

# CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE: July 2021 Snapshot

- This month, **crossing the contact line remained possible only through two EECPs out of seven:** Novotroitske in Donetsk Oblast and Stanytsia Luhanska in Luhanska Oblast, at a level considerably below the pre-COVID period. The other EECPs remained closed on the NGCA as a measure to restrict the spread of COVID-19. The numbers of people crossing them in July 2021 were about eight per cent of the pre-COVID-19 levels, which in 2019 often exceeded 1 million per month. **In July, 80,588 people crossed the contact line.**
- Ukraine entered the green zone in terms of the number of COVID-19 cases. In this regard, **the mandatory requirement for travellers crossing the EECP to install the smart phone GEO-tracing app Vdoma was lifted on 17 June.**
- **On 26 July, a bus with over 20 people arrived from NGCA to Novotroitske EECP at the end of the working day.** The travellers would have been stranded at the border all night. However, after R2P intervention, and by the order of JFO headquarters, the work of EECP was extended and people were able to pass through. In addition, the transportation to Volnovakha was arranged.
- **Since 28 July, people have had the opportunity to get vaccinated against COVID-19 directly at Stanytsia-Luhanska EECP.** The vaccination center is open on Wednesdays and Fridays, from 9 am. to 12 am.
- During July, **11,380 vulnerable elderly persons** were transported across the Stanytsia Luhanska EECP by an electric vehicle provided by the NGO Proliska.

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>



**542 individuals** were surveyed by R2P in July<sup>1</sup>. Among them: **70% were women** and **30% were men.**



**Mandatory installation of Vdoma was canceled** from 17 June at EECPs. Therefore, the app was not installed in July.



**Majority of people stated no concern while crossing the EECPs.**



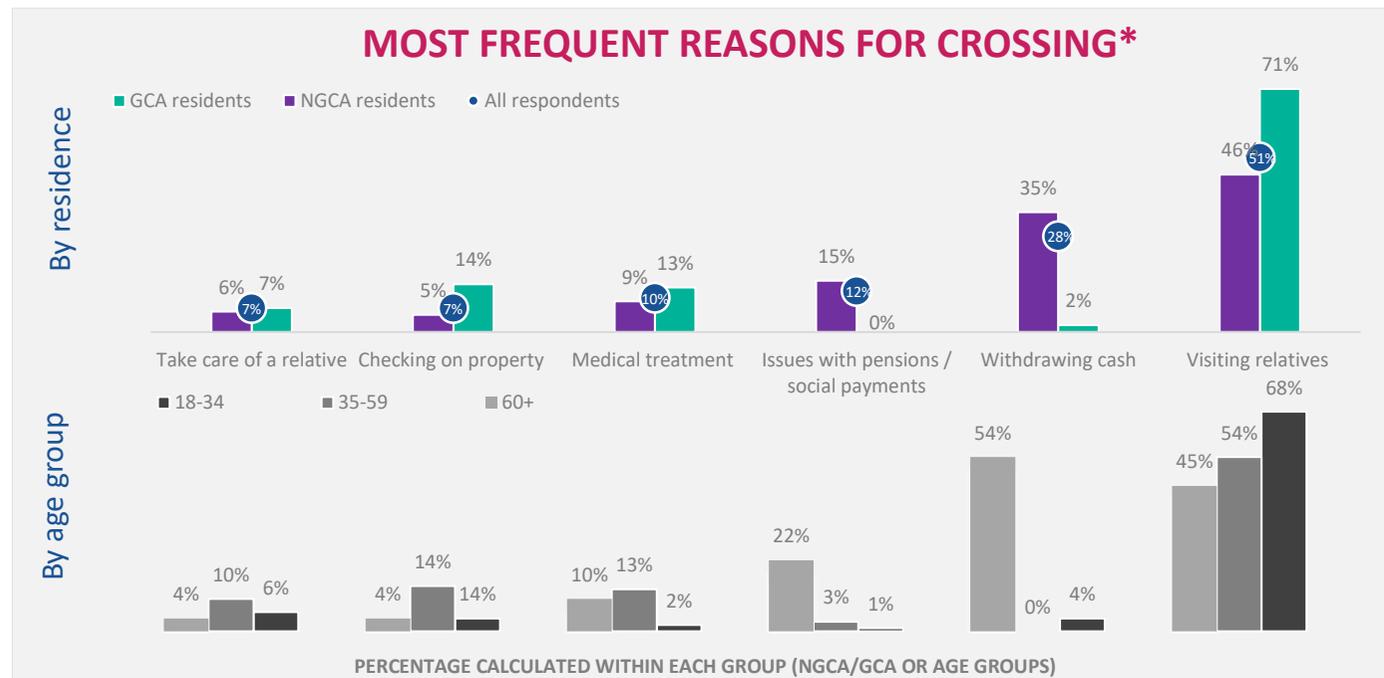
R2P facilitated **394 requests** for crossing through the fast-track procedure.



**The vaccination center at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP is open** twice a week, from 9 am to 12 am.



