

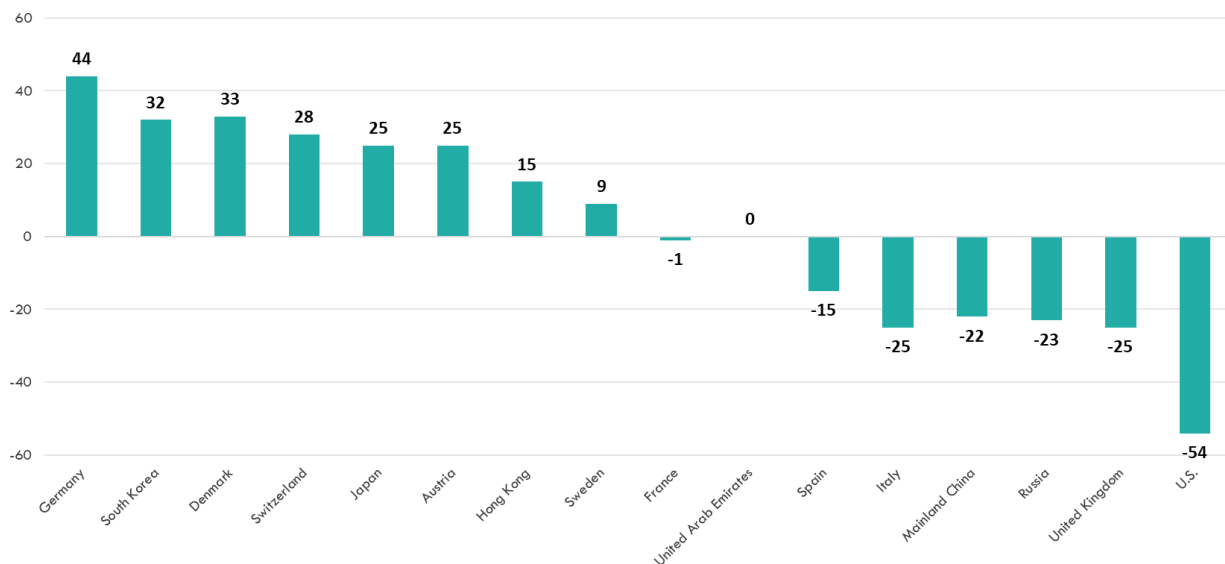
Germany most praised, United States most criticised for global COVID-19 response

London, 15 June 2020 – The third Kekst CNC COVID-19 international tracking survey has found that across the United States, the UK, Germany, France, Sweden and Japan the public believes that Germany has dealt best with the pandemic crisis, while the United States and UK are seen to have dealt with COVID-19 the worst.

The survey also found that citizens in all of the countries surveyed believe that their governments should remain focused on saving lives even as they become more enthusiastic about protecting the economy.

The research was carried out among a representative sample of 6,000 adults, including 1,000 in each of the United States, the UK, France, Germany, Sweden and Japan, between 1 and 5 June.

Graph: Respondents across all countries were asked how well or badly they thought any of the below countries around the world had handled the coronavirus crisis overall.



Source: Kekst CNC research 'COVID-19 Opinion Tracker – Edition 3, 1-5 June 2020

Commenting on the results of the third wave of research, James Johnson Senior Adviser at Kekst CNC said:

“Globally it is clear that the German response to COVID-19 has set the standard, earning praise both domestically and around the world. Global leaders who have seen their own ratings for their COVID-19 response tumble will likely be looking with some jealousy at the strong performance of the German Chancellor through the pandemic.

As people become resigned to a long period of economic recovery from COVID-19, there are signs that countries are becoming more focused on the economy – but majorities in almost all of the markets surveyed still hope that their governments remain focused on saving lives rather than economic reboot”

Government response

Respondents from outside of the United States, see that nation to have handled the COVID-19 pandemic worse than any of the other 16 countries included in the survey. Only in the United States itself is there a view that others (Italy and Mainland China) have done a worse job.

