GENERAL PRESS RELEASE

The Quality of Public Spending Is Falling Across the Globe - and Most Governments Are Giving Citizens Less for Their Money | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

A new global ranking delivers an uncomfortable verdict: in most of the world's better-off economies, the state now gives citizens less in return for their money than it did a decade ago. The Wealth of Nations Index, prepared by the Warsaw Enterprise Institute with 20 think tanks worldwide, finds the quality of public spending sliding even as governments grow larger and more expensive. The United States, Norway and Switzerland still lead the pack, while Romania, Croatia, Greece and Bulgaria are the decade's great climbers and Ireland and the Czech Republic suffered this year's hardest falls.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

The premise is deceptively simple: public spending is not a virtue in itself - only its results are. So the index rewards a government not for how much it spends, but for what citizens can actually point to afterwards: safer streets, working hospitals, decent schools, roads that go somewhere. This year's edition is the most international in the project's history, and it lets readers re-weight the seven areas according to their own priorities.

Key takeaways

- Public spending got worse, not better: in 27 of 40 countries the state delivered less value for money than in 2015.
- The decline is a post-pandemic phenomenon - the rot set in after 2021 and has spread since.
- Private-sector growth has roughly halved across the sample, turning negative in more than a dozen economies.
- The podium is unchanged - the United States, Norway and Switzerland - while Mexico, Colombia and Ukraine sit at the bottom.
- Europe's east is the engine of progress: Romania is the standout long-run climber, followed by Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece.
- The index was built by the Warsaw Enterprise Institute together with 20 partner think tanks from around the world.

Further information

Who leads, and why. The three countries at the top could hardly be more different in how they run their affairs, yet they share one thing: a powerful private economy backed by a state that, on the whole, works. America's first place is almost entirely a story of private wealth rather than public excellence - on the quality of its public services it sits well down the table, behind much of Europe. Norway and Switzerland, by contrast, marry private prosperity with genuinely high-class infrastructure, clean environments and, in the Swiss case, world-beating universities.

Who climbed and who slipped. The clearest winners over the long run are the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe, propelled by their private sectors rather than their states. Over the past year Greece and Croatia rose fastest, while Ireland and the Czech Republic fell hardest. A warning runs through the whole exercise: across much of the sample, growth is being powered by consumption rather than investment - a poor foundation for future prosperity.

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

The authors' wider point is a familiar one for a free-market institute: a free economy does not mean the absence of the state, but a state that is limited and effective - and the wealth of nations is built first and foremost by private capital and enterprise, not by the sheer scale of redistribution.

> *“Our wealth is fundamentally created in the private sector. But for that sector to function, certain public goods have to be provided by the public sector. Our aim is to scrutinise whether the public sector is doing its job right,” says Sebastian Stodolak, Vice President of the Warsaw Enterprise Institute.*

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute or any of the partners. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

COUNTRY-PROFILED PRESS RELEASES – WNI 2026

America Defends Its Crown Atop the Global Wealth Ranking - But Its Public Services Tell Another Story | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

The United States once again finishes first in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its supremacy, however, is a triumph of private wealth, not of public administration. On the quality of public spending alone, America languishes near the bottom of the rich-country pack.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

America keeps the crown for the same reason it has held it for years: a private economy so vast that it dwarfs everything around it and papers over a distinctly ordinary public sector. The state's report card is mixed - formidable on defence and infrastructure, but weak on healthcare, internal security and, once adjusted for size, higher education. This is leadership built on the wallet of the citizen, not the competence of the bureaucrat.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 1st of 40, holding top spot for another year.
- Owes its lead to the largest private economy in the sample, not to public-service quality - where it ranks near the lower end of the advanced economies.
- Strong on defence and infrastructure; weak on healthcare.
- A clear illustration of the index's central message: scale of private wealth, not size of the state.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Norway Holds Second Place Worldwide - and Runs One of the Best-Spending Governments on Earth | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Norway again takes the silver medal in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Few governments on the planet turn public money into results as efficiently as Oslo. It keeps its rank even after a modest dip this year.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Norway sits just behind the United States thanks to a rare double act: deep private wealth and a state that genuinely delivers. Its public sector is among the very best in the world, with flawless infrastructure and pristine environmental performance; the softer spots - schooling and healthcare - look weak only against Norway's own exalted standards. This is what an effective, well-run state looks like.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 2nd of 40, unchanged from last year.
- Among the world's two best performers on the quality of public spending.
- Stand-outs: top-class infrastructure and environmental performance.
- A highly investment-capable private sector, anchored by energy.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Switzerland Locks In Third Place Worldwide as Its Private Wealth Outshines the State | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Switzerland holds firm in third place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its result is driven more by private prosperity than by the public purse. It keeps its rank after only a marginal slip.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Switzerland's strength is the wealth of its citizens, paired with a state that shines precisely where long-term coordination matters most - infrastructure and universities. Curiously, the methodology marks it down sharply on healthcare and only middling on defence, yet the broader portrait is of a country that performs best where institutional quality counts. A quiet, dependable giant.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 3rd of 40, unchanged.
- World-class higher education and infrastructure.
- Private economy among the largest per head in the sample.
- Public-spending quality solid but unspectacular by Nordic standards.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Austria Clings to Fourth Place Worldwide - But the Ground Is Shifting Beneath It | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Austria holds fourth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It punches well above its weight, with private and public sides contributing almost equally. Its position is secure, though its score quietly eased this year.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Austria is a genuine overachiever, sitting fourth on the back of a balanced economy in which a capable state and a comfortable private sector pull together. Infrastructure and universities are real assets; defence, healthcare and schooling are the weaker links. It is a portrait of a prosperous, well-ordered country - if not an especially expansionary one.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 4th of 40, unchanged.
- Balanced profile: private and public contributions roughly equal.
- Strengths: infrastructure and higher education; weakness: defence.
- Steady rather than dynamic on the private side.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Denmark Climbs Two Places to Fifth Worldwide - and Keeps One of the World's Best-Spending States | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Denmark moves up to fifth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It is one of this year's risers, gaining two positions. Its public sector remains among the most effective on the planet.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Denmark climbs because it does the hard thing well: it balances a strong private economy with a state that genuinely earns its keep. Infrastructure and universities lead the way, while healthcare and schooling are merely excellent rather than exceptional - which, in Denmark, still means a standard most countries can only envy.

