

CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

MONITORING REPORT



December 2017 –
January 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the fourth round of the survey conducted by the Charitable Foundation «The Right to Protection» (R2P) at the five entry-exit checkpoints (EECPs) to the non-government-controlled area (NGCA) administered on a regular basis since June 2017. The survey is a part of the monitoring of violations of rights of the conflict-affected population within the framework of the project «Advocacy, Protection and Legal Assistance to the Internally Displaced Population of Ukraine» implemented by R2P with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The purpose of the survey is to explore reasons and concerns of those travelling between the NGCA and the government-controlled area (GCA), as well as the conditions and risks associated with crossing the line of contact through EECPs. The information collected in the survey helps identify needs, gaps and trends, and provides an evidentiary basis for advocacy efforts.

This report is based on data collected during December 2017 – January 2018, which is characterized by the holidays and deteriorating winter weather conditions.



Novotroitske EECP

1 METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a survey of persons crossing the line of contact at the five operating EECPs located in Donetsk (Maiorske, Marinka, Hnutove and Novotroitske) and Luhansk (Stanytsia Luhanska) Oblasts. It should be noted that the survey is not representative of the entire population crossing the checkpoints, but provides trends and tendencies concerning crossing the line of contact.

This round of the survey was carried out from 4 December 2017 to 31 January 2018. The data was collected during regular visits to each of the five specified EECPs on a weekly basis (30 visits in December and 39 in January).

The data collection methodology was the same at all EECPs. R2P monitors surveyed civilians queuing at the EECPs. The survey was conducted anonymously and on a voluntary basis. All persons interviewed for the survey were informed about its purpose. The survey was conducted in the form of personal interviews with people aged 18 and above. The monitors approached every fourth person in line with a request to complete the survey. If a person refused to participate in the survey, monitors proceeded to survey the next fourth person in line.

The monitors reached people waiting to cross the EECPs in the lines for pedestrians and the lines for vehicles¹. People travelling both to and from the GCA took part in the survey. At all EECPs the monitors had no access further than the line of people coming from the NGCA at the Ukrainian checkpoints. At no time did the monitors cross the zero checkpoint into the NGCA.

To get a better understanding of trends and tendencies regarding crossing the line of contact, information from state services (the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine) was used.

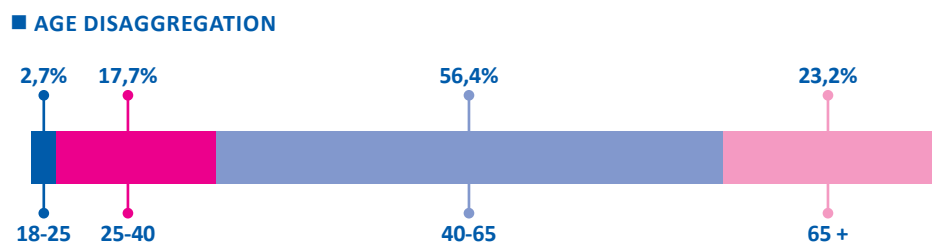


Maiorske EECP

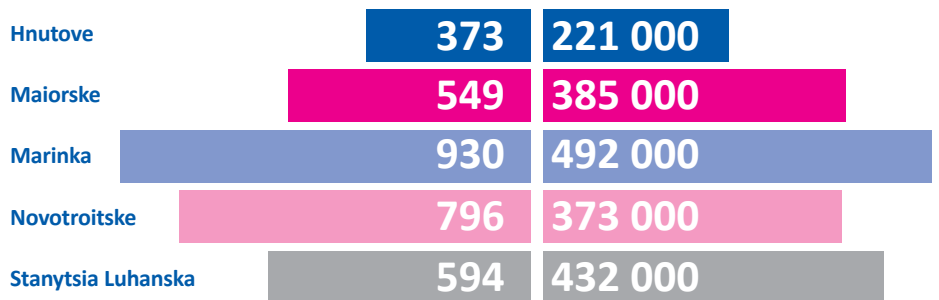
¹ Considering that Stanytsia Luhanska EECP is currently open only for pedestrian crossing, all respondents interviewed at that EECP during the survey were from the pedestrian line. There were some restrictions in access to the vehicle line at Maiorske EECP. Consequently, most respondents interviewed at Maiorske EECP were from the pedestrian line. At the rest of the EECPs, (Hnutove, Marinka and Novotroitske) people from both types of lines were interviewed.

