

Rating World Leaders: 2016

What People Worldwide
Think of the U.S., China, Russia,
the EU and Germany



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Do you disapprove of the leadership of the United States?

George Gallup first asked this famous question of America 75 years ago. Franklin Roosevelt was president at the time, and the nation has evaluated every president after him using this single question. Now known as the president's job approval rating, this metric is a staple in modern politics.

Ten years ago, we decided to pose this same question to the entire world. And now, every year, people in more than 130 countries tell us what they think of U.S. leadership. Additionally, people also tell us how they feel about the leadership of other major powers such as the European Union, Germany, Russia and China.

Our first global study in 2007 found subpar approval ratings of the U.S. Only 38% of the world approved of U.S. leadership, nearly matching the global approval ratings of China's leadership. Two years later, President Barack Obama took office and approval ratings of the U.S. soared. Nearly half of the world (49%) approved of U.S. leadership at that time — still the highest approval rating of a world power that Gallup has seen in its history of tracking. With rare exceptions, U.S. approval ratings have remained mostly stable during Obama's time in office and have been among the highest in the world when compared with Russia, China, the EU and Germany.

But despite the generally high approval ratings for the U.S., there is still room for improvement. Nearly three in 10 (28%) now disapprove of U.S. leadership — its highest point during Obama's presidency so far. In fact, in 2015, Russia provided the U.S. its lowest approval rating from any country in the history of Gallup's tracking, with only 1% of people approving of U.S. leadership.

But should the U.S. even care about how the world feels about its leadership?

The short answer is yes.

Global thought leader Joseph Nye popularized a concept known as soft power, which refers to the amount of power countries possess outside of economic and military might. It is a power of influence that allows countries to get others to cooperate with them not because they have to, but because they want to. Recent research suggests this concept is quantitatively true. Academics at Dartmouth and Sydney University found that "public opinion about U.S. foreign policy in foreign countries does affect their policies toward the U.S."

The data in this report quantify what people worldwide think of the leadership of the U.S., the EU, Russia, Germany and China. It offers an unprecedented look at how the world has viewed each of them for the past decade; it covers where they are the most and least popular; and it closely looks at how countries in the international headlines — such as Russia and Iran — rate them. But most importantly, this report may be one of the best ways to gauge the soft power of the U.S. and other major world powers.



Jon Clifton
Managing Director
Gallup World Poll

Since President Barack Obama took office in 2009, the image of the U.S. has been

Majorities of residents in 46 countries approve of the leadership of the U.S. Approval of U.S. leadership is highest for the second consecutive year in Kosovo, where 85% approve. Just 1% of Russians approved of U.S. leadership in 2015 — the worst rating in the world last year and the lowest approval Gallup has measured for the U.S. in the past decade. Remarkably, this is even worse than their previous record-low 4% approval in 2014.

