



Special Eurobarometer 511b

Summary

EU Civil Protection

Fieldwork
November-December 2020
Publication
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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

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Special Eurobarometer 511b – Wave EB94.2 – Kantar



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(DG COMM "Media monitoring and Eurobarometer" Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union plays a key role in coordinating the response to disasters in Europe and beyond. Disasters have affected every region of Europe in recent years, causing hundreds of casualties and billions in damage to infrastructure and the environment. Epidemics, flash floods, storms, forest fires, earthquakes, and human-induced disasters are continuously putting countries' response capabilities under pressure. Additionally, security concerns have become more complex and climate change is expected to worsen the impact of disasters in the future.

With its base in Brussels, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) ensures rapid and effective delivery of EU assistance during times of disaster in Europe and beyond. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism commenced in 2001 and by the end of 2020 it had been activated more than 430 times to respond to emergencies worldwide¹. All EU Member States participate in the Mechanism, along with Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey. The civil protection assistance offered to countries affected by disasters can vary depending on the capacities of each of the participating states. It can include relief items, expertise, specific equipment, intervention teams and experts assigned to conduct needs assessments and coordinate the actions with local authorities and international organisations.

In 2019, the EU reinforced and strengthened components of its disaster risk management by upgrading the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The latest element that was introduced – 'rescEU' - has the objective of enhancing both the protection of citizens from disasters and the management of emerging risks. As an additional layer of protection, the EU established a European reserve of additional capacities (the 'rescEU reserve')². In response to the coronavirus pandemic, tens of thousands of protective masks, medical gloves and a large number of ventilators coming from the strategic rescEU reserve were distributed to countries who needed those most³.

This report details the results of the Special Eurobarometer survey on civil protection in the EU conducted in order to understand EU citizens' awareness of and support for EU activities in this area. While the EU Civil Protection Mechanism covers assistance inside and outside Europe, the focus of the survey remained on the preparedness and response within the EU. This survey builds on previous Eurobarometer surveys on civil protection conducted in 2015⁴ and 2016⁵.

The November-December 2020 Special Eurobarometer was conducted between 20 November and 21 December 2020 and considers the following:

- Awareness of and attitudes towards the European Union's activities related to civil protection, including crises such as the coronavirus pandemic;
- Awareness of the risk of disasters in respondents' regions;
- Perception of the level of preparedness of public authorities in responding to natural hazards resulting from climate change;
- Preferred sources of information about EU civil protection and response to disasters.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en

² Factsheet 'rescEU': https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/resceu_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en

⁴ Special Eurobarometer 433:

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/search/civil%20protection/surveyKy/2067>

⁵ Special Eurobarometer 454:

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/SPECIAL/search/civil%20protection/surveyKy/2122>

The results are presented for the EU as a whole and by country, and significant variations by gender, age, education and other socio-demographic characteristics are also specified. Whenever possible, the results from the present survey are compared with those from previous surveys.

Note

As a result of the UK leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020, the Union now has 27 Member States. The overall EU level results presented in this report are therefore based on EU27, and not EU28 as was the case in previous waves. Care should therefore be taken when comparing the results from the current wave with previous results.

For trend questions, the evolution of results from the previous survey is sometimes shown with EU28 and sometimes with EU27, depending on the available data.

Consequences of the coronavirus pandemic on fieldwork

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Media monitoring and Eurobarometer” Unit). Given the impact of COVID-19 and subsequent health safety measures, the face-to-face methodology was either not possible to apply or was applied only to a certain extent in some countries. In Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and Sweden, a share of interviews was conducted online, while the rest were conducted as normal, via face-to-face interviews. In Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovenia, all interviews were conducted online⁶.

Where feasible, interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes or on their doorstep and in the appropriate national language. In all countries where face-to-face interviewing was feasible CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) was used. For all interviews conducted face to face, hygiene and physical distancing measures in line with government regulations have always been respected and, whenever possible, interviews were conducted outside homes, on doorsteps, to remain in open air and maintain social distance. As a result, interviews were conducted online with Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) to reach the targets when face-to-face interviewing presented a challenge to do so. These methodologies could have an impact on some of the results.

⁶ Online interviewing took the form of probabilistic panels and access panels, depending on what is available in the country.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Latvia	LV
Czechia	CZ	Luxembourg	LU
Bulgaria	BG	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Greece	EL	Poland	PL
Spain	ES	Portugal	PT
France	FR	Romania	RO
Croatia	HR	Slovenia	SI
Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus	CY *	Sweden	SE
Lithuania	LT		
European Union – weighted average for the 27 Member States			EU27

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the ‘acquis communautaire’ has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the ‘CY’ category and in the EU27 average.

*We wish to thank the people throughout the European Union
who have given their time to take part in this survey.*

Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

KEY FINDINGS

A majority of respondents are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters and nine in ten think this is important

- Slightly more than half of respondents (51%) are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters, while 48% say they are not aware. The level of awareness has slightly decreased since 2016 by 4 percentage points (pp).
- Among those who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters, more than nine in ten (92%) say they are aware that their country participates in these actions.
- Nine in ten think it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters, with 43% saying it is 'very important'. Less than one in ten (9%) think it is not important.
- More than nine in ten respondents (92%) agree that another EU country should provide help when a disaster strikes in their country that is too big to deal with on their own, with 57% who 'totally agree'. Around one in twenty (6%) disagree with this statement.
- Similarly, 92% agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big to deal with on their own, with 55% who 'totally agree'. Around one in twenty (6%) disagree with this statement.
- While opinions about the EU response to the pandemic are divided, a large majority is in favour of increasing EU coordination in the future. More than half (54%) agree that, looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic, with 16% who 'totally agree'. Four in ten disagree with the statement. Results vary significantly from one Member State to the other.
- More than eight in ten (84%) agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future, with 39% who 'totally agree'. Around one in ten (11%) disagree with the statement.

Almost two thirds are aware of the risk of disaster in their region and the level of awareness has significantly increased since 2015

- Almost two thirds (64%) are aware of the risk of disaster in their region (excluding pandemics), with 15% who say they are 'fully aware'. More than a third (35%) are not aware. The level of awareness has significantly increased since 2015 (+9 percentage points).

Opinions are divided among respondents on whether regional, national, European Union and global authorities are prepared to respond to an increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change

- Just under half of the respondents think national (49% 'prepared' vs 46% 'not prepared'), European Union (46% 'prepared' vs 43% 'not prepared') and global (46% 'prepared' vs 42% 'not prepared') authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. Opinions are divided for regional or local authorities (47% 'prepared' vs 48% 'not prepared').

The Internet and TV are the preferred sources of information regarding EU civil protection and the response to disasters

- The Internet (websites, blogs) (56%) and TV (54%) are the two most mentioned sources of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters. The proportions mentioning the Internet (+10 pp) or online social networks (+6 pp) have increased since 2016.

I. AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR EU CIVIL PROTECTION

This section of the report reviews EU citizens' awareness of EU civil protection, as well as their general attitudes towards the EU's role in coordinating the response to disasters. The chapter also analyses the attitudes towards solidarity among Member States and effectiveness of EU-level coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic.

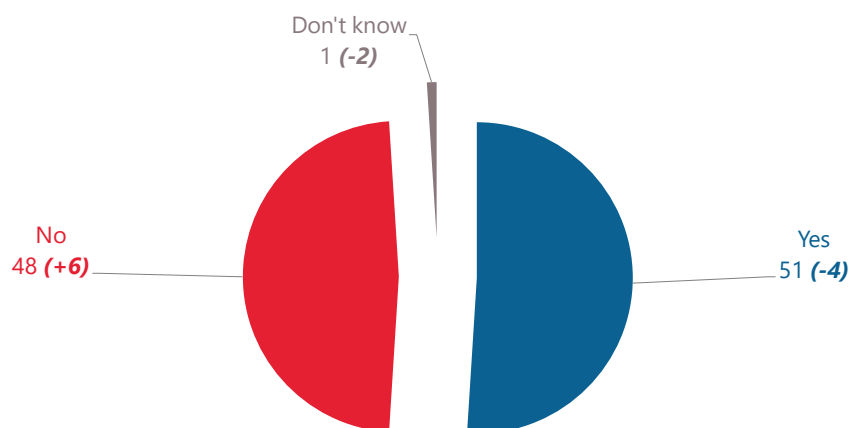
1 Awareness of EU civil protection

A majority of respondents say they are aware that the European Union helps to coordinate the response to disasters

When asked whether they are aware that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters, slightly more than half of the respondents (51%) say they are aware, while 48% say they are not aware⁷.

The proportion of those who say they are aware has decreased by four percentage points since December 2016. Conversely, the share of respondents who indicate they are not aware has increased by six percentage points over the same period.

