



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Record number of Europeans support EU humanitarian aid in spite of hardship at home

Public support for humanitarian aid has gone up in the European Union in spite of the economic crisis. This is one of the key findings of the latest Eurobarometer survey on humanitarian aid and civil protection.

Nine out of 10 citizens (88%) believe it is important for the European Union to continue funding humanitarian aid, a rise of nine percentage points since the last survey in 2010. Almost as many, 84%, support maintaining humanitarian aid funding in spite of the current economic crisis and pressures on public finances.

'Even in times of hardship, the EU public still supports us in helping people around the world who through no fault of their own find themselves in dire need — and that support has strengthened over the last two years,' said Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

'I'm proud for Europe that there is such a strong commitment and support for humanitarian aid and civil protection despite the difficulties we face today. We do not take such generosity for granted. It is our duty to do our utmost to deliver aid and protection in a compassionate, professional and efficient way,' the Commissioner added.

There is also a firm endorsement of the Commission's role in coordinating EU humanitarian aid; 71% — up 13 percentage points since 2010. A strong majority of respondents (88%) also supports an initiative to involve young people in EU humanitarian operations within an EU voluntary aid corps.

For civil protection, 82% agree that coordinated EU action in dealing with disasters is more effective than actions by individual countries.

This year the European Commission marks the 20th anniversary of delivering humanitarian aid through ECHO, its humanitarian aid and civil protection department.

The EU as a whole — the European Commission together with the Member States — is the world's leading humanitarian aid donor.

The Commission assists in the funding of humanitarian aid operations around the world. Its main role in civil protection is in coordinating the delivery of assistance to people in disaster stricken areas inside and outside the EU.

The survey on civil protection reveals concern about the possibility of disasters in the EU. 75 per cent said they were concerned about man-made disasters such as oil spills and nuclear accidents. Floods and earthquakes came next with 67 per cent, while 64 per cent said they were most concerned about terrorist attacks and 59 per cent were concerned about armed conflicts.

68 % of Europeans are aware that the EU funds humanitarian aid. Four out of ten (38 %) know about the EU's coordination of civil protection.

About a third feel well informed about EU humanitarian aid activities, up 12 percentage points compared to the previous survey. In the civil protection survey, 19 % feel well informed about EU activities. In both surveys, respondents chose television and the internet as their preferred sources of information, followed by the press and radio.

Background

The two special Eurobarometer surveys, on Humanitarian Aid (384) and on Civil Protection (383), were carried out in the 27 EU Member States between 25 February and 11 March 2012. In each survey, 26 751 respondents were interviewed face-to-face about their perceptions of the European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection policy.

For more information:

[MEMO/12/423](#) – Public support for EU work in humanitarian aid

[MEMO/12/424](#) – Public support for EU work in civil protection

Eurobarometer reports

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

The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection:

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

Commissioner Georgieva's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/georgieva/index_en.htm

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