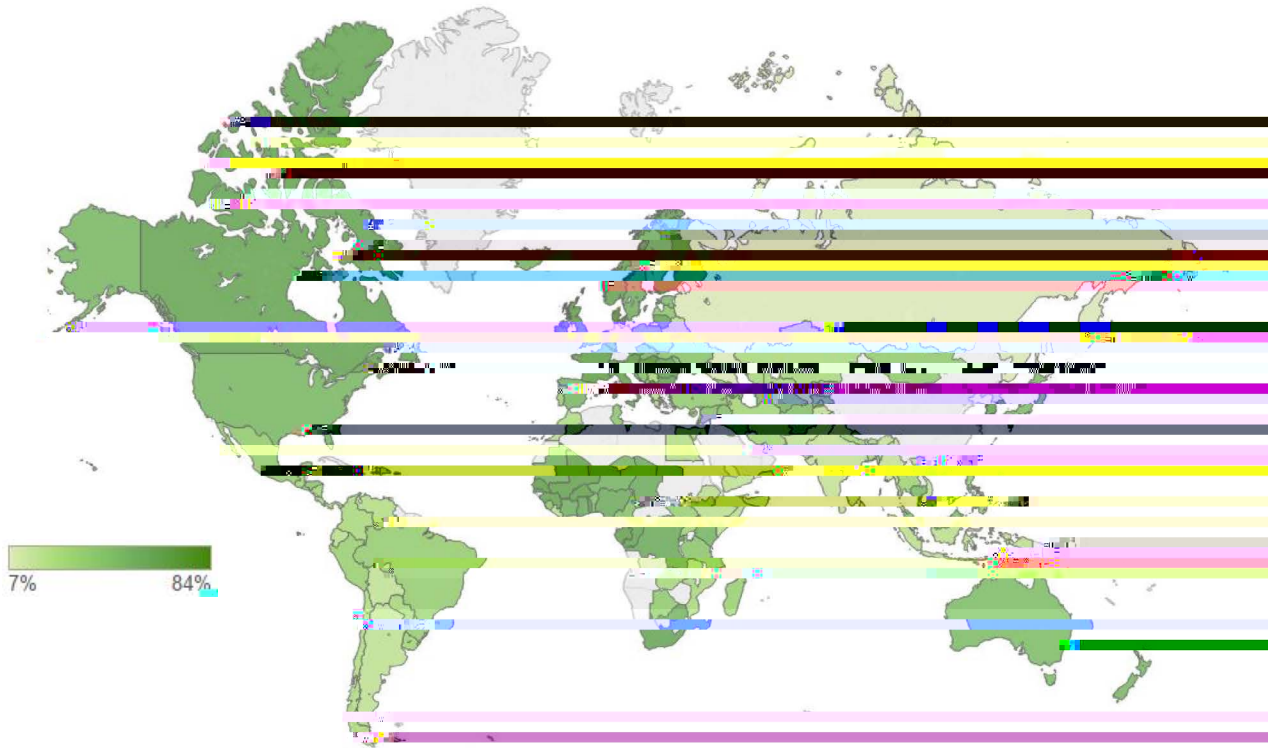
High Approval of U.S. Leadership	Approval
Kosovo	85%
Congo Brazzaville	80%
Senegal	76%
Chad	76%
Albania	74%
Cambodia	74%
Rwanda	74%
Kenya	73%
Gabon	73%
Burkina Faso	72%

Majorities in 15 countries disapprove of U.S. leadership, with the list dominated by countries in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East and North Africa. Russians give U.S. leadership the highest disapproval rating (89%) among all countries surveyed.

