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## Firefighters most trusted group in Europe and U.S.

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LONDON (Reuters Life!) - Firefighters are the most trusted professionals in Europe and the United States, and politicians the least, with bank employees considerably less trusted than a year ago, according to a survey out on Friday.

After a year in which much of the world slid into recession led by a crisis in the financial sector, just 37 percent of respondents to a survey by market research institute GfK said they trusted bankers, compared with 45 percent a year ago.

Firefighters were trusted by 92 percent of respondents, and politicians by 18 percent.

Some of the biggest variations between the countries included in the survey -- 16 European countries and the United States -- were found in levels of trust in the church, the police and judges.

The clergy is trusted by 88 percent of Romanians but just 26 percent of Greeks, for example, while just 37 percent of the Russians surveyed said they trusted the police, compared with 88 percent in Germany.

Bulgarian judges won 31 percent approval, while in Poland 86 percent said they trusted judges.

Overall, teachers came in third, followed by postal workers, doctors and the armed forces in joint third place.

Politicians were least trusted in Greece, with just 6 percent of the vote, and even in the top-rated country for politicians, Sweden, they won only 38 percent approval.

Advertising professionals were second-least trusted after politicians, and top managers third-least.

Journalists were the sixth-least trusted of the 20 professions covered by the survey, with a 41 percent rating.

GfK surveyed 17,295 people in February and March 2009 for its annual poll.

(Reporting by Georgina Prodhan, editing by Paul Casciato)

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