



INTERNATIONAL
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ANATOMY OF THE BORDER INDEPENDENT MONITORING REPORT 2018



NGO “Europe without barriers”

**ANATOMY
OF THE
BORDER**
INDEPENDENT
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REPORT
2018

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Independent monitoring report was prepared under the project «Anatomy of the border: public assessment of the practice of crossing Ukrainian border and normative innovations», implemented by NGO «Europe without barriers» with the support of European program of International Renaissance Foundation.

This report presents results of monitoring for the quality of services at the twenty international automobile and pedestrian border checkpoints at the state border of Ukraine with member states of the European Union, Belarus and Russian Federation. The aim of this study was to obtain a comprehensive assessment of innovations and changes in the practice of crossing a state border by citizens of Ukraine and foreigners after completion of visa liberalization process with the EU and present results of the assessment to policy makers and general public in order to increase the level of mobility of Ukrainians and formation of an entry-friendly policy for foreigners.

NGO «Europe Without Barriers» is responsible for the contents of this document.



**EUROPE
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«Europe Without Barriers» is an NGO that was founded in 2009. The organization's mission is to find a new balance between freedom of movement and security in an effort to see Europe without barriers and Ukraine part of such a Europe. The organization's activity is aimed at enabling human rights to freedom of movement and supporting socially important reforms in the fields of the rule of law, migration and border control, protection of personal data, public order and combating discrimination.

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents results of monitoring for the quality of services at the border checkpoints at the state border of Ukraine with member states of the European Union, Belarus and Russian Federation. For the field research twenty international automobile and pedestrian crossing points were used, where travelers were surveyed in April-May 2018.

The aim of this study was to obtain a comprehensive assessment of innovations and changes in the practice of crossing a state border by citizens of Ukraine and foreigners after completion of visa liberalization process with the EU and present results of the assessment to policy makers and general public in order to increase the level of mobility of Ukrainians and formation of an entry-friendly policy for foreigners. The object of research was a procedure of crossing a border in Ukraine and in parts of checkpoints on Ukrainian borders, adjacent to EU member states, Belarus and the Russian Federation. Due to the results, obtained from the collected data, a number of positive border control practices were identified as well as

problematic issues that need to be addressed.

According to the results, following barriers, which impede the implementation of entry-friendly border policies, have been identified:

- Insufficient traffic capacity and outdated infrastructure of existing border checkpoints with EU countries, slow progress in opening new MABCs (multilateral automobile border checkpoints),
- Insufficient control from the State border guard service of Ukraine (SBGS) and the National police regarding the formation of queues on Ukrainian border,
- Violation of non-discrimination rules for travelers by border authorities of EU countries,
- Cases of corruption at the border.

PORTRAIT OF A TYPICAL USER OF ENTRY POINTS AT THE BORDER

Checkpoints at the state border are mainly used for travel by citizens of Ukraine and citizens of neighboring countries. In particular, according to the SBGS, UKRAINIANS MADE UP A MAJORITY OF PEOPLE, WHO CROSSED THE BORDER BETWEEN UKRAINE AND POLAND, HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA IN 2017. The situation on Ukrainian-Romanian border is different. Almost half of the total number of travelers

was foreigners. This data is consistent with the results of «Europe without barriers» poll, which show that among foreigners who crossed the border, most were citizens of neighboring countries - Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Up to 6% of respondents were citizens of Germany, Lithuania and Czech Republic, and citizens of other countries were outliers in regard to the research sample.

PORTRAIT OF A TYPICAL USER OF ENTRY POINTS AT THE BORDER

At Ukrainian-Belarusian border, the situation with distribution of travelers by citizenship differs from the situation at the border with EU countries. According to the official SBGS data, **foreigners twice as often cross the border with Belarus in Ukraine at two checkpoints (Novi Yarlyovychi and Senkivka) than Ukrainian citizens.** According to the poll, most foreigners had Belarusian citizenship, the rest were Russian.

