



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA

Government response to the Consultation on Public Service Garage Permit Reform

4th November, 2019

Ministry for Transport,Infrastructure and Capital Projects
Block A,
Triq Francesco Buonamici,
Belt is-Sebħ.
Floriana FRN, 1700

This publication (excluding Logos) may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. This material must be acknowledged as Government of Malta and the title of the publication specified.

Any queries regarding this publication should be sent at: onlineconsultations@gov.mt.

Published by the Ministry for Transport,Infrastructure and Capital Projects

Contents

CONTENTS

Contents	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction and overview	4
Responses to the consultation and process used to seek stakeholder views	5
Summary of responses and decisions	6
Implementation	7
Contact Details	7
Annex A: List of respondents	8
Annex B: Meetings held with Stakeholders	9

Executive Summary

Introduction and overview

1. A brief introduction about the subject.

The Authority for Transport in Malta regulates the licensing of garage hire (chauffeur-driven) vehicles, vehicles for hire or lease, and operators of such vehicles under one licensing regime termed the Public Service Garage (PSG) Permit System. There are currently 1046 PSG permits owned by 844 operators, between them actively operating a total fleet of 18,943 vehicles. Most of these PSG permits were issued by the Police whereby PSG fees were calculated according to the Police Licences Regulations. After 2003, the Authority continued to adopt the same system.

2. The public consultation date.

Include the objective and purpose of the public consultation.

On 5 September 2019, the Government published a consultation paper setting out proposals to consolidate and streamline the regulatory framework governing this sector. In order to properly achieve these aims, it is strongly felt that the regulation of chauffeur-driven services should be separated from that of vehicle rental and leasing (self-drive) services, thereby deregulating the latter type of service, considering that there is no element of passenger transport involved. Two separate sets of consolidated regulations are therefore being created, one governing light passenger transport (chauffeur-driven) services and the other governing vehicle rental and leasing (self-drive) services. Consequently, the PSG permit system will be abolished.

Light passenger transport services as well as Vehicle Rental and Leasing Services will be organised under different Operator Licences based on the same conditions applicable on the other passenger transport reforms already undertaken by the Authority. The proposed new regulations will provide for the issuing of one (1) operator licence against a nominal licence fee of €200 per Operator Licence, irrespective of location. The operator must ensure and declare that he/she has sufficient space to garage his/her vehicles while these are not on hire. Moreover, the regulations should prohibit the parking, cleaning or servicing of vehicles for hire on the road while these are not hired out, and provide for hefty fines for breaches, which could also lead to the revocation of an authorisation. This is consistent with the changes made in the Passenger Transport Services Sector.

The Authority believes that introducing a new set of regulations, it will consolidate, streamline and update the rules governing the light passenger transport services and deregulate the vehicle rental and leased vehicles. It will also simplify and ensure effective enforcement system. The ultimate aim is to improve the standards and safety of passengers using these services whilst guaranteeing a level playing field among operators.

3. This consultation sought views on:

- Requirement of Planning Authority Permit for both Operating Licences
- Permit application and renewal fee per annum
- Age of vehicles in service for both Chauffeur Driven and Vehicle Rental and Leasing
- Minimum number of vehicles under Operator Licence
- Regularisation of Digital Platform services
- Tracking Device for Chauffeur Driven Vehicles
- Status of vehicles whilst not in service

Responses to the consultation and process used to seek stakeholder views

This document is the Government Response to this consultation and sets out the Government's decisions on these matters.

4. The closing date of the public consultation. Which methods were used to receive the feedback. The total amount of responses. From whom you received the feedback.

The consultation closed on 3 October 2019. The consultation document and the reply form were available online and responses were accepted electronically. In total, there were 43 responses. These were received from across the industry including Ecabs Co. Ltd, Bolt, and Michael Debono Ltd. Responses were also received from outside the industry including local authorities, NGOs and individuals. A list of respondents can be found at Annex A.

