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OUR BORDER

Public monitoring of border crossings under martial law

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Introduction

Dear ladies and gentlemen, we present you with the six issue of the Information and Analytical Bulletin "Our Border," in which the results of public monitoring of the quality of services provided by authorities when crossing the state border are published.

The monitoring is based on the results of the research, the purpose of which is to receive feedback from citizens and businesses regarding satisfaction with services during border crossing and working out the relevant recommendations.

The subject of the study is the assessments and expectations of businesses regarding obstacles in the implementation of export-import activities, and the assessments and expectations of Ukrainian citizens regarding the quality of services received when crossing the state border between Ukraine and the countries of the European Union and the Republic of Moldova from the State Customs Service and the State Border Service of Ukraine.

The Monitoring is conducted by the IER together with the participants of the Public Initiative "For Fair and Transparent Customs." Methodological support to partners is provided by IER, and data is collected monthly by IER partners:

- Association of customs brokers of Ukraine (Kyiv)
- Public Organization "International Cooperation Agency" (Lutsk)
- Public Organization "Karpatski Obriyi" (Uzhhorod)
- Public Organization "AR ZMI" (Mena, Chernihiv region)
- Public Organization "Strategy of the Future" (Kropyvnytskyi)
- Public Organization "SFERO" (Vinnytsya)

Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted with business representatives and standardized interviews of passengers who crossed the state border to enter Ukraine the month preceding the interview to collect information. Focus groups and in-depth interviews are conducted according to a specially developed guide. And the passenger survey is conducted in the format of a F2F interview based on a questionnaire with a standard set of fourteen closed questions and approximate interview duration of up to ten minutes.

This issue presents data that was collected during October-November 2023.

The report consists of two sections. The first one is entitled "Friendly Border." The section presents the results of the passenger survey. The second chapter, entitled "The Fair Border," presents a business perspective based on the obstacles and challenges in conducting export-import transactions.

FRIENDLY BORDER: assessments and expectations of citizens

1. About the research

During September 2022 – November 2023, eight waves of citizen surveys were conducted with those who crossed the border to enter Ukraine.

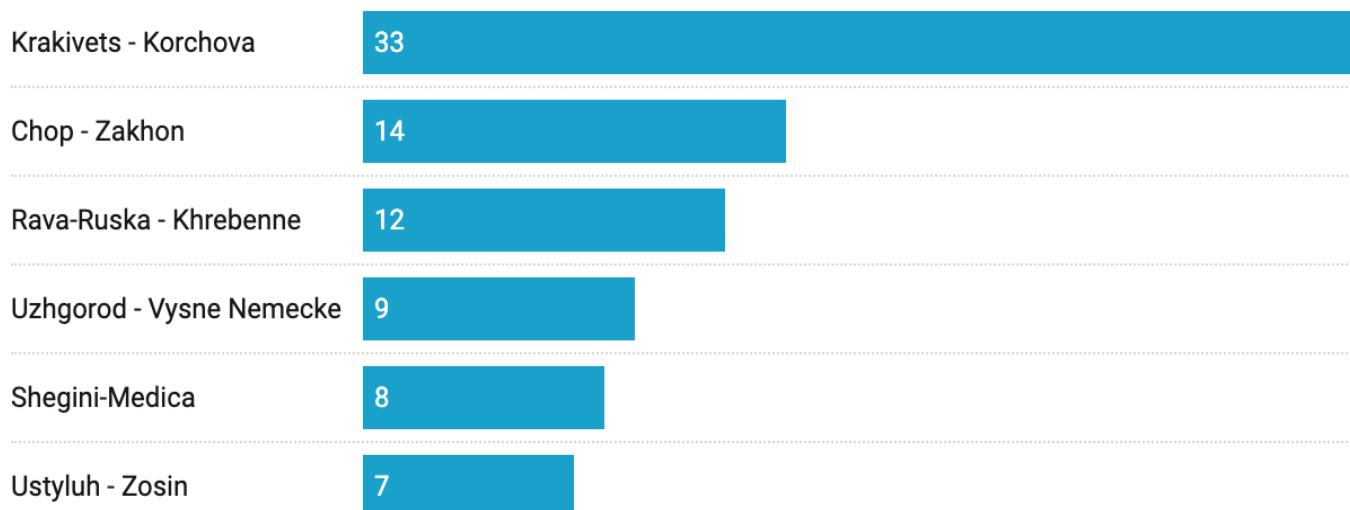
A total of 972 respondents from six regions of Ukraine were surveyed, 124 of them in October-November 2023. They crossed the state border to enter Ukraine a month before the survey.

Surveys were conducted in Vinnytsya - 30 (24%), Lutsk - 28 (23%), Uzhhorod - 26 (21%), Chernihiv - 10 (8%), and Kropyvnytskyi - 30 (24%).

Passengers who took part in the survey crossed the following checkpoints: Krakivets, Ustyluh, Chop, Shehyni, Yahodyn, Rava-Ruska, Luzhanka, Ublya, Vyshnye-Nyemetske, Hrushiv, Uhryniv, Solotvyno, Kosyno, Peremyshl, Mohyliv-Podilskyy, and others.

The largest share, namely 33% of those surveyed in October - November, crossed the border at the "Krakivets-Korchova" checkpoint; 14% of respondents crossed the border at the "Chop-Zakhon" checkpoint. Also, 23% of respondents crossed the border at the "Rava-Ruska - Hrebenne" checkpoint. Much fewer respondents (from 9% to 7%) crossed the border at other checkpoints.

Fig.1. Checkpoints, % of respondents (October)



2. The way of crossing the border

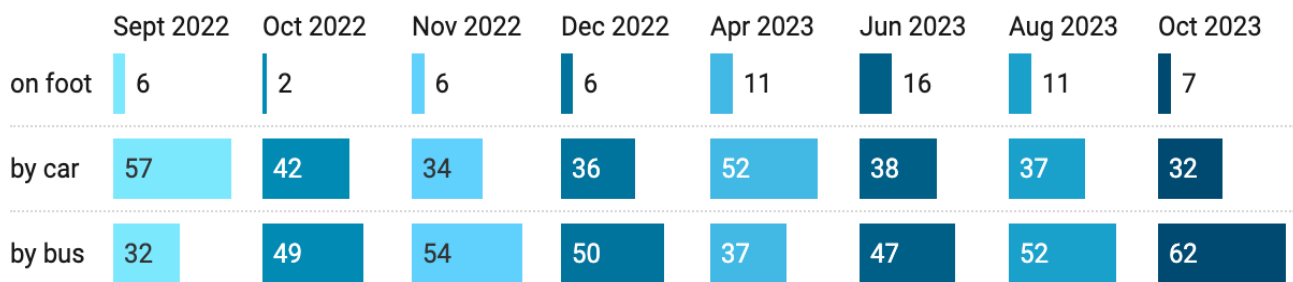
During all survey waves, most respondents crossed the border to enter Ukraine by car and bus.

There were minor changes in the structure of the respondents from September 2022 to October 2023.

The share of those who crossed the border by bus increased (from 32% in September to 62% in October), and the share of those who crossed the border by car decreased (from 57% to 32%, respectively).

The share of respondents who crossed the border on foot almost did not change (6% in September, 7% in October).

