

# CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

## MONITORING REPORT



November 2018

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## INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the November 2018 round of the survey<sup>1</sup> conducted by Charitable Foundation «The Right to Protection» (R2P) at the five entry-exit checkpoints (EECPs) to the non-government controlled area (NGCA). The survey has been administered on a regular basis since June 2017. The EECPs are located in Donetsk (Maiorske, Marinka, Hnutove and Novotroitske) and Luhansk (Stanytsia Luhanska) Oblasts. This survey is a part of the monitoring of human rights violations 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 motivations 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 survey results should not be directly extrapolated onto the entire population crossing the checkpoints, but they help identify needs, gaps and trends, and provide an evidentiary basis

for advocacy efforts. The data collection methodology was the same at all EECPs. R2P monitors surveyed civilians in the pedestrian and vehicle lines in the direction of both the GCA and NGCA on the government-controlled side of EECPs. 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 during 43 visits to the five EECPs. This reporting period was also influenced by poor weather and reconstruction activity at Hnutove, Maiorske, Novotroitske and Stanytsia Luhanska EECPs.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

- The number of respondents over 60 years old increased by 9%, for a total of 63%. The increase could be due to the demand for pensioners to pass physical identification. Women over 60 continues to be the largest share of respondents – 42%.
- The vast majority of respondents (90%) were NGCA residents. The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents remains unchanged.
- During the reporting period, reconstruction at Novotroitske and Stanytsia Luhanska EECP was still in progress. Some temporary inconveniences (protracted crossing procedure at Novotroitske EECP, non-operating latrines at Stanytsia Luhanska etc.) have occurred due to the held activities.
- Reconstruction at Hnutove EECP began on November 5. Reconstruction at Maiorske EECP started on November 15.
- The number of buses at Marinka EECP was increased, reducing the waiting time at the «zero» checkpoint. Consequently, the level of concern expressed by respondents at this EECP considerably decreased.
- Weather deterioration significantly increased the risk of injuries at Stanytsia Luhanska and Hnutove EECP due to the poor condition of the wooden ramps across the damaged bridge and the lack of road surface maintenance.
- The level of concern regarding shelling and shooting at Maiorske remained the highest among five EECPs (16%).



Maiorske EECP

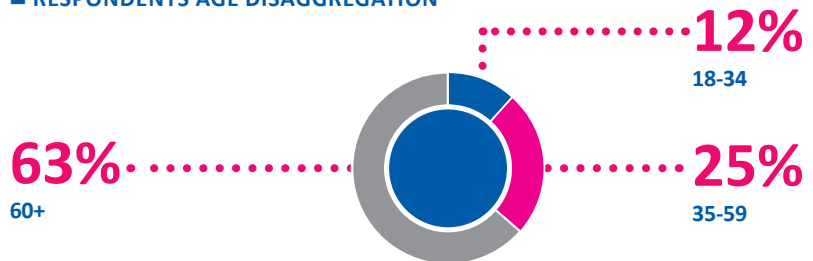
<sup>1</sup> Statistical data are available on the Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring Online Dashboard – <https://goo.gl/fzxD1>

# 1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

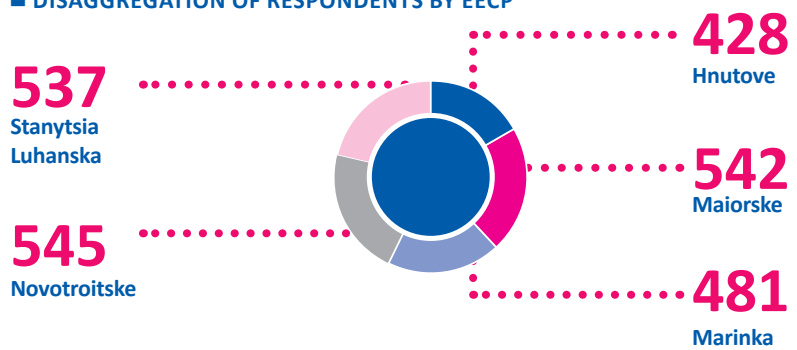
During the reporting period, R2P monitors surveyed a total of 2,533 persons crossing the line of contact. 54% of them were surveyed in the line to the NGCA and 46% to the GCA.

