

Introduction

The 27 EU Member States account for a massive one-sixth of the world's trade. Given this, it is unsurprising that the EU is such a major trading partner for so many non-EU countries and a market for multinational companies. The global economic downturn has heightened the need to understand the dynamics of these trading relationships. Reputation is everything. In recognition of this, ComRes has conducted research to understand the perceptions of senior opinion leaders in Brussels relating to international trade relationships and perceptions of corporations from key trade partner countries.

Summary of Findings

The survey explores which countries opinion leaders in Brussels feel should be the highest priority for the EU when developing trade relationships. It also sheds light on general perceptions of multinational companies headquartered in each country in relation to favourability, trustworthiness and the extent to which companies are seen as being responsible in their business practices.

The country given the highest priority when developing EU trade relationships is the US, followed by China. These two are notably ahead of the other countries tested. Mexico is considered the lowest priority of those tested by some margin.

In terms of general perceptions of companies headquartered in these countries, companies headquartered in Canada, Japan and the USA attract the most positive scores on all three metrics tested (favourability, trust and perceived responsibility in business practices), while Russia and China are perceived the least positively. The developing economies Brazil, India and Mexico fall in the middle of these scales.

The graphs on the following page show the full results for this research with breakdown by country. If you'd like to learn more about this research or discuss how our European stakeholder research services could add value to your own strategy please do contact us.

Rosie Edwards, Senior Account Manager

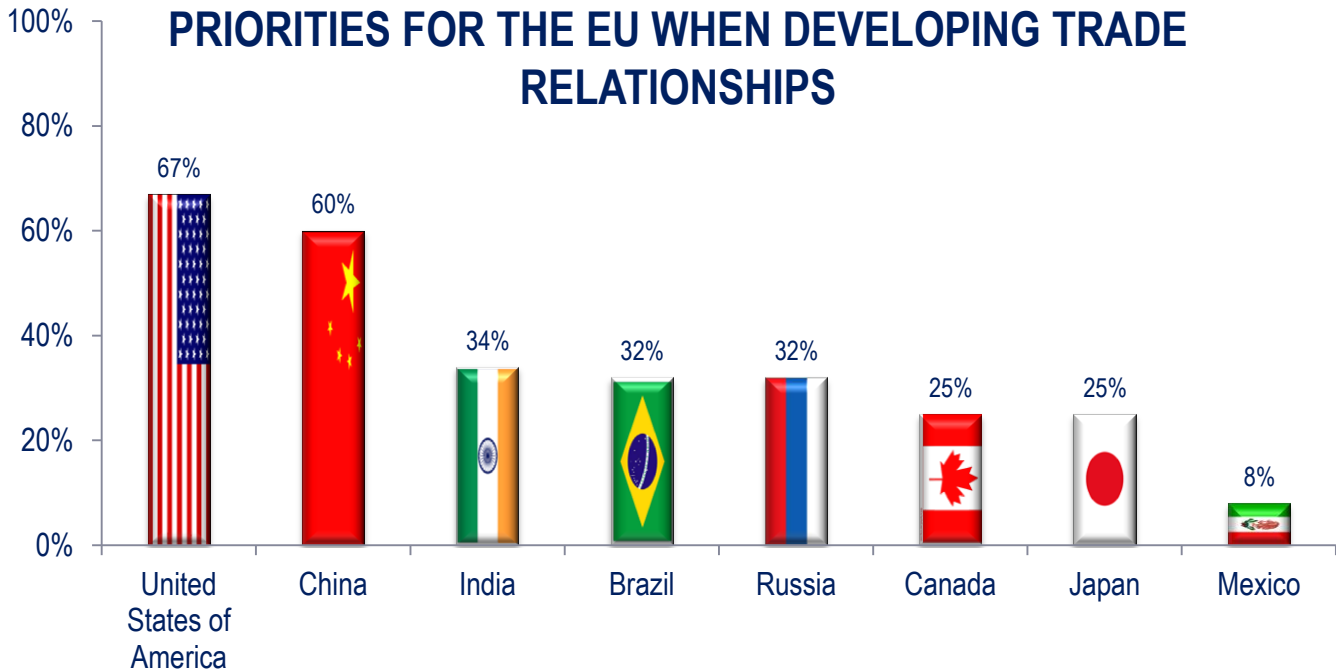
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Methodology

