



CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

MONITORING REPORT

October-
November
2017

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. METHODOLOGY.....	4
2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS.....	5
3. RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN.....	7
4. FREQUENCY, DURATION AND REASONS FOR CROSSING.....	8
5. CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT.....	12
6. INABILITY TO CROSS.....	14
Annex. EECP crossings during June-November 2017.....	15

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the results of a 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) and has been 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 the reasons for 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.

The report is based on data collected during October-November 2017. This period was characterized by the deterioration of weather conditions. Having analyzed the results of the previous period¹, the approach to conducting the survey was adjusted in order to obtain more accurate data.

Tens of thousands of people cross the five operating EECPs every day. During the reporting period, the total number of people crossing EECPs ranged daily from 27,000 to 42,000².

Since the creation of official corridors for crossing the line of contact, their operation has raised a great number of complaints. The imbalance between the number of such corridors/number of EECP staff and the number of people wishing to cross the line of contact is obvious. This leads to numerous negative phenomena and significantly limits civilian freedom of movement.

Information about long lines, unsatisfactory EECP equipment, corruption and incidents appear regularly in the media and on social networks, inducing human rights advocates to conduct thorough monitoring of observance of the rights of the people crossing the line of contact through the operating EECPs. By observing the crossing processes and studying opinions of persons crossing the line of contact, R2P contributes to monitoring the protection environment and respect for civilians' rights in the crossing process.



Novotroitske EECP

¹ August-September Checkpoint report- <http://vpl.com.ua/uk/materials/4133/>

² The State Border Guard Service statistics- <http://dpsu.gov.ua/>

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. The information collected during the survey is supplemented with observations conducted at each EECP. 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.

The data was collected during regular visits to each of the five specified EECPs on a weekly basis during October and November (44 and 43 visits respectively).

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 the persons interviewed for the survey were informed of 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 pedestrian and vehicle lines³. People travelling both to and from the GCA took part in the survey.

Along with the survey, R2P monitors observed the EECP infrastructure, waiting conditions and other details related to the crossing process. Nevertheless, at all EECPs the monitors had no access to check the situation and waiting conditions beyond the last Ukrainian checkpoint (the so-called «zero» checkpoint).

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

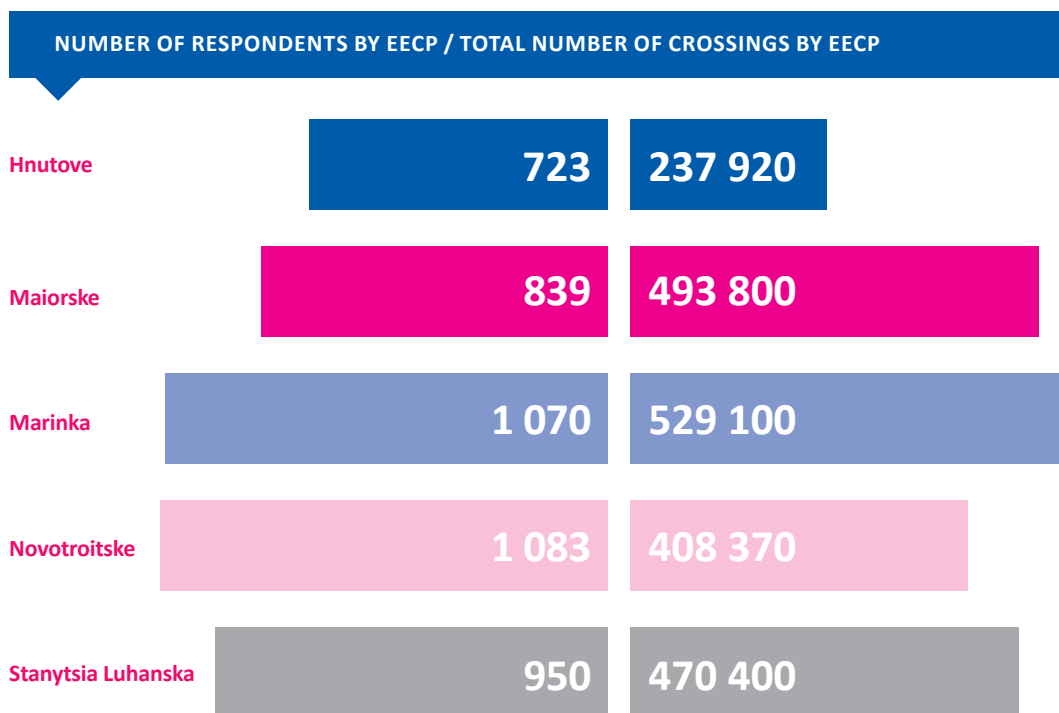


Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

³ Considering that currently, Stanytsia Luhanska EECP is open only for pedestrian crossing, all respondents interviewed at Stanytsia Luhanska 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.