QD3 Are you aware or not that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters in the EU?
(% - EU)

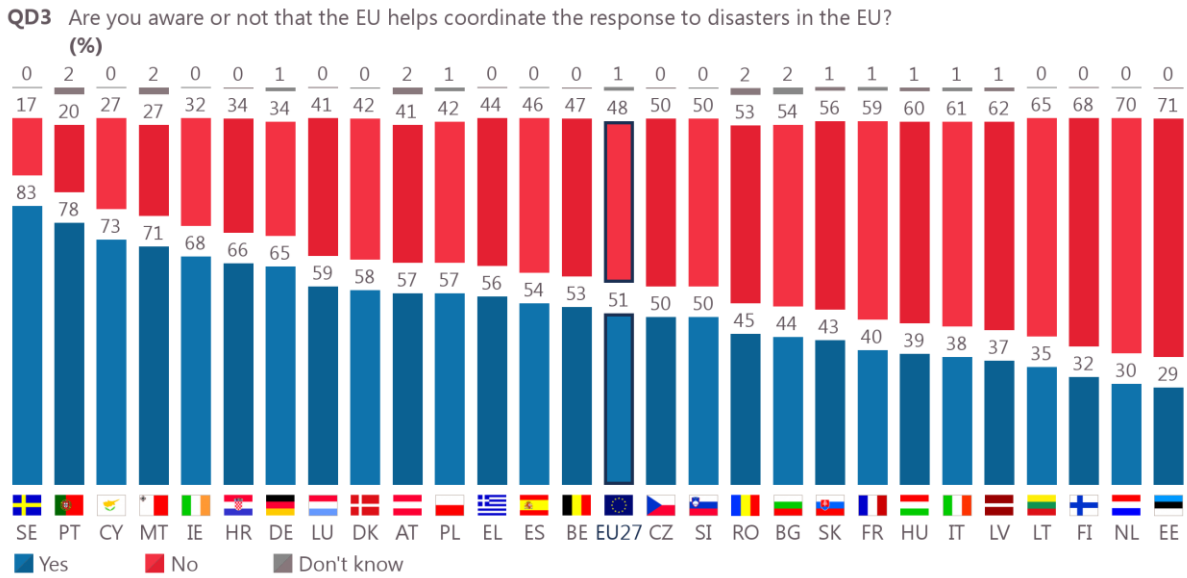


(Nov.-Dec. 2020 - Nov.-Dec. 2016)

Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

⁷ QD3 Are you aware or not that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters in the EU? Yes; No; DK.

The **country analysis** shows that, in 14 Member States, a majority of respondents say they are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters. The highest proportions saying that they are aware can be observed in Sweden (83%), Portugal (78%) and Cyprus (73%), while respondents in Estonia (29%), the Netherlands (30%) and Finland (32%) are the least likely to answer this way.



The proportion of respondents who say they are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters has declined in 19 countries since December 2016. The largest decreases can be observed in Lithuania (-33 percentage points), Estonia (-32 pp) and Finland (-23 pp). Conversely, this share has increased in six Member States, most notably in Sweden (+22 pp), Croatia (+13 pp) and Cyprus (+9 pp).

The **socio-demographic analysis** illustrates the following patterns:

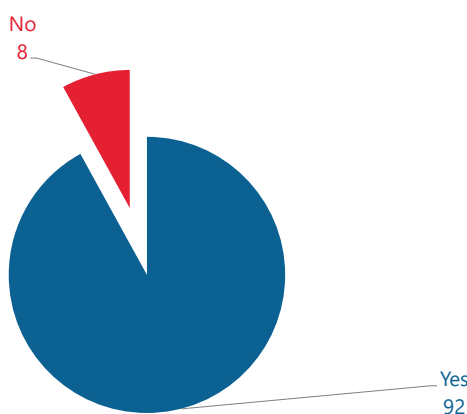
- Respondents aged 25-39 (55%) are the ones most likely to say they are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters, particularly when compared to those aged 55 or more (48%);
- The longer the respondents remained in full-time education, the more likely they are to be aware. For instance, 57% of those having ended education aged 20 or more say this, compared to 40% of those who left education aged 15 or younger;
- Managers (62%) are the most likely to say they are aware, especially when compared to house persons⁸ (36%).

⁸ House persons are people responsible for ordinary shopping and looking after the home, or without any current occupation/not working, but not looking for a job.

Around nine in ten of respondents who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters are also aware that their country participates in this cooperation

Among those who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters, more than nine in ten (92%) say they are aware that their country participates in this coordinated response, for instance by sending assistance to other EU countries⁹. Less than one in ten (8%) say they are not aware.

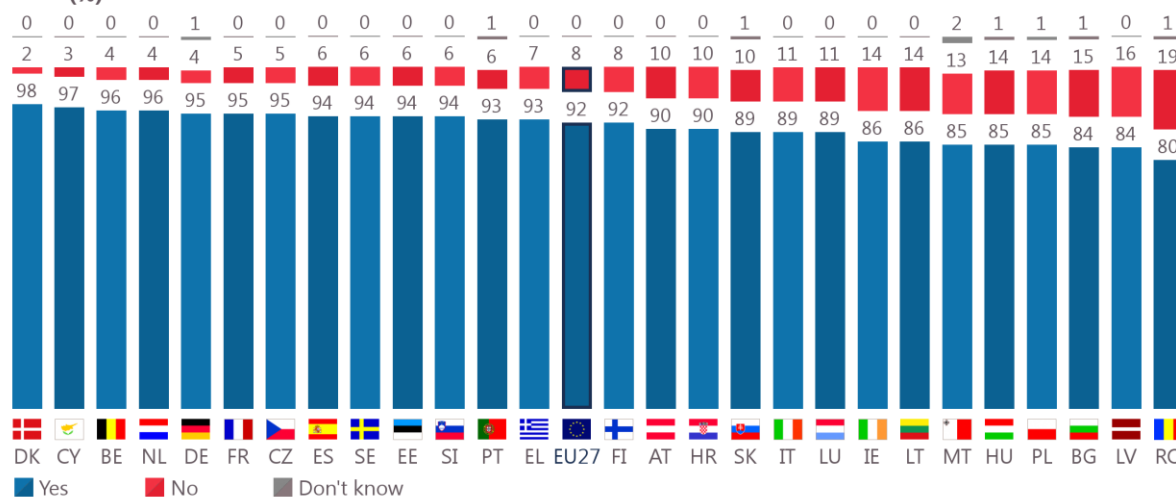
QD4 Are you aware or not that (OUR COUNTRY) participates in this coordinated response, for instance by sending assistance to other EU countries?
(% - EU)



Base: respondents who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the responses to disasters in the EU (n=13,889)

The **country-analysis** illustrates that, in all 27 EU Member States, at least eight in ten of those who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters say they are aware that their country participates in this coordinated response. This proportion is the highest in Denmark (98%), Cyprus (97%), Belgium and the Netherlands (both 96%), and the lowest in Romania (80%), Bulgaria and Latvia (both 84%).

QD4 Are you aware or not that (OUR COUNTRY) participates in this coordinated response, for instance by sending assistance to other EU countries?
(%)



Base: respondents who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the responses to disasters in the EU (n=13,889)

⁹ QD4 Are you aware or not that (OUR COUNTRY) participates in this coordinated response, for instance by sending assistance to other EU countries? Yes; No; DK.

The **socio-demographic analysis** highlights that overwhelming majorities of those who are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters across all categories say they are also aware that their country participates in this coordinated response. However, few differences can still be observed:

- Respondents aged 25 or more are slightly more likely than their younger counterparts to be aware that their country participates in the coordinated response to disasters in the EU (92-93% vs 89%);
- Those who finished full-time education aged 20 or more are more likely than those having ended education aged 19 or less to say they are aware (95% vs 89-90%);
- The self-employed (95%) and managers (94%) are the most likely to say they are aware, especially when compared to manual workers and house persons (both 90%).

2 Attitudes towards EU civil protection

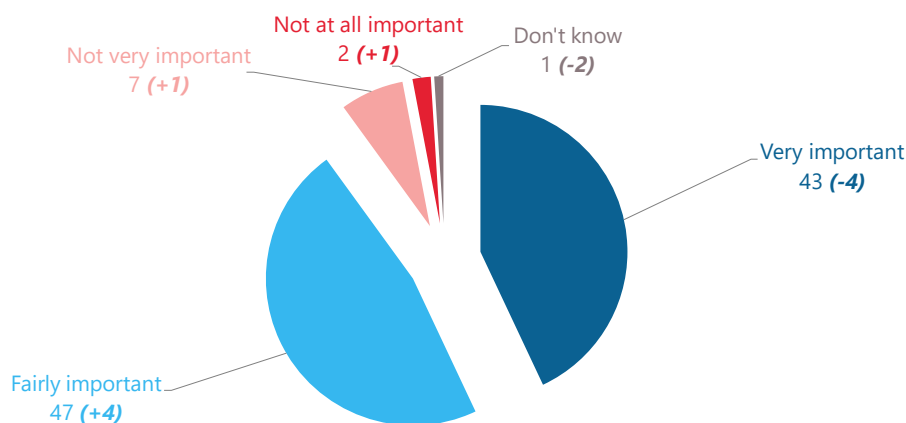
a. EU's role in the coordination of the response to disasters

Nine in ten think it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters

Respondents were asked how important they think it is that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters¹⁰. Nine in ten respondents think this is important, with 43% of respondents considering the EU coordination to be 'very important'. Less than one in ten (9%) think it is not important.

