

Research into public support for overseas aid

September 2015

Each year, Dochas commissions research from Ipsos MRBI, to track public support for international development cooperation, or overseas aid.

The figures in this document present the results of a survey undertaken in July 2015, among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 people aged 15 and over. The results of the 2015 survey are presented along the results from similar polls in previous years.

Question 1:

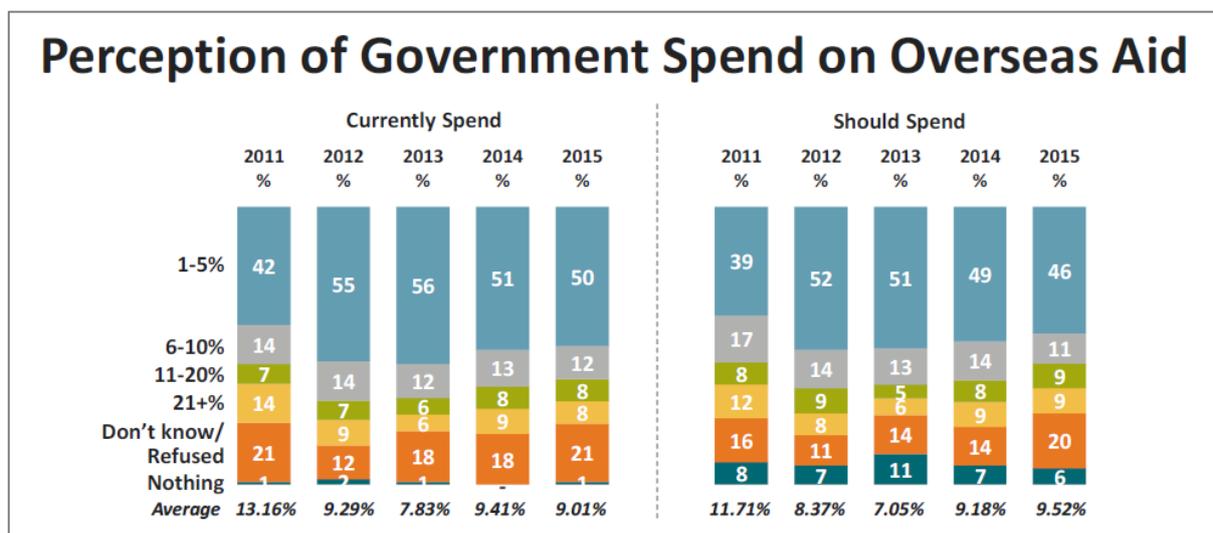
Every year the Irish government spends a proportion of the country's income on overseas aid in some of the poorest countries in the world. What proportion of Ireland's income, in percentage terms, do you think the government spends on overseas aid?

Question 2:

And what proportion of Ireland's income, in percentage terms, do you think the government should spend on overseas aid?

Findings:

- On average, Irish people over-estimate the amount that the Government spends on overseas aid. Respondents to the survey believed it to take up 9% of the national income – some 23 times higher than the actual figure of 0.39%.
- When asked what an appropriate level of spending would be, most people said that what they perceived as the current level of spending was appropriate. On average, people think we should spend 9.5% of national income on overseas aid, when in reality the Irish Government spends 0.39%.
- These answers are roughly in line with previous survey, undertaken annually over the last five years. In 2011 the degree to which people over-estimated the aid budget was even higher, at 13% compared to the real figure that year of 0.5% of GNI.

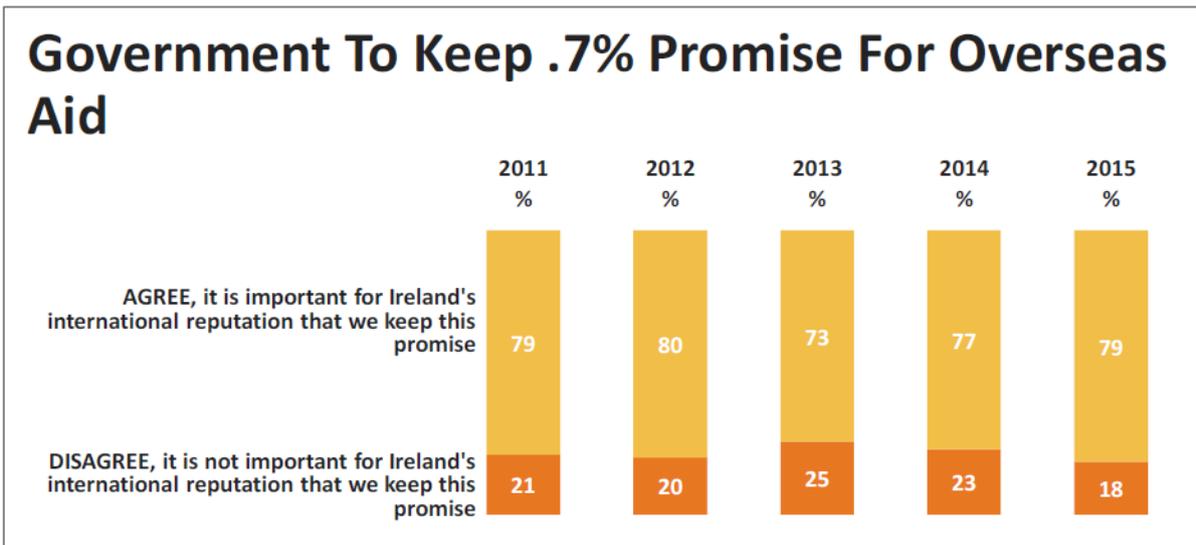


Question 3:

The Government has promised to spend 0.7% of our national income that is 70 cent out of every 100 euro on overseas aid. Do you agree or disagree that it is important for Ireland's international reputation that we keep this promise?

Findings:

- 79% of respondents in this nationally representative group of 1,000 adults agreed with the statement that it is important for Ireland's reputation abroad that we keep our aid promise.
- This number is marginally up from previous years, but broadly in line with previous surveys which all showed a very large majority of people in agreement with the statement.



Question 4:

Ireland is currently going through some difficult economic times. Do you agree or disagree that, even in a down-turn, we have an obligation to invest in overseas aid, and help poor areas of the world to develop the tools they need to provide for themselves?

Findings:

- The survey finds that support, already high in previous years, has gone up marginally, with 79% of respondents agreeing with the statement that Ireland has an obligation to invest in overseas aid.

