

Sea Transport between Malta and Gozo: Q3/2026

NR 185/2026

Transport

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NewsDataMethodology



Salient Points

- During the third quarter of 2026, trips, vehicles and passengers rose by 19.5 per cent, 1.0 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively, when compared with the same period of 2025.
- September accounted for the highest share of Mġarr–Valletta trips (34.4 per cent), while August recorded the largest passenger share (34.7 per cent).
- The fast ferry service between Mġarr and Sliema via Buġibba carried 143,761 passengers, with Mġarr–Sliema and Sliema–Mġarr recording the highest volumes.

Commentary

During the third quarter of 2026, sea transport between Malta and Gozo registered increases in trips, vehicles and passengers, when compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Sea transport between Malta and Gozo

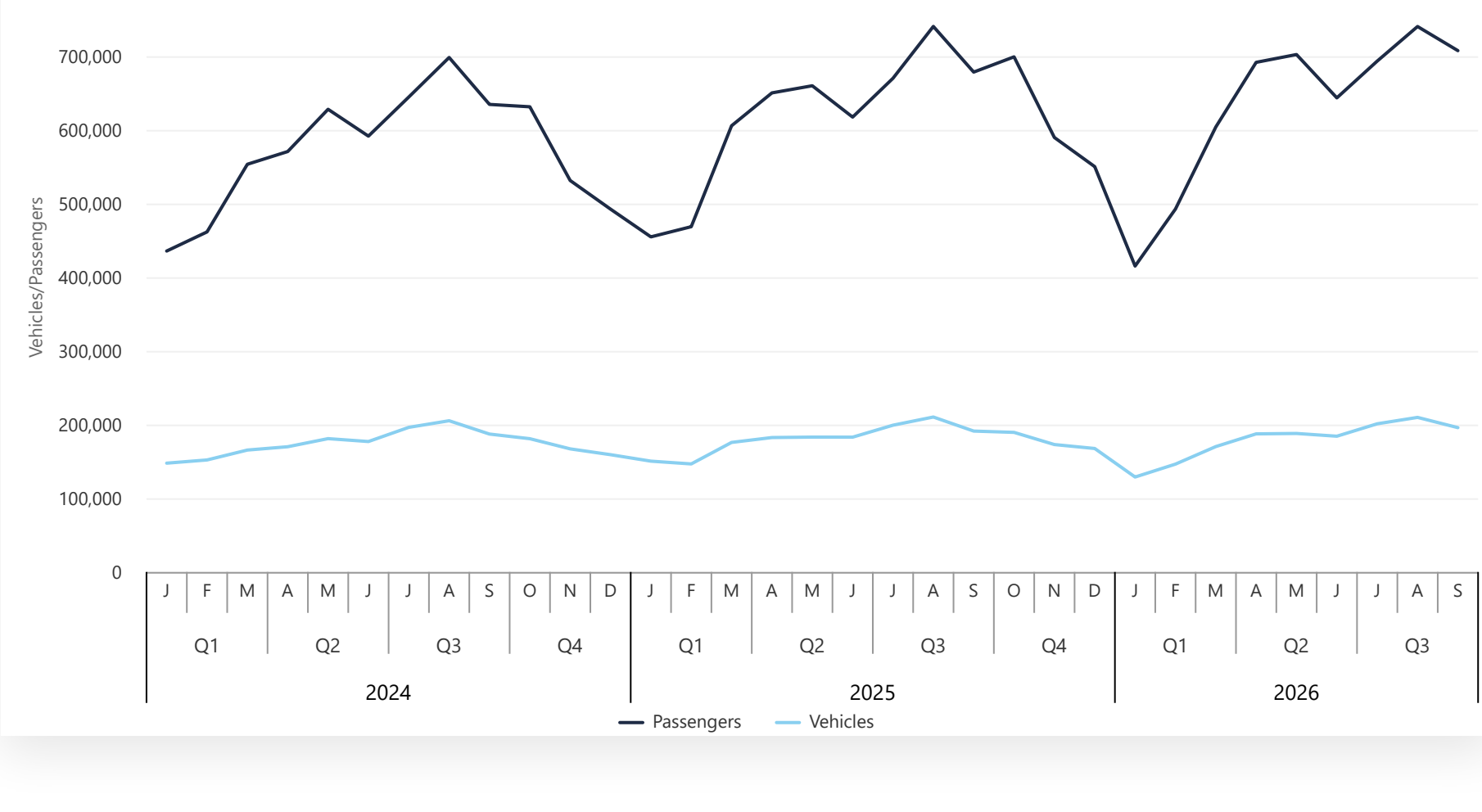
Between July and September 2026, a total of 14,417 trips were carried out, carrying a total of 2,141,312 passengers (Table 1). September was the busiest month recording a total of 4,830 trips or 33.5 per cent of total trips for the quarter (Tables 3, 7 and 9).