2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

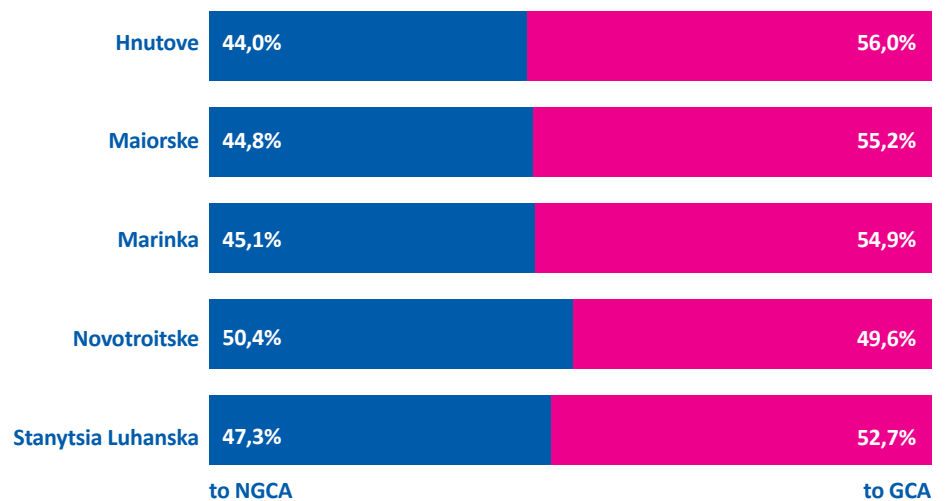
During the reporting period, R2P monitors surveyed a total of **3,242** persons crossing the line of contact. The respondents' demographic profile has been relatively stable in all survey rounds.



■ NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY EECP / TOTAL NUMBER OF CROSSINGS BY EECP²



■ DIRECTION OF CROSSING



The ratio of surveyed individuals is approximately proportionate to the overall number of crossings at each EECP. The majority of respondents (53.4 per cent) were travelling to the GCA. 5.8 per cent of respondents were travelling with children. 2.8 per cent were persons with specific needs.

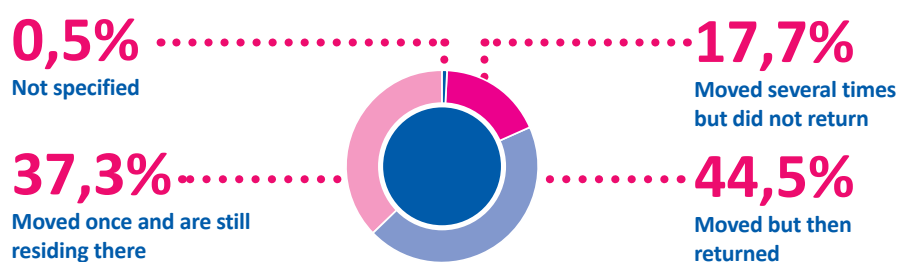
² State Border Guard Service (SBGS) statistics – <http://dpsu.gov.ua/>

3 RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

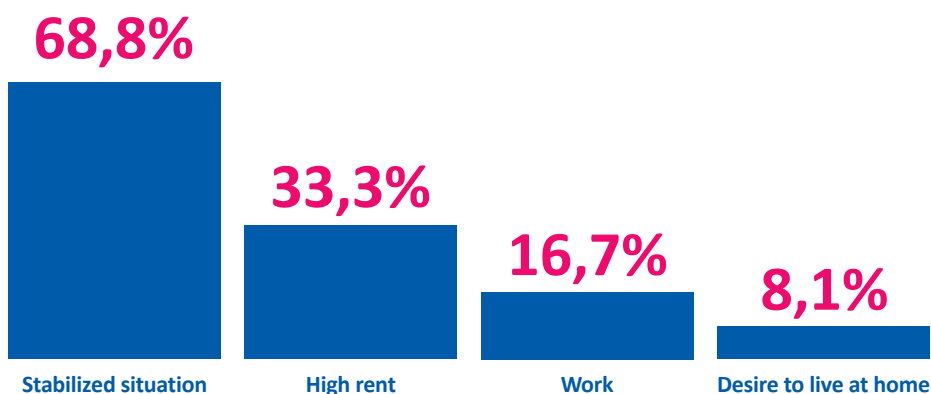
The predominant majority of respondents (94.7 per cent) indicated the NGCA as their place of residence prior to the conflict. It is noteworthy that 89.7 per cent of them stated that they were permanently residing in the NGCA at the time of the survey. Such figures show that GCA residents have far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents.

12.9 per cent of respondents stated that they had changed their place of residence due to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine at least once. Almost half of them (44.5 per cent) ultimately returned to their original place of residence.

DISPLACEMENT



REASONS FOR RETURN



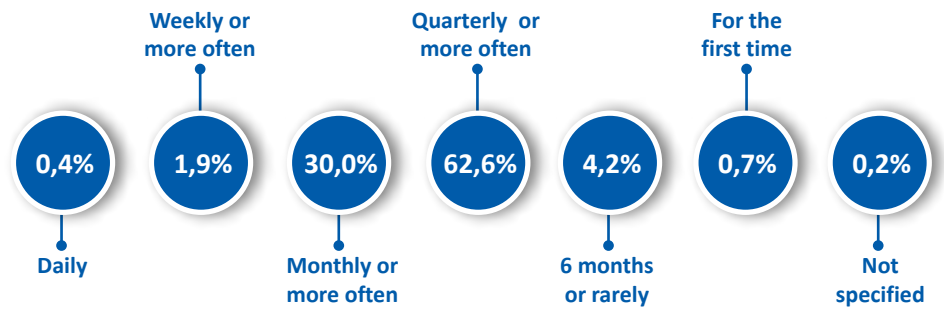
Stabilization of the situation remains the most cited reason for returning to their place of origin (respondents could mention several reasons).