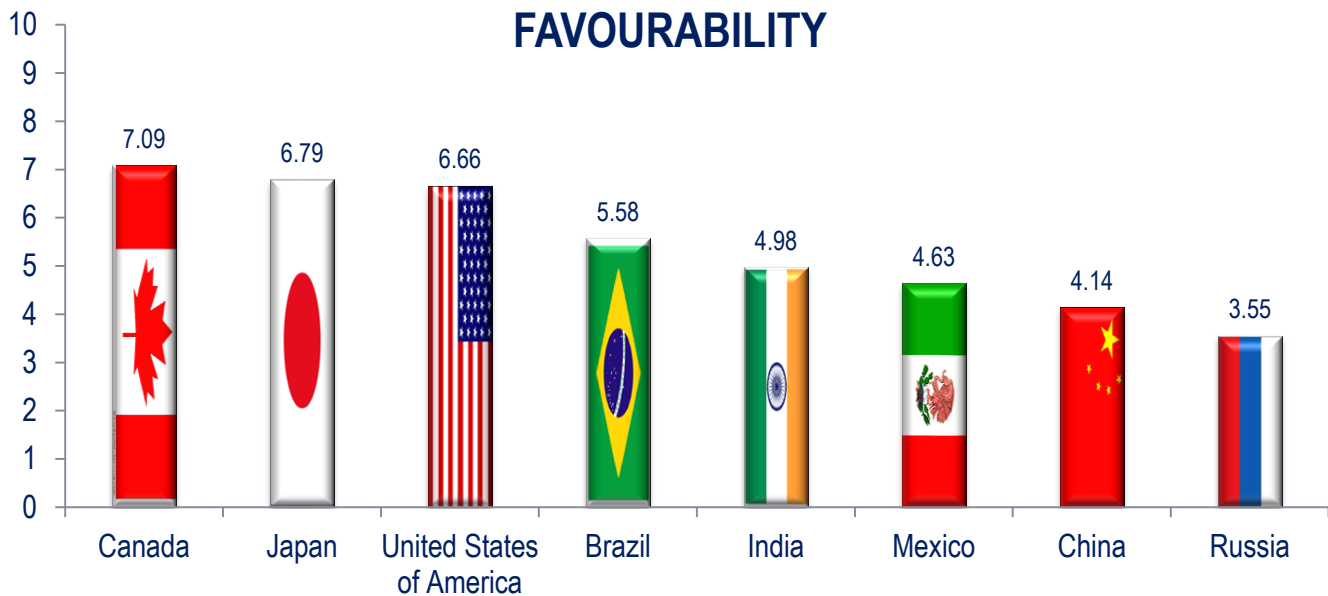
From November to December 2012 ComRes surveyed 200 senior decision makers in Brussels including representatives from the European Commission, Permanent Representations and Parliament as well as interest groups, business leaders, NGOs, think tanks, academics, and the media. More information about the ComRes Brussels Influencers Survey can be found on our website:

<http://www.comres.co.uk/page/39/brussels-influencers-panel.htm>



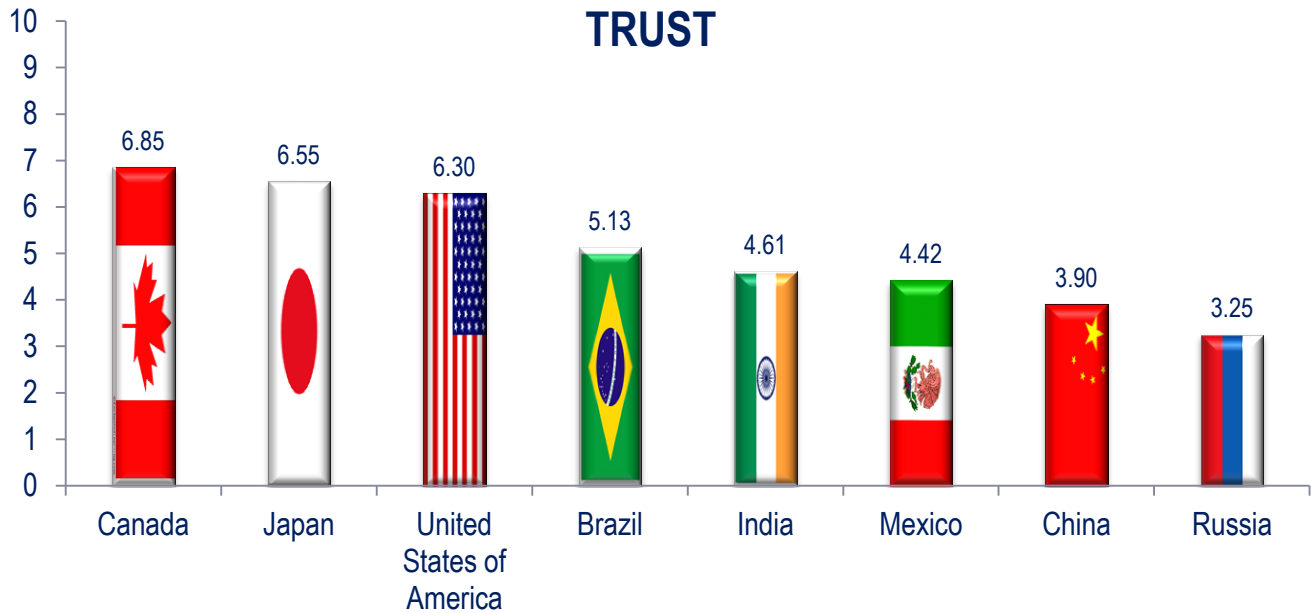
Q. Please rank the following according to which countries should be the highest priority for the EU when developing trade relationships. (Graph shows proportion of respondents who rank each country as 1st, 2nd or 3rd priority)

