

CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE: April 2021 Snapshot

○ This month, **crossing the contact line remained possible only through two EECPs:** Novotroitske in Donetsk Oblast and Stanytsia Luhanska in Luhanska Oblast, at a level considerably below the pre-COVID period. According to Joint Forces Operation data and R2P monitoring, **the number of people** crossing the contact line **was without significant difference** in April compared to March: over 53,000 and 52,823 respectively.

○ People crossing from NGCA at Novotroitske EECP in Donetsk Oblast can buy a new cell phone if they don't have one or if theirs does not allow installing "Vdoma". In April, a new procedure for this was put in place. Following a purchase order online, a store employee waits with the new phone at the entrance to the EECP. The client is accompanied to the entrance by servicemen and R2P to finalize the purchase. **On average, this procedure is used by about 5 people per crossing day.**

○ On 22 March, amendments were made to Resolution #1236 on quarantine COVID-19 measures that will facilitate the crossing procedure for NGCA residents. **Therefore, when the vaccination starts NGCA residents willing to receive COVID-19 vaccines in GCA will be exempted from the mandatory two-week self-isolation (only under the conditions of presenting an invitation to vaccination with a unique identifier).** However, the impact of the regulation remains limited given the current lack of access to vaccination.

○ During April, **4,554 vulnerable elderly persons were provided with transport support at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP by the NGO "Proliska" e-vehicle.** Also, NGO "Proliska" with the financial support of UNHCR, installed two bus stops with solar panels and the possibility to charge devices.

For details on sample and other statistics from the survey visit Eastern Ukraine Checkpoint Monitoring Online Dashboard: <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/eecp-monitoring-2021>



636 individuals were surveyed by R2P in April¹. Among them: **60 percent** were **women** and **40 percent** were **men**.



On two occasions, the **"Vdoma" app** in April blocked people at EECPs for several hours.



Issues with permits and authorisations are the **main concerns** of people when crossing EECP.



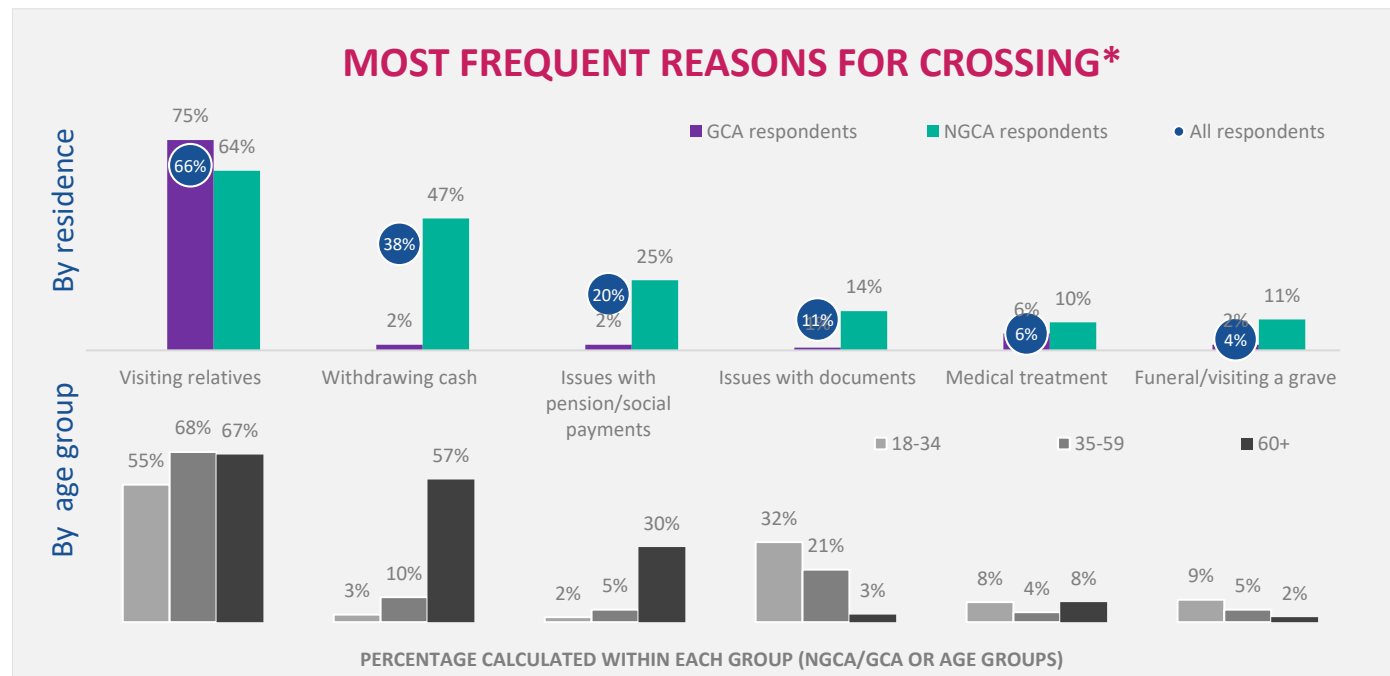
R2P facilitated **214 requests** for crossing through the fast-track procedure and assisted about **1300 persons** with installing **"Vdoma" app**.



