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## European Aid to Foreign Countries in Emergencies - Are ECHO and the EU Large-Donor Countries on the Same Track?

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**Abstract:** *The paper\*\* analyses financial aid given by the richest countries of the European Union and by ECHO (European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department) to six geographical groups of countries. It aims at advancing existing knowledge about the relevance of enabling conditions and the importance of general interest and self-interest to emergency aid. In political science, explanation focuses on economic power and political interest as, respectively, the enabling condition and the contingent reason for aid. The paper analyses the ECHO/EDRIS dataset which weakly supports the enabling conditions explanation and disconfirms the geopolitical interest explanation. The large similarity of the data of the emergency aid policies of the most rich EU MSs requests further study about the EU countries' preference for funding assistance directly to a larger extent than through the EU's programs, and about keeping foreign assistance as shared competence in the EU system.*

**Keywords:** *European emergency policies; foreign aid; disaster assistance; new security issues; EDRIS dataset*

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National policy-makers and international organization officers are increasingly asked to respond to non-traditional security threats, and to deliver policies and programmes towards the problems created by ever more frequent and numerous disaster events. Natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and volcano eruptions of big magnitude, human-made catastrophes like genocides and mass atrocities, major accidents in nuclear and chemical plants, and the breakdowns of critical infrastructures, rank high on the list of the pressing causes of today's security problems to meet with effective policy responses. Although not all natural and human-made disasters put security at risk and turn into emergencies but those of size and scope overwhelming the response capabilities of

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the authorities and societies of the affected countries, the emergencies created by those disasters cause high social instability in the event-afflicted countries and drop damages into the nearby area and distant areas as well. Additionally, the disaster effects last for long where appropriate programs are not available, including programs organized with the important contribution of foreign countries, international organizations and non-governmental groups. Few states have large resources and advanced capabilities to provide efficacious policies of response but they and all the other states benefit from international cooperation to overcome serious emergencies. Since the effect of serious emergencies spreads from the disaster event area to distant areas, especially the governments of the advanced states, like the European ones, are willing to assist the countries affected by a disaster and provide them with post-event aid. Additionally, they are willing to offer aid for disaster preparedness and prevention programs to the states, especially the less developed ones that are placed in disaster-prone areas and live in persistent emergency conditions.

An *emergency* occurs when an event or a series of events causes serious human, material, economic and environmental damages and losses to a society which is unable with its own means and resources to reduce the negative consequences of the damages and losses. Social sciences like anthropology and sociology have been studying the consequences of emergencies and natural disasters for long in the past, and keep being interested in this area (see, for example, Benadusi, Brambilla and Riccio, 2011; Nix-Stenvenson, 2013). The study of the emergency response policies is gaining momentum also in political science and EU studies (see Ansell, Boin and Keller, 2010; Attinà, 2012; Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard, 2013; Boin, Busuioc and Groenleer, 2013; Clapton, 2011; Ekengren *et al.*, 2006; Goldin and Vogel, 2010). Yet, emergency policies as the object of a new area of study lack a consensual definition. In a recent paper (Attinà, 2013), four areas of response have been distinguished as the object of this field of study, namely policies towards responding to (1) disasters caused by large-scale human violence, and to anthropogenic threats involving human intent, negligence, or error causing huge sufferance and loss of life and property (*man-made disasters*); (2) the condition of the large majority of the population of a country which has little or no means of living such as food, shelter, clothes, healthcare, and education (*poverty*); (3) floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, droughts, wildfire, and other geologic processes causing huge sufferance and loss of life and property (*natural disasters*); and (4) the instability and potential/eventual break down of a socio-political system caused by a chain of critical events (*systemic risks*). The problems caused by such emergencies have many aspects in common and the response policies of the states and international organizations have to deal with the same range of actions and measures to relieve the victims, defend political order and security, rebuild the infrastructures, re-launch the local economy, and improve the state administration.

International cooperation when disasters and emergencies blow up is something well-known to the experts but fairly understudied by international relations and political scientists. The present study is about the aid of the European Union (EU) and the EU Member States (MSs) to countries in emergency conditions in order to shed light also on the reasons why foreign aid continues to be a shared or concurrent policy sector in

the European Union. In the first section, the determinants of aid to emergency-affected foreign countries are examined in the general terms, and the enabling conditions and political interests of the states to give emergency aid are shortly discussed. The second section deals with the EU's and member states' policies towards foreign countries' emergencies in order to shed light over the determinants of their policies in order to test empirically whether the EU and the member states allocate aid to different regions of the world with different approaches. In the following sections, EDRIS, the ECHO dataset on humanitarian and disaster aid, is presented and its data are analysed. This analysis demonstrates that, despite some country peculiarities, the EU's and the Member States' emergency aid policies aren't different from one another. This fact raises doubts about aid policy in the present European Union system as a shared policy sector. In the concluding section, preserving the function of foreign aid as instrument of national foreign policy in order to promote the access of the national stakeholders to foreign markets is proposed as explanation of the member states' preference for keeping foreign aid in the state of shared policy of the EU system.