65% of respondents were female and 35% were male. 4.5% of respondents were travelling with children. The elderly remain the largest age group represented (63% of all respondents), which is related to the administrative burdens people registered in the NGCA must undergo to receive their pensions. The number of respondents over 60 years old increased by 9%. The increase might be caused by mass text messages from Oschadbank about the change of account numbers which took place in November.

## RESPONDENTS AGE DISAGGREGATION



## DISAGGREGATION OF RESPONDENTS BY EEC



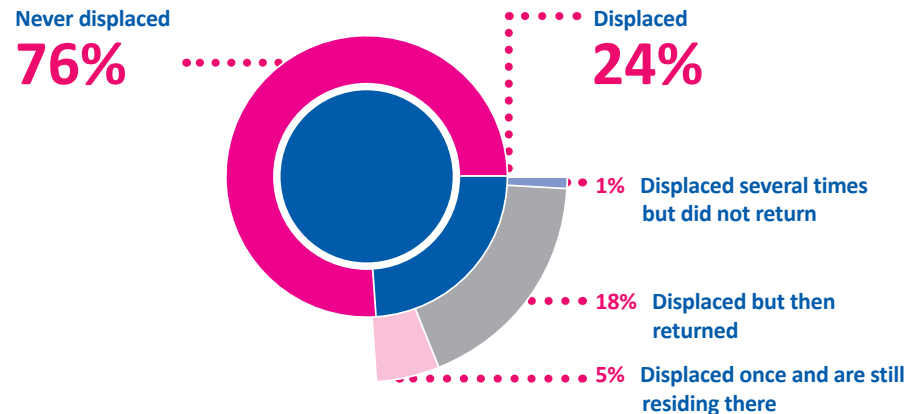
Novotroitske EEC

## 2 RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

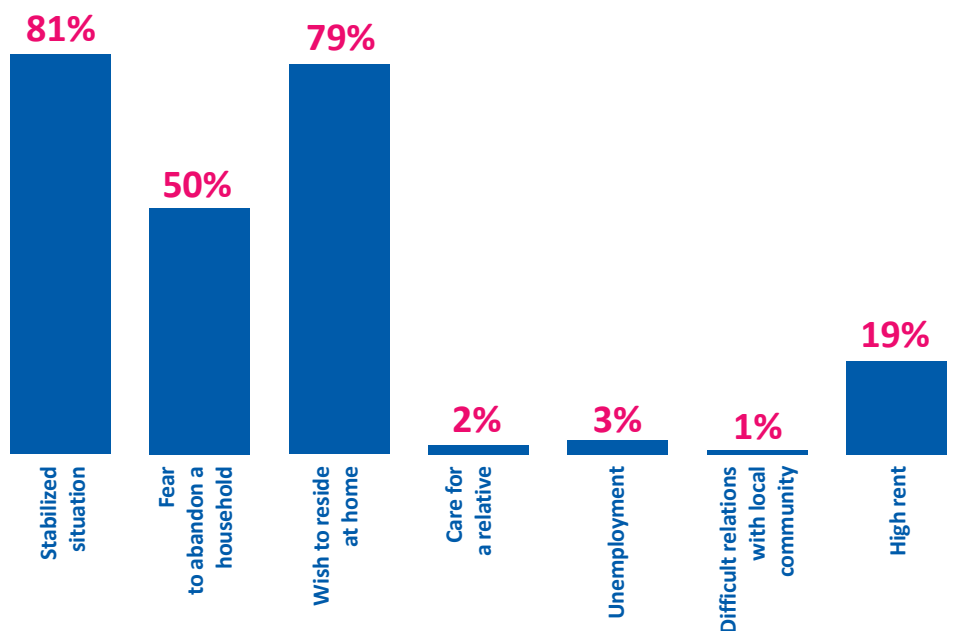
Only 10% of all respondents indicated the GCA as their place of residence at the time of the survey. The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents remained unchanged. 4% of all respondents resided in the GCA prior to the conflict. Nearly all of them (101 of 103 individuals) indicated the GCA as their place of residence at the time of the survey. The majority of such individuals were aged 18-34 (31 person) and 35-59 (54). The majority of them (62 persons) were surveyed at Stanytsia Luhanska EECF.

