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Civil Protection and
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EASTERN UKRAINE CHECKPOINT MONITORING REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the survey conducted by the Charitable Foundation «The Right to Protection» (R2P) with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the five entry-exit checkpoints (EECPs) to the non-government-controlled area (NGCA) in the first quarter of 2019. The data were collected during regular visits to each of the five EECPs (120 visits in three months). More statistical data are available on the Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring Online Dashboard – <https://goo.gl/Ab1qXs>.



Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

METHODOLOGY

The survey has been administered on a regular basis since June 2017. The survey is 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. The objective of the survey is to explore the motivations and concerns of those traveling 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.

It should be noted that the survey results should not be directly extrapolated onto the entire population traveling through 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 EECPs. The survey was conducted anonymously and on a voluntary basis. All persons interviewed for the survey were informed about its objective. 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, monitors proceeded to survey the next fourth person in line. People traveling both to and from the GCA took part in the survey. At no time did the monitors cross the zero checkpoints into the NGCA. As monitors interview people during the process of crossing the line of contact, it would be premature to ask them about the duration of that particular crossing. As a solution, the question about the previous crossing experience was added to the survey.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On March 1 all EECPs switched to the spring operation schedule (07:00 – 18:30).
- By the end of February, SBGS staff converted to the new database – E-inspector – that includes information on debts, stolen cars, etc. The system of obtaining permits was also upgraded on March 28. New permits will be termless. Old permits will become termless after re-applying for prolongation.
- Reconstruction is still in progress at Hnutove, Novotroitske and Maiorske EECPs.
- R2P monitors reported 14 fatalities in the first quarter of 2019. Six of them took place at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. Six people died in a road accident near Marinka EECP. One man died at Novotroitske EECP. According to the Joint Center for Control and Coordination, one more man died in the buffer zone beyond the Ukrainian zero checkpoint at Maiorske.
- Respondents from the NGCA were often concerned about rumors related to presidential elections such as all EECPs being closed for a week up to March 31 and social payment suspensions for those who will not vote. These rumors considerably affected the crossing process. Reconstruction of the bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP planned for March 25 by Luhansk Oblast Military Civil Administration also did not happen as security guarantees were not provided by the NGCA de-facto authorities.
- 349 individuals (5% of all respondents) mentioned cases of not being able to cross the line of contact in the six months prior to the time of their survey. The vast majority (313) of these cases were caused by the lack of permits in the SBGS database.
- Another attempt to launch Zolote EECP was made from the GCA side. As no preparation works, including demining, were conducted in the NGCA, and security guarantees were not provided, the EECP was launched only unilaterally on March 24.
- The water supply issue at Marinka EECP was solved in mid-March when “Donetskheolohia” completed the work on the new water well.
- It is common for the flow of people crossing the line of contact to be much lower on days where governmental entities and banks are closed (weekends, holidays, etc.).