Key takeaways

- Climbs two places to 5th of 40.
- Among the world's very best on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: higher education and infrastructure.
- One of the stronger long-run improvers in Western Europe.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Australia Keeps Sixth Place Worldwide - But Loses Ground for the Second Year Running | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Australia holds sixth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It keeps its rank, but the trend is gently downward. Its public services remain good, if uneven.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Australia stays in the top six on the strength of high institutional quality, even if its public services vary by sector and region. The environment and universities are clear strengths; healthcare and internal security are the soft underbelly. Recent large-scale investment in technology suggests the country is still attracting serious, forward-looking capital.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 6th of 40, unchanged - but down for a second year.
- Strengths: higher education and environment; weakness: healthcare.
- Still drawing major long-term investment.
- Public-service delivery uneven across regions.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Sweden Edges Up to Seventh Worldwide Even as Its Public-Spending Score Takes a Knock | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Sweden rises one place to seventh in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It climbs even though its public component weakened. Private and public sides contribute in roughly equal measure.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Sweden nudges up the table despite a softer year for its state. Its public sector still excels in infrastructure and the environment, but internal security is the conspicuous weak point - consistent with the country's long, anguished debate over crime and social cohesion. A solid private economy keeps it among Europe's leaders.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 7th of 40.
- Among the world's best on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: infrastructure and environment; weakness: internal security.
- Macro backdrop has turned less comfortable than in the pre-2022 years.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Germany Climbs to Eighth Worldwide - But Europe's Biggest Economy Is Running on Reputation | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Germany rises two places to eighth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. The improvement flatters a largely stagnant reality. It owes more to debt-financed public demand than to genuine reform.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Germany's higher ranking masks an economy treading water. The bump owes more to public demand propped up by borrowing than to any structural progress; the familiar litany of sluggish digitalisation, crumbling infrastructure and a reform backlog in education is acting as a brake on growth. Stable institutions and internal security remain bright spots, but Europe's powerhouse is steadily losing relative ground.

Key takeaways

- Climbs two places to 8th of 40 - while standing largely still.
- Improvement driven by debt-financed public demand, not reform.
- Chronic weaknesses: digitalisation, transport infrastructure, education.
- Subdued private investment is eroding long-term competitiveness.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Finland Tops the Quality Table - Yet Slips to Ninth Overall | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Finland ranks ninth overall in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. On the quality of public spending, however, no country in the world does better. Its public sector carries the result more than its private economy.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Finland is the global gold standard for getting value out of public money - first in the world on that measure - with a flawless environmental record and superb infrastructure. The state, not the private economy, is the star here; the softer areas, healthcare and schooling, are weak only by Finland's own lofty benchmark. The weaker half of the story is a private sector that simply does not dazzle.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 9th of 40 overall.
- First in the world on the quality of public spending.
- Stand-outs: pristine environment and excellent infrastructure.
- The private economy is the less impressive half of the picture.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Britain Climbs to Tenth Worldwide Despite Strained Public Services and Stubborn Inflation | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