Fig.2. Way of crossing the border, % of respondents



3. Time to cross the border

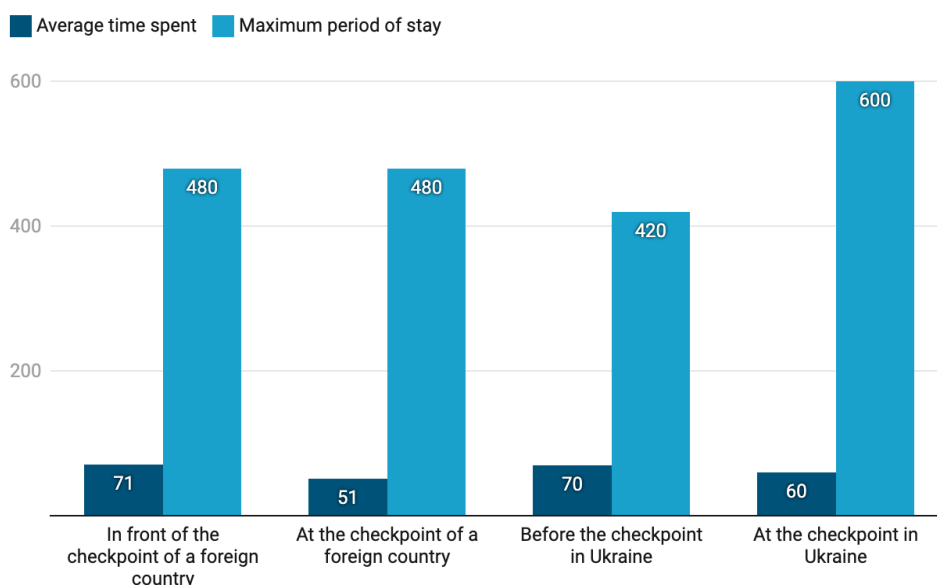
Average time

Border crossing time, presented in this study, consists of two indicators: (1) time spent in front of the checkpoint and (2) time spent at the checkpoint. Both indicators are calculated for the Ukrainian and foreign parts of checkpoints.

On average, respondents spent 51 minutes at a foreign checkpoint and 60 minutes at a Ukrainian checkpoint in October and November.

A similar trend is also observed in front of checkpoints. On average, the stay in front of the checkpoint of a foreign country is 71 minutes, and in front of the checkpoint in Ukraine - 70 minutes.

Fig.3. Duration of stay at the border, minutes (October)



So, on average, it took less time to cross a foreign checkpoint when entering Ukraine in October this year than to cross a checkpoint from the Ukrainian side.

The maximum waiting time has actually increased everywhere, both for checkpoints in Ukraine and foreign ones.

The maximum time of stay in front of the checkpoint of a foreign country in October-November 2023 was 480 minutes, same as at the checkpoint of a foreign country – 480 minutes.

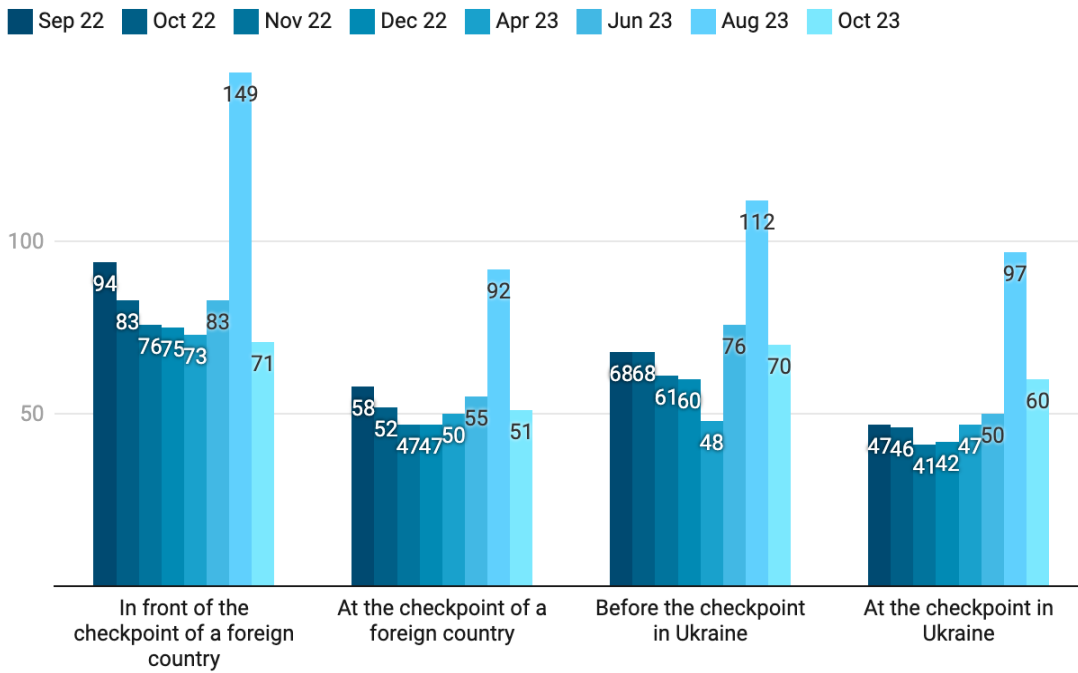
The maximum time of stay at the checkpoint in Ukraine is 600 minutes, while in front of the checkpoint in Ukraine it is 420 minutes.

As you can see, in October-November, the cases of maximum border crossing time are longer on the Ukrainian side in comparison with similar ones on the foreign side.

Average time

Compared to the previous months of this year, in October this year, the average time spent at the border decreased both at the checkpoints and in front of the checkpoints on both sides. The average length of stay at the checkpoint of a foreign country decreased the most - by 78 minutes compared to August. The average time spent in front of the checkpoint in Ukraine also decreased by 42 minutes. The average time at the checkpoint in Ukraine decreased by 37 minutes and at the checkpoint of a foreign country by 41 minutes.

Fig.4. Average time spent at the border, min.