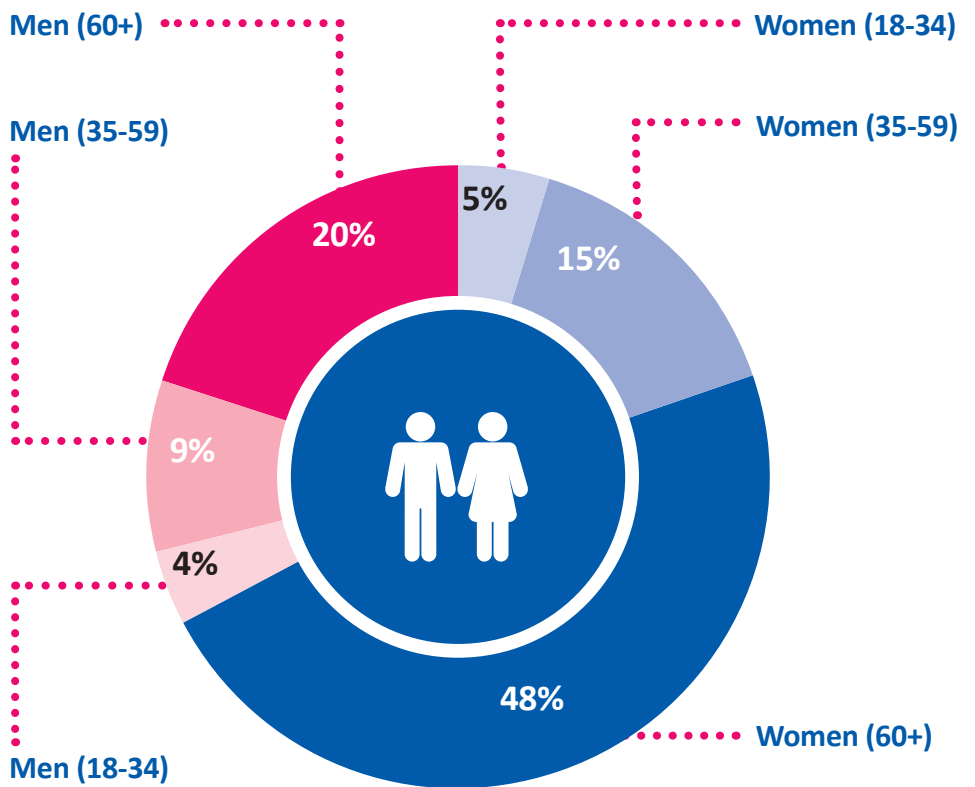


Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

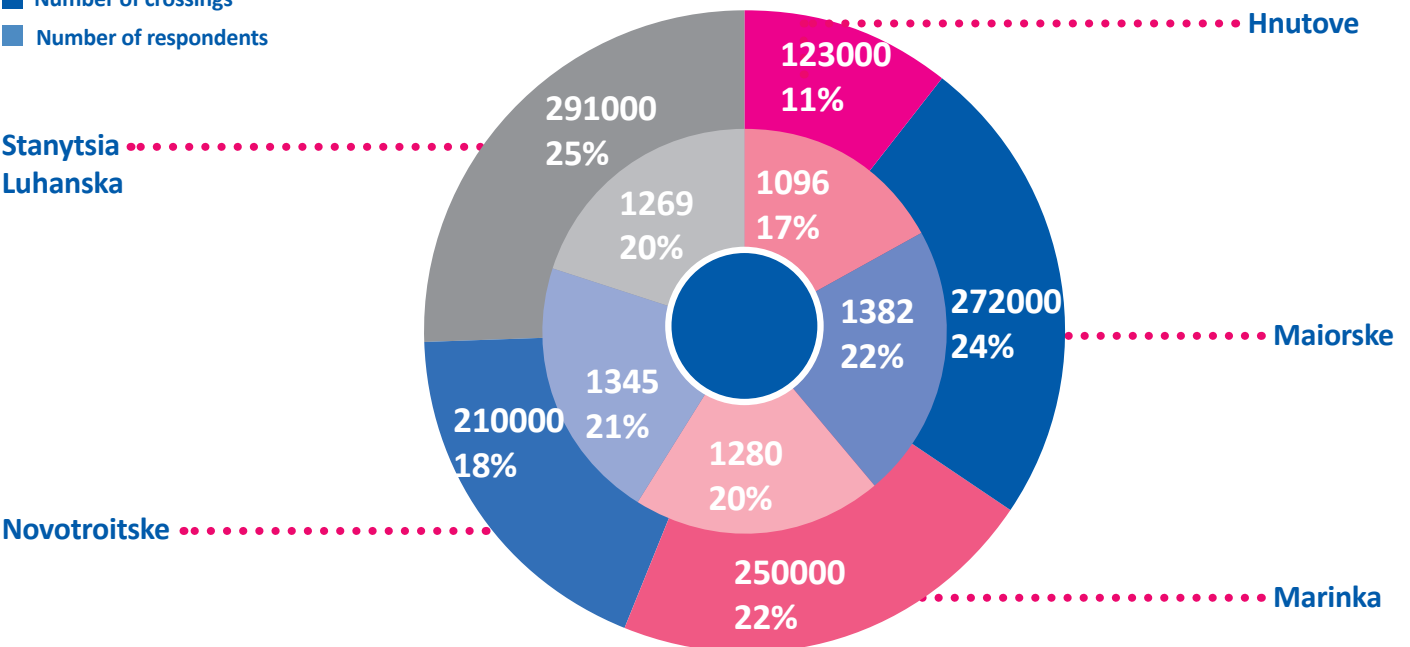
In the first quarter of 2019, R2P monitors surveyed 6,372 individuals. The majority (68%) of respondents were women. 68% of all respondents were over 60 years old. Women over 60 years old constituted almost half of all respondents (3,088 individuals, 48%). 6% of all respondents were traveling with children. The gender ratio was relatively consistent each month. The age disaggregation also remains approximately the same with the elderly representing the predominant majority of interviewees. The low number of younger respondents demonstrates that they have fewer reasons to cross the line of contact. The share of respondents traveling in both directions was almost even: 53% of interviews were conducted with people heading to the NGCA, 47% of respondents were going to the GCA. According to the monitoring observations, NGCA residents tend to make short trips (1 or a few days) to solve their issues and return.