The total figures have remained broadly stable compared to the previous survey in December 2016, even though the proportion saying this is 'very important' has slightly decreased (-4 percentage points).

QD5 How important or not do you think it is that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters in the EU?
(% - EU)



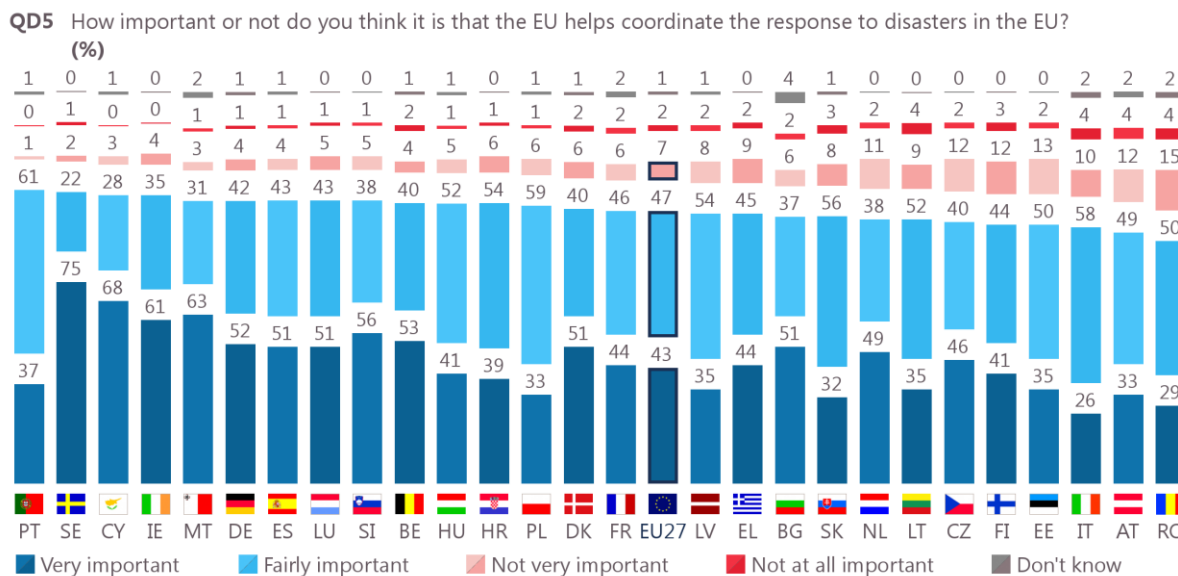
(Nov.-Dec. 2020 - Nov.-Dec. 2016)

Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

¹⁰ QD5 How important or not do you think it is that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters in the EU? Very important; Fairly important; Not very important; Not at all important; DK.

The **country analysis** shows that, in all 27 EU Member States, more than three quarters of the respondents think it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters. This share rises to 98% in Portugal, 97% in Sweden and 96% in Cyprus and Ireland, while, the lowest proportions are observed in Romania (79%), Austria (82%) and Italy (84%).

In addition, a majority of respondents in 13 countries think this is ‘very important’, with the highest proportions saying this recorded in Sweden (75%), Cyprus (68%) and Malta (63%).



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

In 15 countries, respondents are less likely than they were in December 2016 to think it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters. The largest declines can be found in Finland (-11 percentage points), Romania (-9 pp) and Lithuania (-8 pp). Conversely, this share of respondents has increased in eight Member States, most notably in Croatia (+5 pp), Czechia and Poland (both +4 pp). Overall, the EU average for ‘Important’ remained stable compared to 2016.

The **socio-demographic analysis** highlights that more than eight in ten respondents in most categories think it is important that the EU helps to coordinate the response to disasters. Nonetheless, the following patterns can still be observed:

- Respondents who finished full-time education aged 16 or more are more likely than those who ended education earlier to think this is important (90-92% vs 85%);
- White-collar workers (93%) and students (92%) are the most likely to think this is important, particularly when compared to house persons (84%).

b. Solidarity between EU Member States

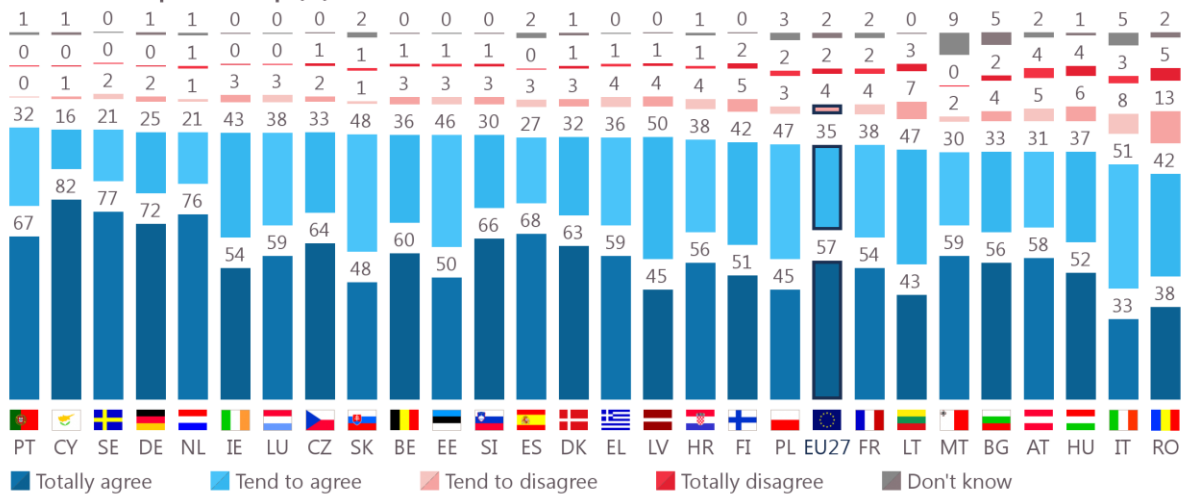
More than nine in ten respondents agree that another EU country should provide help when a disaster strikes in their country that is too big to deal with on their own

More than nine in ten respondents (92%) agree that another EU country should provide help when a disaster strikes in their country that is too big to deal with on their own, with more than half (57%) who ‘totally agree’ and 35% who ‘tend to agree’. Around one in twenty (6%) disagree with this statement, with only 2% who ‘totally disagree’.

The **country analysis** shows that in all Member States at least eight in ten agree that another EU country should provide help when a disaster strikes in their country that is too big to deal with on their own. Almost all of the respondents in Portugal (99%), Cyprus and Sweden (both 98%) agree with this statement. At the other end of the spectrum, less than nine in ten in Romania (80%), Italy (84%), Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Malta (all 89%) agree.

In 21 out of the 27 EU Member States, a majority ‘totally agree’ that another EU country should help their country when a disaster strikes, with more than three quarters in ‘total’ agreement in Cyprus (82%), Sweden (77%) and the Netherlands (76%).

QD7.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
When a disaster strikes in (OUR COUNTRY) that is too big to deal with on our own, another EU country should provide help (%)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

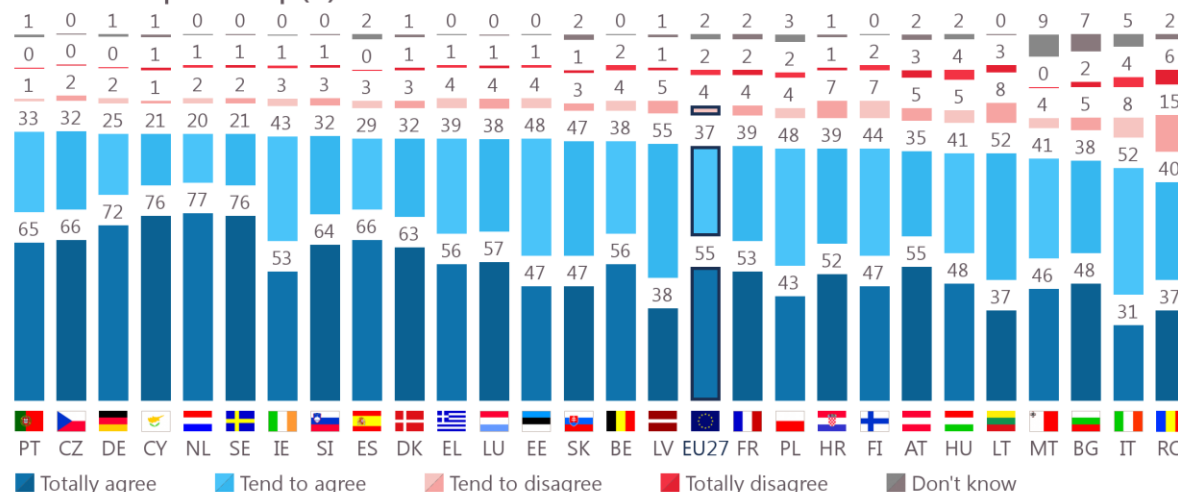
More than nine in ten agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big to deal with on their own

More than nine in ten respondents (92%) agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big to deal with on their own, with more than half (55%) who ‘totally agree’ and 37% who ‘tend to agree’. Around one in twenty (6%) disagree with this statement, with only 2% who ‘totally disagree’.