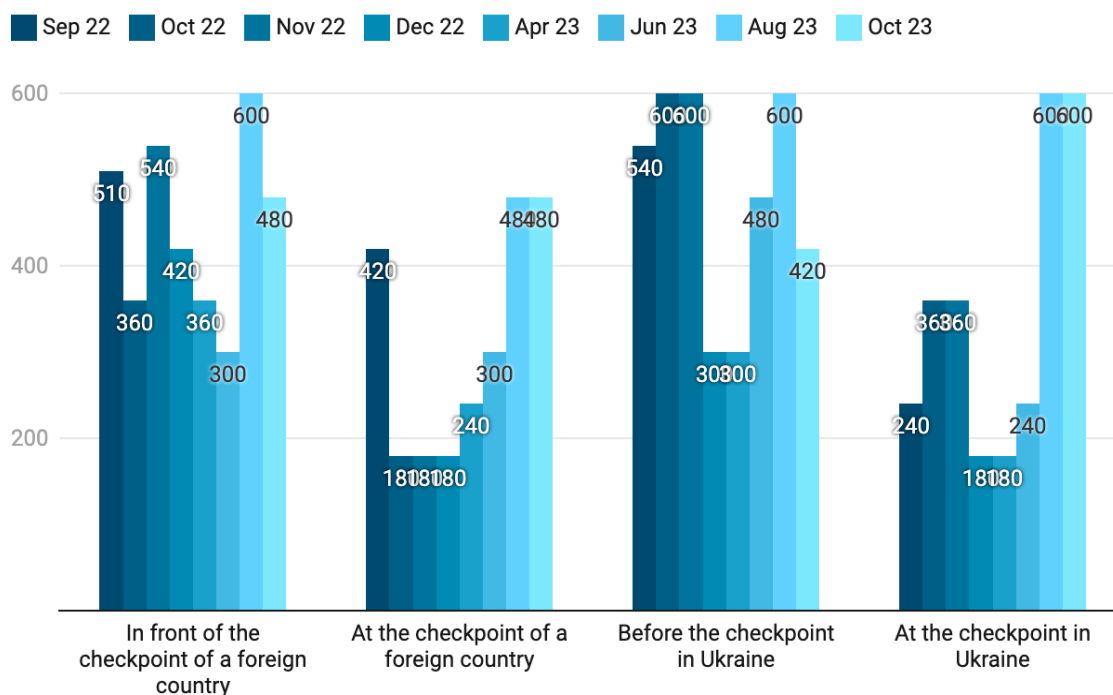


Maximum time

In October-November 2023, we observed various trends regarding the maximum stay times at the border compared to September 2022. The maximum time spent in front of the checkpoint in Ukraine was 540 minutes in September 2022 and 420 minutes in October 2023. The maximum crossing time in front of the checkpoint of a foreign country has also decreased (in September 2022 – 510 minutes, and in October 2023 – 480 minutes). The maximum time of stay both at the checkpoint of a foreign country and at the checkpoint in Ukraine has increased. At the checkpoint of a foreign country, the maximum time was 420 minutes in September 2022 and 480 minutes in October 2023. The largest increase was noted at the checkpoint in Ukraine, where the maximum length of stay increased from 240 minutes to 600 minutes.

So, we see that the maximum time of stay at the border increased more significantly on the Ukrainian side compared to the foreign side.

Fig.5. Maximum time of stay at the border, min



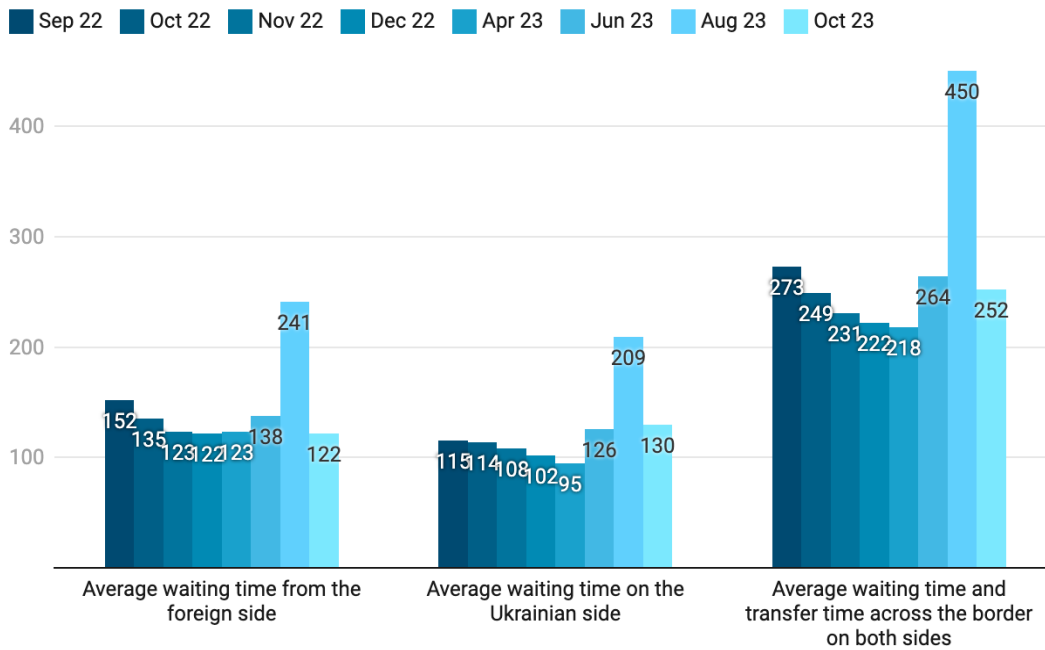
Total average time

The total average waiting time of passengers in the queue from the foreign side gradually decreased every month (with the exception of August last year - 241 minutes): in September 2022 - 152 minutes, and in October 2023 - 122 minutes.

The average waiting time on the Ukrainian side in October 2023 decreased compared to August 2023 and amounted to 130 minutes (209 minutes in August). The average time passengers had to wait and moving through the border from two directions was 252 min or 4 hours 12 minutes in October 2023 and 273 minutes, or 4 hours 53 minutes, in September 2022.

The time spent waiting and crossing the border on both sides tended to decrease from September 2022 to April 2023. In June, it began to increase again; in August, it also increased. And in October, it decreased again.

Fig.6. Total average time spent at the border, min



So, during their trips abroad, citizens of Ukraine spent, on average, on crossing the border:
4 hours 33 minutes in September 2022,
4 hours 9 minutes in October 2022,
3 hours 51 minutes in November 2022,
3 hours 42 minutes in December 2022,
3 hours 38 minutes in April 2023,
4 hours 24 minutes in June 2023,
7 hours 30 minutes in August 2023,
4 hours and 12 minutes in October 2023.

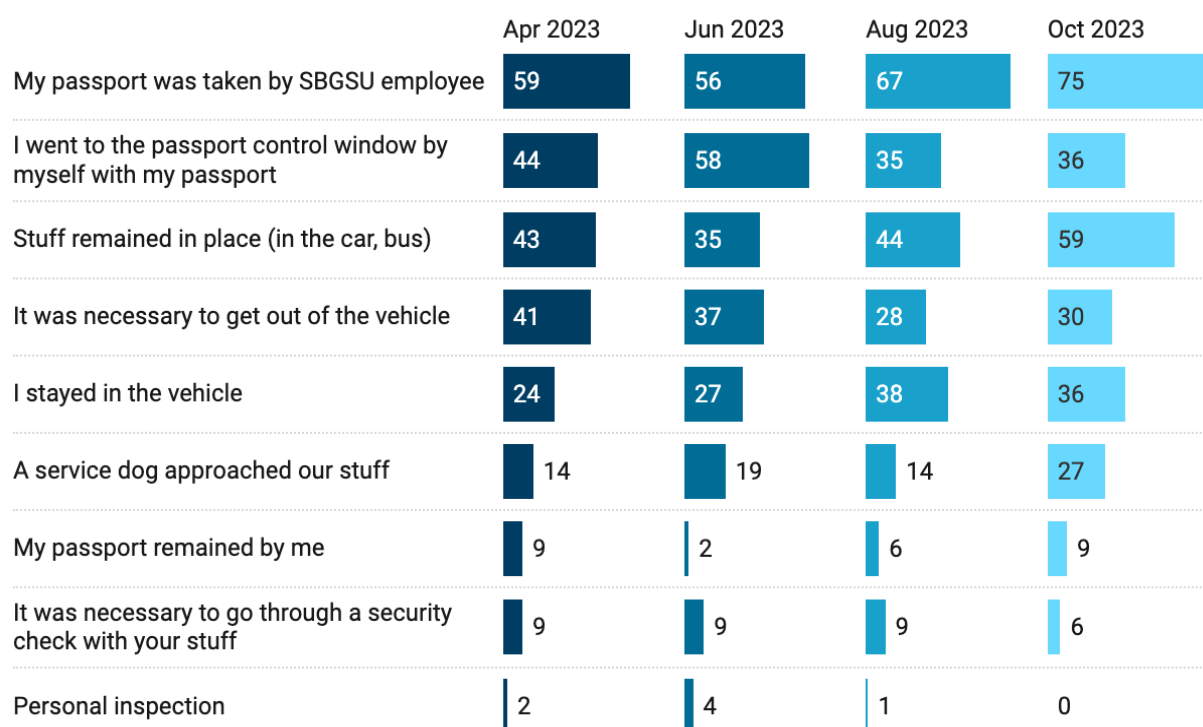
4. Control when crossing the border

In Ukraine

During the security check, more than half of the respondents, namely 75%, noted that their passport was taken by a worker of the State Border Service of Ukraine (SBSU).

