

Oxford-GlobeScan Corporate Affairs Survey 2025 Webinar

High-level Survey Findings
and Key Learnings from
Webinar Discussion

23 April 2025



The Hosts



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Our Panellists



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Our Discussion

Five Key Learnings from our Panel – a summary of the discussion

High-level Findings from the 2025 Survey

- Survey Methodology
- The Big Risks & Opportunities
- ESG and the Changing Political Winds
- Building Capacity: Evolution of the Corporate Affairs Function

Five Key Learnings as Shared by our Panellists

The Corporate Affairs Function is required to play a leading role in the following ways:

1. Decoding Fast-Changing Environments

Corporate affairs professionals play a crucial role in interpreting and navigating the rapidly changing geopolitical and macroeconomic landscapes - an essential skill for guiding organizations through external pressures and ensuring strategic alignment.

"The essence of corporate affairs is that more slowly but surely, we're becoming more or less a strategic nerve centre to companies helping on sustainability, positioning the geopolitical navigation. We need to anticipate, advise and help company adapt."

- Herman Betten, Flora Food Group

2. Strategic Compass

Corporate affairs serve as a strategic compass for organizations, with storytelling being a powerful tool. Effective storytelling helps navigate and communicate complex issues, making it a valuable asset in a tech-driven world. It builds bridges between what is promised and what is delivered.

"In a tech-driven, AI-driven world, storytelling has become a superpower, an absolute superpower. Maybe we can call it an epicentre of corporate affairs, which is this nexus of storytelling, decoding and strategic compass."

- Herman Betten, Flora Food Group

Five Key Learnings as Shared by our Panellists (cont.)

3. Integrating ESG for Value Creation

The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations into business strategies is vital for creating value. Companies must balance risk management with proactive ESG communication to enhance their sustainability and resilience.

"[Corporate Affairs] can play an important role in all sorts of company developments, like change management, increasing employee engagement and providing critical insights which are important for this decision making"

- Ntyaty Petros, Nedbank

4. Importance of Internal Communications

Maintaining robust internal communications and employee engagement is critical, especially in the current geopolitical climate. Ensuring that employees feel connected and aligned with the company's purpose is essential for organizational cohesion.

"The internal audience, in terms of strategic focus, needs the same clarity, purpose, and sense of belonging as external audiences."

- Herman Betten, Flora Food Group

Five Key Learnings as Shared by our Panellists (cont.)

5. Collaborative Advocacy:

Cross-industry collaboration in advocacy is becoming increasingly important. Corporate affairs professionals must work together across supply chains and industries to effectively address common challenges and influence policy.

"You will start seeing much more collaborative cross-supply chain advocacy because if you look at a lot of developments that are taking place, especially around tariffs, it is not just that of the consumer brand companies, not just the farmer. We're all in the same boat."

- Tracey Noe, Mondelez International

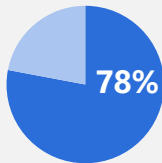
About the Survey

Voices of 245 Corporate Affairs Leaders



Senior-level feedback

78% of participants **report to the Board, CEO-level, or a Group Executive level**

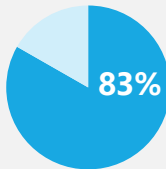


(78% in 2024 and 70% in 2023)



Experienced and tenured opinion

83% of the sample have been operational in Corporate Affairs for **more than ten years**



(81% in 2024 and 85% in 2023)



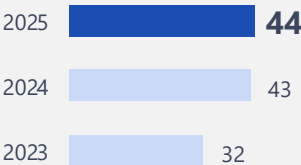
Cross-functions and sectors

Broad spectrum of Corporate Affairs, Corporate Communications, and related practitioners participated in the research



International perspectives

Participants from **44 countries**



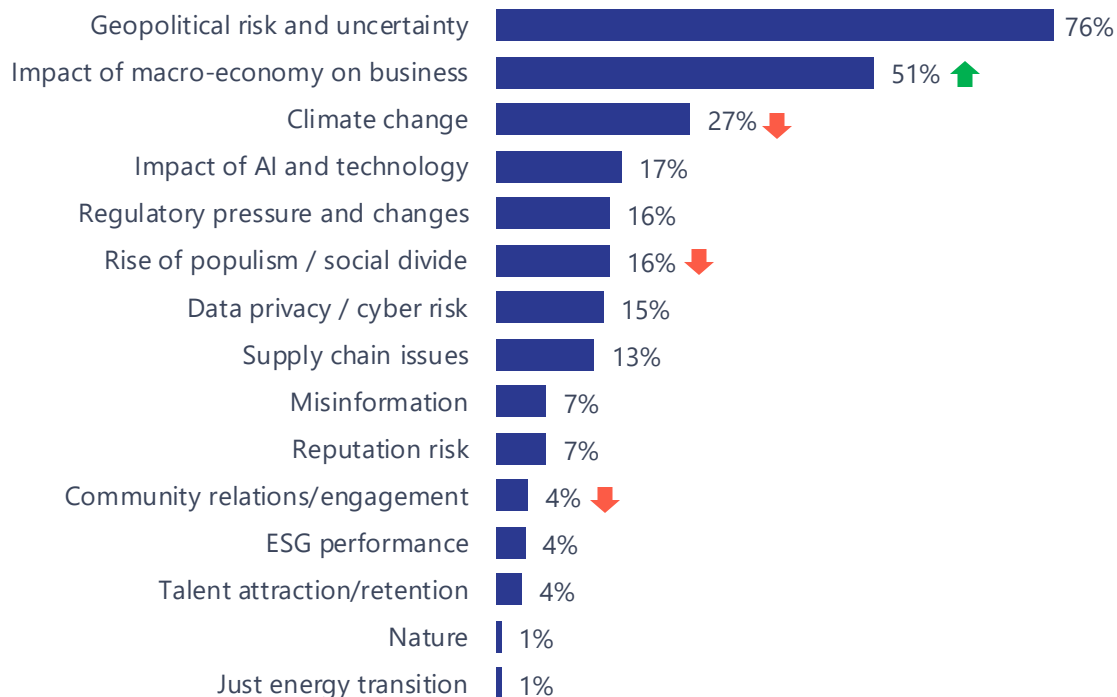
Fieldwork period: 5 February to 26 March 2025

