

CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE: May 2021 Snapshot

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>

○ 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 May compared to April: over 52,000 in both months.

○ On 31 May, in Donetsk Oblast there were 185 people on the list for crossing. About sixty people were waiting from 09:00 on NGCA arrived at Novotroitske just before the closure. According to them, **such a delay on NGCA was caused by a thorough search of personal belongings (cosmetics bags, underwear, first aid kits, etc.), to the point that some people were forced to undress to their underwear for manual inspection.**

○ **Reconstruction at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP has begun.** It is planned to update the infrastructure of the EECP on the model of Novotroitske EECP (Administrative Service Center, sheds, etc.). In this regard, people face inconveniences: private laboratories were moved closer to the roadway, the benches near the laboratories were removed, there were no sheds and the sidewalk road was broken. The repair work will last until the end of the summer.

○ During May, **4,392 vulnerable elderly persons were provided with transport support** at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP by the NGO “Proliska” e-vehicle.



534 individuals were surveyed by R2P in May¹. Among them: 60 percent were women and 40 percent were men.



On two occasions, the “Vdoma” app in May blocked people at EECPs for one hour.



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



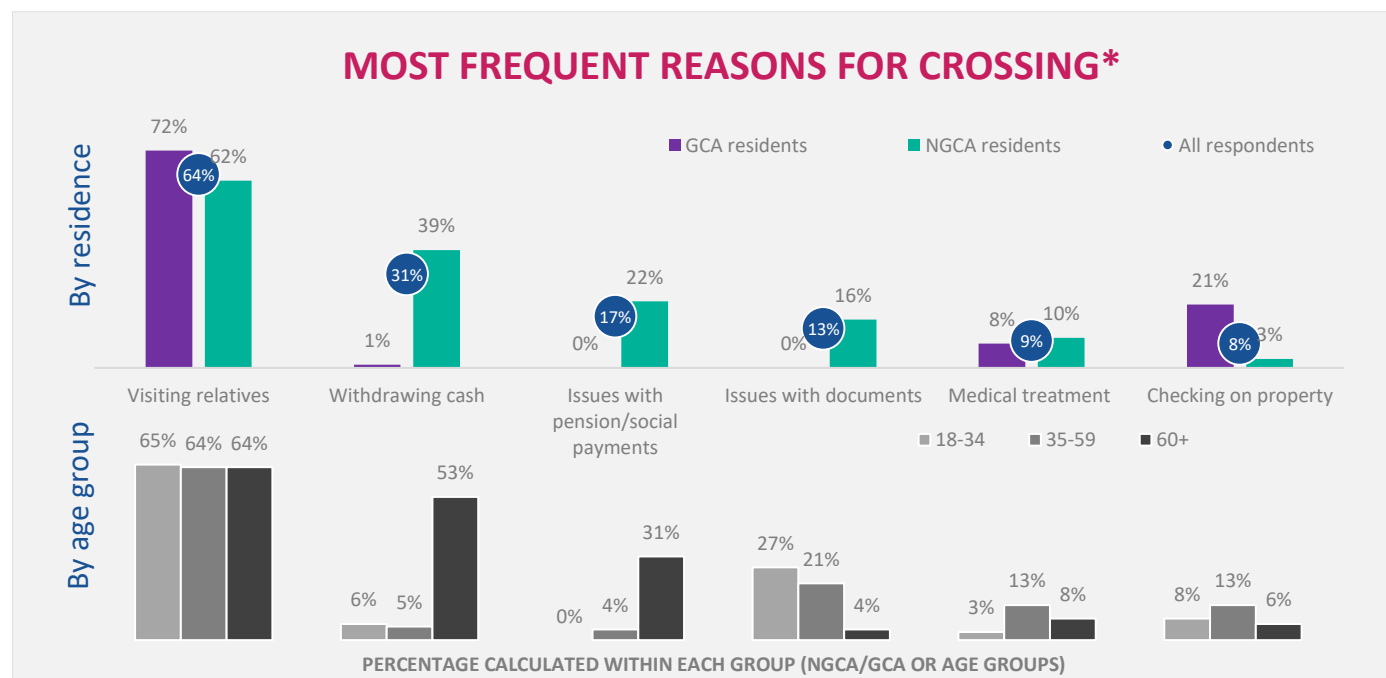
R2P facilitated 203 requests for crossing through the fast-track procedure and assisted about 1800 persons with installing “Vdoma” app.



Reconstruction at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP has begun, with a few inconveniences for people as a result.



