



PRESS RELEASE

World Index of Moral Freedom 2016 published

- The Netherlands top the world ranking with 91.70 out of 100 points.
- Among the most morally free countries, two surprises: Uruguay and Portugal.
- USA only seventh, just after Spain and before Germany and Canada.
- Saudi Arabia closes the list as the 160th country, scoring under 10 points.
- Islamic, communist and small Central American countries perform poorly.
- Russia and the former Soviet Union have middle or low scores.

MADRID, APRIL 2ND 2016. The Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty has today published the first edition of the World Index of Moral Freedom (WIMF). This index aims at completing the views presented by many other international rankings measuring general freedom or aspects thereof (press freedom, economic freedom, etcetera).

The research conducted has aimed at determining the degree of individual freedom to take decisions pertaining to the great moral debates of our time. Twenty indicators have been taken into account and organized into five categories, each of them worth 20% of the total score: religious freedom and separation of state and religion, bioethical freedom, drugs freedom, sexual freedom and freedom on family and gender issues.

Out of one hundred and sixty countries studied, only one (the Netherlands) has slightly scored over ninety points, thus being classified as “highest moral freedom”. Dutch policies have been a beacon of moral freedom and a driving force in the global evolution towards less state intervention on morality. The Netherlands was the first country to legalise some drugs and sex services among consenting adults, and also the first country to legalise same sex marriage.

Just after the Netherlands, the “very high moral freedom” area (80 to 90 points) consists of Uruguay, Portugal and the Czech Republic. Immediately after those countries, but just classified as “high moral freedom”, Belgium comes fifth in the world followed by Spain, the USA, Germany, Canada and Mexico. The Aztec country therefore achieves a surprising tenth place in the world ranking, in great contrast with its Southern neighbours, as Central America performs poorly in this index. In the Southern part of the Americas, larger countries tend to score rather high.

The most dramatic situations of lack of moral freedom are found in the Islamic regimes of Asia, the Middle East and Northeastern Africa. Among those, the countries classified as having “very low moral freedom” (ten to twenty points) include Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Qatar or Yemen. However, only one country, Saudi Arabia—the country of prisoners of conscience like Raif Badawi—, fails to score even ten points and is labelled as “lowest moral freedom”.

A low moral freedom is also detected in the already few but still notorious communist regimes, like Laos, Vietnam, North Korea or China. European countries in the former Socialist block and those making up the Soviet Union tend to have lower degrees of moral freedom than their Western neighbours, with exceptions like Estonia. The Southern Caucasus, Central Asia and Belarus attain the “insufficient moral freedom” label while Russia itself barely manages to score over half of the total points and join the morally free countries of the world.

Download full index at: <http://bit.ly/1RRExE2>

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Foundation for the Advancement of Liberty is a Madrid based think tank oriented to furthering individual liberty, both on social-political and economic issues. The Foundation works on causes such as taxpayers' rights, freedom of the Internet, the sharing economy or devolution of essential services and pension systems to the civil society. For further information please write to: presidencia@fundalib.org

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