76% of all respondents stated that they never changed their place of residence due to the conflict. The majority of respondents who were displaced at least once ultimately returned to their original place of residence. 96% of such respondents currently reside in the NGCA. However, there is no information on when they returned.

### DISPLACEMENT



### REASONS FOR RETURN<sup>2</sup>



why they decided to return to where they resided before the conflict. The most common reasons were the stabilized situation and the desire to reside at home (81% and 79% respectively). The fear to abandon a household lest it be looted (50%) or high rent (19%) were also common reasons for the decision

not continue living in displacement. Though there was some difference in the distribution of reasons for return in comparison to the previous reporting period (for example, 30% of the returnees surveyed in October explained their decision by stabilized situation while in November this option was

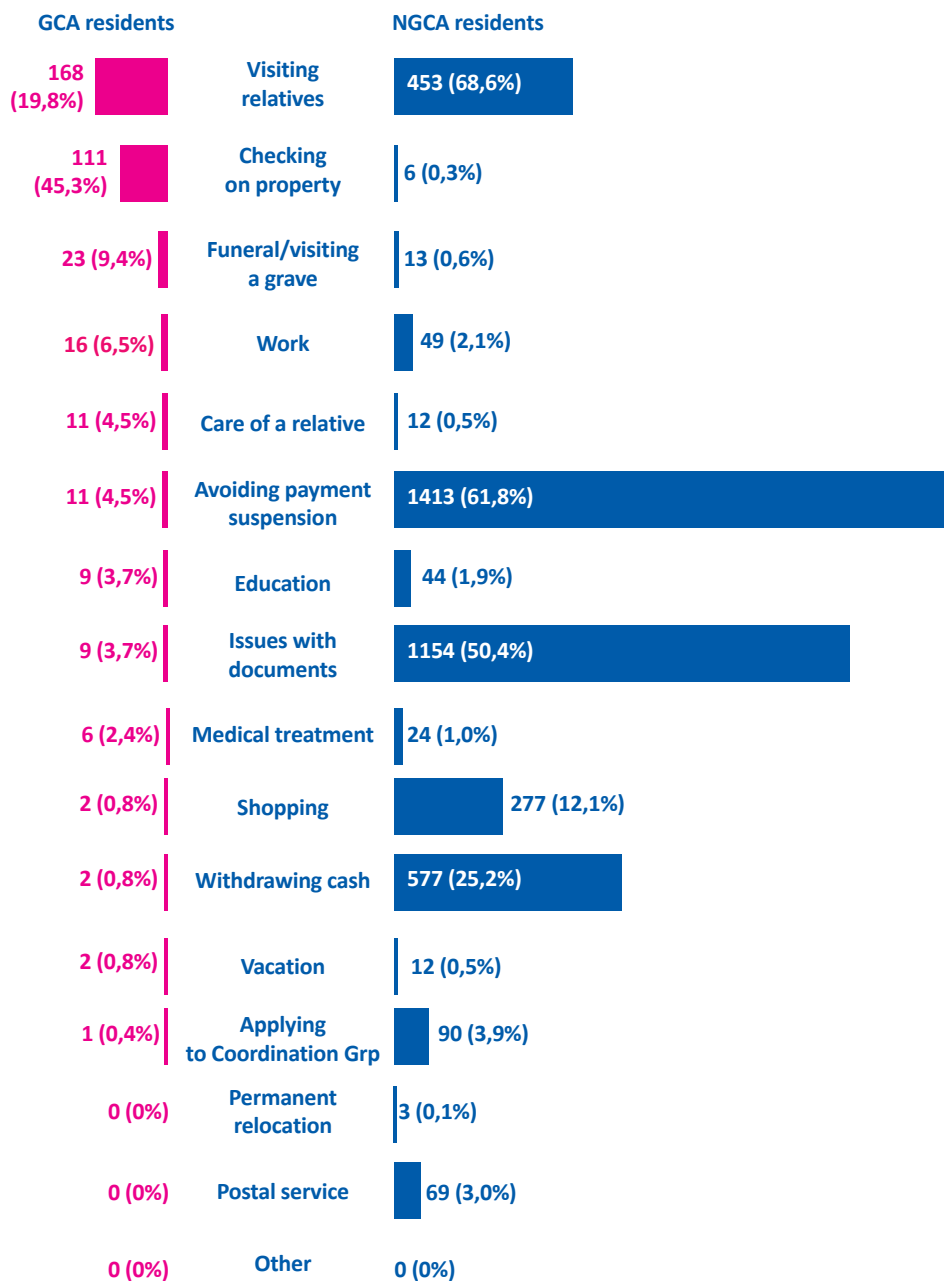
mentioned by 11% less respondents), it is not appropriate to compare survey data from different rounds as the survey does not collect information about time of displacement or return. Overall, there are no signs of active return of internally displaced persons nor are there signs of active displacement.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could indicate more than one reason for their travel.

