

## **Crossing Borders** Key Take-Aways and Additional Resources





These pages contain supplementary information, resources and key takeaways from the "Crossing Borders–Doing Business in the U.K. Netherlands and France" put on by ExporTT on 21st June, 2016 for local exporters.





### What is Culture

Traditions, practices, perspectives, ambitions etc. that are common among members of a cultural group.

### Why is understanding Culture important?

- Helps avoid avoidable problems that come from mis-understanding.
- Gives appreciation for your own as just one perspective and not better, superior or right.
- Better enables you to build healthy cross-border relationships.



# There are important caveats to cultural interpretations:

They are generalisations.

- Only useful as a guide.
- You may deal with outliers.

Helpful for you to:

- expect what you would not normally expect.
- modify your normal behaviour that could cause problems.
- make more helpful interpretations of words and actions.
- negotiate more effectively.
- make better business offers.



### There are many cultural boundaries

National boundaries are not the only useful cultural framework. Culture crosses much more than geographic borders. Here is a broad list of cultural frameworks:

Country	Corporation
Region	Profession
Cities	Gender
Sports	Ambition
Sports Teams	Age
Religion	Experience*
Political ideology	Season
Music	Family
Performing Artist	Individual

\* examples: war veterans, rape victims, Mount Everest summit, loss of a child/job/spouse etc.



Understanding your own culture is the best starting point:

- What is Trini culture?
- How does it manifest socially?
- How does it manifest in business?
- How does it vary by region?
  - Trinidad vs. Tobago
  - North vs. South
  - East vs. West
  - Ethnic group
  - Time of the year e.g carnival

Take the time to notice, reflect, discuss and document.

You'll be required to explain how your culture differs to your host.



# Understanding your host country culture is a basic form of respect.

- Don't think of respect as a form of admiration.
- Think of respect as a practice of speaking and acting that honours what's important to your host.
- You must learn what is important to them to be able to practice respect; and that's why learning about your host culture, history, personal and business ambitions are important.





There is a national view of the proper French place

- Art
- Power
- Culture
- World History

That place is superior, and they are sensitive to having "lost" to America and the British.

### French Culture

- Food
- Wine
- Art
- Language

Are all very important to the French, and you would do well to show that you agree.

Learn to appreciate what is good about French wine (even if you don't drink) and appreciate, savour the French romance with food.



#### French Language

#### LEARN FRENCH!!!!!!



or risk this reaction.

Fluency not required for business success, but some demonstrable effort must be made in written and verbal communications.



### In business what you can expect from the French:

- Well-dressed
- Hierarchy observed in seating
- Titles used
- They don't present their demands up front but first will try to assess yours.
- They are suspicious of overt friendliness too early.
- They don't make decisions in meeting.
- They like long discussions and debate.
- They can be direct (like the dutch), preferring to call it "precise."
- Can depart from the agenda for long periods.
- Personal views, and influence of friends and family can influence decisions.
- They come well-prepared for meetings.
- They like to explore ideas more than rely on facts, and discussions can go a long time exploring ideas they deem interesting. They enjoy such discussion.
- They are known to ask personal questions.



Note the following about the French\*:

- French food culture different from Trinidad. Trini food culture is about filling your belly. Trinis Rush the food. For the French is an accessory to the conversation.
- All about convivialate!
- French living is at the table. Heated conversations at the table is normal and after the conversation no relationships or ego are damaged.
- Don't begin eating or drinking until the host signals to begin with 'Bon appetit (BA)." BA always said.
- Show respect for French language.
- Most senior level French people will at least have a basic knowledge of English.
- Highly recommended you do a short course in French.

#### Food

- A great source of French pride. Conversations at meals can revolve around what is served and the wine being drunk.
- No hard and fast rules about when to talk business at meals. Take cue from your host, who may prefer to talk about the food, wine and restaurant and French culture.
- Business dress not business casual. French are very formal; use titles unless invited to use first names or familiar forms by French senior person. Lead with formality.
- French are very business like and fact or data oriented. They want to see the substantiation with facts and figures. Once you establish your Credibility the personal relationships come after.
- French do not appreciate cold calling. They hate telemarketers.
- Alternative to cold calling: email, meeting at events and conferences.
- Importance of Presentation.
- Make sure business cards, website and email communication are professional.
- Get your site translated professionally.

\*Source: Derek Parker, Economic Officer, French Embassy



# Note the following about the French\*: **Avoid hype**

#### Examples of what will not work

- "Best in Caribbean"
- "Can't beat this product."

Don't be seen as a hustler.

French are very business like and fact or data oriented. They want to see the substantiation with facts and figures. They want you to prove that you can supply demand consistently at the right quality.

#### **Punctuality**

- French expect you to be on time.
- They will expect us to be unsophisticated so you can use this to your advantage. Simply by meeting the standard you can exceed expectations.
- Know stuff about France
- Facts and Trivia e.g. Most visited country in the world.
- French value intellectual curiosity; ask questions
- Use simplified English .
- Export standards must be met.