■ GENDER AND AGE OF RESPONDENTS



■ NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY EEC¹

- Number of crossings
- Number of respondents



¹ General statistics on crossings are available at the UNHCR dashboard visualizing data from the State Border Guard Service – <https://goo.gl/TZbU8c>

2 RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT, AND RETURNS

The majority of all respondents (94%) resided in the NGCA at the time of the survey. 49% of NGCA residents stated that they live more than 20 kilometers from the line of contact, 15% – within 20 km. 36% (2,124 individuals) did not specify the distance. It is important to note that the GCA residents have fewer reasons to visit the NGCA, while people who reside in the NGCA often need services that are unavailable or limited in the NGCA. According to the observations of monitors, the flow of people crossing the line of contact is much lower on days where governmental entities and banks are closed (weekends, holidays, etc.).

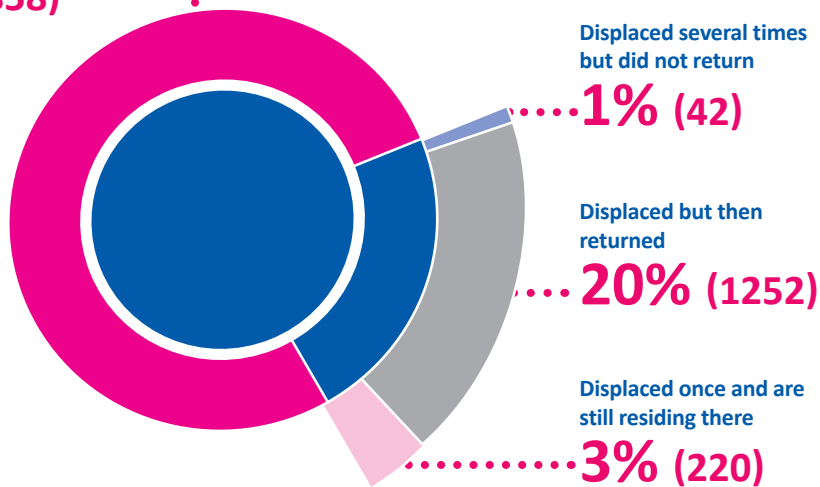
76% of interviewees indicated that they have never moved due to the conflict, so the number of actual or former IDPs is low among respondents. Although the majority of respondents who were displaced at least once already returned to their previous place of residence, such share should not be extrapolated to all internally displaced persons or NGCA residents who do not travel across the line of contact at all or who do not do so through official EECs.

The stabilized situation was cited among the reasons for return by the majority of returnees (862 individuals – 14% of all respondents), which correlates to the share of the NGCA residents who live more than 20 kilometers away from the line of contact. 58% of returnees stated that their decision to return was made voluntarily. 18% were compelled to return due to personal circumstances.

■ DISPLACEMENT

Never displaced

76%
(4858)