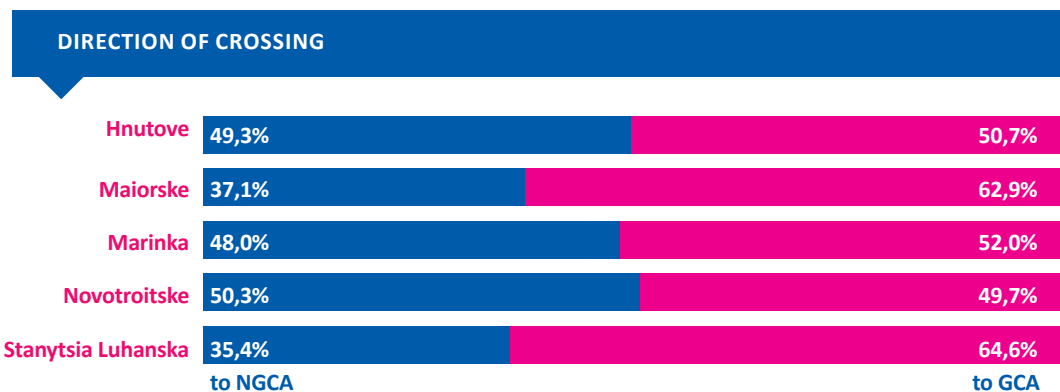
2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

During the reporting period, R2P monitors surveyed a total of 4,665 persons crossing the line of contact. More women were interviewed than men.

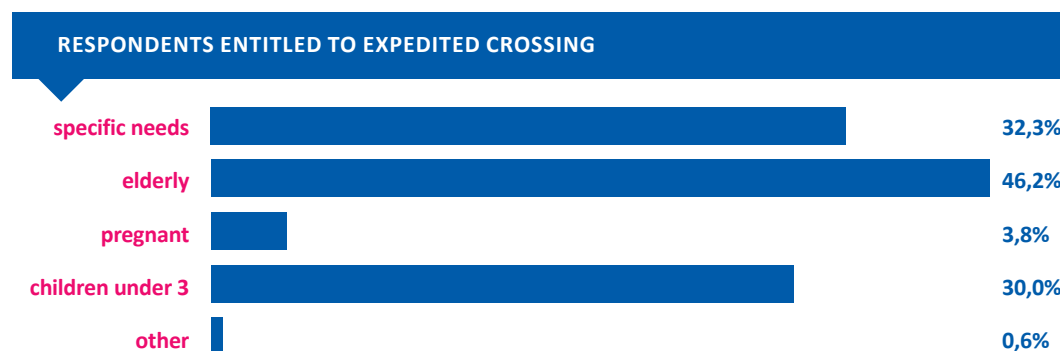


The ratio of surveyed individuals is approximately proportional to the overall number of crossings at each EECP.

The majority of respondents (55.8 per cent) were travelling to the GCA.



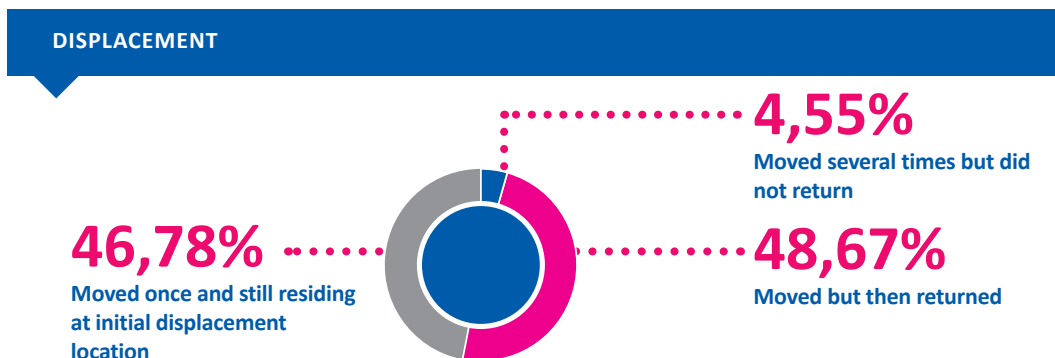
13 per cent of all respondents stated that they were eligible for expedited crossing without waiting in line per Temporary Order 2 for crossing the line of contact (respondents could give several answers).



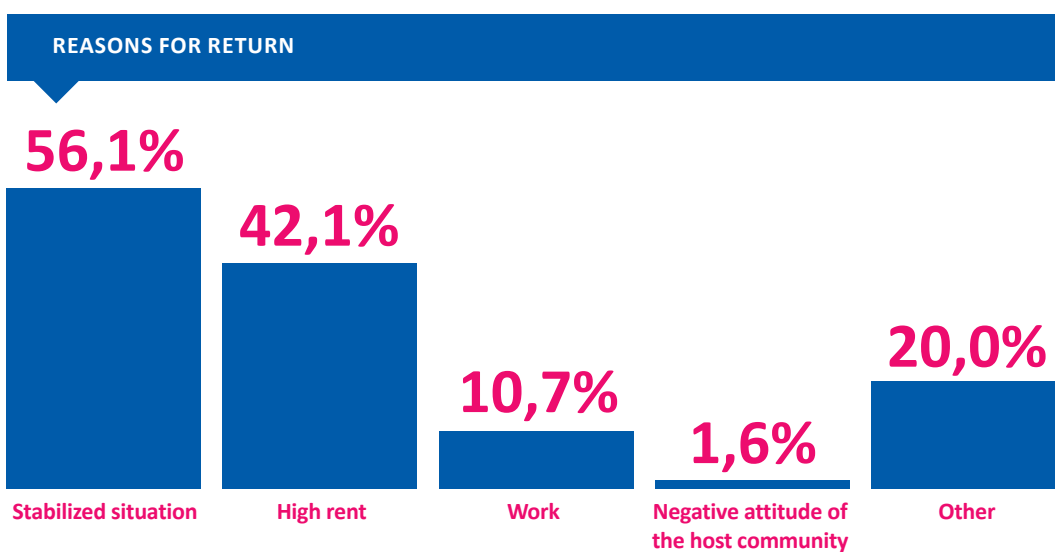
Novotroitske EEC

3. RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

17.0 per cent of all respondents stated that they had changed their place of residence due to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine at least once. 48.7 per cent of them returned to their permanent place of residence.