### **The issue: aid, enabling conditions and political interest**

Knowledge about the determinants of foreign aid is available in the scientific literature that has been produced for long-time by economists, sociologists and political scientists but the present analysis is placed within the research made by the scholars of the political science and international relations discipline. In this scholarship, explanation has pointed mainly to economic power as the enabling condition and to political interest as the contingent reason for foreign aid. Recently, scholars have called also to culture to explain the approach of the states towards foreign aid. Assistance is given to foreign countries if the country's culture comprises consistent traits of solidarism and humanitarianism. In a democracy the state government needs the citizens' support to allocate national resources to foreign people's needs. This support depends on the cultural constitution of the domestic society. The qualitative (culture studies) and quantitative (opinion surveys) analysis of a society reveals whether the national culture is favourable to unselfish offering of own resources (solidarism) for the neutral, autonomous and impartial aid (humanitarianism) to others, i.e. the individuals and groups of a foreign community. Knowledge about civil society actors like churches, NGOs, and social movements, and about the national media is important to study because the former play the crucial role of the mobilizer of social support, and the latter influence the society support by diffusing or, on the opposite, concealing relevant news and, consequently, raise or refrain from raising pressure on the policy-makers to give aid (Balabanova, 2010). Lastly, knowledge about the recent history of the state assistance to foreign countries, i.e. the record of governmental aid to emergency and disaster affected foreign countries, is helpful to generate knowledge about the propensity of the state, as distinguished from society, to provide emergency assistance to foreign countries. This knowledge is helpful to know about the relevant attitude of the policy-makers and the political class, and also to know whether the country government is generally able to drive the public administration officials to organize assistance programs and carry them out efficiently. On such a premise, the altruistic and humanitarian culture of a country is enabling condition as much as it is the country's economic strength.

Emergency aid, however, does not overlap entirely with the traditional form of foreign aid, i.e. with assistance to economic take-off and development, but encompasses a wider set of actions towards the recipient states and societies because it deals with a specific set of problems (see, for example, Revet et Langumier, 2013). Generally, emergency assistance is framed within humanitarian and altruistic concerns but how much is given by a state to assist disaster victims and emergency-prone states depends on the assessment of the government of the donor state about two conditions, namely the country's interests and the sustainability of the aid by the domestic society. Two kinds of interest are pursued by the emergency aid donor states, the *general interest* to make the world safe from instability and crises caused by emergencies and disasters, and the *self-interest* to defend the donor's concern in a geo-political region of vital importance. This concern comprises the interest to induce the recipient country to share political values and goals with the donor as well as the interest to access the recipient's economic market, trade and business. However, general interest and self-interest do not exclude each other and may be complementary to one another. On this account, emergency aid does not look very much different from development aid. The domestic sustainability of aid to a foreign country, instead, depends on enabling (permanent/structural) conditions of the donor state which are directly related to emergency response capabilities like solidarity culture, technological strength, and above all the technical capabilities for disaster preparedness and relief. Consequent to the difference in political interests and domestic sustainability, the states cultivate different approaches towards giving assistance in case of disasters and emergencies in foreign countries.

### **The question: Is the EU's and Member States' aid driven by political interest?**

The study of the assistance the European Union Member States give to emergency-affected and disaster-prone countries fits well into the objective of dissecting the issue at stake because the EU Member States have the opportunity of financing bilateral and collective assistance at the same time, i.e. the opportunity of making direct donations to a foreign country as well as the opportunity of making indirect donations via the EU's budget allocation to assistance programs. Foreign aid is shared competence of the Union and the member states, consequently by giving direct aid the governments of the EU states will use the national resources either to complement and strengthen the EU's aid objectives which are defined by the Commission or, on the opposite, promote political goals which are different from those pursued by the European Union. Scholars, however, remark that the strong states of the EU are able to influence the European Union decisions on aid to an extent not at hand to the states of other international organizations (see, for instance, Schneider and Tobin, 2013). In such a view, the strong EU states buttress their own political objectives by deciding on, and influencing, the EU assistance programs. Studies about the European Community aid programs up to the '90s (like Tsoutsoplides, 1991; and Zanger, 2000) explained the influence of strong states like France and the United Kingdom on the Community aid programs with the interest of these countries to make the common programs instrumental to the objective of keeping alive important relations with the former colonies. But many things have changed since that time and a

few remarks are in order to distinguish the present nature of the foreign aid policy of the European Union from that of the member states. These remarks briefly distinguish the economic, political, budgetary and institutional conditions that determine the foreign aid allocation of the EU and of the MSs.

