

# CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

## MONITORING REPORT



July 2018

# CONTENTS

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	INTRODUCTION	3
	OVERALL SUMMARY	3
<b>1</b>	DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS	4
<b>2</b>	RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURNS	5
<b>3</b>	REASONS, FREQUENCY AND DURATION	6
<b>4</b>	CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT	9
<b>5</b>	INABILITY TO CROSS	11

## INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of the July 2018 round of the survey conducted by the Charitable Foundation «The Right to Protection» (R2P) at the five entry-exit checkpoints (EECPs) to the nongovernment-controlled area (NGCA) administered on a regular basis since June 2017. The EECPs are located in Donetsk (Maiorske, Marinka, Hnutove and Novotroitske) and Luhansk (Stanytsia Luhanska) oblasts. The survey is a part of the monitoring of violations of the human 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 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 the survey results should not be directly extrapolated onto the entire population crossing 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 government-controlled side of EECPs in the lines for pedestrians and for vehicles both in the GCA and NGCA directions. 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 2-30 July 2018 during 39 visits to the five EECPs. This reporting period was characterized by the vacation season and reconstruction work at Marinka and Stanytsia Luhanska.

## OVERALL SUMMARY

- The gender and age proportion of respondents have remained relatively stable throughout all survey rounds. Women over 60 years old constitute the largest share of respondents.
- The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents remains unchanged. The fluctuations in disaggregation of reasons for crossing were of a seasonal nature: more civilians were crossing the line of contact for recreation.
- On average it took respondents 2-3 hours to pass all checkpoints. It took the most time to cross the line of contact at Maiorske EECP. Crossing times at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP were the shortest. The crossing process took more time at NGCA checkpoints at all EECPs except Stanytsia Luhanska.
- All State Emergency Service (SES) paramedics were withdrawn from EECPs in Donetsk Oblast due to internal regulations.
- Among the positive developments included the beginning of reconstruction works at Marinka and Stanytsia Luhanska.



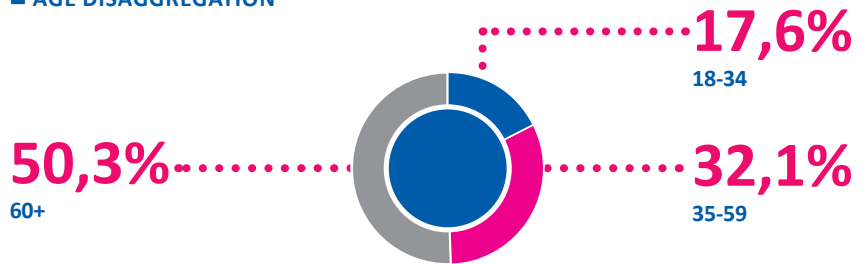
Novotroitske EECP

# 1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

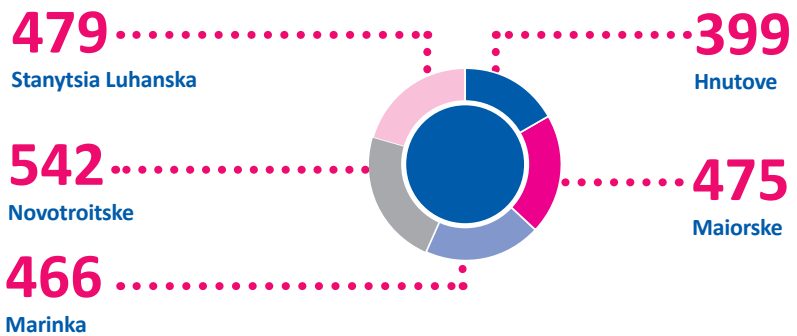
During the reporting period, R2P monitors surveyed a total of **2,361** persons crossing the line of contact. 50.6% of them were travelling to the GCA and 49.4% to the NGCA.

33.2% of respondents were male and 66.8% were female. 11.1% of respondents were travelling with children. The number of such respondents has increased since May due to vacation and examination periods. The elderly remain the largest age group (50.3% of all respondents), which is related to the administrative burdens people registered in the NGCA must undergo to receive their pensions. The overall demographics of respondents have remained quite similar throughout all survey rounds.

