

35,640 AI responses, 66 brands, 12 languages: Rankfor.AI publishes the first peer-review-grade ranking of AI brand reputation across 11 European markets.

The Rankfor® Index 2026, Nordic-Baltic + CEE Edition, identifies a **Bilingual Penalty of up to 23 ARI points** between home-language and English answers, **three cross-region categories where one brand owns 94 to 97 percent** of AI recommendations, and a **long-tailed citation economy** where 80 percent of AI citations come from just 18 percent of cited domains.

Tallinn, Warsaw, 3 May 2026. Rankfor.AI today released *The Rankfor® Index 2026: Nordic-Baltic + CEE Edition*, the largest open quantitative study to date of how AI language models construct brand reputation across Northern, Baltic, and Central European markets. The dataset of **35,640 grounded AI responses** across **66 brands, 12 languages, and 3 leading models** (GPT-5.4, Gemini 3.1 Pro, Perplexity Sonar Pro) has been submitted to *Springer Discover Artificial Intelligence* for peer review and is published in full at **open.rankfor.ai/index-2026**.

The study introduces the **Rankfor® Index v3 (ARI v3)**, a five-component composite score with weights of 25 percent sentiment, 25 percent recommendation share, 20 percent source quality, 20 percent cross-language consistency, and 10 percent inter-model stability. Across the 66-brand cohort, ARI v3 ranges from **42.86** to **66.51** (mean **53.71**), with **18 brands scoring above 60** and Spotify (Sweden, Tech) leading at **66.51**.

■ Five findings

- **1. AI-default tech and industrial brands lead the cohort.** The top 10 brands by mean ARI v3 across all 12 languages are dominated by AI-monopoly categories: Spotify **66.5**, Evolution **66.2**, Kone **65.9**, Wise **65.7**, Printful **65.6**, Vestas **65.4**, Maersk **65.4**, Lidl Slovakia **64.5**, Zalando **64.5**, and Pipedrive **63.9**. Legacy automotive leaders, while still strong, no longer top the table. The brands AI defaults to in buyer-intent prompts now outrank them.
- **2. The Bilingual Penalty is real and splits cleanly by recognition tier.** Global multinationals operating in markets with substantial native-language press are systematically penalized when AI is asked in their home language. Deutsche Telekom loses **7.6** ARI points in German versus English. Pipedrive loses **4.0** in Estonian. Volkswagen Slovakia and Lidl Slovakia each lose more than 3 points in German. Local champions in smaller-language markets show the opposite pattern, with double-digit boosts: Reserved gains **23.1** ARI points in Polish, airBaltic **22.9** in Latvian, Tele2 Lithuania **22.8**, Swedbank Latvia **22.7**, Lietuvos paštas **22.5**, and Elisa **22.4** in Finnish.

In markets with thick local press, AI inherits domestic critical journalism. In markets with thin foreign-language coverage, local press dominates the AI narrative without a counterweight.

- **3. Three brands hold AI monopolies in their categories.** At the (country × industry) level, three brands command at least 95 percent recommendation share when AI is asked the category question: **Kone** (industrial, Finland) at **97** percent, **Vestas** (energy, Denmark) at **96** percent, and **Maersk** (logistics, Denmark) at **94** percent. Eleven additional cells are dominant (≥75 percent) and 32 are strong (≥50 percent). At the finer (country × industry × language) cell level, **97 cells show a single brand owning at least 95 percent of recommendation share**, including Vinted (Lithuania–Tech) at 100 percent in five different languages, Maxima (Lithuania–Retail) at 100 percent in three, and Tele2 Lithuania (Telecom) at 100 percent in two.
- **4. The AI link economy is genuinely long-tailed.** Across **131,667** cleaned citations from **21,077** unique domains in the merged Nordic–Baltic + CEE 2026 dataset, the most-cited single domain captures only **4.4** percent of all citations. **80 percent of citations come from 3,878 domains, just 18.4 percent of the unique sources.** Reaching 95 percent of citations requires **14,494** domains, and the remaining 5 percent draws on the long tail of **6,583** additional sources. AI's evidence base follows a Zipf distribution with $\alpha \approx 0.85$ ($R^2 > 0.95$) on the top-1,000 ranks. Wikipedia is the top source in 11 of 12 languages. Only Lithuanian flips, with vz.lt (Verslo žinios) edging out Wikipedia at **4.38** percent of Lithuanian-language citations.
- **5. Estonian is the most positive AI language. German is the most critical.** Mean ARI per language across all 66 brands ranks Estonian highest at **50.22** and German lowest at **45.80**, a **4.4**-point spread. By language family, Uralic (49.10) and Baltic (48.52) sit above Slavic (47.51) and Germanic (46.74). The hypothesis: thicker native-language web corpora surface more critical journalism into the AI response, while thinner corpora default to neutral or positive Wikipedia-style framing.