The **duration of crossing** at EECPs decreased in general in 2021, compared to 2020.



Main reason for crossing is **visiting relatives**. NGCA residents also come for banking, pensions and social payments.



¹The findings of the monitoring should not be directly extrapolated to the entire population. * Respondents could select several options

*(N)GCA – (non-)government-controlled areas

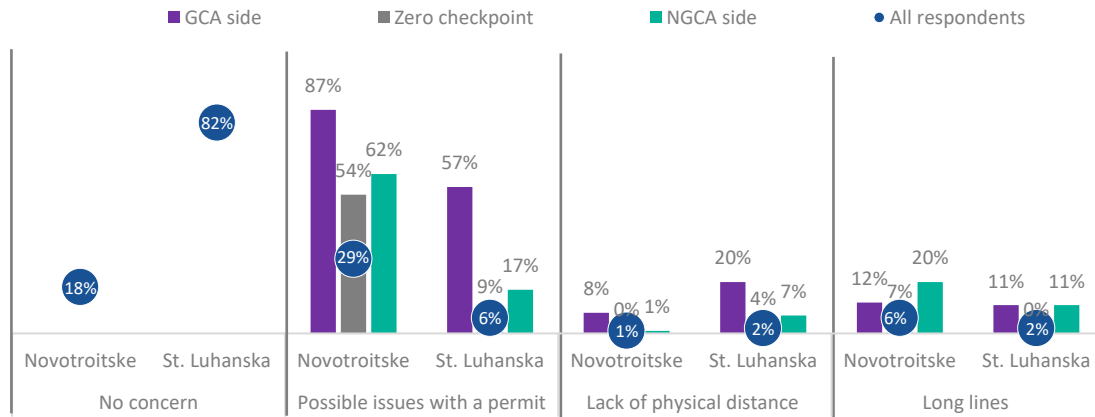
EECP – entry-exit checkpoint

NGO - non-government organization

PCR - Polymerase chain reaction

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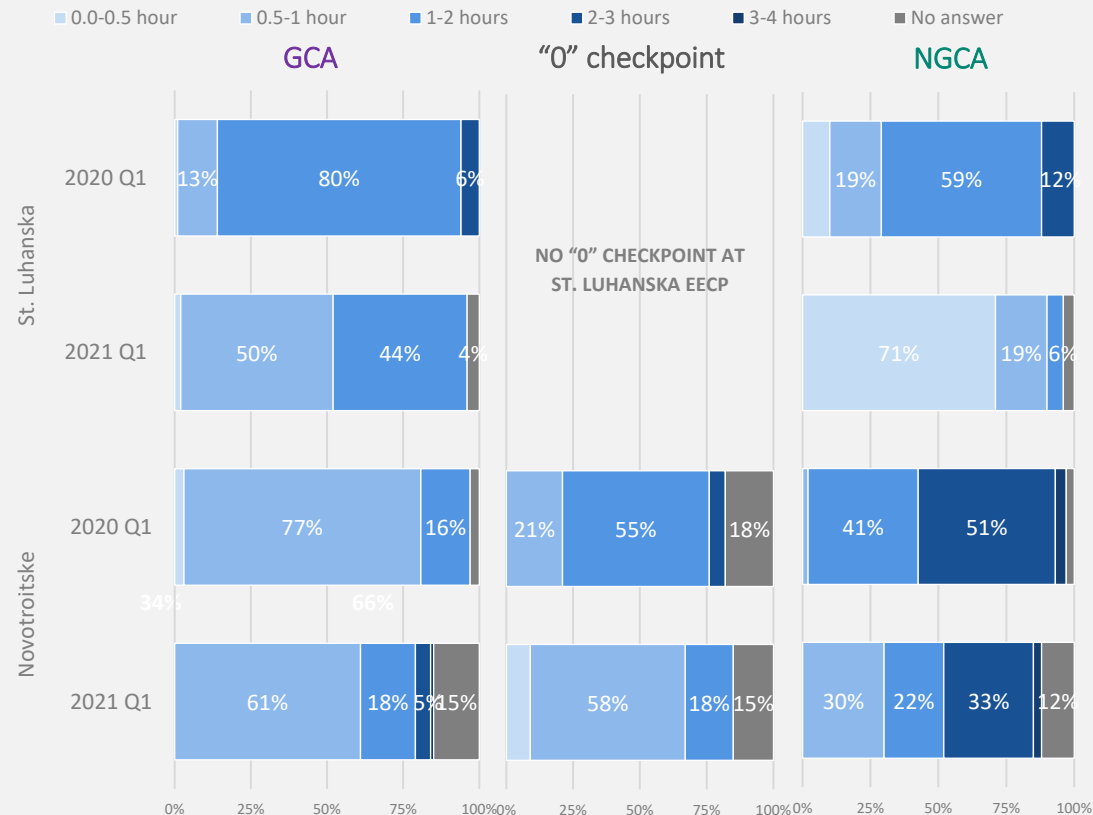
MAIN CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING*



