



U.S. News, Y&R's BAV Consulting and the Wharton School Unveil Second Annual Best Countries Rankings

– New edition includes 20 new countries; Switzerland debuts at No. 1 on overall list –

Washington, D.C. – March 7, 2017 – Switzerland debuted as the best country in the world, according to the 2017 Best Countries report, a joint rankings and analysis project from U.S. News & World Report, Y&R's BAV Consulting and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Now in its second year, the rankings evaluate 80 countries – up from 60 last year – across a range of criteria, from power and economic influence to citizenship and quality of life, to capture how nations are perceived on a global scale.

Key findings from the 2017 Best Countries Report:

- Worldwide civil and political unrest in 2016 had varying effects on the Best Overall Countries. Canada remained No. 2 on the list. The U.K. held fast to its third-place position, suggesting that the initial shock of its vote to leave the European Union may have stabilized. Germany, last year's No. 1 best overall country, slipped to No. 4 after dips in three important categories: open for business, citizenship and quality of life. The nation was rocked by a range of events – from growing public anxiety over an influx of refugees to a string of deadly terror attacks.
- Japan moved up two positions to No. 5 this year, speaking to its stability. The nation scores in the top 10 for categories including entrepreneurship, up-and-coming economies and countries with the most cultural influence.
- The U.S. fell three positions to No. 7. The nation ranked lower across multiple categories, including best for business, citizenship, adventure tourism, education, transparency and headquartering a corporation. While nearly 75 percent of survey respondents said they lost some respect for U.S. leadership after the 2016 presidential election, the U.S. remained No. 1 on the list of most powerful countries, closely followed by Russia at No. 2.
- Nordic nations – known for their forward-looking social and environmental policies – continue to dominate the rankings, with Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark in the top 15 overall. Sweden is named the best country for women, for raising children and for green living.
- Countries in Asia and the Middle East have the most up-and-coming economies, with the United Arab Emirates ranked No. 1. Thailand remains No. 1 for starting a business, and Malaysia is the best to invest in.

- Switzerland is the best to headquarter a corporation, and New Zealand is the best for retirement. Panama is the most business-friendly nation, while Canada takes the top spots for education and quality of life. Italy again ranks as the nation with the richest tradition and Brazil is the No. 1 country to visit.

“We wanted to capture how tumultuous political change affect a country’s perceived standing in the world,” said Brian Kelly, editor and chief content officer of U.S. News. “Similar to what we have done with hospitals, universities and other institutions, the Best Countries portal pairs fact-based metrics with storytelling to help citizens, business leaders and governments better evaluate their countries and make sense of a range of important global issues.”

The 2017 Best Countries ranking methodology relies on data gathered from a proprietary perception survey – conducted after the U.S. presidential election – of more than 21,000 business leaders, informed elites and general citizens.

“The Best Countries project allows us to chart how global perceptions of a country affect its prosperity,” said David Reibstein, a professor of marketing at the Wharton School. “We’ve learned that a focus on education and citizenship – including human rights, gender equality, religious freedom and more – can drive prosperity more than traditional forms of power, like military prowess.”

John Gerzema, chairman and CEO of Y&R’s BAV Consulting, added: “Our data captured widespread global concern for the social and geopolitical changes that cast many nations into uncertainty and turmoil. The new rankings reflect people’s desire to restore some sense of order by rewarding nations they perceive as championing neutrality, stability and diplomacy.”

The Best Countries rankings are the centerpiece of the growing U.S. News Best Countries portal, a platform combining in-depth editorial content, interactive data visualization tools, video, photos and op-eds from global experts in government, business and academia. The new platform is part of the expanding News channel at U.S. News, which includes the new Best States project, unveiled in February.

2017 Best Countries Rankings

*See the full rankings here

Overall

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Switzerland | 6. Sweden |
| 2. Canada | 7. United States |
| 3. United Kingdom | 8. Australia |
| 4. Germany | 9. France |
| 5. Japan | 10. Norway |

To Start a Business

1. Thailand
2. China
3. Malaysia

To Headquarter a Corporation

1. Switzerland
2. Canada
3. Australia

Most Powerful

1. United States
2. Russia
3. China

For Women

1. Sweden
2. Denmark
3. Norway

For Education

1. Canada
2. United Kingdom
3. Germany

For Comfortable Retirement

1. New Zealand
2. Australia
3. Switzerland

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About Y&R's BAV Consulting

Y&R, part of WPP (NASDAQ: WPPGY), is one of the leading and most iconic global marketing communications companies. Operating as a Global Boutique, Y&R connects deep insights from businesses and consumers with strategies and objectives that reach across borders. With 189 offices in 93 countries, clients include Campbell's Soup Company, Danone, Dell and Xerox. Y&R's BAV Consulting is a global advisory practice specializing in corporate, brand and marketing strategies and customer insights using the BrandAsset® Valuator. The leading quantitative study of brand and consumers and largest database of brand perceptions, BAV contains ratings on over 56,000 brands on 75 consistent metrics that span 23 years, 51 countries and more than 1.2 million respondents. For more information, visit www.yr.com and www.bavconsulting.com.

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