4 FREQUENCY, DURATION AND REASONS FOR CROSSING

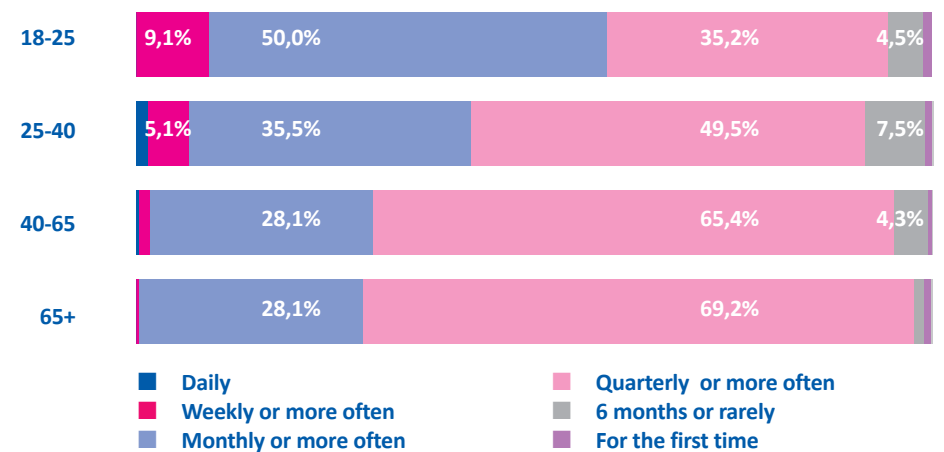
The majority of respondents (62.6 per cent) cross the line of contact quarterly or more. Taking into account the age disaggregation of respondents, such a ratio is most likely related to the requirements imposed by Ukrainian legislation for obtaining pensions and social benefits, such as the verification of actual place of residence and physical identification at Oschadbank.

As for the time spent crossing the line of contact³ previously (all the lines controlled by the Ukrainian and de-facto authorities on the GCA and NGCA sides respectively), the majority of respondents stated that it had taken about 3-4 hours to cross the line of contact.

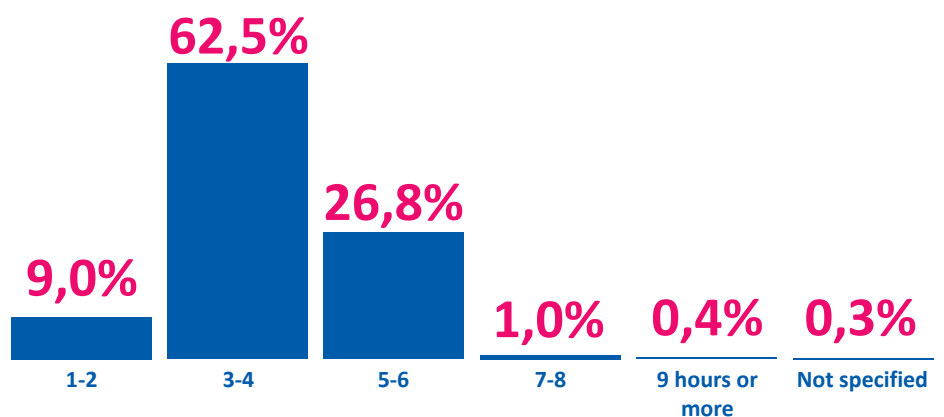
FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