Travelers crossing the border can be divided into groups according to **the purpose of their trip**: traders, who operate in the border area, persons, who drive foreign-registered cars without re-registering them in Ukraine and paying customs clearance, migrant workers, entrepreneurs, buyers of goods, relatives, tourists and students.

Persons, engaged in trade near the border, account for a significant proportion of the total number of persons crossing the border. Their activities, often illegal, stem the difference in prices for the individual groups of goods in Ukraine and neighboring countries, which allows them to benefit from sales (for example, from selling cigarettes and alcohol). During the survey, this category of people often referred to the purpose of their trip «shopping or buying goods». In general, about 30% of Ukrainians and foreigners questioned traveled for the purpose of buying goods; therefore, this group includes both traders, who operate in the border area and individuals, who buy consumer goods for themselves. The vast majority of Ukrainian respondents, who traveled to shop, were entering Poland.

Labour migrants, who are often traveling to countries of destination by

bus, are the second largest category of people crossing the border. 17% of the respondents stated that their purpose to go abroad is employment. Countries of destination for labor migrants were Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Germany and Italy. In rare cases, respondents were travelling to work in Austria, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The next category of travelers, who often cross the border, are **persons who drive foreign-registered cars without re-registering them in Ukraine and paying customs clearance.** According to the Article 381 of the Customs Code of Ukraine, citizens of Ukraine may import cars in transit mode for up to 5 days if they enter and leave through a single border checkpoint and up to 10 days for different checkpoints. However, as practice shows, citizens living in border towns use foreign-registered cars not for transit, but for their own use. According to the survey, about 15% of respondents indicated that their purpose is to «cross the border by car every 5 days», «transit», «peresichka» (the latter indicates a local term for crossing for the purpose of crossing, which will allow to renew the transit status of a car).

According to the survey, almost 14% of Ukrainians crossed the border with EU countries **in order to visit the relatives.** Mostly, Ukrainians traveled to see their relatives in neighboring countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as Czech Republic and Germany. In rare cases, Ukrainian travelers were going to visit their relatives in the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Greece and Lithuania.

PORTRAIT OF A TYPICAL USER OF ENTRY POINTS AT THE BORDER

12% of responders from Ukraine entered EU countries for **tourism-related purposes**. Countries of destination of Ukrainian tourists were primarily Hungary and Poland, and to a lesser extent, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Lithuania. It is worth noting that «tourist» category can include those individuals, who are involved in border trade and do not wish to advertise their activities.

On the other hand, almost 19% **of foreigners entered Ukraine for tourism-related purposes**, which makes it second in the list of categories that indicate the purpose of foreign citizens' travel.

10% of responders from Ukraine noted they were crossing the border **in order to conduct business and/or for a business trip**, most of them traveling to Poland and Slovakia. The same situation as with the previous category can be expected here – it might potentially include people engaged in border trade. Among the **foreign citizens**, 7.5% of the respondents said they were entering the Ukraine for the purpose of doing business.

Travel categories such as «**cultural exchange/sports/medical treatment**» and «**education/science**» were the least frequent among Ukrainian respondents, who entered EU countries and foreigners, who entered Ukraine. Also, in rare cases, respondents stated that they were

traveling abroad for the purpose of permanent residence.

Polls on **Ukrainian-Belarusian** and, partly, **Ukrainian-Russian** border showed a slightly different picture. Among Ukrainian citizens, the primary purpose of the trip was «**private visit to relatives**», and among Belarusian and Russian citizens - **visits to relatives and purchase of goods and services**.

