Humanitarian Aid

Summary report

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Eurobarometer 73.2

Humanitarian Aid

Conducted by TNS Opinion & Social at the request of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO)

Survey coordinated by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM “Research and Speechwriting” Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been a number of major natural and man-made disasters which, through global media coverage, have brought extreme images of suffering into people’s homes around the world.

Just a few months ago, on 12 January 2010, shortly before the fieldwork for this current report was started, a 7.3 Richter magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, which triggered a large global aid response. Images of this disaster would still have been fresh in the minds of citizens when polled between 26 February and 17 March.

This report offers a summary of four major issues included in the study:

♦ Awareness of humanitarian aid: this section looks at respondents’ awareness of organisations that provide the actual aid at the scene of a disaster, as well as at the bodies who provide the finance to fund these aid activities.

♦ Knowledge and information on EU humanitarian aid activities: this section examines EU citizens’ knowledge of EU involvement in such activities and assesses whether citizens believe they have enough information.

♦ Importance of EU humanitarian aid activities: EU citizens are asked whether they consider the EU’s activities in these areas to be important.

♦ Common or national approach to humanitarian aid: citizens of the 27 EU Member States were polled as to whether they believed it would be more efficient if aid were provided by Member States on an individual basis or provided by the EU through the European Commission.

It should be noted that this report offers a summary of the full report EB343 as it focuses on key findings and main conclusions only. Please consult the full report for the complete analysis of all questions included in this survey.
The results of this summary report come from the special Eurobarometer no 343 conducted by TNS Opinion & Social network from the 26th of February to the 17th of March 2010. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people’s homes and in the appropriate national languages. The methodology is consistent with that used in Standard Eurobarometer polls managed by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Communication (‘Research and Speechwriting’ unit). A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted is appended as an annex to this report. This note indicates the interview methods and the confidence intervals.

The Eurobarometer web site can be consulted at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across the continent who have given of their time to take part in this survey.

Without their active participation, this study would simply not have been possible.
The 27 EU Member States are included in this survey together with non-EU member Iceland. These countries are represented by their official abbreviations in this report. The abbreviations used correspond to:

**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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* Data presented in the report are exclusively those of Germany as a whole. However, data for "East" and "West" Germany are also available in the data tables.

** Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the “acquis communautaire” is suspended in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews conducted in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are recorded in the category “CY” and included in the EU27 average.
1. AWARENESS OF HUMANITARIAN AID

This chapter looks first at European citizens’ awareness of organisations that provide ground support in humanitarian aid (QB1\(^1\)) and, secondly, of organisations that fund such activities (QB2\(^2\)).

1.1. Awareness of organisations that give on-the-ground support

To begin with, respondents were asked to name organisations involved in providing on-the-ground humanitarian aid. The names of organisations were not read out to the respondents, but mentioned spontaneously by them. Across the EU, the vast majority (85%) of citizens could quote at least one organisation providing humanitarian aid on-the-ground. These figures rise to almost total coverage in Denmark and Slovenia (both 97%) and figures of 96% and 95% are noted in Sweden and the Netherlands respectively.

\(^1\) QB1 Can you name some organisations involved in providing humanitarian aid? By providing aid, we mean that they provide on the ground support.

\(^2\) QB2 And now, can you name any organisations that are funding humanitarian aid? By funding, we mean that they provide financial support to humanitarian aid.
The proportion of respondents that were able to name organisations that provide on-the-ground support is also remarkably high in Belgium (94%), Luxembourg (93%), Finland (93%), Germany (92%) and Austria (91%). Even in the lowest scoring countries Lithuania (67%), Estonia (68%) and Malta (68%) more than two-thirds of respondents were able to name a minimum of one organisation involved in this field.

Respondents in Iceland are also very aware of organisations that provide humanitarian aid on the ground and as many as 91% of respondents could mention an organisation involved in such activities.
Three bodies are frequently mentioned when respondents are asked to name an organisation that provide on-the-ground support, namely the Red Cross (64%), the United Nations’ Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (36%) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (20%). About a seventh (15%) of EU citizens could not name any organisation involved in such activities (No 4%) or did not know what to answer (Don’t know 11%).