1. The Big Risks & Opportunities

Corporate Affairs professionals see geopolitical risk and uncertainty, the impact of macro-economy issues, and climate change as the biggest short-term risks to global businesses

Short-term Risks to Global Business

Open-ended, Total mentions, 2025

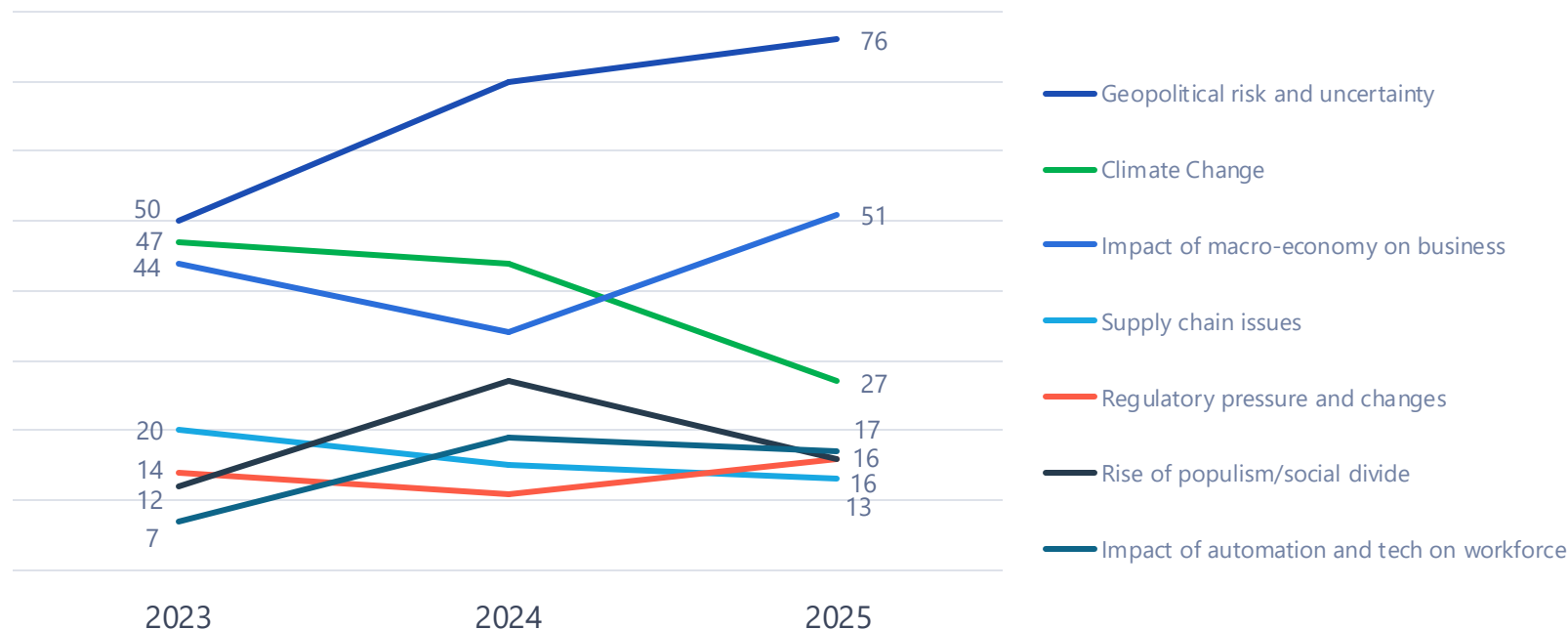


Arrows represent a significant (10-point) difference compared to 2024

Geopolitical risk is the top short-term risk in every region except for North America where the impact of the macro-economy is seen as the biggest risk for global business

