

CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

MONITORING REPORT



June 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the June 2018 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 EECPs are located in Donetsk (Maiorske, Marinka, Hnutove and Novotroitske) and Luhansk (Stanytsia Luhanska) Oblasts. The survey is a part of the monitoring of violations of the human 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 the 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 the EECPs. It should be noted that the survey results should not be directly extrapolated onto the entire population crossing the checkpoints, but it helps identify needs, gaps and trends,

and provides an evidentiary basis for advocacy efforts. The data collection methodology was the same at all EECPs. R2P monitors surveyed civilians queuing at the government-controlled side of EECPs in the lines for pedestrians and for vehicles both in the GCA and NGCA directions. The survey was conducted anonymously and on a voluntary basis. All persons interviewed for the survey were informed about its purpose. This report is based on data collected 1-26 June 2018 during 37 visits to the five EECPs. This reporting period was characterized by summer heat and the vacation season.

OVERALL SUMMARY

- The overall demography remains relatively stable throughout all survey rounds. Women constitute the vast majority of respondents and the largest age group is 60+.
- The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents continues. The slight changes in disaggregation of reasons for crossing were of a seasonal nature.
- On average it took respondents 2-3 hours to pass all checkpoints. It took the most time to cross the line of contact at Maiorske EECP. Waiting times at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP were the shortest. The crossing process took more time at NGCA checkpoints at all EECPs except Stanytsia Luhanska.
- Summer weather continues to negatively affect crossing conditions, especially at Stanytsia Luhanska. As it takes about 1 hour of walking to cross the line of contact at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, the level of concern significantly increased. The stuffiness and lack of sunshades in the summer can be hazardous to life and health, especially for the elderly.



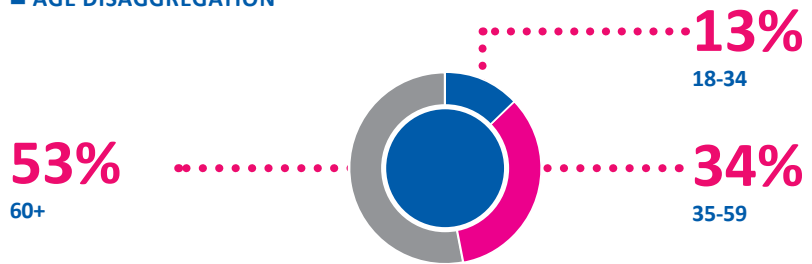
Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

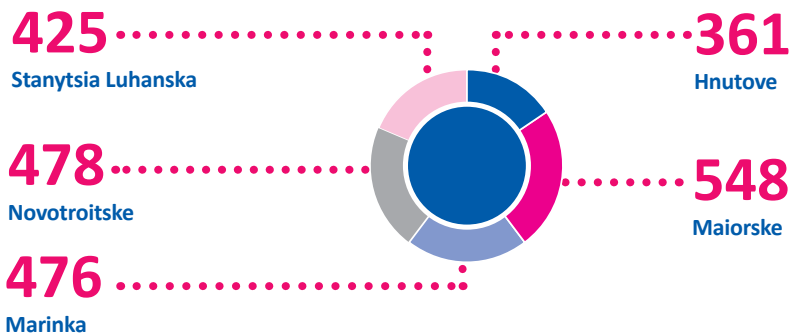
During the reporting period, R2P monitors surveyed a total of **2,288** persons crossing the line of contact. **51%** of them were travelling to the GCA and **49%** to the NGCA.

32,5% of respondents were male and **67,5%** were female. **8%** of respondents were travelling with children, which is slightly more than in the previous month (**6%** in May). This is connected with the summer holidays. The elderly remain the largest age group (**53%** of all respondents), which is related to the administrative burdens people registered in the NGCA must undergo to receive their pensions. The overall demographics of respondents remains quite similar throughout all survey rounds.