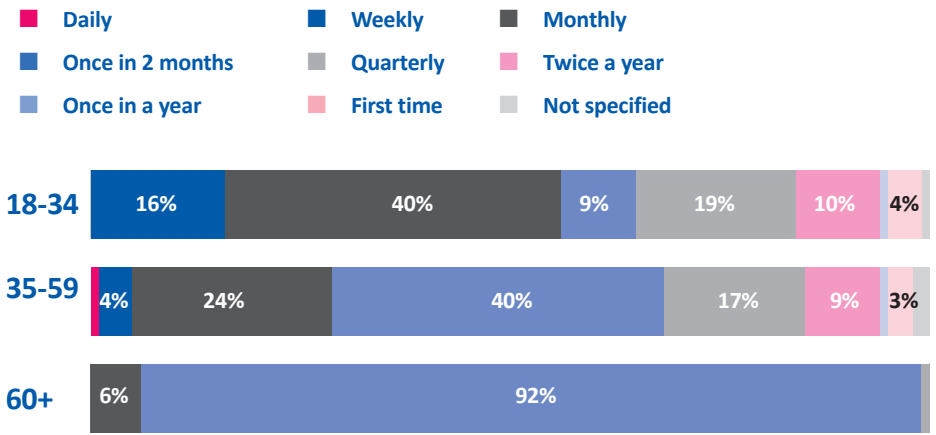
Maiorske EEC

3 FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF CROSSING

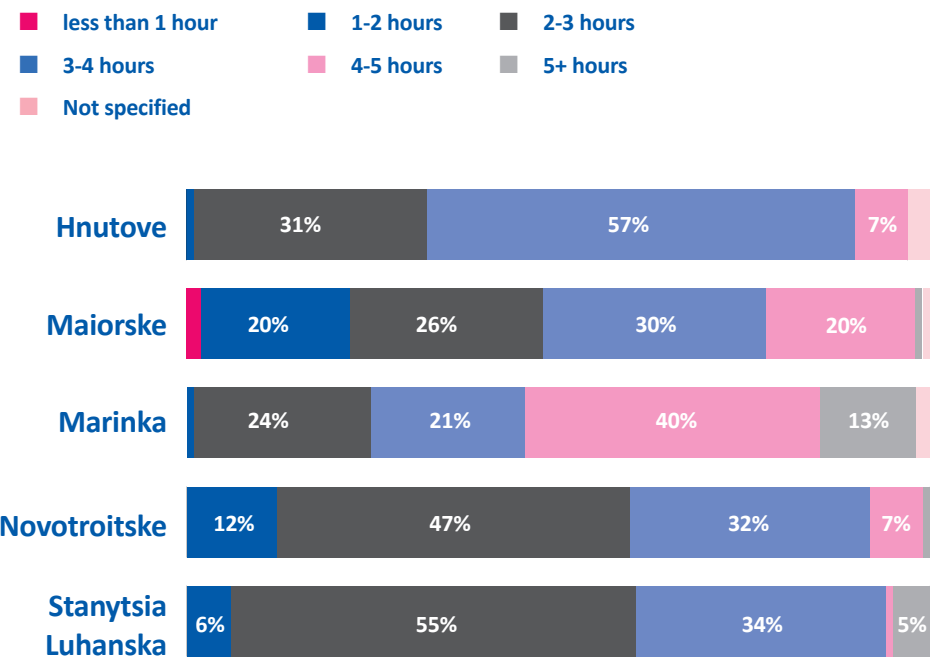
As pensioners are mostly traveling to fit in the 60-day limit of being away from the GCA, the vast majority of respondents over 60 years old (92%) cross the line of contact once every two months. Younger respondents who do not have to meet such conditions plan their trips based on their own schedules and are not tied to any particular frequency.

As people are surveyed while they are in a process of crossing the line of contact, the questions related to duration refer to the previous crossing. 66% of all respondents stated that they had previously crossed the line of contact in January, February or March 2019. The largest share of respondents stated it took 2 to 3 hours to cross the line of contact. 33% said it took 3 to 4. It is noteworthy that the crossing process considerably accelerated: the share of such respondents who spent over 4 hours on crossing decreased from 34% in January to 14% in March. It is also noteworthy that 55% of such respondents stated it took longer to pass checkpoints in the NGCA. 12% said they spent more time on the GCA checkpoints. 33% stated it was approximately the same.

FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



DURATION OF CROSSING BY EECP



4 REASONS FOR CROSSING²

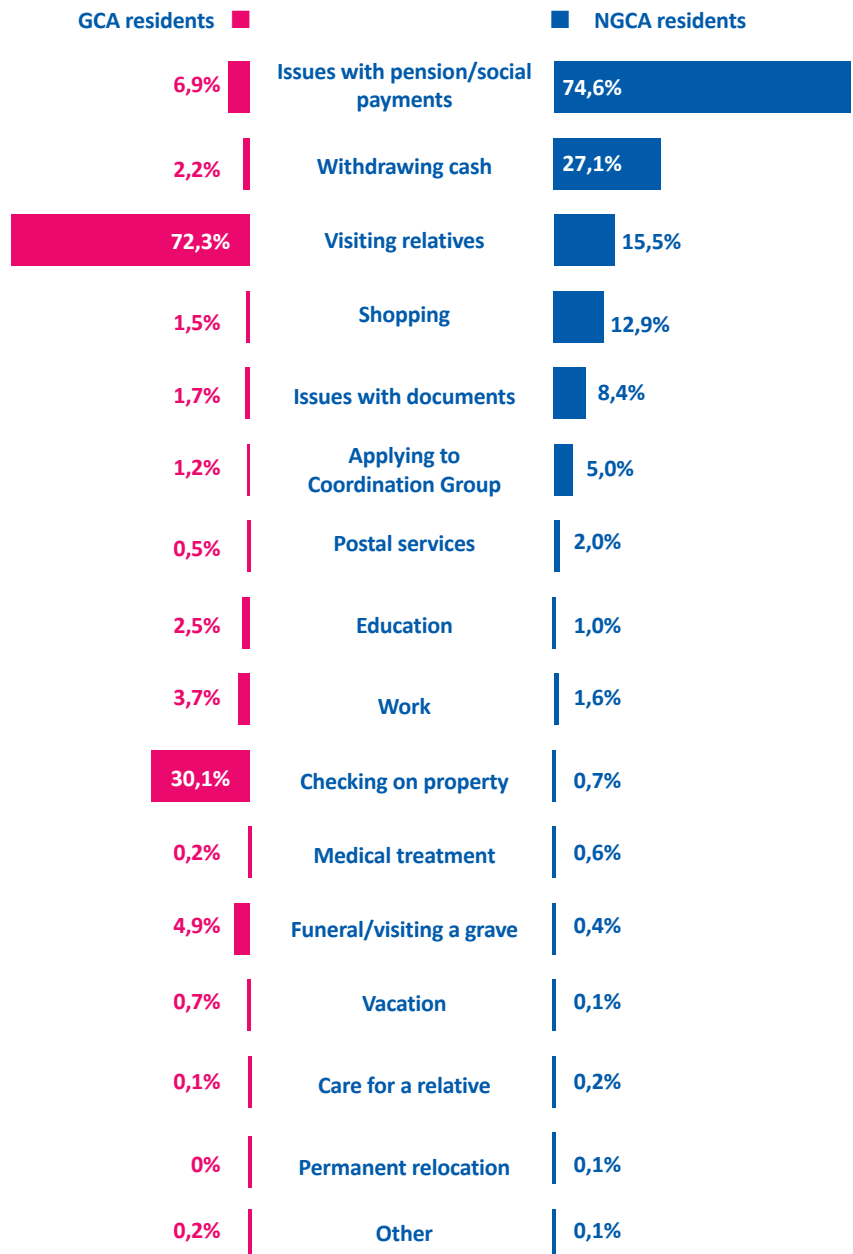
No considerable changes in the reasons for crossing were observed during the first quarter of 2019. As in earlier reports, they differ substantially for GCA and NGCA residents.

