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European Political Leadership Rankings 2026

Final Multi-Market Survey of Business Owners

Zurich, Switzerland – The final results of the Connect4B European Political Leadership Survey show a clear and consistent message across Europe’s business community: respondents reward **competence, stability, credibility, and proven delivery**, while penalizing perceived weakness, drift, polarization, and poor economic management.

Across nearly all markets surveyed, **former leaders outperform many current officeholders**, suggesting a broad preference for experienced and trusted leadership over contemporary incumbency. The findings indicate that in a period of geopolitical uncertainty and economic pressure, respondents place greater value on seriousness, predictability, and demonstrated results than on rhetoric or political branding.

One of the most prominent findings concerns **Donald Trump**, who was included as a reference figure across multiple respondent markets. Trump performs weakly overall and is rated negatively in most countries surveyed. In several markets, he ranks near the

bottom of the full dataset. While he retains pockets of support, the dominant response among European business owners is clearly unfavorable. This makes Trump one of the most visible and polarizing figures in the entire study.

At the top of the broader rankings stand several highly respected legacy figures. **Helmut Kohl** emerges as one of the strongest-performing German leaders and remains a benchmark for strategic leadership, long-term statecraft, and economic credibility. **Adolf Ogi** ranks among the highest-rated leaders in Europe and symbolizes Switzerland's wider strength as a stable and pragmatic governance model. **Gerhard Schröder** also performs strongly, suggesting continued recognition for decisiveness and reform capacity. **Angela Merkel** records a solid and positive overall result, continuing to benefit from perceptions of seriousness, calm leadership, and crisis management.

Among current leaders, **Petr Pavel** of the Czech Republic is one of the standout performers and ranks as the strongest active leader in the dataset. His results suggest that professionalism, discipline, and calm authority resonate strongly with business respondents. **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** also performs credibly and comparatively well given wartime conditions, maintaining meaningful support despite the pressures associated with conflict leadership. Zelenskyy ranks significantly above many other current leaders in the survey.

Switzerland is one of the clearest country-level winners in the study. Multiple Swiss leaders perform strongly across generations, reinforcing the perception of Switzerland as a trusted, competent, and stable political system. Denmark also performs very well, with several leaders ranking near the top. Germany benefits from highly rated historical figures, though its current leadership profile is markedly weaker.

Germany presents one of the most striking contrasts in the survey. While **Helmut Kohl**, **Gerhard Schröder**, and **Angela Merkel** all receive respectable to strong results, **Olaf Scholz** performs exceptionally poorly. Nearly seven in ten German respondents rate Scholz as *Poor or Insufficient*, making him one of the weakest-rated leaders in the full study. **Friedrich Merz** performs somewhat better than Scholz but remains mixed overall and trails Germany's historical leaders by a clear margin. The contrast between Germany's former leadership bench and its current leadership ratings is likely to attract particular media attention.

Elsewhere, several sitting leaders receive weak or divided ratings, reflecting frustration over economic performance, policy uncertainty, or lack of perceived direction. The survey suggests that respondents are less interested in ideology than in managerial competence, delivery, and confidence-building leadership.

Overall, the results point to a wider leadership preference across Europe's business community: respondents favor leaders associated with steadiness, economic realism,

institutional credibility, and effective execution. They are notably less supportive of leaders perceived as chaotic, divisive, weak, or ineffective.

The broader message is clear: in uncertain times, Europe's business owners prefer trusted competence over political noise.

Table 1. Overall Top 25 Leaders

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
1	Algirdas Brazauskas	Lithuania	4.48	75
2	Petr Pavel	Czech Republic	4.27	204
3	Anders Fogh Rasmussen	Denmark	4.07	216
4	Adolf Ogi	Switzerland	4.05	489
5	Helmut Kohl	Germany	4.01	511
6	L'udovít Ódor	Slovakia	3.90	176
7	Lars Løkke Rasmussen	Denmark	3.88	217
8	Pedro Passos Coelho	Portugal	3.84	285
9	Gerhard Schröder	Germany	3.71	510
10	Andrus Ansip	Estonia	3.68	387
11	Donald Tusk	Poland	3.66	474
12	Doris Leuthard	Switzerland	3.54	492
13	Volodymyr Zelenskyy	Ukraine	3.49	37
14	Mette Frederiksen	Denmark	3.46	217
15	Ueli Maurer	Switzerland	3.42	490
16	Juha Sipilä	Finland	3.42	155
17	Johann Schneider-Ammann	Switzerland	3.41	490

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
18	Petteri Orpo	Finland	3.40	155
19	Angela Merkel	Germany	3.40	510
20	Petr Fiala	Czech Republic	3.39	204
21	Mirek Topolánek	Czech Republic	3.35	204
22	Helle Thorning-Schmidt	Denmark	3.33	217
23	Nicolas Sarkozy	France	3.31	59
24	Zoran Milanović	Croatia	3.17	143
25	Petro Poroshenko	Ukraine	3.17	36