PERCENTAGE CALCULATED WITHIN EACH GROUP (NGCA/GCA/ZERO CP AND EECPS)

DURATION OF CROSSINGS BY EECPS

(2020 Q1 vs 2021 Q1)

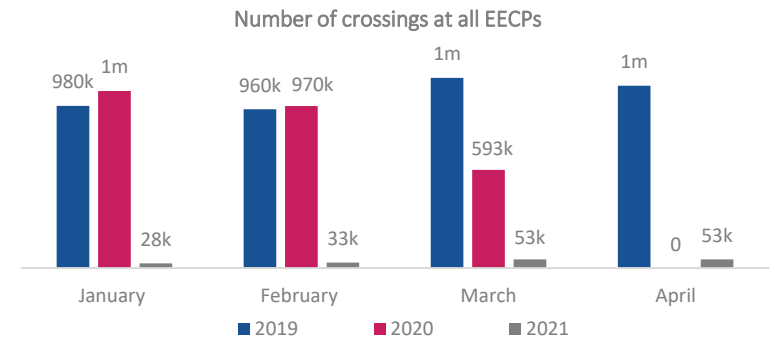


OBSERVATIONS

- In April, **80 percent (882)** of people who crossed to GCA passed free rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 **at Novotroitske EEC** and **7 percent (1,699) at Stanytsia Lyhanska EEC**. However, there were no places in the observation facility in Luhansk Oblast still. In Donetsk Oblast, **32 people were sent to the observation facility**, all of them either had an inappropriate phone model or no phone at all.
- On 30 April, from the morning until 13.45, **"Vdoma" app was not working**, as people were not able to receive the required confirmation message. R2P monitors reported the technical problem to the Ministry of Digital Transformation. Until the problem was fixed, people were waiting, gathered in line. At Stanytsia Luhanska, about 500-600 people were stuck, and about 130 at Novotroitske, including children, pregnant women, people with disabilities. Many people did not succeed to catch the train or bus for further travel.
- On 12 April, **was identified a new problem with installing "Vdoma" on iPhones**: the "Vdoma" app was loaded incorrectly. The problem was solved after the involvement of The Ministry of Digital Transformation.
- **The time required to cross EECs decreased in general at both operational EECs in 2021, compared to 2020, mostly as a result of the smaller number of people crossing the EEC daily.** This trend is less significant for the crossing of the GCA side of EECs most probably because of COVID-19 preventive measures imposed there (COVID-19 tests, installation of "Vdoma" app). The relative increase of duration of the crossing in 2021 on the GCA side of the Novotroitske EEC (6% of respondents reported spending more than 2-3 hours) may be explained by issues with permits faced by people at this EEC in 2021.

NUMBER OF CROSSINGS IN APRIL²

The total number of crossings in April 2021 was over 53,000. In Donetsk Oblast, 1,107 people were authorized to in direction to GCA and 932 to NGCA. In Luhanska Oblast, about 25,000 people crossed the contact line to GCA and about 26,000 people to NGCA. The procedure of crossing remained unchanged at both EECs.



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