Special Eurobarometer 454

Summary

Civil protection

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Survey requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

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Special Eurobarometer 454 – Wave EB86.3 – TNS opinion & social
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Summary

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Survey conducted by TNS opinion & social at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication ("Strategic communication" Unit)
I. AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR EU CIVIL PROTECTION

1. Awareness of EU civil protection

55% of EU citizens are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters in the EU, although a considerable proportion of respondents (42%) say they are not aware of the EU efforts.

At country level, in 21 out of 28 Member States, the absolute majority of respondents are aware the EU helps to coordinate response to disasters in the EU. Awareness is highest in Portugal (78%), Ireland (75%) and Malta (72%). By contrast, awareness is lowest in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary (47%), France and Slovakia (45%), Italy (39%) and the Netherlands (30%).

The socio demographic analysis shows that men (57%), respondents aged 25-54 (57%-60%), the most educated (63%) and white collars or self-employed (59%-68%) are more likely to be aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters. In addition, respondents who think enough is being done to prevent and prepare for disasters in their region, or within the EU are more likely to be aware of the coordination efforts carried out by the EU in response to a disaster (61%) and respondents who think the EU’s coordination efforts in response to disasters are important, are more likely to be aware of what the EU does in response to disasters in the EU (58%). Also, those who consider a coordinated EU response to a disaster to be more effective than an individual country’s action, are more likely than those with the opposing view to be aware the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters in the EU (59%).

2. General attitude to EU’s role in the coordination of the response to disasters

At EU level, a large majority (90%) think that it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters in any of the Member States.

In all 28 Member States at least eight in ten have this opinion.

The socio-demographic analysis shows that respondents with a positive (96%) image of the EU, are more likely to think it is important that the EU coordinate the response to disasters compared with those with a neutral (90%) or negative image (80%). Moreover, respondents who think enough is being done at the EU level to prevent and prepare for disasters are slightly more likely to think that it is
important the EU helps to coordinate relief in a disaster situation (95%). Those who think a coordinated EU action in dealing with disasters is more effective than actions by an individual country, are more likely to think the EU’s coordinated response is important (96%).

3. Attitudes towards civil protection

Almost nine in ten Europeans (89%) agree that if a disaster were to occur in their country they would expect other EU countries to help. They also strongly agree (86%) that the EU should help any country in the world hit by disasters in a coordinated manner, by sending experts and equipment to affected areas.

**Solidarity between EU Member States (89% total ‘agree’)**

Across all EU Member States, more than seven in ten respondents agree that if a disaster were to occur in their country, they would expect other EU countries to provide help. Agreement levels range from 97% in Malta to 77% in Romania.

Since the last survey in March 2015, there have been variations in a couple of countries, most notably in Cyprus (92%, +14 percentage points) where agreement levels increased considerably, and Romania (77%, -10 pp) where fewer respondents now think if a disaster were to occur in their country, other EU countries would provide help.

**Solidarity with non-EU countries (86% total ‘agree’)**

In all Member States, more than three quarters of respondents agree the EU should help any country worldwide hit by disasters by sending experts and equipment to affected areas.

In most countries, the differences in opinion with 2015 are minimal. Still, some large decreases in support for the statement can be observed in Romania (77%, -10 percentage points), Austria (78%, -7 pp), the Netherlands (79%, -6 pp), and the Czech Republic (79%, -6 pp) with corresponding increases in the proportions who disagree.

**Effectiveness of EU-level coordination (81% total ‘agree’)**

The absolute majority of respondents in all EU Member States agree that a coordinated EU action in dealing with disasters is more effective than actions by individual countries, and this opinion has remained relatively stable in most countries since March 2015.

The most notable changes can be seen in Finland, where there has been a 10-percentage point increase, in Sweden and Cyprus (both seeing an increase of 5pp) and Italy and Luxembourg (both down 7pp).

**EU Member States readiness to deal with disasters (56% total ‘disagree’)**

In 24 EU Member States, the absolute majority of respondents do not agree their country has sufficient means to deal with all major disasters on their own. The least likely to think their country has sufficient means to deal with all major disasters on their own are respondents in Cyprus (88%, +5 percentage points), Estonia (86%, +3 pp) and Bulgaria (84%, +7 pp).

Countries with the largest variations since the last survey, include an increasing proportion of respondents in Greece (77%, +13 pp) and Portugal (76%, +10 pp) who are now more likely to disagree that their country has the sufficient means to deal with major disasters on their own.

**A EU civil protection policy (87% total ‘agree’)**

More than three quarters of respondents in all countries agree the EU needs a civil protection policy because major disasters can have cross-border effects.

There has been very little variation in opinion since the last survey, with the exception of Italy (79%, -7 pp) and the Czech Republic (82%, -6 pp).
II. PERCEPTION OF PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER

At EU level, about half of all respondents (49%) do not think enough is being done at a **regional level** or within their own countries to prevent or prepare for disasters, and this represents an increase since March 2015. In 15 out of 28 Member States, an absolute majority of respondents thinks this way. Since the last survey, there have been significant changes in the perception of prevention and preparedness for disaster at the national level in the majority of countries.

In terms of being prepared for disasters at **country level**, there are differing opinions between countries across the European Union. The absolute majority in 14 Member States and a relative majority in six countries, do not think enough is being done in their own country, such as in Italy (76%, -6 percentage points), Greece (75%, +1 pp), Cyprus (74%, +8 pp) and Croatia (74%, +5 pp). This compares with eight countries where the majority of respondents think enough is being done. A significant proportion in five countries ‘do not know’ if enough is being done in their country, such as in Estonia (24%) and Denmark (22%) which have the highest proportions. Since the last survey, there have been significant changes in opinion in 22 countries, and more specifically in the United Kingdom (36%, -16 pp) and Denmark (53%, -12 pp), where respondents are now less likely to think enough is being done in their own country to prepare or prevent disasters. In contrast, respondents in Ireland (65%, +10 pp), Lithuania (55%, +10 pp) and Malta (61%, +8 pp) are now more likely to think their countries are not prepared for disaster.

In 15 Member States, the majority of respondents think enough is being done at the **EU level** to prepare or prevent against disaster, whilst a majority in the remaining 13 States have the opposite view. Since the last survey in March 2015, there has been an increasing support amongst respondents who think enough is being done at the EU level in Greece (47%, +11 pp), Spain (38%, +10 pp) and Belgium (44%, +8 pp). In four countries, there have been large increases in the opinion that not enough is being done at an EU level: Romania (44%, +18 pp), Croatia (49%, +11 pp), the Netherlands (36%, +10 pp) and Estonia (24%, +10 pp).

III. PREFERRED INFORMATION CHANNELS

TV has remained the most commonly preferred source of information regarding EU civil protection policy, as mentioned by 57% of respondents. The Internet (46%) is the second most mentioned source, despite a 10 pp decline since March 2015, followed by the written press (25%) and the radio (21%). Compared to 2015, there has been a general decline in the proportion of respondents mentioning these different sources of information. The analysis of socio-demographic variables shows that men and younger respondents are more likely to prefer the Internet and online social media and that TV is their secondary source for information. Those who completed their education at or before the age of 15 years are more likely to prefer TV as their source of information, while those who finished their education at or after the age of 20 years prefer the Internet. Managers, other white collar workers and the self-employed have stronger preference for the written press, and information or awareness campaigns. Respondents who spend more time at home such as house persons and retired respondents are more likely to express a preference for TV (63-68% vs. 45% managers). Finally, large town dwellers are more likely to express a preference for the Internet than smaller towns or villages.