The foreign aid of the European Union is economically determined in the broad sense that it depends on the economic wealth of the Union and the MSs. It is politically driven in the sense that aid is one of the primary goals of the European Union foreign policy, mentioned in all the fundamental documents and EU treaties. It is budgetary determined in the sense that the allocation of funds to foreign aid is decided by the Council and the Parliament by means of the multi-annual budget agreement, i.e. irrespective of the short term change of the Union' countries economy. Lastly, it is institutionally determined in the sense that it is administered under the control of the Commission through the ECHO Department. This Department defines the goals and actions of the EU's foreign assistance policy according to definite values and instruments (see, for example, the Commission communication to the other EU institutions, published in November 2011, titled *Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change*, Com (2011) 637). The declared values are the universally known humanitarian principles, namely impartiality (no matter which society and community the victims belong to), proportionality (the most in need, weak and vulnerable human beings must be aided first) and neutrality (no backing a party in conflict with others in case aid is given to groups at war and to divided communities). The instruments are those created by ECHO like the GNA (Global Needs Assessment) index and the FCA (Forgotten Crises Assessment) index to drive its own action in agreement with the humanitarian principles.

The MSs funding of foreign assistance depends on economic, political, budgetary, and institutional conditions as well but not in the same sense as the EU foreign assistance funding. Generally, the level of the economic wealth of the country influences the size of the aid offered to foreign countries by the single member state but the data reviewed hereafter warn about conceiving such influence as the strict connection of wealth to aid. Politically, the foreign aid policy of the state is conditioned by the existing political relations of the state with distinct states and areas and by the short-time political objectives of the government parties, in other terms by the priorities of the state foreign policy in relation to domestic political competition. Budgetary foreign aid fund allocation is reviewed every year, rather than on multiannual base like in the EU, in line with the conditions of the national economy, the national budget provisions, and the allocation of budgetary resources to other international and domestic programs. Institutionally, the foreign aid national agencies, namely the foreign affairs and civil protection ministries, are under the control of the government but have also routine relations with foreign countries and special relations with internal and external stakeholders.

Briefly, the ECHO's assistance funds are less dependent than the MSs' funds on budgetary fluctuations and short-term political conditions, and are protected from political fluctuations by the specific EU institutional features. As demonstrated hereafter, the different course of the aid funds of the EU and the MSs, i.e. the EU's steadily growing course and the MSs' discontinuous course after 2008, the year the last financial crisis

started (see Figure 3 hereafter), reminds us that the foreign assistance of the states has been influenced by the current financial crisis but the EU's foreign assistance continued to grow because it profits from the budgetary and institutional conditions of the present European Union setting.

On such premises, since the most rich European Union countries share the economic conditions that enable them to act individually in the assistance field, the comparative analysis of the assistance given by the member countries and by the European Union suits well the objective of shedding light on whether contingent reasons like the short-term political interest of the country shape the approach to emergency- and disaster-affected country assistance as determined by the enabling conditions of the donor country.

If enabling conditions rather/more than political goals make the EU MSs able to aid foreign countries suffering from emergency and disaster events, the direct assistance of the MSs will not be significantly different from the course of the EU's assistance. Consequently, it is to assume that what matters is the need of the recipients. In such a view, allocating national and joint aid to the same recipients is also enhanced by the positive reception of the donor country citizens because that aid is positively assessed by the citizens as it is internationally legitimised.

On the contrary, if contingent political interests are the primary motivation of the EU MSs' assistance, the direct assistance they give to distinct countries and areas will be different from the EU's assistance approach. Although giving aid to countries not aided by the EU would spread European aid to additional recipients and complement the EU's aid programs, the donor country will get supplementary and competitive benefits like political influence and economic market access from the aid it gives to countries not or little assisted by the EU.

### **The EDRIS Dataset**

The present study source of data and information about the foreign assistance given by the richest EU MSs is the EDRIS dataset. Since 1999, the "European Disaster Response Information System" (EDRIS) has been collecting financial data and other information about the aid activities of the Commission/ECHO and the Member States. EDRIS was created after the Member States agreed to inform DG ECHO about the funding for humanitarian aid activities approved by the national government ([Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1257/96](#) concerning humanitarian aid, Article 10). EDRIS records information about:

1. The Cash and In kind Contribution form,
2. The Financial year (1999 on),
3. The Donor (ECHO and the 27 Member Countries),
4. The Recipient country(ies),
5. The Recipient world region(s),

6. The Beneficiary group (Children, Elderly, Handicapped, Multiple beneficiary, Not Specified, Women, Displaced Refugees and Returnees),
7. The Sector (Community services, Coordination, Demining, Disaster Preparedness, Energy, First aid items, Food, Health and Medical, Household products & equipment, Logistics/Technical assistance, Not specified, Nutrition, therapeutic and supp feeding, Protection, Psychological, Rehabilitation, Shelter, Support to special operations, Training, Transport, Water/Sanitation),
8. The Type of Aid (Disaster preparedness, Food aid, Humanitarian aid)
9. The Crisis/Disaster (Cyclone/hurricane/tropical storm, Drought, Flood, Volcano, Conflict, Earthquake, Epidemic, Other),
10. The Date of decision; Project code; Duration; Budgetary source.