At the same time, 36% of respondents approached the passport control window on their own. Another 59% said their baggage was left in place, and they did not have to remove them from the vehicle or bus during passport control. 36% of respondents claim they did not have to leave the vehicle and could stay in it during the inspection. 27% claim that a service dog approached them. No respondents indicated they were checked in person when crossing the border.

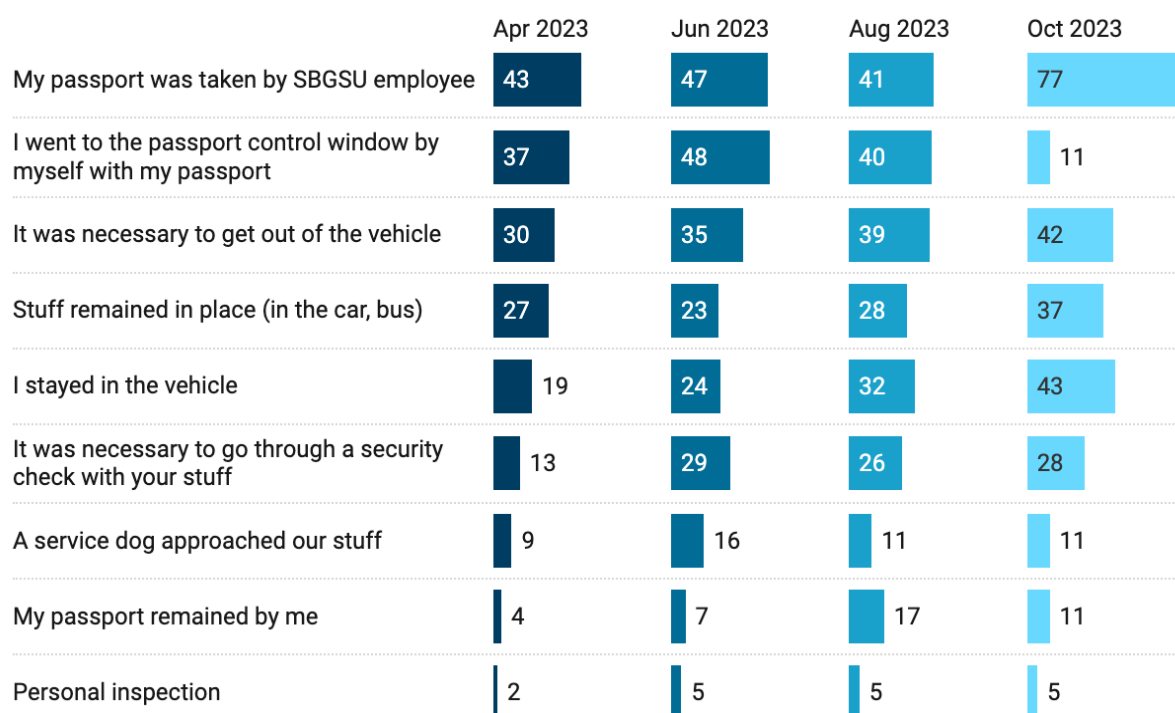
Fig.7. How does border control work in Ukraine, % of respondents (October)



In a foreign country

During the security check, 77% of respondents gave their passports to a border guard. 11% of respondents approached the passport control window on their own. Another 42% stated they had to get out of the vehicle, and 37% that their baggage remained in place. 43% of respondents say they did not have to leave the vehicle; they could stay in it during border control. Only 5% of respondents indicated they were checked personally when crossing the border. In October, the percentage of those who kept their passports was 17%.

Fig.8. How is border control carried out in a foreign country, % of respondents (October)

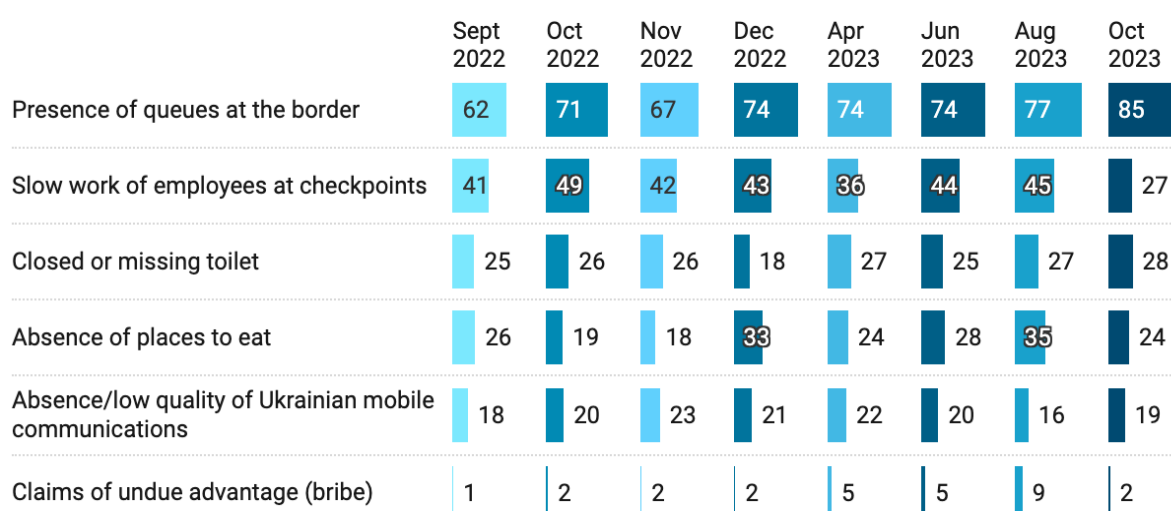


So, border crossing control in Ukraine is not much different from border crossing control in a foreign country.

4. Problems when crossing the border

The main problem when crossing the border for the majority of respondents (85%) was the presence of queues. This problem is in the lead during all waves of the survey. The second most significant problem is the lack of toilets at checkpoints (28%). This trend is observed from September 2022 to October 2023. Other shortcomings in the operation of checkpoints were also related to personnel's slow work at checkpoints (27%). Also, 24% mentioned the lack of a place to eat. 19% of respondents indicated the absence or low quality of Ukrainian mobile communications. The presence of problems with providing places for eating, toilets, and low-quality mobile communication indicates the need to improve the infrastructure and communication services at the border to ensure the comfort and safety of passengers. It is also impossible to ignore that 2% of respondents still point to demands for undue benefit, i.e. a bribe. The presence of demands for illegal benefits (bribes) indicates the problem of corruption at the border.