Thus, the results of survey showed portraits of typical users of border checkpoints between both Ukraine and the EU and Ukraine and Belarus/Russia. The most active users of checkpoints on the border with EU countries are Ukrainian citizens traveling to neighboring countries for the purpose of border trade, labor migration and the further use of foreign-registered cars. Ukrainians, who visit relatives in EU countries, as well as Ukrainian tourists and businessmen, cross the border less frequently. Among foreigners visiting Ukraine, the largest percentage are the inhabitants of neighboring countries, with most frequent purpose for crossing the border being visiting relatives, purchasing goods and tourism. However, primary users of the border checkpoints on Ukrainian-Belarusian border are foreigners - Belarusians and Russians, who travel to Ukraine to visit their relatives and buy more affordable Ukrainian goods. Ukrainians also enter Belarus mainly to visit relatives, work abroad and for tourism.

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS WITH THE BORDER CHECKPOINTS

The infrastructural convenience of the checkpoints is one of the key factors that affects the quality of border crossing. Benefiting from the developed infrastructure means travelers can expect to cross the border with dignity, and border patrol workers - to fulfill high-quality and timely standards, required by their profession, and have high standards of working conditions.

At Ukrainian checkpoints, the situation is far from perfect: capacity of most MABCs is not calculated based on the actual traffic flow, which leads to extremely long motor transport queues. The respondents were noting the necessity of repairs almost at all of the checkpoints, except for those that were recently opened or were

undergoing reconstruction.

Lack of separate lanes for pedestrians and buses, broken roads, and absence of toilets are the problems that tens of thousands of people face daily when crossing the Ukrainian border. Poorly developed infrastructure promotes violation of human rights, discrimination of travelers, deterioration of working conditions at the border agencies and reduction of security levels at the border. An introduction of a visa free regime with the EU and an increase in the labor migration flows from Ukraine have only exacerbated existing problems, for which the solution is to create conditions for the opening of new checkpoints and modernization of existing ones.

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS WITH THE BORDER CHECKPOINTS

REPAIRS

The respondents stated about the necessity of repairs at almost all of the checkpoints with the exception of MABC «Smilnytsia» (opened in 2002), «Rava-Ruska» (95% reconstructed with EU support), «Hrushiv» (opened in 2013), MABC «Mali Selmentsi» (reconstructed with EU support in 2014) and MABC «Porubne». All other 13 checkpoints need repair in the opinion of the surveyed Ukrainians, which ranged from fixing the lighting system on one of the new MABC «Uhryniv» to complete reconstruction of MABC «Uzhhorod». Moreover, at nine checkpoints from the total eighteen, old buildings and rubbish were the main infrastructure problems that were troubling Ukrainians.

COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Another infrastructural problem that needed to be resolved, according to respondents, was the inadequate work of computer systems, which is known to occasionally paralyze checkpoints. It was the «freeze state» of databases and the failure of computer systems that led to a collapse at the border in August 2018 that lasted many hours¹. Meanwhile, the problem of system operation can be solved by providing the checkpoints with back-up power.

TOILETS

It is worth underlining the problems with the toilets, since these were noted by the respondents at **all of the checkpoints** without exception. The most acutely the problem was the described at MABC «Malyi Bereznyi», «Mali Selmentsi» on Ukrainian-Slovak border,

MABC «Chop», «Kosyno» on Ukrainian-Hungarian border, MABC «Shehyni», «Uhryniv», «Rava Ruska» on Ukrainian-Polish border and MABC «Diakove» on Ukrainian-Romanian border. Travelers recommended to clean the toilets at all of checkpoints, and in some of them - to stop charging the customers.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES

Of the twenty border checkpoints with the EU and Belarus, only five were equipped with pedestrian crossings. In particular, they were operational at the check points of «Shehyni» and «Uhryniv» in Ukrainian-Polish section, «Porubne» in Ukrainian-Romanian section and «Mali Selmentsi» and «Malyi Bereznyi» in Ukrainian-Slovak section. On Hungarian border pedestrians are forced to stand in the same queues as cars are standing, which creates inconveniences and increases the risk of accidents.

On the other hand, at such points as «Malyi Bereznyi» on the border with Slovakia and «Rava Ruska» on the border with Poland, the surveyed travelers were worried about the lack of separate lines for buses.