The United Kingdom rises one place to tenth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It climbs on the back of its private economy, even as public services creak. Its public-spending quality holds steady.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Britain inches up the table even as the strain on its public services becomes ever more visible. World-leading universities and a strong defence posture lift the state's score, but internal security and healthcare drag it down - hardly a surprise in a year dominated by debate over overstretched services and a renewed squeeze on households. The private sector is doing the heavy lifting.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 10th of 40.
- Strengths: world-class universities and defence; weaknesses: internal security and healthcare.
- Business investment looking shaky into 2026.
- Long-run trajectory broadly flat.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Ireland Crashes Six Places in a Single Year | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Ireland suffers the steepest fall in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, dropping six places to eleventh. The collapse came almost entirely from its famously volatile private-economy component. Its public-spending quality actually nudged up.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Ireland records the year's most dramatic tumble, the product of a sharp swing in a private-economy measure that has always been hostage to the quirks of Irish national accounts. The state, meanwhile, tells the familiar Irish tale: superb universities and good infrastructure alongside persistent pressure on healthcare and a thin defence. Behind the headline drop sits a hyper-productive, globally wired economy.

Key takeaways

- Falls six places to 11th of 40 - the year's biggest faller.
- The plunge came from its volatile private-economy figures.
- Strengths: higher education and infrastructure; weakness: healthcare.
- Still unusually good at turning savings into investment.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

The Netherlands Nudges Up to Twelfth Worldwide as Its Public Score Slides | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

The Netherlands rises one place to twelfth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It climbs even as the value of its public spending slips. Its position now leans more on the state than on private momentum.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

The Dutch hold a place just outside the top ten, but increasingly thanks to a high-quality state rather than private-investment dynamism. Universities and the environment are clear strengths; healthcare and defence pull the score down - a less balanced profile than the country's polished reputation might suggest. A prosperous, well-run nation, but one whose growth prospects look uncertain.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 12th of 40.
- Strengths: universities and environment; weaknesses: healthcare and defence.
- A strong but unspectacular private economy.
- Growth increasingly dependent on the public sector holding up.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

New Zealand Rises to Thirteenth Worldwide - But the Private Economy Is the Weak Link | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

New Zealand moves up one place to thirteenth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its public component softened, but a stronger private side carried it higher. It is a soft-power success more than a hard-power one.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

New Zealand advances on a profile typical of a small, well-governed country: strong where soft capacity counts, weaker where hard power does. The environment and universities shine, while healthcare, defence and internal security weigh it down. The bigger concern is a sluggish private economy that looks less like a temporary dip than a settled pattern of soft growth.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 13th of 40.
- Strengths: universities and environment; weakness: healthcare.
- A small, well-governed economy that excels in soft-capacity areas.
- Private-sector recovery has been delayed.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Canada Drops Two Places to Fourteenth Worldwide as Both Its Engines Lose Power | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Canada falls two places to fourteenth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Both halves of its score weakened at once. Its public-spending quality eased over the year.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Canada slips because both engines sputtered together. Universities and the environment remain genuine strengths, but healthcare, defence and internal security drag the state's score down - the healthcare result echoing years of debate over waiting times and uneven provincial performance. On the private side, investment looks serviceable rather than dynamic.

Key takeaways

- Falls two places to 14th of 40.
- Strengths: universities and environment; weakness: healthcare.
- Corporate investment turning more cautious.
- Long-run trajectory gently downward.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

South Korea Holds Fifteenth Worldwide - and Squeezes Remarkable Value Out of Every Public Dollar | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

South Korea holds fifteenth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It is the highest-ranked Asian economy, two places ahead of Japan. Few countries extract as much public-service value from their income.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Korea stands out for getting unusually high public-service value relative to its wealth - its state ranks far higher than its private economy alone would suggest. World-class schools and a superb transport network are the headline strengths; air pollution and a heavy reliance on private health spending are the drags. The looming shadow is demographic: the world's lowest birth rate threatens both workforce and consumer base.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 15th of 40, unchanged - Asia's top performer.
- Punches above its weight on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: schooling and transport infrastructure; weaknesses: environment and healthcare.
- An exceptionally investment-heavy economy shadowed by demographic decline.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Belgium Holds Sixteenth Worldwide as Fragmented Government Caps Its Public-Service Value | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Belgium holds sixteenth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its overall standing is unchanged. A respectable private economy is doing more of the work than the state.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Belgium stands still, with its citizens' prosperity outpacing what the state gives back. Superb universities and decent schooling are offset by strikingly weak defence, modest internal security and so-so healthcare - the predictable result of an institutional set-up so fragmented that policy delivery is slower and less coherent than the country's income would warrant.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 16th of 40, unchanged.
- Strength: universities; weakness: defence.
- Private economy stronger than the headline rank suggests.
- Institutional fragmentation slows public-policy delivery.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Japan Holds Seventeenth Worldwide With One of the World's Best-Value Public Sectors | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Japan holds seventeenth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its large, high-quality state outweighs a middling private economy. On public-spending quality it sits among the world's best.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Japan's position rests on a big, high-quality state rather than a thriving private economy. Its schools are the best in the world and its defence posture is strong; the environment and universities are the relatively softer areas. The drag is private investment, which is only middling for a country this wealthy - though recent signals from corporate Japan are more encouraging than mixed.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 17th of 40, unchanged.
- Among the world's best on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: world-leading schools and strong defence.
- The private economy is the weaker half of the story.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