## AGE DISAGGREGATION



## NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS BY EEC

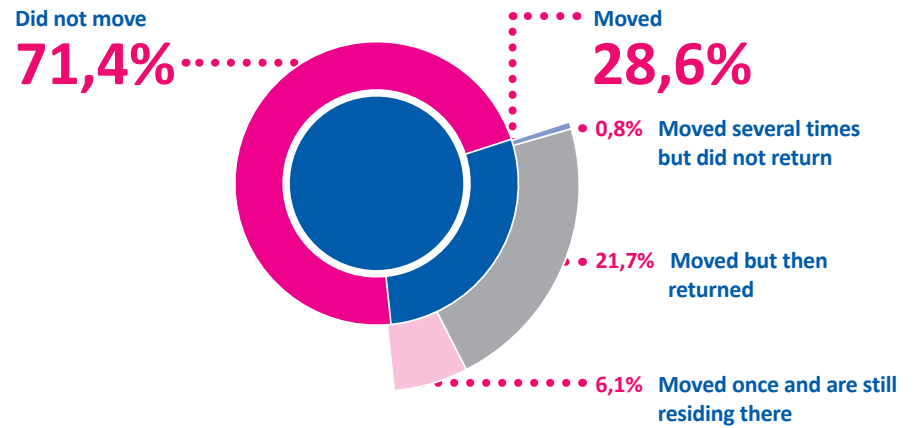


Maiorske EEC

## 2 RESIDENCE, DISPLACEMENT AND RETURN

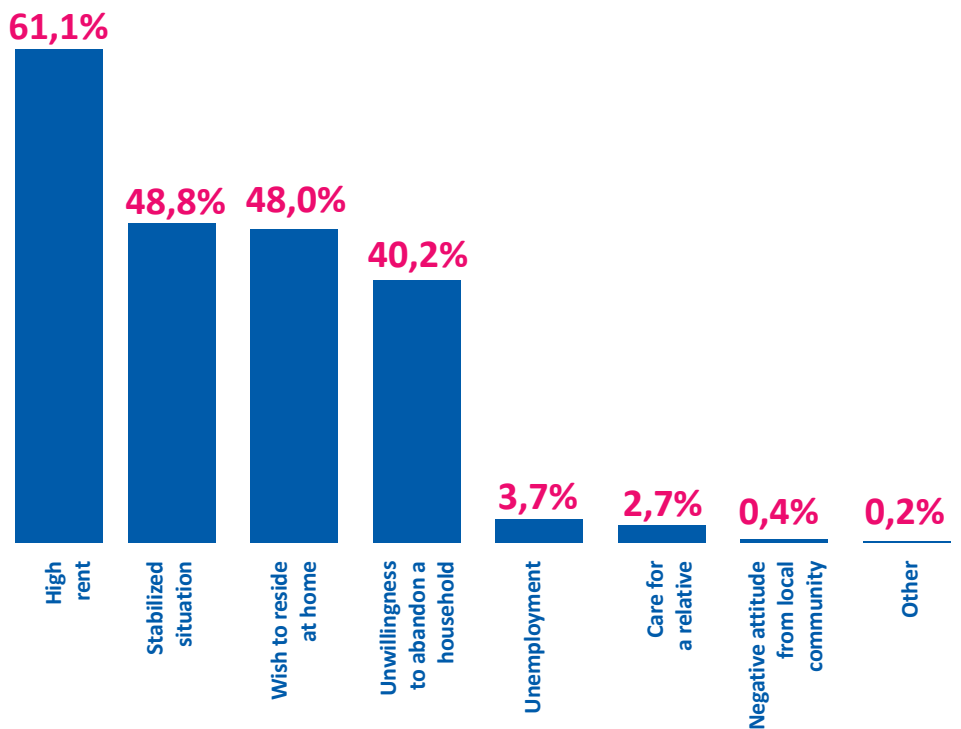
94.4% of respondents stated that they resided in the NGCA prior to the conflict. 88.2% of all respondents cited the NGCA as their place of residence at the time of the survey. The trend of GCA residents having far fewer reasons to travel across the line of contact than NGCA residents remains unchanged. 71.4% of all respondents stated that they never changed their place of residence due to the conflict. The majority of respondents who moved at least once (21.7% of all respondents) returned to their original place of residence<sup>1</sup>.