The **country analysis** highlights that, in all Member States, more than eight in ten agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big to deal with on their own, with the only exception of Romania, where still more than three quarters agree with the statement (77%). The highest proportions answering this way are recorded in Czechia, Portugal (both 98%), Cyprus, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden (all 97%). At the other end of the spectrum, in addition to Romania, the lowest proportions are found in Italy (83%) and Bulgaria (86%).

In 20 Member States, a majority ‘totally agree’ that their country should help another EU country when a disaster strikes, with, once again, more than three quarters in ‘total’ agreement in the Netherlands (77%), Cyprus and Sweden (both 76%).

QD7.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
When a disaster strikes in another EU country that is too big to deal with on their own, (OUR COUNTRY) should provide help (%)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

The **socio-demographic analysis** reveals that very large majorities across all categories agree with both statements regarding solidarity among EU Member States in case of a disaster. However, the following differences can be observed:

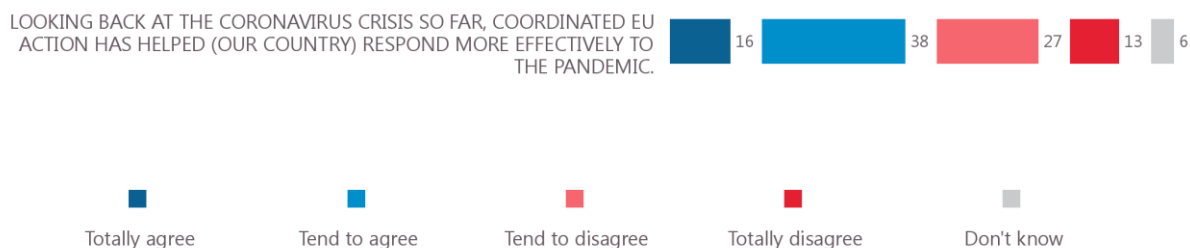
- The longer the respondents remained in full-time education, the more likely they are to agree with each statement regarding solidarity among EU Member States. For instance, 95% of those who finished education aged 20 or more agree that their country should provide help when a disaster strikes in another EU country, compared to 85% of those who left education aged 15 or less;
- Close to nine in ten or more across all socio-professional categories agree with each of the statements, with the exception of house persons (83-85%).

c. Effectiveness of EU-level coordination in responding to the coronavirus pandemic

More than half of respondents agree that coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic

More than half of the respondents (54%) agree that, looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic, with 16% who ‘totally agree’ and 38% who ‘tend to agree’¹¹. Conversely, four in ten disagree with the statement, with more than one in ten (13%) who ‘totally disagree’. Around one in twenty (6%) say they don’t know.

QD6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic?
(% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

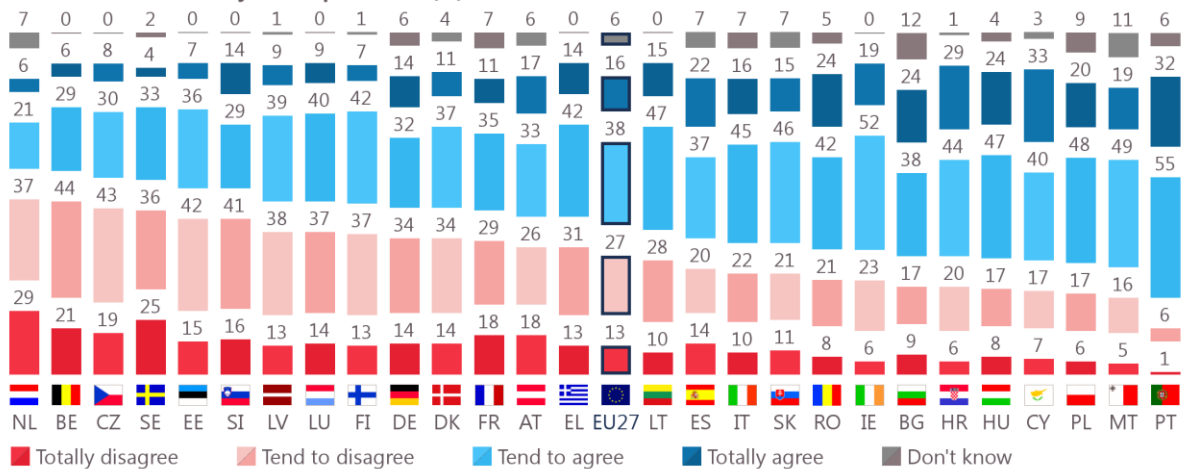
¹¹ QD6.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic? Looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped (OUR COUNTRY) respond more effectively to the pandemic. Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; DK.

The **country analysis** highlights that, in 15 Member States, a majority agree that, looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic. Portugal stands out for a particularly high proportion of respondents who agree with this statement (87%), followed by Croatia and Cyprus (both 73%). At the opposite end of the scale, 27% in the Netherlands, 35% in Belgium and 37% in Sweden agree.

Cyprus (33%), Portugal (32%) and Croatia (29%) are also the countries where respondents are the most likely to ‘totally agree’ that coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the coronavirus pandemic.

QD6.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic?

Looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped (OUR COUNTRY) respond more effectively to the pandemic (%)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

The **socio-demographic analysis** reveals the following differences:

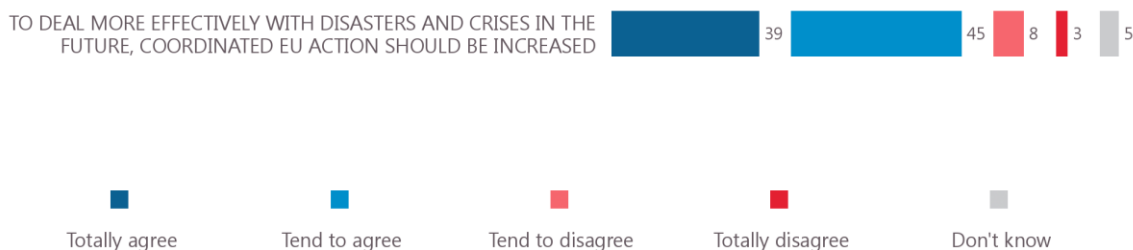
- Respondents aged 15-39 are more likely than those aged 40 or more to agree that, looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic (57% vs 52-53%);
- No clear pattern emerges in terms of education level, even though respondents who finished education aged 20 or older are the least likely to agree with this statement (50% vs 53-57% of those who finished education aged 19 or younger);
- Students (58%), manual and white-collar workers (both 57%) are the most likely to agree, particularly when compared to house persons and the unemployed (both 48%).

d. Effectiveness of EU coordination in dealing with disasters and crises in the future

An overwhelming majority agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future

More than eight in ten respondents (84%) agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future, with around four in ten (39%) who ‘totally agree’ and 45% who ‘tend to agree’¹². Around one in ten respondents (11%) disagree with the statement, with 3% who ‘totally disagree’. One in twenty say they don’t know.

QD6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic? (% - EU)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

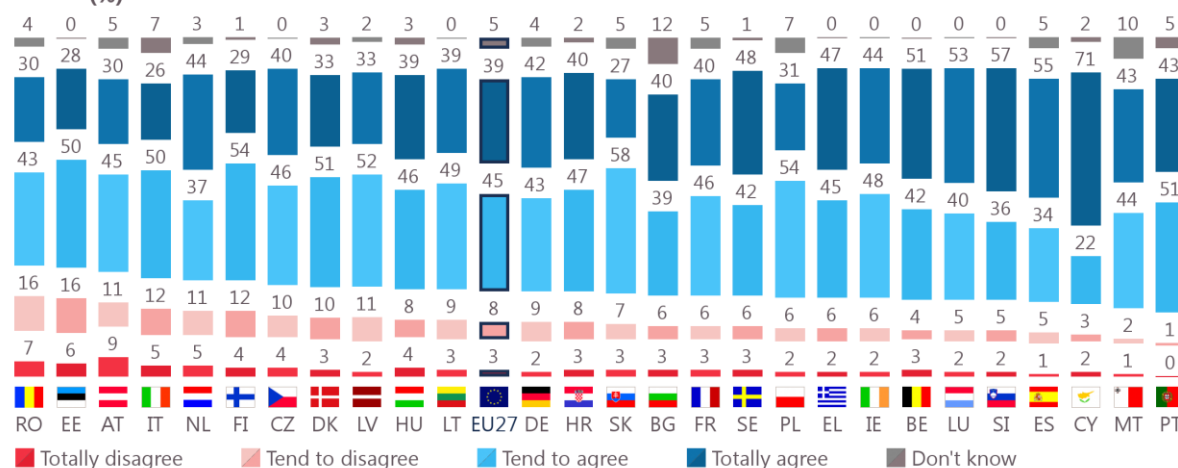
¹² QD6.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic? To deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future, coordinated EU action should be increased. Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; DK.

