



Monthly Comments – Emerging Markets

MacroFinance Research – December 2020

Key Messages

Country Focus – **Mexico: gradual exit from recession**

Mexico is well into its recovering phase after the massive sanitary and economic shocks, nevertheless, the recent resurgence of new Covid-19 infections suggests lasting effect on long-term economic performances. Sound country-risk fundamentals (limited current account deficit, contained external debt, very competitive exchange rate, and low credit leverage) should prevent a systemic impact on the economy, but the path to higher growth is hindered by governance and reforms challenges.

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RiskWatch – **Annual update of Political & Governance Risk Ratings**

The update of Political & Governance Risk ratings confirms the stabilization of the overall measure at an intermediate level (53.6-c in 2020) with ambivalent dynamics across indicators and countries. On one side, the significant deterioration in the indicator of *Political Stability* was compensated by smaller improvements in three others (*Voice & Accountability*, *Rule of Law*, and *Government Effectiveness*); given that *Political Stability* remains the best-performing indicator, all six indicators have relatively converged. On the other side, Political & Governance Risk rating for individual countries diverged further, with lower-risk countries generally improving while higher-risk countries continued to deteriorate.

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Dashboard & Heatmap – **Global Credit Risk, Covid-19 & Country Risk Premium Heatmap**

Our updated Heatmap looks at performances and risks through each country's financial risks, growth sensitivity to the pandemic / health situation, and their ex-ante vulnerabilities.

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As always, readers are most welcome to come back to us for further details or clarifications.

Completed on December 9, 2020.

Country Focus – Mexico: gradual exit from recession

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Unmoving economy in 2019

Mexico entered the year 2020 with an economy in bad shape (GDP growth at -0.1% y/y in 2019), tensions on fiscal accounts and tight monetary policy. Faster deterioration in our short-term Risk ratings pointed to growing economic and financial difficulties for 2020. Meanwhile the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities, especially since relatively weak governance was detrimental to effective management of health and sanitary situation.

Severe effects of the Covid-19 pandemic

About 1.2mn people infected and 100,000+ deaths officially related to Covid-19 since Feb. 28, 2020, with a resurgence in November-end, close to 10,000 new cases per day on average over the last week. To control the early stage of the pandemic, authorities implemented a range of sanitary measures, including travel restrictions, closures of schools and of non-essential activities. Consequently, substantial drop in both domestic and external demand – due to Mexico’s massive global and regional trade integration – as well as plunge in global oil prices have heavily impacted the economy (GDP: -19% y/y in 2020Q2).

Ongoing recovery

Partial and heterogenous recovery has taken place since the worst of the activity shock in April-May. Although all sectors were still contracting in 2020Q3, industries have caught up at a faster pace; manufacturing rebound (+32% q/q) partly reflects the recovery of US demand; but the gain in services was constrained by some extended social distancing measures. Nevertheless, more recent downturn for utilities and construction in Sept. (on quarterly basis) indicates a still poor momentum of domestic demand; private consumption is impacted notably by lower wages income, rising unemployment and pick up in (food) inflation, even if resilient remittances bring some respite for households.

Tepid policy responses

The fiscal stimulus in response to the Covid-19 crisis has been relatively shy (about 0.7%of GDP), despite resilient tax revenues (effect of past tax enforcement changes), since authorities have been concerned to minimize borrowings in 2020 in relation to the constitutional mandate to borrow only for income-generating investments and debt management operations. In addition, withdrawals from official trusts and deposits

(Budgetary Income Stabilization Fund - FEIP) for 1% of GDP and expected exceptional dividend transfers from Central Bank (1% of GDP) will preserve short- and medium-term debt sustainability.

In parallel, the Central Bank further eased its monetary policy in August and September (policy rate: -75bp to 4.25% with an aggregate cut of -300bps in 2020), but paused this cycle in November, as inflationary pressures have become sticky (+4.1% y/y in Oct. because higher food prices, but +3.4% in Nov.H1 due to Black Friday). Overall, the weak economy with ample slack conditions, and downward inflation expectations should lead to at least one additional interest rate cut in the coming months. Strengthening of the Mexican Peso, with positive impact on imported prices and hence on domestic inflation, along still significant interest rates’ spread should prevent bouts of financial volatility.