### 3 REASONS, FREQUENCY AND DURATION

The reasons for crossing differ substantially depending on the place of residence. Respondents who reside in the NGCA were mostly traveling to avoid suspension of payments triggered by being away from the GCA for over 60 days, to solve issues with documents, to withdraw cash, to visit relatives and to do shopping. GCA residents were mostly visiting relatives and checking on property. The main reasons for crossing by GCA residents who resided in the GCA prior to the conflict were visiting relatives (64%) and work (16%). Such share is partially attributable to the employment environment in Luhansk oblast that compelled people to seek opportunities in major cities that are mostly in the NGCA now. The differences in some of the reasons for crossing were of a seasonal nature (education, shopping, etc.).

#### REASONS FOR CROSSING<sup>3</sup>



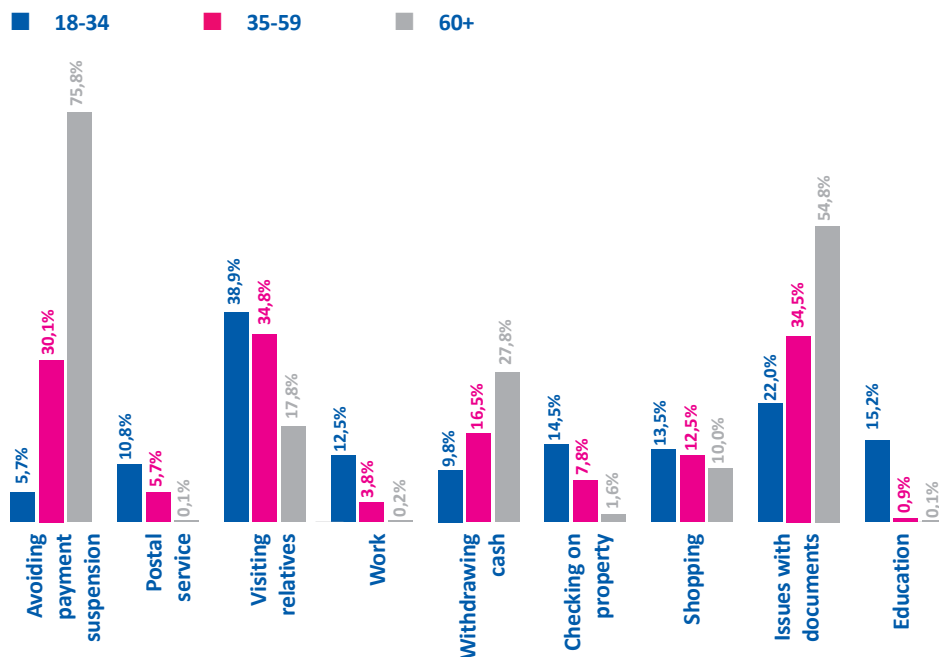
<sup>3</sup> Respondents could indicate more than one reason for their travel. The percentage was calculated based on the total number of people who indicated either the GCA or the NGCA as their current place of residence.