AGE DISAGGREGATION



NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY EEC



Marinka EEC

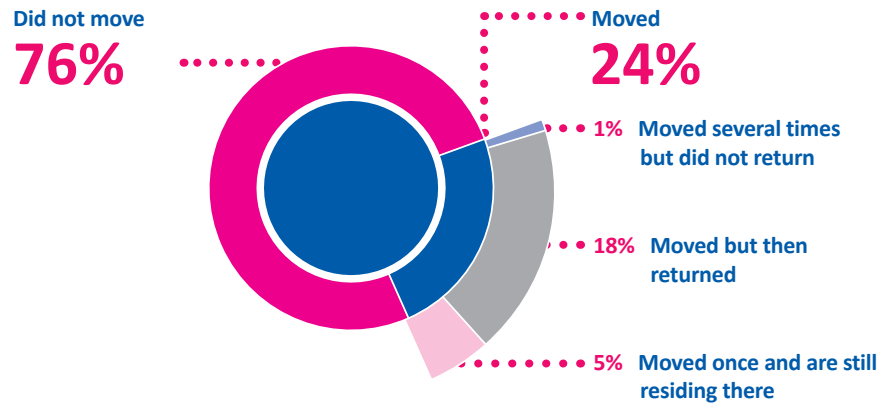
2 RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

96.7% of respondents stated that they resided in the NGCA prior to the conflict. 90.5% of all respondents cited the NGCA as their place of residence at the time of the survey.

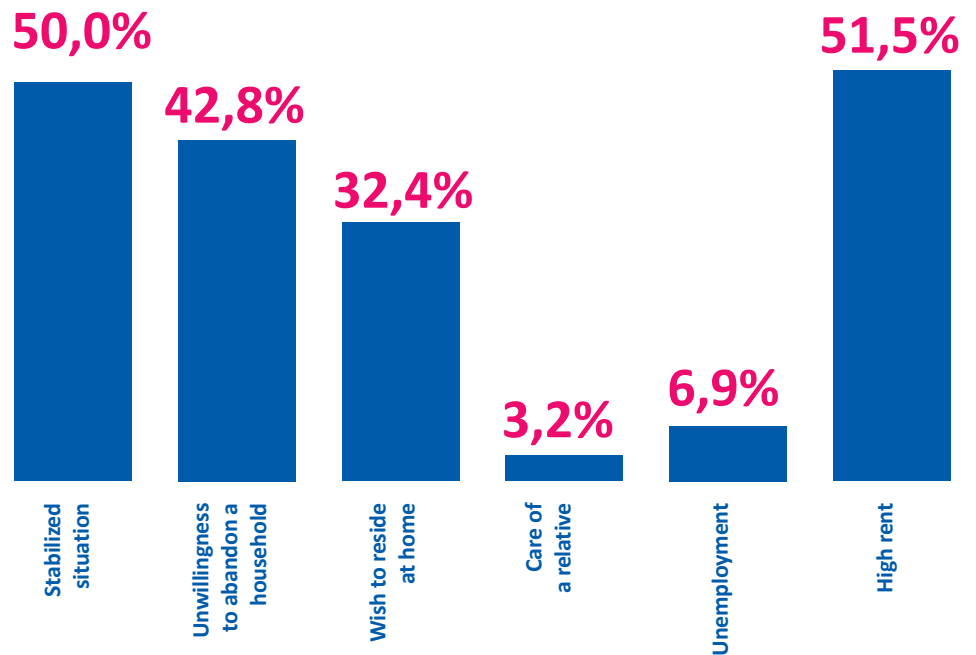
The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents remained unchanged. 76% of all respondents stated that they never changed their place of residence due to the conflict. The majority of respondents who moved at least once (18% of all respondents) ultimately returned to their original place of residence¹.

The most common reasons for return indicated by respondents who changed their place of residence but then returned were high rent (51.5%) and stabilized situation (50%). Unwillingness to abandon a household (42.8%) and desire to reside at home were also common reasons for returning. Though there was a significant difference in disaggregation of reasons for return in comparison to the previous reporting period (for instance, 41.2% of the returnees surveyed in May explained their decision by unaffordable rent in the GCA while in June this option was chosen by 10.3% more respondents), it is not appropriate to compare survey data from different rounds as the survey does not collect information about time of displacement or return.