The **country analysis** shows that, in all 27 Member States, more than seven in ten agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future. This proportion is the highest in Portugal (94%), Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Slovenia (all 93%), whereas it is the lowest in Romania (73%), Austria (75%) and Italy (76%).

Cyprus stands out for a particularly high share of respondents who ‘totally agree’ with this statement (71%). In addition, more than half of respondents are in ‘total’ agreement in Slovenia (57%), Spain (55%), Luxembourg (53%) and Belgium (51%).

QD6.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EU coordination when dealing with disasters and crises such as the coronavirus pandemic?

To deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future, coordinated EU action should be increased (%)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

The **socio-demographic analysis** illustrates that more than eight in ten respondents in most categories agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with disasters and crises in the future. However, the following differences can still be observed:

- Respondents who finished full-time education aged 16 or later are more likely than those who left education aged 15 or younger to agree with this statement (84-87% vs 75%);
- Managers (88%), students (87%) and white-collar workers (86%) are the most likely to agree, particularly when compared to house persons (74%).

II. RISK AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF PREPAREDNESS FOR DISASTER

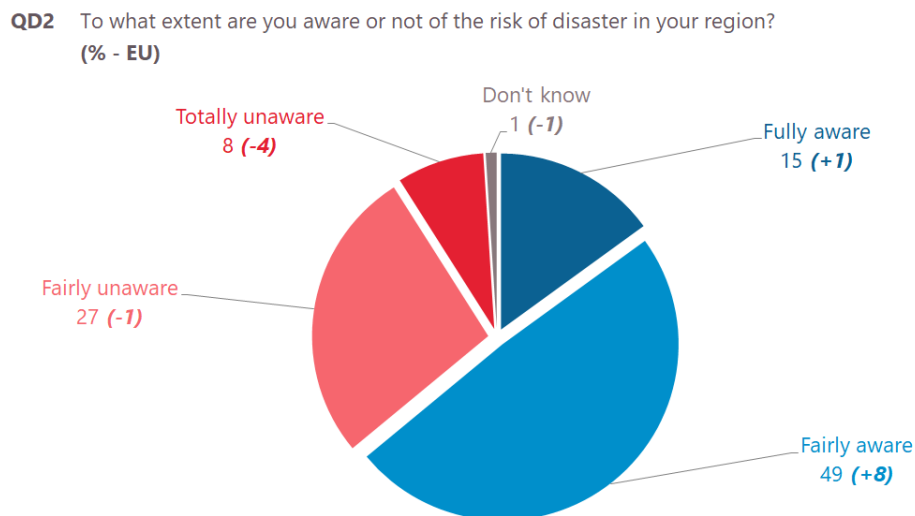
This section examines EU citizens’ awareness of the risk of disaster in their region and their perception of the preparedness of public authorities at various levels.

1 Awareness of disaster risk at regional level

Almost two thirds of the respondents are aware of the risk of disaster in their region and this level of awareness has significantly increased since 2015

Respondents were asked to what extent they are aware or not of the risk of disaster in their region (excluding pandemics)¹³. Almost two thirds (64%) say they are aware of this risk, with 15% of them saying they are ‘fully aware’ and nearly half (49%) ‘fairly aware’. Conversely, more than one third (35%) declare they are not aware of such risk, with 8% who are ‘totally unaware’.

The share of respondents who are aware of the risk of disaster in their region has significantly increased since this question was last asked in March 2015 (+9 percentage points).



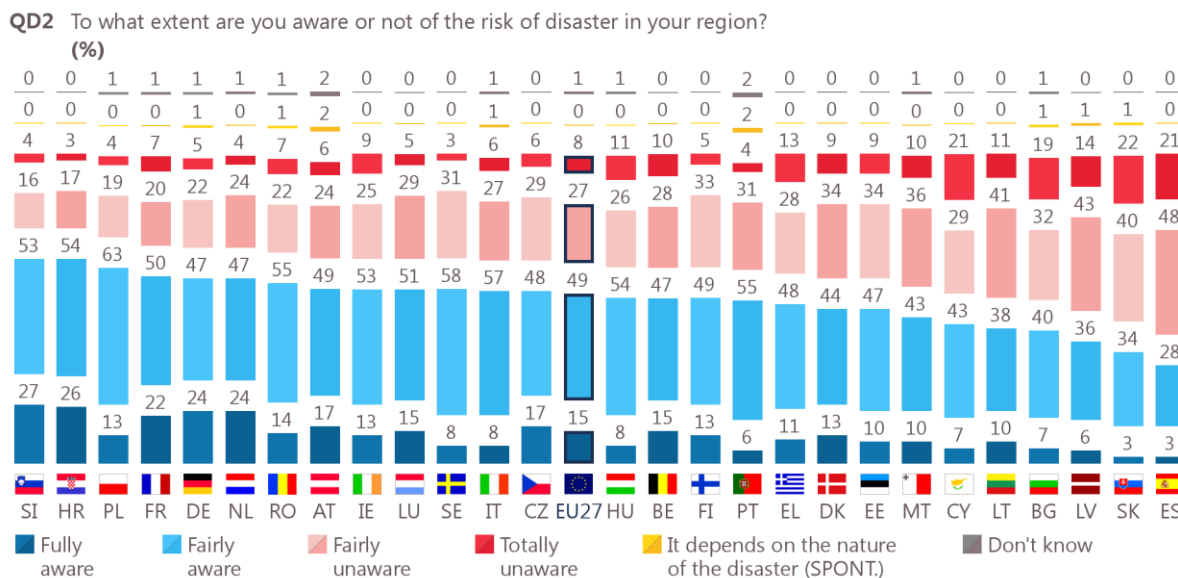
(Nov.-Dec. 2020 - Mar. 2015)

Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

¹³ QD2 To what extent are you aware or not of the risk of disaster in your region? (In this question, "the risk of disaster" does not include pandemics). Fully aware; Fairly aware; Fairly unaware; Totally unaware; It depends on the nature of the disaster (SPONTANEOUS); DK.

The **country analysis** highlights that, in 22 countries, at least half of the respondents say they are aware of the risk of disaster in their region (excluding pandemics). This proportion rises to more than three quarters in Croatia, Slovenia (both 80%) and Poland (76%). At the opposite end of the scale, 31% in Spain, 37% in Slovakia and 42% in Latvia are aware of this risk.

Around one quarter or more state they are ‘fully aware’ of such risk in Slovenia (27%), Croatia (26%), Germany and the Netherlands (both 24%).



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

In 18 Member States, respondents are more likely than they were in March 2015 to say they are aware of the risk of disaster in their region. The largest increase by far can be observed in Germany (+22 percentage points), followed by Czechia (+13 pp) and Estonia (+12 pp). At the other end of the spectrum, this proportion has decreased the most in Romania (-8 pp), Luxembourg (-7 pp) and Austria (-5 pp).

The **socio-demographic analysis** illustrates the following:

- Men are more likely than women to say they are aware of the risk of disaster in their region (67% vs 60%);
- The younger respondents (aged 15-24) are the least likely to be aware of the disaster risk in their regions (58% vs 63-66% among older respondents);
- Respondents who finished full-time education aged 16 or older are more likely than those who left education earlier to say they are aware (65-68% vs 50%);
- Managers (72%) are the most likely to say they are aware of the risk of disaster in their region, especially when compared to house persons (50%).

2 Perception of preparedness of public authorities to respond to disasters

Respondents were asked how well-prepared public authorities at different levels are to respond to a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe resulting from climate change, such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage¹⁴. **National authorities** are regarded as well prepared by almost half of the respondents (49%), closely followed by **regional or local authorities** (47%), **European Union authorities** and **global level authorities (for example, the United Nations)** (both 46%).

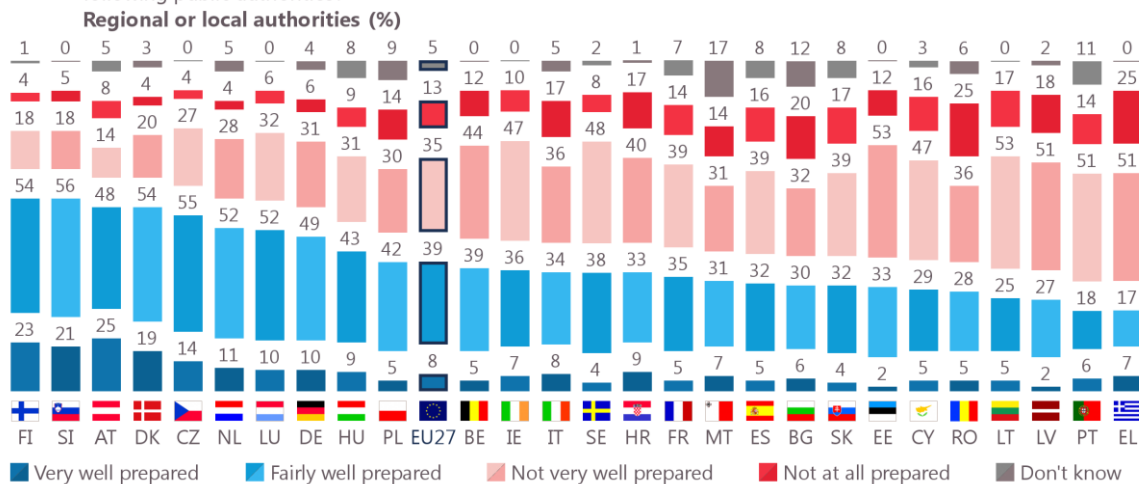
a. Perception of preparedness for disasters at local and regional level

Opinions are divided on the level of preparedness of regional or local authorities in responding to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change

Less than half of the respondents (47%) believe regional or local authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, with almost one in ten (8%) saying these authorities are ‘very well prepared’ and 39% saying they are ‘fairly well prepared’. Close to half of respondents (48%) think regional or local authorities are not prepared, with more than one in ten (13%) saying they are ‘not at all prepared’. 5% say they don’t know.