The reasons for crossing also varied depending on the age of respondents. Those over the age of 60 mostly traveled in order to solve issues with governmental agencies, documents or banking services, while respondents aged 18-34 were mostly visiting relatives, solving issues with documents and traveling for education purposes. Overall, younger respondents had fewer reasons to travel through the line of contact. The number of respondents traveling to avoid payment suspension has increased among the respondents in the 35-59 (by 8.1%) and 60+ (6.8%) age groups in comparison to the previous month. The number of respondents over 60 years old who were solving issues with documents decreased by 9.2%.

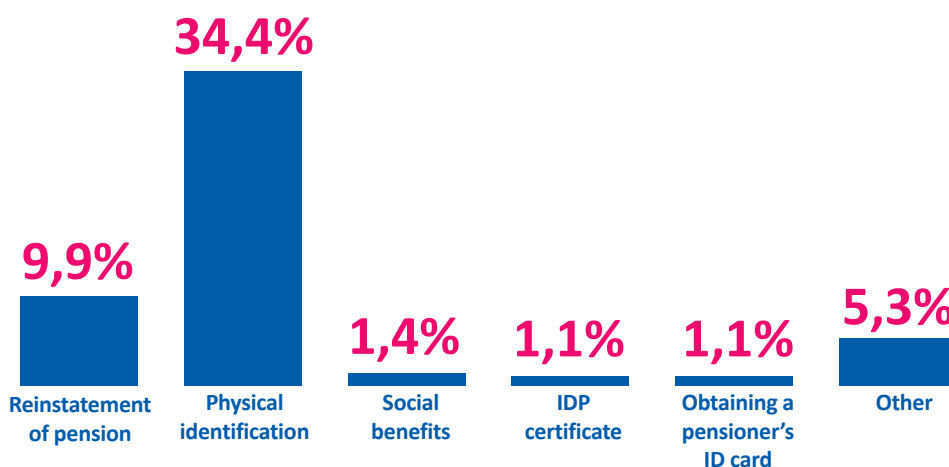
46% of all respondents indicated the need to solve issues with documents among their reasons for crossing the line of contact. Passing physical identification at Oschadbank (cited by 34.4% of all respondents) and reinstatement of pensions (9.9%) remain the most common documentation issues. Among other issues, respondents mostly mentioned submitting documents for internal or international passports. It is noteworthy that the number of respondents traveling to reinstate their pension payments has decreased by 6.4% in comparison to October.

11% of all respondents indicated shopping as one of the reasons for crossing the line of contact. 99% of such respondents were NGCA residents. Food remains the most commonly purchased item, followed by medicine and then clothes. Outside of these items, the most common item mentioned in the «Other» category is household appliances.

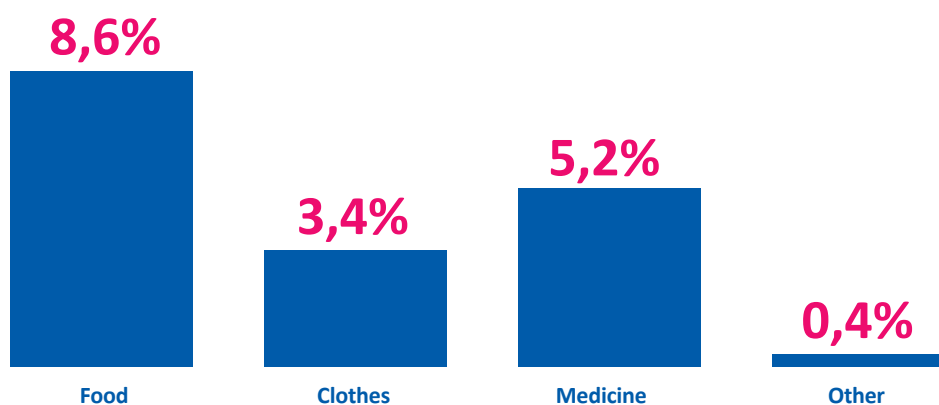
**■ MOST FREQUENT REASONS FOR CROSSING BY AGE<sup>4</sup>**



**■ TYPE OF DOCUMENT ISSUE**



**■ TYPE OF GOODS PURCHASED**



<sup>4</sup> Respondents could indicate more than one reason for their travel. The percentage was calculated based on the total number in the particular age group.