Short-term Risks to Global Business

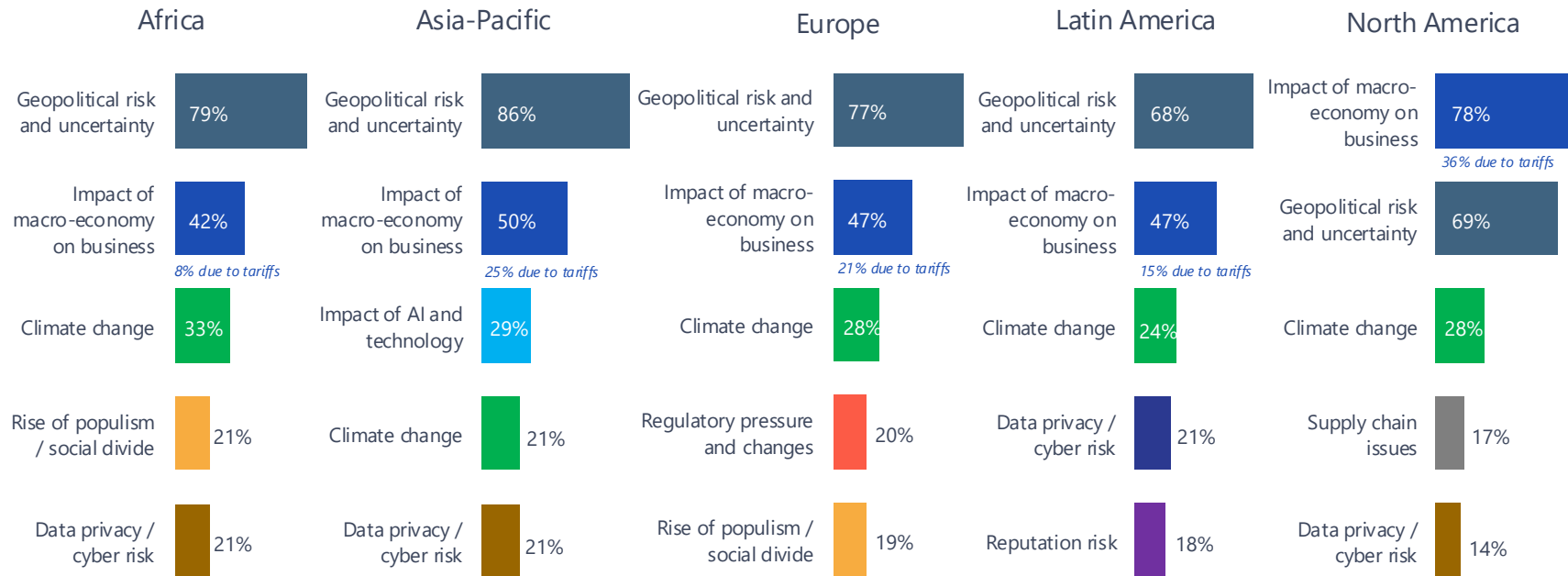
Open-ended, Total mentions, 2025



Geopolitical risk is the top short-term risk in every region except for North America where the impact of the macro-economy is seen as the biggest risk for global business

Top Five Short-term Risks to Global Business, by Region

Open-ended, Total mentions, by Region, 2025



Corporate Affairs professionals believe innovation and AI, sustainable growth and driving economic upliftment offer the biggest opportunities to global businesses

Short-term Opportunities for Global Business

Open-ended, Total Mentions, 2025



Sustainable growth / strategies / ESG is now the second-biggest short-term opportunity to global business, up from 4th position

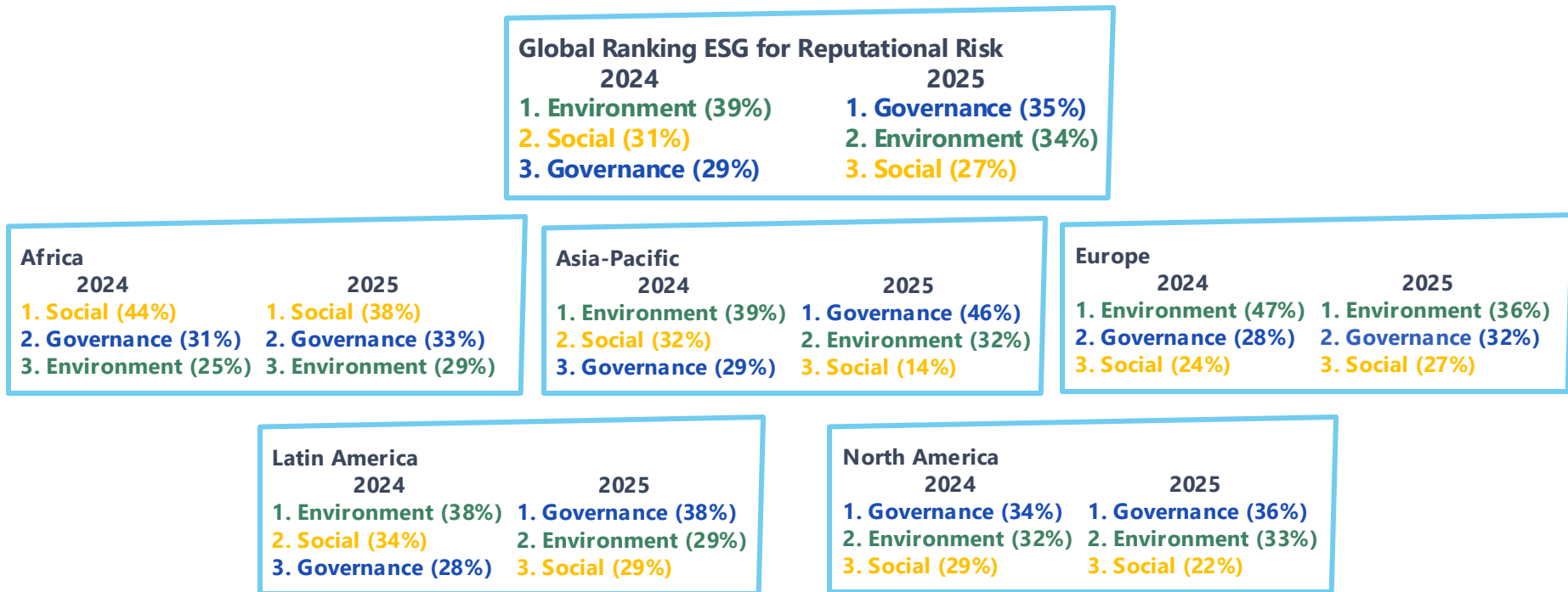
Driving economic growth and upliftment is perceived as an increasing risk (increased by 6 percentage points from 11% in 2024 to 17% in 2025)



