

Adults in Five Largest European Countries and the US Believe Angela Merkel is Most Favorable and George Bush is Most Influential World Figure

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – December 1, 2008 – A new Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey conducted online by Harris Interactive® among a total of 6,257 adults (aged 16-64) in France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain and the United States and adults (aged 18-64) in Italy between October 29 and November 6, 2008 finds that:

- In each of the five European countries the world figure that people have the strongest opinion of is the Dalai Lama. In the United States, he comes in second, while former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair is first;
- Looking at an average of all six countries, the Dalai Lama comes in as the world leader people have the strongest opinion of (71% have a favorable opinion), followed by Angela Merkel of Germany (54%), Tony Blair (51%), Pope Benedict XVI (47%) and Nicolas Sarkozy of France (44%). At the bottom of the list is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran (7% have favorable opinion), Bashar al-Assad of Syria (10%) and Hu Jintao of China (10%);
- While some leaders may not be perceived favorably, they may be seen as influential. US President George Bush is seen as most influential in Great Britain (68% say he has a great deal of or some influence), Italy (75%), Spain (77%) and the United States (64%) while Vladimir Putin is seen as having the most influence by Germans (71%) and French adults (68%);
- In looking at the average for all six countries, George Bush is seen as most influential (70%) followed by Vladimir Putin (64%) and Angela Merkel (60%). Rounding out the top five influential leaders is Nicolas Sarkozy (58%) and Gordon Brown (53%). Perceived to be least influential are Bashar al-Assad (20%), Fidel Castro of Cuba (21%) and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil (21%);
- A popularity/influence index was also created combining these two different questions and Angela Merkel comes on top in Italy (73%), Spain (68%), France (68%) and Germany (67%) while Tony Blair is on top in the United States (58%) and The Dalai Lama and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown are on top in Great Britain (44% each); and,
- Looking at the average for all six countries combined, Angela Merkel comes in at top (57%) followed by the Dalai Lama (54%), Nicolas Sarkozy (51%), Tony Blair (50%) and Pope Benedict XVI (47%).

So What?

There are many things that make a leader influential in the eyes of the world – power, ability to work with other countries and a strong military are just some reasons. But, it is for these reasons that George Bush and Vladimir Putin both come in at the top of the influence index. When it comes to opinions of these two world figures, there is definitely a difference – sometimes, the most influential are not well-liked as in a list of 19 world figures Putin and Bush rank 13th and 14th respectively. However, Angela Merkel seems to be able to balance the two pieces

– she is number two in favorability and number three in influence. Maybe other leaders should look to her leadership style for pointers.

TABLE 1
OPINIONS OF WORLD LEADERS

“For each of the following people, please indicate whether you have a very good, somewhat good, somewhat poor or very poor opinion of that person?”

Percent saying “Very/Somewhat good”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	Average for all 6 countries
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Dalai Lama	61	79	80	70	77	60	71
Angela Merkel (Germany)	28	70	73	59	63	30	54
Tony Blair (Great Britain)	37	52	65	39	50	65	51
Pope Benedict XVI	41	41	55	34	59	55	47
Nicolas Sarkozy (France)	31	40	60	53	48	36	44
Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (Spain)	16	57	65	50	36	20	41
Gordon Brown (Great Britain)	33	41	49	42	34	42	40
Jose Manuel Barroso (European Union)	16	40	52	49	46	20	37
Ban Ki-moon (United Nations)	29	43	43	41	39	19	35
Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Brazil)	9	32	36	50	16	16	26
Silvio Berlusconi (Italy)	16	9	43	20	14	20	20
Fidel Castro (Cuba)	19	12	25	15	21	8	17
Vladimir Putin (Russia)	13	8	24	15	25	18	17
George W. Bush (United States)	16	5	22	10	8	34	16
Hugo Chavez (Venezuela)	10	31	22	11	14	9	16
Dmitri Medvedev (Russia)	9	7	14	13	18	10	12
Hu Jintao (China)	10	7	10	16	8	10	10
Bashar al-Assad (Syria)	7	7	15	14	9	6	10
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Iran)	7	5	6	9	8	5	7

TABLE 2
INFLUENCE OF WORLD LEADERS

“For each of the following international personalities, how much influence do you think they have at an international level?”

Percent Saying “A Great deal/Some influence”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	Average for all 6 countries
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
George W. Bush (United States)	68	66	75	77	69	64	70
Vladimir Putin (Russia)	53	68	74	63	71	51	64
Angela Merkel (Germany)	38	66	72	77	70	34	60
Nicolas Sarkozy (France)	41	61	71	78	61	38	58
Gordon Brown (Great Britain)	55	47	60	65	42	47	53
Hu Jintao (China)	43	58	58	56	52	47	52
Tony Blair (Great Britain)	35	40	60	61	47	50	48
Jose Manuel Barroso (European Union)	38	45	58	58	51	35	47
Pope Benedict XVI	33	30	67	53	41	52	46
Ban Ki-moon (United Nations)	41	41	50	52	41	36	44
Dmitri Medvedev (Russia)	37	42	44	45	53	39	43
The Dalai Lama	26	35	51	42	34	37	37
Silvio Berlusconi (Italy)	26	30	54	54	34	22	37
Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (Spain)	21	36	57	38	26	24	33
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Iran)	26	27	46	33	25	38	32
Hugo Chavez (Venezuela)	14	24	28	33	11	32	24
Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Brazil)	15	17	27	37	13	18	21
Fidel Castro (Cuba)	18	15	31	24	16	22	21
Bashar al-Assad (Syria)	19	21	25	22	10	23	20

**TABLE 3
POPULARITY/INFLUENCE INDEX**

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	Average for all 6 countries
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Angela Merkel (Germany)	33	68	73	68	67	32	57
The Dalai Lama	44	57	66	56	56	49	54
Nicolas Sarkozy (France)	36	51	66	66	55	37	51
Tony Blair (Great Britain)	36	46	63	50	49	58	50
Pope Benedict XVI	37	36	61	44	50	54	47
Gordon Brown (Great Britain)	44	44	55	54	38	45	47
George W. Bush (United States)	42	36	49	44	39	49	43
Jose Manuel Barroso (European Union)	27	43	55	54	49	28	42
Vladimir Putin (Russia)	33	38	49	39	48	35	41
Ban Ki-moon (United Nations)	35	42	47	47	40	28	40
Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero (Spain)	19	47	61	44	31	22	37
Hu Jintao (China)	27	33	34	36	30	29	31
Silvio Berlusconi (Italy)	21	20	49	37	24	21	29
Dmitri Medvedev (Russia)	23	25	29	29	36	25	28
Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (Brazil)	12	25	32	44	15	17	24
Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Iran)	17	16	26	21	17	22	20
Hugo Chavez (Venezuela)	12	28	25	22	13	21	20
Fidel Castro (Cuba)	19	14	28	20	19	15	19
Bashar al-Assad (Syria)	13	14	20	18	10	15	15

Note: This index combines the results of those who said "Very/Somewhat good in terms of opinion" (Table 1) and "A great deal/Some influence" in terms of influence (Table 2)

Methodology

This **Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune** study was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,257 adults (aged 16-64) within France (1,045), Germany (1,034), Great Britain (1,087), Spain (1,007) and the United States (1,032), and adults (aged 18-64) in Italy (1,052) between 29 October and 6 November 2008. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult populations of the respective countries. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls and of the British Polling Council.

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