High Disapproval of U.S. Leadership	Disapproval

Germany

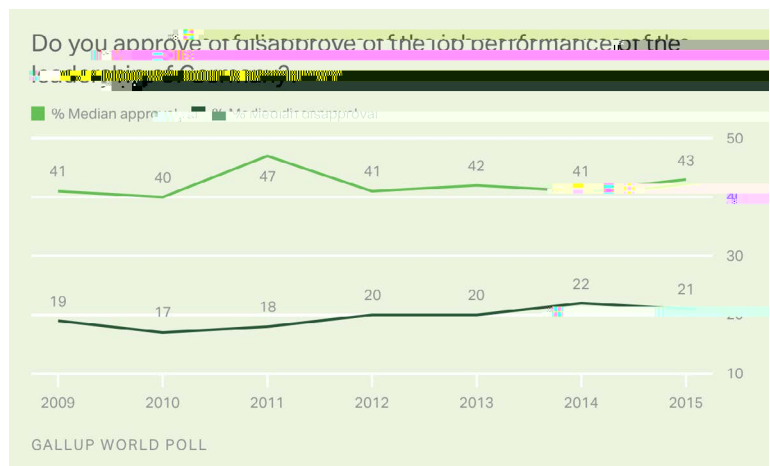
Approval of Germany's Leadership



Approval of Germany's Leadership

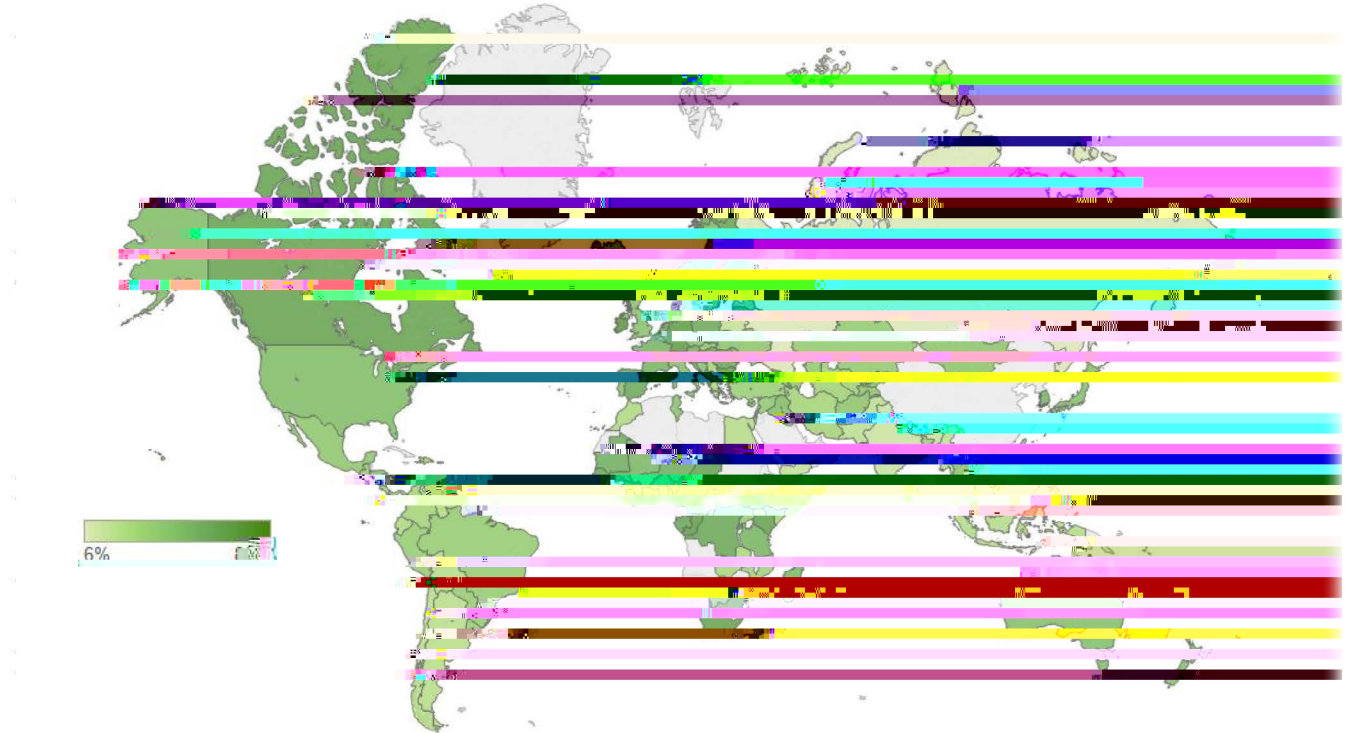
Median approval of Germany's leadership is up slightly from 41% in 2014 to 43% in 2015, and median disapproval is about half as high at 21%.

When asked separately about their own country's leadership in 2015, Germans were much more positive. Seventy-two percent of Germans approved of their country's leadership — in line with the 71% in 2014 and one of the highest for Germany since Gallup started asking the question. Similarly, 72% of Germans said they approve of the job performance of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.