DISPLACEMENT



REASONS FOR RETURN²



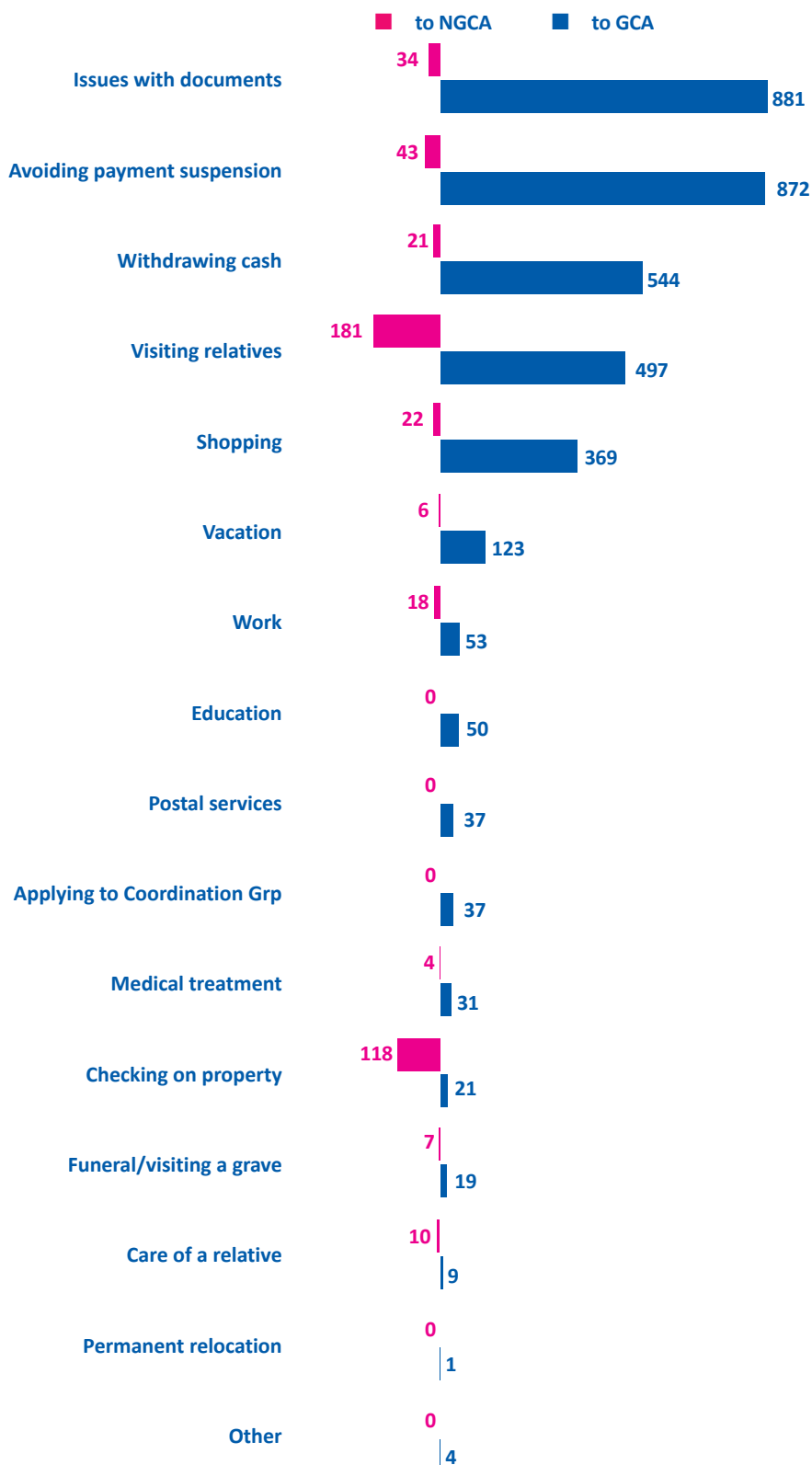
¹ It is important to mention that the demographics of respondents and their answers should not be extrapolated to the whole population as the survey does not cover internally displaced persons or NGCA residents who do not travel through the EECs.