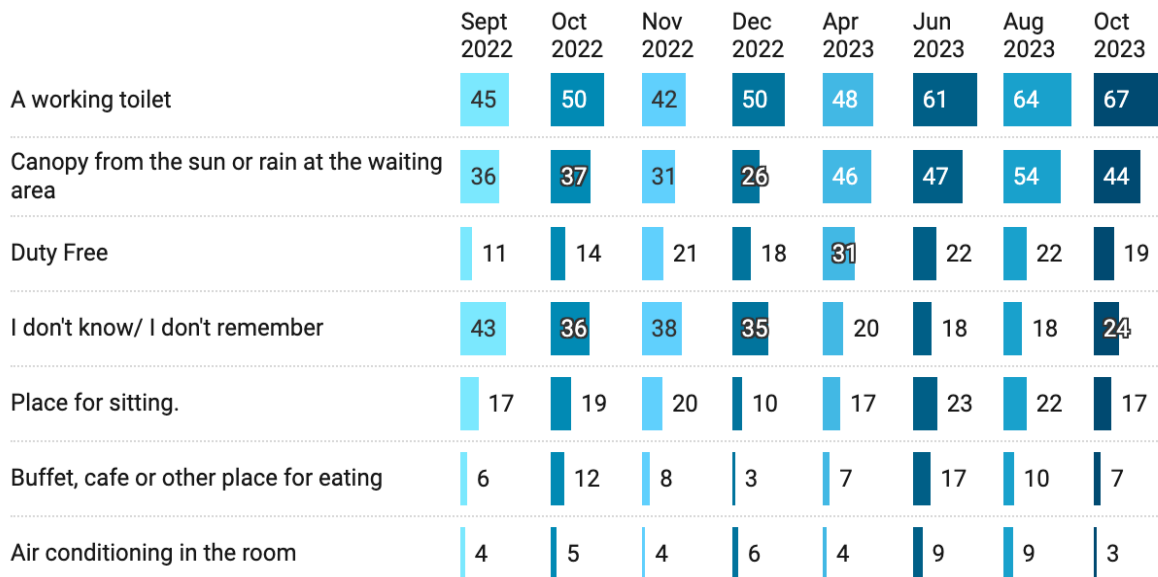
Fig.9. Problems when crossing the border, % of respondents.



5. Infrastructure for passengers

Only 67% of respondents who crossed the border in October noted there was a working toilet at the checkpoint. The same results were obtained in September 2022 when 45% of respondents mentioned the availability of a toilet. 24% respondents in October did not pay attention to sanitary conditions at checkpoints; in September, this percentage was much higher (43%). The second condition the respondents were provided with was shelter from the sun/rain: 44% in October and 36% in September, respectively. A significant percentage of respondents in October indicated a Duty-Free presence (19%). For comparison, in September, only 11% mentioned the availability of Duty-Free. 17% of respondents in October noted the availability of places to sit. 7% of respondents indicated the availability of a cafe or a place to eat in October and 6% in September. Only 3% of respondents indicated the presence of air conditioning in the rooms.

Fig.10. Availability of necessary conditions, % of respondents.

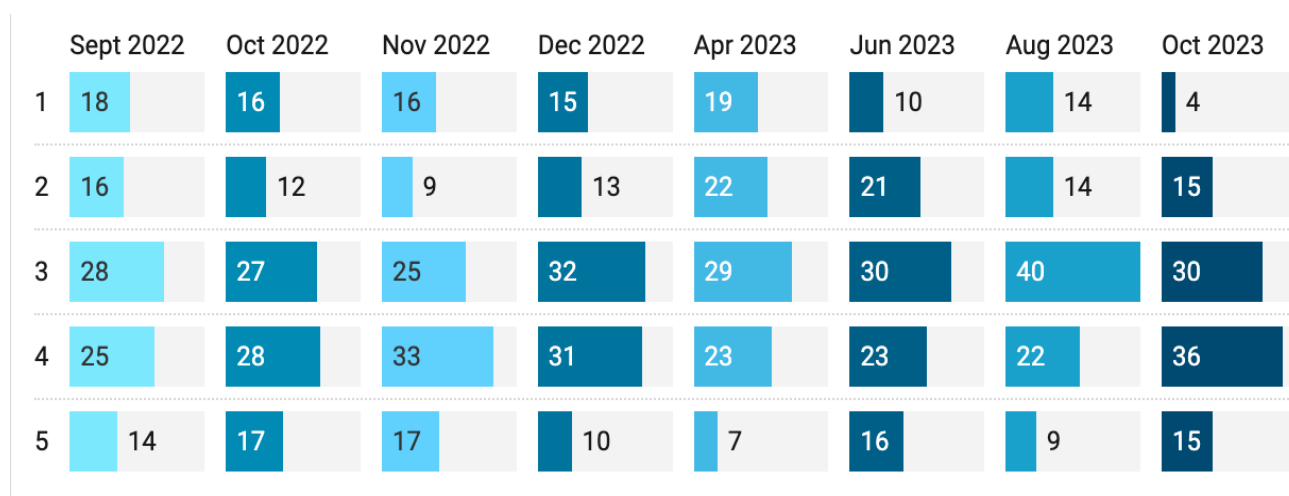


In general, it can be said there are positive trends in improving conditions at checkpoints. But there are also issues that require further improvements, such as reducing queues, ensuring comfort, and access to additional services for passengers.

6. Satisfaction with sanitary conditions

Since September, satisfaction with sanitary conditions has been gradually increasing, which indicates a certain improvement in the situation. The question of satisfaction with sanitary conditions divided the respondents almost in half. Neutral and satisfactory ratings prevail in October. 15% of respondents rated satisfaction with sanitary conditions as the highest score of "5", and 4% of respondents rated "1" as the lowest. Most respondents (36%) rated sanitary conditions as "4". In total, positive assessments outweigh negative ones.

Fig.11. Satisfaction with sanitary conditions, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, and 5 completely satisfied).

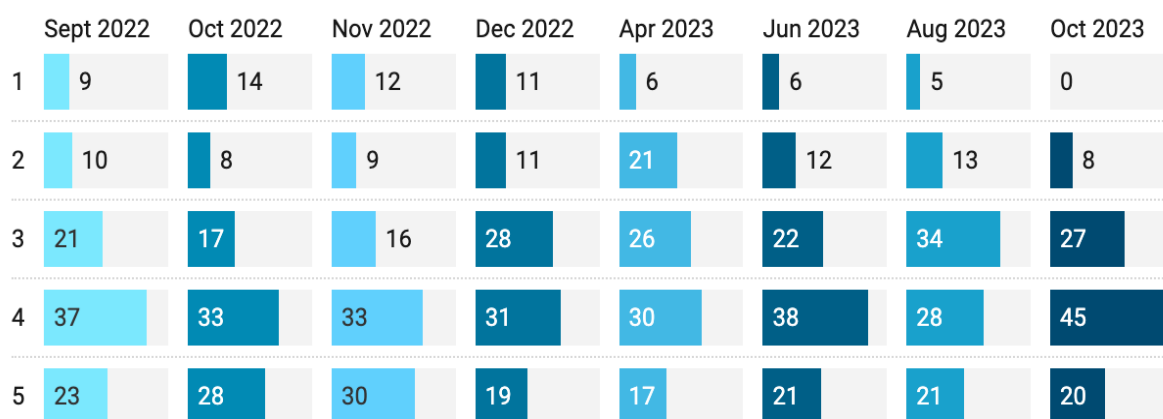


7. Quality of the Internet and mobile communication

In general, the quality of access to the Internet and mobile communications in October 2023 was positively estimated.

For example, 20% of respondents in October gave the highest score - "5", 45% rated it "4". 27% rated the quality of Internet and mobile communication as average, and only 8% were partially or fully dissatisfied. Positive estimates significantly outweigh negative ones in October 2023.

Fig.12. Internet and mobile communication quality, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, 5 is completely satisfied)



Average satisfaction assessment

Satisfaction with sanitary conditions

The average level of satisfaction with sanitary conditions remains stable from September 2022 to August 2023, reaching a value of 3.0 in August. However, in October 2023, the average level of satisfaction increased to 3.4.

Internet and mobile communication quality

The average assessment of satisfaction with the Internet and mobile communication quality decreased from September 2022 to April 2023, however, in June it started to increase and in October 2023 it was 3.7.

There is a need to improve both sanitary conditions and the quality of Internet and mobile communications at checkpoints in Ukraine, to meet the requirements and expectations of users.