The United States is seen to have handled COVID-19 badly by a net 73% by citizens of the UK and Germany, and net badly by 61%, 50% and 49% from France, Japan and Sweden respectively. Citizens of the United States rate their own country at net 15% badly. The UK, Mainland China, Russia, Italy and Spain are all rated negatively overall. The UK was the most critical of its own nation’s response, rating the response a net 26% badly.

Although there is generally positive feedback on the performance of public services and essential retailers through the pandemic, the performance of political leaders is not universally praised by their own citizens. The Japanese Prime Minister scores a net -33% in Japan, and The United States President a net -20% in the United States. There is also strong domestic criticism of the French president (net -17%) and UK Prime Minister (net -7%). These ratings are in complete contrast to that of the German Chancellor who scores +48% on the same metrics.

Government priorities

Since the first tracking survey in April, public priorities relating to saving lives or protecting the economy have continued to shift, but significant numbers continue to prioritise health over the economy.

Looking over time, the survey found in all markets apart from Sweden, the gap between prioritising lives (even if that risks a major recession) and avoiding economic damage (even if that risks a major loss of life) is narrowing. In the United States, the gap has gone from 30 points last month to 22 now, from 16 points to 13 in Germany, from 44 to 30 points in Japan and from 59 points to

41 in the UK. Sweden, where lockdown measures have been less stringent has seen the gap widening over the past month, rising from 15 to 20 points.

The UK remains the country where the public is most adamant about the importance of saving lives (63%), regardless of economic damage.

The impact of COVID-19

In all markets, concern about the impact of COVID-19 has fallen over the past month, although majorities remain very concerned about the virus' impact on the economy, in the UK (72% and consistently the most concerned country), the United States (62%), Japan (61%), France (60%) and Germany (54%). In Sweden 46% are very concerned.

Over the past month the expected duration of the impact of COVID-19 has continued to grow with clear majorities expecting the impact on the economy to last for over a year in all of the markets surveyed.

A second wave?

Alongside concerns about the on-going impact of COVID-19, clear majorities in the UK (72%), United States (64%), Sweden (61%) and Japan (59%) expect a second wave of the virus in the next year or so. This view is shared by 45% in Germany and 44% in France.

Resetting business priorities

There is a clear demand from the public across all of the countries surveyed for there to be a reset in terms of business priorities post-COVID-19. Looking across the three dimensions of ESG, Environment, Social and Governance, the focus for the citizens of Sweden (55%), the UK (42%), Germany (38%), the United States (37%) is on Social priorities, in particular the health and safety of employees and mental health support. In Japan, Governance (40%) is the priority, in particular transparency in business activities. France is the country where the priority for Environmental measures (32%) scores highest, in particular in business' day-to-day activities and waste management.

Methodology and full results

- Nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults in Great Britain, 1,000 adults in Sweden, 1,000 adults in Germany, 1,000 adults in United States, 1,000 adults in Japan and 1,000 adults in France.
- Fieldwork took place on 1st June – 5th June 2020.
- Quotas and weights on gender, age, and region in each country.
- Margins of error of +/- 3.3% for all countries.
- Full results of the survey available at: <https://www.kekstcnc.com/insights/covid-19-opinion-tracker-edition-3/>

About Kekst CNC

Kekst CNC is a leading global strategic communication consultancy. The team of over 250 experienced professionals serve clients from 13 offices in New York, London, Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels, Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Stockholm. As trusted advisors, the firm contributes its expertise on such high-stake matters as: M&A, shareholder activism and governance, crisis communications, restructurings, regulatory investigations, litigation support, investor relations, IPO communications, issues and reputation management, change management and employee engagement, as well as digital and social communications. For more information, please visit: www.kekstcnc.com

Media contacts

James Johnson	M +44 7826 714 286	E james.johnson@kestcnc.com
Julia Klein	M +447791288412	E julia.klein@kestcnc.com