

## Press Release

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### **Germans Trust Firefighters, Paramedics and Nurses**

#### **Findings of the GfK Verein's "Trust in Professions 2018" study**

**Nuremberg, Germany, March 21, 2018 – Germans trust firefighters, paramedics and nurses the most, politicians by far the least. Lawyers and professional athletes show the largest declines compared to the last study in 2016. Overall, trust remains stable, according to the current "Trust in Professions" survey conducted by the GfK Verein, which surveyed Germans on which professions they trusted.**

In general, trust in the professions covered by the survey remains stable in Germany in 2018. The figures continue to place Germany in the middle of the pack internationally.

Firefighters, paramedics and nurses again perform the best. Nearly all Germans consider these professions trustworthy, awarding them approval ratings of about 95 %. The remaining top places are occupied by doctors, bus drivers, train operators and pilots, each earning the trust of nearly 90 % of Germans. As a result, trust in this top group remains consistently high.

There were no noteworthy increases in trust in professions in 2018. However, in the lower half of the rankings, there are major declines. For example, trust in lawyers shows a decline of five percentage points to 67 %. Professional athletes and soccer players suffer losses in approval to the same extent (2016: 42 %; 2018: 37 %). Trust in bankers and clergy also decrease by a few percentage points: from 43 % to 40 % and from 61 % to 57 %, respectively. The diminishing trust in clerics corresponds to ongoing declines in membership numbers for both of the major churches in Germany.

#### **Politicians remain in last place**

A total of seven professions are seen as trustworthy by less than half of Germans; this group includes advertising professionals (25 %) and

insurance agents (23 %). Moreover, politicians remain stuck at the bottom of the list at 14 % in terms of trust. The German federal election in 2017, which occurred during the survey period, presumably plays a role here.

The perception of politicians at the lower end of the scale is identical in eastern and western Germany. The same applies to professions at the top of the trust list. The largest differences between the eastern and western regions is shown in the assessment of clergy: Germans in the western regions trust this profession significantly more, by a margin of 25 % (east: 37 %; west: 62 %). This may be attributable to a legacy of the former East Germany, where the share of those without any religious affiliation is particularly high. Lawyers, police officers, judges, civil servants and mayors enjoy much higher trust in the western part of Germany. By contrast, Germans in eastern regions regard retailers and actors much more positively.

### Germany: Trust\* in Professions

Germany's Top 10 (in %)	2016	2018
Firefighters	96	96
Paramedics	96	96
Nursing professionals	95	95
Doctors	89	89
Train operators, bus drivers and subway and trolley operators	89	89
Pilots	87	89
Pharmacists	90	87
Engineers, technicians	86	85
Police officers	82	84
Tradespeople (plumbers, carpenters, painters, etc.)	77	80

Germany's Bottom 10 (in %)	2016	2018
Entrepreneurs	54	53
Retailers, salespeople	52	51
TV hosts	48	50
Actors	48	46
Bankers, bank employees	43	40
Journalists	36	38
Professional athletes, professional soccer players	42	37
Advertising professionals	27	25
Insurance salespeople	22	23
Politicians	14	14

\* I trust completely/essentially

Source: **Trust in Professions 2018** – a study by the GfK Verein.

### Firefighters enjoy the most trust worldwide

Politicians hold last place on the trust scale in Germany and in 16 other countries. In each of the remaining countries, they occupy one of the last

places, which comes to an average of 29 % internationally and last place overall by some distance. Nevertheless, they enjoy the trust of nearly half of citizens in India and about one-third of citizens in Indonesia and South Africa. By contrast, in Brazil, France and Spain, politicians have nearly no popular support, with an approval rating of about 6 %.

Differences are also striking when it comes to police officers. They place in the middle of the pack with a global approval rating of 67 %, but there is significant polarization regarding police officers in certain countries. Trust in police officers is generally lower if there is a perception of corruption in one's country. A police officer as "your friend and helper" is not only a slogan – in Germany and many other countries they are actually viewed that way. The situation is entirely different in Kenya, where police officers rank next to last at 29 %.

Internationally, the professions that are regarded as most trustworthy are those one counts on in an emergency – exemplified by firefighters again ranking first. In Germany and in ten other countries, they rank number one.

#### **About the study**

These findings have been taken from GfK Verein's "Trust in Professions 2018" report. This study, the third of its kind, was conducted in fall 2017. Two thousand respondents (age 14 and above) were surveyed in Germany.

The study was also conducted in 19 other countries.

This study is based on surveying confidence in 32 professions using a scale ranging from "trust completely" and "trust essentially" to "trust less" and "do not trust at all."

#### **About the GfK Verein**

The GfK Verein is a nonprofit organization founded in 1934 to promote market research. It is comprised of 550 companies and individuals. The purpose of the Verein is to develop innovative research methods in close cooperation with scientific institutions; to promote the training and continuing education of market researchers; to follow fundamental structures and developments for private consumption in society, the economy and politics; and to research the impact of these on consumers. The findings of the studies will be made available to the members of the Verein free of charge. The GfK Verein is a shareholder in GfK SE. Additional information is available at [www.gfk-verein.org](http://www.gfk-verein.org).

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