#### \*Source: Derek Parker, Economic Officer, French Embassy



### From "A year in the merde" by Stephen Clarke

Don't try to make people like you. That's very English. You've got to show them that you don't give a shit what they think. Only then will you get what you want. In other words don't try to "Win" people over. If you smile too much they will think you are retarded.

People are very polite almost ritually so.

They will always shake your hand the first time they see you in the day and say

"Bonjour." Followed by "Ça va?"

When you part

- "Bonne journée" (have a nice day)
- "Bonne apres-midi" or from 3pm "Bonne fin d'apres-midi" (have a nice rest of the afternoon)
- Meeting for the first-time after 5pm, it is "Bonsoir" instead of "Bonjour"
- "Bonne soirée" when someone is leaving to go home from work.
- "Bonne semaine" on Mondays
- "Bon weekend"

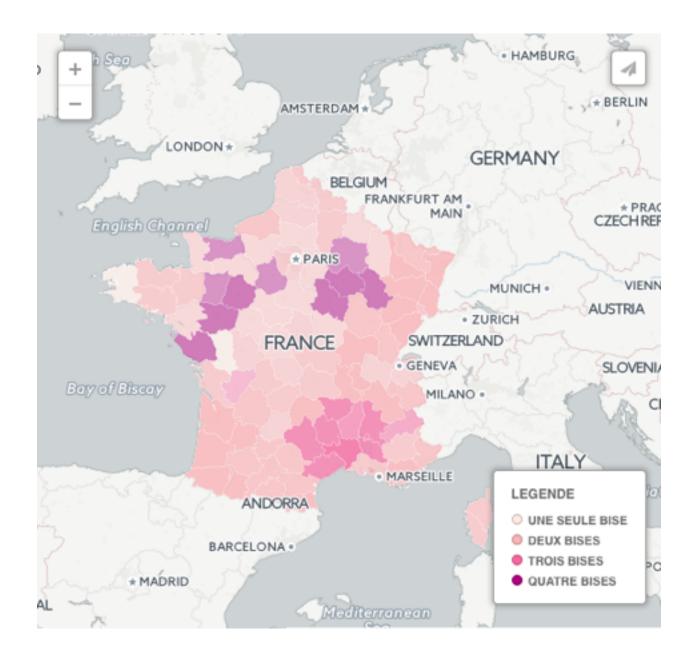
Also See slides 22-29 of Global Business Etiquette



### Kissing by French Region

Note it can range from one to four kisses depending on where you are. See the

#### original article in French.







Rich trading history, influenced by their small square footage and precarious sea exposure. Because of their exceptional historical need to trade they have developed exceptional skill at the following

- Tolerance
- Linguistic ability
- Practicality
- Inclusion
- Consensus building

### **Dutch Culture**

Noted for apparent paradoxes:

- Permissive yet conservative
- Consensual yet competitive
- Egalitarian yet materialistic and entrepreneurial
- Informal yet proper.



### A note on Directness

The dutch are—for most—shockingly direct. They may forcefully challenge any casually mentioned, not well-presented opinion as not very smart, and wait for your reaction.

The key thing to remember is that **it is not personal** and the dutch are simply expecting you to defend your point-of-view. If you can't they'll accept it as a waste of everyone's time and move on. Even more important to remember is that they will not hold it against you. You do not fall in their esteem (unless of course you don't learn and keep making statements you are unprepared to defend).

### In business what you can expect from the Dutch:

Breakfast and lunch are often the same content e.g. bread, cheese and cuts of ham.

Meals for the dutch are more functional and can seem the polar opposite to how the French or Italians treat their meals.

Expect vigorous debate in meetings, and the dutch expect EVERYONE — regardless of rank or status to participate. If you're in the room, the dutch want to hear what you think.

The dutch are egalitarian and do not appreciate excessive shows of status or wealth.



### Dutch Gezelikheid

No english translation, and in Trini-speak the closest thing is what we would call a "nice lime", but it also includes some reference to the physical space which they feel adds to the experience. English speakers would call the contribution of the space "cozy."



### "Het was gezellig."

The Dutch are very polite. They will walk into a room of strangers and walk around and introduce themselves to everyone.

At a dinner table, a dutch person will serve everyone first and himself last, either with pouring drinks, or buttering bread.



### More Dutch observations

Main points are:

- In meetings; use given titles and surnames. No first names until they initiate.
- They appreciate diving into business immediately.
- No personal lives will enter into business. Stick to business, seems very cold but when they ask you to go out for a drink they are very warm and inviting; even seem to be not same person from meeting. Personal and business separate.
- They are proud of their foreign language mastery but will appreciate any attempt at a few dutch words.
- Be punctual/call if late. If you are late or otherwise don't stick to schedules, you will be seen as unreliable.
- Don't expect to do much business in summer in either Netherlands or France
- No boasting bragging or displays of wealth or achievement.
- Ride up front with taxi drivers.

See <u>International Business the Dutch Way</u> for a more academic and nuanced way to look at dutch business culture.

Here is <u>Queen Maxima giving a very revealing talk</u> about what it means to be dutch, and is there such a thing as a dutch identity. She speaks dutch and gives a good sense of what the language sounds like, but it sub-titled so you can follow.