ROADS

The problem of road repairs was the second by the number of references on the border between Ukraine and the EU. It was the most acute problem for the respondents, who were crossing MABC «Grushiv», «Smilnytsia» on Ukrainian-Polish border and MABC «Kosyno». In order to solve this problem in September 2015, Ukraine and Poland signed a loan agreement, granting €100 million for

30 years at 0.15% per annum. The loan will be used to finance projects for the development of the road infrastructure near the borders and renovating Ukrainian-Polish border checkpoints and other projects².

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE CHECKPOINTS RECONSTRUCTION

The issue of checkpoints modernization has on the agenda of the relevant institutions of Ukraine and the European Union for a long time. In 2013-2014, several EU funded projects with a total budget €29.2 million were launched to help integrate Ukrainian economy with neighboring EU countries through shortening border crossing time and improving customs procedures³. Among the checkpoints that were planned to be reconstructed and equipped were MABCs «Uzhhorod», «Ustiluh», «Rava Ruska», «Krakivets», «Shehyni», «Yahodyn», «Luzhanka», «Vylok», «Krasnoilsk» and «Diakivtsi». However, over the course of five years, these projects have not been implemented and were discontinued by European side in the end. It should be noted here that, although in this case, the Ukrainian side did not fulfill its obligations, part of the problem with financing infrastructural projects may have been slow decision-making and restrictions set by donors.

Currently, the State fiscal service of Ukraine (SFS) is considering providing further financing for the reconstruction and construction of new checkpoints. The Prime Minister of Ukraine has promised to negotiate the launch of a new program

for modernization of border infrastructure with the European side, but the results of the talks are still unknown⁴. For both of these operations, Ukraine needs to attract external resources. The question of which public authorities need to be charge of building and retaining checkpoints instead of SFS remains open.

Another aspect of the whole modernization issue is the problem of adapting buildings and infrastructure of checkpoints to joint control procedures. Some checkpoints are built in such a way that introducing joint control without reconstructing the building is completely impossible, while at others (for example, «Uhryniv»), there is actually a joint control on Ukrainian and Polish sides in one building on Polish territory.

OPENING NEW CHECKPOINTS

The issue of opening new checkpoints is important for the border regions of Ukraine. For example, 16 prospective checkpoints are identified in the regional program of just Transcarpathian region. However, financing of major infrastructural projects falls mostly on the shoulders of the neighboring countries of Ukraine, which are members of the European Union. In particular, in the years 2013-2014, two new checkpoints «Uhryniv-Dołhobyczów» and «Grushiv-Budomierz» were opened on the territory of Poland, which spent about 300 million zloty for these projects. However, the roads leading to MABC «Grushiv» on Ukrainian side have not been repaired, which significantly reduces the number of people willing to use this relatively new checkpoint.

³* <https://www.5.ua/polityka/u-zmi-povidomyly-shcho-yes-zghortaie-proekt-modernizatsii-kordonu-z-ukrainoiu-reaktsiia-dfsu-165326.html>
⁴* <https://gordonua.com/ukr/news/money/grojsman-pro-proekt-modernizatsiji-ukrajinskoji-kordonu-u-nas-je-groshi-shchob-jogo-zavershiti-ale-zaplanovana-vartist-zroslo-v-razi-245733.html>

PROBLEM WITH FORMING THE QUEUES

The issue of queues worried almost everyone who was crossing the border. The longest queues were faced by Ukrainian respondents, who traveled by car to Poland. The average length of entry to Poland by car ranged from two hours in MABC «Smilnytsia» and «Grushiv», where border and customs clearance is carried out jointly by Ukrainian and Polish guards, to five hours at the checkpoint «Krakivets», where the lowest level of satisfaction of travelers was recorded. As for Slovakia, Ukrainian respondents spent an

average of 3.5 hours at the checkpoint «Uzhhorod» and 3 hours at «Malyi Bereznyi». At Hungarian-Ukrainian section of the border - 2 hours at «Chop» checkpoint, 1.5 hours at MABC «Luzhanka», and less than an hour at the checkpoints «Vylok», «Kosyno» and «Dzvinkove». To get to Romania, Ukrainians were waiting for an 1 hour on average at the checkpoint «Porubne» and half an hour at «Diakove». On the northern border Ukrainians also entered Belarus on average after an 1 hour wait at MABC «Novi Yarylovychi».