Mediocre growth outlook

Considering the lowering of Mexican economic growth potential before the Covid-19 pandemic and global crisis in 2020, the long-term growth performances will be muted, besides a temporary technical rebound in 2021Q2 and Q3. Activity could remain below its pre-pandemic level until 2022, especially as a resurgence of Covid-19 outbreak would entail restrictions unfavorable to business and consumers, with immediate impact on confidence and activity.

Mexico: Country-Risk Assessment under Covid

*Ex-ante Vulnerability,
Global Credit Risk and Growth Sensitivity to Covid
from 0 (best) to 100 (worst)*

	Mexico
Eco. & Fin. Risk rating	36
Political Risk rating	55
Ex-ante Vulnerability	59
Liquidity Risk	30
Fx Debt Risk	18
Corporate Risk	58
Sovereign Risk	59
Global Credit Risk	41
Covid Health Situation	60
Health Vulnerability	60
Stringency of lockdowns	67
International Trade - Supply chains	100
International Trade -Demand-side	61
Growth Sensitivity to Covid-19	66

Source: TAC ECONOMICS

RiskWatch – Annual update of Political & Governance Risk Ratings

The update of Political & Governance Risk ratings confirms the stabilization of the overall measure at an intermediate level (53.6-c in 2020) with ambivalent dynamics across indicators and countries. On one side, the significant deterioration in the indicator of Political Stability was compensated by smaller improvements in three others (Voice & Accountability, Rule of Law, and Government Effectiveness); given that Political Stability remains the best-performing indicator, all six indicators have relatively converged. On the other side, Political & Governance Risk rating for individual countries diverged further, with lower-risk countries generally improving while higher-risk countries continued to deteriorate.

Annual release of World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators

The World Bank has released the annual update of its dataset [Worldwide Governance Indicators](#) on the overall political and governance situation, with an extensive coverage (214 countries), and based on 30+ data/survey sources, allowing TAC ECONOMICS to construct a comprehensive tool for better measuring and understanding Political & Governance Risk in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs).

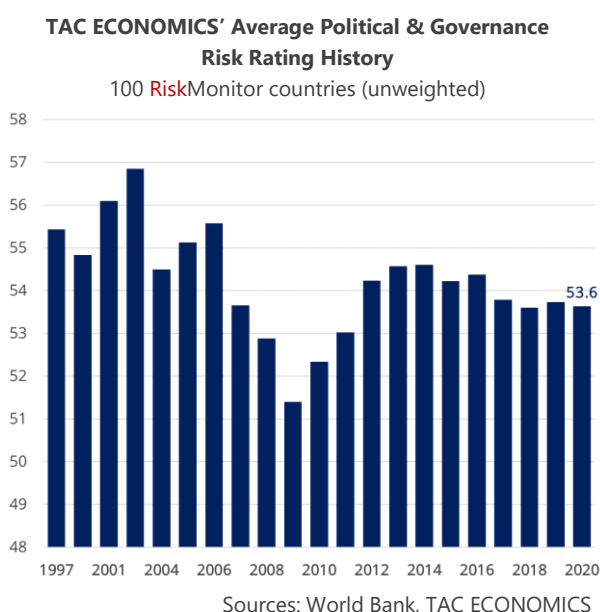
We use World Bank data through six broad measures: two indicators are *stricto sensu* elements of political risk (*Voice & Accountability* and *Political Stability*), two for the assessment of public management of the regulatory environment (*Government Effectiveness* and *Regulatory Quality*) and two focus on the legal

environment (*Rule of Law* and *Control of Corruption*). Akin to our Economic & Financial Risk ratings, the six indicators of Political & Governance Risk ratings for the 100 countries included in RiskMonitor are normalized from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) for comprehensive comparisons across indicators, countries and averages. An overall Risk rating above 60 denoting very high risk (or high costs from political uncertainty), whereas an overall Risk rating below 40 suggests a relatively sound political and business environment.