### DISPLACEMENT



The most common reasons for return indicated by respondents who changed their place of residence but then returned were high rent (61.1%) and stabilized situation (48.8%). Wish to reside at home (48%) and unwillingness to abandon a household (40,2%) were also common reasons for returning. Though there was a significant difference in disaggregation of reasons for return in comparison to the previous reporting period (for instance, 51.5% of returnees surveyed in June explained their decision by unaffordable rent in the GCA while in July this option was mentioned by 9.6% more 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.

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



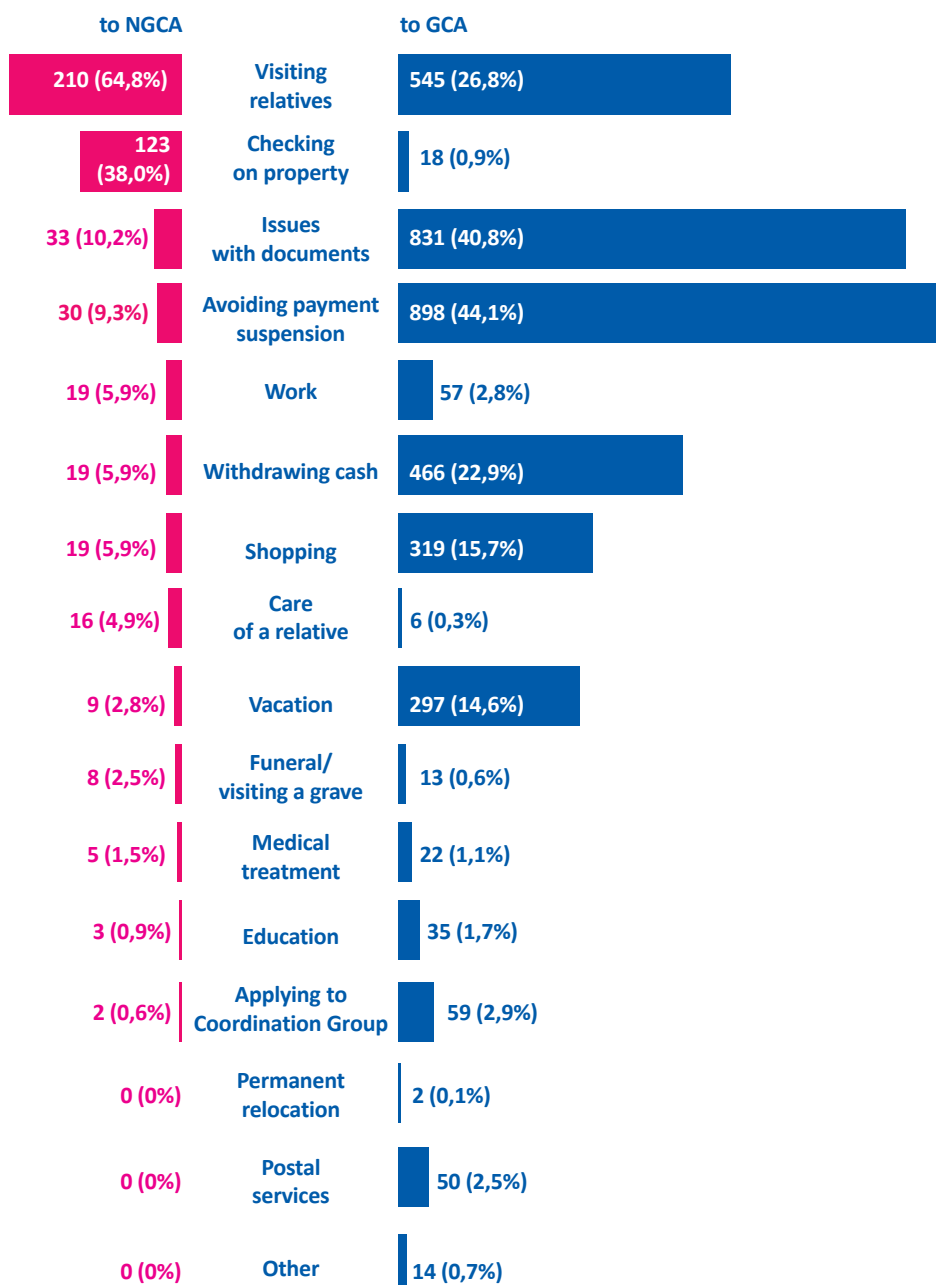
<sup>1</sup> It is important to mention that the demographics of respondents and their answers should not be extrapolated onto the whole population as the survey does not cover internally displaced persons or NGCA residents who do not travel through the EECs.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could mention several reasons.