Arrows represent a significant (10-point) difference compared to 2024

Governance has become the highest reputation risk to businesses, driven largely by shifts in Asia-Pacific and Latin America

Highest Reputational Risk, Given 1st Ranking, by Region, 2024–2025

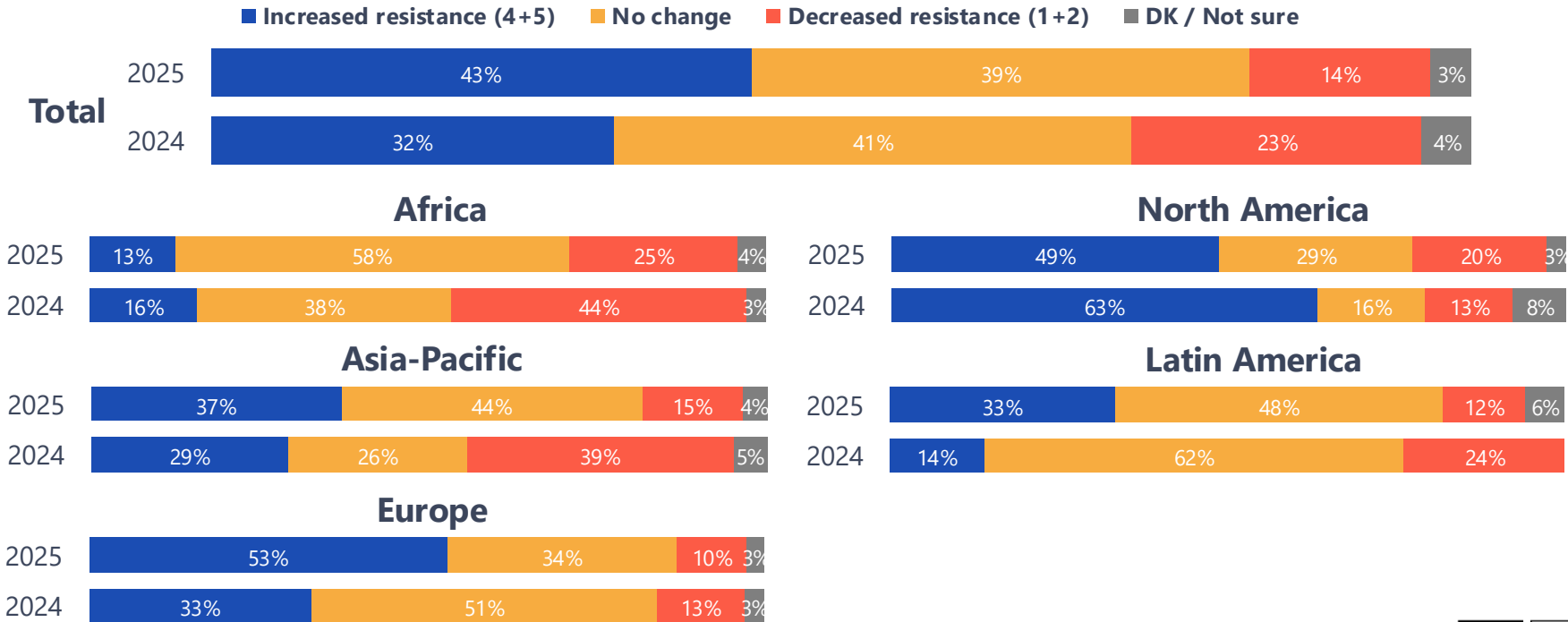


2. ESG and the Changing Political Winds

While resistance to ESG has increased globally, North America, Africa, and Asia-Pacific see no change

