

New competitive global elite emerges in IMD business school's latest world competitiveness ranking

Lausanne, Switzerland – May 31, 2017 - The world's most competitive countries continue to jostle for the top positions in the 2017 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook, as the USA is pushed out of the top three.

Hong Kong has consolidated its dominance of the annual rankings compiled by the IMD [World Competitiveness Center](#), taking the top spot for the second year. Switzerland and Singapore came in second and third, with the USA ranking fourth, its lowest position in five years and down from third last year. The Netherlands completed the top five, jumping up from eighth last year.

The IMD World Competitiveness Center, a research group at [IMD business school](#) in Switzerland, has published the rankings every year since 1989. It compiles them using 260 indicators, about two thirds of which come from 'hard' data such as national employment and trade statistics; and a third from more than 6,250 responses to an Executive Opinion Survey that measures the business perception of issues such as corruption, environmental concerns and quality of life. This year 63 countries are ranked with Cyprus and Saudi Arabia making their first appearance.

Professor Arturo Bris, Director of the IMD World Competitiveness Center, said the indicators that stood out among the most improved countries are related to government and business efficiency as well as productivity.

"These countries have maintained a business-friendly environment that encourages openness and productivity," he said. "If you look at China, its improvement of seven places to 18th can be traced to its dedication to international trade. This continues to drive the economy and the improvement in government and business efficiency."

The bottom of the table, meanwhile, is largely occupied by countries experiencing political and economic upheaval. "You would expect to see countries such as Ukraine (60), Brazil (61) and Venezuela (63) here because you read about their political issues in the news. These issues are at the root of poor government efficiency which diminishes their place in the rankings," said Bris.

Introducing the Digital Competitiveness Ranking

For the first time this year, the IMD World Competitiveness Center is publishing a separate report ranking countries' digital competitiveness. Indicators for technology and scientific infrastructure are already included in the overall rankings. The new Digital Competitiveness Ranking, however, introduces several new criteria to measure countries' ability to adopt and explore digital technologies leading to transformation in government practices, business models and society in general.

At the top of the ranking is Singapore, followed by Sweden, the USA, Finland and Denmark. “There is no doubt that supportive and inclusive government institutions help technological innovation,” said Bris.

“Singapore and Sweden have developed regulation that takes advantage of the talent they have by adopting, for instance, regulation that facilitates the inflow of overseas talent which complements the locally available pool. The US invests more in developing its scientific concentration and generating ideas but the country has a history of government support for technological innovation. This shows that in digitally competitive countries, the government must facilitate the adoption of new technologies.”

Many of the top 10 digitally competitive countries are also found at the top of the overall rankings, with some exceptions. Luxembourg, number eight in the overall list, ranks only 20th in the digital list. Finland is 15th in the overall list, but 4th in the digital ranking. “Of paramount importance in the digital ranking are issues related to how adaptive and agile economies are when faced with technological change,” Bris said.

The bottom five are Indonesia, Ukraine, Mongolia, Peru and Venezuela. Bris said: “One thing the results highlight is that these countries not only have low rankings in terms of talent but they don’t invest in developing whatever talent they have.”

“There is a relation between the lack of talent and training with a lack of business agility,” he added. “Education and knowledge production are the key.”

Notes for editors

- The Digital Competitiveness Ranking is a new report from the IMD World Competitiveness Center published in 2017 for the first time alongside the annual World Competitiveness Ranking. Data and criteria on technology have always been a part of the main ranking, allowing the center to compile a new digital ranking. Singapore, Sweden, USA, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Hong Kong SAR, Switzerland, Canada, and Norway make up the top 10 in the first 2017 ranking.
- A full breakdown of the IMD World Competitiveness Center’s Ranking, as well as the new Digital Competitiveness Ranking, is available at www.imd.org/wcc-press/home/?access=wccpress2017
- The ranking has been produced every year since 1989 by the IMD World Competitiveness Center and is widely acknowledged as the leading annual assessment of the competitiveness of countries. In 2016 the top 10 consisted of the Hong Kong SAR, Switzerland, USA, Singapore, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Canada.

About IMD

IMD is a top-ranked business school, expert in developing leaders, transforming organizations and creating immediate and long-term positive impact. IMD is based in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Singapore. www.imd.org



The 2017 IMD
World Competitiveness Ranking
Top performers

Economic performance	Government efficiency	Business efficiency	Infrastructure	Overall
11	1	1	20	Hong Kong SAR 1 
15	2	5	1	Switzerland 2 
6	3	10	7	Singapore 3 
1	27	14	2	USA 4 
9	12	4	8	Netherlands 5 
4	9	3	19	Ireland 6 
20	7	8	4	Denmark 7 
3	15	6	22	Luxembourg 8 
17	14	9	3	Sweden 9 
5	4	2	37	UAE 10 
48	6	7	5	Norway 11 
32	5	20	23	New Zealand 16 
2	45	18	25	China Mainland 18 