Sea transport between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa

A total of 1,654,505 passengers travelled between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa during the third quarter of 2026, a decrease of 3.3 per cent when compared to the corresponding quarter of 2025. The highest number of passengers, 573,847 or 34.7 per cent of the total for the quarter, was recorded in August. When compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous year, the number of vehicles increased by 1.0 per cent, totalling 606,745 (Tables 2 and 3).

The number of trips during the third quarter amounted to 9,286, an increase of 0.5 per cent over the same period in 2025 (Table 2). August registered the highest number of trips, 3,140 or 33.8 per cent of total trips for the quarter (Table 3).

During the third quarter, vehicle traffic originating from the Mġarr terminal was highest on Sundays and Mondays, while passenger traffic peaked on Sundays and Saturdays. On the other hand, vehicle traffic originating from Ċirkewwa was highest on Fridays and Saturdays, while passenger traffic originating from Ċirkewwa was also busiest on Fridays and Saturdays (Charts 4 and 5).



Sea transport between Mġarr and Valletta

During the third quarter of 2026, a total of 2,991 trips were carried out, carrying a total of 343,046 passengers (Table 6). When compared to the same quarter in 2025, the number of trips increased by 5.8 per cent and the number of passengers decreased by 9.1 per cent. September registered the highest number of trips – 1,028 or 34.4 per cent of total trips for the quarter, while August registered the highest number of passengers – 118,878 or 34.7 per cent of the total for the quarter (Table 7).

Sea transport between Mġarr and Sliema via Buġibba

During the third quarter of 2026, 1,067 trips were operated on each of the Buġibba–Mġarr and Sliema–Mġarr routes, while 1,073 trips were operated on each of the Mġarr–Buġibba and Mġarr–Sliema routes. Passenger volumes increased in September compared with the previous two months across all four routes. The Sliema–Mġarr and Mġarr–Sliema routes registered the highest passenger numbers during this quarter, carrying 42,803 and 42, 811 passengers, respectively, while the Buġibba–Mġarr and Mġarr–Buġibba routes carried 29,010 and 29,137 passengers, respectively (Table 9).