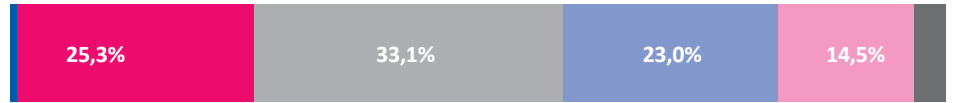
The changes in frequency of crossing the line of contact in comparison to October were insignificant. The majority of all respondents (62%) stated that they cross the line of contact quarterly. Considering the age disaggregation, such a percentage of respondents travelling quarterly and monthly is often 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.

26% of those surveyed stated that they have previously crossed the line of contact during the reporting period. The graphs in this section contain information on the duration of crossing in November. The majority (67%) of such respondents spent 4 to 5 hours to pass the EECPs on both the GCA and NGCA sides. In general, the crossing process continues to slow down: the number of respondents who spent 4-5 hours increased by 9% after increasing by 10% in October. The most considerable increase was observed at Novotroitske EECP and was most likely caused by reconstruction.

The majority of respondents (62%) stated that it took more time to pass the NGCA checkpoints. Stanytsia Luhanska EECP remained the only one where respondents mostly (58%) stated that they spent more time crossing the GCA checkpoints.

**FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT (BY AGE)**

**18-34**



**35-59**



**60+**



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

**DURATION OF CROSSING**

**November**



**October**



**September**



- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 4-5 hours
- 5+ hours
- Not specified

**SIDE OF CHECKPOINT WITH LONGER DURATION OF CROSSING**

**November**



**October**



**September**



- NGCA side
- GCA side
- Approximately the same
- Not specified



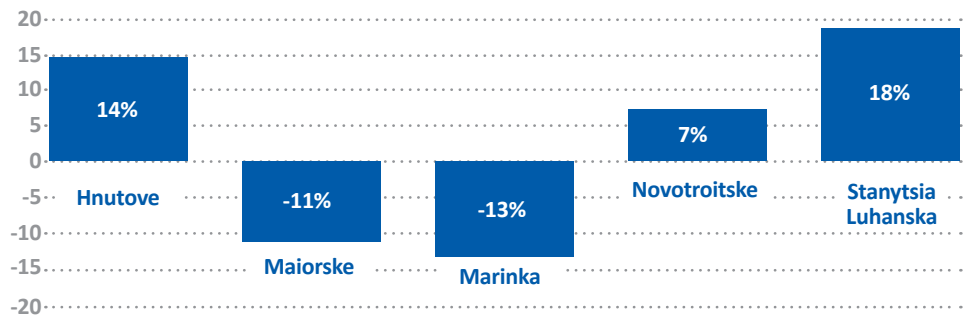
## 4 CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

The general level of concern considerably increased at Hnutove and Stanytsia Luhanska EECs. Such an increase was mostly caused by weather deterioration as slippery roads raised the risk of injuries for pedestrians. While the situation at Stanytsia Luhanska is worsened by the condition of the wooden ramps across the damaged bridge, the level of concern at Hnutove EECP increased due to the lack of maintenance.