Lastly, the Political & Governance Risk ratings measure endogenous/domestic risks, but do not assess geopolitical risks *per se*; external threats and/or regional tensions are not incorporated into the *Political Stability* indicator and aggregate Risk ratings.

Stabilization of Political & Governance Risk ratings

The average Political & Governance Risk ratings for the 100 RiskMonitor countries remained almost steady over the last four years (53.6-c in 2020). This period of relative stability, a first since 1997, denotes ambiguous patterns of convergence (indicator-wise) and of divergence (country-wise), and suggests higher uncertainties on future political and governance development in EMDEs.



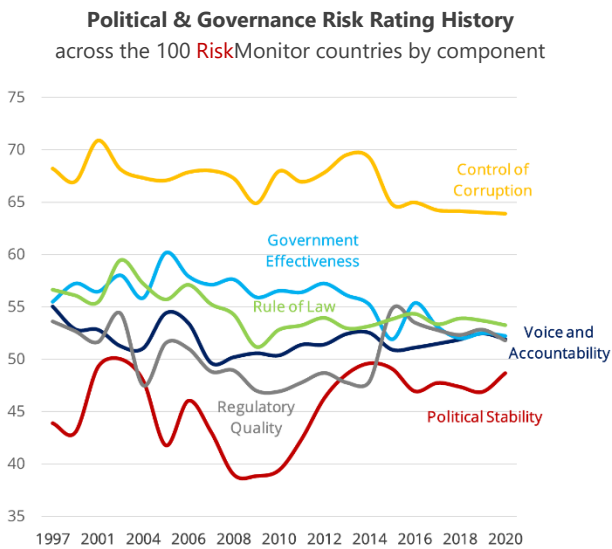
Long-term view indicates strong variation in Political & Governance Risk ratings with a historical peak observed in 2003 (at 57), followed by a structural improvement up to 2009 (down to 51). The subsequent mild deterioration till 2014 reflected notably the impact of Arab Spring and the emergence of more illiberal/populist regimes; in particular, the indicator of *Political Stability* degraded rapidly (by almost 11 points over five years).

Convergence amongst indicators

When looking at the dynamics of the six indicators, the deterioration in *Political Stability* was compensated by smaller improvements in three other indicators: *Voice & Accountability*, *Rule of Law*, and *Government Effectiveness*; thus this contrast led to the overall stability in the average Political & Governance Risk ratings.

The clear convergence indicator-wise is revealed by:

- 1) The degradation of the best-performing indicator (*Political Stability*: +2 at 49-c in 2020) and the simultaneous marginal reduction of the *Control of Corruption* (64-d). Indeed, the spread between the two extremes almost halved over the last decade.
- 2) Convergence of three indicators (*Voice & Accountability*, *Government Effectiveness*, and *Regulatory Quality*) to the same intermediate level (52-c in 2020), along with *Rule of Law* slightly above, while their paths were dissimilar until the mid-2010s.



Sources: World Bank, TAC ECONOMICS

Regional differences remain very large

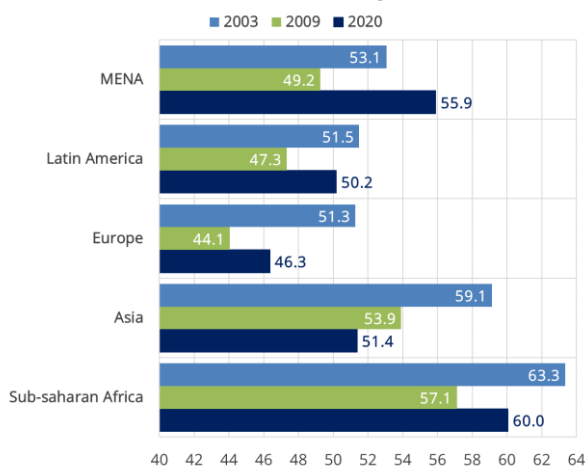
Large and persistent divergences can be observed for the five EMDEs regions:

- 1) The main long-term pattern, analogous to the average Political & Governance Risk ratings for 100 countries, in three regions (**Latin America, Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa**) with higher Risk ratings in 2020 than in 2009 (and lower than the global peak of 2003).
- 2) A significant and consistent improvement in **Asia** since 2003 (to 51-c in 2020)
- 3) An unfavorable reversal since 2010 in **MENA** (56-c in 2020, above the earlier peak of 2003).

Lastly, most regions exhibited a stability in their Political & Governance Risk ratings between 2019 and 2020, with an improvement only in **Europe**, which still shows the most favorable Risk rating (-0.5 to 46.3).

Political & Governance Risk ratings by region

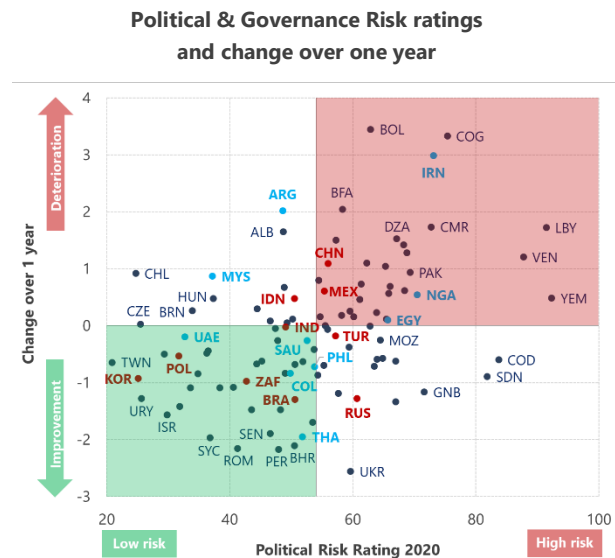
From 0 (lowest risk) to 100 (highest risk)



Sources: World Bank, TAC ECONOMICS

Wide dispersion in Political & Governance Risk ratings

When looking at the changes in the Risk ratings over the past year (vertical axis on the next chart), there is a clear dichotomy across EMDEs: most below-median (*Low Risk*) countries have improved (37 out of 50), while conversely a majority of above-median countries has deteriorated (32 out of 50), leading to a larger dispersion of Political & Governance Risk ratings in 2020.



Sources: World Bank, TAC ECONOMICS

Few “failed states” display the highest and worsening Risk ratings: **Venezuela, Yemen, and Libya**; **D. R.Congo** and **Sudan** also have very high but declining Risk ratings. Moreover, several Sub-Saharan African and MENA countries combine high Risk ratings and large deterioration over one year: **Iran, Congo, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Algeria, Zambia, Mali**, and, to a lower extent, **Nigeria, and Egypt**. On the opposite, some large EMDEs show low and improving Risk ratings: **South Korea, Poland, South Africa, and Brazil**.

Taiwan (20.9) remains the best performing country in terms of domestic political and governance situation for the fourth consecutive year, on the back of further strengthening in public management (*Government Effectiveness* and *Regulatory Quality*). In parallel, **South Korea** regained a third position in 2020 (against 8th rank in 2016) thanks to better indicators of legal environment (*Rule of Law* and *Control of Corruption*) and *Government Effectiveness*.

Ukraine registered the largest improvement in Risk ratings in 2020 (-2.6 to 60-c), with significant reductions in all six indicators. This favorable evolution is related to the latest change in government after the Presidential election in 2019 won by Volodymyr Zelensky who broke the traditional power dominance from Russia and took

serious measures to control corruption. Other positive moves include **Peru** (-2.2), **Romania** (-2.2), as well as **Bahrain, Seychelles, Thailand, Senegal, El Salvador, and Israel** which displayed significant improvements in Risk ratings, notably for the indicators of *Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality*, and to a lower extent *Control of Corruption* and *Voice & Accountability*.

