

Brits express fear of negative national image & poor international relations

Contributed by GfK NOP
Thursday, 10 July 2008

Brits express fear of negative national image & poor international relations

Â

London, 10 June 2008 - Only 14 per cent of Britons think the UK's foreign relations are going in the right direction

Britons and Americans are the most pessimistic about their national image as perceived by the rest of the world. More than one in three (39 per cent) UK respondents of latest research carried out by GfK Roper Consulting via their study Roper Reports Worldwide expressed their view that other countries think of Britain "very or somewhat unfavourably". Nearly half of American respondents (48 per cent) also expressed their fear of a negative national image.

In contrast, the people of Sweden feel most positive about their national image, with just 2 per cent of respondents feeling that the rest of the world sees their country "very or somewhat unfavourably". This is just in front of China at 3 per cent.

GfK's Roper Reports Worldwide also found that Britons are the most negative in the world about the direction of international relations of their own country - while the Chinese are the most positive - according to their new global research which questioned 30,000 in 25 countries.

The research revealed that just 14 per cent of UK respondents feel that relations between their own country and the rest of the world are heading in the "right direction"; the lowest number of all those polled, and a fraction of the global average of 50 per cent saying the same.

Following the UK in negative feeling towards the direction of their international relations is the US, with just 22 per cent saying they are heading in the right direction. Italy (27 per cent), Taiwan (30 per cent), and Japan (30 per cent) make up the rest of the bottom five. The US tops the rankings for those explicitly saying relations are heading in the wrong direction (62 per cent).

The most positive country in the world is overwhelmingly China, with 89 per cent regarding its relations with other nations as heading in the right direction. China is followed by India (71 per cent), Indonesia (70 per cent), Korea (68 per cent) and Thailand (60 per cent).

Globally, an average 50 per cent of people feel that their international relations are heading in the right direction - with 33 per cent feeling the opposite - and 17 per cent having no opinion on the matter.

Nick Chiarelli of GfK Roper Consulting comments: "This research reveals a negative picture of how those in the UK and US feel about their international relations. There could be many factors at play here, but an obvious link is each country's involvement with the troubles in the Middle East. Interestingly, by contrast to the UK, those in Germany and France feel very positive about their relations with other nations "two countries which are not so close to such issues.

"Of course, considerations of how one's country is regarded are not just of importance when citizens of various countries interact in tourist destinations (think for example of the negative views of the UK that residents of Agia Napa or Faliraki have each Summer). How their country of origin is regarded can be a key factor for brands that wear their national identity very much on their sleeve - for example, Rolls-Royce, Beefeater gin, Rimmel London. If the perceptions of British citizens, that their country is not well regarded around the world, are true, then maybe it is time for such brands to rethink the way they position themselves abroad. American brands have had to deal with this issue since the very beginning of the "war on terror". Maybe now, British brands also must reassess how they portray themselves to the world."