<u>This gives another look at dutch business culture</u>. Note slide 10 which talks about the dutch "Polder model.





The British golden era may be behind them but the Brits don't seem to mind and may even prefer the less hegemonic role they play in world affairs. They are a nation of stark contrasts with Monarchy, and socialism cohabiting quite nicely.

Harmony over conflict

Formality and Protocol

Cold, distant and aloof — difficult to warm up "stiff British upper lip"

Orderly —dislike non-queuing cultures

Dry Humour

They think they straddle the mean between excessive German and French formality and the premature familiarity of the Americans and Australians.

### In business what you can expect from Brits:

Use of humour:

- Self-deprecation
- To break up tension
- To affect a change e.g. in meeting pace.
- To deliver a criticism
- To introduce a new "wild" idea
- To demonstrate the absurdity of an idea or management policy



### The British (cont'd)

"... humour is regarded as one of the most effective weapons in the British manager's arsenal and some people can gain the confidence of the British by showing that they can be a match for them in this area." (From "When Cultures collide".)

British execs will try to show that they are guided by reasonableness, compromise and common sense. However, even in the absence of disagreement the British will rarely make a decision at the first meeting, in contrast to Americans, who will be quick to "seize the moment" and go with a hunch.

You can ask them "Could we have a decision at the next meeting?" See how that works out.

Brits won't disagree openly.

They will use reasonableness, politeness, charm, and humour to tenacious effect and you might find having lost the upper hand before you're aware of it.

They are masters of negotiation and will use behind the scenes influence, e.g. with old-boy networks to get their way.



### Dressing

Each country has it's own style of dress with British and French dress styles being appreciated all across the E.U. Take care to dress professionally, and over dress if you're not sure.

Know the difference between Formal wear, business, business casual and casual.



For women it's always better to play down (don't accentuate) your sexuality.

See "The Five Levels of Business Attire" from Business Insider.



### Kissing

- UNITED KINGDOM: Cheek kissing is not very common, outside of close family and friends, except for amongst the upper and middle classes (usually in London) and is historically considered to be a rench practice.
- FRANCE: The French seem to enjoy two kisses once on each cheek called faire la bise starting on the left, though a popular French joke states that you may recognize the city you are in by counting the number of cheek kisses as it varies widely across the country.
- NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND: Cheek kissing is a common greeting between relatives and friends. Usually three kisses are exchanged.

See <u>A Guide to Cheek Kissing Etiquette</u>

### Touching & Hugging

- Never initiate hugging and do not touch people.
- Hugging in the UK is reserved for very close friends and family.
- Not likely to happen in the UK, more likely in the Netherlands and in France once social comfort established



### Commonalities

### Among the French, Dutch and British

Despite the aforementioned differences and many, many more there are certain commonalities that are as easy to observe as they are helpful. They include the following:

- Punctuality: NEVER be late for social or business engagements.
- Preparation: Know your stuff, be able to defend your positions with data, facts, survey results etc. Make casual assertions at your own risk; the British may let you get away with it but the Dutch and French won't. Don't be surprised if they seem to know more about Trinidad & Tobago than you do.
- Politics & Religion: Stay away, it's safer not to discuss.
- Follow the lead of your host: Allow them to show you where to sit and don't sit before they do. Follow their lead in business and social conversations.





Embassies

#### French embassy in Trinidad.

7 Mary Street, St. Clair, Port-of-Spain 628-1931 <u>http://www.ambafrance-tt.org/-English-</u>

#### **Dutch Embassy**

http://trinidadandtobago.nlembassy.org 69-71 Edward Street Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago (+1) 868 625 1210 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

#### **British High Commission**

<u>https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-high-commission-</u> <u>trinidad-and-tobago</u>

19 St Clair Avenue St Clair, Port of Spain Trinidad and Tobago Telephone: + I 868 350 0444 Telephone: oam to 4pm J

Telephone: 9am to 4pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 1pm Friday (excluding public holidays)

UK Trade and Investment



#### British High Commission 19 St Clair Avenue; St Clair

**Telephone:** 

+ 1 868 350 0444

#### **ExporTT**

http://www.exportt.co.tt

#### Contact Us

151B Charlotte Street, Port of Spain Tel: (868) 623-5507 Fax: (868) 625-8126

Head Office: Trade Certification Unit: 151B Charlotte Street, Port of Spain Tel: (868) 625-2363/0520 Fax: (868) 625-2359 Email: info@exportt.co.tt Email: info@exportt.co.tt

#### Point Lisas Office:

Plipdeco Information Centre, Atlantic Avenue E-Teck Mall, Sangster's Hill, Point Lisas Industrial Estate, 
 Tobago