Map 1. Distribution of trips between Malta and Gozo during Q3/2026

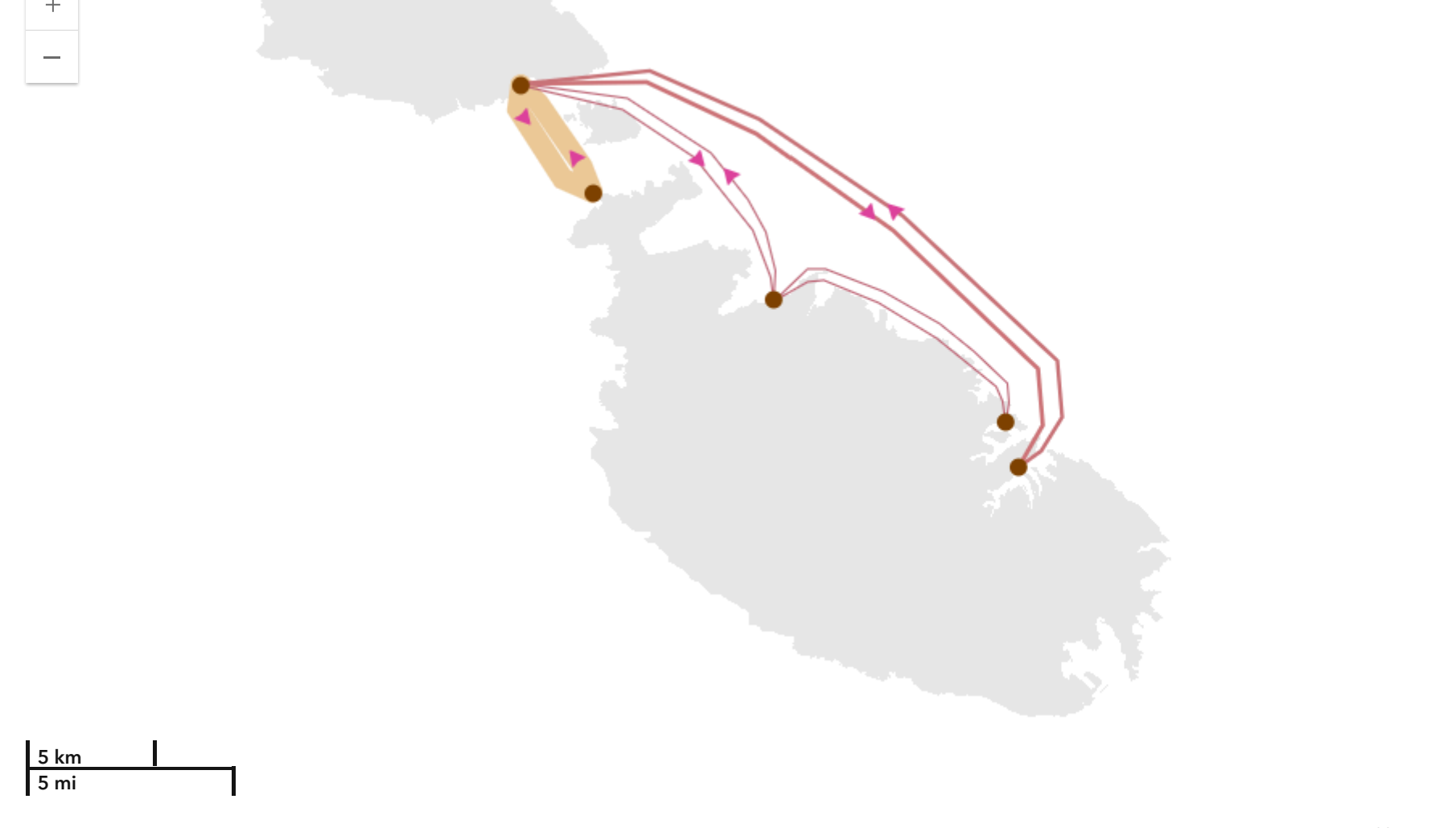


Chart 2. Distribution of passengers by type of transport between Malta and Gozo during Q3/2026

