

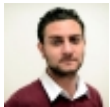
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Ministers unite to launch European Mobility Week

Cabinet members announce plans for Mobility Week to be held in September.



Tim Attard Montalto
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Environment minister Leo Brincat



Environment Minister Leo Brincat and Transport Minister Joe Mizzi speak about the importance of sustainable transport ahead of European Mobility Week. Video by Ray Attard
Three ministers and two parliamentary secretaries this morning launched the European Mobility Week, which will be held between the 16th and 22nd of September.

Flanked by two electrically-run Smart cars, environment minister Leo Brincat, together with transport minister Joe Mizzi, Gozo minister Anton Refalo and parliamentary secretaries Michael Falzon and Stefan Buontempo announced a number of events planned by government.

The theme of this year's mobility week will be 'Our Streets, Our Choice', and will include a car-free day on 22 September, a national bicycle marathon on 21

September and other activities aimed at raising awareness on sustainable means of transport and renewable energy. Participation in the marathon will be at a fee of €10, with the money collected going towards the Community Chest Fund.

Brincat said that through this initiative, government was sending a "clear message" that better air quality and less congestion on the roads leads to a better quality of life and, consequently, was of benefit to everyone. "It is our duty to raise such awareness and to encourage alternative and clean energy," he said, adding "this is and has always been one of government's priorities."

Citing the EU's regulations requiring member states to reduce their carbon emissions by 20% from the 1990 levels, Brincat said a low-carbon economy was a must. "The question should not be whether we should do this but how and when," he said. "This, of course, requires inter-ministerial work and collaboration from local councils, NGOs and the general public."

Mizzi warned that the high usage of private vehicles in Malta was not merely a cause of concern for issues such as congestion, but would - in the long-run - start to affect people's health. He said that government was determined to promote "better, more efficient and more sustainable" methods of public transport. "This needs to be tackled on a national, as well as a local level," he said. "For this reason, we are urging local councils to participate and suggest initiatives which can help in this regard."

Meanwhile, Gozo minister Refalo said that awareness on more sustainable methods of transport had to be tackled through campaigns such as this and educational measures. He said that during the recent Santa Marija weekend, a total of 18,000 vehicles - carrying some 70,000 persons - travelled to the sister island. Moreover, Gozo is set to receive in excess of one million tourists throughout 2014. Therefore, transport sustainability had to be sought.

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Tim Attard Montalto joined MaltaToday in 2013 as a reporter.

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