Solving issues with pensions or social payments is the most common reason for NGCA residents. It is also a lot more common among elderly people: 90% of respondents over 60 years old mentioned it among their reasons. These issues include avoiding payment suspension due to 60-day limit of not being in the GCA (61% of all respondents); passing physical identification (51%); obtaining or reinstating of payments (9%), etc.

Out of all people who had issues with documents, 64% were related to passport (5% of all respondents – 329 individuals). Among other documents respondents mentioned obtaining death (72 individuals) and birth (34) certificates, digitalized pension cards (47) and IDP certificates (26).

12% of all respondents indicated shopping as one of their reasons for crossing. 99% of them were NGCA residents. The most common purchases included food (10% of all respondents – 645 individuals) and medicines (6%). Among others were hygiene items (2%), clothes (1%), household appliances (1%), etc.

REASONS FOR CROSSING (BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE)



² General statistics on crossings are available at the UNHCR dashboard visualizing data from the State Border Guard Service – <https://goo.gl/TZbU8c>

5 DESTINATION OF THE TRIP

As the NGCA residents often travel to solve issues related to state, legal or bank services it is important to understand the demand on the infrastructure of the localities in the GCA. 77% of all NGCA residents agreed to answer the question about their destination point. The majority of such respondents (94%) were visiting localities in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast, giving preference to the bigger ones located closer to the EECP. 4% (76 individuals) were heading to Zaporizhzhia Oblast, 2% (34 individuals) – to Dnipro Oblast.

The most common destination point for respondents surveyed at Hnutove EECP who answered this question was Mariupol (75% – 393 individuals). Among other – Berdiansk (Zaporizhzhya Oblast, 7%), Nikolske (Donetsk Oblast, 6.5%), Mangush (Donetsk Oblast, 5%) and Sartana (Donetsk Oblast, 2.5%).

Respondents at Maiorske EECP were mostly traveling to Bakhmut (48% – 190 individuals). 10% were heading to Kostyantynivka, 7% to Slovyansk and 7% to Kramatorsk.

Respondents surveyed at Marinka EECP were almost equally often traveling

to Kurakhove (34% – 184 individuals) and Pokrovsk (30%). Selydove (9%) and Marinka (9%) were also quite frequently mentioned.