 Tel: (868) 679-2492/4429
 Tel: (868) 639-4067/639-2549

 Fax: (868) 679-2493
 Fax: (868) 639-4340

 Email: info@exportt.co.tt
 Email: info@exportt.co.tt
Point Lisas

### Tobago Office: Scarborough, Tobago

#### Language Help

#### **Learn French at Alliance Français**

http://www.alliancetnt.org

868-622-6119

#### **French greetings:**

https://frenchtogether.com/french-greetings/



### Books:



### Au Contraire! FIGURING OUT THE FRENCH

GILLES ASSELIN AND RUTH MASTRON



#### Review

Au Contraire! takes you on a journey of not only uncovering cultural differences but understanding and appreciating these differences in practically every aspect of life-whether it is business, public, or private. . . . A must-read for anyone seeking to gain better insight into French culture. (Michael O. Davenport, director, Human Resources, UniStar Nuclear Energy)

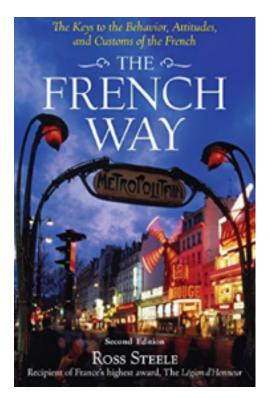
Mastron and Asselin have truly grasped the complex interfacing with French culture. And nobody's right or wrong, just different! I find Au Contraire! delightfully validating-a great piece of work. (Nancy Bragard, Franco-American interculturalist, trainer, and coach)

This new edition rightly underlines the regional and cultural diversity that contributes to the charm of France. The authors have moved France far from the cliches of an old-fashioned country. Vive le dialogue interculturel! (Olivia Brunet, European Commission's Regions of Knowledge Programme)

#### \$25.96 usd on amazon.com

#### Report on Animals, Page 27

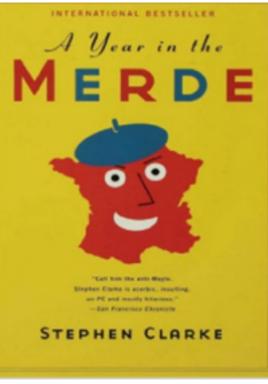




Written by an internationally renowned expert in French culture, Ross Steele, this second edition of *The French Way* offers a uniquely impartial and fully up-to-date perspective on French attitudes, tastes, and customs regarding everything from business style (formal) to pets (doted on), conversation (an art form) to humor (satiric, political), love (truly, madly, deeply) to time ("Better late than never!"). With the help of *The French Way*, you will:

- Understand how people from every corner of France interact, do business, and live their daily lives
- Become well-versed in ninety major topics including food, family, holidays, the media, religion, sports, money, entertainment, and *le shopping*
- Learn the truth about common myths and misconceptions concerning the French and communicate comfortably with French-speaking people without committing faux pas

\$8.17 usd on Amazon



A Year in the Merde is the almost-true account of the author's adventures as an expat in Paris. Based on his own experiences and with names changed to "avoid embarrassment, possible legal action-and to

prevent the author's legs being broken by someone in a Yves Saint Laurent suit", the book is narrated by Paul West, a twenty-seven-year-old Brit who is brought to Paris by a French company to open a chain of British "tea rooms." He must manage of a group of lazy, grumbling French employees, maneuver around a treacherous Parisianboss, while lucking into a succession of lusty girlfriends (one of whomhappens to be the boss's morally challenged daughter). He soon becomes immersed in the contradictions of French culture: the French are not all

cheese-eating surrender monkeys, though they do eat a lot of smelly cheese, and they are still in shock at being stupid enough to sell Louisiana, thus losing the chance to make French the global language.

The book will also tell you how to get the best out of the grumpiest Parisian waiter, how to survive a French business meeting, and how not to buy a house in the French countryside.

<u>\$3.42 - \$11.27 usd Amazon</u>



#### **RICHARD D. LEWIS**



"An authoritative roadmap to navgating the world's economy. - The Mail Street Journal



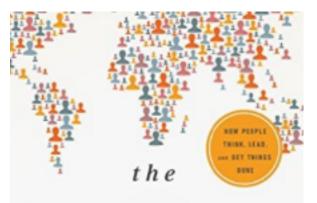
THIRD EDITION

From the Publisher

In this completely revised and expanded new paperback edition, Richard Lewis has built on the international success of the first edition to provide a rich and enlightening global guide to working and communicating across cultures and countries. From India to Ireland, Mexico to Malaysia, Belgium to Brazil, this classic look at what it takes to succeed in international business exmaines in-depth how our own culture and language affect the ways in which we organize our world, think, feel, and respond.

Amazon \$29.99 usd





## CULTURE MAP

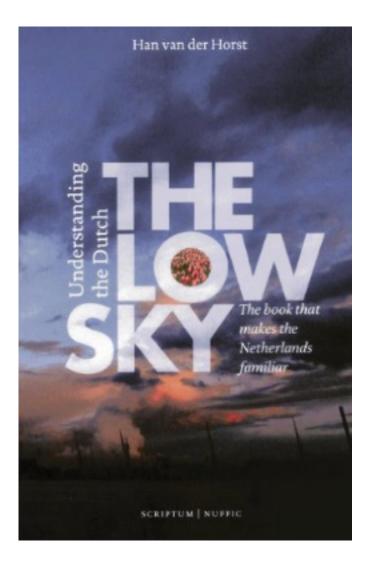
BREAKING THROUGH THE INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES OF GLOBAL BUSINESS

ERIN MEYER

Whether you work in a home office or abroad, business success in our ever more globalized and virtual world requires the skills to navigate through cultural differences and decode cultures foreign to your own. Renowned expert Erin Meyer is your guide through this subtle, sometimes treacherous terrain where people from starkly different backgrounds are expected to work harmoniously together.

