CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE: September 2021 Snapshot

Only two of seven Exit-Entry Crossing Points (EECPs) remained open for crossing the contact line: Novotroitske in Donetsk Oblast and Stanysia Luhanska in Luhanska Oblast. COVID-19 measures continue to have an impact on the number of persons crossing the EECPs. In September less people crossed than in previous months. According to SBGS statistics, about 70,000 people crossed the contact line in September, while the figure was 91,000 for August. Anti-COVID-19 measures are cited by the de facto authorities as their reason to keep the other EECPs closed.

On 17 and 24 September, NGCA side of Novotroitske EECP was closed by the de facto authorities citing technical problems without any further explanations. Meanwhile, Novotroitske EECP on GCA side was open on those days. This closure prevented people crossing for purposes such as obtaining necessary medical treatment, visiting relatives or attending funerals of relatives on time. Such closures may in some cases lead to the deterioration of health of sick people and those who need special care.

In September, it has become possible to obtain a printable Covid-19 vaccination certificate at the Diya website. It means that people can get the certificate without visiting a medical facility even while being in the NGCA. However, a smartphone with Diya app or an electronic digital signature is needed.

During September, 10,159 vulnerable elderly persons were transported across the Stanysia Luhanska EECP by an electric vehicle provided by the NGO Proliska.

325 individuals were surveyed by R2P in September: 62% were women and 38% were men.

The installation of Vdoma app remains a challenge for the majority of respondents (63% in September).

R2P facilitated 293 requests for crossing through the fast-track procedure and assisted about 1,350 persons with installing Vdoma app.

On 17 and 24 September, de facto authorities closed Novotroitske EECP on NGCA side.

Getting a printable COVID-19 vaccination certificate became possible via Diya website.

**MOST FREQUENT REASONS FOR CROSSING***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By residence</th>
<th>Percentage calculated within each group (NGCA/GCA or age groups)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GCA residents</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGCA residents</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All respondents</td>
<td>42%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. The findings of the monitoring should not be directly extrapolated to the entire population.

2. *NGCA – (non-)government-controlled areas

EECP – entry-exit checkpoint

NGO – non-government organization

PCR - Polymerase chain reaction

SBGS – State Border Guard

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Respondents who stated they had no concerns

**COVID-19 SPECIFIC ISSUES**

- Unable to install without help: 91%
- Internet connection problems at the EECP: 7%
- Problems with mobile connection at the EECP: 7%
- Installation of the app took over half and hour: 9%
- Inappropriate operating system: 6%
- Problems with GooglePlay: 1%

**NUMBER OF CROSSINGS IN SEPTEMBER**

The total number of crossings in September 2021 was 69,948. Almost 95 per cent of all people crossing between the GCA and the NGCA in September did so through the Luhansk EECP. In Donetska Oblast, 1,639 people were authorized to cross to the GCA and 2,054 to the NGCA. In Luhanska Oblast, 32,751 people crossed the contact line to the GCA and 33,504 to the NGCA.

**NUMBER OF CROSSINGS AT EECPS IN THE 3RD QUARTER OF 2021**

- **Novotroitske**: 75k in July, 85k in August, 66k in September
- **St. Luhanska**: 6k in July, 6k in August, 4k in September

General statistics on crossings are available at the UNHCR dashboard visualizing data from the State Border Guard Service. [https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/resources/checkpoints-crossings](https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/resources/checkpoints-crossings). For the statistics of May 2021, data from Joint Forces Operation were used.