as a founder who had set up in Zug told others and the canton's reputation spread through conferences, online forums and the social networks of the industry.

Not all who came were welcome, since the open environment attracted projects of doubtful quality and some outright frauds. The authorities could do little against them before FINMA's guidelines and its enforcement actions of 2017 and 2018. As the canton's reputation suffered from its association with failed or fraudulent projects, the industry's own leaders began to call for standards. The Crypto Valley Association's code of conduct, adopted in 2018, was one response.¹

1 Notes

1. Crypto Valley Association, "Crypto Valley Association Announces Switzerland's First ICO Code of Conduct", 9 January 2018, cryptovalley.swiss: code of conduct for ICOs launched in January 2018; members must acknowledge it and reaffirm it annually, with disciplinary action for violations. ↩

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-who-came-to-the-valley