Amazon \$15.50 usd





At times Dutch people will ignore you politely; other times they will go out of their way to help you. You will get into trouble with the authorities for putting up a fence without permission but, in the late evenings, many family television channels broadcast pornography and advertisements for telephone sex into the privacy of your home.

Even your best friends reach for their diaries to make a dinner date, because you don't just drop by without being invited. And when you buy them a present they will open it in front of you without batting an eyelid

<u>\$15.00 (range) usd Amazon</u>



**UNING AND WORKIN** 

ΉE

**JACOB VOSSESTEIN** 

LING WITH

DUTCH

The Netherlands is a thriving transportation hub for Europe, and a booming center for banking and energy sectors, and other innovative industries. Thousands of expatriate executives and their families are transferred to Holland annually; and hundreds of thousands of visitors come on business.

People from all corners of the globe come into contact with Dutch colleagues and contacts, both in the Netherlands and in their own countries. They all have to "deal with the Dutch," and although the Dutch are becoming more and more cosmopolitan, aspects of their character and behavior still surprise many people.

For instance, the directness of the Dutch, their critical attitudes, and sometimes slow decision-making processes are some of the characteristics that foreigners notice immediately, and may find frustrating. While the Dutch may drive a hard bargain, once agreement has been reached, their word is their bond. They are also noted for their thoroughness, and their energy and ingenuity in discovering and exploiting new business opportunities.

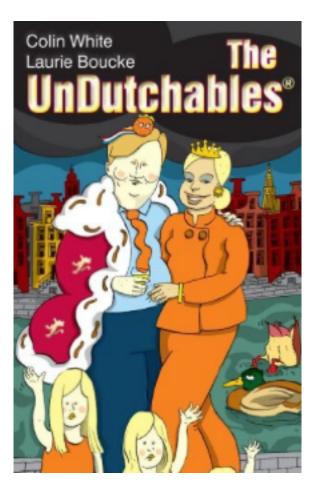
Expatriates working in the Netherlands point out that it is the underlying values and norms of the Dutch that puzzle them most and sometimes irritate them.

For anyone traveling to the Netherlands on business, to live and work in the country, or for anyone who may have regular contact with the Dutch abroad, this unique book - written by a Dutch author - will ensure more effective and enjoyable business and social relations.

This new edition both follows the first in covering Dutch values and norms, and presents an up-dated picture of the latest economic, social and cultural changes in the country.

<u>\$.01 (varies) usd Amazon</u>





A hilarious yet profound and revealing look at the Dutch, their customs and their mentality. This exquisite satire explores the most diverse aspects of daily Dutch life, from coffee to child rearing, from train travel to the toilet.

Learn why the Dutch believe, "It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it," and why it's so hard to learn the Dutch language, "The more you try to learn Dutch, the more the Dutch refuse to speak Dutch to you and the more they complain that you haven't learned it."

Other topics include Dutch moralizing & criticizing, cozy Dutch homes, flowers & plants, money & thriftiness, work ethics, welfare, commercial cunning, telephone habits, the national passion, rules for shopping, driving, Dutch customs, bikes, language, gay community, food, sex, drugs, phobias, the Dutch abroad and flood disasters.

\$16.00 usd Amazon



### Cuisine

#### **English Cuisine**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_English\_dishes

#### **Dutch Cuisine**

<u>https://meetmrholland.wordpress.com/2014/04/24/10-dutch-foods-you-should-try-once/</u>

#### **French Cuisine**

http://www.mygourmetconnection.com/how-to-cook/ethnic-cuisines/french-cuisine.php