Seeing More Resistance against ESG in Your Region

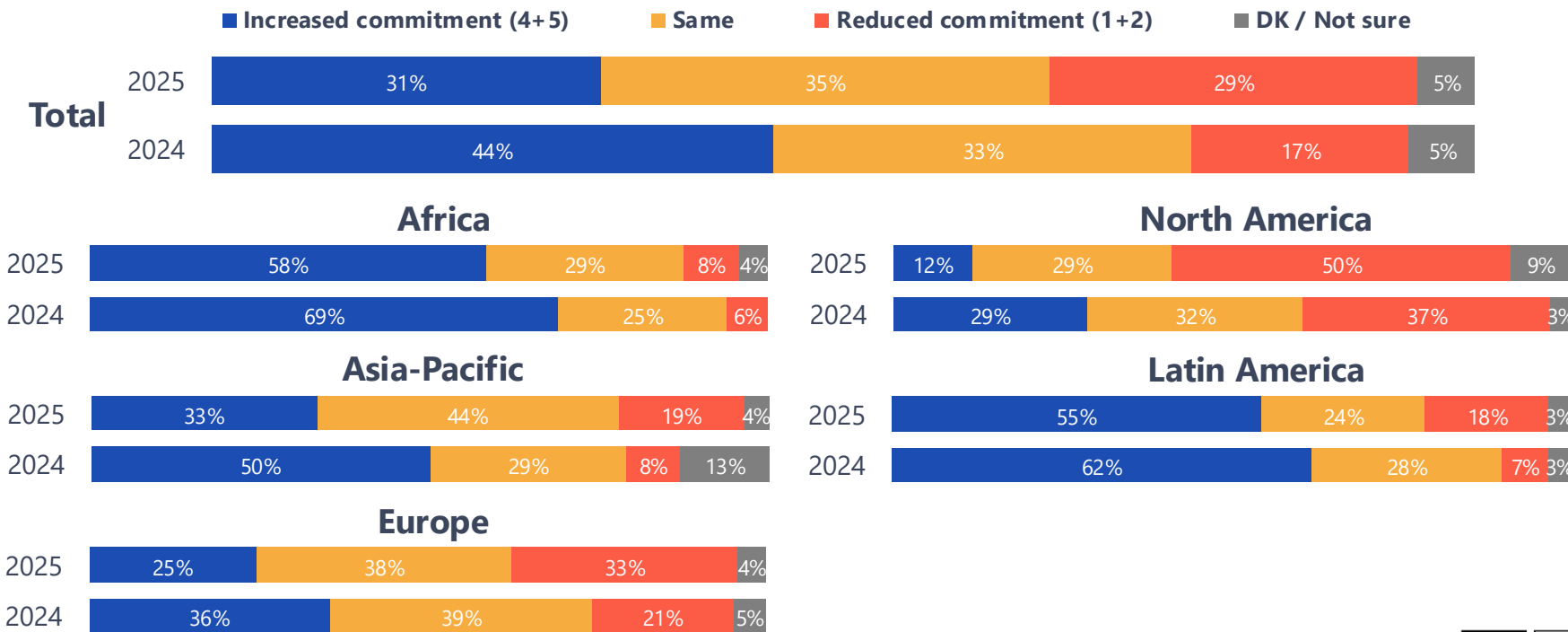
5-point Scale, 2024–2025



Across the world, commitment to ESG has declined with half of North American respondents seeing a reduction in commitments

