

Nine out of ten Europeans still strongly support development aid despite the downturn

Eurobarometer n°318

Special Eurobarometer “Development Aid in time of economic turmoil”

Ahead of the 4th European Development Days, a Special Eurobarometer on “Development Aid in time of economic turmoil” shows that the crisis affecting European countries did not affect public support for development aid, which still remains high.

Around 90% of Europeans still believe development is important and 72% of Europeans are in favour of honouring or going beyond existing aid commitments to the developing world. *“This poll clearly shows that citizens expect their governments and the EU Commission to dig deep for development financing”,* says EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Karel De Gucht. *“Even in the context of the economic crisis, I appeal again to the EU Member States to stick to their commitments to increase development aid up to € 69 billion by 2010 to meet the mid term target of the Millennium Development Goals”.*

A large majority of European citizens (61%) feel that Europe can positively contribute to the debate on global development. *“Europeans understand better and better why development is important. They ask for more coverage on development issues by national media”,* says EC Vice-President and Commissioner for Communication Strategy, Margot Wallström.

Interestingly, the economic crisis is not considered as a key challenge for developing countries. One in two Europeans see poverty as the greatest challenge faced by developing countries, placing it above the economic and food crisis (35%). Europeans seem to understand that beyond the economic slump, poverty is the overwhelming structural problem.

Other interesting results:

- Two out of three Europeans cite self-interested motivations for giving aid (64%), namely trade, terrorism, migration and political relations with third countries.
- There is no lack of interest, since 42% Europeans argue for more media coverage of development issues.
- 74% of Europeans have never heard of the Millennium Development Goals, but it is less than in 2007 (80%).

Background

The report details the EU-wide findings as well as country-by-country breakdowns. They show that development cooperation brings the European Union closer. Aid effectiveness calls for greater coherence and consensus among member states. European polling shows that since 2004 cross-country differences are narrowing,

especially between the countries that joined the EU since 2004 and the other member states.

Education, age and socio-economic data on the respondents are available.

The Special Eurobarometer n°318 on “Development Aid in time of economic turmoil” was conducted in May-June 2009. It was aimed at assessing whether the economic downturn affected public support for development cooperation in European countries. Though the impact of the crisis on how Europeans would view the importance of development aid was the trigger, this most recent survey is part of a series exploring European awareness of development issues since 2004. Comparisons with results of previous studies are made where applicable.

To read the entire report:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_special_en.htm

Website

http://ec.europa.eu/development/index_en.cfm

Contact :

John Clancy +32 2 29 53773 +32 498 95 3773
john.clancy@ec.europa.eu

Marie-Pierre Jouglain +32 2 29 84449 +32 498 98 4449
marie-pierre.jouglain@ec.europa.eu