Beat: Business

SATISFACTION OF AMERICAN INVESTORS IN FRANCE

AMCHAM - BAIN BAROMETER 19th EDITION

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USPA NEWS - Was held on February 5, 2019 a Press Conference regarding the AmCham - Bain Barometer 19th Edition on "Satisfaction of American Investors in FRANCE". AmCham is a French Think-Tank based in Paris, which has been bringing American and French Experts together for over 120 Years. Today, It is a Platform for Reflection on the Transatlantic Relationship, constructing Disruptive Ideas and Policy Solutions to contribute to the Democratic Debate. Working directly with a Variety of Economic Sectors, AmCham France counts 350 American and French Companies as Members. Among these are CAC40 and Fortune 500 companies, as well as Numerous Startups and SMEs...

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Rooted in the Shared ideals of the French and American Revolutions, the French-American Relationship has evolved greatly from the Bonds established more than Two Centuries ago. From the Battle of Yorktown to the Invasion of Normandy, the French-American Alliance has grown Stronger and Stronger throughout the Years. For more than Two Centuries, Big Thinkers on Both Sides of the Atlantic have highlighted Differences between Americans and Europeans. After 1945, however, the Soviet threat drew them both together into one Transatlantic "West," a Relationship given Institutional Expression in NATO. France and the United States, in addition to their Strong Relationship at the Political Level, have deep Economic Ties that are Mutually Beneficial. These Trade and Investment Flows support Growth, Jobs and Innovation in Both Countries.

Some Three Million Americans visit France each year. The United States and France share Deep Trade and Economic Relations. Each Country is among the Other's Largest Trading Partners. Different Locations around the Globe have Cultural Differences ; however, many Individuals do not know that Businesses located around the Globe also have Differences with Relation to Business Culture. And because so many Businesses today span the Globe, understanding Specific Business Cultures that are Common in other Countries is Imperative for those who hope to succeed in this New Worldwide Business Marketplace.

The Country ranked 31st out of 190 Countries in the 2018 Doing Business Report published by the World Bank. The Country's Strengths include its Position as Europe's Third Power, its Highly-Skilled Workforce, its Large Industrial Base, its Agricultural Resources, its Worldwide Cultural Reputation and its Geographic Location at the Center of Europe. France is one of the Top Ten World Economic Powers and has many Assets to attract Foreign Investors.

- The Strong Points to consider if you invest in France (Source SantanderTrade) :

** A strategic Geographical Location in the Centre of Western Europe
** A Developed Tertiary Fabric (including Tourism), a Vast Industrial Base and Strong Agricultural Production Capacity
** Leading Infrastructure and Quality Public Services
** A Skilled and Productive Workforce (2nd European Country in terms of Hourly Productivity) and a Dynamic Demographics
** An Investment-Friendly Business Environment and a Relatively Stable and Transparent Legal Framework
** A Diversified Economy that is full of a Wide Range of Players ranging from Large Multinationals to High-Tech Start-Ups (French Tech).

- The Weak Points to consider if you invest in France (Source SantanderTrade)

** One of the Highest Corporate Tax Rates in the World
** High Cost of Labour

** Heaviness of the Tax and Work Regimes
** High Unemployment rate (9.4% in 2017, OECD) which particularly affects Young People and Older Workers
** Growing inequalities
** High Public Spending fuelling already significant Public Debt (96.8% of GDP in 2017, OECD)
** A Low Level of SMEs operating for Export or Investing in Innovation

The USA is the Largest Investor in France and Franco-American Economic Relations have never been harmed by the Political Squabbles in their Relationship. The First American Company in France is probably the Banque Welles (founded in 1816 by Col. Samuel Welles, from Boston, the Bank went Bankrupted in 1841). The First US Industrial Firm in France is the Porcelain maker Haviland, founded in 1842. A Porcelain Dealer in New York, David Haviland could not obtain from the Porcelain Makers in Limoges what he wanted for the US Market : he moved to France and his Family still runs the Factory... The American Chamber of Commerce in France (AmCham) was the First American Chamber of Commerce to be founded in a Foreign Country (founded by Eleven American Businessmen in Paris in 1894). It is the Voice of American Business in France, dedicated to the Optimization of US Investments and the Promotion of Transatlantic Business Ties...

