

Czech Republic emerges as highest climber as EIRIS updates its Country Sustainability Ratings for 2007



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Global sustainable and responsible investment specialist EIRIS has updated its country sustainability rating service. The service meets the needs of socially responsible investment managers wishing to invest in sovereign fixed income securities. New facilities include trend data that enables users to see the extent to which a Country is progressing in terms of environmental, social and governance factors.

The Country Sustainability Ratings product provides analysis on 64 countries worldwide¹, including key emerging markets. It covers a number of environmental, social and governance criteria, as well as other criteria of particular interest to ethical investors, such as religious freedom. The data can be manipulated by users according to their own views and weightings for particular issues to give the investor a bespoke rating, ranking and profile for each country.

Since the product's launch last year the Czech Republic has emerged as the highest climber in the updated ratings due to its increased expenditure on health, sanitation and water as well as a positive performance on climate change. Other new leaders in the ratings are Switzerland and Austria. The bottom three sustainability-rated countries are now China, Pakistan and Qatar. Events such as

Thailand's 2006 military coup and Venezuela's more authoritarian political regime had an impact on these countries' governance scores.

Country Sustainability Ratings uses a range of indicators relevant to socially responsible investors including:

- equality indices;
- corruption perception;
- *GHGs (Greenhouse Gases) inventory*;
- convention ratification.

Brunno Maradei, EIRIS' Assistant Director said, "As more of our clients continue to broaden their investment horizons beyond equities we are delighted to refresh our research to highlight how each country has progressed in key environmental, social and governance areas.

The new service has already been taken up by clients such as: Invesco, Robeco, van Lanschott and Banca Etica.

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Note to editors:

1. EIRIS country sustainability ratings and profiles are available for the following countries:

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Croatia

Czech Republic
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece

Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Kuwait
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Mexico
Morocco
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Pakistan
Panama
Peru
Philippines

Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Singapore
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
South Africa
South Korea
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Taiwan
Thailand
Tunisia
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States of America
Venezuela
Vietnam

2. Ethical Investment Research Services (EIRIS), established in 1983, provides the independent research into corporate social, environmental and ethical performance that is needed by investors to make informed and responsible investment decisions.
3. EIRIS is the leading global analyst of corporate social, environmental and ethical performance with the following overseas research partners: Avanzi of Italy, Centre for Australian Ethical Research (CAER), Fundacion Ecologia y Desarrollo (EcoDes) of Spain, Imug – Institut fur Markt-Umwelt-Gesellschaft of Germany and EthiFinance of France.
3. EIRIS clients include, ABN Amro Bank, ATP, Credit Suisse Asset Management, Fortis Investment Management, Gartmore Investment Managers, Government and Local Authority pension funds, Merrill Lynch, and Schroders Investment Management Ltd. In addition, the FTSE4Good index relies on EIRIS research.
4. EIRIS does not promote any one particular view on ethical or socially responsible issues.

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