Base: All Brussels Influencers (n=244)

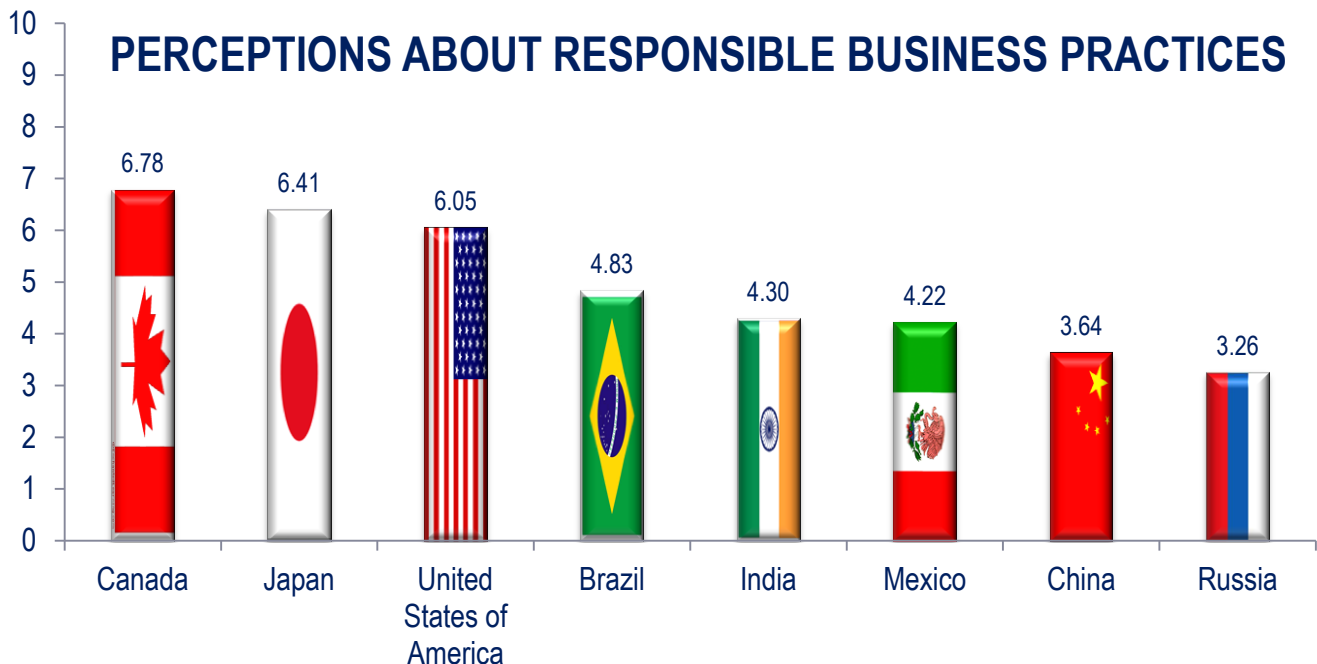


Q. In general, how favourable or unfavourable are your impressions of companies that are headquartered in each of the following countries? (Graph shows mean score where 10 = very favourable and 0 = very unfavourable)

Base: All Brussels Influencers (n=244)



Q. To what extent do you perceive multinational companies headquartered in the following countries to be trustworthy or untrustworthy? (Graph shows mean score where 10 = very trustworthy and 0 = very untrustworthy)
 Base: All Brussels Influencers (n=244)



Q. To what extent do you perceive multinational companies headquartered in the following countries to be responsible or irresponsible in their business practices? (Graph shows mean score where 10 = very responsible and 0 = very irresponsible)
 Base: All Brussels Influencers (n=244)