FREQUENCY OF CROSSING BY AGE



DURATION OF PREVIOUS CROSSING

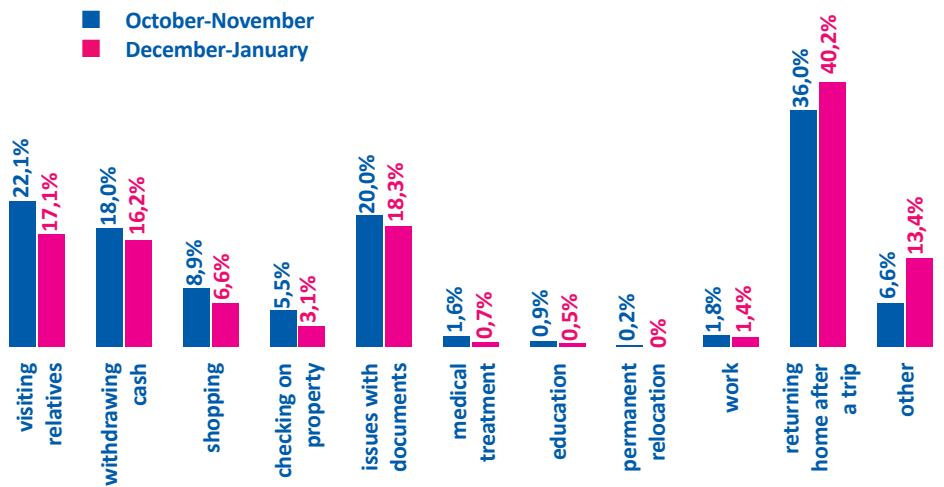


³ The question is related to the previous crossing instead of the current crossing as respondents are surveyed during the crossing process. For this reason, it is impossible to indicate the time spent on the current crossing. Checkpoint disaggregation by duration of crossing is unavailable. As the dates of the mentioned crossings are also unavailable, it is not appropriate to compare answers to this question in the two reporting periods.

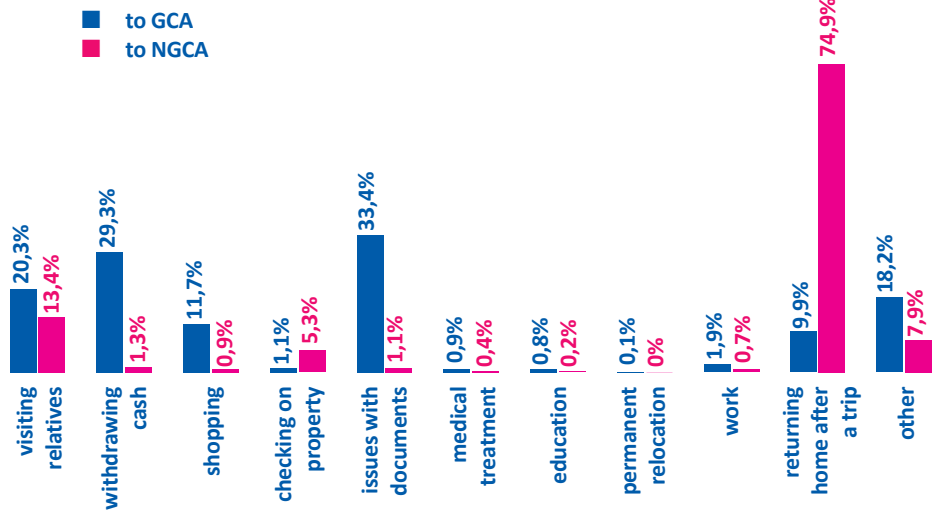
The «Other» option included mostly crossing the LoC so as not to exceed a 60-day absence from the GCA in order to prevent suspension of social and/or pension payments.

The overall tendencies in reasons for crossing based on age are similar to the October-November reporting period.