### 3 REASONS, FREQUENCY AND DURATION

Only 13.7% of all respondents indicated the NGCA as the trip destination. The reasons for crossing differ substantially depending on the travel direction. The respondents traveling to the GCA were mostly avoiding payment suspension for being away from the GCA for over 60 days, solving issues with documents, visiting relatives, withdrawing cash and going on vacation. The most common reasons to travel to the NGCA were visiting relatives and checking on property. The number of respondents going on vacation in the GCA increased by 8.4%, which is related to the summer season<sup>3</sup>. The highest proportion of respondents going on vacation was observed at Hnutove EECP (30.6% of all respondents at this EECP) which is located close to the sea coast.

#### REASONS FOR CROSSING BY DIRECTION



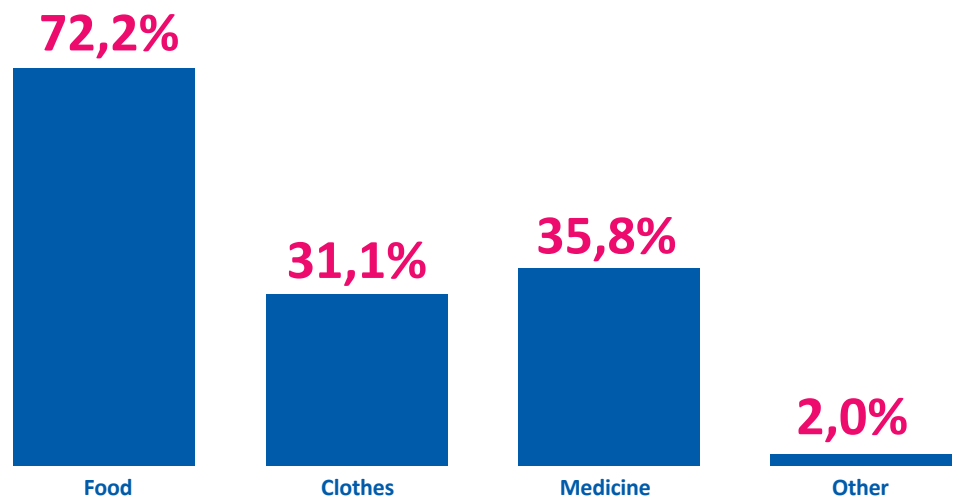
<sup>3</sup> The percentage was calculated based on the total number of people who indicated either the GCA or the NGCA as their destination.

14.3% of all respondents indicated shopping as their reason for crossing the line of contact. 94.4% of such respondents were travelling to the GCA. The number of respondents who were travelling to buy food decreased by 9.4%, however the overall proportion remains relatively stable with food being the most commonly purchased item. Among other goods respondents mentioned purchasing were mainly household appliances, hygiene items and toys.