Change in ESG Commitments due to Political Pressure over the Past Year

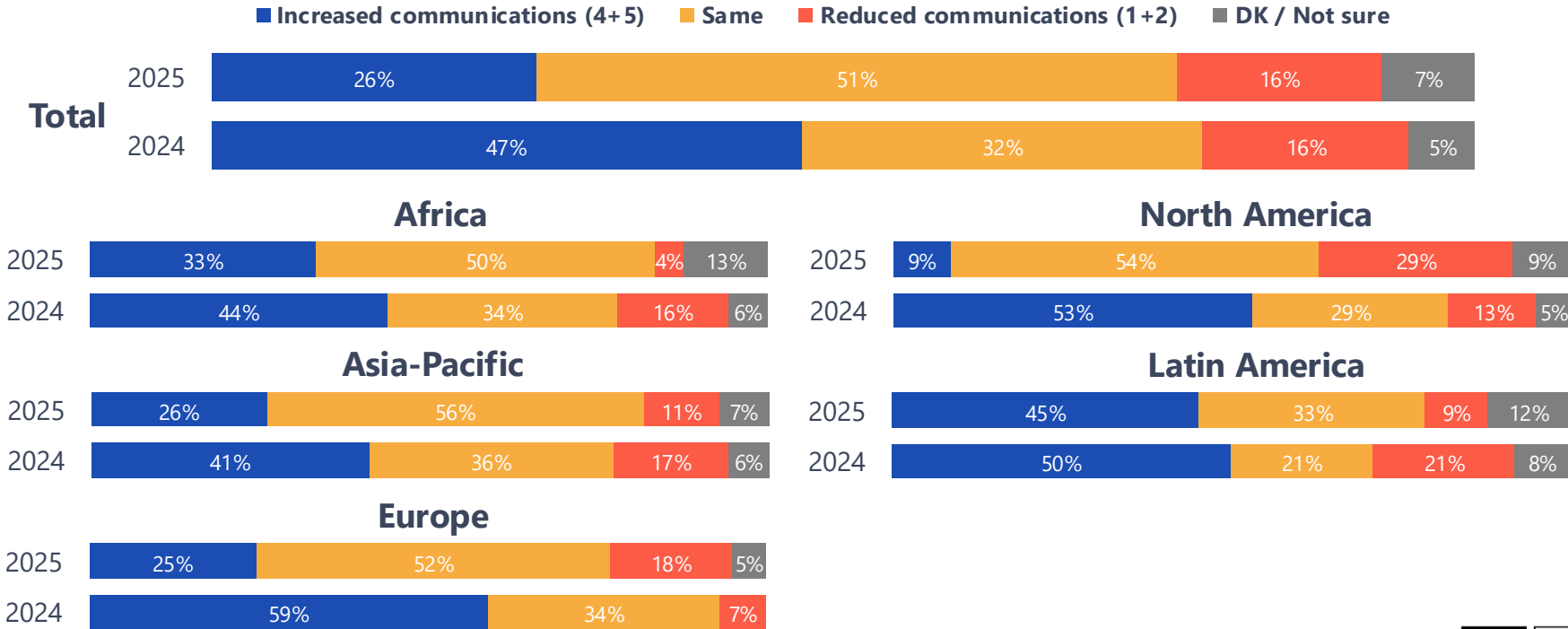
5-point Scale, 2024–2025



The politicization of ESG has slowed communications but has not decreased them, apart from in Europe where there has been a significant decrease

Change in ESG Communications due to Politicisation of ESG over the Past Year

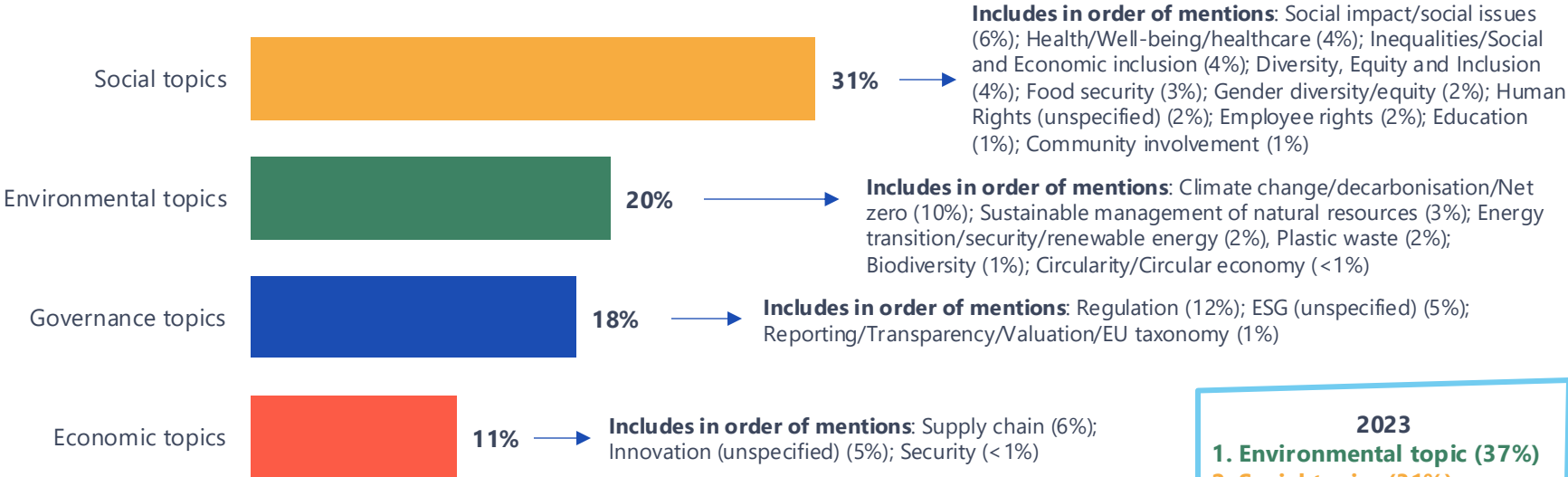
5-point Scale, 2024–2025



Social issues are the most planned corporate advocacy topic for the coming year, while there is overall a greater balance between environmental and governance themes

Planned Advocacy: Key Themes in 2025

Planned Advocacy Topics, Open-ended, Total Mentions, 2025



2023

1. Environmental topic (37%)

2. Social topics (31%)

3. Governance topics (19%)

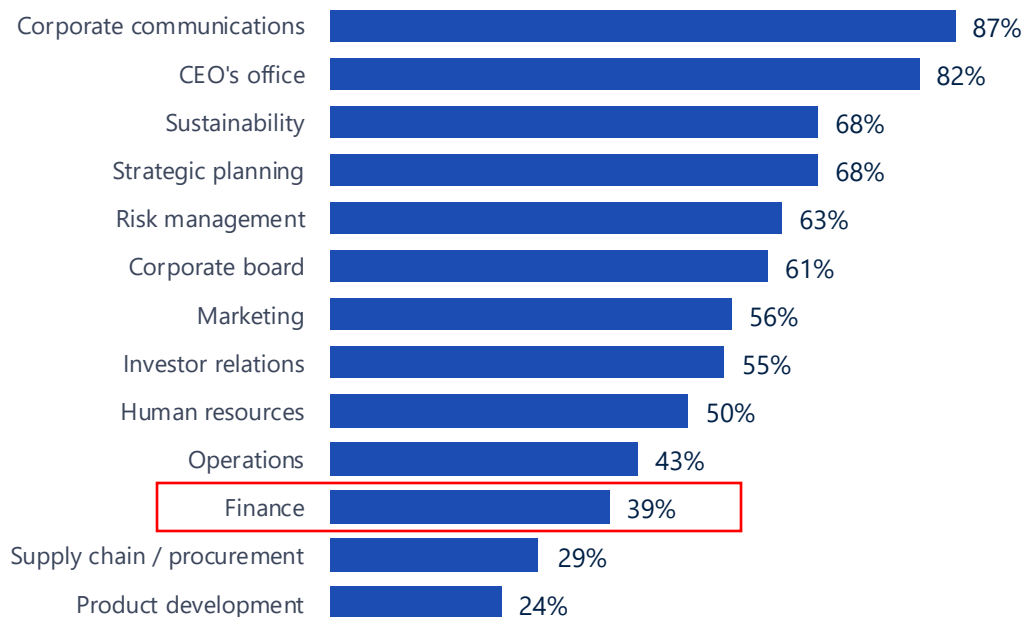
4. Economic topics (6%)