Data are recorded by the Member States' Ministries of Foreign Affairs according to the 'HOLIS standard 14 points' format. To ensure co-ordination and the supply of information according to certain standards, in 2002, HOLIS (Humanitarian Office Local Information System) was set up in DG ECHO, and the 'HOLIS 14 points' application was introduced. HOLIS 14 points *is a tool to allow the Member States to record their humanitarian aid contributions, to automate the coordination with OCHA and to provide visibility on humanitarian aid through the Internet*<sup>1</sup>. The definition of what constitutes humanitarian aid is left up to the Member States but in 2003, DG ECHO established "Guidelines" for a harmonized approach to the definition of humanitarian aid. In addition, for reasons of compatibility, the Member States have to distinguish operations corresponding to DG ECHO's mandate as defined in the Council Regulation from "other" operations which correspond to varying definitions and/or practices.

### **Analysis and findings: few geopolitical preferences**

In the time period 1999 to 2012, ECHO and the EU member states donated around € 33 billion to help countries in all the corners of the world to overcome the problems created by different kinds of emergency events and processes. ECHO's donation amounted to € 13,637 million, i.e. 41.5 % of the total European aid. The MSs' donation amounted to € 19,249 millions, i.e. 58.5 % of the total. The figures are the sum of cash and in-kind aid but the latter is an insignificant part of the total aid. The ECHO and Non-ECHO aid programs are implemented either directly by the recipient government or by international organizations, private agencies, and non-governmental organizations. The direct aid by the individual EU states varies in size from a year to the next. Generally it goes up and down. In a few cases, states missed giving aid in a year.

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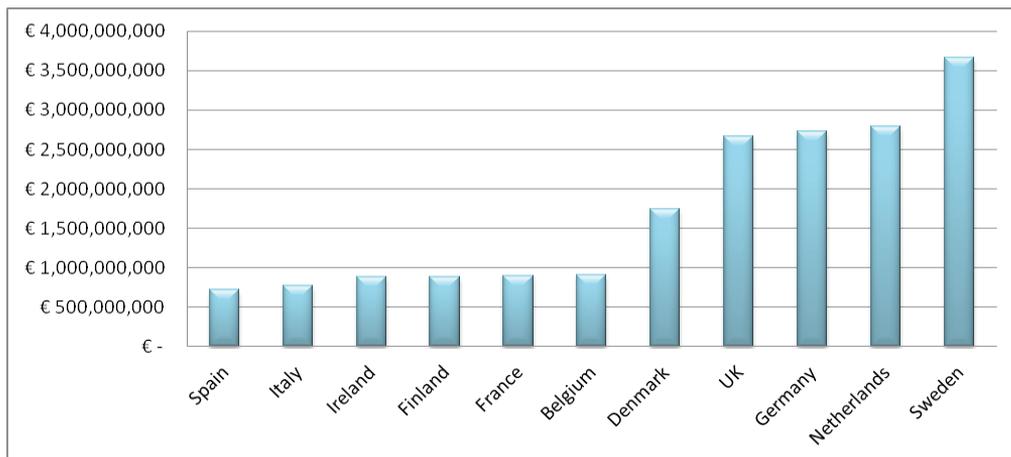
<sup>1</sup> Read more at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/key\\_figures/ms\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/key_figures/ms_en.htm) (June 02 2013)

**The Top Eleven Direct Donor (TEDD) countries**

The present analysis is about the *Top Eleven Direct Donor* (TEDD) EU countries. From the smallest to the largest donor, these countries are Spain, Italy, Ireland, Finland, France, Belgium, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden (see Figure 1). They donated € 18,661 million, i.e. about 97 % of the total € 19,249 million donated by all the EU member states. All the donations of the remaining EU countries, i.e. the Non-TEDD countries, are small in size. The twelfth country, Luxemburg, follows at considerable distance from the smallest donor of the TEDD group.

Two groups of donors are distinguished by counting the aid given by each TEDD country in the 14-year time period. The lower-donor group gathers Spain, Italy, Ireland, Finland, France, and Belgium. All of them gave almost the same amount of funds. The upper-donor group gathers the remaining countries. Denmark is quite back down in the group. The UK, Germany and the Netherlands are on the same level. Sweden is off ahead the others.