The **country analysis** reveals that in ten Member States the majority of respondents say regional or local authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. More than seven in ten respondents in Finland and Slovenia (both 77%), Austria and Denmark (both 73%) think this way. This contrasts with less than three in ten respondents in Portugal, Greece (both 24%) and Latvia (29%) who say these authorities are prepared. Respondents in Austria (25%), Finland (23%), Slovenia (21%) and Denmark (19%) are also the most likely to think that regional or local authorities are ‘very well prepared’.

QD1.1 Climate change has resulted in a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage. In your view, how well prepared to respond or not are the following public authorities?



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

¹⁴ QD1 Climate change has resulted in a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage. In your view, how well prepared to respond or not are the following public authorities? Regional or local authorities; National authorities; European Union authorities; Global level authorities (for example, the United Nations). Very well prepared; Fairly well prepared; Not very well prepared; Not at all prepared; DK.

b. Perception of preparedness for disasters at country level

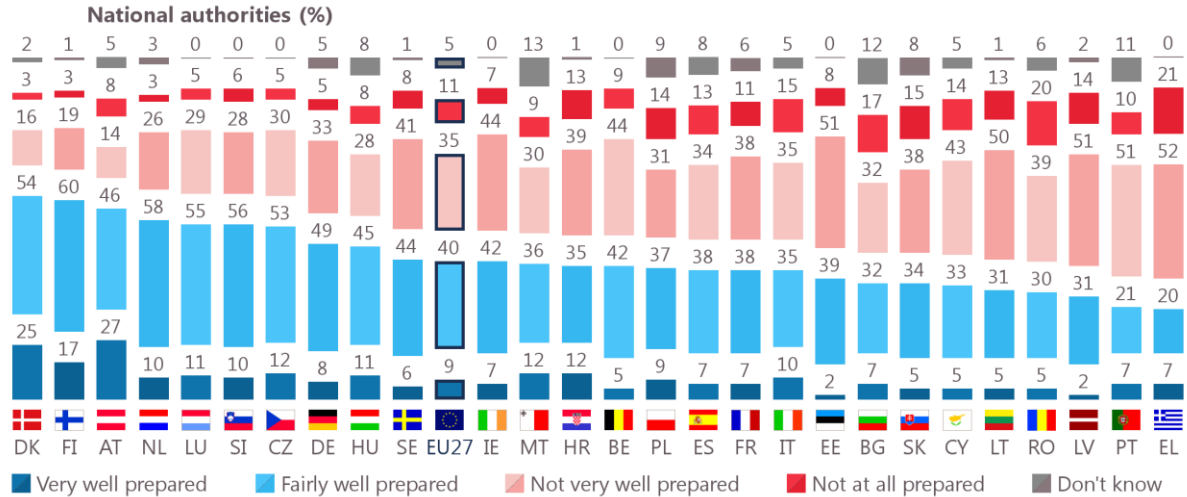
Nearly half of the respondents think national authorities are prepared to face the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) say national authorities are prepared to face the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, with almost one in ten (9%) saying they are ‘very well prepared’ and four in ten saying they are ‘fairly well prepared’. This compares to more than four in ten respondents (46%) who think these authorities are not prepared, with around one in ten (11%) saying they are ‘not at all prepared’. One in twenty say they don’t know.

The **country analysis** shows that, in 10 countries, the majority think national authorities are well prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. The highest shares of respondents saying national authorities are prepared can be observed in Denmark (79%), Finland (77%) and Austria (73%), while only one third or less answer this way in Latvia (33%), Portugal (28%), and Greece (27%).

Respondents in Austria (27%), Denmark (25%) and Finland (17%) are the most likely to think national authorities are ‘very well prepared’.

QD1.2 Climate change has resulted in a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage. In your view, how well prepared to respond or not are the following public authorities?



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

c. Perception of preparedness for disasters at EU level

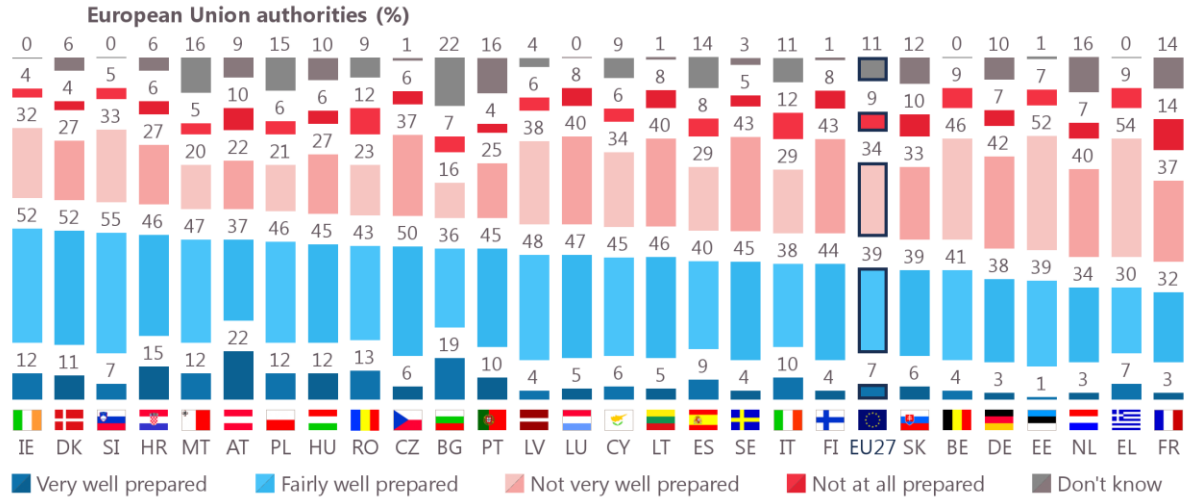
Under half of respondents consider that European Union authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards related to climate change

Under half of respondents (46%) believe European Union authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, with 7% saying they are ‘very well prepared’ and 39% saying they are ‘fairly well prepared’. More than four in ten (43%) think EU authorities are not prepared, with 9% saying they are ‘not at all prepared’. Around one in ten (11%) say they don’t know.

The **country analysis** highlights that, in 16 Member States, a majority say European Union authorities are prepared to face the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. More than six in ten answer this way in Ireland (64%), Denmark (63%), Slovenia (62%) and Croatia (61%). This compares to less than four in ten saying this in France (35%), Greece and the Netherlands (both 37%).

Respondents in Austria (22%), Bulgaria (19%) and Croatia (15%) are the most likely to think European Union authorities are ‘very well prepared’ to respond to natural hazards related to climate change.

QD1.3 Climate change has resulted in a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage. In your view, how well prepared to respond or not are the following public authorities?



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

d. Perception of preparedness for disasters at global level

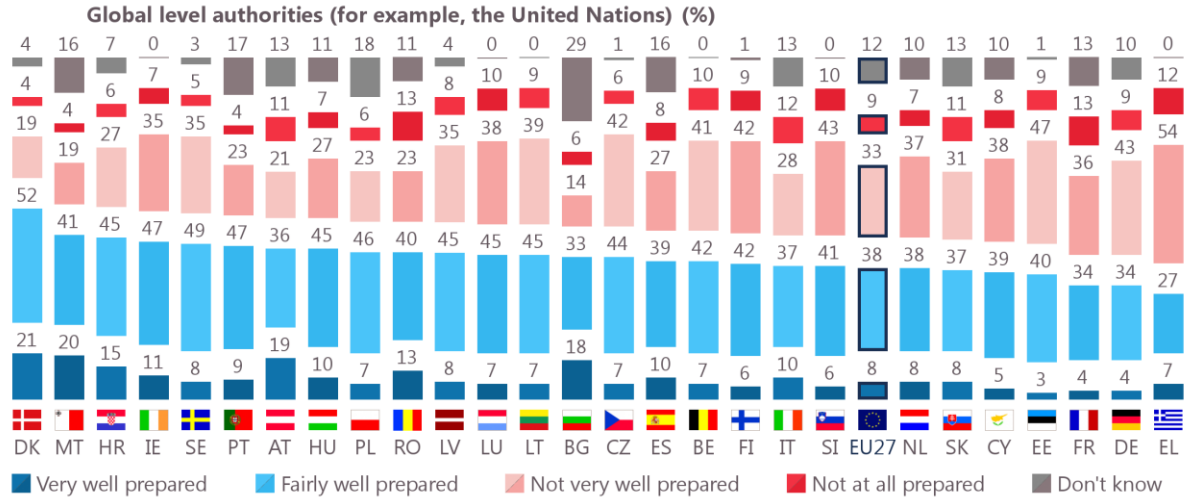
Under half of respondents think global level authorities are prepared to face the climate change-related increase in natural hazards

Under half of respondents (46%) think global level authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, with close to one in ten (8%) saying they are ‘very well prepared’ and 38% saying they are ‘fairly well prepared’. Conversely, around four in ten (42%) believe these authorities are not prepared, with slightly less than one in ten (9%) saying they are ‘not at all prepared’. More than one in ten (12%) say they don’t know.