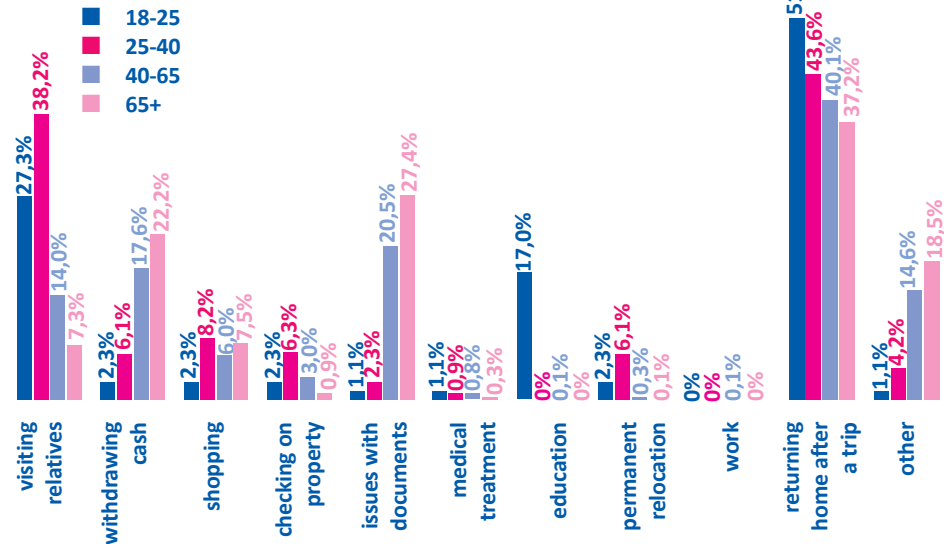
■ REASONS FOR CROSSING⁴



■ REASONS FOR CROSSING BY DIRECTION⁵



■ REASONS FOR CROSSING BY AGE

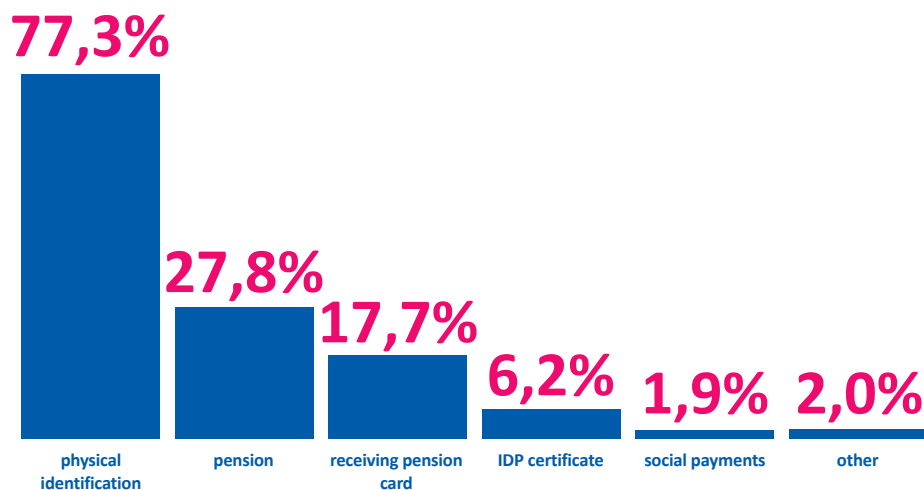


⁴ Respondents could choose several reasons.

⁵ The percentage was calculated related to the total number of persons crossing in one direction – either to the GCA or the NGCA.

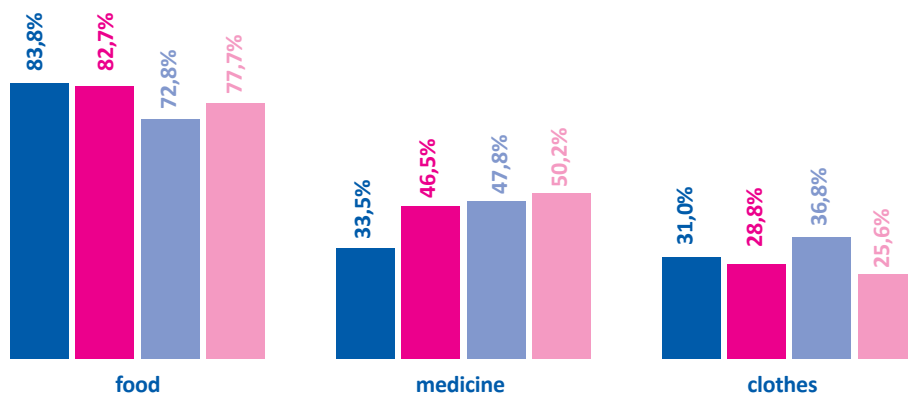
The most common documentation issue was related to physical identification, as well as receipt of pension cards and pension payments. The most frequent answers among «Other» were issues related to passports (to obtain an ID card; to update a passport photo when turning 25 or 45, etc.).

■ TYPE OF DOCUMENTATION ISSUE



■ TYPE OF GOODS PURCHASED

- June-July
- August-September
- October-November
- December-January



5 CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

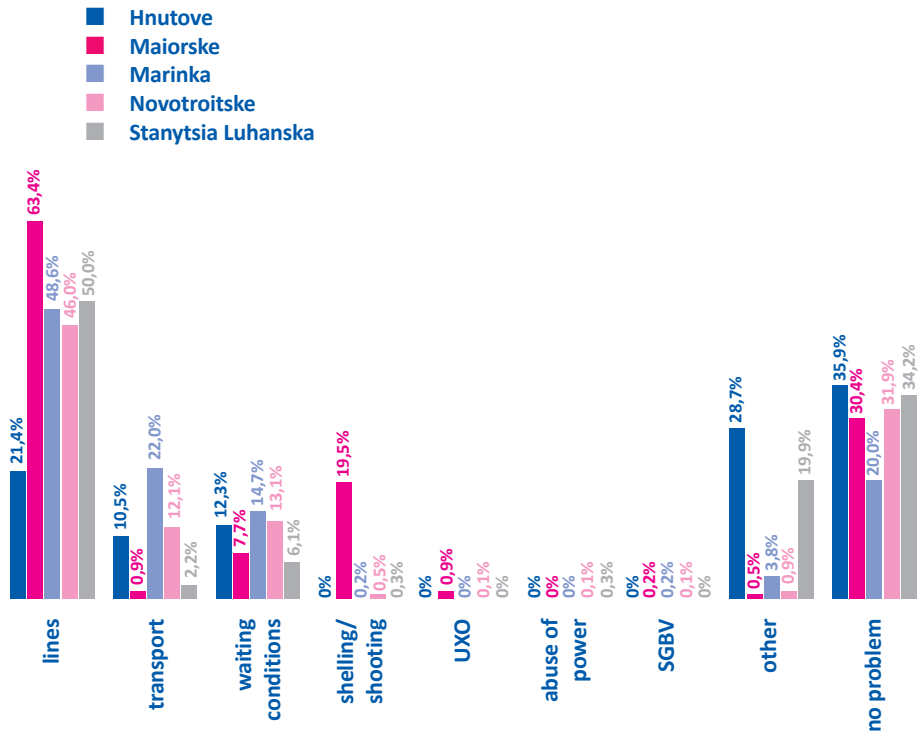
Long lines remain the biggest concern⁶, though the level has decreased significantly at Maiorske and Stanytsia Luhanska EECPs compared to October-November (by over 15 per cent). Similarly, more people at these two checkpoints mentioned no problems (by over 10 per cent).