France Climbs to Eighteenth Worldwide - But Its Big, Expensive State Still Underdelivers | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

France rises one place to eighteenth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. A stronger private side offset a weaker public one. Its public-spending quality holds steady.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

France edges up the table despite a state that is large and costly yet far from uniformly efficient. Infrastructure and universities are real assets, but healthcare, internal security and schooling hold the score back - the very picture of a big, expensive government that does not always convert its outlays into results. The macro backdrop, with trimmed growth forecasts, does not help.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 18th of 40.
- Strengths: universities and infrastructure; weaknesses: healthcare and internal security.
- A large, expensive state that underdelivers in places.
- Private-sector activity has been contracting.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Italy Drops to Nineteenth Worldwide as Its Large State Fails to Turn Spending Into Results | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Italy falls one place to nineteenth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. The decline came mostly on the public side. Its state spends heavily but converts little of it into outcomes.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Italy slips because its sizeable state still struggles to turn money into measurable results. Infrastructure and universities are bright spots, but internal security, healthcare and the environment drag the score down - the familiar Italian pattern of a large public sector that does not provide the upward pull seen in Finland, Sweden or Japan. A respectable private economy is not dynamic enough to compensate.

Key takeaways

- Falls one place to 19th of 40.
- Strengths: infrastructure and universities; weakness: internal security.
- Public spending poorly converted into outcomes.
- Low productivity and investment remain the binding constraints.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Türkiye Holds Twentieth Worldwide on a Dynamic Economy Despite a Weak State | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Türkiye holds twentieth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its result is powered far more by a dynamic private economy than by an efficient state. Over the long run, its public sector has slowly improved.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Türkiye keeps its upper-middle perch thanks to a flexible, diversified, export-minded private economy that absorbs shock after shock. The state has gradually got better over the past decade, with infrastructure and a fast-growing defence industry as relative strengths, but weak environmental quality, patchy institutional efficiency and lagging education outcomes still cap the value of public spending.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 20th of 40, unchanged.
- Strengths: infrastructure, logistics and industrial capacity; weakness: environment.
- A diversified private economy resilient even amid high inflation.
- One of the stronger long-run improvers over the decade.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Slovenia Holds Twenty-First Worldwide and Outscores Richer Peers on Public Spending | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Slovenia holds twenty-first place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It keeps its rank after only a marginal slip. On public-spending quality it beats most economies of similar income.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Slovenia delivers more public value than its income would predict, with the score split evenly between the two sides. Strong schools and universities, excellent internal security and a clean environment do the lifting, while an inefficient healthcare system is the glaring weakness. The worry lies on the private side, where growth leans on consumption and foreign capital rather than home-grown investment.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 21st of 40, unchanged.
- Outperforms richer peers on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: education, internal security, environment; weakness: healthcare.
- One of the decade's notable long-run climbers.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Spain Stalls at Twenty-Second Worldwide as Schools and Infrastructure Slip | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Spain ranks twenty-second in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, down from twentieth a decade ago. Public spending has risen, yet the country's standing has fallen. Its public-spending quality peaked in 2021 and has been sliding since.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Spain is a textbook case of diminishing returns: more money, lower rank. Its public sector still beats France and Italy, but a steep decline in schooling and a slow erosion of infrastructure are pulling it lower, while healthcare remains the weakest pillar. The deeper problem is a private sector whose investment has been frozen for a decade - EU transfers cannot substitute for genuine domestic capital.

Key takeaways

- Sits 22nd of 40 - down from 20th in 2015.
- Public-spending quality peaked in 2021 and has fallen since.
- Schooling is the most alarming trend; healthcare the weakest pillar.
- Private investment structurally stuck despite EU money.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Lithuania Holds Twenty-Third Worldwide by Turning a Lean Public Sector Into High-Value Services | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Lithuania holds twenty-third place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It keeps its rank after a small gain. It squeezes more value from a lean state than its neighbours do.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Lithuania converts one of the EU's leanest public sectors into high-value services, outdoing its Baltic and Central European neighbours on sheer efficiency. National and external security are exceptional strengths; physical infrastructure bottlenecks and uneven healthcare access are the drags. The challenge ahead is to shift from cost-based competition to innovation-led growth before the convergence story runs out.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 23rd of 40, unchanged.
- Outperforms its neighbours on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: national security and digital infrastructure; weaknesses: physical infrastructure and healthcare.
- One of the fastest converging economies in the region.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Israel Jumps Two Places to Twenty-Fourth Worldwide on a Rebounding Private Economy | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Israel rises two places to twenty-fourth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. A bounce-back in the private economy did the lifting. Its public-spending quality held steady.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Israel climbs on the back of a recovering private economy, with the state still contributing more than the private side. Its public profile is lopsided by design: a maxed-out defence score and strong universities sit alongside weak healthcare, a poor environment and modest schooling - an asymmetry that follows naturally from the country's security predicament. Any read of its economy comes with a heavy geopolitical risk premium.