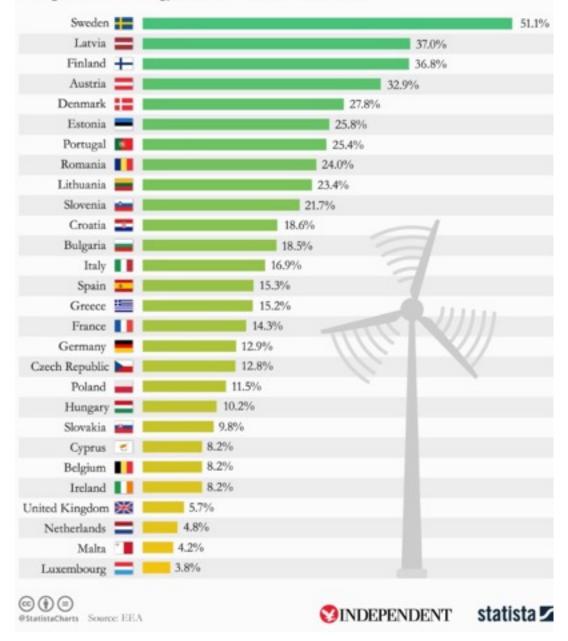




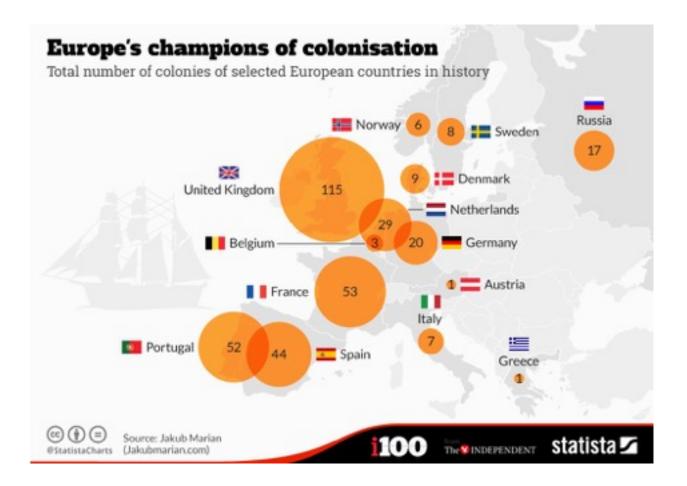
## EU Facts from <u>statistica.com</u> See European Union Infographics here.

#### Renewables account for over half of Sweden's energy

Average renewable energy share in EU countries (2013-2014)









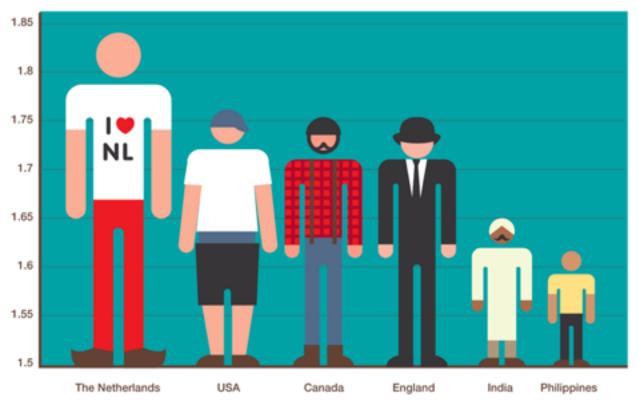






# LOOKING DOWN ON THE REST OF THE WORLD

(Average male height in m)



From: http://joyreactor.com/post/1643456

"Why are the dutch so tall?" Huffington Post

Scientists try to answer why the dutch are so tall.



# Most Visited Countries

Rank ¢	Country +	UNWTO Region <sup>[3]</sup> •	International tourist arrivals (2014) <sup>[1]</sup>	International tourist arrivals (2013) <sup>[1]</sup>	Change (2013 to 2014) (%)	Change (2012 to 2013) (%)
1	France	Europe	83.7 million	83.6 million	<b>0</b> .1	A 2.0
2	United States	North America	74.8 million	70.0 million	▲ 6.8	▲ 5.0
3	<b>Spain</b>	Europe	65.0 million	60.7 million	▲ 7.1	▲ 5.6
4	China	Asia	55.6 million	55.05 million	▼ 0.1	▼ 3.5
5	Italy	Europe	48.6 million	47.7 million	<b>▲</b> 1.8	A 2.9
6	C Turkey	Europe	39.8 million	37.8 million	▲ 5.3	▲ 5.9
7	Germany	Europe	33.0 million	31.5 million	<b>4.6</b>	▲ 3.7
8	😹 United Kingdom	Europe	32.6 million	31.1 million	▲ 5.0	<b>6</b> .1
9	Russia	Europe	29.8 million	28.4 million	▲ 5.3	▲ 10.2
10	Mexico	North America	29.1 million	24.2 million	▲ 20.5	▲ 3.2

From: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\_Tourism\_rankings





Home > Cricket Development > Opinion: Top Non Commonwealth cricket playing countries...

### Opinion: Top Non Commonwealth cricket playing countries...

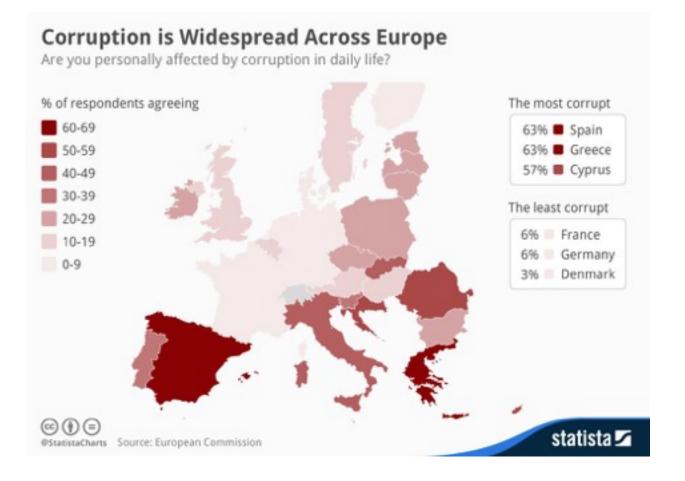
🛗 May 19, 2006 🛛 🚨 Nasir M. Khan

💬 Go to comments 🛛 🧠 Leave a comment

The following are the top non commonwealth countries in the world where cricket is not played predominantly by recent immigrants i.e. the number of locals playing the game is more than 20%