At the same time, the number of complaints has increased dramatically in the «Other» option at Hnutove EECF (by 18 per cent), and remains high at Stanytsia Luhanska EECF. The majority of complaints under this option are related to the poor condition of roads and the bridge as well as the necessity to walk a long distance.

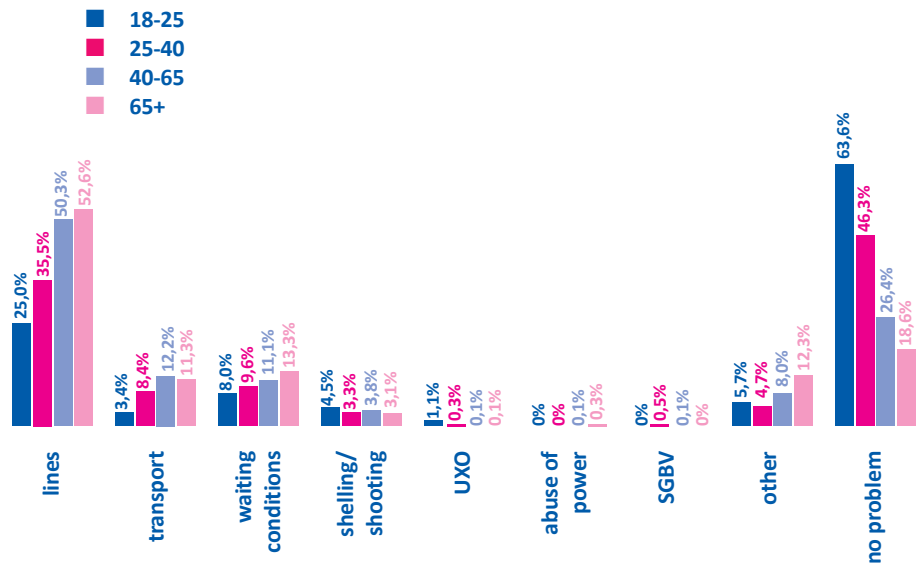
The overall level of concern by age cohort remains almost unchanged. As noted before, the process of crossing the line of contact causes more difficulties for elderly people.

Inadequate waiting conditions still remain one of the biggest issues through all the survey rounds, with shelter being the largest concern. Besides, the proportion of respondents complaining about slippery roads at EECFs and cold weather under the «Other» option increased substantially at Stanytsia Luhanska and Hnutove, and also remains quite high at Maiorske, which indicates insufficient maintenance of the EECF during unfavourable weather conditions.

■ CONCERNS BY CHECKPOINT



■ CONCERNS BY AGE



⁶ Respondents could choose multiple options.

