

International Business Linkage Forum (IBLF) in Zug

Inauguration speech by Matthias Michel
(Minister of Economy and Member of the Government of the Canton of Zug)

His Excellency, Minister of Sri Lanka
Dear Mr. President and Dear Chairman of the IBFL
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel extremely honoured and satisfied, that you as important leaders in politics or economics have come from so far (from far east as we say from our point of view) to have your Forum here in Zug. On behalf of the Government of our Canton I welcome you in our small but interesting place in the middle of Europe.

Why come to such a small place, which from a birds view may be one of many other hundreds of small places at the foothills of the alps?

You may already know the answer. We are a small place, yes. But we are big when it comes to business opportunities. Why? Because in the words of analysts, the canton of Zug is an extremely attractive place to live as well as a preferred location for doing business, due to Switzerland's most attractive taxation system, to highly qualified personal, to the proximity of the airport of Zurich and - last but not least - to the business friendly infrastructure and the support of the authorities.

These are some reasons, why companies like Amgen, Roche, Siemens, Glencore/Xstrata, Johnson&Johnson, Partners Group or Rusal have settled here. Among them, there are some important headquarters of global players.

Not only companies but also our population is very international: In the small number of 100'000 inhabitants of our canton we count more than 120 nationalities. In our public schools, our kids - starting with German - they learn English at the age of 9 and French at the age of 11. Later, in the High School, students often choose another language like Spanish. International schools with English teaching are completing our school system.

After all, even when all the key criteria for an outstanding business location are guaranteed, it comes to a very personal level: Why do you and we like to life and work here? Given the fact, that we are a small canton of only 240 km² (including a nice lake) and 100'000 inhabitants, the social relations are close, the links to authorities are short and networking is excellent. Therefore, you have chosen a good place to network within the Forum. Finally, important decisions are supported by personal motivation. And due to very personal contacts to the honourable Mr. Podar, we have the opportunity to come together here in Zug.

In order to make you even see and feel, why Zug is a small world with big business opportunities, we like to present you a short film (DVD "Zug - small world, big business"). I thank you to enter in this special world and I wish you a very good meeting.