Key takeaways

- Climbs two places to 24th of 40.
- Strengths: defence and universities; weakness: healthcare.
- Result lifted by a rebounding private economy.
- Outlook heavily tied to the regional security situation.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Croatia Leaps Four Places to Twenty-Fifth Worldwide and Among the Decade's Top Improvers | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Croatia jumps four places to twenty-fifth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026 - the year's biggest climber. Over the long run it is among the strongest improvers in the whole index. Its public-spending quality is strong for its income level.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Croatia is one of the index's great success stories, rising fast on EU convergence, euro and Schengen entry, and a string of market-friendly reforms. Internal security and infrastructure - the latter boosted by EU funds - are real strengths, even as an over-burdened healthcare system and a rigid labour market still cap productivity. The next leg up will depend on private investment and bolder reform.

Key takeaways

- Leaps four places to 25th of 40 - the year's biggest climber.
- Among the decade's strongest long-run improvers.
- Strengths: internal security, infrastructure and macroeconomic stabilisation.
- Reforms have lifted its standing on economic-freedom rankings.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Estonia Drops Two Places to Twenty-Sixth Worldwide Despite a Top-Tier Public Sector | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Estonia falls two places to twenty-sixth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. A tougher external environment cost it ground. Its public sector remains one of the most efficient in the region.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Estonia dips this year but still runs one of Europe's most efficient states, built on highly digitised administration, serious cybersecurity and rising defence spending. The drags are regional disparities in healthcare and transport outside the main cities. Its private economy is entrepreneurial and start-up-rich, but small and exposed to the swings of external demand.

Key takeaways

- Falls two places to 26th of 40.
- Among the region's best on public-spending quality.
- Strengths: digital governance, cybersecurity and defence.
- A small, entrepreneurial private economy sensitive to external shocks.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Portugal Slips Two Places to Twenty-Seventh Worldwide as Its Public Score Fades | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Portugal falls two places to twenty-seventh in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. The value of its public spending lost ground relative to peers. Its private economy contributes more to the result than the state.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Portugal slips as its public component fades against its peers. The state sits in mid-table, neither failing nor excelling, and over the long run the country has posted a respectable but unremarkable convergence story. It remains ahead of Greece on the headline ranking but behind Spain - a steady Southern European middle-of-the-pack.

Key takeaways

- Falls two places to 27th of 40.
- Public-spending quality in mid-table.
- Ahead of Greece but behind Spain among Southern European peers.
- A respectable but unspectacular long-run climb.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Latvia Eases to Twenty-Eighth Worldwide While Pouring Money Into Security | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Latvia falls one place to twenty-eighth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It lost a little ground over the year. Its standout contribution is national security.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Latvia's defining strength is security: defence spending is among the highest in NATO, with a pledge to go higher still. But the state's score is held back by underinvestment in healthcare, regional inequality and infrastructure gaps, while the private economy stays exposed to external shocks and short of capital depth. Future convergence hinges on productivity, innovation and keeping talent at home.

Key takeaways

- Falls one place to 28th of 40.
- Strength: national security (among NATO's top defence spenders); weakness: healthcare.
- Persistent demographic decline and limited R&D.
- Still converging gradually with Western Europe.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

INFORMACJA PRASOWA – WNI 2026

Polska pnie się na 29. miejsce na świecie - choć publiczne pieniądze wydaje wciąż gorzej niż sąsiedzi | Wskaźnik Bogactwa Narodów 2026

Polska awansowała o jedno miejsce na 29. pozycję we Wskaźniku Bogactwa Narodów 2026. Awans to jednak zasługa skromnego wzrostu gospodarki prywatnej, a nie poprawy jakości państwa. W jakości wydatków publicznych Polska wciąż wypada gorzej niż kraje o podobnej zamożności.