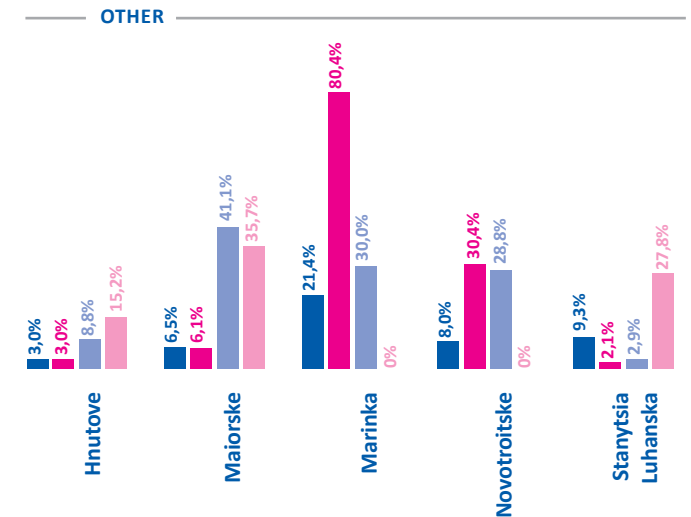
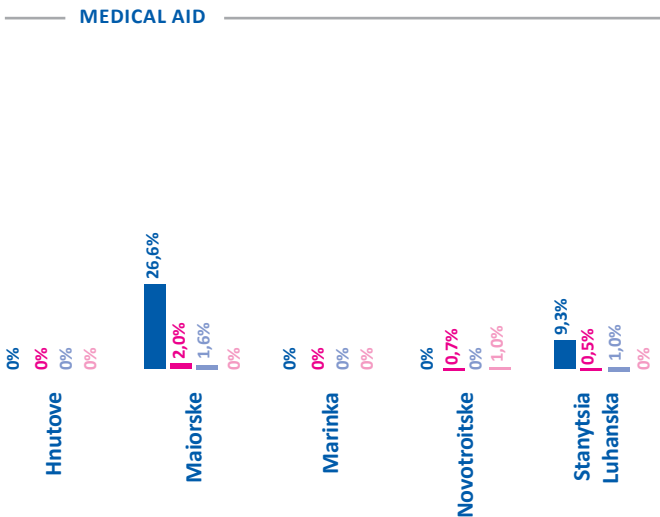
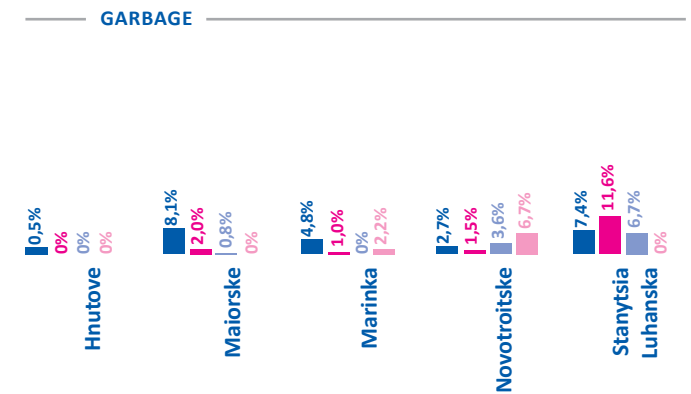
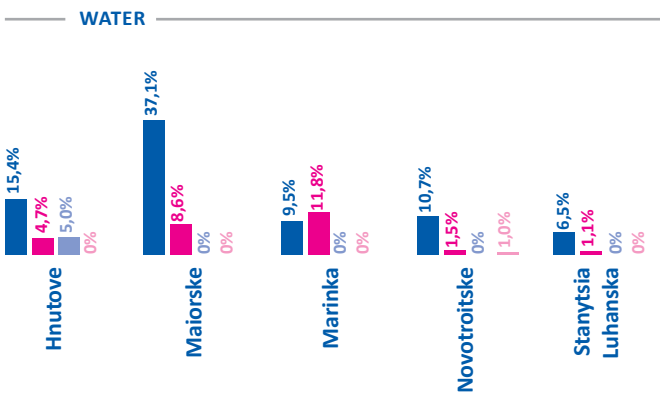
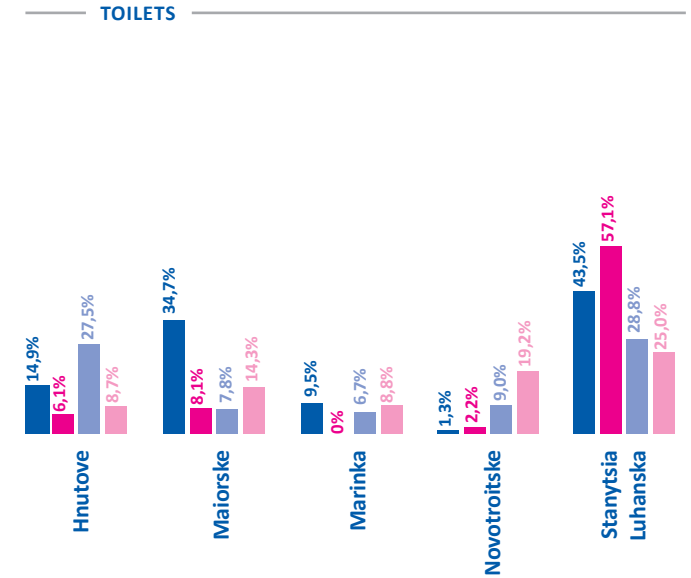
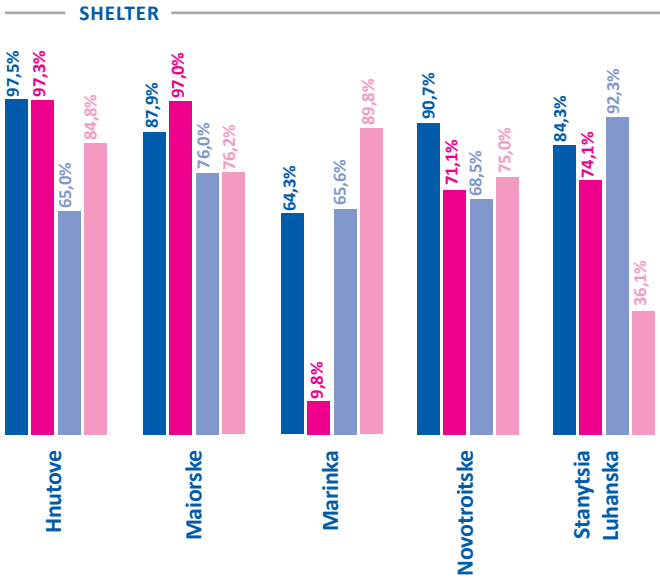
■ WAITING CONDITIONS

■ June-July

■ August-September

■ October-November

■ December-January



6 INABILITY TO CROSS

Four per cent of all respondents mentioned incidents of not being able to cross the line of contact in the past six months. Respondents continued to report database related issues as the most common reason for not being able to cross the line of contact⁷.