The European Union and EU bodies - the European Commission and its Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) - are mentioned by noteworthy numbers of respondents across the EU. This is interesting insofar as, in reality, the EU is not delivering humanitarian aid on the ground but that the Commission calls itself an “active donor” with around 100 ECHO experts permanently based in humanitarian crisis hotspots around the globe. While about a tenth of respondents (9%) name the European Union as a provider of humanitarian aid on the ground, there are substantial variations, ranging from 24% in Bulgaria and Romania and 23% in Slovakia to just 2% in Finland and 1% in France.
The European Commission, which de facto is not delivering on-the-ground support but is present in the field through its network of ECHO experts, is seen to be providing such assistance in the eyes of 3% of the poll. The biggest contributors to this average are 9% in Romania and 13% in Bulgaria. It should be noted that the recent nomination of a Bulgarian as the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection may have influenced these high results in Bulgaria.

Moreover, the European Commission’s humanitarian aid department (ECHO) was mentioned by 3% of the poll with 14% in Slovakia and 8% in Belgium and Hungary being the highest figures.

One quarter of the respondents mentioned ‘other organisations’ (26%).
1.2. Awareness of organisations that are financing the aid

Having explored Europeans’ awareness of organisations that deliver humanitarian aid on-the-ground, we turn to examine respondents’ acquaintance with organisations that are providing the financial support for such activities (QB2). Whereas an average of 85% of respondents are able to mention at least one organisation involved in providing humanitarian aid on-the-ground, a lower percentage of 72% are able to name one or more organisations active in financing humanitarian aid. Figures of 85% and above are observed in the Nordic EU countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Slovenia.

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3 QB2 And now, can you name any organisations that are funding humanitarian aid? By funding, we mean that they provide financial support to humanitarian aid.
A lower degree of awareness, however still a relative majority, is noted among respondents in Estonia (47%), Latvia (51%) and Lithuania (53%) while respondents in Iceland (76%) show a relatively high level of awareness.

Turning now to what actual organisations respondents associate with funding humanitarian aid, the Red Cross (42%) and UNICEF (27%) are once more in the lead, with national governments (18%) coming third together with the European Union (15%). In comparison, the United States are mentioned by 7% of them and any EU Member States governments by 6%.

Moreover, the European Commission is mentioned by 5% of respondents and its Humanitarian Aid Department (DG ECHO) by 4%.

An additional 16% of respondents gave the name of another organisation not specifically listed in this survey.
2. KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION OF EU HUMANITARIAN AID ACTIVITIES

In this section, we look at how knowledgeable and informed EU citizens feel about the humanitarian aid activities of the EU. Firstly, citizens are asked whether they are aware that the European Union funds humanitarian aid activities in countries outside its borders (QB3⁴). We then look into how informed respondents feel (QB4⁵) and the importance respondents attach to having information on this matter (QB6⁶).

2.1. Awareness of EU humanitarian aid activities

The first question measures how aware citizens are of the fact that the European Union funds humanitarian aid activities in countries outside its borders, via the European Commission and its humanitarian aid department (ECHO). Although the majority (51%) claims that they do not know about the EU’s work in this regard, as many as 43% of respondents are aware of the EU’s humanitarian aid activities.

⁴ QB3 Do you know that the European Union, through the European Commission and its Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), funds humanitarian aid activities in countries outside the European Union?
⁵ QB4 How well informed do you think you are about the European Union humanitarian aid activities?
⁶ QB6 How important do you think it is that European citizens are informed about humanitarian aid activities funded by the European Union, through the European Commission and its Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)?
Looking more into detail of the 43% of citizens who are aware of the EU’s financial support of humanitarian aid in third countries, high figures are reported in Luxembourg (72%), Belgium (58%), France and Malta (both 55%). At the same time, the proportions of aware respondents constitute only about a third in Greece and Hungary (both 33%), Romania and non-EU member Iceland (both 28%).
2.2. Information on EU humanitarian aid activities

When respondents are asked how well informed they consider themselves to be about the humanitarian aid activities of the European Union (QB4), 2% consider themselves to be very well-informed, 16% to be fairly well informed, 50% not very well informed and nearly a third (31%) not at all informed.

Of those that do consider themselves to be informed on this activity of the EU, the highest figures are noted in Luxembourg where 6% feel very well informed and 39% fairly well informed. On the other hand, four out of ten respondents in Greece (41%), Latvia (40%), Hungary (39%) and Romania (38%), don't consider themselves at all informed on this issue.