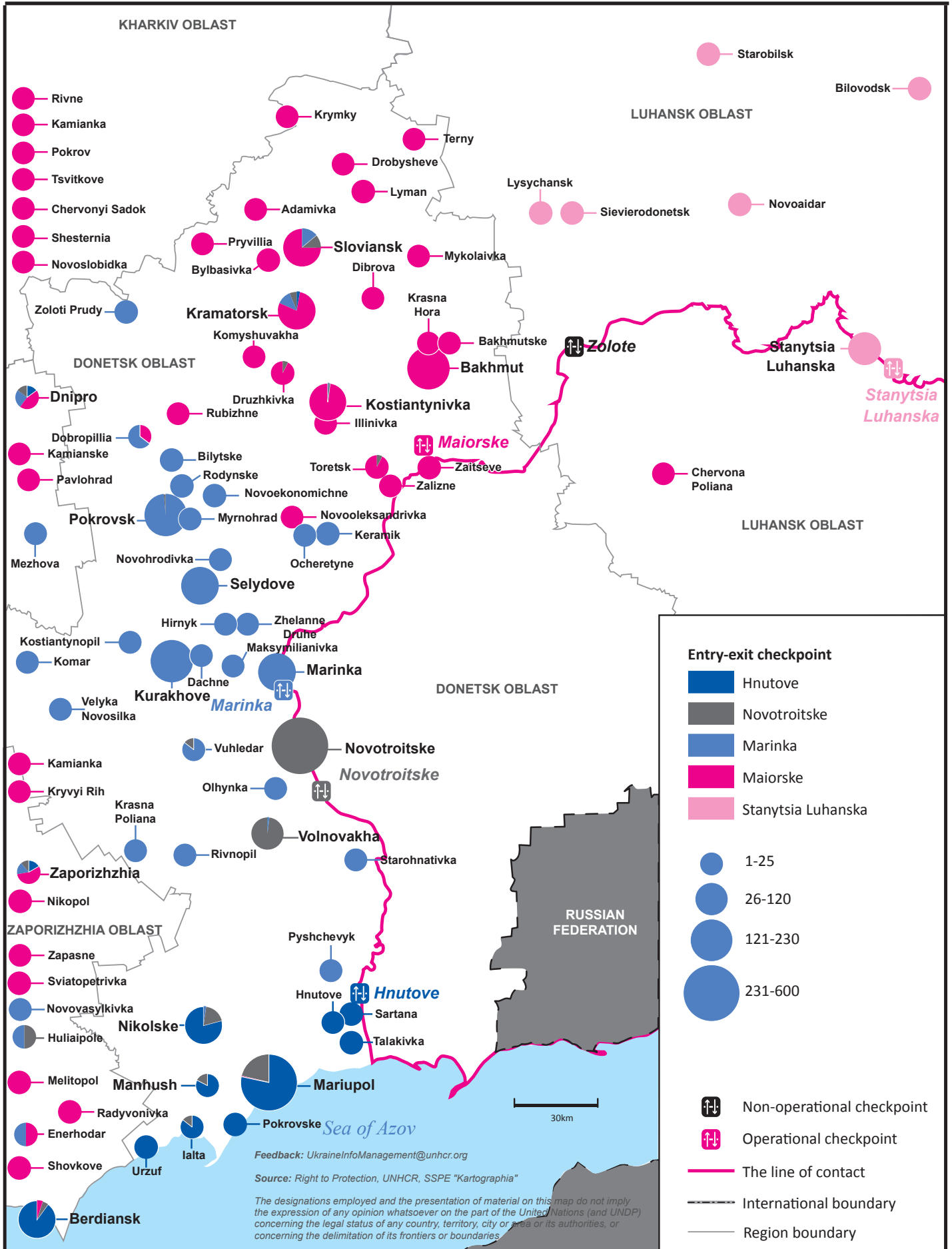
The village of Novotroitske itself was the most common destination point among those surveyed at Novotroitske EECP (61%). They also mentioned Mariupol (17%) and Volnovakha (14%).

The number of respondents who agreed to answer this question at Stanytsia Luhanska was the lowest (60 individuals). They were mostly traveling to Stanytsia Luhanska (36), Sievierodonetsk (10) and Bilovodsk (9).