Fig.13. Average satisfaction rating, % of respondents (scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all, 5 - completely satisfied)

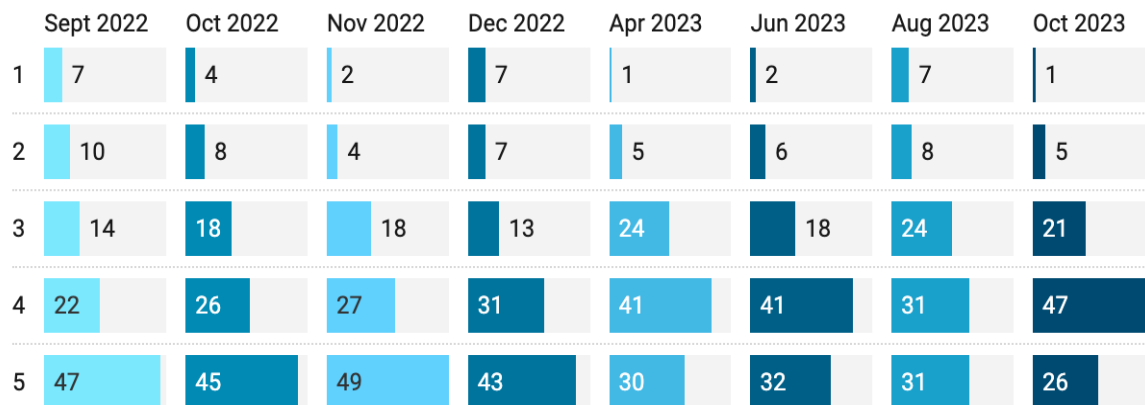


8. Organizing border crossing from the Ukrainian side

In general, the respondents positively assess organizing the border crossing from the Ukrainian side. In October, a quarter of respondents (25%) assessed organizing the border crossing from the Ukrainian side at "5". 47% assessed it at "4", and 21% assessed it at "3". The lowest rating of "1" for the border crossing organization in Ukraine was given by only 1% of respondents.

In total, the positive assessments outweigh the negative ones, and therefore the passengers are quite satisfied with organizing the border crossing procedure from the Ukrainian side.

Fig.14. Organizing the border crossing procedure from the Ukrainian side, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, 5 - completely satisfied)

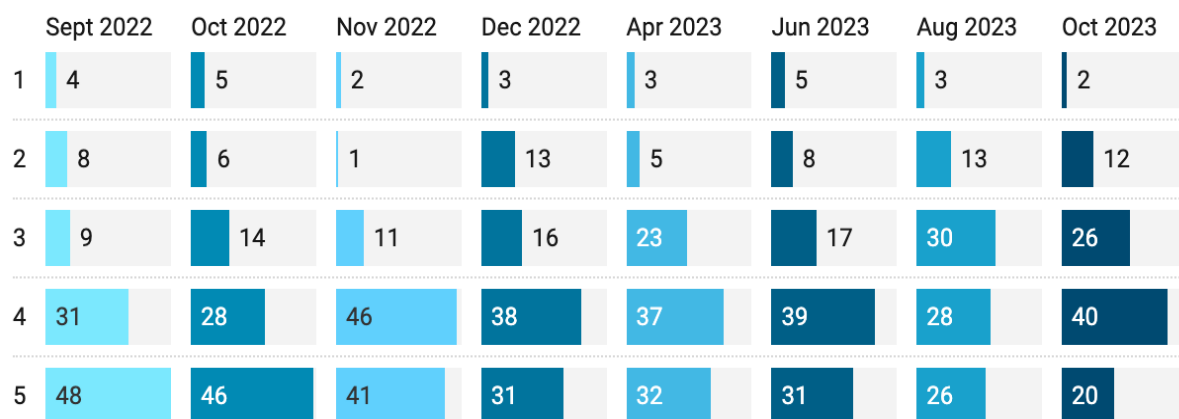


9. Organizing the border crossing from the foreign side

There is a similar trend with organizing the border crossing procedure from the foreign side. Respondents mostly positively assess the border crossing from the foreign side. In October, 20% of respondents assessed organizing the border crossing at "5", and 40 % rated it as "4". The percentage of such estimates ranged from 20% to 48% from September 2022 to October 2023. In October, 26% of respondents gave a neutral assessment, and 14% of passengers remained partially or fully dissatisfied.

In general, the majority of respondents gave positive assessments of organizing border crossing by a foreign state. However, a small percentage of respondents scored it "1" and "2", which may indicate certain problems or shortcomings in organizing border crossing by a foreign state.

Fig.15. Organizing the procedure for crossing the border from the foreign side, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, 5 is completely satisfied)



Average satisfaction assessment

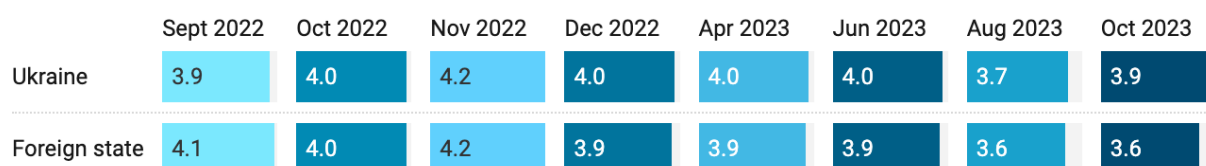
Organizing the border crossing from the Ukrainian side

The average assessment of satisfaction with organizing the border crossing in Ukraine ranged from 3.7 to 4.0 from September 2022 to October 2023. In October, the average satisfaction score is 3.9. It indicates the moderate respondents' satisfaction with organizing the border crossing in Ukraine.

Organizing the border crossing from the foreign side

The average assessment of satisfaction with organizing the border crossing by a foreign state was from 4.1 to 3.6 from September 2022 to October 2023. Only in August and October the assessment was lower than during the previous waves of the survey.

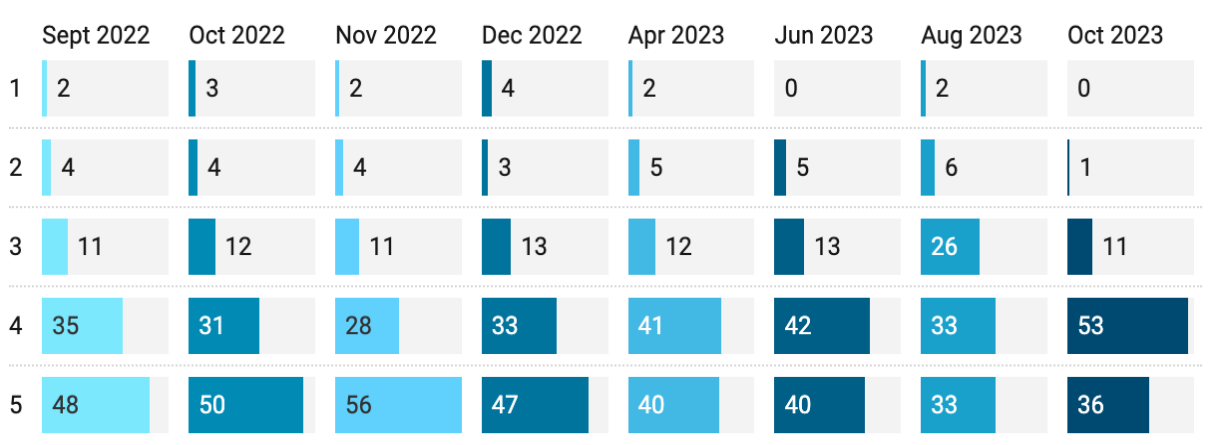
Fig.16. Average satisfaction assessment, % of respondents (scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all, 5 is completely satisfied)



10. The work of the State Border Service of Ukraine

The quality of service, namely the behavior of personnel of the State Border Service of Ukraine, were mostly assessed positively. In October, more than a third of the respondents - 36% - assessed it as "5," and 53% of respondents rated it as "4". Only 11% gave a neutral assessment. And only 1% of respondents assessed the quality of service provided by SBSU personnel as unsatisfactory.