² Respondents could mention several reasons.

3 REASONS AND FREQUENCY

Only 12.5% of all respondents indicated the NGCA as the destination of the trip. The reasons for crossing differ substantially depending on the travel direction. The respondents traveling to the GCA were mostly solving issues with documents, avoiding payment suspension for being away from the GCA for over 60 days, visiting relatives, and withdrawing cash. The most common reasons to travel to the NGCA were visiting relatives and checking on property. The number of respondents checking on their property in the NGCA and going on vacation in the GCA increased by 9.3% and 4% respectively, which is related to the summer season³. Among other reasons for travelling were submitting documents for a permit to cross the line of contact and passing the Independent External Evaluation in order to pursue higher education.

■ REASONS FOR CROSSING BY DIRECTION⁴



³ The percentage of reasons for crossing was calculated based on the total number of people who indicated either the GCA or the NGCA as their destination.

⁴ Respondents could mention several reasons.

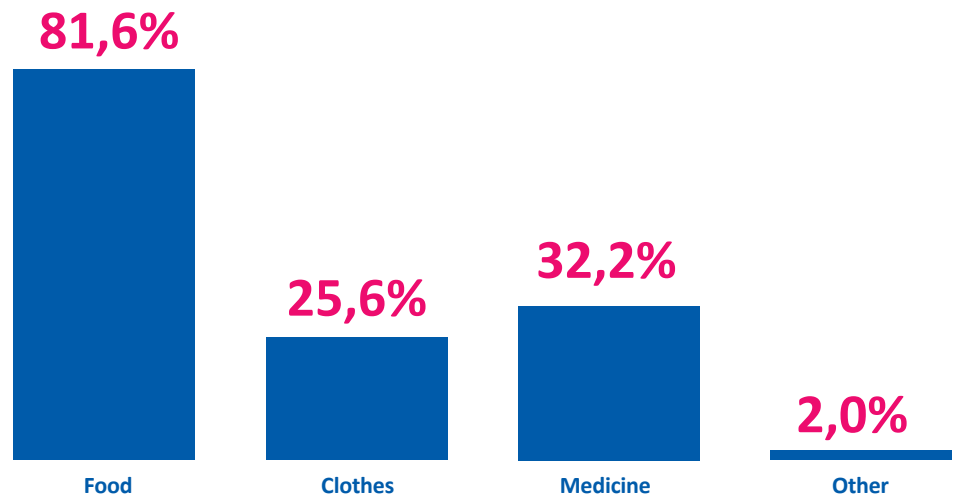
17.1% of all respondents indicated shopping as their reason for crossing the line of contact. 94.4% of such respondents were travelling to the GCA. The number of respondents who were travelling to buy clothes increased by 5.7%, however the overall proportion remains relatively stable with food being the most commonly purchased item. Among other goods respondents mentioned purchasing were mainly household appliances and hygiene items.

The need to pass physical identification (58.5% of respondents crossing the line of contact were solving documentation issues) and pensions (28.2%) remain the most common documentation issues. Among other issues, respondents mostly mentioned submitting documents for internal or international passports and obtaining death or birth certificates.