On the contrary, **Bolivia** has witnessed the largest deterioration (+3.5 to 63-d) due to large worsening of *Political Stability* and *Government Effectiveness* after the political crisis in 2019-end (massive protests on allegations of electoral fraud which later forced former President Evo Morales to resign).

Turning to the best and worst performances across 100 EMDEs, countries from only two regions (Latin America: **Uruguay** and **Peru**; and Asia: **Brunei, South Korea, and Taiwan**) exhibit the lowest risk for each Political & Governance Risk indicator; surprisingly, no European country is listed in the Lowest Risk component. Meanwhile, largest deterioration over one year are listed for African (**Comoros, Congo, and Madagascar**) and Latin American countries (**Bolivia** and **Argentina**). Also, the indicator of *Political Stability* recorded the largest positive and negative changes in 2020.

TAC ECONOMICS’ Political & Governance Risk rating

Best and Worst performances across 100 countries

	Lowest Risk	Highest Risk	Largest improvement over 1 year	Largest deterioration over 1 year
Voice & Accountability	Uruguay 11.1	Laos 89.9	Guinea-Bissau -5.7	Comoros +5.0
Political Stability	Brunei 15.5	Yemen 100.0	Romania -8.8	Congo +13.6
Government Effectiveness	Taiwan 16.8	Yemen 96.3	Brazil -5.7	Bolivia +7.9
Regulatory Quality	Taiwan 16.6	Venezuela 99.2	Brazil -4.2	Argentina +3.5
Rule of Law	Korea 18.9	Venezuela 99.3	Cambodia -4.5	Madagascar +4.0
Control of Corruption	Uruguay 23.4	Yemen 97.7	Seychelles -7.2	Comoros +5.4
Political & Governance Risk rating	Taiwan 20.9	Yemen 92.3	Ukraine -2.6	Bolivia +3.5

Sources: World Bank, TAC ECONOMICS

Key take-away from the Political & Governance Risk Heatmap

The Political & Governance Risk Heatmap (cf. next section) provides critical outputs from our quantitative tools, i.e. the six indicators composing the Political & Governance Risk rating (for which we look at both level and dynamics to define the color code, and the overall Political & Governance Risk rating (for which the color codes are on level of risk only). The 100 EMDEs are sorted by the largest number of red and orange boxes.

Focusing very simply on the top 10 and bottom 10 countries in this table, we have a fair view of level and dynamics of risk differentiation.

Beyond “crisis-stricken” **Yemen** and **Libya**, we also find in the top 10 **Iran, Congo, Cameroon, Mali, Algeria, Venezuela, Sudan, and Nigeria**, where poor political and governance situation can have sizeable impact on social, economic, and financial developments.