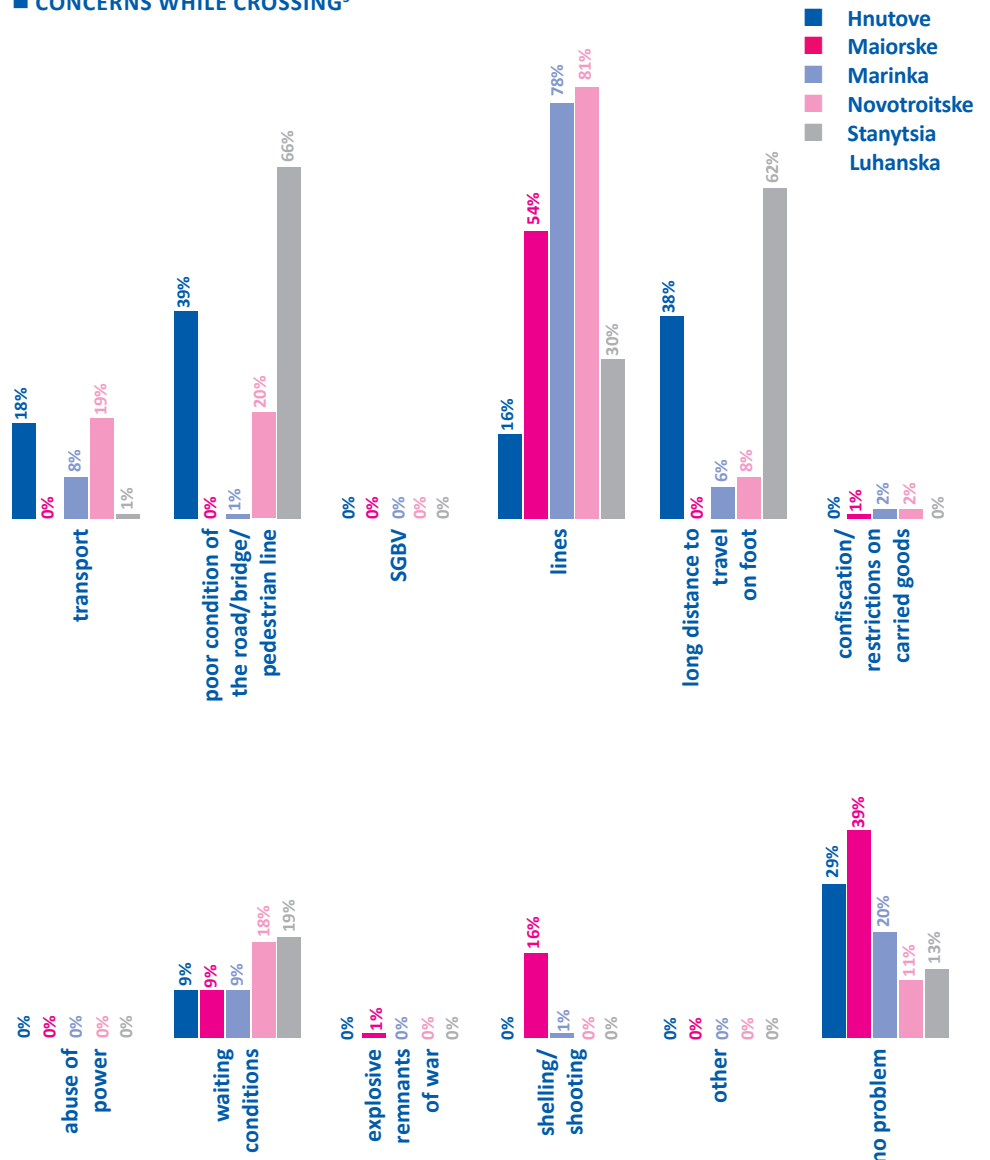
During the reporting period the most considerable changes were observed at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. The share of respondents who complained about the long distance to travel on foot increased by 27%. The share of complaints regarding long lines and poor condition of the road increased by 17% and 12% respectively. Such changes were most likely caused by weather deterioration. Monitors indicated the increased risk of injuries for the pedestrians due to the slippery road surface, especially on the wooden ramps across the damaged bridge. High concern about the poor condition of the road was also observed at Hnutove EECP. The number of complaints increased regarding the poor road condition (20%), long distance to travel on foot (19%) and transportation (16%). However, the share of people concerned about long lines decreased by 19%.

Significant improvement was observed at Marinka EECP. The number of complaints about waiting conditions and transportation decreased by 26% and 18% respectively. This is most likely related to the schedule regulation for buses carrying people between the «zero» checkpoint and the EECP.