PROBLEM WITH FORMING THE QUEUES

On the other hand, the majority of foreigners spent much less time on entering Ukraine due to the allocation of individual lanes for EU citizens in some of border checkpoints and also due to a simplified interview procedure. It should be noted that an introduction of procedures for fingerprinting the foreigners at the border in January 2018 has mainly affected the citizens of the Russian Federation and other countries, associated with migration risks, and therefore did not actually affect the length of the queues at the western border checkpoints that were chosen for research.

Travelers, who have crossed the Ukrainian border, often complained not only about the long waiting time, but also about just how disorderly queues were because of the lack of separate lanes for pedestrians and cars, as well as due to some individuals trying to get around staying in line. According to Ukrainian legislation, both border patrol and police should be involved in solving this problem by issuing coupons that will allow better control over the formation of the queues. However, the respondents reported violations of the requirements for the queue formation, cases of bribery and nepotism among the employees of Ukrainian border agencies, as well as instances of individual drivers selling their place in line. Most of problems of this kind

were mentioned in MABCs «Chop», «Luzhanka», «Kosyno», «Uzhhorod», «Malyi Bereznyi», «Krakivets», «Ustiluh», and «Uhryniv».

The assessment of the satisfaction level in regard to the border crossing procedure has shown that long queues and slow work of customs authorities cause the biggest concern among Ukrainian and foreign travelers. On Ukrainian side of the checkpoints, respondents were also worried about corruption and outdated infrastructure, and at the checkpoints of neighboring countries, travelers focused on negative attitudes and manifestations of discrimination, lack of communication or the ability to complain about the actions of the border patrol services of another state. The highest level of satisfaction was expressed by respondents at checkpoints with the smallest flow of travelers, which once again proves the need to open new automobile checkpoints and expand the capacity of existing ones, which would redistribute flows of travelers and reduce queues.

PROBLEM WITH FORMING THE QUEUES

TABLE 1.
AVERAGE LENGTH OF THE BORDER CROSSING PROCEDURE IF TRAVELLING BY CAR,
HOURS (MEDIAN)

MULTILATERAL AUTOMOBILE BORDER CHECKPOINT	UKRAINIAN CITIZENS TRAVELLING ABROAD	FOREIGN CITIZENS TRAVELLING TO UKRAINE
KRAKIVETS	5	3
SHEHYNI	4,5	4,5
UHRYNIV	3	3
SMILNYTSIA	2	1
UZHGOROD	3,5	2
MALYI BEREZNYI	3	1
CHOP	2	1
LUZHANKA	1,5	2
VYLOK	0,8	0,3
KOSYNO	0,5	1
DZVINKOVE	0,2	0,3
PORUBNE	1	1
DIAKOVO	0,5	1
NOVI YARYLOVYCHI	1	1

SOURCE:
survey on the fifteen international automobile crossing points at the state border of Ukraine with member states of the European Union, Belarus and Russian Federation

SPEED OF BORDER CROSSING PROCEDURE

One of the factors that affects queues at the border is the speed of border and customs control procedures. According to the results of this survey, Ukrainian travelers mostly considered border customs clearance faster on the Ukrainian side than on the side of the neighboring country. This situation has objective reasons, because the border services of neighboring states need to inquire Ukrainian citizens about the purpose of travel and the availability of means to stay in the EU, as well as inspect things and cars, which takes extra time. In particular, on Ukrainian-Polish border, a popular respondents' comment was that the overall length of crossing the border depends on the speed of the Polish side. However, there were exceptions - in MABC «Krakivets-Korchova», where the longest average speed of border crossing was recorded, most respondents considered the work of Ukrainian border services to be slower, and the speed of Polish border

guards as rather fast.