-- AmCham - Bain Barometer 19th Edition "Satisfaction of American Investors in France"

** It aims to measure from Year to Year the Morale of American Investors in France and their Perception of the Economic Environment (Launched in 1995). To collect the Opinions of American Investors on Current Economic Topics in France. To understand American Employees Drivers and Detractors of living in France.

** From December 2018 to Mid-January 2019, a Questionnaire was sent to the Management of Subsidiaries of American Companies in France (127 Answers from US Companies covering more than 52,000 Employees and more than 52 Billion Euros Turnover).

** Respondents are less Optimistic than in 2017 on the Economic Outlook due to the European and Global Growth Uncertainties (2017 : 72% positive - 2018 : 30% positive)

** Despite Uncertainties, Job Creation Perspectives remain Positive (2017 : 52% Incrrease and 35% Stable - 2018 : 42% Increase and 41% Stable)

** The NPS (Net Promoter Score) of France as an Investment Destination is Similar to last year and remains Negative, with a Higher Share of Passives (2017 : 21% Promoters and 46% Passives - 2018 : 14% Promoters and 58% Passives)

** Respondents are more Reluctant to recommend Further Expansion of an Existing Business in France than last year ; but the NPS is still Higher than its pre-2017 Level (2017 : 28% Promoters and 38% Passives - 2018 : 17% Promoters and 53% Passives)

** Socio-Economic and Legal Stability, Simplicity and Administrative Procedures and Workforce Qualification are the Key Investment Decision Criteria (Top 10 : Economic Context, Legal Certainty, Social Climate and Political Stability, Simplicity of Administrative Procedures, Workforce Qualification, Workforce Overall Cost, Geographic Location, Workforce Availability, Tax System for Foreign Companies, Flexibility in Work Time Organization)

** France's Main Assets are its Culture, its Geographic Location and Quality of Life, while Flexibility in Work Time Organization and Redundancies remain Weaknesses (Strenghts : Cultural Environment, Geographic Location, Quality of Life, Workforce Qualification, Infrastructure Quality, Importance given to R&D and Innovation - Weaknesses : Social Climate and Political Stability, Relocation Costs, Tax System for Foreign Companies, Workforce Overall Cost, Simplicity of Administration Procedures, Complexity of Redundancy Procedures, Flexibility in Work Time Organization, Redundancy Costs)

** In 2018; Germany and the UK remain France's Main Competitors for US Investment

** Again this year, the NPS of France as a Country where to settle is increasing significantly (2017 : 31% Promoters and 42% Passives - 2018 : 31% Promoters and 54% Passives)

** More and more Investors consider France as an Attractive Country for Companies engaging in Digital Transformation (2017 : 38% Very attractive and 58% relatively attractive - 2018 : 40% very attractive and 56% relatively attractive)

** For the Majority of Respondents, France should further invest in its Business Environment to support Digital Transformation (Top 3 : Enhance the Overall Business Environment, Intensify Traninngs dedicated to the Digital Industry, Encourage the Development of Digital Infrastructure)

** Respondents judge that the French Start-Up Econsystem supports the Acceleration of the Digital Transformation (38% very positive, 54% Positive, 7% Neutral)

** The Pace of Reforms is considered Good by Respondents, but they are divided on the Presidential and Governmental Determination to succeed (34% it has accelerated, 35% it has remained constant, 31% it has slowed down)

** Positive Impact of Reforms on France's Economic Attractiveness is recognized even if more limited than in 2017 competiveness of France in general : 20% very positive, 54% positive, 21% neutral)

** Overall, ongoing Projects on Corporate Taxation, PACTE Law and Reform of Unemployment Insurance have a Positive Impact on France's Attractiveness

** However, Respondents are concerned by Public Debt and Social Climate, Impact of Governement Measures being questioned

** Respondents are also concerned by French-American Relations and a Potential Trade War between the European Union and the U.S.

** Uncertainties over Europe highly concern Respondents (10% Positive, 35% neutral, 48% negative, 6% very negative)

** The Impact of Brexit on Companies activity is evaluated Positively in case of a Deal, but Harmful or with No Effect in case of No Deal between the EU and the UK

Source : Press Conference at AmCham in Paris, on February 5, 2019 -
Amcham - Bain Barometer 19th Edition "Satisfaction of American Investors in France"
With Speakers :
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* Marc-André Kamel, Partner Bain & Company Paris

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