CROSSING THE CONTACT LINE: November 2021 EECP Survey Snapshot

On 5 November, for several hours no one could cross the contact line in Luhansk oblast due to shelling near the Stanytsa Luhanska checkpoint, only one of two EECPs still open on both the GCA and the NGCA sides of the line. Then on 24 November the Marinka checkpoint was also closed. Except for exceptional crossings, crossings are authorized by NGCA side at Marinka EECP, with 14 crossings reported in November (SBGS statistics).

Last month for the first time, travellers crossing Stanytsa Luhanska showed a higher percentage of respondents reporting concerns than those crossing Novotroitske EECP in Donetsk oblast. The proportion in Stanytsa Luhanska jumped from one eighth in August to two fifths in November, and will probably fall back to September levels from December. In November, 737 persons, 55 per cent of those who entered the GCA through Novotroitske EECP, were tested for COVID-19 as were 2,312 persons, 14 per cent of those who entered GCA via Stanytsa Luhanska EECP. They were tested because they could not install the Vdoma location-aware app on their phones, an acute problem for people crossing the contact line to GCA, especially people aged 60+ and people with serious illnesses.

Stanytsa Luhanska EECP is usually open seven days a week. By contrast movement in Donetsk Oblast is more restricted. Novotroitske EECP is only open two days per week. By contrast movement in Donetsk Oblast is more restricted. Novotroitske EECP is only open two days per week. By contrast movement in Donetsk Oblast is more restricted. Novotroitske EECP is only open two days per week. By contrast movement in Donetsk Oblast is more restricted. Novotroitske EECP is only open two days per week.

To enhance the crossing procedure, Baggage scanners were installed at Stanytsa Luhanska EECP, that enhanced the crossing procedure. On November 5, Stanytsa Luhanska EECP was closed and the crossing was suspended for several hours due to shelling in the vicinity.


Respondents could select several concerns

* Percentage calculated within the group of respondents having expressed concerns
* Percentage calculated within each zone (NGCA/GCA/Zero CP)

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To reach the GCA, many NGCA residents prefer to make arduous journeys to reach international border crossing points than cross the contact line. They enter or exit Russia through Milove IBCP in Luhansk oblast or Hoptivka IBCP in Kharkiv oblast, because crossing the contact line is now possible only through two EECPs, Novotroitske in Donetsk oblast and Stanytsa Luhanska in Luhansk oblast, both with varying restrictions.

The survey indicates that in November, more residents of Donetsk NGCA crossed both Hoptivka and Milove IBCPs than Luhansk NGCA residents did. Although only a sample was surveyed, tentative inferences can be drawn. Larger numbers from Donetsk NGCA correlate with the tighter restrictions for crossing the Novotroitske EECP in Donetsk oblast.

The travel distances are sometimes enormous. Some respondents said that to travel between the GCA and the NGCA via an IBCP, they had to travel 1,300 km, about the same distance as from Donetsk to Lviv.

Due to the lack of transport at Hoptivka IBCP, between the Russian and Ukrainian border gates, people have to walk 1.2 km on foot. This is especially challenging for the elderly, the sick, and those with heavy luggage.

Nearly all respondents (95%) reported that a typical journey costs from 1,000 to 2,000 UAH (34-68 USD) one way. Others said they spent 3,000 and even up to 4,000 UAH (109-143 USD) for their journey.

Hoptivka IBCP still lacks shelters and places for people to sit while waiting for buses for up to three hours.

UNHCR continued the installation of the shelters and prefabricated modules at Milove IBCP in November.