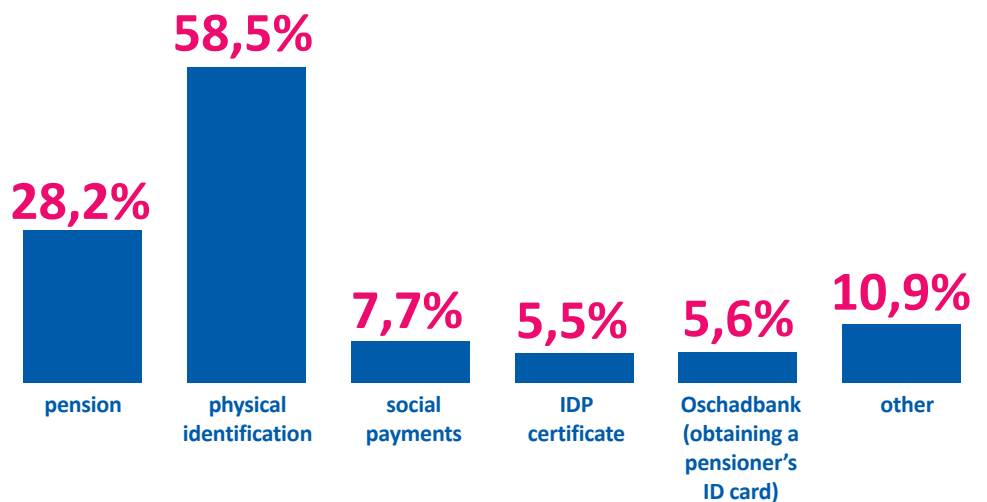
Some fluctuation in frequency of crossing was observed in comparison to May: the number of respondents who cross the line of contact quarterly increased by 4.8%, while the number of monthly crossings decreased by 7%.

The majority of respondents (65.7%) stated that they cross the line of contact quarterly. Considering the age disaggregation, such share of respondents travelling quarterly and monthly is often related to the requirements imposed on people with NGCA residence registration by Ukrainian legislation for obtaining pensions and social benefits, such as verification of the actual place of residence and physical identification at Oschadbank.

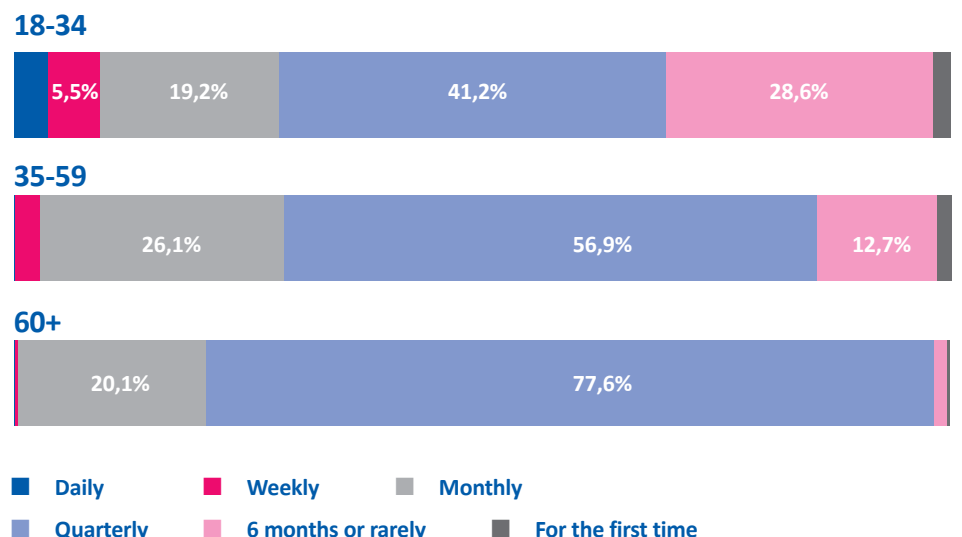
■ TYPE OF GOODS PURCHASED



■ TYPE OF DOCUMENT ISSUE



■ FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly
 ■ Quarterly ■ 6 months or rarely ■ For the first time

17.8% of those surveyed stated that they have previously crossed the line of contact during the reporting period. Graphs in this section contain information on duration of crossing in June.

