

BORDER MONITORING REPORT, LATVIA

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Border area: Green border between Latvia and Belarus

Key contacts: State Border Guard (SBG) and Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Background

In October 2025, GPB was contacted by MSF Poland which inquired on the matter of access to health care at the Latvia-Belarus border, as well as in detention centers. GPB sent out requests for public information both to SBG and EMS, inquiring on such topics as the amount of medical care services provided and their nature, or challenges encountered while providing medical care for the period 2021-2025.

EMS service	Number of calls	Number of people hospitalized	Number of people died after border crossing	Number of people deterred at the border	Number of people accepted on hum. grounds
2021 (from August)	137	37	-	4045	94
2022	124	58	1	5286	217
2023	144	71	4	13863	428
2024	21	10	6	5388	26
2025 (by November)	20	12	4	11823	31

Key Findings

○ SBG involvement/self-evaluation

- Since 10 August 2021, SBG has been working in close cooperation with EMS. SBG visually evaluates the person and considers person's needs to decide on the involvement of EMS. EMS evaluates the necessity of hospitalization.
- SBG does not transport people to hospitalization places, but they provide support in transporting people to the nearest access for EMS, occasionally, several kilometers away.
- SBG has emphasized that another core challenge besides the road infrastructure is related to the fact that people simulate health problems or aggravated conditions which lead to unfounded EMS involvement – a service which is limited at border area.
- In regards border deaths, SBG has specified in their answer that in 2021 and 2022 no data was collected, which could also be interpreted that it is not excluded that people have died after border crossing in 2021 and 2022.

○ EMS involvement/self-evaluation

- EMS has provided emergency medical care at Latvia-Belarus border since August 2021 which also marked the year with the most calls received (137 for less than 6 months in comparison to 21 in 2024 with a similar number of people at the border).
- EMS similarly emphasizes challenging logistics at the border area when often the help of SBG is needed to access the person/people in need of medical care. Occasionally, brigades have to cross swampy areas by foot.

- Direct calls by GPB to EMS, which lasted until 2024 when the decision was made to contact SBG instead, were said to be challenging since medical staff did not involve SBG or State Police for support and tried to reach out the person/people in need of medical care on their own, including during nighttime.
- EMS highlights that language barrier creates significant obstacles to collecting their medical history.
- **Main trends throughout 2021-2025**
 - In 2021 (from August), EMS received the most requests (137) while only 37 people were hospitalized. Consequently, it can be interpreted as a precaution in response to the sudden influx of people at the border which later was treated differently with decreasing EMS calls, more likely, from the part of SBG.
 - In 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025, approximately in half cases of EMS calls people were hospitalized.
 - In 2021, 2022, and 2023, there were significantly more calls related to various respiratory and digestive system diseases.
 - Exclusively, in 2023 EMS was provided to people during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period (for example, there were 4 cases of spontaneous single births, in all of which the patients were transported to a medical facility).
 - In 2024 and 2025 the most frequent EMS calls were related to various injuries, poisonings, and other consequences of external influences (for example various fractures, frostbite, and hypothermia).
 - **Although it cannot be ruled out that some of the diagnoses were already apparent before the border crossing, the available data indicate that many conditions in the pre-hospital stage, such as various injuries, poisoning, the effects of other external influences, as well as respiratory and digestive disorders, could be related to extended stays in life-threatening and unsuitable conditions or even the result of possible violence.**

Recommendations and Action Points

- Analyze data and prepare a report on access to health care in accommodation centers for detained foreigners “Mucenieki” and “Daugavpils” for the period 2021-2025.

Annexe: EMS Activity and Key Diagnoses at the Latvia-Belarus Border, 2021-2025

2021

In 2021, from August to December, EMS received 137 calls. Of these, in 37 cases people were transported to medical institutions. No deaths were recorded at the pre-hospital stage. The most frequently established pre-hospital diagnoses were:

- **Various respiratory system diseases – 34 cases**, for example:
 - *Acute upper respiratory infection with multiple and unspecified localization* – 18 cases, of which 6 people were transported to medical institutions.
- **Various digestive system diseases – 14 cases**, for example:
 - *Acute appendicitis* – 4 cases, all 4 of which resulted in transport to medical institutions;
 - *Unspecified functional bowel disorders* – 4 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution.
- **Various skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases – 9 cases**, for example:
 - *Unspecified local infections of the skin and subcutaneous tissue* – 4 cases, in none of which people were transported to medical institutions;
 - *Abscess, furuncle, and carbuncle of the trunk skin* – 2 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution.
- **Various urogenital system diseases – 13 cases**, for example:
 - *Acute cystitis* – 3 cases, of which 2 people were transported to medical institutions;
 - *Acute salpingitis and oophoritis* – 3 cases, of which 2 people were transported to medical institutions.
- **Injuries, poisonings, and certain other consequences of external causes – 17 cases**, for example:
 - *Fracture of the lower leg, including the ankle* – 4 cases, of which 2 people were transported to medical institutions;
 - *Poisoning from edible mushrooms* – 1 case, in which the person was transported to a medical institution.

2022

In 2022, EMS received 124 calls. Of these, in 58 cases people were transported to medical institutions. No deaths were recorded at the pre-hospital stage. During this reporting period, the most frequently established pre-hospital diagnoses were:

- **Various respiratory system diseases – 12 cases**, for example:
 - *Acute upper respiratory infection with multiple and unspecified localization* – 11 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution;
 - *Pneumonia caused by an unspecified microorganism* – 1 case, in which the person was transported to a medical institution.
- **Various digestive system diseases – 18 cases**, for example:
 - *Unspecified gastroduodenitis* – 3 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution;
 - *Unspecified functional bowel disorders* – 3 cases, of which 2 people were transported to a medical institution;
 - *Acute pancreatitis* – 5 cases, of which 3 people were transported to medical institutions.

- **Various skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases – 8 cases**, of which 3 people were transported to medical institutions.
- **Diseases of the musculoskeletal and connective tissue system**, for example:
 - *Spondylosis* – 8 cases, in none of which people were transported to a medical institution.
- **Urogenital system diseases – 5 cases**, of which 3 people were transported to a medical institution.
- **Various injuries, poisonings, and other consequences of external causes – 57 cases**, for example:
 - *Superficial frostbite of the ankle and foot* – 14 cases, of which 5 people were transported to a medical institution;
 - *Unspecified frostbite of the lower limb* – 9 cases, in all of which people were transported to a medical institution;
 - *Hypothermia* – 6 cases, of which 4 people were transported to a medical institution;
 - as well as various fractures, contusions, wounds, and frostbite of the upper and lower limbs.

2023

In 2023, EMS received 144 calls. Of these, in 71 cases people were transported to medical institutions. No deaths were recorded at the pre-hospital stage. The most frequently established pre-hospital diagnoses were:

- **Various respiratory system diseases – 18 cases**, of which 8 people were transported to medical institutions.
- **Various digestive system diseases – 11 cases**, of which 7 people were transported to medical institutions.
- **Various diagnoses related to pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period – 11 cases**, for example:
 - *Spontaneous abortion and its complications* – 2 cases, both transported to medical institutions;
 - *Threatened abortion* – 3 cases;
 - *Preterm spontaneous onset of labor with preterm delivery* – 1 case, in which the person was transported to a medical institution;
 - *Single spontaneous delivery* – 4 cases, all 4 transported to medical institutions;
- **Somnolence, stupor, and coma – 2 cases**, both transported to medical institutions.
- **Various injuries, poisonings, and other consequences of external causes – 52 cases**, of which 26 people were transported to medical institutions, for example:
 - *Head injuries* – 10 cases, of which 3 people were transported to medical institutions;
 - *Hypothermia* – 6 cases, of which 4 people were transported to medical institutions;
 - *Frostbite of the ankles and feet with necrosis* – 4 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution;
 - as well as various fractures, contusions, wounds, and frostbite of the torso and upper and lower limbs.

2024

In 2024, EMS received 21 calls. Of these, in 10 cases people were transported to medical institutions. During this reporting period, two deaths were recorded — in February and March — with the causes of death unknown. The most frequently established pre-hospital diagnoses were:

- **Various injuries, poisonings, and other consequences of external causes – 12 cases**, of which 9 people were transported to medical institutions, for example:

- *Fracture of the lower leg, including fracture of the ankle* – 2 cases, both of which resulted in transport to medical institutions;
- *Superficial frostbite of the ankle and foot* – 2 cases, of which only 1 person was transported to a medical institution;
- *Hypothermia* – 2 cases, both resulting in transport to medical institutions.

2025

In 2025, from January to October, EMS received 20 calls. Of these, in 12 cases people were transported to medical institutions. One death was recorded — in April — with the cause of death unknown. During this reporting period, the most frequently established pre-hospital diagnoses were:

- **Syncope and collapse** – 2 cases, of which 1 person was transported to a medical institution.
- **Various injuries, poisonings, and other consequences of external causes – 13 cases**, of which 9 people were transported to medical institutions, for example:
 - *Fracture of the lower leg, including ankle fracture* – 3 cases, all 3 resulting in transport to medical institutions;
 - *Unspecified frostbite of the lower limb* – 2 cases, of which only one person was transported to a medical institution;
 - *Hypothermia* – 2 cases, both resulting in transport to medical institutions.