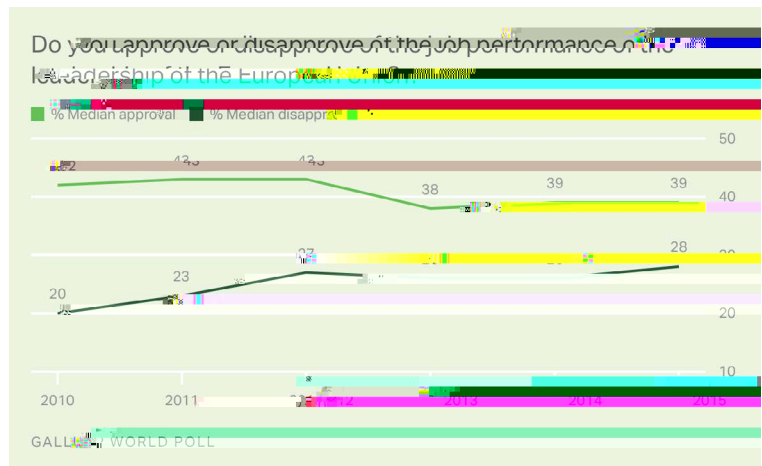
European Union

Approval of the EU's leadership



EU's leadership performance

Median approval of the EU's leadership is flat at 39%. Median disapproval is 28%, which is on the higher end for typical ratings of the EU and considerably higher than the median disapproval for Germany's leadership (21%).

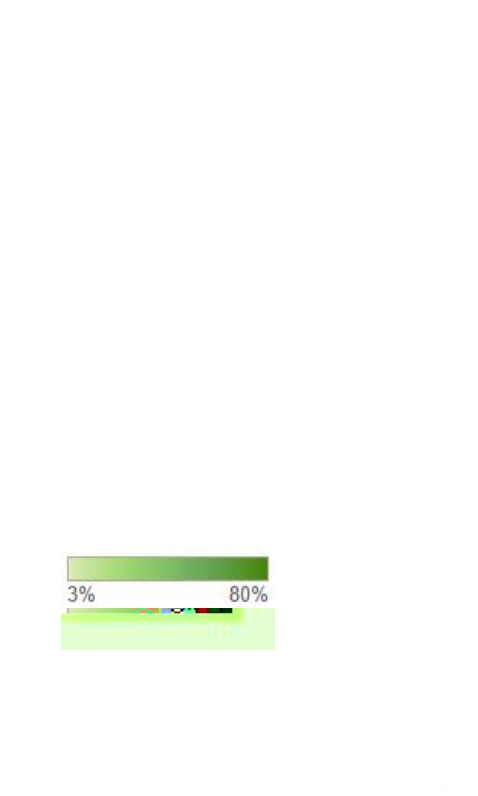


Majorities of residents in 37 countries approve of the EU's leadership. Seventeen are EU member countries. Approval of the EU's leadership is highest in Albania (80%), which became an official candidate for accession to the EU in June 2014. Russians are the least likely to approve of the EU's leadership, at 6%.