**Figure 1 – Top Eleven Direct Donor Countries. Total aid 1999-2012**



The TEDD countries did not enjoy the same economic prosperity over the 14-year period of time but they all belong to the class of the prosperous countries of the world. Generally, large economic resources enable a country to be a large donor but, in our case, the division in two donor groups shows that economic power is not the only factor relevant to foreign aid giving. The same is apparently true about other *material* attributes like the geographical size and demographic range of the country. Ireland and Denmark, geographically and demographically small countries but economically well off in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita, donated significantly less than similarly small-medium size and rich countries like Sweden and the Netherlands. Large and rich states

like Germany and the United Kingdom donated more than other large and rich states like France and Italy (See Table 1).

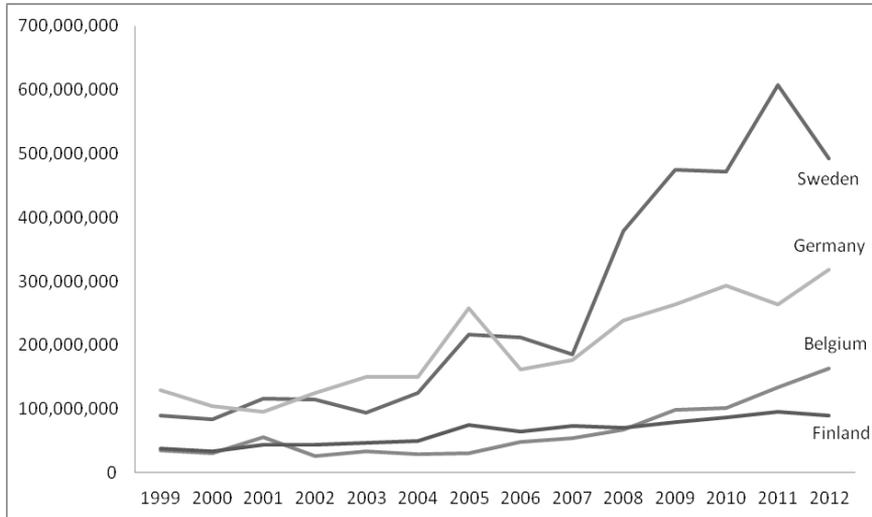
**Table 1 – Aid and average GDP per capita of the TEDD countries in 1999-2012**

	<b>Total aid (a)</b>	<b>% on total TEDD aid</b>	<b>Average aid per year</b>	<b>Average GDP per capita per year (b)</b>
Sweden	€ 3.659.732.105	19,61	€ 261.409.436	€ 33.807 (3)
Netherlands	€ 2.787.524.246	14,94	€ 199.108.875	€ 31.743 (4)
Germany	€ 2.729.323.760	14,63	€ 194.951.697	€ 27.964 (8)
UK	€ 2.667.515.006	14,29	€ 190.536.786	€ 29.050 (7)
Denmark	€ 1.746.623.369	9,36	€ 124.758.812	€ 38.264 (1)
Belgium	€ 908.439.898	4,87	€ 64.888.564	€ 29.221 (6)
France	€ 897.271.133	4,81	€ 64.090.795	€ 27,457 (9)
Finland	€ 889.035.655	4,76	€ 63.502.547	€ 30.524 (5)
Ireland	€ 886.529.586	4,75	€ 63.323.542	€ 35.236 (2)
Italy	€ 772.742.957	4,94	€ 55.195.926	€ 24.136 (10)
Spain	€ 717.232.679	4,14	€ 51.230.906	€ 20.357 (11)
<b>Total TEDD aid</b>	<b>€ 17.944.737.714</b>	<b>100</b>		

Sources: (a) EDRIS, (b) EUROSTAT.

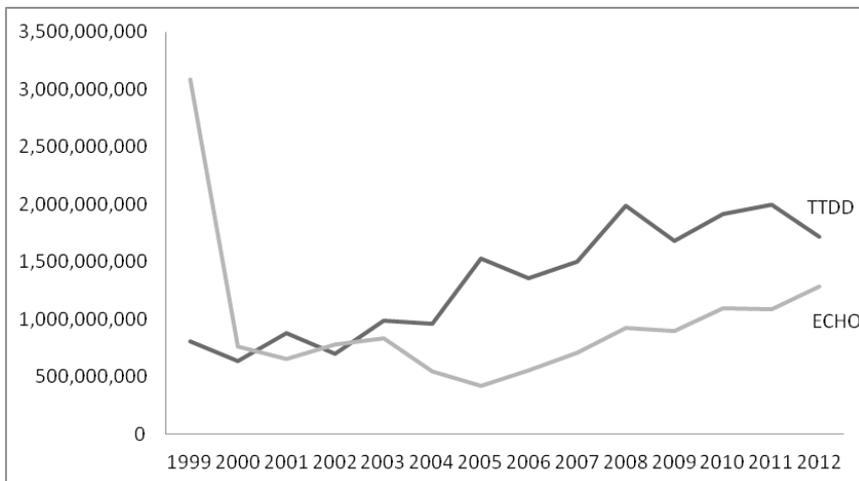
It has been mentioned that the amount of money set for foreign aid by the individual state has not been a stable entity over the 1999-2012 time period but ups and downs normally followed one another in the single year-unit of the period. It is known also that foreign aid is provided episodically, i.e. on the occasion of apparent need such as the occasion of an emergency event. However, in our case, the aid of some states grows over time at a ratio more regular than the growth ratio of the others. The donations given by Sweden, Germany, Belgium and Finland have been growing progressively over time (Figure 2). The seven remaining countries, instead, have been irregular donors over the fourteen-year time period. The reasons for such difference are not examined on this occasion. However, the middle-rank stage in the GDP per capita scale of three 'regular donor' countries, i.e. Germany, Belgium and Finland, further advises to underrate the importance of the national economy to predict the size, persistence and growth of aid. In explicit terms, it is deceptive to expect that the richer the country is the larger and persistent its aid is, and the more it grows yearly. To make a sound prediction about the country inclination to offering assistance it is wise to take on board also other enabling conditions like culture.