Pełne wyniki i interaktywny ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

Wskaźnik Bogactwa Narodów (WBN), w już szóstej edycji, to odpowiedź Warsaw Enterprise Institute na PKB - w tym roku przygotowana wspólnie z 20 think-tankami z całego świata. Obejmuje 40 gospodarek - w praktyce kraje Unii Europejskiej i OECD oraz Ukrainę. Tam, gdzie PKB każdą wydaną złotówkę traktuje jako tak samo wartościową, WBN robi rzecz trudniejszą: zestawia wielkość gospodarki prywatnej z osobną miarą tego, ile obywatele realnie otrzymują od państwa w siedmiu obszarach - obronności, bezpieczeństwie wewnętrznym, infrastrukturze, środowisku, ochronie zdrowia, szkolnictwie i szkolnictwie wyższym.

Polska zajmuje 29. miejsce wśród 40 ocenianych krajów - tuż za Łotwą, a przed Rumunią - co daje jej czwartą lokatę w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, zaraz za krajami bałtyckimi. Awans cieszy, ale ma gorzki posmak: wynik dzieli się niemal równo na część prywatną i publiczną, a to właśnie jakość wydatków publicznych jest piętą achillesową. Pod tym względem Polska wypada wyraźnie słabiej niż Słowenia, Hiszpania, Litwa, Izrael czy Łotwa - kraje o zbliżonej wielkości gospodarki prywatnej na mieszkańca.

Najważniejsze wyimki

- Awansuje o jedno miejsce na 29. pozycję wśród 40 krajów.
- Awans napędza gospodarka prywatna, nie jakość państwa.
- Najsłabsze obszary: szkolnictwo wyższe i jakość środowiska; mocna strona: bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne.
- Wzrost wciąż napędzany konsumpcją, a nie inwestycjami - co źle wróży przyszłej produktywności.
- W jakości wydatków publicznych Polska ustępuje wszystkim sąsiadom o podobnej zamożności.

Pozostałe informacje

Dlaczego Polska jest tam, gdzie jest. Polską część publiczną ciągnie w dół mierna jakość szkolnictwa wyższego i kiepski stan środowiska - regularnie wracają doniesienia, że niektóre polskie miasta plasują się wśród najbardziej zasmogowanych na świecie - przy jedynie przeciętnych ocenach infrastruktury i obronności. Pozytywnym wyjątkiem jest wysoka ocena bezpieczeństwa wewnętrznego: Polska to po prostu kraj, w którym czują się bezpiecznie i mieszkańcy, i przyjezdni. Po stronie prywatnej gospodarka radzi sobie lepiej, niż sugerowałaby pozycja ogólna, ale wzrost ciągnie konsumpcja gospodarstw domowych, nie inwestycje.

Polskie spowolnienie widać tu jak w soczewce: gospodarka wyraźnie wytraca tempo, podczas gdy sektor publiczny wciąż się rozrasta. Przyczyn jest wiele, ale eksperci wskazują przede wszystkim na niestabilność prawa i rosnące obciążenia aparatu biurokratycznego - w tym na deregulację, która wciąż pozostaje niewystarczająca. Dodają, że system podatkowy z roku na rok staje się coraz bardziej skomplikowany i nieprzewidywalny, czego dowodem są mnożące się podatki sektorowe oraz niezapowiedziane podwyżki akcyzy.

Szerszy obraz nie napawa optymizmem. W większości badanych krajów - w 27 z 40 - obywatele dostali w 2026 r. mniej w zamian za publiczne pieniądze niż dekadę wcześniej. Budżety pęczniały, ale efekty za nimi nie nadążały.

Zjazd zaczął się po pandemii. Po fali poprawy do 2021 r. jakość wydatków publicznych w dużej części próby zawróciła, a wzrost sektora prywatnego mniej więcej o połowę wyhamował, w kilkunastu gospodarkach wręcz stając się ujemny.

Na samym szczycie ton wciąż nadają Stany Zjednoczone, Norwegia i Szwajcaria, łączące duże gospodarki prywatne ze sprawnie działającym państwem. Prawdziwy rozpęd należy jednak do doganiających gospodarek Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej - z Rumunią na czele oraz Chorwacją, Bułgarią i Grecją tuż za nią.

Szerszy wniosek autorów raportu jest dla wolnorynkowego instytutu znajomy: wolny rynek nie oznacza braku państwa, lecz państwo ograniczone i skuteczne - a o bogactwie narodów decyduje przede wszystkim prywatny kapitał i przedsiębiorczość, a nie sama skala redystrybucji. Wskaźnik powstał z inicjatywy Warsaw Enterprise Institute we współpracy z 20 think-tankami z całego świata.

Dziennikarzy zainteresowanych eksperckim komentarzem lub wywiadem na temat Wskaźnika Bogactwa Narodów 2026 serdecznie zapraszamy do kontaktu z Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Nasi analitycy chętnie omówią szczegóły wyników.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Romania Climbs to Thirtieth Worldwide and Leads the Whole Index for Long-Run Growth | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Romania rises one place to thirtieth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Over the past decade no country in the index has climbed further. Yet its public sector remains the weakest in Europe.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Romania's story is a striking clash between a galloping private economy and a state that trails the continent. Its public-spending quality is the lowest in Europe, weighed down by a dismal environment and healthcare; the private economy, by contrast, has surged over the decade and now leads Central and Eastern Europe. The fear, given the country's political turbulence, is that hard-won gains could be squandered.