Maiorske EECP

■ MAIN SETTLEMENTS OF DESTINATION OF THE NGCA RESIDENTS CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



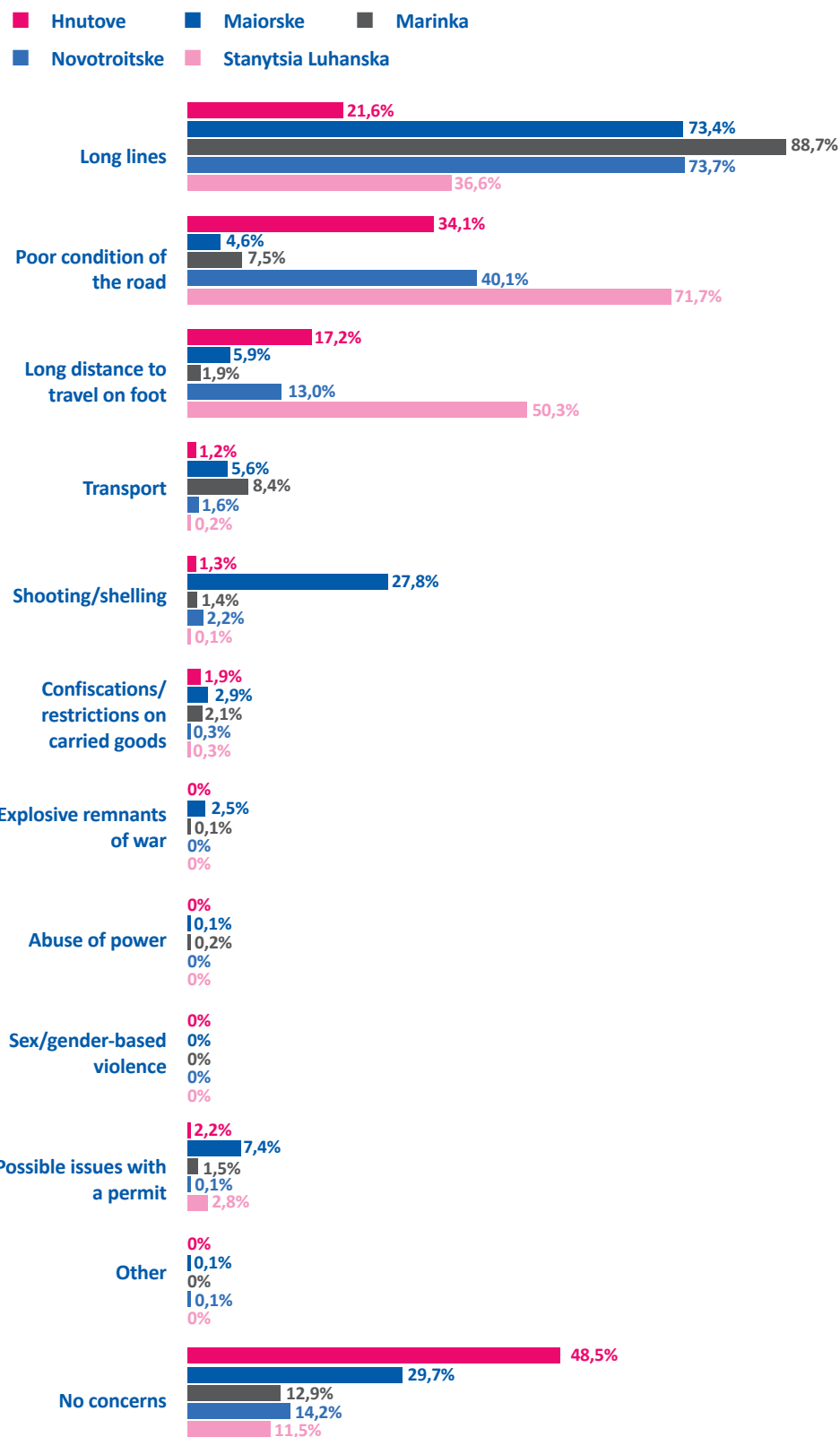
6 CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT³

Long lines remain a major concern at all EECPs.

The number of respondents who did not raise any concerns slightly increased from 18.7% in January to 23.3% in March. This includes a 13.6% decrease in a number of concerns regarding the condition of the road (due to seasonal changes and reconstruction improvements), but at the same time there was a discernible (11.3%) increase in complaints about waiting times.

Respondents did not report any cases of sex- and gender-based violence to monitors. 5 respondents mentioned abuse of power among their concerns: 3 of them took place in the NGCA and 2 in the GCA. People often feel intimidated about articulating such complaints, so the level of such concern is most likely understated.

CONCERNS (BY EECP)