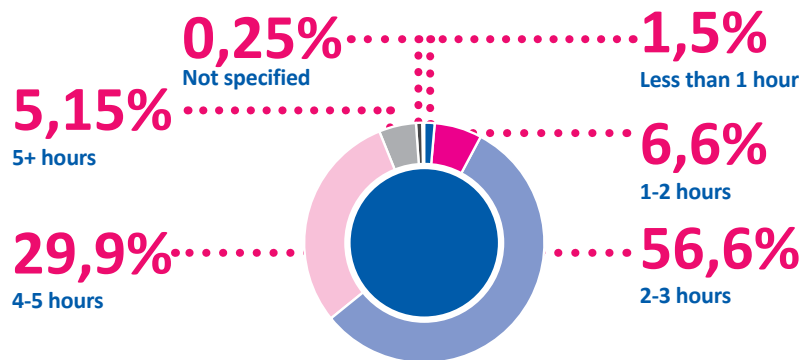
The majority (56.6%) of such respondents spent 2 to 3 hours to cross through the EECPs on both the GCA and NGCA sides.

Among all five EECPs it took the most time to cross the line of contact at Maiorske EECP. Almost 50% of those respondents who crossed the line of contact at Maiorske EECP in May had to spend 4 hours or more. A significant increase in crossing times was observed at Novotroitske EECP where the number of respondents who spent more than 4 hours increased by 27.7%. The largest share of respondents who spent less than 2 hours crossing the line of contact was at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. It is important to note that the bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska is damaged and there is no roadway for vehicles. Thus, it takes about an hour to walk between the GCA and NGCA checkpoints there.

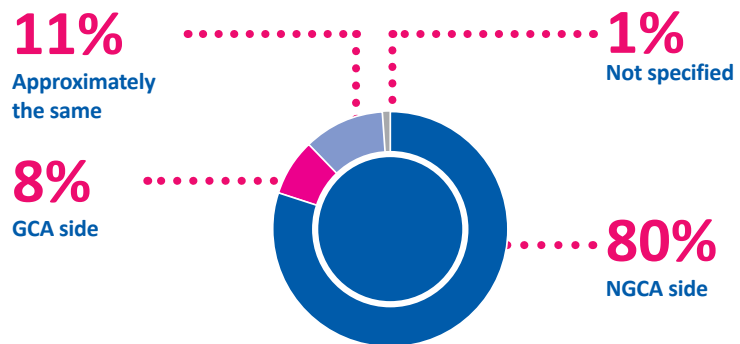
The majority of respondents stated that it took more time to pass the NGCA checkpoints, which is similar to the May survey. Such tendency correlates to information obtained during monitoring visits: people crossing the line of contact complained about slow servicing on the NGCA side.

Stanytsia Luhanska EECP remained the only one where the majority (78.1%) of respondents stated that they spent more time crossing the GCA checkpoints. According to information received during monitoring visits, the control procedure in the GCA is more thorough. At the same time, GCA checkpoints at Stanytsia Luhanska lack the staff and equipment for speedy processing due to heavy traffic at the EECP.

■ DURATION OF CROSSING



■ WHICH CHECKPOINT SIDE TOOK LONGER TO CROSS



4 CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

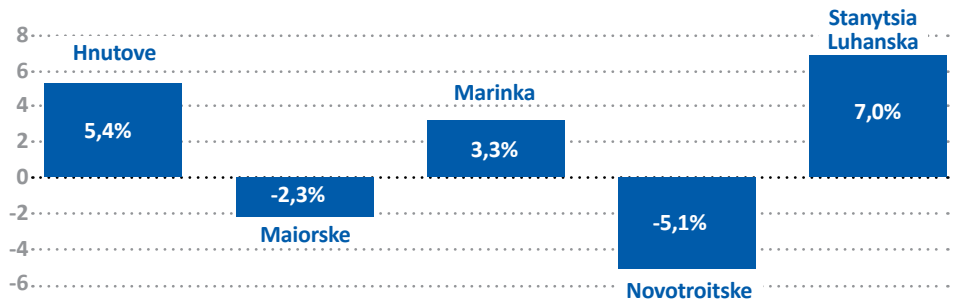
In comparison to the previous reporting period several changes in the level of concerns were observed. The number of respondents who did not mention any complaints decreased by 7% at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP and 5.4% at Hnutove EECP. Such a decrease is related to weather conditions.