Table 2. Current Leaders Ranking

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
1	Petr Pavel	Czech Republic	4.27	204
2	Volodymyr Zelenskyy	Ukraine	3.49	37
3	Mette Frederiksen	Denmark	3.46	217
4	Petteri Orpo	Finland	3.40	155
5	Petr Fiala	Czech Republic	3.39	204
6	Zoran Milanović	Croatia	3.17	143
7	Andrej Plenković	Croatia	3.09	143
8	Rishi Sunak	United Kingdom	3.00	200
9	Luís Montenegro	Portugal	2.90	286
10	Friedrich Merz	Germany	2.79	511
11	Viola Amherd	Switzerland	2.76	491
12	Christian Stocker	Austria	2.52	481

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
13	Emmanuel Macron	France	2.47	59
14	Kaja Kallas	Estonia	2.47	388
15	Olaf Scholz	Germany	2.14	511
16	Keir Starmer	United Kingdom	2.01	200

Table 3. Germany Leadership Ranking

Rank	Leader	Score	n
1	Helmut Kohl	4.01	511
2	Gerhard Schröder	3.71	510
3	Angela Merkel	3.40	510
4	Friedrich Merz	2.79	511
5	Donald Trump	2.38	511
6	Olaf Scholz	2.14	511

Table 4. Switzerland Leadership Ranking

Rank	Leader	Score	n
1	Adolf Ogi	4.05	489
2	Doris Leuthard	3.54	492
3	Ueli Maurer	3.42	490
4	Johann Schneider-Ammann	3.41	490
5	Viola Amherd	2.76	491
6	Donald Trump	2.37	491

Table 5. Austria Leadership Ranking

Rank	Leader	Score	n
1	Sebastian Kurz	2.54	482
2	Christian Stocker	2.52	481
3	Christian Kern	2.36	482
4	Donald Trump	2.27	482
5	Karl Nehammer	2.23	482
	Werner Faymann	2.18	481

Table 6. Donald Trump by Market

Rank	Respondent Country	Score	n
1	United Kingdom	2.91	200
2	France	2.71	59
3	Lithuania	2.67	75
4	Czech Republic	2.51	204
5	Bulgaria	2.43	236
6	Portugal	2.43	286
7	Estonia	2.41	387
8	Romania	2.41	153
9	Finland	2.39	156
10	Germany	2.38	511
11	Switzerland	2.37	491
12	Austria	2.27	482
13	Poland	2.24	237

Rank Respondent Country Score n

14	Slovakia	2.20	176
15	Ukraine	2.11	36
16	Norway	1.98	101
17	Croatia	1.96	144
18	Denmark	1.77	217

Table 7. Lowest Rated Leaders (Selected)

Rank	Leader	Country	Score
1	Marcel Ciolacu	Romania	1.89
2	Keir Starmer	United Kingdom	2.01
3	Peter Pellegrini	Slovakia	2.07
4	Olaf Scholz	Germany	2.14
5	José Sócrates	Portugal	2.11
6	Robert Fico	Slovakia	2.20
7	Werner Faymann	Austria	2.18

Table 8. Historical Heavyweights

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
1	Adolf Ogi	Switzerland	4.05	489
2	Helmut Kohl	Germany	4.01	511
3	Pedro Passos Coelho	Portugal	3.84	285
4	Gerhard Schröder	Germany	3.71	510
5	Donald Tusk	Poland	3.66	474

Rank	Leader	Country	Score	n
6	Doris Leuthard	Switzerland	3.54	492
7	Angela Merkel	Germany	3.40	510
8	Nicolas Sarkozy	France	3.31	59
9	Jacques Chirac	France	3.03	59
10	David Cameron	United Kingdom	2.56	200

Key Findings at a Glance

- **Donald Trump** performs weakly overall across Europe and is rated negatively in most markets.
- **Helmut Kohl** remains one of the most respected German leaders tested.
- **Adolf Ogi** ranks among the strongest leaders in the full European sample.
- **Petr Pavel** is the highest-rated current active leader.
- **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** performs credibly and above many incumbents despite wartime pressures.
- **Olaf Scholz** is among the weakest-rated leaders in the survey.
- Former leaders generally outperform current officeholders.
- Switzerland and Denmark show particularly strong leadership depth.

Methodology

The Connect4B European Political Leadership Survey was conducted among business owners across multiple European markets. Respondents assessed selected national and international political figures on a six-point retrospective leadership scale:

1 = Poor

2 = Insufficient

3 = Sufficient

4 = Satisfactory

5 = Good

6 = Very good

Weighted averages were calculated across all leaders.

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Illustrative summary only. This cover presents a selective visual snapshot of survey findings and is not a full reproduction of the official ranking tables. Some leaders and markets are omitted for design clarity, and display order is editorial rather than the complete official ranking sequence. Scores shown reflect selected survey results and may include country-specific or European average measures where indicated. All full rankings, methodology, sample sizes, definitions, weighting approach, and authoritative results are contained in the complete Connect4B report, which supersedes this illustration. This graphic should not be interpreted as an endorsement, prediction, or definitive comparative assessment of any individual leader.