**Figure 2 – Regular ‘upward’ donor countries**



On the whole the TEDD countries’ aid funds have been growing in the 14-year period (Figure 3). From time to time, also the six ‘irregular donor’ countries, especially the UK and France, increased the amount of their donation on the previous year donation but the merit of the upward trend of the TEDD-country group belongs to the four ‘regular donor’ countries. Almost 44 % of the total donation of the TEDD countries is made by the ‘regular donor’ countries. Differently from the irregular upward trend of the group of the TEDDs, the EU/ECHO donation has been irregular up to 2005 but steadily regular from 2005 onwards for reasons not analysed on this occasion.

**Figure 3 – State direct donation and ECHO donation trends**



### ***Aid, regions, and interest***

The present section of the analysis aims at checking whether, against humanitarian reasons and complementarities with the ECHO objectives, the TEDD countries' assistance policies are driven by the geopolitical preferences and interests of each one of them. A clarification is in order about geopolitical preferences and interests with regards to the EU and the EU countries. The hard meaning of the term, i.e. enhancing the strategic interest of the state in the global power competition, is discarded here. As Rudloff, Scott and Blew (2013) remark, this is the case, for instance, of the United States foreign aid policy in the past and present world politics. The term here has, instead, the soft meaning of caring about and acting for the stability of an area in order to either establish or keep alive friendship relations with the countries in the area. Accordingly, the assumption of the present analysis is the following one. If foreign aid is tied to political interest, then the countries and regions in need of aid either as victims of disaster events or as emergency-affected countries and regions receive different amounts of emergency aid. They receive large amounts of aid if they are important to the political interest of the donor. The countries scarcely or no important, instead, receive a small aid. In the present analysis of the EU's TEDD countries, this assumption is checked by answering to the question "Do all the TEDD countries and the ECHO have different regional priorities or do they share the same preference(s)?" . Accordingly, two related hypotheses are tested.

H1 - If assistance funds are given to regions by the group of the TEDD countries and by ECHO in different amounts, the political interest of the TEDD countries is distant from the above mentioned EUs declared policy and values.

H2 - If individual TEDD countries give different amounts of assistance to different regions, they have distinct geopolitical interests.

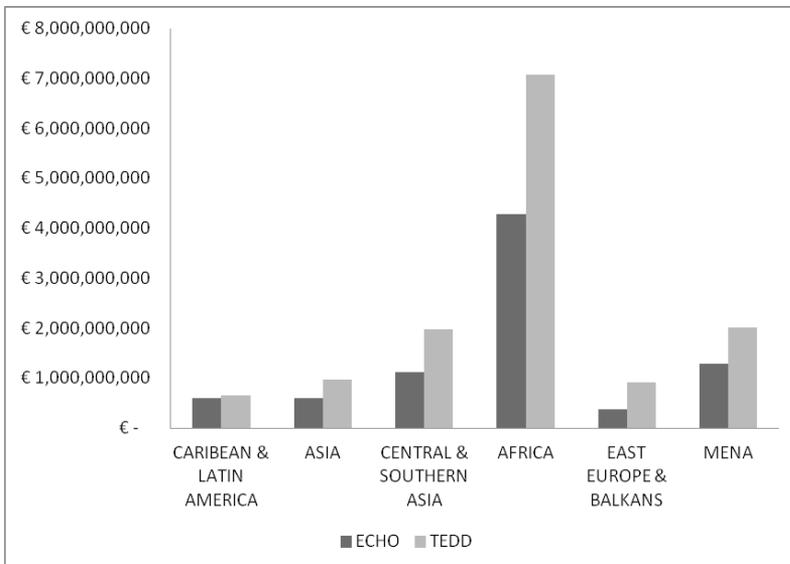
On the present occasion, analysis is made on aggregate data, i.e. at the level of international regions. The analysis of state to state aid will be the object of a later study. Data to recipient countries are aggregated in six geographic groups or regions, namely Africa, Asia, Caribbean & Latin America, Central & Southern Asia, East Europe & Balkans, and MENA (Middle East and North Africa). The region membership is the one adopted by the EDRIS data set (See the region membership list in Appendix).