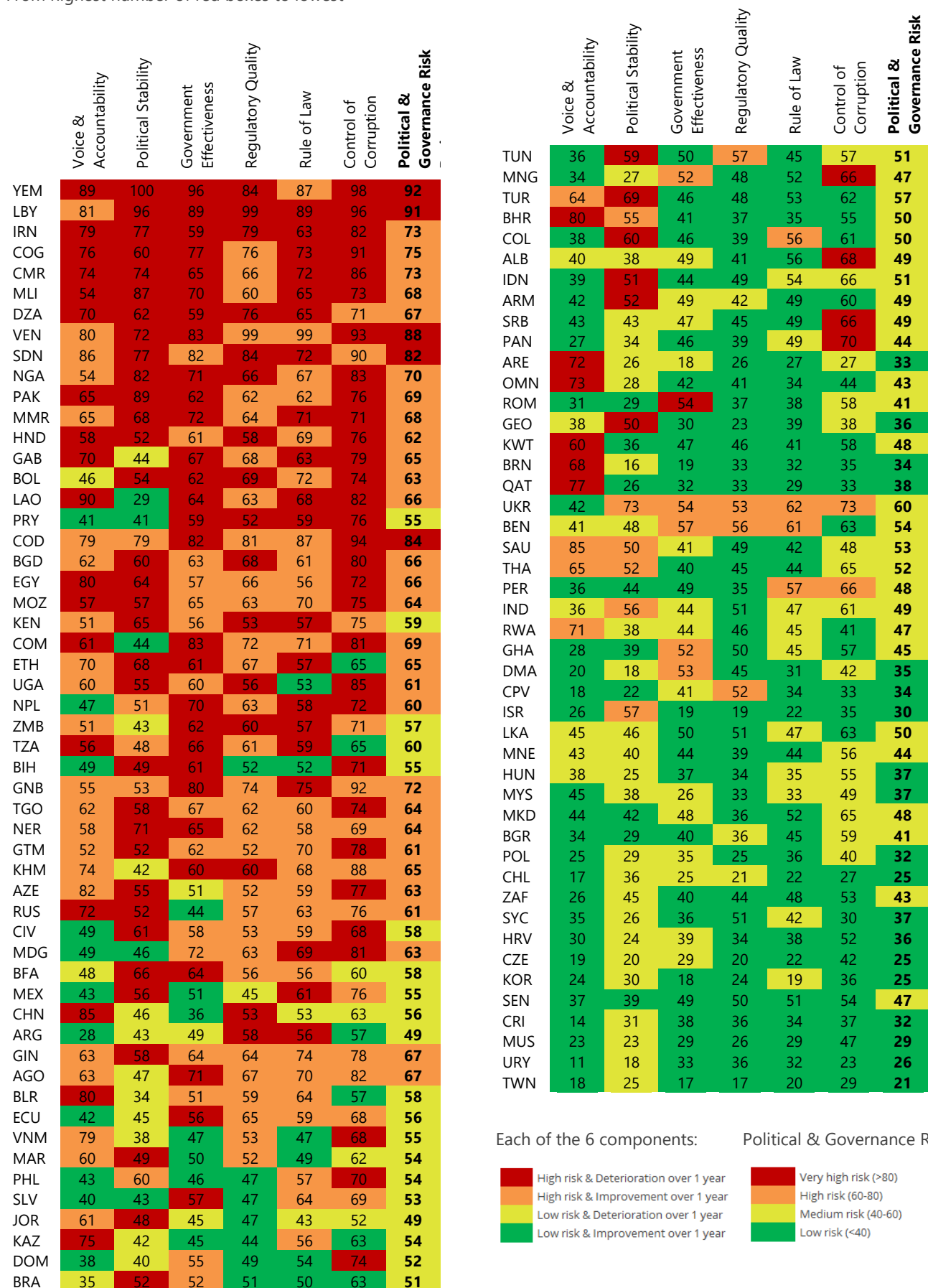
Conversely, the bottom 10 is a very mixed group of countries from all regions (**Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe**), all of them characterized by all six components of Political & Governance Risk being better than the median and most of them improving further, while their aggregate Political & Governance Risk rating is below our lower risk threshold (below 40), with only two exceptions (**South Africa** at 43 and **Senegal** at 47). Some key European EMDEs have seen progressive deterioration in their ranking, with both **Poland** and **Hungary** relegated to higher positions in the list and only the **Czech Republic** and **Croatia** being in the best/bottom 10.

Political Calendar for emerging countries

As a complement to the update of the Political & Governance Risk ratings, we provide an up-to-date calendar of the key political consultations (confirmed or tentative; parliamentary and presidential elections, and referendums) scheduled until the end of 2021.

