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## Government to fight congestion with 'intelligent' traffic management

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The government is to develop an "intelligent" traffic management system in an attempt to reduce congestion on the roads.

The IT system will allow experts to gather information on traffic in real time and pass on information to motorists about tailbacks and alternative routes.

The different traffic lights around major junctions will be integrated and managed remotely.

The system will also include better management of public transport through automatic vehicle location and monitoring systems, the Infrastructure, Transport and Communications Ministry announced yesterday.

New technologies and alternative modes of transportation will also contribute to the national effort of attempting to make a shift away from private car use to travelling in groups, in some cases combining the two modes of transport as with the successful Park and Ride service operating in Valletta today.

The ministry also announced that the Controlled Vehicular Access (CVA) system, launched in Valletta in May last year, has recently been voted best case study of the year 2007 on the European Local Transport Information Service ( [www.eltis.org](http://www.eltis.org) ).

An average of 80,000 individual vehicles access Valletta monthly, more than double the 33,000 vehicles which formerly had the old V license.

This has taken place while for the first time ever a parking space is available somewhere in Valletta to anyone driving in at any time of day, every day, the Ministry stressed.

Cars now remain in Valletta for an average of 2.5 hours a day, and that average includes cars belonging to residents whose stay is unrestricted.

The CVA scheme has generated interest in other European countries where policy makers are currently evaluating the possibility of introducing similar systems to improve accessibility and protect the environment in major towns and cities.

The scheme is also being presented at the European Local And Regional Government Finance Conference meeting in Rome.

Commenting on the recognition of the CVA as a European best practice model, Transport Minister Austin Gatt said: "With the CVA we have proved that we can be innovative when addressing our congestion challenges and we can be successful.

"The fact that we have a city that can now boast a larger, more attractive and more pleasant pedestrian area in its core is the first boost.

"But the CVA has also increased retail business in Valletta, justified the investment of the Park and Ride as an alternative to parking in town for employees and, very importantly, has brought about the first increase in public transport custom in 13 years as more commuters use the bus to come to work in Valletta than ever before," he said.

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