Indonesia (12161) Italy (5668) Thailand (5656) Netherlands (5380) Japan (4182) Argentina (3925) Denmark (3784) Chile (2045)



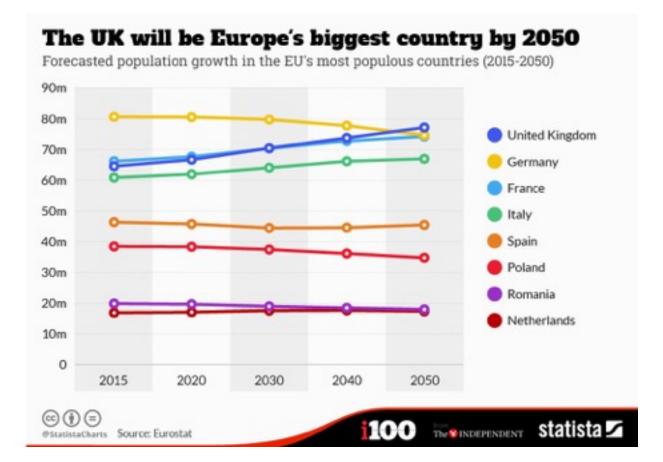




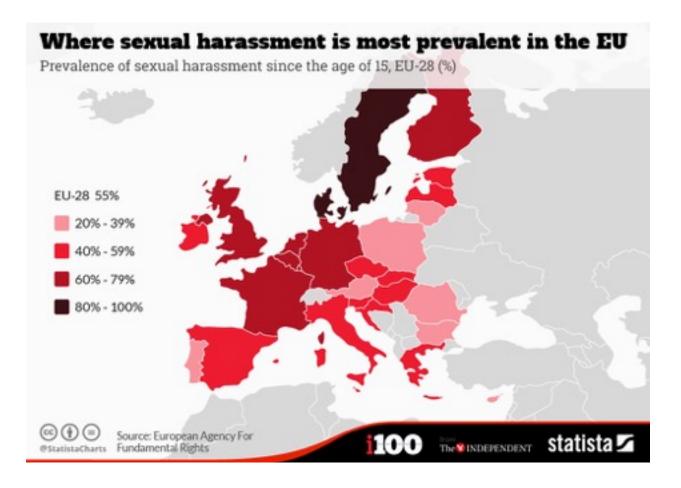
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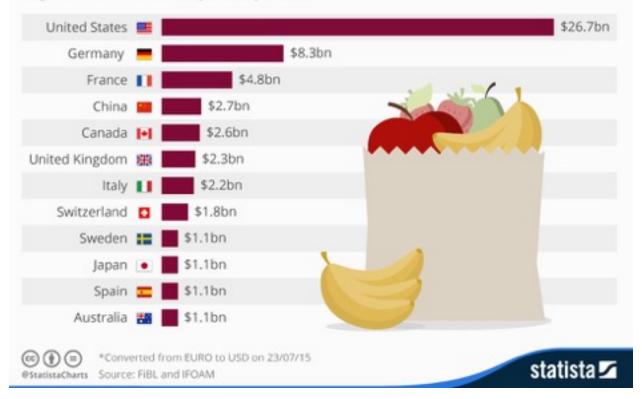






### The World's Largest Markets For Organic Products

Organic retail sales value by country in 2013\*







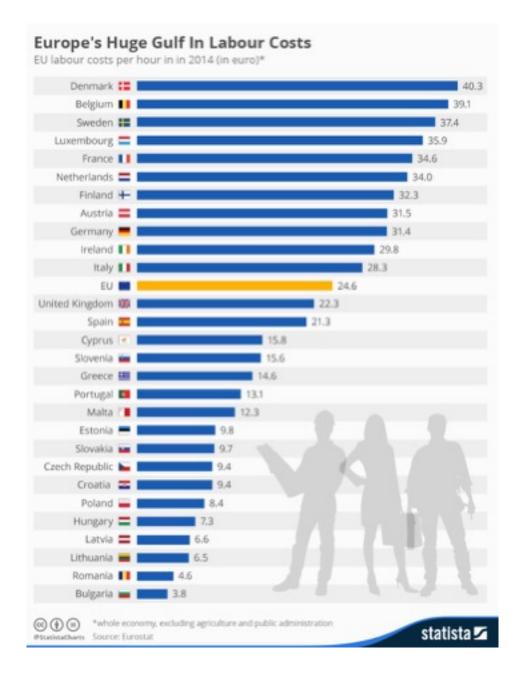




# British Titles and Forms of Address

Title	Form of Address	Introduce As	
King/Queen	Your Majesty	Her Majesty the Queen	
Prince/Princess	Your Royal Highness	His/Her Royal Highness, the Prince/Princess of	
Duke/Duchess	Your Grace	His/Her Grace, the Duke/Duchess of	
Marquess/Marchioness Earl/Countess Viscount/Viscountess Baron/Baroness	Men: Lord (last name) Women: Lady (last name)	(By appropriate title) For example: Baron Lancaster Countess Egerton Viscount Wodehouse	
Baronet/Knight	Sir (first name)	Sir (first name, last name) Wife: Lady (last name)	
Dame	Dame (first name)	Dame (first name, last name)	

