UKRAINE COVID-19 Response

In Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, the local branch of the Oschadbank prepared red signs near ATM for physical distancing of people withdrawing money. Photo: UNHCR

Large crowds gathered at the Mariinka EECP in anticipation of crossing into NGCA. Long queues of cars were also observed. Photo by R2P.

Large crowds gathered at the Stanytsia Luhanska EECP in anticipation of crossing. UNHCR's NGO partner R2P noticed that physical distancing was not observed between those who waited. Photo by R2P.

Situation in the Entry-Exit Checkpoints (EECPs) in east Ukraine

- **Intro:** On 10 June, before noon, UNDSS in Ukraine has already reported that despite the announcement by the JFO of a partial reopening of the Mariinka and Stanytsia Luhanska EECPs (between 11.00 to 14.00 only for certain categories of people who have socio-humanitarian grounds and students wishing to sit their university exams), the de facto authorities in both Donetsk and Luhansk informed that the EECPs would remain closed until further notice claiming precautions related to COVID-19 prevention measures. As a result of the announcement that the EECP would open, large queues of cars with persons sleeping had already gathered since a day before on both GCA and NGCA sides.

- **Stanytsia Luhanska EECP**: On 10 June, at approx. 11:00, 35 persons were already waiting for permission to cross this pedestrian-only EECP. While waiting, a man aged 57 fainted. At approx. 11:12, six persons crossed the 'contact line' towards NGCA; however, they all returned back to GCA EECP at around 12:00. They waited for the permission of the Luhansk NGCA de facto authorities, but it never came. Between 11:00 and 14:00, the number of people waiting to cross into NGCA increased to approx. 100. However, the de facto authorities only permitted the transfer of a coffin containing a deceased person. Throughout the day, Governmental agencies such as the State Border Guard Services (SBGS), Ukrainian Police, Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC), State Emergency Services (SES), Security Services of Ukraine (SSU) were present on the ground. Nevertheless, physical distancing between people present was not observed. Furthermore the Ukrainian authorities announced that internet routers had been installed so that people could download the tracing app; however, UNHCR could not confirm that the necessary equipment was already in place.

- **Mariinka EECP:** Starting on 9 June, approx. hundreds of cars and persons were already waiting for the crossing to happen. On 10 June, UNHCR had already received reports early in the day through a civilian that called R2P's hotline that the de facto authorities on the NGCA side of the EECP informed those waiting that a "data base failure" on the GCA side meant that the crossing would not be possible. Because of the heat, a women who was waiting to cross fainted and was supported by the NGO *Première Urgence Internationale*. Firstly, a vehicle decided to cross at approx. 10:50 and was not allowed to cross into NGCA Donetsk and returned 40 minutes later. Later, four persons tried crossing but also did not manage to cross up until writing of this report. On 11 June, there are approx. 20 cars waiting on GCA side to cross the EECP, but are unable to cross. Similarly to Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, authorities were present. UNHCR's NGO partner R2P noted some preparations for reopening of all EECP, but did not notice any new WI-FI/internet service. R2P was told that in case those who cross do not have internet to download the necessary app, they have to sign a declaration in the presence of the SBGS, Ukrainian Police and Medical staff confirming the address where she/he will be self-isolating. If the person does not have a clear location for self-isolation, they will be offered to do so in a hospital in Volnovakha district hospital (to which UNHCR provided non-food items, including mattresses).

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