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

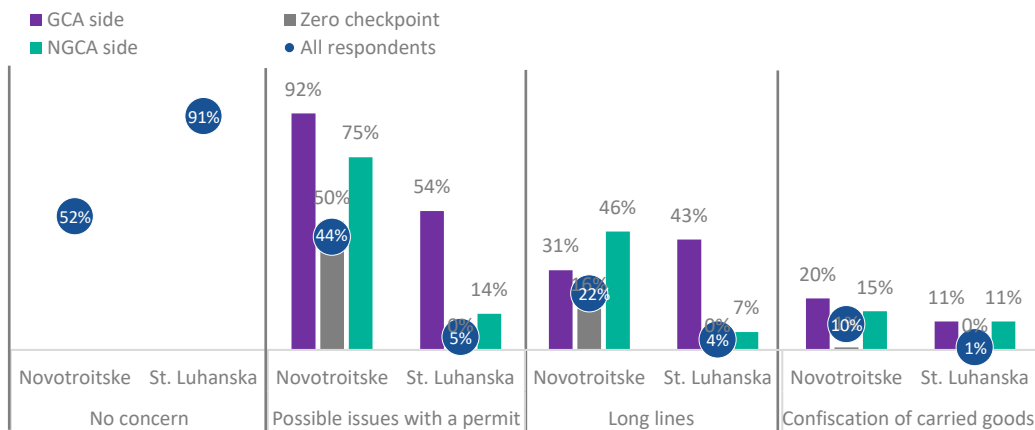
EECP – entry-exit checkpoint

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)

GOING AROUND THE CONTACT LINE

(INFORMATION ON MOVEMENTS OF NGCA RESIDENTS THROUGH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION)

Due to the restrictions on crossing the contact line, thousands of people are blocked from accessing their permanent residence, visits or care for family members, collecting social benefits or pensions to which they are entitled, obtaining birth and death certificates amongst other essential needs.

As a result, many NGCA residents decide to go to GCA through the Russian Federation and cross the Russian-Ukrainian International Border Crossing Points (IBCP) in Milove and Hoptivka. This trip necessarily takes much longer than crossing the contact line, and incurs additional expenses, for transportation, and, in many cases, the payment of a fine for illegally crossing the border.

Crossing and waiting conditions at border points are not entirely satisfactory. The monitoring conducted on the Ukrainian side of IBCPs identified a certain number of services or missing infrastructures at both, more particularly in Milove. See the table below for details.

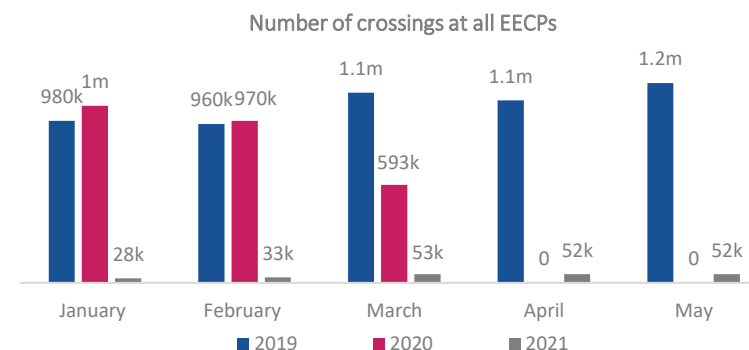
	Hoptivka IBCP	Milove IBCP
Waiting area (modules, sheds, seats, garbage bins)	✓	✗
Potable/Sanitary water	✓✓	✗✗
Toilet	Paid	Free
Wi-Fi	✗	✗
Health-care unit with health workers	✓	✗
Paid PCR-test	900 UAH	1,100 UAH
Observation facility	✗	✓
Free of charge rapid antigen tests	✗	✗
Time of crossing the border points (on average)	About two hours	From 8 to 14 hours
Transportation	Private carriers	Private carriers

OBSERVATIONS

- In May, **92 percent (1,365)** of people who crossed to GCA passed free rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 **at Novotroitske EECP** and **9 percent (2,314) at Stanytsia Lyhanska EECP**. Also, in Donetsk Oblast, **50 people were sent to the observation facility**, all of them either had an inappropriate phone model or no phone at all. There were no places in the observation facility in Luhansk Oblast still.
- On 14 and 21 of May, **“Vdoma” app did not work for one hour**, as people were not able to receive the required confirmation message. R2P monitors reported the technical problem to the Ministry of Digital Transformation. The problem was solved within one hour.
- For the eighth consecutive month the issue with permits remains a priority concern for majority of people: **44 percent at Novotroitske EECP** and **5 percent at St. Luhanska EECP** (see graph page 1). This reflects a context where conditions for crossings remained seriously restricted as a result of COVID-19, particularly at Novotroitske EECP, due to the complex procedure of crossing.
- People started mentioning checking on property as another reason for going to NGCA. This may be due to a bill passed by the de-facto authorities at the end of April on the “Nationalization of abandoned housing within 75 days”.

NUMBER OF CROSSINGS IN MAY²

The total number of crossings in May 2021 was over 52,000. In Donetsk Oblast, 1,365 people were authorized to cross in direction to GCA and 1,315 to NGCA. In Luhanska Oblast, about 26,000 people crossed the contact line to GCA and about 26,000 people to NGCA. The procedure of crossing remained unchanged at both EECPs.



² General statistics on crossings are available at the UNHCR dashboard visualizing data from the State Border Guard Service. <https://goo.gl/TZbU8c>. For the statistics of May 2021, data from Joint Forces Operation were used.