Ukrainian respondents, on average, rated the speed of work of border guards and customs officers in Slovakia as slow. However, respondents considered to be fast the work of Hungarian, Romanian and Belarusian border agencies. A peculiar situation was observed at the largest border checkpoints with Hungary and Slovakia - MABCs «Uzhhorod-Vyšné Nemecké» and «Chop-Zahony», where it was the activity of Ukrainian border authorities that was called slow.

Foreigners generally had a more positive experience of entering Ukraine than vice versa. In particular, foreign citizens mostly regarded the activities of border services of Ukraine and Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Belarus as fast. The only exception was the «Chop-Zahony» checkpoint, which is on the border with Hungary, where respondents believed that Ukrainian services were working rather slowly.

CORRUPTION

CORRUPTION

An assessment of the corruption at the border phenomenon was challenging for this study, because bribes are not a subject to be discussed in the immediate vicinity of government officials (e.g. border guards). Respondents were guaranteed confidentiality, which contributed to providing frank answers based on their own experiences or on the stories of people close to them. The results of the poll on the border with EU countries showed that 20% of Ukrainian respondents and 23% of foreigners knew about cases of corruption that involved Ukrainian authorities. Moreover, about 11% of Ukrainian respondents and 15% of foreign respondents knew about cases of corruption involving border and customs authorities of the neighboring EU states. At the Ukrainian-Belarusian and Ukrainian-Russian border, corruption was reported less frequently - 4% of Ukrainian respondents and 9% of foreigners disclosed information about bribery on part of Ukrainian authorities and 2% of Ukrainian respondents and 8% of foreign respondents mentioned corruption in relation to the activity of border services of the neighboring countries.

Corruption cases, reported by Ukrainian respondents, often occurred during the interaction with customs officials. The most widespread were paying bribes for the transportation of smuggled goods (cigarettes and alcohol), insufficiently thorough inspection of vehicles, ignoring cars with foreign registration that were illegally used by Ukrainians. Sometimes the respondents also described paying bribes for speeding up passport control procedures or moving ahead in line. In

general, according to the respondents, a number of cases of corruption at the border decreased in comparison with the past years. Travelers mentioned the load cases of detention of corrupt officials in neighboring EU countries and noted the risk of offering bribes to Polish officials, which could lead to detention and punishment. However, despite the intensification of anti-corruption measures, the illegal import of goods remains a source of profit for a large part of those, who cross the border most frequently.



CORRUPTION

5.1. EXAMPLES OF CORRUPTION AT THE BORDER

Some respondents decided to report on specific cases of corruption at the border. The most widespread stories from Ukrainian respondents were about paying bribes for the transportation of smuggled goods (cigarettes and alcohol), insufficiently thorough inspection of vehicles, ignoring cars with foreign registration that were illegally used. However, the respondents also described paying bribes to the SBGS representatives for speeding up passport control procedures or moving ahead in line.

UKRAINIAN-POLISH SECTION OF THE BORDER

At MABC «Shehyini - Medyca» respondents talked about the paying bribes for the transport of smuggled cigarettes and alcohol in both Ukrainian and Polish parts of the checkpoint. Also, Ukrainian customs offices were paid so they would not impose taxation for cars. In MABC «Krakivets-Korczowa», respondents reported **a bribe fare for a fast queue or importing a car with a foreign registration to be 250 hryvnias on Ukrainian part of the checkpoint**. As for Polish part, respondents believed that corruption occurred less frequently there, but **«during specific shifts people are allowed to smuggle good in exchange for money»**. In MABC «Hrushiv-Budomierz» and «Smilnytsia-Krościenko», respondents noted **cases of corruption in regard to contraband cigarettes and alcohol from both**

Ukrainian and Polish sides of border checkpoints. In addition, respondents at MABC «Smilnytsia» said that **«buses pay to be allowed to cross with excess weight»**.