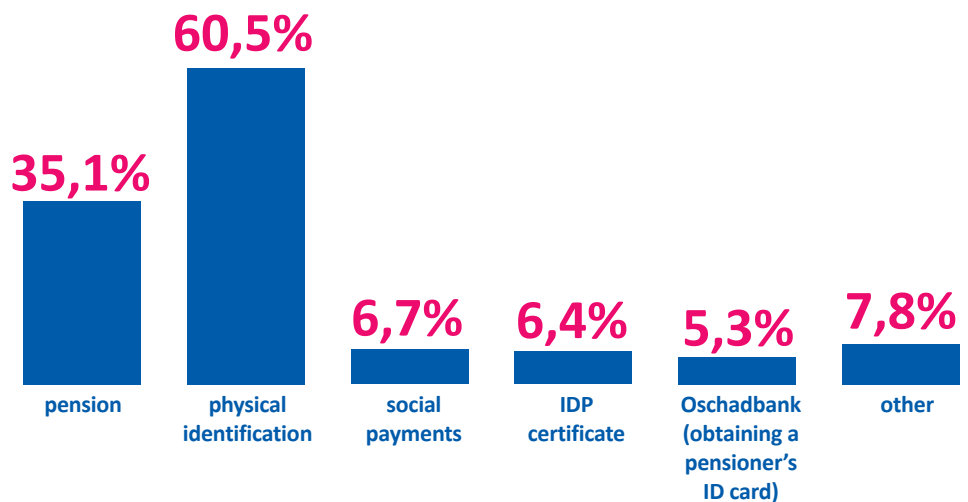
The need to pass physical identification (60.5% of respondents who travelled to solve issues with documents) and pensions (35.1%) remains the most common documentation issues. Among other issues, respondents mostly mentioned submitting documents for internal or international passports, obtaining death or birth certificates and inheritance issues.

Some increase in frequency of crossing was observed in comparison to June: the number of respondents who cross the line of contact monthly rose slightly in every age group (by 8.7% for respondents 18-34, by 6.1% for respondents over 60 years, 1.7% for respondents 35-59). The majority of all respondents (57.9%) stated that they cross the line of contact quarterly. Considering the age disaggregation, such share 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. Fluctuations in the frequency of crossing might also be caused by the vacation season.

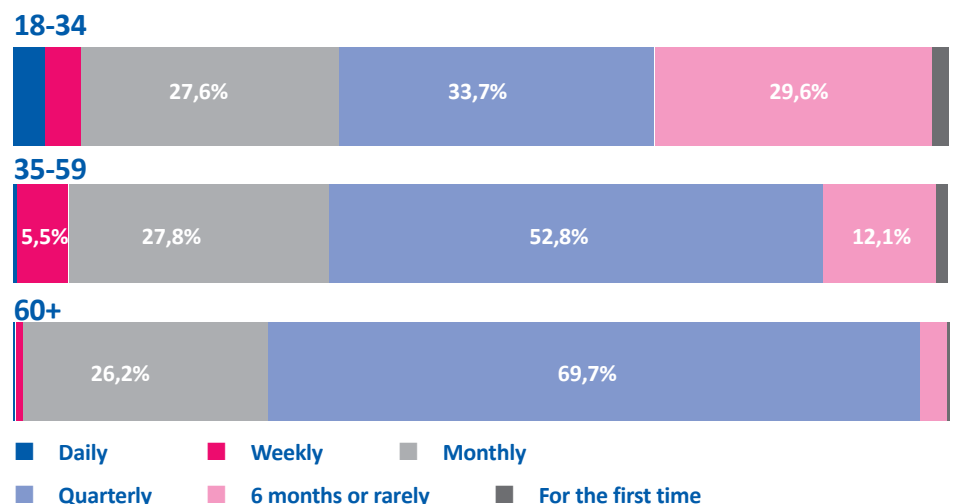
■ TYPE OF GOODS PURCHASED



■ TYPE OF DOCUMENT ISSUE



■ FREQUENCY OF CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT



16.6% of those surveyed stated that they have previously crossed the line of contact during the reporting period. Graphs in this section contain information on duration of crossing in July. The majority (65.5%) of such respondents spent 2 to 3 hours to pass the EECPs on both the GCA and NGCA sides. The crossing process has sped up in comparison to June: the number of respondents who spent 2-3 hours increased by 8.9%, while the number of those who spent more time decreased.