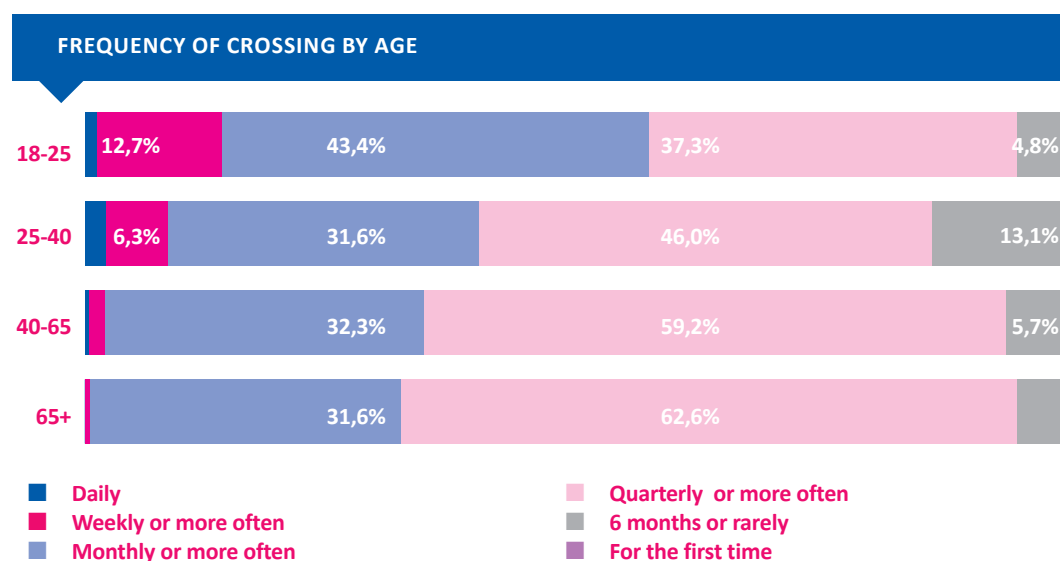
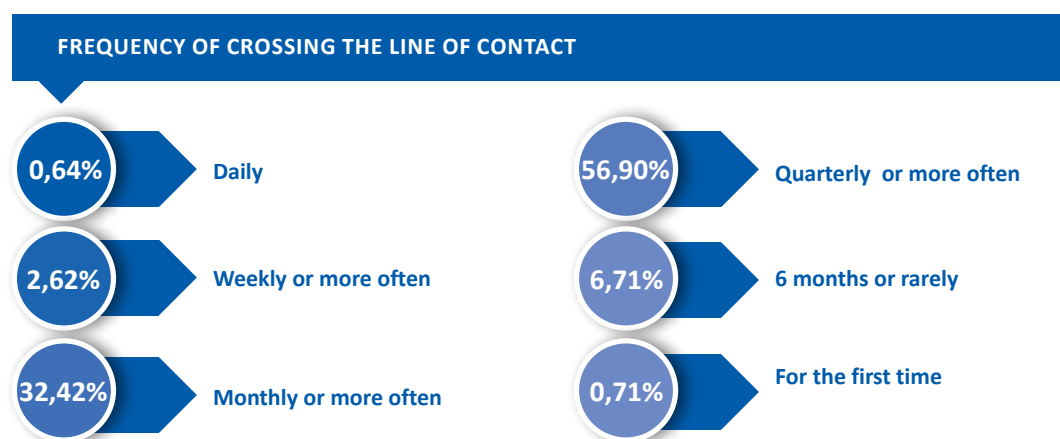


The security situation stabilizing and high rent in the GCA were the most frequently mentioned reasons for returning.

