

MSN, 9-7-2011

## US falls to 5th in global competitiveness, survey shows

Huge deficits and lack of faith in government push nation down the list

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updated 2 hours 14 minutes ago

[GENEVA](#) — The U.S. has tumbled further down a global ranking of the world's most competitive economies, landing at fifth place because of its huge deficits and declining public faith in government, a global economic group said Wednesday.

The announcement by the World Economic Forum was the latest bad news for the Obama administration, which has been struggling to boost the sinking U.S. economy and lower an unemployment rate of more than 9 percent.

Switzerland held onto the top spot for the third consecutive year in the annual ranking by the Geneva-based forum, which is best known for its exclusive meeting of luminaries in Davos, Switzerland, each January.

**Singapore** moved up to second place, bumping Sweden down to third. Finland moved up to fourth place, from seventh last year. The U.S. was in fourth place last year, after falling from No. 1 in 2008.

The rankings, which the forum has issued for more than three decades, are based on economic data and a survey of 15,000 business executives.

The forum praised the U.S. for its productivity, highly sophisticated and innovative companies, excellent universities and flexible labor market. But it also cited "a number of escalating weaknesses" such as rising government debt and declining public faith in political leaders and corporate ethics.

The results of a survey of **142 nations** comes a day before Obama is preparing to tackle jobs issues in a speech to the U.S. Congress, and just as U.S. polls show a clear majority of those surveyed say they disapprove of the way Obama is handling the economy.

**Switzerland** held onto its top ranking, the forum said, because of "continuing strong performance across the board" with innovation, technological readiness, even-handed regulation and having one of the world's most stable economic environments.

**Germany**, Europe's economic powerhouse, was sixth, followed by the **Netherlands** and **Denmark**. **Japan** came in ninth, and **Britain** was 10th. **France** was 18th, and **Greece**, saddled with debt, fell to 90th.

The report looked at broader trends: While the U.S. slipped, emerging markets gained traction.

**China** took 26th place, highest among major emerging economies; **Brazil** was 53rd; **India** was 56th; and **Russia** was 66th.

"**Fiscal imbalances** that have been building up around the world are really a danger to future competitiveness, in terms of the ability of countries to [invest](#) in those things that will be very important for competitiveness going forward, things like education, infrastructure and so on," said Jennifer Blanke, an economist with the forum.

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