■ REASONS FOR INABILITY TO CROSS

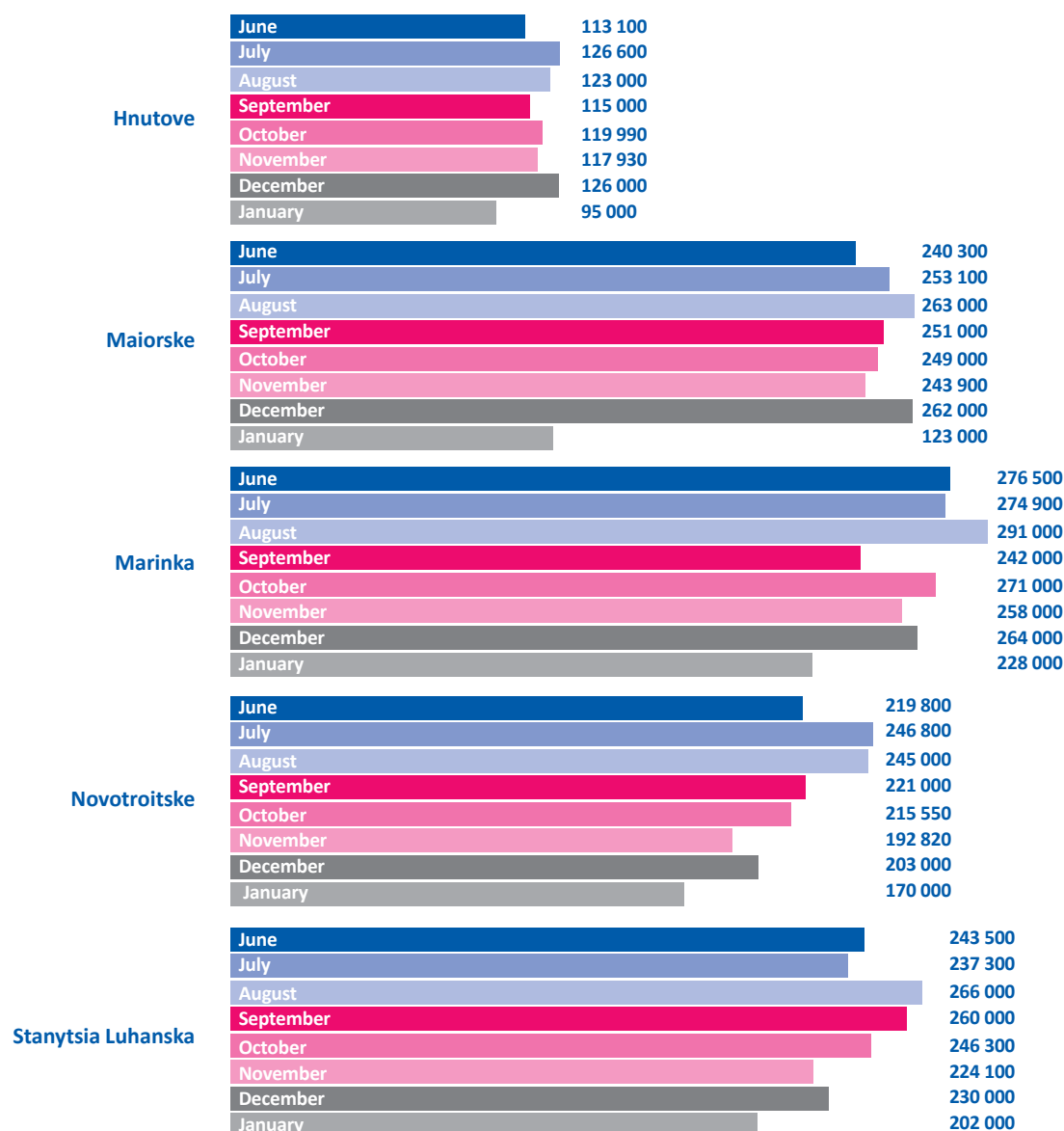


⁷ Respondents could provide several reasons.

ANNEX.

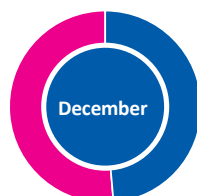
EECP CROSSINGS DURING JUNE 2017 - JANUARY 2018⁸

■ NUMBER OF CROSSINGS BY CHECKPOINT



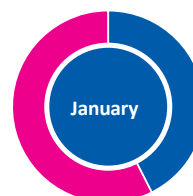
■ CROSSINGS BY DIRECTION

51,3%
Exit from NGCA



48,7%
Entry to NGCA

57,5%
Exit from NGCA



42,5%
Entry to NGCA

⁸ SBGS statistics- <http://dpsu.gov.ua/>