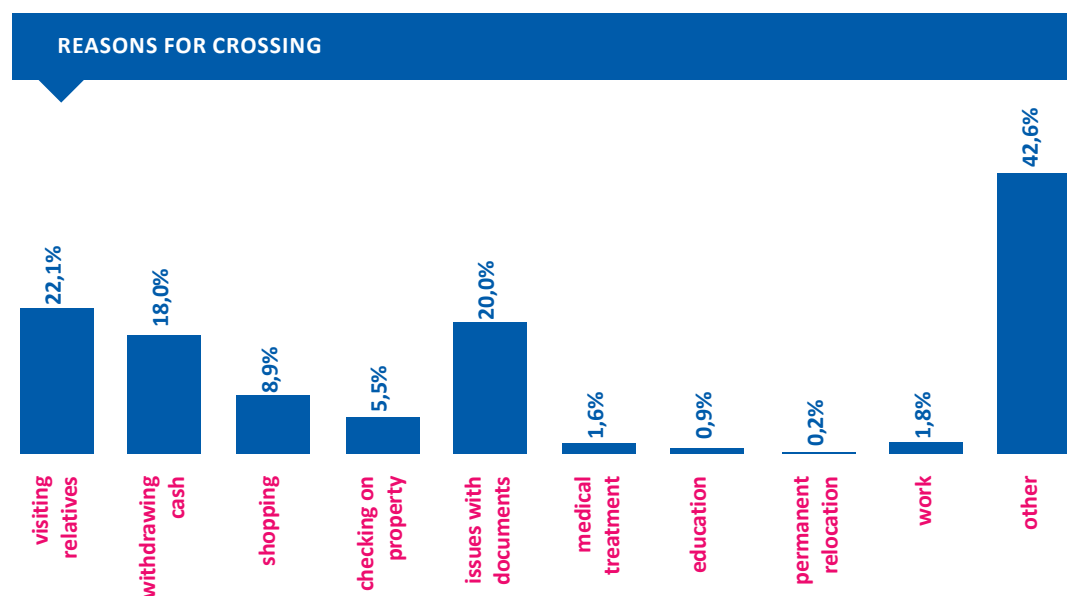
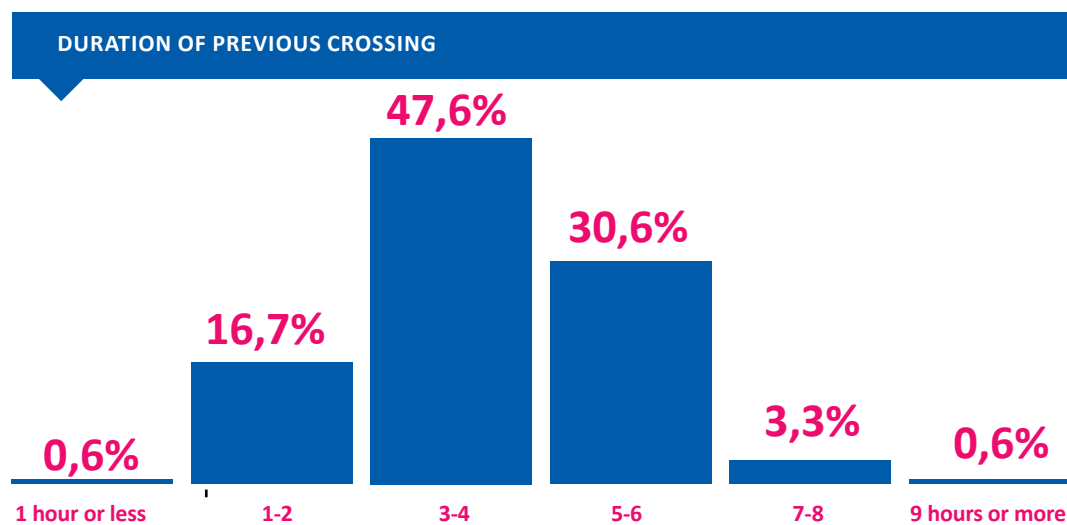


4. FREQUENCY, DURATION AND REASONS FOR CROSSING

The majority of respondents (56.9 per cent) cross the line of contact quarterly or more. Taking into account the age disaggregation, 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 the actual place of residence and physical identification at Oschadbank.

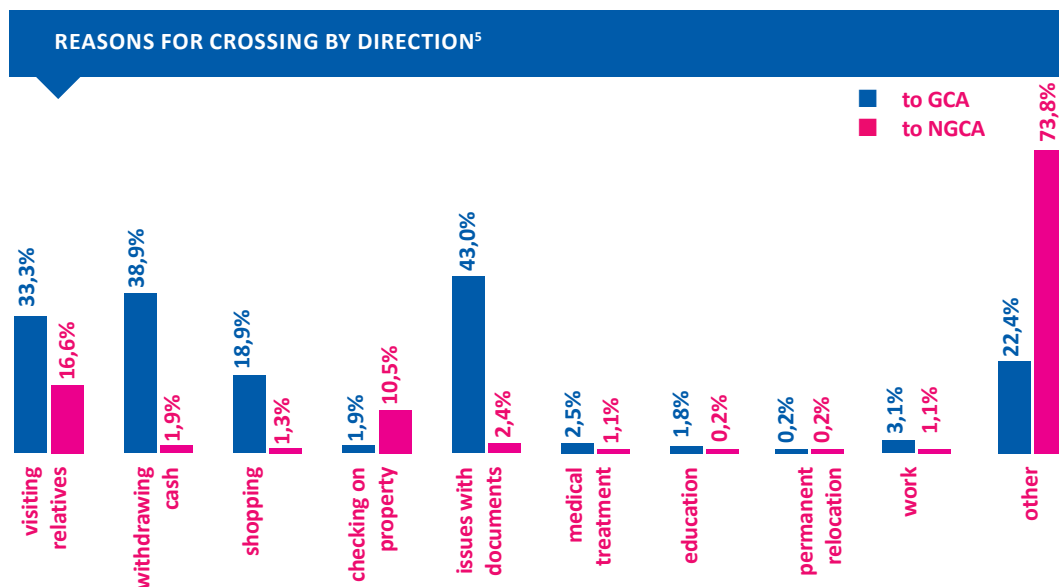


As for the time spent crossing the line of contact⁴ previously (all lines controlled by the Ukrainian and de-facto authorities on the GCA and NGCA sides respectively), the majority of respondents stated that it took 3-4 hours to cross the line of contact.