Among all five EECPs it took the most time to cross the line of contact at Maiorske EECP. Almost 40% of those respondents who crossed the line of contact at Maiorske EECP in July had to spend 4 hours or more. However, it is noteworthy that the number of such respondents decreased by 10.9%. The largest share of respondents who spent less than 2 hours crossing the line of contact was at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. It is important to note that the bridge at Stanytsia Luhanska is damaged and

**DURATION OF CROSSING**

**June**



**July**



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

there is no roadway for vehicles. The reconstruction works that started at the EECP still do not envisage rehabilitation of the bridge. Thus, it takes about an hour to walk between the GCA and NGCA checkpoints there. The majority of respondents stated that it took more time to pass the NGCA checkpoints, which is similar to the results of the June survey round. Such a tendency correlates to information obtained during monitoring visits: people crossing the line of contact complained about slow servicing on

the NGCA side. Stanytsia Luhanska EECP remained the only one where the majority (73.5%) of respondents stated that they spent more time crossing the GCA checkpoints. According to information received during monitoring visits, the control procedure in the GCA is more thorough. At the same time, GCA checkpoints at Stanytsia Luhanska lack the staff and equipment for speedy processing due to heavy traffic at the EECP.

**WHICH CHECKPOINT SIDE TOOK LONGER TO CROSS**

**June**



**July**



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



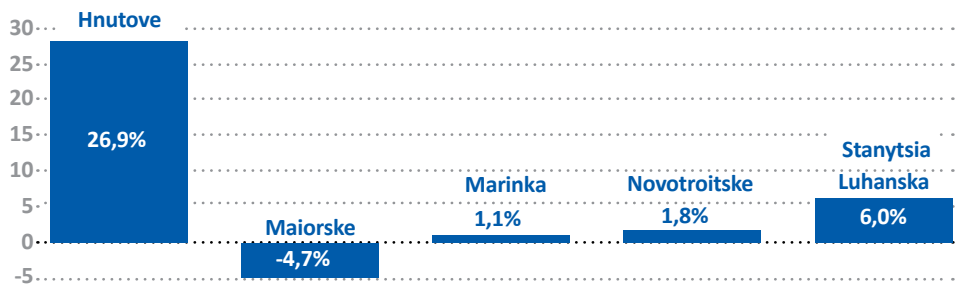
# 4 CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING THE LINE OF CONTACT

A major change at Hnutove EECF was observed in comparison to the previous reporting period. The number of respondents who did not mention any complaints significantly dropped, raising the level of concern by 26.9%. Such a decrease is related to the vacation season and changes in the public transport schedule, which resulted in an intensified flow of people through the EECF. However, according to the information obtained from monitoring visits, the control procedure remains relatively fast.

