

AIR POLLUTION AND MALTA'S CALL FOR HELP

Air pollution occurs when harmful particles and gases, such as fine dust (PM2.5) and nitrogen oxides, enter the air. In Malta, the average level of PM2.5 is about 11.7 micrograms per cubic meter, which is more than double the safe limit of 5 recommended by the World Health Organization, according to the Malta Environment and Resources Authority (MERA). These tiny particles are dangerous because they can travel deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream, causing serious health problems.

Traffic is one of the main causes of air pollution in Malta. The large number of cars on the roads leads to constant emissions and traffic congestion. Long-term exposure to polluted air increases the risk of asthma, heart attacks, strokes, and lung cancer. Studies estimate that about 4% of all deaths in Malta each year are linked to air pollution, and 24% of emergency visits for child asthma are connected to poor air quality, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) in Malta.

According to the European Environment Agency, air pollution causes hundreds of thousands of premature deaths across Europe every year. Chronic exposure over time can reduce life expectancy and lead to diseases such as chronic bronchitis, heart disease, strokes, and lung cancer. These pollutants cause inflammation inside the body and damage important organs.

Children and older adults are the most vulnerable. Young lungs are still developing, while elderly people may already have weaker respiratory or heart conditions. Exposure to polluted air can worsen existing illnesses and lead to more hospital visits and long-term health complications.

Air pollution also creates economic challenges. Increased healthcare costs, medication expenses, and missed days of work or school place pressure on families and Malta's healthcare system. As a result, pollution is not only an environmental and health issue, but also a financial concern for the country.

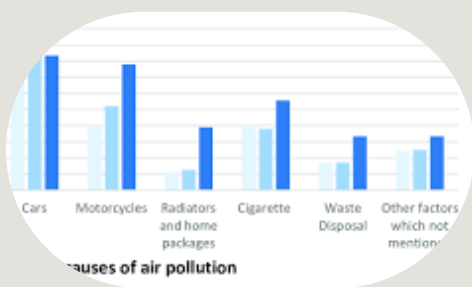
During a personal interview, one participant explained that pollution in Malta is clearly visible because of heavy traffic and the high number of vehicles. Although they stay physically active, they admitted that this does not make polluted air healthy. They suggested that more green spaces, tree planting, and cleaner transportation options could improve air quality.

While the government has introduced some environmental projects, reducing the number of cars remains a key solution. The participant also mentioned that public awareness about air pollution is important so that more people understand the problem. They believed that if individuals and the government work together, air quality in Malta could improve in the future.

In conclusion, clean air is a basic need for people, animals, and nature. By choosing sustainable transport, supporting environmental initiatives, and caring for our surroundings, we can protect public health and create a cleaner future for Malta.



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Personalised photo

Resources:

- National Malta Environment and Resources Authority (MERA), pollution.mt and L-Università ta' Malta,
- World Health Organization (WHO); Malta Environment and Resources Authority (ERA),
- Original information