■ DYNAMICS IN GENERAL LEVEL OF CONCERN



■ CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING<sup>5</sup>



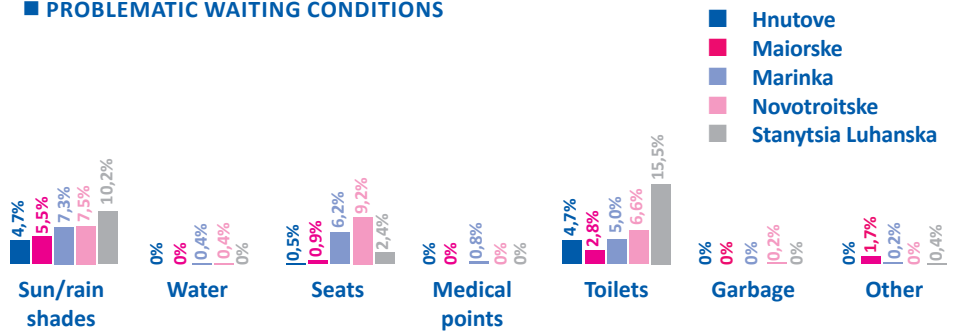
<sup>5</sup> Respondents could indicate more than one concern.

It is noteworthy that the level of concern regarding shelling and shooting remains relatively high at Maiorske EECF.

As people had to spend less time waiting at the «zero» checkpoint, the number of complaints regarding waiting conditions at Marinka EECF significantly decreased. Respondents mentioned concerns about the lack of sheds and seats by 22.5% and 21.6% less often. The number of concerns about the lack of sheds also decreased by 12.6% at Novotroitske EECF due to the reconstruction.

Conversely, respondents at Stanytsia Luhanska complained about waiting conditions slightly more often. The number of complaints regarding the insufficient number or poor condition of latrines increased by 6.7%. According to the information from monitors new latrines were mostly closed due to the reconstruction while the operating ones were not properly maintained.

**PROBLEMATIC WAITING CONDITIONS**



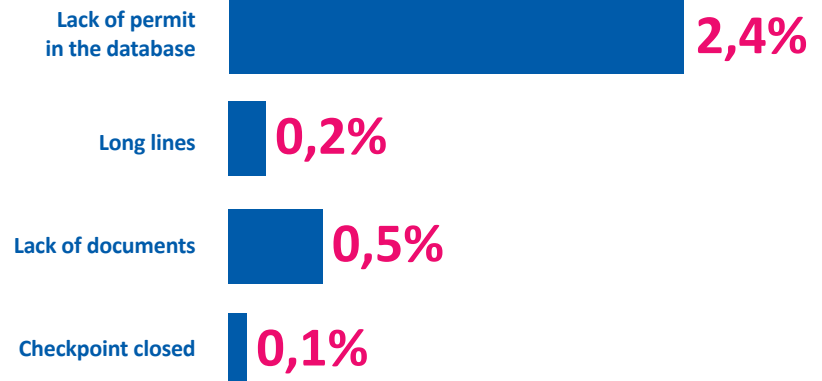
Stanytsia Luhanska EECF

## 5 INABILITY TO CROSS

During the reporting period, only 3% of all respondents mentioned incidents of not being able to cross the line of contact in the past six months. The absence of a crossing permit from the database was the most common reason for such incidents. The share of such respondents and the main reason for inability to cross has remained relatively stable through the whole period of conducting the survey.

The lack of Coordination Group representatives at Hnutove, Novotroitske and Stanytsia Luhanska EECPs still hinders the opportunity for obtaining a permit at the EECP. The State Border Guard Service at these EECPs can assist in obtaining a crossing permit for emergency cases by an expedited procedure, but in all other cases people have to travel to Coordination Groups offices in the GCA.

### REASONS FOR INABILITY TO CROSS<sup>6</sup>



Hnutove EECP

<sup>6</sup> Respondents could mention several reasons.

For more information please contact: [pr@r2p.org.ua](mailto:pr@r2p.org.ua)

More statistical data can be found on the Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring Online Dashboard available at <https://goo.gl/fZxXD1>.