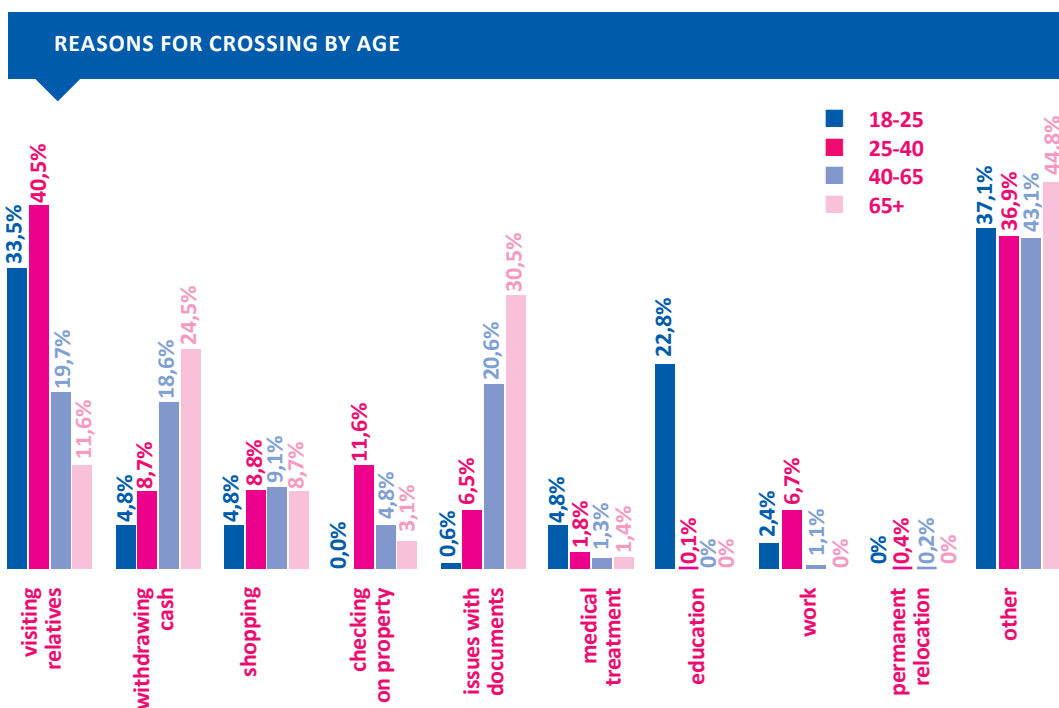


The majority (84.5 per cent) of respondents who chose «Other» explained that they were returning from a trip (mostly from the GCA).

⁴ This question is related to the previous crossing instead of the current crossing because 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 between the two reporting periods.

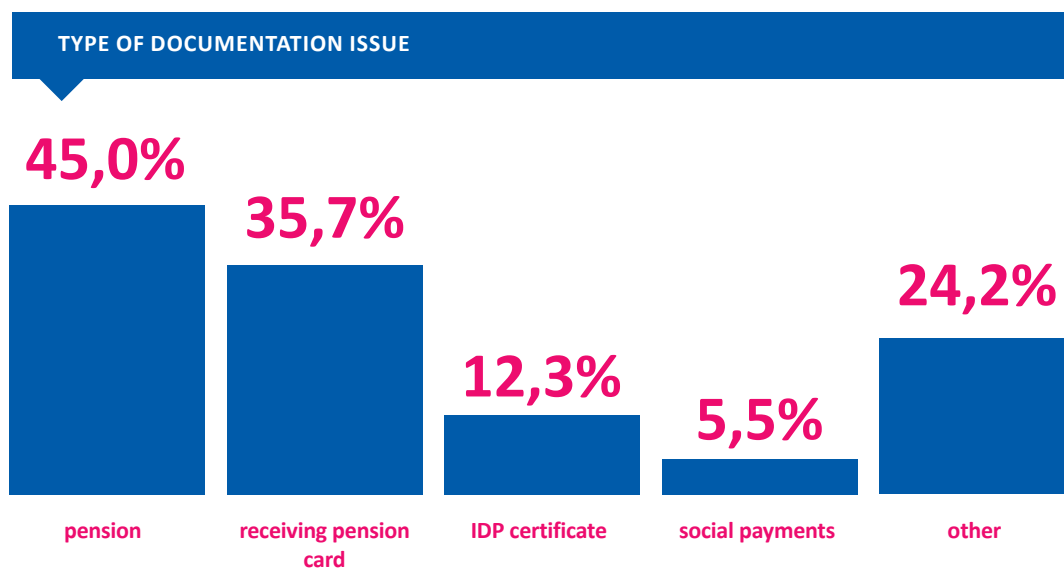


The overall tendencies in reasons for crossing based on age are similar to the August-September reporting period.

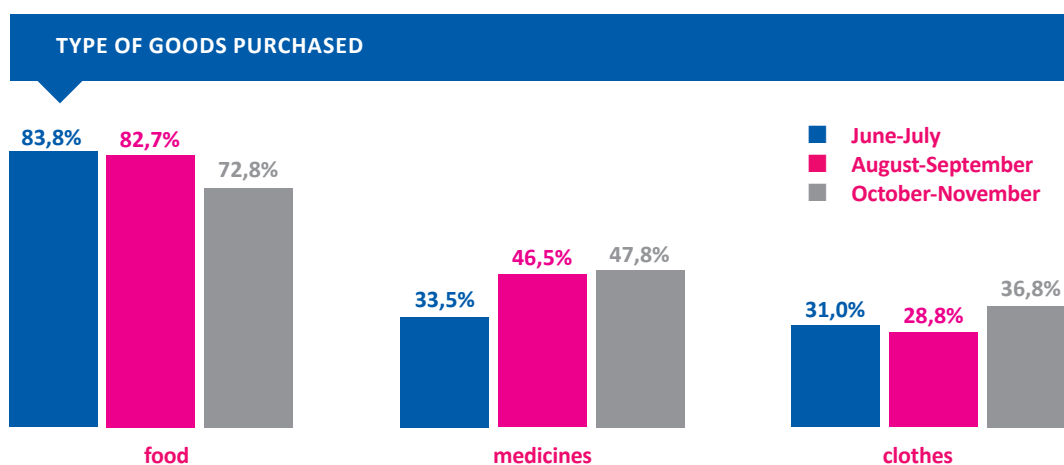


Among the respondents who mentioned documentation as the reason for crossing, the most common documentation issues were related to pension cards and pension payments (35.7 and 45 per cent respectively). The most frequent answers among «Other» were passing physical identification and issues related to passports (to obtain an ID card; to update a passport photo when turning 25 or 45, etc.).

