



Switzerland Is the Best Country in the World, Says 2018 Best Countries Report

*– Justin Trudeau, Angela Merkel viewed as most respected world leaders;
Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin least respected on global stage –*

Washington, D.C. – Jan. 23, 2018 – Switzerland held its position as the No. 1 country in the world, according to the [2018 Best Countries report](#), a rankings and analysis project by U.S. News & World Report, Y&R's BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. In its third year, the rankings evaluate 80 countries across a range of criteria, from economic influence and power to citizenship and quality of life, to capture how nations are perceived on a global scale.

For the first time, respondents were asked their opinions of major world leaders. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel are viewed as the most respected globally, while U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin saw the highest disapproval rating. Among top business leaders, Eric Schmidt, executive chairman of Google's parent company Alphabet was the most respected.

"U.S. News is known globally for its in-depth rankings of complex institutions, like university and hospital systems," said Brian Kelly, editor and chief content officer at U.S. News. "We're taking the same approach with governments to help citizens, business executives and policymakers better evaluate their countries and their leadership."

Key Findings in the 2018 Best Countries Report:

- Switzerland is No. 1, followed by No. 2 Canada, as countries with more progressive social and environmental policies dominate the [overall rankings](#). Nordic nations – Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway – rank in the top 15 overall. Denmark is the No. 1 country for [raising children](#) and [for women](#). Sweden takes the top spot for [green living](#), and Norway ranks at the top for [citizenship](#).
- Germany moved up one spot to No. 3, replacing the U.K., which fell to No. 4. Germany's reputation as an open nation with government transparency and strong gender equality led to its rise in the rankings. The U.K.'s drop, however, signals a growing lack of confidence in its economic strength post-Brexit.
- Japan remains at No. 5, scoring high marks in [entrepreneurship](#), [up-and-coming economies](#) and [rich traditions](#). Singapore and China, at No. 16 and No. 20 respectively, follow among the highest ranked countries in Asia. Both nations are viewed as having a strong potential for economic growth.

- The U.S. falls one spot to No. 8, after No. 6 Sweden and No. 7 Australia. It drops in two important categories: [open for business](#), which looks at market-oriented countries, and [movers](#), which evaluates nations with up-and-coming economies. Perceptions of the U.S. as politically stable, democratic and having an open travel policy have decreased. However, the nation remains No. 1 in power for the third year, closely followed by Russia at No. 2.
- Luxembourg is the most [business-friendly](#) nation, Germany is No. 1 in [entrepreneurship](#) and Switzerland is the best to [headquarter a corporation](#). The U.K. leads in [education](#), Canada is No. 1 for [quality of life](#) and New Zealand is the favorite for [retirement](#). Brazil is the No. 1 country [to visit](#), and Italy ranks highest as the nation with the [richest traditions](#).

“For the countries that rose to the top of this year’s rankings, it is once again clear that military vigor and economic power are no longer the key determinants to a country’s brand success. The Best Countries rankings continue to show us that just as brands must focus on a wide range of attributes to raise profiles and win over audiences, nations that are multidimensional and that reflect a wider range of qualities, such as innovation and compassion have the brand appeal that propels them on the global stage,” said David Sable, Y&R Global CEO.

The 2018 Best Countries ranking [methodology](#) relies on data gathered from a proprietary survey of more than 21,000 business leaders, informed elites and general citizens. “The Best Countries report speaks to the effect a nation’s brand can have on its economic prosperity and perceived standing in the world,” said David Reibstein, professor of marketing at the Wharton School.

The Best Countries rankings are the centerpiece of the growing U.S. News [Best Countries portal](#), a platform combining in-depth news articles, interactive data visualization tools, video, photos and op-eds from global experts in government, business and academia. The platform is part of the expanding government rankings portfolio at U.S. News, which includes the [Best States project](#) and the upcoming [Healthiest Communities rankings](#).

2018 Best Countries Rankings

*See the full rankings [here](#)

Overall

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

To Start a Business

1. Thailand
2. Malaysia
3. Mexico

To Headquarter a Corporation

1. Switzerland
2. Canada
3. Luxembourg

Most Powerful

1. United States
2. Russia
3. China

For Women

1. Denmark
2. Sweden
3. Norway

For Education

1. United Kingdom
2. United States
3. Canada

For Comfortable Retirement

1. New Zealand
2. Australia
3. Switzerland

Follow the [Best Countries](#) coverage on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) using #BestCountries.

Media Contact: Enxhi Myslymi, emyslymi@usnews.com, +1 (202) 955-2189
Jodi Lefkowitz, jodi.lefkowitz@yr.com, +1 (212) 210-4651

About U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News & World Report is a global digital news and information company that empowers people to make better, more informed decisions about important issues affecting their lives. Focusing on Education, Health, Personal Finance, Travel, Cars and News & Opinion, [USNews.com](#) provides consumer advice, rankings, news and analysis to serve people making complex decisions throughout all stages of life. More than 30 million people visit [USNews.com](#) each month for research and guidance. Founded in 1933, U.S. News is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

About Y&R's BAV Group

Y&R's BAV Group is a global consultancy with expertise in consumer insights and brand marketing strategy. Using BrandAsset® Valuator, a proprietary brand management tool and global database of consumer perceptions of brands, BAV informs strategic and creative solutions that drive business results. Over 24 years, BAV has captured data and insights from more than 1.5 million consumers across 56,000 brands in 52 countries around the world, evaluating 72 brand image and equity dimensions that matter. Y&R's BAV Group also produces the Best Countries report, an annual ranking and data analysis of 80 countries around the world, in partnership with US News and World Report and The Wharton School. Visit [yr.com/bav](#) to learn more.

About the Wharton School

Founded in 1881 as the first collegiate business school, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania is recognized globally for intellectual leadership and ongoing innovation across every major discipline of business education. With a broad global community and one of the most published business school faculties, Wharton creates economic and social value around the world. The School has 5,000 undergraduate, MBA, executive MBA, and doctoral students; more than 9,000 participants in executive education programs annually and a powerful alumni network of 94,000 graduates. For more information, visit <http://seicenter.wharton.upenn.edu>.