Key takeaways

- Climbs one place to 30th of 40.
- The single biggest long-run climber in the whole index since 2015.
- Weaknesses: environment and healthcare - the weakest state in Europe.
- A private economy that has surged ahead, led by investment.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Greece Jumps Three Places to Thirty-First Worldwide - But the State Is Big and Underperforming | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Greece climbs three places to thirty-first in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It is one of the year's fastest risers, after years stuck in place. Its public sector still lags behind comparable economies.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Greece finally breaks a long deadlock, lifted by a strong rebound in private economic activity. But its state underperforms its peers - even near-twin Poland does a touch better - with healthcare among the very worst in the index and schooling sliding. Military potential is its standout strength. The central weakness remains chronically low investment: too much consumption, too little capital formation.

Key takeaways

- Climbs three places to 31st of 40.
- Public-spending quality lags comparable economies.
- Worst pillars: healthcare and schooling; strongest: defence.
- Recovery is consumption-led and investment intensity is structurally low.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Czechia Falls Four Places to Thirty-Second Worldwide as Both Components Weaken | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Czechia falls four places to thirty-second in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Both halves of its score declined. Its public sector nonetheless remains its strong suit.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Czechia records one of the year's steepest falls, even though the state is what it does best - matching richer Germany on public-spending quality and outscoring its poorer neighbours. Internal security, universities and healthcare lift it; weak defence and a poor environment pull it down. The private economy, consumption-led, is simply not performing.

Key takeaways

- Falls four places to 32nd of 40.
- Public-spending quality on a par with Germany, above its poorer neighbours.
- Strengths: internal security and universities; weakness: defence.
- A consumption-led private economy that is underperforming.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Slovakia Slips to Thirty-Third Worldwide Despite Gaining Ground | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Slovakia falls one place to thirty-third in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It improved its score, but a surging Greece leapfrogged it. Its public-spending quality held steady.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Slovakia slips a place even as its score ticks up, with the state contributing slightly more than the private side. Internal security is a relative strength, while healthcare drags on the public score and weak private-investment intensity holds the wider economy back. The private economy is consumption-driven, with one of the region's lowest investment ratios - a poor recipe for catching up faster.

Key takeaways

- Falls one place to 33rd of 40, despite a higher score.
- Public component remains slightly more important than the private one.
- Relative strength: internal security; weakness: healthcare.
- A consumption-led economy that is slow to converge.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Hungary Drops to Thirty-Fourth Worldwide as Its Private Economy Shrinks | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Hungary falls one place to thirty-fourth in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. The decline is mainly a private-economy story. Its public-spending quality slipped only marginally.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Hungary's drop is driven by a shrinking private economy, leaving it heavily reliant on the state to compensate - which, this year, it could not. Internal security and digital networks are relative strengths; weak healthcare and modest higher-education depth hold the score back. The route to a better ranking runs through productivity: investment must finally translate into real domestic value.