The **country analysis** illustrates that, in 15 Member States, a majority of respondents think global level authorities are prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. The highest proportions saying this can be observed in Denmark (73%), Malta (61%) and Croatia (60%), while the lowest proportions are found in Greece (34%), France and Germany (both 38%).

Denmark (21%) and Malta (20%) are also the only countries where at least one fifth of respondents say global level authorities are ‘very well prepared’, followed by Austria (19%) and Bulgaria (18%).

QD1.4 Climate change has resulted in a dramatic increase in natural hazards in Europe such as wildfires, floods or droughts, often resulting in many victims and economic damage. In your view, how well prepared to respond or not are the following public authorities?



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

Overall, while respondents in Denmark are consistently among the *most* likely to say that each of the authorities tested in the survey is prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, the respondents in Greece are consistently among the *least* likely to think this about each of them.

Moreover, interesting patterns emerge when observing the perceived level of preparedness of (sub-) national authorities compared to European or global authorities. In 12 Member States, respondents tend to consider *European Union and global level authorities* to be more prepared than national, regional or local authorities. Conversely, in six countries respondents tend to hold more favourable opinions on the level of preparedness of *national and regional or local authorities* compared to European Union and global level authorities: Finland (77% for national and regional or local authorities vs 48% for European Union and global level authorities), the Netherlands (63–68% vs 37–46%), Germany (57–59% vs 38–41%), Austria (73% vs 55–59%), Luxembourg (62–66% vs 52%) and Czechia (65–69% vs 51–56%).

Lastly, respondents in Sweden tend to consider global level authorities to be more prepared than regional, national or European Union authorities (57% vs 42–50%), while the reverse is true in Slovenia (47% vs 62–77%). Those in Spain (37% vs 45–49%) and Estonia (35% vs 40–43%) are less likely to think local or regional authorities are prepared compared to higher level authorities.

The **socio-demographic analysis** of perceived level of preparedness across all four levels of governance shows the following patterns:

- The younger the respondents the more likely they are to think **European Union authorities** are well prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change. For instance, 54% of those aged 15–24 think this, compared to 42% of those aged 55 or more. Similarly, respondents aged 15–54 are more likely than older respondents to say **global level authorities** are prepared (48–51% vs 41%).
- The oldest respondents (aged 55 or more) tend to hold more favourable opinions on the level of preparedness of **local/regional and national authorities** compared to European Union and global level authorities (48% vs 41–42%). Those aged 15–39 tend to think **national, European Union and global level authorities** are more prepared than local/regional ones (51–54% vs 45% among 15–24 year olds and 50–52% vs 45% among 25–39 year olds).
- Those who completed full-time education aged 16 or later are more likely than those who ended education aged 15 or younger to think **each** level of authorities tested is prepared. For instance, 47% of those finishing education aged 16 or more say this for global level authorities, compared to 39% of those who left education aged 15 or younger.
- Managers (50%) are the most likely to think **regional or local authorities** are prepared, particularly when compared to the unemployed (38%) and house persons (39%). Managers (52%) are also the most likely, together with students (52%) and other white collars (51%), to say **national authorities** are prepared, while house persons (42%) and the unemployed (43%) are once again the least likely to say this. Students (52%) are the most likely to think **European Union authorities** are prepared and, after white-collar workers (51%), they (50%) are also the most likely to say this for **global level authorities**. Conversely, the retired and house persons are the least likely to consider both these levels of authority as prepared to respond to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change (41–42% and 39–42%, respectively).

III. PREFERRED INFORMATION SOURCES

This final section reports EU citizens’ preferences when it comes to the sources of information about EU civil protection and response to disasters¹⁵.

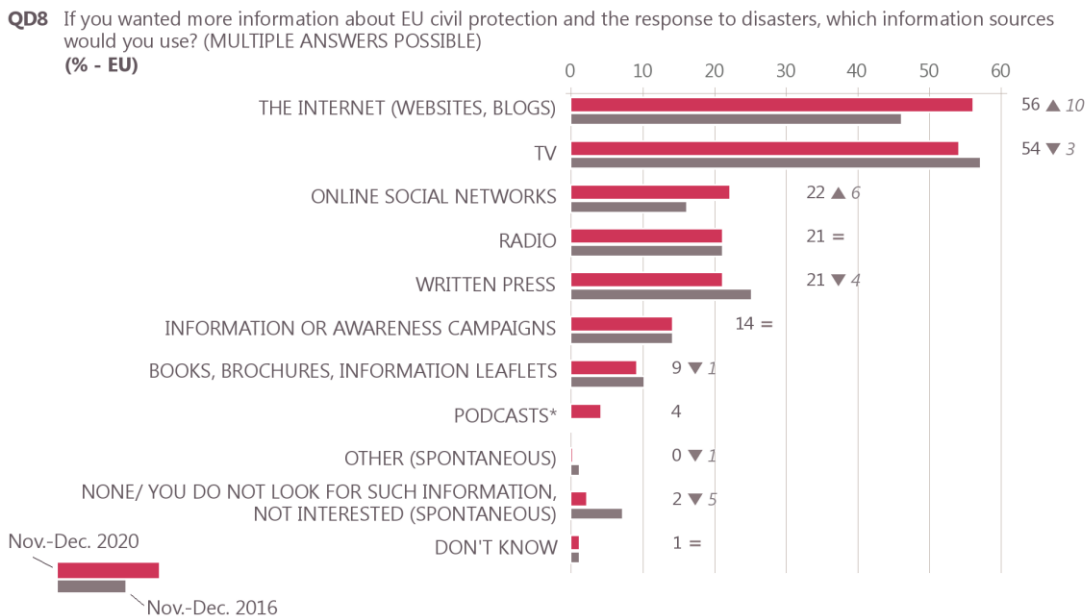
The Internet and TV are the most used sources of information regarding EU civil protection and the response to disasters

The Internet (websites, blogs) (56%) and TV (54%) are the two most mentioned sources of information about EU civil protection. More than one in five respondents say they would use **online social networks** (22%), the **radio** and the **written press** (both 21%), followed by **information or awareness campaigns** (14%). Around one in ten would use **books, brochures, information leaflets** (9%), while around one in twenty cite **podcasts** (4%) to get information on EU civil protection.

Only 2% of respondents *spontaneously* mention none of the above mentioned information sources, state that they do not look for such information or they are not interested, while 1% say they don’t know.

This question was also asked in the 2015 and 2016 surveys, albeit with a slightly different wording¹⁶. The share of respondents citing the Internet has increased by ten percentage points since December 2016, making it, for the first time, the most mentioned source of information about EU civil protection. The proportion mentioning online social networks has also increased over the same period (+6 pp)¹⁷.

Conversely, respondents are now less likely to mention the written press (-4 pp) and TV (-3 pp) than they were four years ago. Preference for other information sources remains broadly stable.