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China

Approval of China's leadership



Median approval of China's leadership is flat

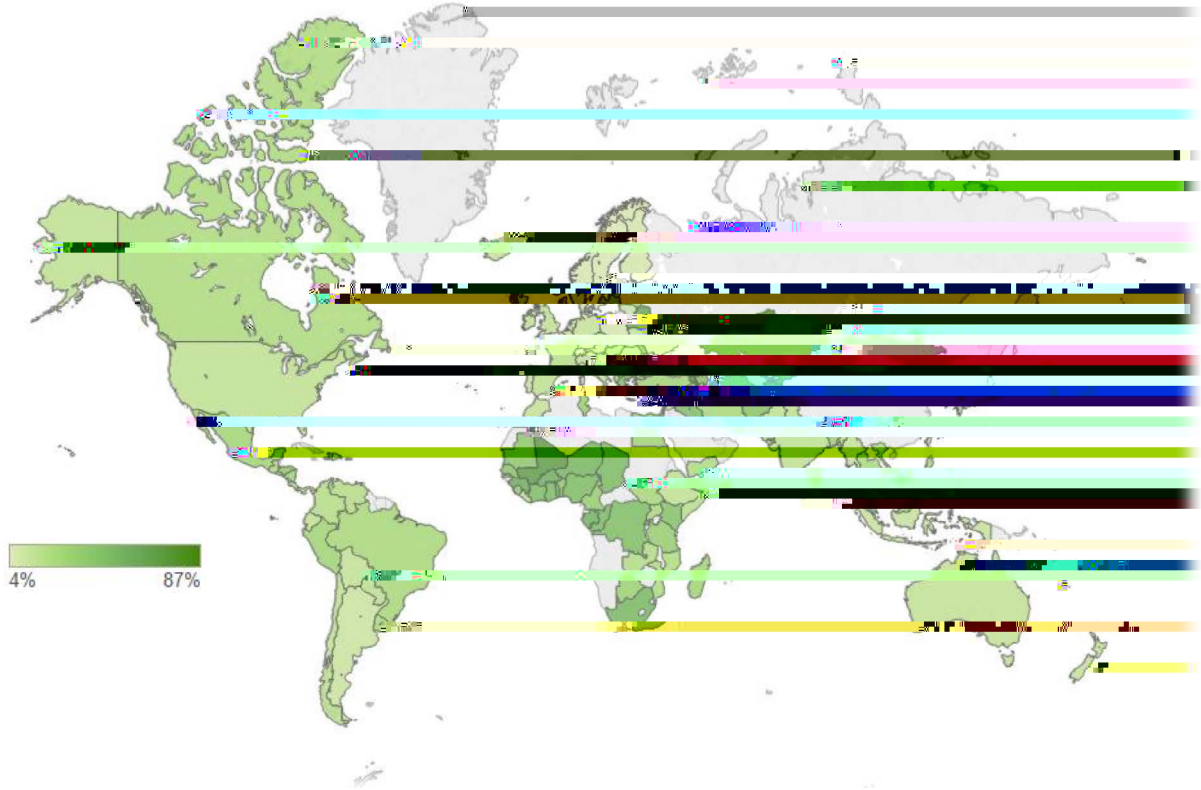
Median approval of China's leadership is flat

Majorities of residents in 23 countries approve of China's leadership. All of these countries are in Africa, except for Pakistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Approval of China's leadership is highest worldwide in Mali, where 80% approve. Residents in 64 countries are more likely to approve than disapprove.

High Approval of China's Leadership	Approval
Mali	80%
Chad	76%
Burkina Faso	76%
Rwanda	76%
Pakistan	75%
Gabon	72%
Niger	71%
Congo Brazzaville	

Russia

Approval



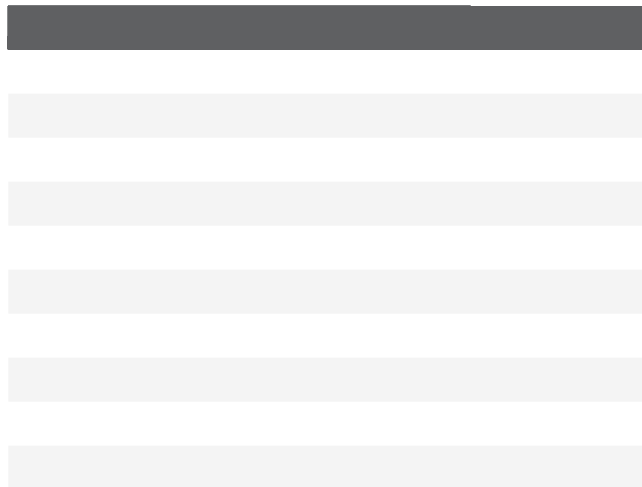
Disapproval

In addition to earning the lowest approval ratings worldwide among the five major global

Majorities of residents in 14 countries approve of Russia's leadership. Seven are former Soviet states, including Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, where Russia's leadership earns its highest approval ratings worldwide (87%, 86% and 85%, respectively).

High Approval of Russia's Leadership	Approval
Tajikistan	87%
Turkmenistan	86%
Kyrgyzstan	85%
Kazakhstan	75%
Armenia	69%
Mali	66%
Mongolia	62%
Belarus	59%
Rwanda	57%
Guinea	55%

Majorities of residents in 41 countries disapprove of Russia's leadership. This includes 22 of the 28 EU member states, the U.S., Canada and Ukraine. Residents in 75 countries are more likely to disapprove than to approve.



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