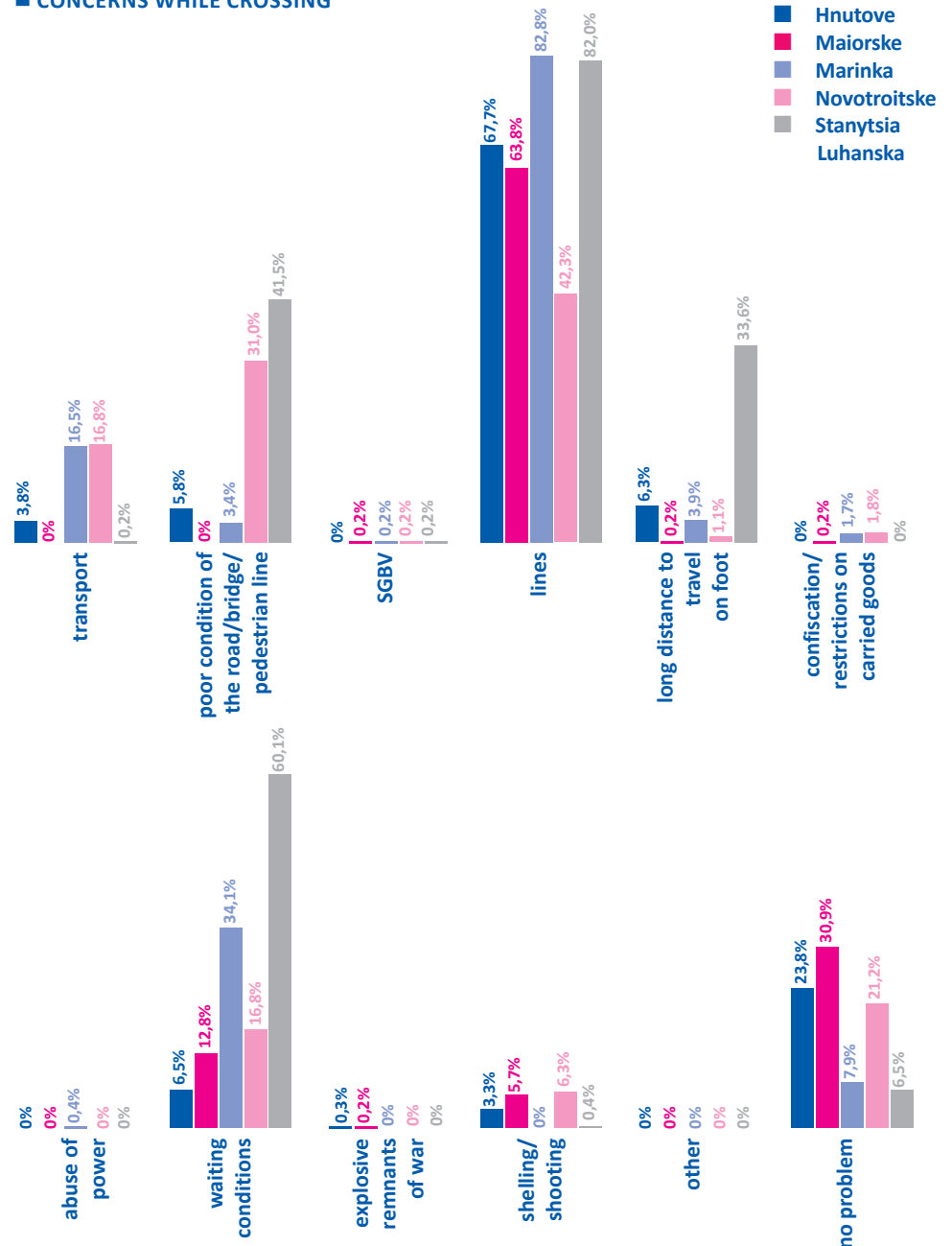
Long lines remain one of the main concerns at EECFs, especially taking into account the summer heat. The number of complaints about the lines at Hnutove EECF drastically increased from 15.5% in June to 67.7% in July. At Novotroitske EECF, 17.8% more respondents than last survey round complained about long lines. According to information from monitoring visits, long lines are mostly caused by bus scheduling overlaps. The increased number of people going on vacation also negatively affected the issue.

After considerable increase in May, the level of concern about intensified shelling continued to decrease at Maiorske EECF (from 29.4% in May to 5.7% in July).