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

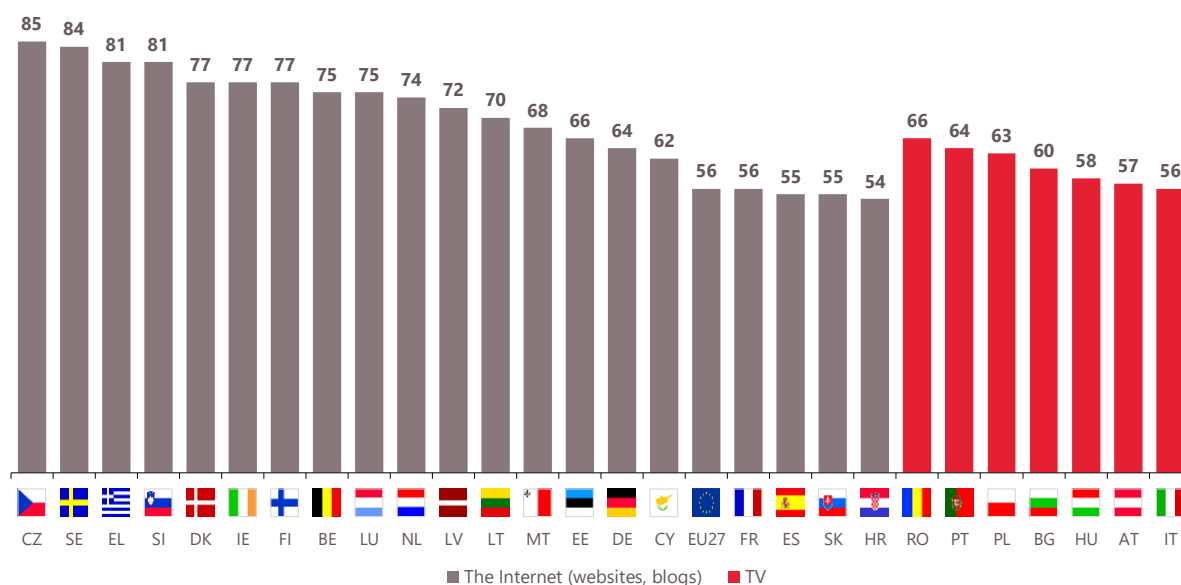
¹⁵ QD8 If you wanted more information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters, which information sources would you use? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) The Internet (websites, blogs); Online social networks; Books, brochures, information leaflets; Written press; Radio; Podcasts; TV; Information or awareness campaigns; Other (SPONTANEOUS); None/you do not look for such information, not interested (SPONTANEOUS); DK.

¹⁶ In the Special Eurobarometer surveys 433 (March 2015) and 454 (November–December 2016), the question was phrased as follows: “If you wanted information about EU civil protection policy, which information sources would you prefer?”; “Podcasts” was not among the suggested answers in the previous surveys.

¹⁷ This answer was worded as “online social media” in previous surveys.

The **country analysis** shows that in 20 Member States respondents are most likely to mention the Internet (website, blogs) as their main source of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters, while TV is the most mentioned source in seven countries.

QD8 If you wanted more information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters, which information sources would you use? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
 (% - THE MOST MENTIONED ANSWER BY COUNTRY)



Base: all respondents (n=27,213)

In 20 Member States, more than half of the respondents say they would use **the Internet (websites, blogs)** if they wanted more information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters, with more than eight in ten answering this way in Czechia (85%), Sweden (84%), Greece and Slovenia (both 81%). At the opposite end of the scale, respondents in Romania (22%), Bulgaria (35%) and Austria (41%) are the least likely to mention the Internet.

At least half of respondents in 15 countries mention **TV** as their source of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters. The highest shares of respondents saying this are recorded in the Netherlands (71%), Romania (66%) and Portugal (64%), while, at the opposite end of the scale, the lowest proportions are found in Ireland, Sweden (both 33%) and Luxembourg (35%).

In 12 countries, more than one quarter say they would use **online social networks** as their source of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters. Respondents are most likely to mention this in Greece (47%), Cyprus and Malta (both 45%). At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest proportions answering this way can be observed in Sweden, Finland (both 12%), and Italy (17%).

In 25 EU Member States, respondents are more likely than they were in 2016 to say they would use **the Internet (websites, blogs)** if they wanted more information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters. This proportion has increased by at least ten percentage points in 23 countries, and most notably in Greece (+35 percentage points), Czechia (+34 pp) and Slovenia (+32 pp). Romania is the only country where this share has decreased (-6 pp), while results are stable in Poland.

Conversely, the proportion mentioning **TV** has decreased in 21 Member States in total, and by at least ten percentage points in 11 countries. The largest decreases are observed in Malta (-24 pp), Greece (-22 pp), Belgium and Portugal (both -15 pp). However, this proportion has consistently increased in the Netherlands (+18 pp), followed by Estonia and Cyprus (both +7 pp).

In 21 countries, respondents are more likely than they were in December 2016 to mention **online social networks**. This proportion has increased by more than ten percentage points in nine countries, most notably in Greece (+25 pp), Estonia and Slovakia (both +17 pp). Conversely, this share has decreased the most in Denmark (-8 pp), Finland and Sweden (both -7 pp).

The **socio-demographic analysis** reveals the following differences:

- Men are more likely than women to say they would use **the Internet (websites, blogs)** if they wanted more information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters (58% vs 53%);
- Respondents aged 15-54 are more likely than those aged 55 or more to mention **the Internet** (62-69% vs 41%). The younger the respondents, the more likely they are to say they would use **online social networks** (42% of those aged 15-24 vs 12% of those aged 55 or more) or **podcasts** (9% vs 2%). The opposite is true for more traditional information sources – the older the respondents, the more likely they are to mention **TV** (68% of those aged 55 or more vs 39% of those aged 15-24) or the **radio** (28% vs 12%). In addition, the oldest respondents (aged 55 or more) are the most likely to cite the **written press** (29% vs 13-18% among younger respondents);
- The longer respondents remained in full-time education, the more likely they are to mention **the Internet** (72% of those finishing education aged 20 or more vs 21% of those who left aged 15 or less) or **information or awareness campaigns** (17% vs 8%), while the reverse is true for **TV** (46% vs 69%). Those who completed education aged 20 or more are also the most likely to say they would use the **written press** (25% vs 18-19% of those who finished education aged 19 or less) or **books, brochures, information leaflets** (13% vs 5-7%) as the source of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters. Lastly, those with the lowest level of education are the least likely to mention **online social networks** (10% vs 21-23% of those ending education aged 16 or more) and the **radio** (18% vs 22-23%);
- The patterns observed by socio-professional categories largely reflect those already detected in terms of age of the respondents. Managers and students (both 74%) are the most likely to say they would use **the Internet** (compared to 36-68% among other professional categories), and students are also the most likely to mention **online social networks** (41% vs 10-26%) or **podcasts** (9% vs 2-6%). Conversely, the retired are the most likely to mention **TV** (71% vs 37-63%), the **written press** (31% vs 13-25%) or the **radio** (30% vs 11-22%). Managers and students (both 13%) are also the most likely to mention **books, brochures, information leaflets** (compared to 6-11% among other categories) as the preferred source of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters.

CONCLUSION

This Special Eurobarometer survey has explored EU citizens' awareness of and attitudes towards EU civil protection and the response to disasters. Overall, the results show that citizens are aware of EU civil protection activities and hold positive opinions on the EU's role in coordinating the response to disasters and crises in Europe.

A majority are aware that the EU helps coordinate the response to disasters and, among these respondents, more than nine in ten are also aware that their country participates in this effort. However, levels of awareness of the EU's role in coordinating the response to disasters vary widely across countries, from more than eight in ten respondents in Sweden to less than three in ten in Estonia. Awareness of the risk of disasters (excluding pandemics) in EU citizens' regions is high, with almost two thirds saying they are aware of the risk – an increase by nine percentage points since 2015.

An overwhelming majority of respondents think that the EU's role in coordinating the response to disasters is important, with little difference in attitudes across Member States. Respondents throughout the European Union show also a strong sense of solidarity towards other EU countries and expect solidarity in return in the event of a disaster. Indeed, more than nine in ten agree their country should help when a disaster hits other Member States, and an equal proportion agree other Member States should provide assistance to their country should a disaster occur, with majorities in total agreement with both statements.

More than half agree that, looking back at the coronavirus crisis so far, coordinated EU action has helped their country respond more effectively to the pandemic. Nonetheless, although majorities hold this view in most Member States, levels of agreement vary greatly, from around three quarters of respondents or more in Croatia, Cyprus and Portugal, to less than four in ten in the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Czechia. Despite these differences, more than eight in ten respondents across the EU as a whole and more than seven in ten in all countries agree that coordinated EU action should be increased to deal more effectively with crises and disasters in the future.

Regarding the level of preparedness of public authorities in responding to the increase in natural hazards resulting from climate change, the respondents' perceptions are somewhat mixed. While around half of the respondents believe national, European Union and global level authorities are prepared, more than four in ten still think each of these authorities is not prepared to respond to such disasters, and opinions are divided on the level of preparedness of regional or local authorities.

When it comes to respondents' preferences for sources of information about EU civil protection and the response to disasters, the Internet and TV remain by far the most mentioned sources, followed by online social networks, radio and written press. Compared to 2016, the shares of respondents relying on the Internet and online social networks to source information on EU civil protection have increased. Unsurprisingly, media habits vary depending on the age of the respondents, with younger respondents more likely to use the Internet or online social networks and older respondents relying more on traditional media, such as TV, radio or written press.

Finally, differences in awareness and attitudes emerge, depending on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Generally speaking, respondents with a higher level of education and with the least financial difficulties tend to be more aware of the EU's role in coordinating the response to disasters, their country's participation in this effort and the risk of disaster in their region. These respondents are also more likely to believe the EU's coordinating role is important and to show solidarity towards (and expect it from) other EU Member States. This is also the case for those having a positive image of the EU, who tend to be more aware and are more likely to be supportive of the role played by the EU in the area of civil protection and response to disasters and crises.

