

€800,000 in CVA bills issued in 11 months

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Since its introduction on May 1 last year a monthly average of 80,569 unique vehicles accessed Valletta's Controlled Vehicular Access zone. Photo: Jason Borg.

The Controlled Vehicular Access (CVA) system in Valletta has netted close to €800,000 (Lm343,440) since its introduction on May 1 last year, The Times has learnt.

The system is overseen by the government but CVA Technology Limited is ultimately responsible for its management.

A spokesman for the Malta Transport Authority (ADT) said that, since its introduction, a monthly average of 80,569 vehicles had accessed the charging zone, which excludes the ring road (the number of vehicles rather than their movements are recorded here). This is more than double the 33,000 cars which carried the V licence, permitting them to enter the capital city.

The spokesman said that entry to Valletta before the introduction of the system was restrictive and now the capital was far more accessible to people. The system did not, however, increase traffic congestion in the city.

The spokesman said that €273,070 (Lm117,228) of the €798,983 (Lm343,003) invoiced were still outstanding at the end of March and €48,305 (Lm20,737) worth of bills were still pending in view of the policy to send quarterly rather than monthly bills if these amount to under €11.65 (Lm5).

According to the statistics compiled for The Times, an average of 9,322 vehicles access the charging zone on a weekday and an average 6,934 vehicles go into the CVA zone on a typical weekend day. Almost half of these vehicles (47.45 per cent) remain in Valletta for under two hours and nearly 20 per cent spend anything between two and eight hours. The daily average stay is two hours and 30 minutes.

The largest number of vehicles accessing the CVA zone on any given day is between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. The average bill is of €4.22 (Lm1.81).

The ADT spokesman said that before the scheme was introduced, it was almost impossible for visitors to find parking spaces between the peak time of 10-11 a.m. as they were typically already taken up by 8.30 a.m. by people working in the city. Now, however, the availability of parking spaces even between 10 and 11 a.m. has improved accessibility to Valletta due to the constant turnover of vehicles entering and leaving the city.

"The CVA has therefore succeeded in letting us make the best efficient use of the limited parking space in the city," the spokesman said.

The busiest points of the CVA (excluding the ring road) are Pope Pius V, near the Central Bank, for vehicles entering Valletta, and Santa Lucija Street for those exiting the CVA zone.

The ADT spokesman said that between May 2 last year (the CVA is not in operation on public holidays) and the end of last month, a total of 7,840 vehicles were exempted from the CVA scheme. Of these, 3,762 vehicles belonged to residents, 369 were vehicles registered for parking in garages, 178 were vehicles being used for permitted road or building works, 38 cars belonged to disabled people who work in Valletta, 644 cars belonged to relatives of elderly Valletta residents, 879 public transport vehicles and 987 vehicles were delivering goods to Valletta.

Other exemptions were issued for vehicles being repaired in car repair garages in Valletta, for vehicles owned by Monti hawkers, emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire engines, electric cars, motorcycles, vehicles belonging to members of Parliament, other official vehicles and cars belonging to disabled people who are not employed in Valletta. These drivers have a capped exemption amounting to €46.59 (Lm20) a year.

The invoiced amount of €798,983 (Lm343,003) includes late-payment fee charges imposed after expiry of the credit term period of one month from the date the bill is issued. It also factors in 10 per cent prepayment discounts to CVA clients who pre-pay before the issue of bills or who adopt the direct debit process of paying their bills.

CVA Technology Company Limited offers various options to settle bills on time. These include payment by cheque, cash or credit card at the CVA office in Marsa or at the Valletta local council, online through the CVA website www.cva.gov.mt, via credit/debit card, by direct debit or over the phone. The use of direct debit is strongly encouraged both to avoid the possibility of incurring late payment fees, and also to benefit from a 10 per cent discount on fees.

Statistics show that nearly 30 per cent of all payments were made online either as part of the road licence renewal or through the CVA website. The most popular payment system remains the cheque, which accounts for nearly 60 per cent of all payments received.

On average, the time taken by CVA clients to settle their bills is three months.

The CVA system came under fire from the Chamber of Small and Medium Enterprises - GRTU, which last October said it had failed completely and called for a review.