Political & Governance Risk Heatmap

From highest number of red boxes to lowest



Political Calendar - by date

December 2020 - December 2021

* Elections dates subject to changes due to Covid-19 health crisis

Country	Date	Elections	Comment
Kuwait	December 05, 2020	Parliamentary	National Assembly
Romania	December 06, 2020	Parliamentary	Chamber of Deputies & Senate
Venezuela	December 06, 2020	Parliamentary	National Assembly
Ghana	December 07, 2020	Presidential & Parliamentary	House of Representatives
Egypt	December 08, 2020	Parliamentary	House of Representatives (2nd round)
Niger	December 27, 2020	Presidential & Parliamentary	February 20, 2021 (Presidential elections' runoff)
Kazakhstan	January 10, 2021	Parliamentary	House of Representatives
Uganda	January 14, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	February 08, 2021 (Parliamentary elections' runoff)
Ecuador	February 07, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	April 11, 2021 (Presidential elections' runoff)
Laos	February 21, 2021	Parliamentary	National Assembly
El Salvador	February 28, 2021	Parliamentary	Legislative Assembly
Bulgaria	March 28, 2021	Parliamentary	National Assembly
Cape Verde	March 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	National Assembly
Congo	March 2021	Presidential	
Chile	April 11, 2021	Parliamentary	Constituant Assembly
Peru	April 11, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	June 06, 2021 (Presidential elections' runoff)
Benin	April 11, 2021	Presidential	May 09, 2021 (runoff)
Albania	April 25, 2021	Parliamentary	
Vietnam	May 23, 2021	Parliamentary	National Assembly
Mexico	June 06, 2021	Parliamentary	Chamber of Deputies
Iran	June 18, 2021	Presidential	
Mongolia	June 2021	Presidential	
Zambia	August 12, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	National Assembly
Taiwan	August 28, 2021	Referendum	New Constitution
Ethiopia	August 2021	Parliamentary	House of People's Representatives
Russia	September 19, 2021	Parliamentary	Federal Duma
Czech Republic	October 15, 2021	Parliamentary	Chamber of Deputies
Argentina	October 24, 2021	Parliamentary	Chamber of Deputies & Senate
Côte d'Ivoire	October 2021	Parliamentary	National Assembly
Morocco	October 2021	Parliamentary	Chamber of Representatives
Chile	November 21, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	Chamber of Deputies & Senate December 19, 2021 (Presidential elections' runoff)
Bulgaria	November 2021	Presidential	
Honduras	November 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	National Congress
Libya	December 24, 2021	Presidential & Parliamentary	Council of Deputies
Libya	2021?	Referendum	Constitution
Algeria	2021	Parliamentary	
Mali	2021	Referendum	Creation of Senate and increase of President's powers
Qatar	2021	Parliamentary	
Yemen	2021?	Presidential & Parliamentary Referendum	New Constitution

Sources: IFES Election Guide, Wikipedia, M. Herrera, NDI. TAC ECONOMICS

Appendix 1: List of 100 countries monitored

ISO 3 Code	Country Name
AGO	Angola
ALB	Albania
ARG	Argentina
ARM	Armenia
AZE	Azerbaijan
BEN	Benin
BFA	Burkina Faso
BGD	Bangladesh
BGR	Bulgaria
BHR	Bahrein
BIH	Bosnia
BLR	Belarus
BOL	Bolivia
BRA	Brazil
BRN	Brunei
CHL	Chile
CHN	China
CIV	Cote d'Ivoire
CMR	Cameroon
COD	DR Congo
COG	Rep. of Congo
COL	Colombia
COM	Comoros
CPV	Cape Verde
CRI	Costa Rica
CZE	Czech Rep.
DMA	Dominica
DOM	Dominican Rep
DZA	Algeria
ECU	Ecuador
EGY	Egypt
ETH	Ethiopia
GAB	Gabon
GEO	Georgia
GHA	Ghana
GIN	Guinea
GNB	Guinea Bissau
GTM	Guatemala
HND	Honduras
HRV	Croatia
HUN	Hungary
IDN	Indonesia
IND	India
IRN	Iran
ISR	Israel
JOR	Jordan
KAZ	Kazakhstan
KEN	Kenya
KHM	Cambodia
KOR	Korea
KWT	Kuwait