The size of aid to each region in a year as well as in a time period has two ecological conditions, (1) the number of the region member states and (2) the number of the disaster events in a year as well as the emergency expectation and risk as assessed by the donor country. The larger that number and the more prone to disasters and emergencies the potential recipients are assessed to be, the higher the amount of aid by the donor is. Consequently, the empirical analysis is made by comparing the donor's data region by region and assuming all the donors do the same risk assessment. For the largest number of states and the most serious and frequent emergency problems, Africa is the recipient area with the highest aid amount given by all the TEDD countries but Spain.

*Do TEDD countries and the ECHO have different regional priorities?*

The TEDD group and the ECHO allocate quite the same percentage quotas of aid funds to each of the six regions. The ECHO's percentage is significantly larger than the TEDD's in the case of the East Europe & Balkans region, and smaller in the case of the Caribbean & Latin America region. But the absolute figures of the aid of the TEDD countries and of ECHO to the latter regions are almost the same in size (See Figure 4). This indicates that the TEDD countries either underrate this region emergency and humanitarian needs or prefer to leave it to the care of the EU because they either do not consider it of importance to their political interests or recognize that the EU is better suited to act in the region.

**Figure 4 – TEDD and ECHO aid to six regions**

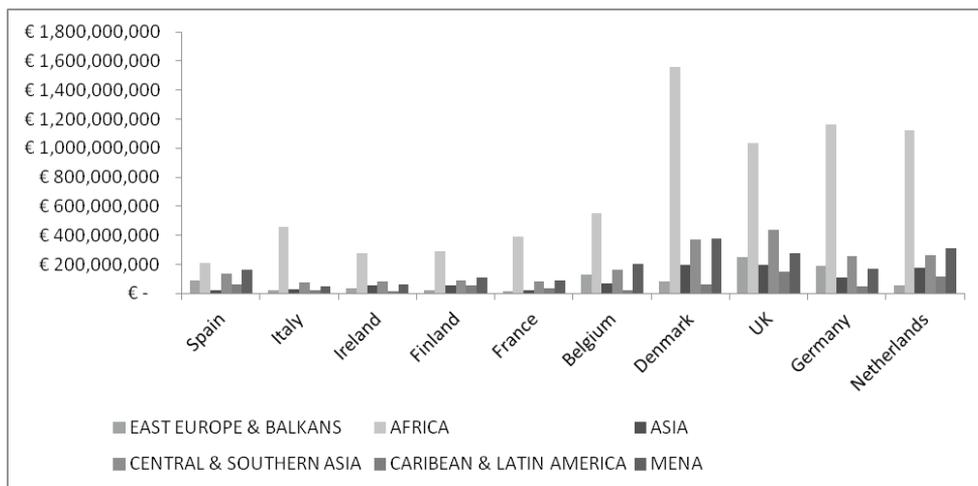


In conclusion, the almost alike allocation of funds to emergency aid by the TEDDs and by ECHO does not support the view of different objectives guiding the policies of the TEDD countries and of the ECHO. One could maintain that these data match with the argument by Schneider and Tobin (2013) about the influence of the MSs on the Commission's programs, and the ability of the MSs to address such programs to their own interests. However, since foreign aid is a concurrent area of competence and action of the EU and the MSs, and the TEDD countries' foreign aid funds exceed their contribution to the ECHO budget, it is worth disaggregating the TEDD group data and checking on the single state's fund allocation to each of the six regions to know whether some states have specific funding policies and, consequently, want to preserve shared competence in order to pursue their own objectives, either geopolitical or of a different kind.

*Do all the TEDD countries share the same region preference?*

The TEDD countries allocate aid funds to each region with few differences from one another (see Figure 5). In general, the countries of the upper-donor group (Denmark, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden) and the countries of the lower-donor group (Spain, Italy, Ireland, Finland, France, and Belgium) at the global level are also in the upper and lower ranking order of the six regions<sup>2</sup>. However, Denmark and the Netherlands, two members of the former group at the global level, are lower donors to the Caribbean & Latin America and Asia regions, and Sweden, the highest donor at the global level, is a lower donor to the East Europe & Balkans region. Italy and Spain, two members of the lower-donor group, are among the upper donors in the Caribbean & Latin America and Asia regions; Italy also in the East Europe & Balkans region; Spain also in the MENA region.