In MABC «Ustiluh-Zosin», respondents were reluctantly sharing cases of corruption, saying they knew about bribery from friends, media or Internet resources. Only one of the respondents commented on corruption more openly, saying that the **«tax» for the carriage of contraband goods is 500 hryvnias**. Poles in Polish part of the checkpoint noted that corruption was not as common and gave an example of how **«the Polish customs officer was arrested last week»**.

At the «Uhryniv-Dołhobyczów» checkpoint, respondents often refused to comment on cases of corruption, having only talked about witnessing corruption without giving concrete examples. Only one of the respondents noted that he **«asked for money for the pit»** (review of the auto). In Polish part of the border, a question about corruption was commented as follows: **«They are afraid, but they also have corruption - they have good salaries and health insurance, etc., it's easier for them»**. However, some respondents claimed that representatives of Polish services would immediately arrest a person for offering a bribe: **«In there if you are trying to give a bribe, you can be cuffed right away!»** Similarly, the respondents did not want to share details about cases of corruption at the points «Yahodyn - Dorohusk» and «Rava-Ruska - Hrebenne», although

some respondents were laconic: **«you pay and you get to go»**.

UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN SECTION OF THE BORDER

Among descriptions of cases of corruption at Ukrainian side of MABC «Chop - Zahony» the stories of paying bribes to customs officers in **the amounts ranging from 10 to 500 euros for the carriage of goods** are worth highlighting. At the same checkpoint, one of the foreigners said that the bribe can be paid for crossing without a queue. At MABC «Luzhanka - Beregsurány» a respondent acknowledged that he was a participant in a corruption case, **«because you cannot really do it otherwise»** while another Ukrainian at MABC «Vylók - Tiszabecs» reported on paying bribes for an accelerated passage of the border. On Hungarian side of the checkpoints, respondents were less specific and told that they had **«heard about corruption»** from friends and media.

UKRAINIAN-SLOVAK SECTION OF THE BORDER

At the largest checkpoint in this section on the border «Uzhhorod - Vyšné Nemecké», the respondents talked about the transportation of smuggled goods via buses, to which Ukrainian customs officers **«close their eyes»** (an expression meaning ignoring something), as well as paying for the passage without a queue. At

Slovak side, the respondents also paid attention to **corruption in the smuggling of cigarettes and the passage by the Slovak authorities of minibuses for money**. At the checkpoint «Malyi Bereznyi - Ublá», respondents talked about how Ukrainian border guards ask for **«coffee money» in the amount of 100 UAH, 5-10 euros, 10 dollars, and customs officers request 10 euros for an accelerated inspection of the car**. According to the respondents, Slovak officials are **charging money to allow smuggling cigarettes and for conducting an insufficiently thorough car check**. At MABC «Mali Selmentsi - Veľké Slemence» respondents did not want to talk about examples of corruption in detail, but only noted that bribes are taken in both Ukrainian and Slovak parts of the border checkpoints for the import of smuggled goods.

UKRAINIAN-ROMANIAN AND UKRAINIAN-BELARUSIAN SECTION OF THE BORDER

Respondents mostly did not comment on cases of corruption at Ukrainian-Romanian and Ukrainian-Belarusian border checkpoints, emphasizing that they only heard about such stories, but do not know about them personally. Only one of the respondents noted that the situation in Romanian part of the checkpoint «Porubne - Siret» is as follows: **«you do not pay and you do not get to go»**.

INFLUENCE OF A VISA-FREE REGIME ON BORDER CROSSING PROCEDURE

The introduction of visa-free travel with the EU has a mixed effect on people crossing the border. On the one hand, the access to checkpoints has become easier and cheaper for all Ukrainian citizens with a biometric passport. On the other hand, those who often crossed the border before visa-free regime, such as merchants, who were trading near the border area,

remained dissatisfied by increasing queues at the borders, caused by the influx of travelers. Ukrainian border infrastructure proved to be unprepared for the introduction of visa-free regime and increase in the demand for the land-based border checkpoints. Increasing flows of travelers once again indicated the need to open new checkpoints and reconstruct existing ones.