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

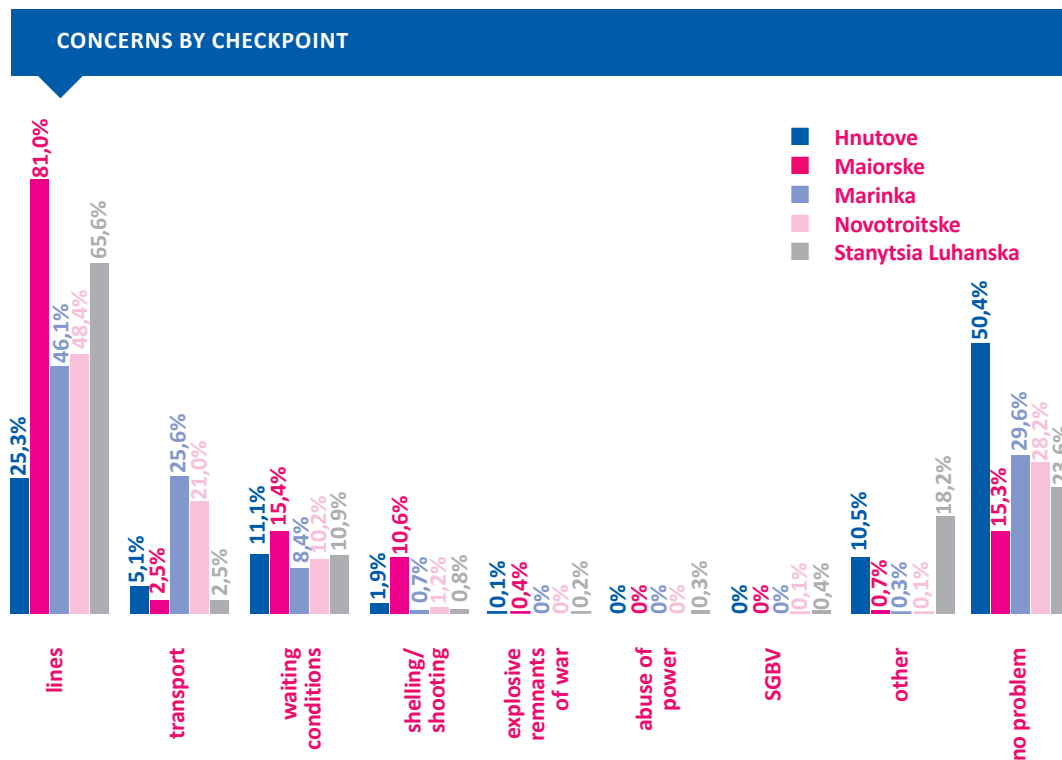


The insignificant growth in the number of respondents who travelled to purchase clothes might be related to the beginning of the winter season.

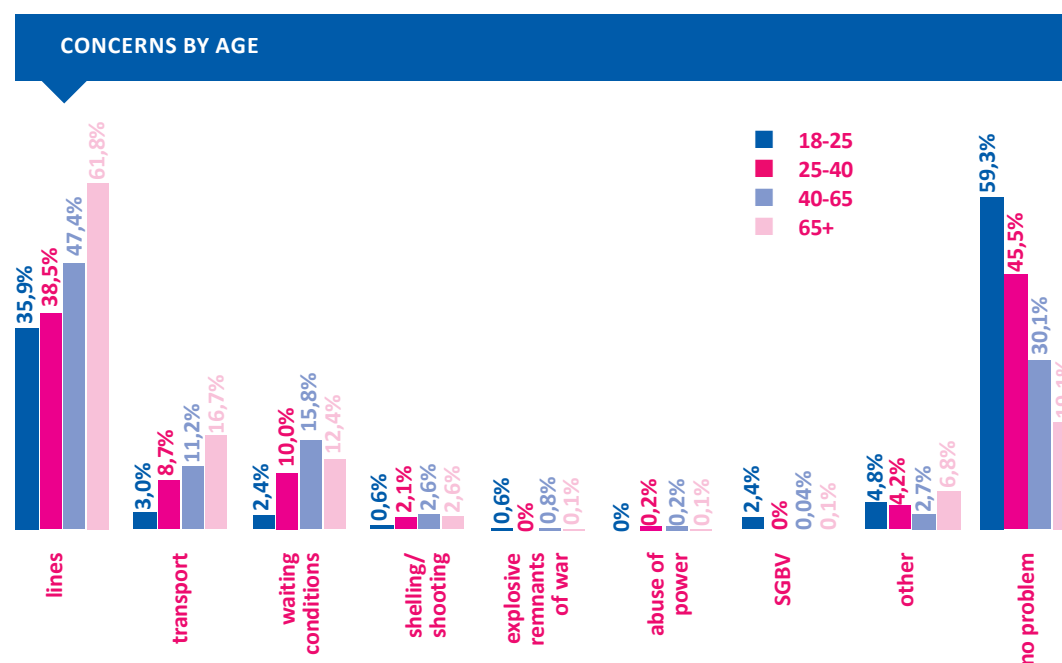


5. CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

Long lines remain the biggest concern⁶. The level of such concern grew in October and November at all EECPs except Hnutove.