**Main reason for crossing was visiting relatives.** NGCA residents also came for withdrawing cash.



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

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

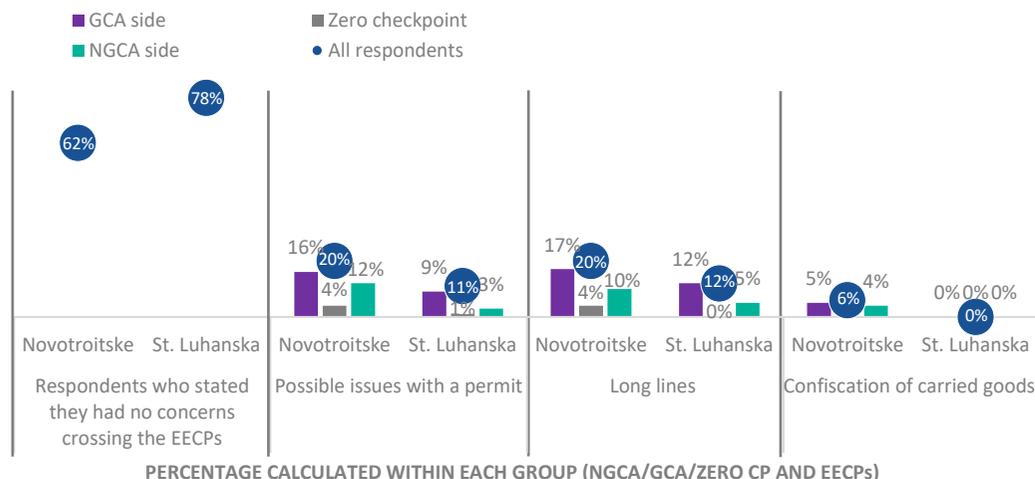
EECP – entry-exit checkpoint

NGO - non-government organization

PCR - Polymerase chain reaction

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## MAIN CONCERNS WHILE CROSSING\*



## GOING AROUND THE CONTACT LINE

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

Due to the restrictions on crossing the contact line, 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. To do this, they have to enter the Russian Federation without leaving Ukraine through a Ukrainian State Border Guards Service (SBGS) border crossing, which is illegal.

In response to the issue with fines for illegal crossing (Administrative code, article 204-2), an amendment to the COVID-19 quarantine legislation was proposed. It suggested releasing from the administrative responsibility citizens of Ukraine violating the procedure of entering and leaving the NGCA through IBCPs on humanitarian grounds within the period of quarantine, or for the period of blocking of the EECPs. **The amendment was adopted on 29 June 2021 and signed by the President on 22 July.**

Such humanitarian grounds are:

- Return of Ukrainian citizens and their family members to their place of residence;
- Family reunion;
- Serious illness, death of close relatives;
- The need to provide medicines and medical devices or undergo treatment in the presence of severe and / or chronic diseases;
- Departure from NGCA of a person who has documents confirming the right to permanent or temporary residence in another country;
- Crossing the IBCPs by a child under the age of 16, accompanied by one of the parents (adoptive parents) or other legal representatives for the purpose of issuing identity documents and confirming the citizenship of Ukraine to the child;
- The need to accept the inheritance.

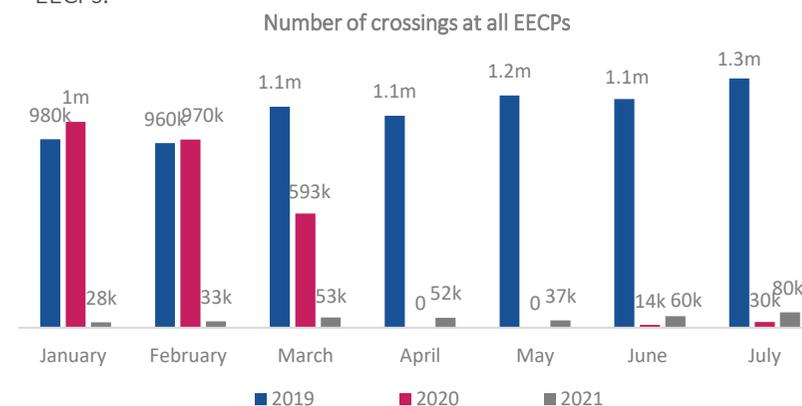
Despite the fact that there is a number of prescribed humanitarian reasons, this list is not complete, and it is very important that humanitarian grounds should be understood as broadly as possible.

## OBSERVATIONS

- Respondents were asked to select one or more of their concerns from a list, and "issues with permits" was the concern most commonly indicated for eight consecutive months. But in July, "having to wait in long lines" took first place. This might be partly because the number of people crossing the Novotroitske EECP, in July, increased by 40 per cent to 5,255 from June's figure of 3,355. While, at Stanytsia Luhanska EECP this problem may be also related to the temporary closure of the Coordination Group. R2P is processing all travellers' fast-track procedure requests. Increased waiting times caused by renovation work at this EECP might be another reason.
- People continued 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 JULY<sup>2</sup>

The total number of crossings in July 2021 was 80,588. Almost 93 per cent of all people crossing between the GCA and the NGCA in July did so through the Luhansk EECP. In Donetsk Oblast, 2,688 people were authorized to cross in direction to GCA and 2,567 to NGCA. In Luhanska Oblast, about 37,417 people crossed the contact line to GCA and about 37,903 people to NGCA. The procedure of crossing remained unchanged at both EECPs.



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