METHODOLOGY

The results of this survey describe the trends in the procedure for crossing the border by Ukrainian citizens at 20 automobile and pedestrian border checkpoints between Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Belarus in April-May 2018. A total of 2,243 interviews were conducted, including 1,386 interviews with Ukrainian citizens and 857 interviews with foreigners.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to accommodate the specifics and innovative approach of the main program items of the planned research, namely its object, subject, goals and objectives, a methodological basis is chosen to be not only the legislative and regulatory framework for crossing the border of Ukraine as of March 2018, but also analytical materials and narratives within the public discourse, (stories, discussions, interviews, etc.) that relate to various practices of crossing Ukrainian border collected from Ukrainians and foreign citizens during the period from June 2017 and up to date.

The first method was «desk research», meaning collecting and processing all available material, which gave us different angles to review the problem, as well as critical processing of selected informational materials, namely, the identification of inconsistencies, contradictions and problematic aspects in the description

and analysis of intersection of practices at borders of Ukraine from different sources.

The second stage was collecting specific statistics about selected 20 border checkpoints - the statistics of departure and entry of Ukrainian and foreign citizens, as well as data on violations and complications found at the selected border checkpoints.

The third stage was a field study of current practices of crossing the Ukrainian border in the specified 20 checkpoints for such categories of respondents as Ukrainians, EU citizens and citizens from the group of countries considered a migration risk (RF). For this purpose, semi-formalized questionnaires were developed, based on materials collected during the previous stages, which allowed respondents to choose not only from the pool of proposed answers, but also to express their opinions, impressions and suggestions on several occasions.

The fourth stage was to obtain expert opinions regarding the situation that prevails at MABCs in Volyn, Transcarpathian, Lviv, Chernivtsi and Chernihiv regions. Experts were chosen from the representatives of profile departments, who are familiar with the peculiarities of common practices of border crossing in Ukraine and can provide recommendations that can contribute to overcoming the checkpoint problems if there are any.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE PROBLEMS:

- To the Prime Minister of Ukraine and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to intensify the negotiation process with relevant institutions of the European Union in order to open projects for the reconstruction of existing checkpoints. In particular, special attention should be paid to modernization of «Uzhhorod», «Malyi Bereznyi», «Vyllok», «Luzhanka», «Krakivets», «Dzvinkove», «Ustiluh» and «Diakovo»,
- To the State Fiscal Service, together with the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine and local administrations, to facilitate the modernization of checkpoints and roads leading to them, in particular, to schedule allocation of appropriate resources from state and local budgets,
- To the relevant institutions of Ukraine and the EU to take into account the introduction of the joint control procedure during the planning stage of the reconstruction of the checkpoints,
- To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to strengthen the negotiation process with the relevant institutions of the neighboring countries in order to conclude international agreements about opening new border checkpoints and joint control agreements.

PROBLEMS WITH FORMING QUEUES:

- To the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine and the National police to strengthen coordination efforts aimed at transparent formation of queues at the border,
- To the administration of the State Border Guard Service to strengthen anti-corruption measures for the MABC employees,
- To analytical centers and research institutions to conduct in-depth studies of the procedure for fingerprinting the foreigners at automobile checkpoints in Sumy and Kharkiv regions that border Russian Federation, as well as at checkpoints in international airports.

PROBLEMS WITH CORRUPTION:

- To the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine to strengthen measures to counter corruption at Ukrainian border, using the EU experience,
- To the border authorities of Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania to introduce the opportunity to report cases of corruption or to challenge the refusal of entry for Ukrainian citizens,
- To international organizations to facilitate independent journalistic investigations and research on phenomenon of corruption at the borders in order to overcome problematic moments.





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