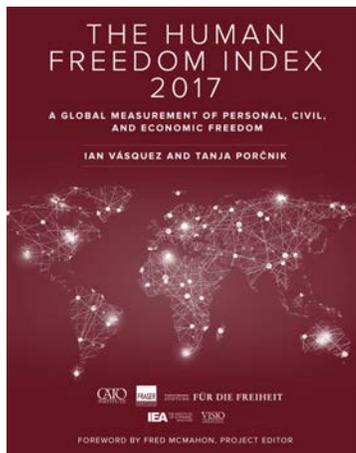


New Human Freedom Index released

Is Global Freedom on the Decline?

Is the world getting more or less free? Which countries have the most robust freedom overall? How do economic freedom and personal freedoms interact? *The Human Freedom Index*, now in its third annual edition, is the most comprehensive freedom index ever created to answer these questions for 159 of the world's countries. The report is copublished by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute, and the Liberales Institut at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. It measures 79 distinct indicators of personal and economic freedom, including freedom of movement and religion, the rule of law, freedom of expression and information, freedom of identity and relationships, the size of government, freedom to trade, the legal system and property rights, and more.



The authors, Cato's Ian Vásquez and Tanja Porčnik of the Visio Institute, find that global freedom has declined slightly since last year's report. The top five jurisdictions for freedom were Switzerland, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Ireland, and Australia. The United States ranked only 17th. The five least free countries were Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Venezuela, and finally Syria, in 159th place. The

areas that saw the largest global declines in freedom were the rule of law; freedom of movement; association, assembly, and civil society; and expression and information.

Out of 17 regions, the highest levels of freedom were found in Western Europe, Northern Europe, and North America (Canada and the United States). The lowest levels were in the Middle East and North Africa, Eastern Europe (Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine), South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Many of the countries that slid in freedom are those experiencing a wave of authoritarian populism, such as Russia, Venezuela, Turkey, Hungary, and Argentina.

While global freedom did decline overall, about half the countries in the index had improved since last year's report. Some countries have shifted dramatically in rank over the past 10 years—while Russia, for example, moved from 99th place in 2008 to 126th in 2015, Taiwan moved in the opposite direction—from 49th place to 19th.

The index continues to find that freedom leads to increased prosperity—countries in the top quartile enjoyed a much higher average per capita income, at \$38,871, than those in the bottom quartile, at \$10,346. ■

[READ THE FULL REPORT AT CATO.ORG.](https://www.cato.org)

Cato News Notes

BACCHUS JOINS TRADE CENTER

James Bacchus joined the Cato Institute's Herbert A. Stiefel Center for Trade Policy Studies in January as a senior fellow. He was a founding judge and was twice the chairman—the chief judge—of the highest court of world trade, the appellate body of the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. He served for two terms as a member of Congress from Florida and is also a former international trade negotiator for the United States. For more than 14 years, he chaired the global practice of the largest law firm in the United States. He is the author of *Trade and Freedom* and *The Willing World: Shaping and Sharing a Sustainable Global Prosperity*, forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in 2018.

SPOTLIGHT ON SECURITY

In 2017 Cato's Julian Sanchez authored three of the most-read articles on *Just Security*, an online forum that analyzes U.S. national security law and policy, based out of the New York University School of Law.

CATO'S CONSTITUTION DAY TRAVELS TO ROME

In late October, members of Italy's Pietro Nenni Foundation met at Cato with Roger Pilon and Ilya Shapiro. They were familiar with Cato's 16 annual Constitution Day symposiums. With the 70th anniversary of Italy's Constitution coming up on December 22, they were seeking advice on doing something like that in Rome. Shortly thereafter, the foundation's Prof. Luigi Trioni drafted the program for Italy's first Constitution Day symposium and invited Pilon to give an hour-long keynote address on American constitutionalism. Under the "high patronage" of President Sergio Mattarella, the event took place on December 22. Pilon's address, "American Constitutional Theory and History: Implications for European Constitutionalism," was translated into Italian before the event. It will appear in both languages when the proceedings are published as a book later this year. While in Rome, Pilon did interviews with *La Voce di New York* and the Italian magazine *Formiche*. He also had lengthy discussions on constitutional matters with Justice Giulio Prosperetti, a member of Italy's Constitutional Court, and Counselor Giancarlo Montedoro, legal advisor to President Mattarella.