Long lines remain one of the main concerns at EECPs, especially taking into account the summer heat. Moreover, at Marinka EECP the number of complaints about the lines increased from 70.8% in May to 85.1% in June.

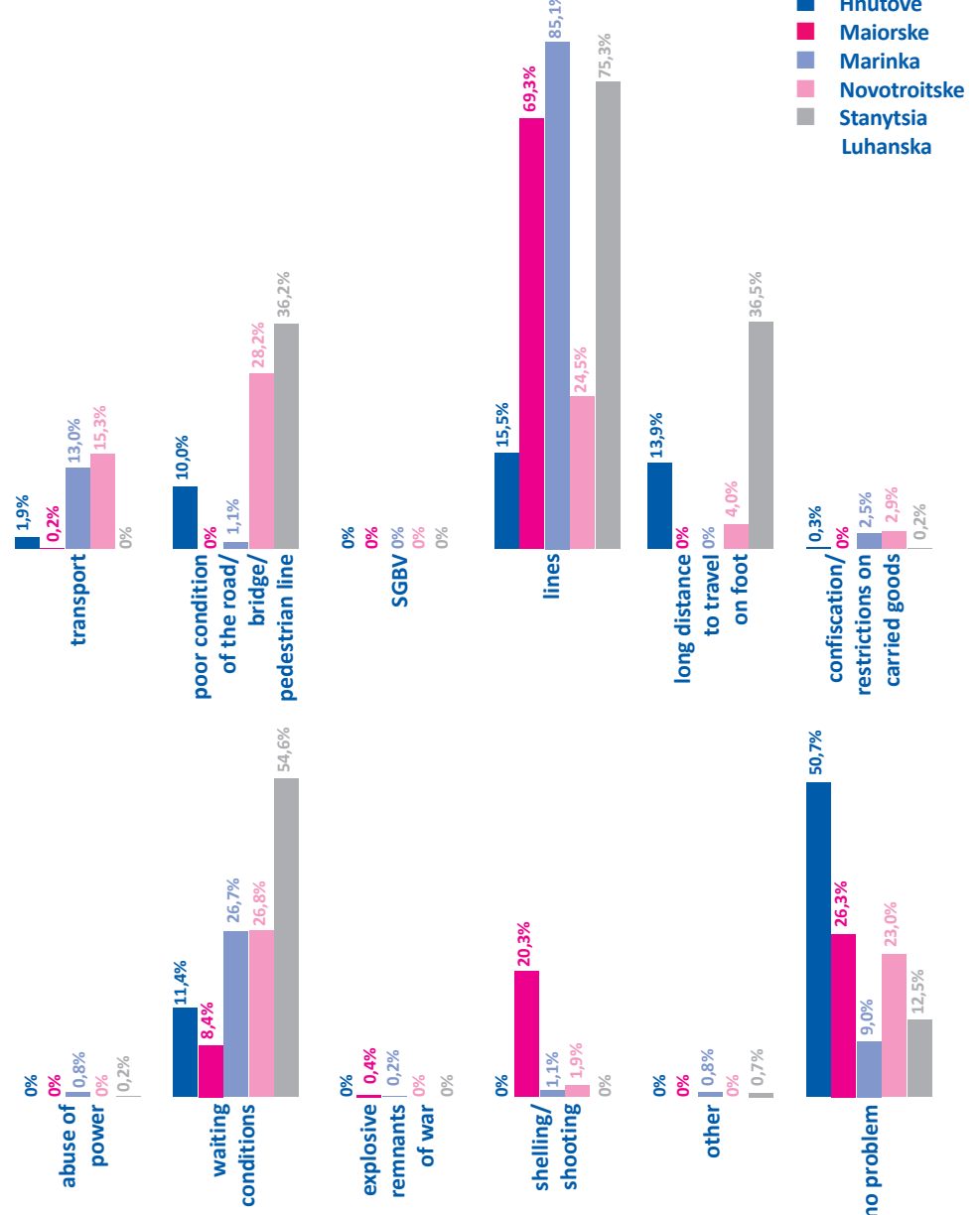
After considerable increase in the level of concern about the intensified shelling in May, this concern reduced to some extent at Maiorske EECP (from 29.4% in May to 20.3% in June) and decreased to zero at Hnutove EECP (from 8% in May).

The heat continue to negatively affect the situation at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. As crossing the line of contact at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP requires over an hour of walking, the level of concern about the waiting conditions, poor condition of the pedestrian area and long distance one must walk increased by 27.7%, 16,8% and 15.6% respectively in comparison to May.

■ DYNAMICS IN GENERAL LEVEL OF CONCERN



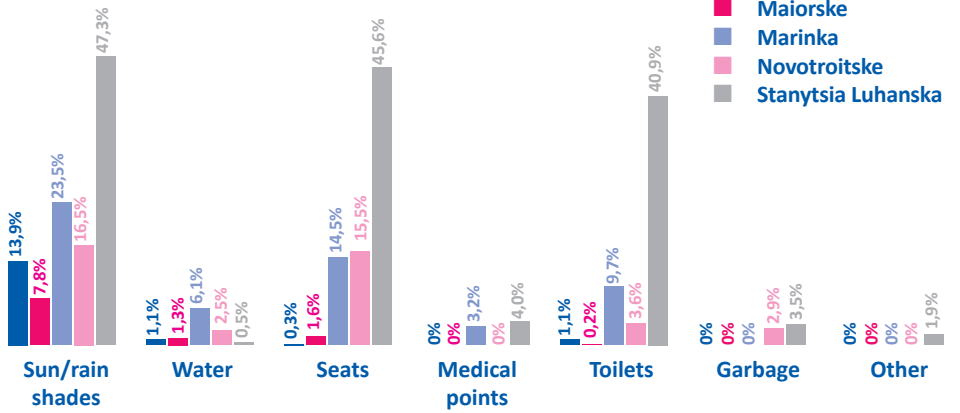
■ CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING⁵



⁵ Respondents could mention several concerns.

Waiting conditions remain a cause of significant concern, especially at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. There were more complaints about the lack of sunshades at Stanytsia Luhanska (the level of concern raised by 24.5%) and Hnutove (by 8.4%) EECPs. Even though there are State Emergency Service tents located at EECPs, it is not feasible to use them during crossing as people may miss their turn if they leave the line. The lack of sunshades and stuffiness in the summer can be hazardous to life and health, especially for the elderly. During monitoring visits numerous cases of losing consciousness continued to be reported.

■ WAITING CONDITIONS

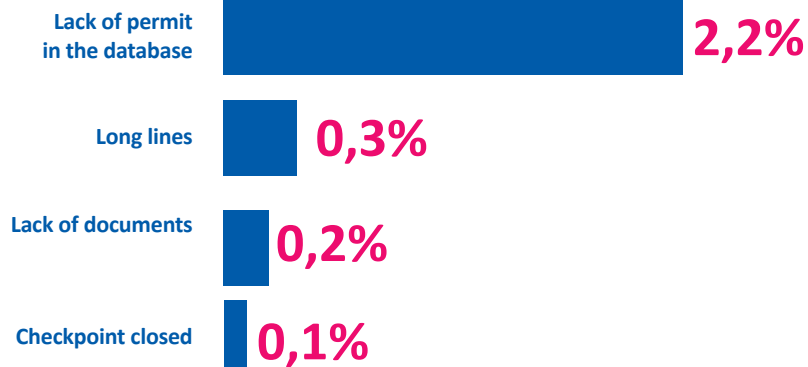


Marinka EECP

5 INABILITY TO CROSS

Only 2.8% of all respondents mentioned incidents of not being able to cross the line of contact in the past six months. The crossing permit not being in the database was the most common reason for such incidents.

REASONS FOR INABILITY TO CROSS⁶



Maiorske EECF

⁶ Respondents could mention several concerns.