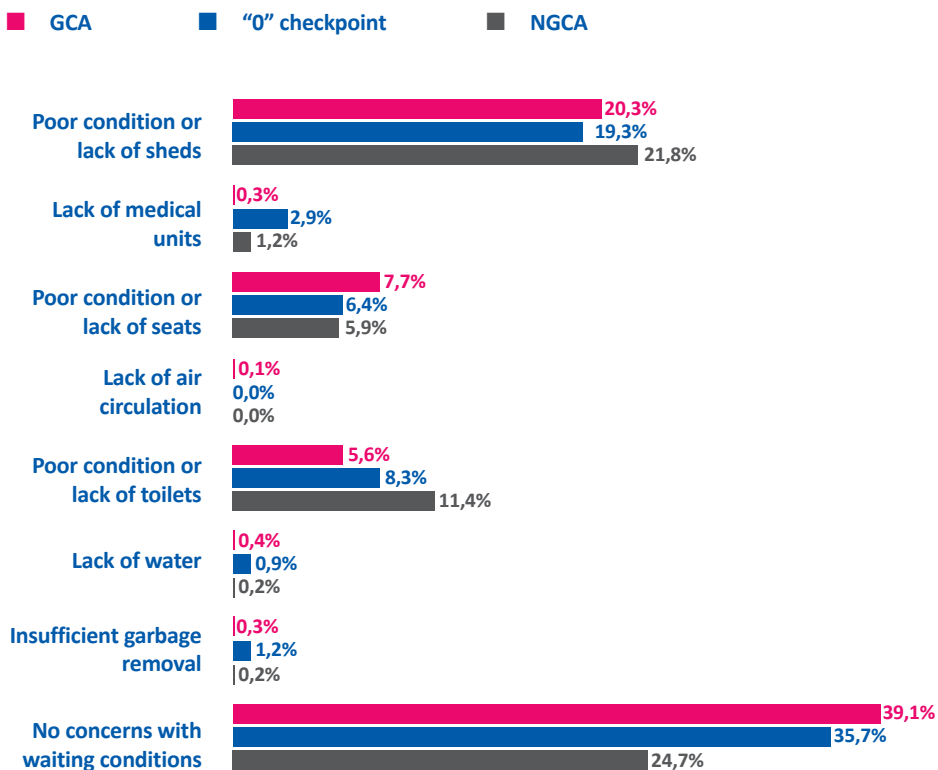


³ Respondents could indicate several concerns

WAITING CONDITIONS⁴

Among the five EECPs, the conditions at Hnutove were the least concerning to the respondents. The flow of people traveling through Hnutove EECP is the lowest, which also affects the level of concerns among respondents. In contrast, the highest share of concerned respondents was at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, which is the most crowded one. Concerns about sheds, seats, and toilets were very common at Novotroitske and Hnutove and were caused by temporary reconstruction inconveniences. Many respondents at Stanytsia Luhanska were also concerned about sheds that are too small to shelter all the people in lines. By the end of March, it was decided to build additional sheds at Stanytsia Luhanska to improve the waiting conditions. Up to mid-March issues with water supply were hindering the maintenance of toilets at Marinka EECP. The issue was solved when «Donetskheolohia» completed works on the new water well.

■ WAITING CONDITIONS



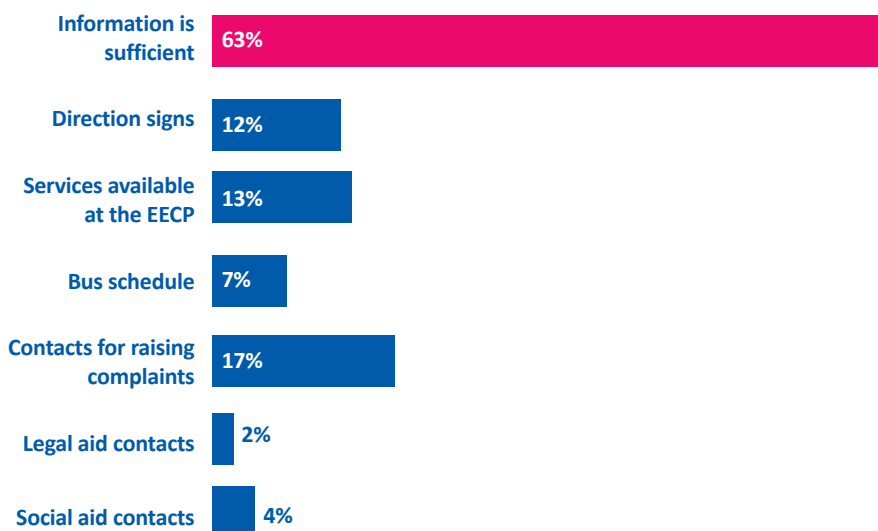
Marinka EECP

⁴ Respondents could indicate several issues

AWARENESS OF RESPONDENTS⁵

63.3% of all respondents do not feel they lack any information. However, it should be noted that 16.7% mentioned the lack or poor visibility of contacts of entities to address their complaints regarding the situation at the EECP (the share implicitly indicates that they might have such complaints). Lack of the information about services available at the EECP (medical aid, water supply, toilets etc. – 13.2%) and direction signs (12.3%) were also frequently mentioned.

■ LACK OF INFORMATION



Novotroitske EECP

⁵ Respondents could indicate several issues

For more information please contact: pr@r2p.org.ua