■ Quote

"The story used to be 'does AI talk about my brand?' That question is over. AI is now describing every brand in our dataset across every language and every major model, every day, to every buyer who asks it. The new question is: are these descriptions consistent, are they true, and who controls the sources AI grounds in? The Rankfor® Index 2026 gives marketers, regulators, and journalists the first reproducible way to measure all three."

— Dmitrij Žatuchin, PhD, founder and lead researcher, Rankfor.AI

■ The top 10 by ARI v3

Rank	Brand	ARI	Industry · HQ
1	Spotify	66.51	Tech · Sweden
2	Evolution	66.22	Tech · Latvia
3	Kone	65.88	Industrial · Finland
4	Wise	65.67	Fintech · Estonia
5	Printful	65.55	Tech · Latvia
6	Vestas	65.44	Energy · Denmark
7	Maersk	65.40	Logistics · Denmark
8	Lidl Slovakia	64.52	Retail · Slovakia
9	Zalando	64.47	Retail · Germany
10	Pipedrive	63.94	Tech · Estonia

■ Methodology in brief

Each (brand × language × model × prompt) cell produces one grounded AI response. The 18 prompts span six categories: open reputation (A1–A3), source attribution (B1–B3), competitive positioning (C1–C3), regional context (E1–E3), AI visibility and media (F1–F3), and stability probes (D1–D3, deferred to Phase 2 with a uniform-80 proxy used for the stability component). Sentiment is scored by CardiffNLP XLM–RoBERTa multilingual; cross-language consistency is computed via BGE–M3 (1024-dim) embeddings and pairwise cosine; source quality is a weighted average across 11 source-type categories. The full pipeline, dataset, layered JSON, all nine visualizations with their underlying CSVs, and the 66 per-brand profile decks are open and reproducible.

■ What is available today

- **Public landing page** with interactive leaderboard, country filters, industry filters, methodology, and downloadable PDF report: open.rankfor.ai/index-2026
- **66 per-brand HTML and PDF profiles** with score breakdown, cross-language ARI, top citation domains, model-by-model sentiment, and bilingual penalty
- **Nine publication-grade charts** (PNG and SVG) with underlying CSVs: AI Monopoly Map, Bilingual Penalty Butterfly, ARI Heatmap, Defensibility Quadrant, Citation CDF, Power-law Decay, Sentiment Dispersion, Co-mention Network, and Top Domain by Language
- **Layered open JSON dataset** for academic and journalistic re-use
- **17-slide report deck** suitable for press, board, and investor briefings

■ About Rankfor.AI

Rankfor.AI is the AI Visibility company, helping CMOs and PR teams measure and improve how language models describe their brands. The company publishes the Rankfor® Index, the first peer-review-grade quantitative ranking of AI brand reputation across European markets, and provides AI Reputation tooling for enterprise clients including domain reputation analytics, listicle audit, and sentiment-correlated source intelligence. Rankfor.AI is headquartered in Tallinn, Estonia.

■ Right of reply

Every brand named in the index is offered the opportunity to submit a written response, which is published alongside the brand's profile page. Brand representatives can email dmitrij@rankfor.ai with subject line "Right of reply: [your brand]".

■ Citation

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For interviews, high-resolution charts, the full PDF report, or a custom data slice for your market, please email the contact above with subject line "Press kit: Rankfor Index 2026".

ASSETS FOR MEDIA

Full report and interactive leaderboard: open.rankfor.ai/index-2026

Per-brand profiles: open.rankfor.ai/index-2026/brands

Methodology: open.rankfor.ai/index-2026/methodology

High-resolution charts and 17-slide deck: open.rankfor.ai/index-2026/press-kit

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