3. Building Capacity: Evolution of the Corporate Affairs Function

The Corporate Affairs function engages mostly with Corporate Communications and the CEO's Office

Level of Engagement of Corporate Affairs with Other Functions

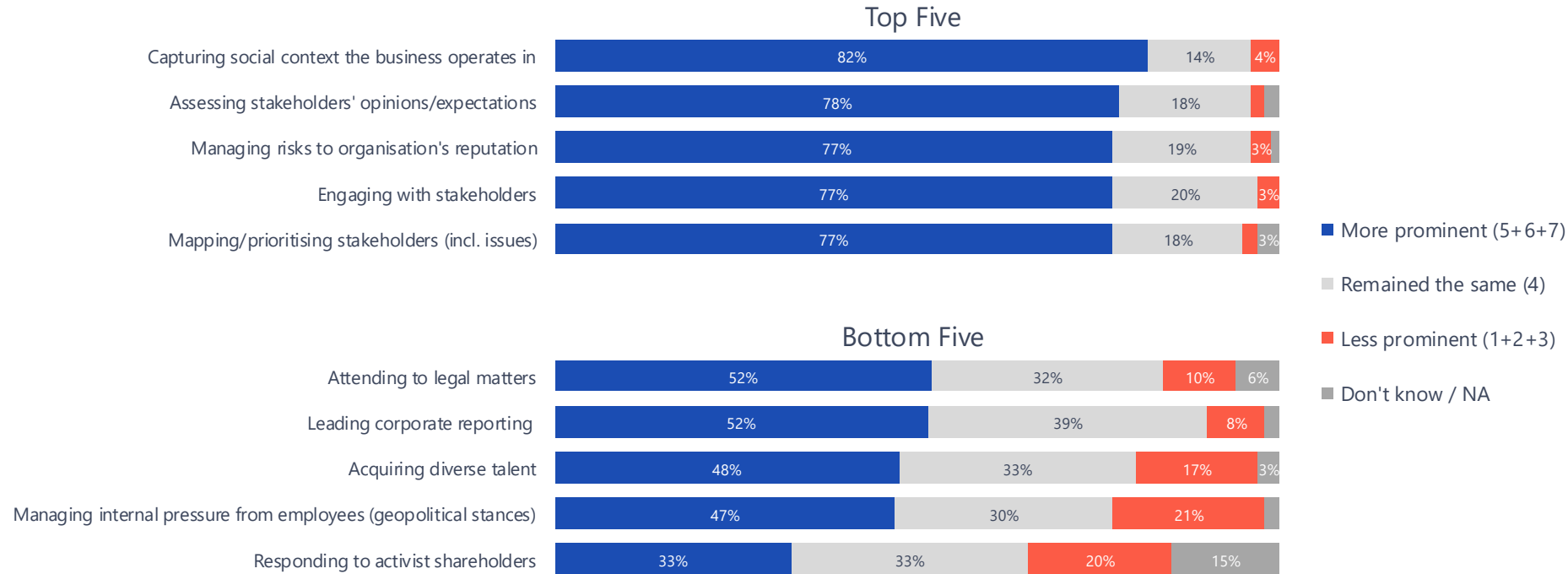
"Very engaged" 4+5 on a 5-point Scale, 2025



Capturing the social context of the business, stakeholder engagement, and managing reputation risks are the fastest-growing responsibilities within Corporate Affairs