by alphabetical order of ISO3 Code

ISO 3 Code	Country Name
LAO	Laos
LBY	Libya
LKA	Sri Lanka
MAR	Morocco
MDG	Madagascar
MEX	Mexico
MKD	N. Macedonia
MLI	Mali
MMR	Myanmar
MNE	Montenegro
MNG	Mongolia
MOZ	Mozambique
MUS	Mauritius
MYS	Malaysia
NER	Niger
NGA	Nigeria
NPL	Nepal
OMN	Oman
PAK	Pakistan
PAN	Panama
PER	Peru
PHL	Philippines
POL	Poland
PRY	Paraguay
QAT	Qatar
ROU	Romania
RUS	Russia
RWA	Rwanda
SAU	Saudi Arabia
SDN	Sudan
SEN	Senegal
SLV	El Salvador
SRB	Serbia
SYC	Seychelles
TGO	Togo
THA	Thailand
TUN	Tunisia
TUR	Turkey
TWN	Taiwan
TZA	Tanzania
UAE	UAE
UGA	Uganda
UKR	Ukraine
URY	Uruguay
VEN	Venezuela
VNM	Vietnam
YEM	Yemen
ZAF	South Africa
ZMB	Zambia

Appendix 2: List of 100 countries monitored**Eastern & Central Europe, CIS (19)**

ALB	Albania	KAZ	Kazakhstan
ARM	Armenia	MNE	Montenegro
AZE	Azerbaijan	MKD	N. Macedonia
BLR	Belarus	POL	Poland
BIH	Bosnia	ROU	Romania
BGR	Bulgaria	RUS	Russia
HRV	Croatia	SRB	Serbia
CZE	Czech Rep.	TUR	Turkey
GEO	Georgia	UKR	Ukraine
HUN	Hungary		

Latin America (18)

ARG	Argentina	SLV	El Salvador
BOL	Bolivia	GTM	Guatemala
BRA	Brazil	HND	Honduras
CHL	Chile	MEX	Mexico
COL	Colombia	PAN	Panama
CRI	Costa Rica	PRY	Paraguay
DMA	Dominica	PER	Peru
DOM	Dominican Rep	URY	Uruguay
ECU	Ecuador	VEN	Venezuela

Asia (18)

BGD	Bangladesh	MNG	Mongolia
BRN	Brunei	MMR	Myanmar
KHM	Cambodia	NPL	Nepal
CHN	China	PAK	Pakistan
IND	India	PHL	Philippines
IDN	Indonesia	LKA	Sri Lanka
KOR	Korea	TWN	Taiwan
LAO	Laos	THA	Thailand
MYS	Malaysia	VNM	Vietnam

by region**Middle East & North Africa (15)**

DZA	Algeria	MAR	Morocco
BHR	Bahrein	OMN	Oman
EGY	Egypt	QAT	Qatar
IRN	Iran	SAU	Saudi Arabia
ISR	Israel	TUN	Tunisia
JOR	Jordan	UAE	UAE
KWT	Kuwait	YEM	Yemen
LBY	Libya		

Sub-Saharan Africa (30)

AGO	Angola	MDG	Madagascar
BEN	Benin	MLI	Mali
BFA	Burkina Faso	MUS	Mauritius
CMR	Cameroon	MOZ	Mozambique
CPV	Cape Verde	NER	Niger
COM	Comoros	NGA	Nigeria
COG	Rep. of Congo	RWA	Rwanda
COD	DR Congo	SEN	Senegal
CIV	Cote d'Ivoire	SYC	Seychelles
ETH	Ethiopia	ZAF	South Africa
GAB	Gabon	SDN	Sudan
GHA	Ghana	TZA	Tanzania
GIN	Guinea	TGO	Togo
GNB	Guinea Bissau	UGA	Uganda
KEN	Kenya	ZMB	Zambia

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TAC ECONOMICS team is available for any economic, financial, technical questions and requests at the following e-mail address: hotline@taceconomics.com

Tel +33 (0)299 39 31 40

Web: www.taceconomics.com

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