■ DYNAMICS IN GENERAL LEVEL OF CONCERN



■ CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING<sup>4</sup>

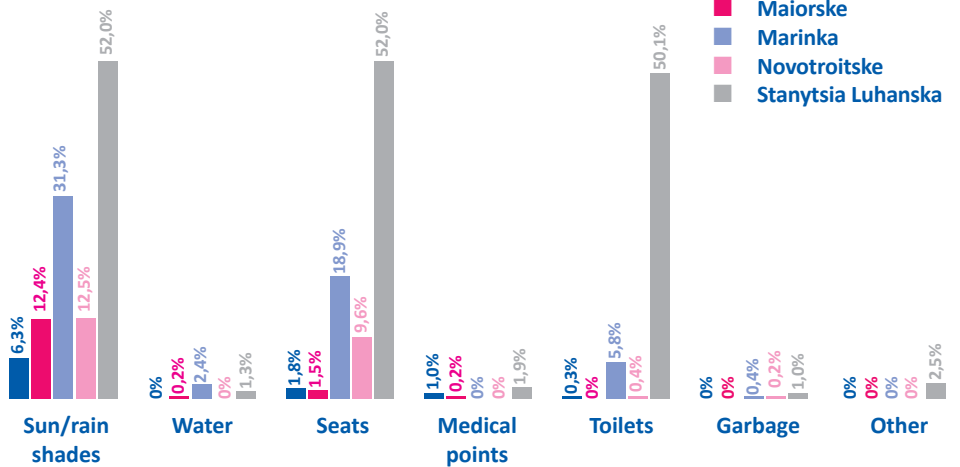


<sup>4</sup> Respondents could mention several concerns.

Waiting conditions remain a cause of significant concern, especially at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP. As crossing the line of contact at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP requires over an hour of walking, the level of concern about the waiting conditions, poor condition of the pedestrian areas, and long distance one must walk, have increased since May. As the shade side covers which were temporarily installed for the cold weather period were not removed as of the end of July, civilians continue to suffer from stuffiness under the shades. Numerous cases of losing consciousness continued to be reported during monitoring visits to EECPs. Monitors noted insufficient maintenance of latrines taking into account the intensive flow of people through the territory of the EECP.

However, the severity of protection risks did not face significant changes comparing to June even with the temporary inconveniences posed by the reconstruction works in progress at Stanytsia Luhanska and Marinka EECPs. Even though there are SES tents located at EECPs, it is not feasible to use them during crossing as people may miss their turn if they leave the line. The lack of sunshades and stuffiness in the summer can be

**■ WAITING CONDITIONS**



hazardous to life and health, especially for the elderly. During monitoring visits numerous cases of losing consciousness continued to be reported. Monitors reported about reconstruction works at Stanytsia Luhanska and Marinka EECPs. New shades were installed at Marinka EECP for civilians waiting for buses to the NGCA after passing all GCA checkpoints. A drainage system was installed at Stanytsia Luhanska as of late July.

Civilians crossing the line of contact at Maiorske EECP complained about the lack of a place to write an application for expedited crossing. In early July, the last SES paramedic at the Donetsk Oblast EECPs was withdrawn from Hnutove EECP. Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI) continues to provide medical aid. In Luhansk Oblast SES paramedics continue to provide medical aid at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP.

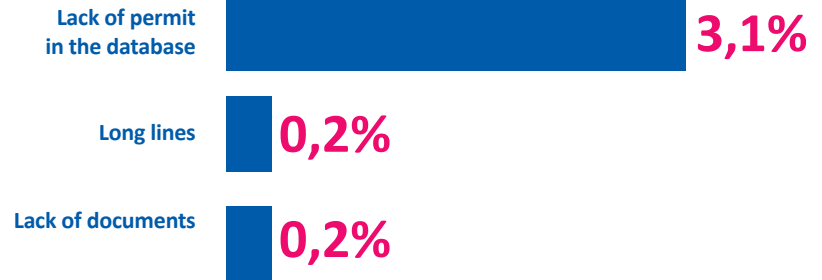


Stanytsia Luhanska EECP

## 5 INABILITY TO CROSS

Only 3.4% of all respondents mentioned incidents of not being able to cross the line of contact in the past six months. The crossing permit not being in the database was the most common reason for such incidents. The lack of Coordination Group representatives at Hnutove, Novotroitske and Stanytsia Luhanska hinders the opportunity for obtaining a crossing permit at the EECP. At Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, State Border Guard Service representatives began assisting in obtaining crossing permits for emergency cases by expedited procedure, which takes about three hours. However, in other cases, people must still travel to Starobilsk and wait for 10 days to obtain a permit. During the reporting period monitors at Maiorske EECP were informed about internal regulations for EECP staff to ensure the expedited issuance of crossing permits for civilians over 80 years old. No changes in the procedure were observed at other EECPs.

### REASONS FOR INABILITY TO CROSS<sup>5</sup>



Marinka EECP

<sup>5</sup> Respondents could mention several reasons.