Evolution of Roles in the Corporate Affairs Function

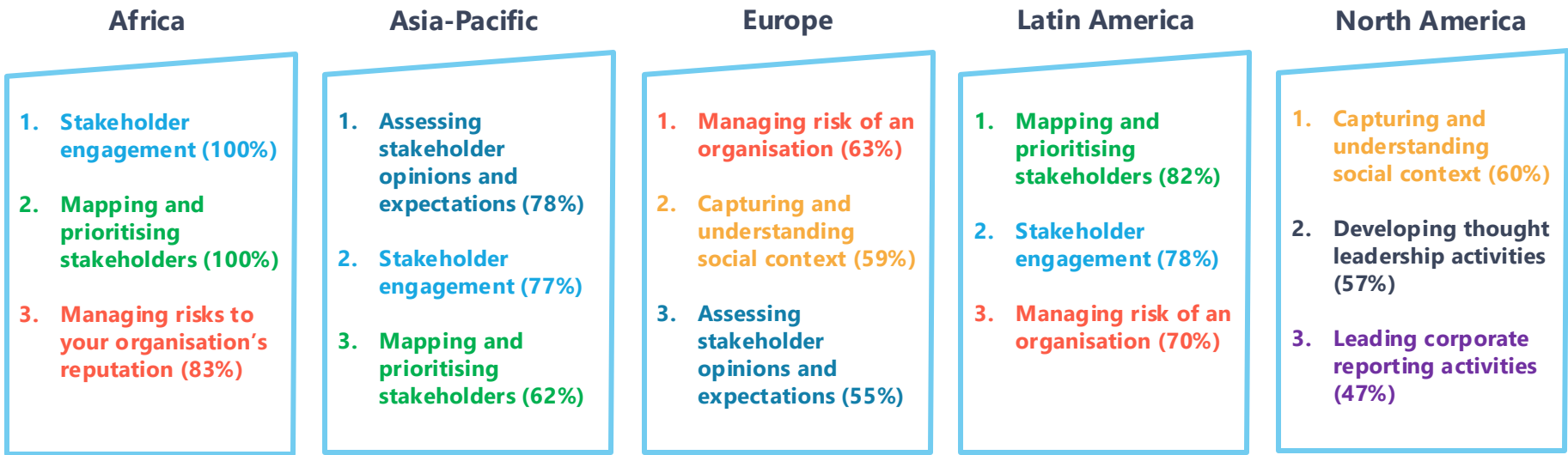
7-point Scale, Top and Bottom Five, 2025



Stakeholder relations top priority in Global South, while understanding social context, more prominent in Global North

Evolution of Roles in the Corporate Affairs Function

6+7 on a 7-point Scale, by Region, 2025



In-person and open engagement and clear, proactive, and consistent communication are the main innovative methods used to build and maintain trust with key stakeholders

Innovative Methods to Build or Maintain Trust with Key Stakeholders

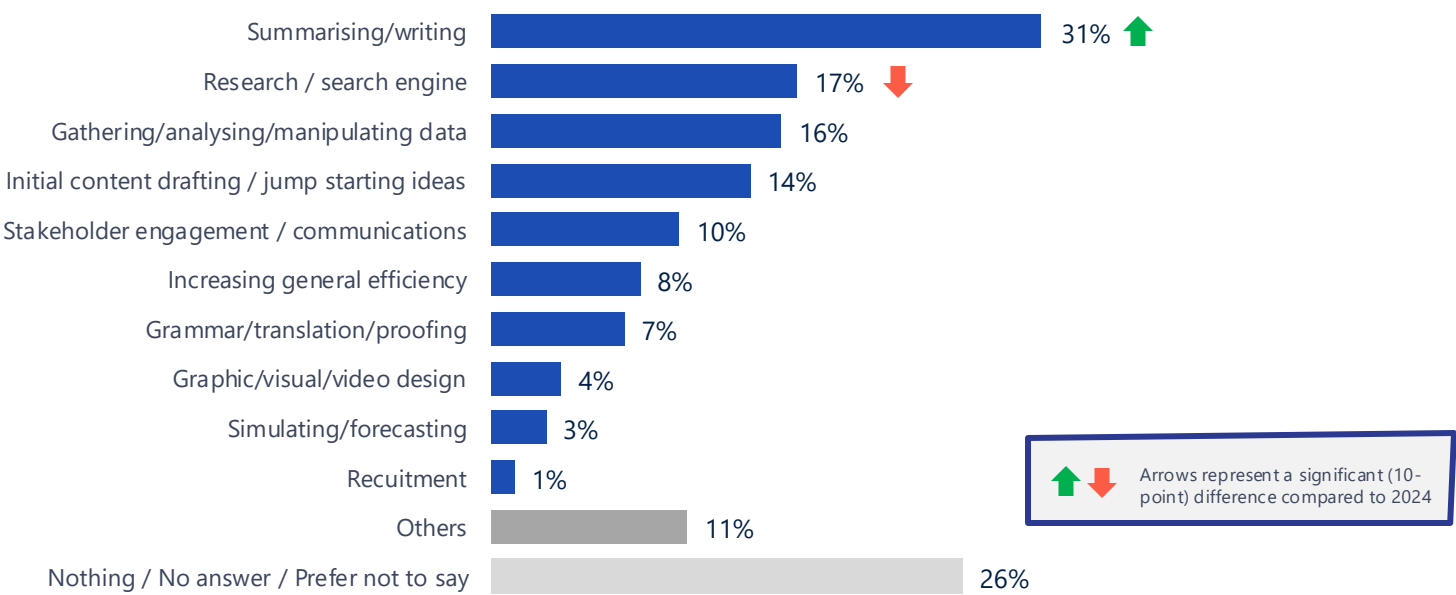
Ways to Build or Maintain Trust with Key Stakeholder, Total Mentions, 2025



Nearly one-third of AI users use it for summarising and writing, followed by helping them with research purposes

Main Uses of AI in Corporate Affairs

Users of AI, Open-ended, Total Mentions, 2025



Oxford-GlobeScan Corporate Affairs Initiative

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