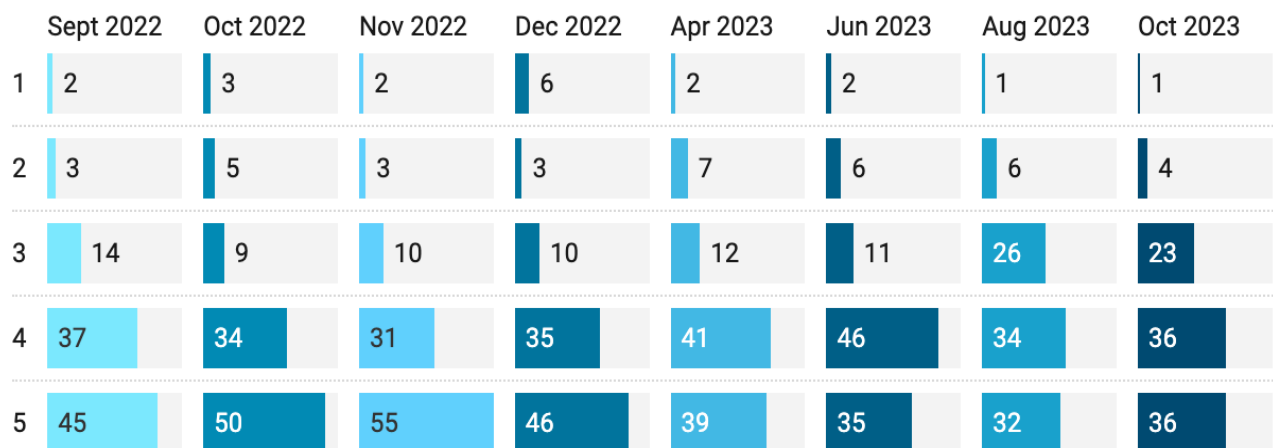
Fig.17. Quality of service at the checkpoint on the Ukrainian side, behavior of personnel of the State Border Service of Ukraine, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, 5 is completely satisfied)



11. Work by the State Customs Service of Ukraine

Respondents also positively assessed the quality of service of the State Customs Service of Ukraine. 36% of passengers gave the highest score - "5". A significant percentage of respondents (36%) assessed the behavior of the State Customs Service of Ukraine at "4". And 23% of respondents assessed it neutrally giving a score of "3". And only 5% rated it as unsatisfactory.

Fig.18. Quality of service at the checkpoint on the Ukrainian side, behavior of personnel of the State Customs Service of Ukraine, % of respondents (on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all satisfied, 5 is completely satisfied)



Average satisfaction assessment

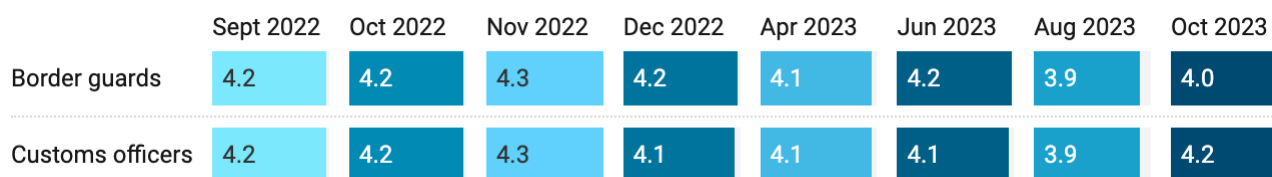
Assessment of the State Border Service of Ukraine services

From September 2022 to October 2023, the average assessment of satisfaction with the quality of service by border guards ranged from 3.9 to 4.3. In October 2023, this indicator is 4.0. It shows that the respondents were generally satisfied with the quality of work of border guards and their actions at checkpoints.

Assessment of the State Customs Service of Ukraine work

During the same period, the average assessment of satisfaction with the quality of service by customs officials also varied from 3.9 to 4.3. In October 2023, the average satisfaction indicator is 4.2. It shows that the respondents were also satisfied with the quality of work of customs officials and their actions at checkpoints.

Fig.19. Average satisfaction assessment, % of respondents (scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not satisfied at all, 5 - completely satisfied)



Conclusions and suggestions

1. Citizens of Ukraine spent an average of 4 hours 12 minutes crossing the border during their trips abroad in October 2023.
2. The main problem when crossing the border for the majority of respondents (85%) was the queues. Other disadvantages of the checkpoints were related to living conditions, such as the availability of a toilet or a place to eat. They were mentioned by 28% and 24% of respondents, respectively.
3. Data received show that satisfaction with sanitary conditions is at the average level. The average assessment of satisfaction on a five-point scale is 3.4.
4. In general, the respondents assessed the work of the State Customs Service and the State Border Service personnel when crossing the state border as good.

According to the results of the survey of passengers who crossed the state border during the month before it was conducted, proposals were made to improve the situation when citizens of Ukraine cross the state border of Ukraine.

1. Further organizing of places for eating and sitting at checkpoints.
2. Improving of sanitary conditions, including the availability of clean toilets at the checkpoints themselves and at the entrances to them.
3. Increasing the number of workers of the State Customs Service and the State Border Service serving the respective checkpoints to reduce the number of queues.
4. Improving access to mobile communication networks of Ukrainian operators.

A FAIR BORDER: business assessments and expectations

During October-November 2023, 60 respondents were interviewed in the format of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Customs officers, entrepreneurs engaged in foreign economic activity, customs brokers, carriers, representatives of business associations, volunteers, and customs experts participated in the surveys.

In this wave of the survey, special attention was paid to border crossing obstacles entrepreneurs experience when carrying out export-import activities from countries neighboring Ukraine.

Surveys were conducted in Vinnytsya, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, Zakarpattia, Chernihiv, Kyiv regions, and Kyiv city.

1. General characteristics of enterprises' foreign economic activity

During October-November 2023, enterprises continued to work in conditions of limited logistics routes due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The vast majority of goods continue to be processed at the Ukraine/EU border at international automobile checkpoints (IACs). In this regard, the increased load on the western border of Ukraine continues to affect the delivery terms of goods and the quality of logistics. The limited capacity of international checkpoints remains one of the urgent problems for foreign economic activity entities. Also, the speed of deliveries is affected by the ability to process the corresponding amount of cargo from neighboring countries.

However, the business noted a certain stabilization with the implementation of export-import operations and the adaptation of FEA entities to logistical realities. Here, first of all, we are not talking about improving the situation but about adaptation to the existing conditions of international supplies.

Also, during the survey, the issue of the effectiveness of the functioning of the E-queue at the border crossing was raised. Despite a positive assessment of the E-queue at the border, according to the respondents, it did not solve the problem of queues at the border. Separately, it should be noted about obstacles in crossing the border for foreign carriers who do not meet the established deadlines for returning from Ukraine.

Particular attention is paid to the implementation of the common transit regime (NCTS). Thus, according to the respondents, at some international automobile checkpoints, it is necessary to pay more than 200 UAH for printing the T1 declaration. It was also noted that European partners refused to record in the T1 declaration the destination of the cargo in Ukraine (for example, the city of Chernihiv) since foreign counterparties do not want to be responsible for the cargo in Ukraine in the conditions of military operations on the territory of Ukraine.

Therefore, such declarations lose their validity at the border. In addition, an increase in the number of cases was noted when Polish customs officials refused to accept T1 declarations issued in Ukraine, pointing to errors in their preparation. According to the entrepreneurs, such mistakes disappear from the Polish broker for 140 zlotys.

Separately, it was noted that the strike of Polish carriers and the blockade of the border by the Republic of Poland had a negative impact on deliveries. Some carriers see the fault of the Ukrainian side, which was warned about the strike but did not take seriously the demands put forward by Polish carriers.

Respondents began to mention more often "pre-war or traditional obstacles" when crossing the customs border:

- issue of overestimation of the customs value during import;
- differences in customs clearance procedures for the same product in different regions of Ukraine.

In general, a significant number of respondents mentioned adapting to existing logistics routes and adjusting to objective realities related to their bandwidth and other obstacles. Agricultural enterprises continue to report obstacles related to the export of certain types of agricultural products related to restrictions imposed on the import of Ukrainian agricultural products by certain European countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary). For example, on the Polish side, there are obstacles to export related to veterinary inspections.

Exporters noted long queues at customs from the Republic of Poland, delays in customs clearance in the territory of other foreign countries adjacent to Ukraine, additional checks, etc. The Polish side technically lacks electronic seals with GPS and other means of transit tracking. It leads to the fact that more transit cargo arrives than the Polish side can handle, and this, accordingly, leads to queues.

Despite the logistics services market having adapted to the war conditions, business continues to lose funds and contractors due to the logistics component. Even if the Ukrainian supplier has a more attractive price than competitors, foreign buyers often reject such offers and prefer more expensive options only because of the long delivery time from Ukraine, which depends on the logistics shoulder and delays at customs.

2. The main results of the study

The main theses voiced by respondents during focus groups and in-depth interviews.

1. Adaptation of entrepreneurs to logistical realities and conditions of foreign economic operations in the conditions of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine.

At the same time, queues at the border remain the main obstacle for export-import operations, as businesses continue to lose funds and counterparties due to the logistics component. Another challenge for business was the Polish carriers' strike and the border blocking by the Republic of Poland in November 2023.

2. Positive assessment the "E-Queues" mechanism introduction.

However, the E-queue introduction at the border did not solve the issue of queues at international checkpoints. Respondents continue to mention cases of time calculation errors when arriving at the checkpoint, the possibility of bypassing the E-queue, etc.

3. More frequent mention of "pre-war, traditional" obstacles when crossing the customs border:

- *issue of overestimation of the customs value during import;*
- *differences in customs clearance procedures for the same product in different regions of Ukraine.*

4. Respondents paid considerable attention to border crossing obstacles from neighboring countries (see below).

5. Issues of improving the border infrastructure and improving the efficiency of customs procedures are traditionally raised.

3. Export directions and dynamics

In general, there is currently no question of a large-scale entry into new sales markets or the restoration of pre-war supplies. But some enterprises are actively working to restore their exports to some countries in Europe and Asia.

The export component by types of products also did not change significantly. Enterprises work within the agreed assortment that is ordered from them and within the capabilities of their production facilities.

The main reason for the decrease in the enterprises' exports was the restrictions on the import of Ukrainian agricultural products from the already mentioned Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia. For example, the respondents noted the significantly complicated transit of products through the territory of Poland.

4. Assessment of "E-Queues" work at the border

A significant number of respondents positively assessed the introduction of the E-queue at the border, although they admit that its introduction did not solve the problems of queues at international checkpoints.

According to respondents from different regions, there are examples of untimely updating of transit times and insufficient efficiency of the electronic queue, in particular:

- there is evidence of irrelevance of the border crossing time after arrival at the relevant checkpoint;
- the need to physically monitor your place in the queue (absence of messages from the system);
- there is evidence of cases of speeding up the passage of the queue for an additional fee;
- the unsettled issue of responsibility for violation of the terms of goods delivery (if waiting in the queue exceeds the established limits (for motor vehicles – 10 and 5 days);
- lack of responsibility for crossing the border outside the E-queue mechanism.

It is proposed to introduce a separate registration in the "Electronic Border Crossing Queue" system to transport agricultural products by motor vehicle.

5. Implementation of NCTS

Despite the increase in declarations made in the common transit system (NCTS), a significant number of enterprises are in no hurry to authorize in the common transit system. According to the respondents, it is probably due to the large number of documents that need to be submitted and the natural resistance to everything new.

One of the reasons that deters FEA entities from using the common transit system is the high cost of financial guarantees and guarantor services. The company can independently act as a financial guarantor, but this requires the presence of significant working capital. In addition, the mechanism for calculating the amount of the guarantee remains unclear for many entrepreneurs, which also deters them from using the NCTS system.

In addition, the respondents stated that at some checkpoints, it is necessary to pay more than 200 UAH for printing the T1 declaration, as well as the fact that European partners refuse to record the destination of the cargo in Ukraine in the T1 declaration due to the war, so, such declarations lose their validity at the border.

6. Infrastructure/procedures

During the survey, special attention is paid to issues of border and customs infrastructure development and customs procedures. In view of the long queues at the border, respondents in every survey pointed to the issue of expanding checkpoints, increasing the number of customs officers, improving the efficiency of customs procedures, etc.

In the course of the conducted survey, the respondents noted, in particular, the following:

- Necessity of regulation of the functioning of the "Way" system;
- Difficulties in chartering specific vehicles;
- Carriers' lack of desire to use the latest technologies that are spreading in European countries;
- The complexity of risk reinsurance;
- Lack of an equipped terminal in the city of Chernihiv (especially in the context of cargo sealing);
- The need to bring the infrastructure of control services closer to the international checkpoints.

7. Obstacles from neighboring countries

Separate attention in the study was paid to the obstacles that Ukrainian enterprises face when making export-import supplies from neighboring countries since some of the mentioned obstacles do not depend on the Ukrainian side but affect the movement of goods through Ukrainian checkpoints. Most of the complaints are related to obstacles arising during transit through the territory of Poland or deliveries to Poland.

In particular, the respondents complained about the following obstacles:

- complicated cargo transit through the territory of Poland;
- there have been more frequent cases when Polish customs officials refuse to accept T1 declarations issued in Ukraine, pointing to existing errors in their preparation;
- the facts of European partners' refusal to record in the T1 declaration the cargo's destination in Ukraine (for example, Chernihiv);
- There are still problems with veterinary control at the border;
- The waiting time at checkpoints of neighboring countries has increased.

The surveyed enterprises did not use the helpdesk of the State Customs Service regarding obstacles to customs clearance from neighboring countries.

Box.1

The average time for crossing the border for the final delivery in the Doroguzk customs crossing zone that does not require veterinary control (on the example of one of the respondents):

- waiting time in the neutral zone up to 15 min
- the waiting time in front of the international checkpoint of a neighboring country is, on average, 6-12 hours; for import, it is 12-48 hours (you have to stand in a live queue)
- the waiting time at the international checkpoint of a neighboring country is 6 - 12 hours
- when delivering goods requiring veterinary control, the time of stay at the international checkpoint of a neighboring country was, on average, 36-48 hours

Recommendations and suggestions of participants of focus groups and in-depth interviews

- ✓ Increasing the efficiency of international automobile checkpoints and improving their infrastructure;
- ✓ Improvement of the E-Queue mechanism functioning;
- ✓ Implementing of common customs and border control at the most problematic areas of the border and development of the possibility of opening common checkpoints with partner countries;
- ✓ Implementing common customs and border control at the most problematic areas of the border and developing of the possibility of opening common checkpoints with partner countries;

It is worth noting that the recommendations formulated in the [previous issue of the bulletin](#) have not lost their relevance.