Key takeaways

- Falls one place to 34th of 40.
- Strengths: internal security and digital infrastructure; weakness: healthcare.
- Decline driven by a weaker private economy.
- A large state relative to a comparatively modest income.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Bulgaria Holds Thirty-Fifth Worldwide as Growth Outpaces Its Weak State | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Bulgaria holds thirty-fifth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. It is among the decade's fastest risers - yet still the lowest-ranked EU member. Its public sector is among the EU's weakest.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Bulgaria is one of the index's quickest long-run improvers, but a weak state caps the result. Its public-spending quality is near the bottom of the EU, dragged down by a dreadful environment, poor healthcare and weak schooling - the legacy of years of political instability and stalled reform. Defence and infrastructure are the relative bright spots. Eurozone and Schengen entry now promise a fresh wave of investment.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 35th of 40, unchanged - the lowest-ranked EU member.
- Among the EU's weakest on public-spending quality.
- Weaknesses: environment, healthcare and schooling; relative strengths: defence and infrastructure.
- Among the decade's fastest long-run climbers.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Chile Holds Thirty-Sixth Worldwide - One of the Few Countries Worse Off Than in 2015 | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Chile holds thirty-sixth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Strikingly, it now sits below where it stood a decade ago. It is the best-placed of the three Latin American economies in the index.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Chile is the best-placed Latin American economy here, yet belongs to the rare club of countries that have gone backwards since 2015. Its public-spending quality trails comparable economies, dragged by stagnant healthcare, a weak environment and worsening internal security; infrastructure and universities are the relative strengths. The deeper problem is that activity is growing more slowly than the population.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 36th of 40, unchanged - but below its 2015 standing.
- Best-placed of the Latin American economies.
- Weaknesses: healthcare, environment and internal security.
- A rare backward mover in an index where most countries advanced.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Georgia Holds Thirty-Seventh Worldwide on a Surging Private Economy | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Georgia holds thirty-seventh place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. A strong private-economy rebound lifted its score. Its public-spending quality nudged up.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Georgia improves on the back of private consumption, even as it stays near the bottom of the table. Its public profile is wildly uneven - solid universities and defence alongside dismal healthcare, a poor environment and weak schooling - meaning the state's value-added is narrow rather than broad-based. The private sector is promising but not yet enough to pull the country clear of the bottom ranks.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 37th of 40, unchanged.
- Relative strengths: universities and defence; weakness: healthcare.
- Improvement driven by private consumption.
- State value-added remains narrow and concentrated.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Mexico Holds Thirty-Eighth Worldwide as Crime and Weak Services Drag It Down | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Mexico holds thirty-eighth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its public component fell sharply over the year. On the quality of public spending it now ranks dead last.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Mexico props up the table on public-spending quality - the weakest score of all 40 countries. Crippling weaknesses in internal security, healthcare and higher education do the damage, and the security gap is especially corrosive, dragging down the effective value of public action far beyond the security sphere. Corruption and organised crime continue to sap the country's appeal to investors.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 38th of 40, unchanged.
- The weakest public-spending quality of all 40 countries.
- Weaknesses: internal security and healthcare; relative strength: schooling.
- Corruption and organised crime weigh on investment.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Colombia Holds Thirty-Ninth Worldwide as Core-Capacity Gaps Persist | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Colombia holds thirty-ninth place in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. Its public component edged down over the year. Its public-spending quality is unchanged but low.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Colombia sits near the foot of the table, with the state doing more of the work than a small private economy. Low internal security, weak healthcare and a poor environment point to a country still wrestling with the basics of state capacity rather than mere misallocation; infrastructure and defence are the relative strengths. Fiscal tensions only add to the uncertainty.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 39th of 40, unchanged.
- Weaknesses: internal security and healthcare; relative strengths: infrastructure and defence.
- A small private economy with low investment intensity.
- Fiscal tensions cloud the outlook.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.

PRESS RELEASE – WNI 2026

Ukraine Sits Fortieth Worldwide as War Turns the State Into a Defence Machine | Wealth of Nations Index 2026

Ukraine ranks fortieth and last in the Wealth of Nations Index 2026. A larger population further diluted its per-person figures. Its state now functions almost entirely as a wartime apparatus.

Full results and the interactive ranking: wni.wei.org.pl

The Wealth of Nations Index (WNI), now in its sixth edition, is the Warsaw Enterprise Institute's answer to GDP, built this year with 20 think tanks from across the world. It covers 40 economies - essentially the members of the European Union and the OECD, plus Ukraine. Where GDP treats every unit of spending as equally valuable, the WNI does something more demanding: it sets the size of the private economy alongside a separate measure of how much citizens actually get back from the state across seven areas - defence, internal security, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, schooling and higher education.

Ukraine's profile is one of extreme imbalance: a public sector propped up almost entirely by an exceptional defence score, and a private economy that is the most suppressed in the entire sample. Healthcare is at a critical low, the environment and internal security badly strained, while wartime government spending crowds out private capital. It is a state that is efficient only in the military sphere.

Key takeaways

- Finishes 40th and last of 40.
- Strength: an exceptional defence score; critical weakness: healthcare.
- The smallest, most suppressed private economy in the sample.
- Wartime public spending is crowding out private investment.

Further information

The bigger picture is unflattering. In most of the countries surveyed - 27 out of 40 - citizens got less value for their public money in 2026 than they did a decade earlier. Budgets swelled; results did not keep pace.

The slide set in after the pandemic. Having broadly improved up to 2021, the quality of public spending has since gone into reverse across much of the sample, even as private-sector growth has roughly halved and, in more than a dozen economies, turned negative.

At the very top, the United States, Norway and Switzerland again set the pace, pairing large private economies with broadly capable states. The real momentum, though, belongs to the catching-up

economies of Central and Eastern Europe - Romania above all, with Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece close behind.

Poland is a case study in the same paradox. Its economy has slowed noticeably even as the public sector keeps expanding. The causes are many, but analysts point in particular to the instability of the law and the mounting burden on the bureaucratic apparatus - including a deregulation effort that has never gone far enough. They add that the tax system grows more tangled and unpredictable by the year, as sectoral levies multiply and excise duties are raised with little or no warning.

For expert commentary or to arrange an interview about the Wealth of Nations Index 2026, journalists are warmly invited to contact the Warsaw Enterprise Institute. Our analysts are available to discuss the findings in detail.