QB4 How well informed do you think you are about the European Union humanitarian aid activities?
Having studied how knowledgeable respondents feel about humanitarian aid activities funded by the European Union, we now turn to the importance respondents attach to being informed about this matter (QB68).

Despite the lack of knowledge many EU citizens perceive, the results show that respondents see the EU funding of humanitarian aid activities as an important issue on which they should be kept informed. In fact, more than a third (38%) sees this as very important and a further 48% deem it as being fairly important. Together these figures indicate that nearly nine out of ten EU citizens (86%) consider it important to be informed about humanitarian aid activities funded by the European Union.

At the national level, the vast majority of respondents (>74%) in all countries surveyed answer that it is important the European citizens are informed about humanitarian aid activities funded the European Union, through the European Commission and its Humanitarian Aid Department (DG ECHO).

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8 QB6 How important do you think it is that European citizens are informed about humanitarian aid activities funded by the European Union, through the European Commission and its Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO)?
3. IMPORTANCE OF EU HUMANITARIAN AID ACTIVITIES

Citizens were asked how important it is that the European Union funds humanitarian aid activities outside the European Union (QB5⁹). Our results show that 79% of EU citizens see the Union’s presence in this area as either very or fairly important. Almost a third (31%) of EU citizens views this as being very important. A further 14% view this activity of the EU to be of less importance, with only 4% saying it is not at all important. A further 3% report that it depends on the country and 4% cannot form an opinion on the matter.

At the national level, four of the Mediterranean countries appear as the strongest supporters for EU funded humanitarian aid and respondents in Cyprus (95%), Greece (91%), Malta (90%) and Portugal (89%) all show staunch support for the Union’s presence in such activities. Similarly high figures are also noted in other parts of the EU with 86% of respondents in Sweden, Luxembourg, Finland and Slovenia perceiving this as important.

⁹ QB5 How important do you think it is that the European Union funds humanitarian aid activities outside the European Union?
Respondents in Lithuania (68%), Austria and Latvia (both 70%) are only slightly less convinced that it is important that the EU funds humanitarian aid activities outside its borders. Worthy of note is also that a high percentage of Icelandic respondents (86%) see this activity as important.

The percentage of respondents that see the funding by the EU of humanitarian aid projects outside the Union as being important (79%) has decreased by 9 percentage points since the previous survey four years ago (88% in EB65.4, summer 2006). Although we can only speculate about the reasons for this decline, it might be reasonable to assume that the financial and economic crisis throughout the EU has had a dampening effect on public attitudes in this area.
4. COMMON OR NATIONAL APPROACH TO HUMANITARIAN AID?

Having concluded that respondents deem humanitarian aid activities outside its borders as an important aspect of EU policy and that they wish to be informed about these activities, we now investigate whether EU citizens favour a common or national approach to humanitarian aid. Respondents were therefore asked whether humanitarian aid would be more efficient if it was provided separately by each Member State or jointly by the European Union through the European Commission (QB7\textsuperscript{10}).

The results show that a majority (58%) of EU respondents favours a common approach where aid is provided jointly through the EU. A quarter (24%) thinks that humanitarian aid should be provided by each Member State and a further 5% favours neither one nor the other. As many as 13% of respondents are unable to give an opinion on the matter.

At country level, the strongest support for a common approach is found in Cyprus (71%), Spain and Portugal (both 68%).
The concept of common action attracts less support in Ireland and Romania (both 43%) as well as Lithuania (46%), but even in these countries this approach is supported by a relative majority. A national approach to humanitarian aid is only favoured by a minority across the EU, reaching its highest figure in the Czech Republic (33%), Slovenia and the UK (both 32%). Respondents in non-EU member Iceland report equal support for both approaches with 43% favouring the national level and 42% supporting a common approach.

QB7 Would you say that humanitarian aid is more efficient if provided by each Member State of the European Union separately or if it is provided by the European Union through the European Commission?

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10 QB7 Would you say that humanitarian aid is more efficient if provided by each Member State of the European Union separately or if it is provided by the European Union through the European Commission?
Compared with the previous survey EB65.4 (summer 2006), little change is noted for the EU average. Support for the view that humanitarian aid is more efficiently provided by individual Member States has decreased slightly (-2 percentage points), while support for the joint action route has increased by 2 percentage points.