



Sweden world's most respected country: study

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Sweden has topped the reputation consulting firm Reputation Institute's annual [survey](#) measuring public perception of 39 countries around the world.

"People think that Sweden has a lot of things going for it: natural beauty, the business environment, effective government and the social welfare system. Its reputation speaks for itself, so it scores highly physical beauty, lifestyle and social welfare," Robert Gelmanovsky, CEO of the [Nordic](#) Brand Academy, the Swedish arm of the Reputation Institute, told The Local.

"Sweden does a lot of things right, as well as having a beautiful landscape. It is important to people. We can only speculate that we like beautiful surroundings and nature," he added.

The CountryRep 2010 study measures the overall respect, trust, esteem, admiration and good feelings the public in G8 countries hold toward 39 countries outside of their home country.

[Iran](#) was the least respected country in the ranking.

"A strong country reputation builds stakeholder support, making Sweden a country people will recommend as a place to visit, invest, live and work," Nicolas Trad, managing partner of Reputation Institute, said in a statement.

The Reputation Institute's research model indicates that reputation is built on 11 pillars from which a country can create a strategic platform for communicating with its stakeholders.

The 11 attributes were organized into three categories: effective government, advanced economy and appealing environment.

The study showed that public perception is most influenced by a country's lifestyle, global community involvement and physical beauty, which combined accounts for more than 30 percent of a country's reputation.

"A diverse image reduces reputation risk and provides a stronger platform for support," Kasper Nielsen, Reputation Institute managing partner, said in a statement.

Sweden came in the top five in 10 of 11 dimensions, taking the top spot for social welfare and contribution to the global community, while placing second in business environment and effective government.

The general public in the G8 - Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK and the US - was also asked its their perceptions of the most attractive countries to invest in. Switzerland topped the list, while Sweden placed in the top three.

The survey also evaluated how 35 of the countries rated themselves. In the self-image survey, Sweden ranked 12th, an indication that Swedes are not as comfortable demonstrating national pride in public.

"Generally, Swedes, when it comes to surveys and such, especially when talking to others, are very humble, but Swedes know this and are proud of their country. They are just not as comfortable talking about it. It might be part of the Swedish mental character to be a bit low-key and not boast too much about themselves," said Gelmanovsky.

Findings from more than 40,000 interviews showed that Australia, Finland, and Canada gave their home countries the highest ratings when asked about their perceptions whether the country has a good reputation and whether they like, admire and respect and trust the country. Hungary rated itself the lowest.

Gelmanovsky suggested several tips to help Sweden remain at the top of the survey next year. He believes that Sweden needs to move away from common perceptions about Sweden's business environment, such as how the country is home to many large global corporations and is innovative, and emphasise its effective government with high political stability and a well functioning society.

"Most of these things are not new to how Sweden is portrayed. Maybe we could speak more about how good a business environment Sweden actually is instead of the the image out there that it is a high-tax country. This survey shows there is a lot to gain about talking about Sweden's business and government system, putting forth the effective government thing a bit more," he said.

He added that the government needs to look at the scores in effective government and social welfare, as well as its contributions to the global community. In addition, the findings were greatly affected by the current global financial climate given that Sweden is one of the countries least affected by the economic crisis in Europe.

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