5. Include (if any) meetings with stakeholders and list who the stakeholders were.

A number of meetings with stakeholders, including the private sector, were also held during the consultation period. These meetings have also informed our thinking. A list with whom meetings were held can be found at Annex B

Summary of responses and decisions

The following is a summary of the consultation responses received. We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation and participate in stakeholder meetings around the consultation exercise.

6. Statistics.

- Total feedback received: 43
- Total feedback received by individuals: 36
- Total feedback received by organisations: 7
- Total feedback received through email: 16
- Total feedback received through online form: 27
- Total feedback received by post: N/A

7. Summary of feedback received.

A majority of respondents (70%), mostly from the industry sector, were opposed to the Government's proposal to present a declaration stating that the operator has sufficient space in his/her garage, rather than submitting the PA permit upon applying for the Operator Licence.

Many respondents also disagreed with our assessment:-

- to the introduction of age limits being set at 15 years for Chauffeur driven vehicles, 10 years for passenger Vehicles Rentals,
- to introduce a tracking device in the Chauffeur Driven vehicles.

A majority (85%) of respondents are in favour of:-

- the regularisation of Digital Platform services,
- Rental value of Operator Licence set to a fixed fee of €200. Passengers vehicles must be new to enter into service (except for Vintage vehicles used for special occasions)

The Authority received mixed feedback with regards to the garaging of Chauffeur Driven Vehicles while these are not on hire.

Following a meeting held in Gozo, where all the stakeholders and general public were invited, unanimously agreed that the age limited being proposed is too low. This considering that their vehicles are used only for a limited period of time (especially during summer period). Also when taking into consideration that Gozo being a very small island, the distances covered are very short.

8. Your assessment and the Government's decision (list the Government's decisions).

Having reviewed the feedback received during the consultation period, our assessment remains that reform in the Public Service Garage Permit shall take place. In view of this and the evidence and opinions from the consultation exercise, the Government has decided to take the decisions as summarised below.

- Operator must declare that the vehicles that he/she has sufficient space to garage his/her vehicles while these are not in use.
- An application fee of €200 per garage irrespective of location. Annual renewal fee of €200 per garage
- Age limit of 20 years from first registration and/or 22 years from year of manufacture for Chauffeur Driven Vehicles
- Vehicles certified as vintage will be exempted from age limit but the use will be limited to special occasions
- Used Commercial vehicles can enter service as follows:-
 - N1 goods vehicles not older than 4 years
 - N2 goods vehicles not older than 6 years
 - N3 goods vehicles no age limit
- Maximum Fleet age per Category:-
 - Age limit of 15 years for passenger vehicles
 - Age limit of 15 years for N1 goods vehicles
 - Age limit of 20 years for N2 goods vehicles
 - No age limit for N3 goods vehicles
- Minimum of 1 Chauffeur driven vehicle under Operator licence
- Minimum of 5 Rental Service and leasing vehicle under Operator licence
- Digital Platform will be required to either acquire an operator's licence under the new regime and abide by all the licensing conditions, or serve as an intermediary booking service platform only for licensed operators, and not drivers
- The vehicle must be equipped with a tracking device. Data should be provided in real time if it is required by the Authority
- Operator must declare that the vehicles will not be left on the road while these are not in use.

IMPLEMENTATION

9. When you intend to implement the decisions

Subject to Cabinet approval, we intend to implement our decision on 14 January 2020, with the aim of the changes coming into force on 31 January 2020.

Contact Details

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact:
brian.m.farrugia@transport.gov.mt

Annex A: List of respondents

Organisation

Michael Debono Group

Bolt

Ecabs Co. Ltd

GRTU

ACIM

RACA

ERA

Private Individuals : 36

Annex B: Meetings held with Stakeholders

Organisation

Bolt

Michael Debono Group

Bonju Rides

GRTU

Gozo Public meeting

Ecabs

Dacoby

Various individuals