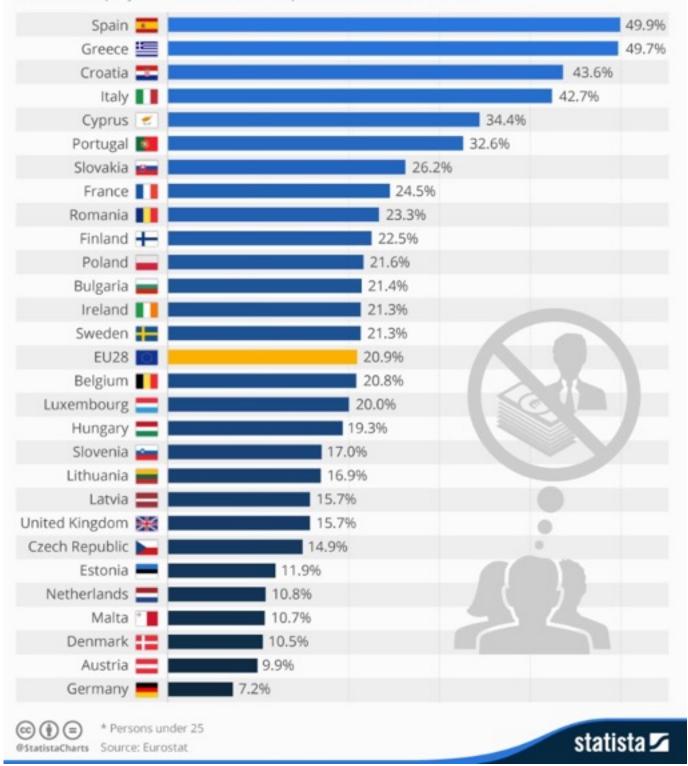




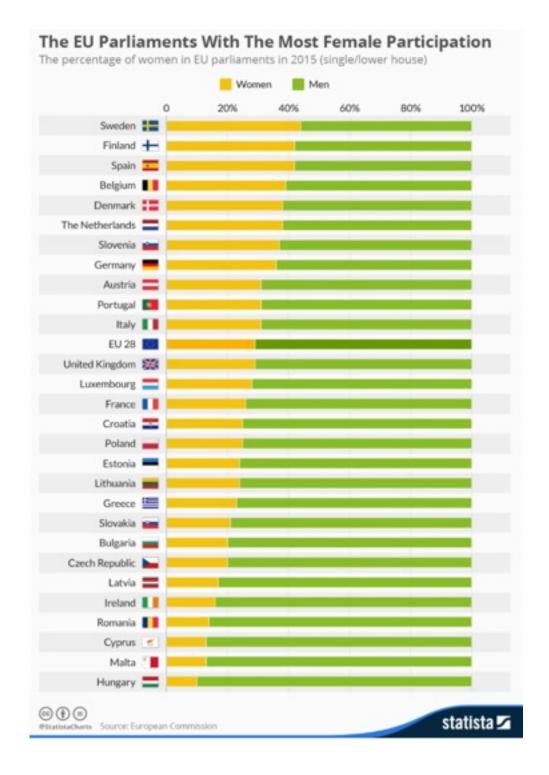


# Youth Unemployment Still Unrelenting In Europe

Youth unemployment rate in the European Union in March 2015\*



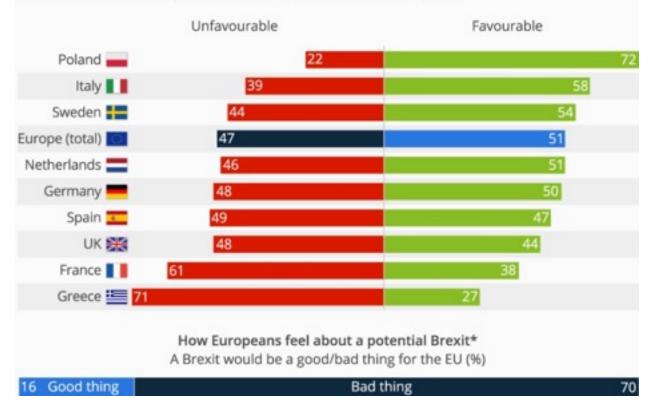






## How Do Europeans Feel About The EU And A Potential Brexit?

% of Europeans finding the EU favourable/unfavourable in 2016





### **Sources:**

The material in this document are compiled from google searches, personal interviews with representatives from the French and Dutch embassies; books particularly "When Cultures Collide" by Richard D. Lewis, the Low Sky by Han van der Horst, the unDutchables by White and Boucke and "A year in the Merde" by Stephen Clarke; personal interviews with expats from the U.K, and the Netherlands; email correspondence with French nationals, and the author's own extensive experience living in the Netherlands and the U.K.

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