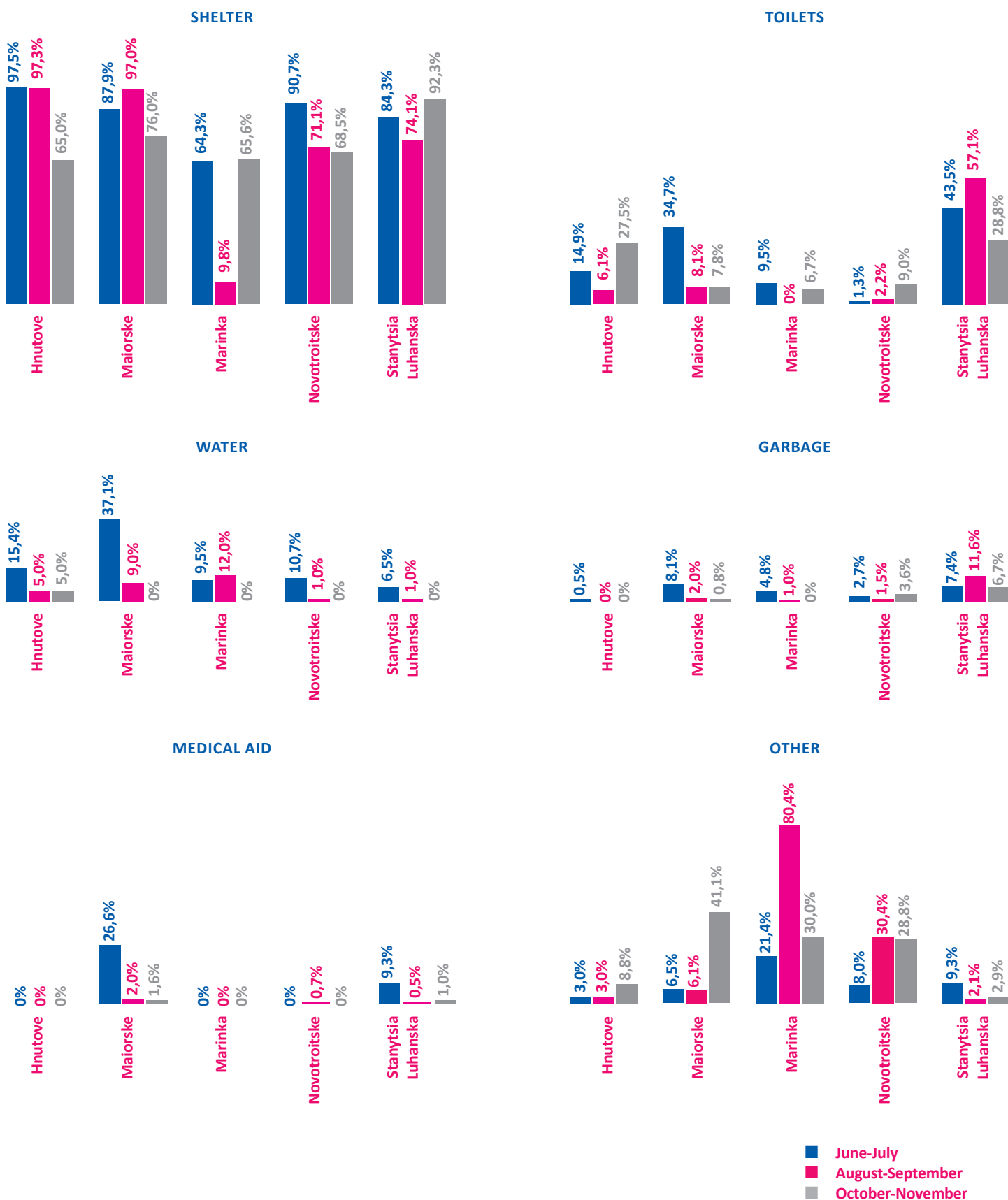
The overall level of concern by age cohort remains almost unchanged. As noted before, the process of crossing the line of contact causes more difficulties for elderly people.



11.0 per cent of all respondents complained about waiting conditions at EECPs in October and November, which is 4.1 per cent less than in the August-September reporting period. Such a reduction might be related to infrastructure improvements at EECPs. The main concerns among those choosing «Other» were the weather conditions and the lack of hot beverages in State Emergency Service tents.

⁶ The respondents could choose several options.