**Figure 5 – Individual TEDD country’s donations to six regions**



Relevant knowledge is provided also by each TEDD country’s aid allocation percentage to distinct regions. The peculiarity of Italy’s and Spain’s allocation to regions come to the surface. Italy’s aid spreads throughout the six regions. Differently from all the other TEDD countries, the highest percentage of Italy’s donation (to Africa) is the lowest of the group, i.e. 31 %, while the second highest percentage of Italy’s aid (to MENA) is the highest second donation to regions in the TEDD group. Consequently, the percentage of the two largest Italy’s donations to regions is the smallest one of the group (Table 2). On this account, one can say that Italy’s aid policy is the most *fair* of all and the least geopolitically biased. On the opposite, Ireland’s approach is assessable as the least *fair* of all as it is geopolitically focused on Africa.

<sup>2</sup> See data and charts at the ReShape Project website <http://www.fscpo.unict.it/europa/JMAP/reshapeprin.htm>

**Table 2 – TEDD countries focus regions**

	Aid to the 1 <sup>st</sup> region (%)	Aid to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> region (%)	Aid to the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> regions (%)
Italy	31 (Africa)	24 (MENA)	55
Germany	44 (Africa)	19 (Cen- & South. Asia)	63
France	47 (Africa)	18 (MENA)	65
Denmark	49 (Africa)	18 (MENA)	67
Finland	53 (Africa)	16 (Cen- & South. Asia)	69
Spain	53 (MENA)	17 (Caribbean & Latin America)	70
Sweden	55 (Africa)	15 (MENA)	70
UK	59 (Africa)	14 (MENA, Cen- & South. Asia)	73
Netherlands	60 (Africa)	13 (Cen- & South. Asia)	73
Belgium	61 (Africa)	14 (MENA)	75
Ireland	70 (Africa)	11 (Cen- & South. Asia)	81

Spain's approach to fund allocation to regions in the time period has been the most distant from the approach of the rest of the group members. Spain allocates funds mostly to the MENA region countries and, secondly, to the traditionally friend countries of the Caribbean and Latin America region. The geopolitical preferences of Spain are clearly different from the rest of the TEDD countries group.

### **Conclusions: keep on with aid as instrument of the national foreign policy**

The approach of the TEDD countries and that of the ECHO to fund allocation to regions for emergency aid are similar to one another. Africa is the first recipient region and either the MENA or Central & Southern Asia regions are the second recipient region of the aid of the TEDD group and of the aid of each country but Spain (see Table 2).

The first rank of the aid to Africa is due to the number of the region member countries and the number of the region emergencies as well as by the EU's and TEDD countries' general interest in protecting the world stability and the coincident self-interest and geopolitical interest of all the TEDD countries but Spain.

The aid to the MENA countries is explained by the geographical proximity to Europe and the interest to contain the political conflicts that ravage the region. However Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and Ireland prefer Central & Southern Asia region, also a natural disaster-prone region, to MENA as the second recipient region.

The EDRIS data do not support the hypothesis of the geopolitical interest of the European donors as the driver of the assistance given by the TEDD countries to countries in need of emergency aid, but Spain is a case worth investigating further on.

In general, in harmony with ECHO, the TEDD countries' emergency aid serves the *general interest* of making the world safe from instability and crises but the aid to the MENA region countries serves also the *self-interest* of the TEDD countries in containing the instability of this nearby area because of the direct effect that the problems of this area have on the European states (see also Ayadi and Gadi, 2013).

The large similarity of the policies of the TEDD countries and of ECHO raises the question of why the big EU countries prefer to keep foreign assistance as shared competence in the EU system and, accordingly, keep on funding assistance directly in a larger amount than through the EU's programs run by ECHO. Since foreign aid is an important instrument of the external action of the contemporary states, the governments of the EU MSs do not want to lose such instrument, and prefer to count on it for their own objectives. In explicit terms, the EU states care about their economic and symbolic interests. Direct foreign aid is an instrument for financing national companies abroad as well as the non-governmental organizations of the donor country, i.e. for giving to domestic groups' access to foreign countries. The symbolic reason is that giving aid directly to foreign countries, rather than through ECHO, is a way for gaining good reputation to the donor country rather than to the EU. Analysis is needed to better understand the European states present policies towards emergency cooperation and their opposition to overcome the pressure to extend the EU's institutions power in emergency aid.

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## **Appendix**

### **Regions and member states**

AFRICA – 39 member states: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Congo Dr, Cote D'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan Republic, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

ASIA – 19 member states: Cambodia, China, East Timor, Fiji, Indonesia, Korea Dpr, Laos, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

CARIBBEAN & LATIN AMERICA – 18 member states: Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru.

CENTRAL & SOUTHERN ASIA – 16 member states: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, Seychelles, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

EAST EUROPE & BALKANS – 19 member states: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM Macedonia, Serbia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine.

MENA (Middle East and North Africa) – 14 member states: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Lybia, Morocco, Palestinian Terr., Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen.