



Webinar 3 - 2022
Is Carbon Free Travel possible for Gozo?
The Contribution of the Business Sector

Michael Galea

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Thank you Daniel for your introduction. I welcome all of those who have joined us through our online platform, and also those who are following us through our social media platforms.

As a Chamber, and also as the host structure of the EUROPE DIRECT office in Gozo, we constantly advocate for and support the implementation of policies relating to green mobility, especially in Gozo. We believe in Gozo's potential of becoming a catalyst amongst both Islands, and this webinar today has the objective of getting the ball rolling on this subject. Gozo is fully dependent on proper accessibility, which can be seen also from sea passenger numbers and ferry trips made throughout the year. Therefore, undoubtedly, transport is an undeniably essential factor for Gozo's economic and social survival. The trips between the Islands, reached a total of 38,453 in 2021 also. In parallel, one can also observe the exponential increase in private vehicle ownership, which has gone up to 1,365 cars per 1,000 inhabitants over 18 years. This marks more than 100% of the total population who can actually drive..

This is extremely concerning for us, emphasizing the need for offsetting the carbon footprint within the transport sector with the aim of keeping in line with the EU's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and reducing GHGs by at least 55% by 2030. The Chamber's position is based on Gozo achieving carbon neutrality, enabling it to achieve this aim, even before Malta does. We truly believe this can be done if many efforts and a lot of planning go into creating the required policy and regulatory framework. Apart from creating the necessary policy and regulatory framework where specific and more focused incentives need to be created for residents on the island, there are other objectives which need to be achieved, such as enough supply on the grid to meet the increase in demand.

It is a fact that electrifying road transport requires a heavier load on the grid's current demand. As the situation stands in Gozo, we already have a number of villages struggling with lack of supply of electricity in periods where demand is high, like the winter and summer months. Electric vehicles are high consumers

of electricity, so even though as a chamber we agree fully with green mobility and that it is also an opportunity for Gozo to be used as a test bed, we cannot forego the concern that many Gozitans have regarding stability of electricity provision, especially, if demand is to increase even more with a push for electric vehicles. Therefore, prior to embarking on this mission at full speed the government must also address stability of supply of electricity for all Gozitans in all villages and towns.

Today's discussion focuses on businesses, as we believe that they are the backbone of Gozo's economy, and can pave the way by setting an example in achieving the Island's sustainability goals.

To this end I would like to thank the speakers who will be joining us today, including Dr Jeannette Axia, Mark Scicluna Bartoli, Roman Dojcak, Daniela Burlo and Patrick Spiteri Staines who will deliver their presentation on behalf of their respective entities.