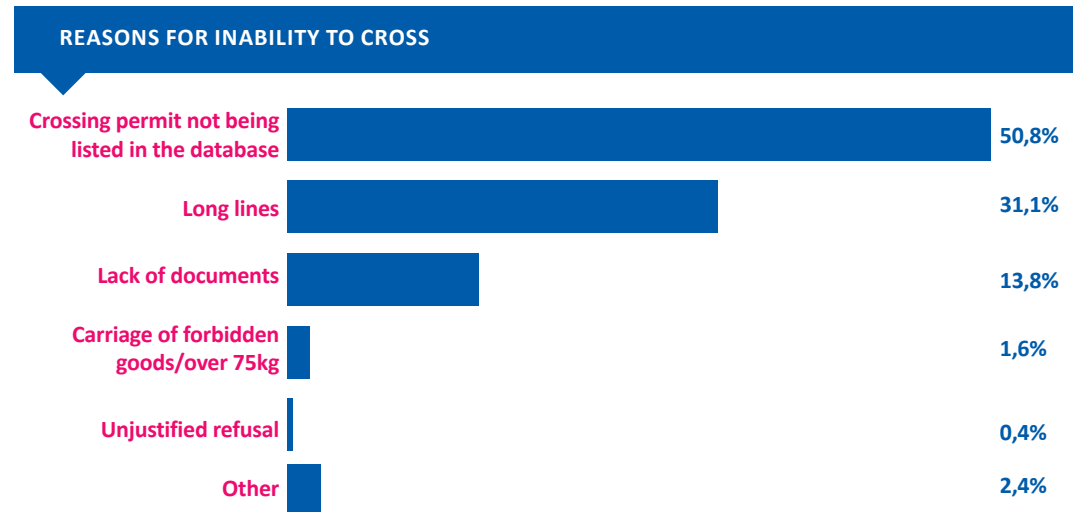
WAITING CONDITIONS



■ June-July
■ August-September
■ October-November

6. INABILITY TO CROSS

5.5 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 contact.

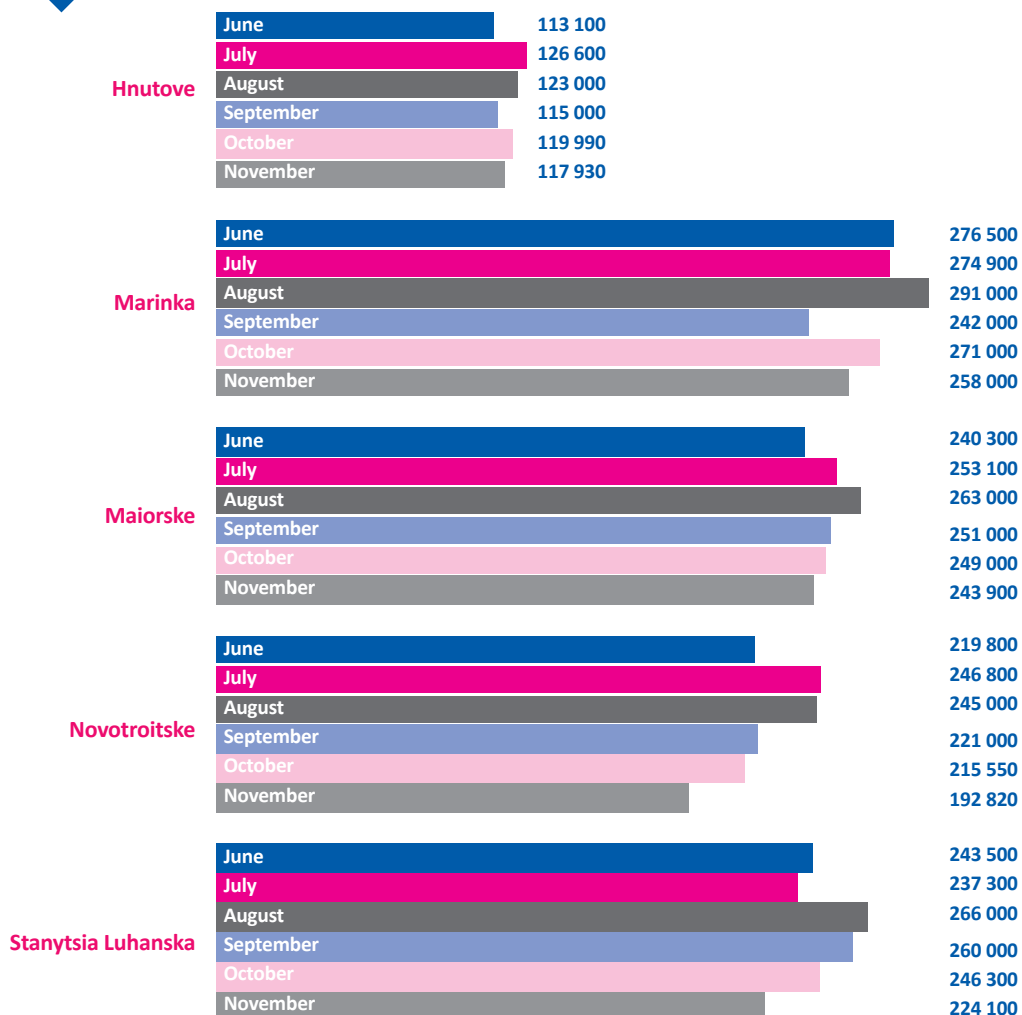


Maiorske EECF

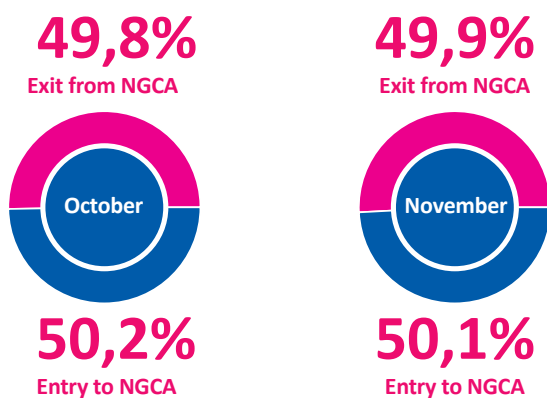
ANNEX.

EECP CROSSINGS DURING JUNE-NOVEMBER 2017⁷

NUMBER OF CROSSINGS BY CHECKPOINT IN JUNE-NOVEMBER



CROSSINGS BY DIRECTION



⁷ The State Border Guard Service statistics - <http://dpsu.gov.ua/>