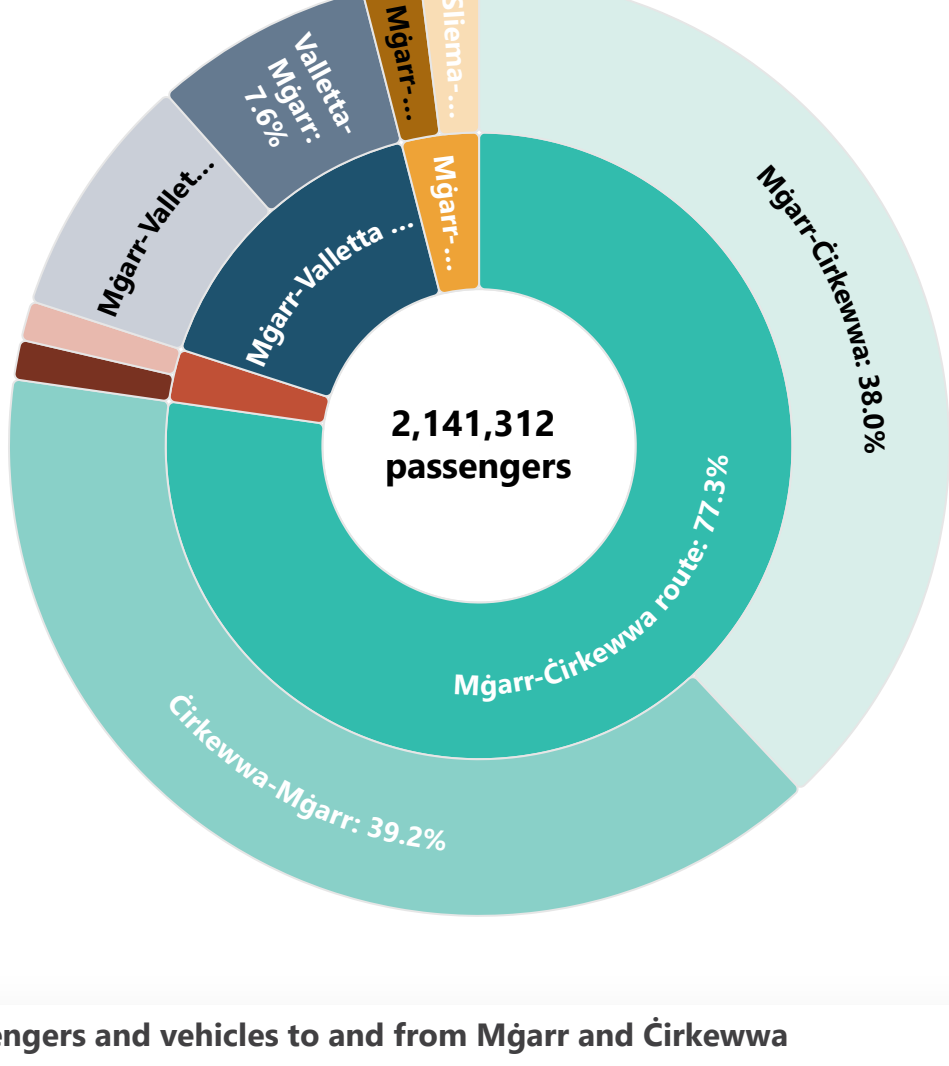


Chart 3. Passengers and vehicles to and from Mġarr and Ċirkewwa

Reference months: July–September

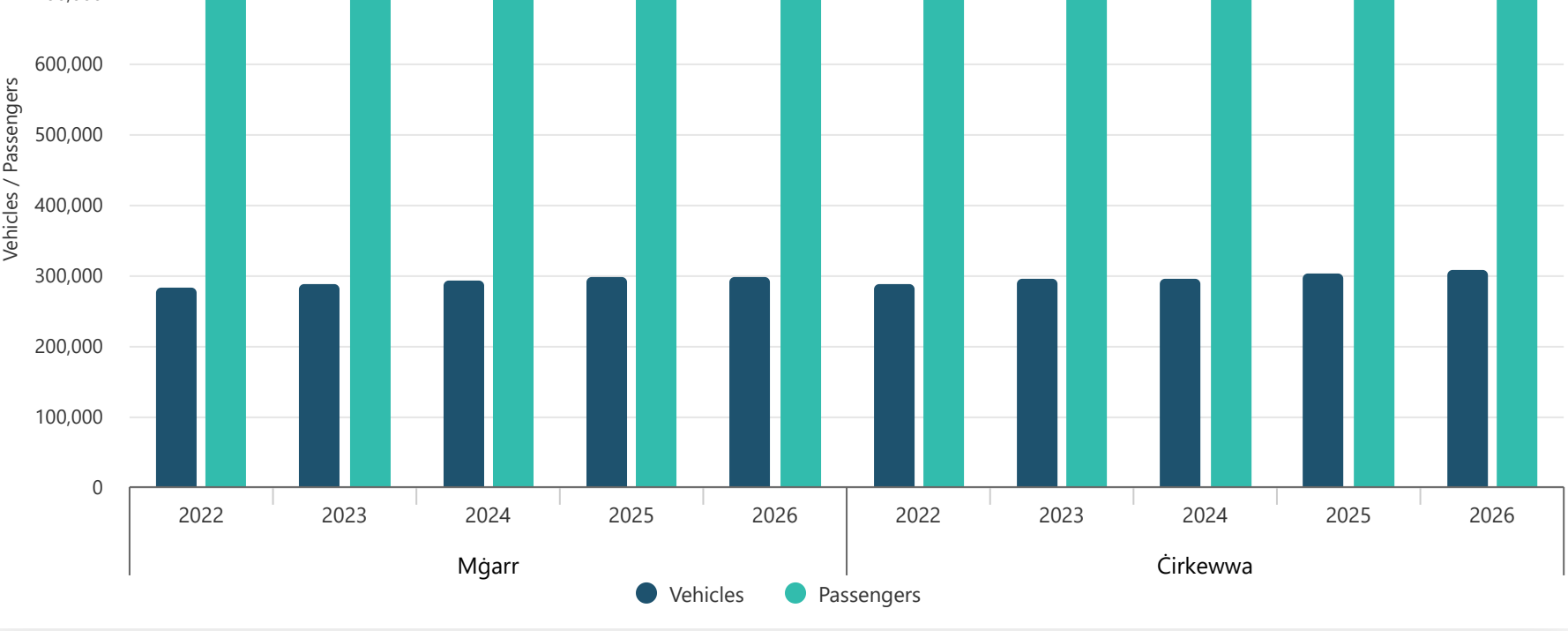


Chart 4. Vehicles to and from Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by day of the week

Reference months: January–September

Select Port:

Ċirkewwa

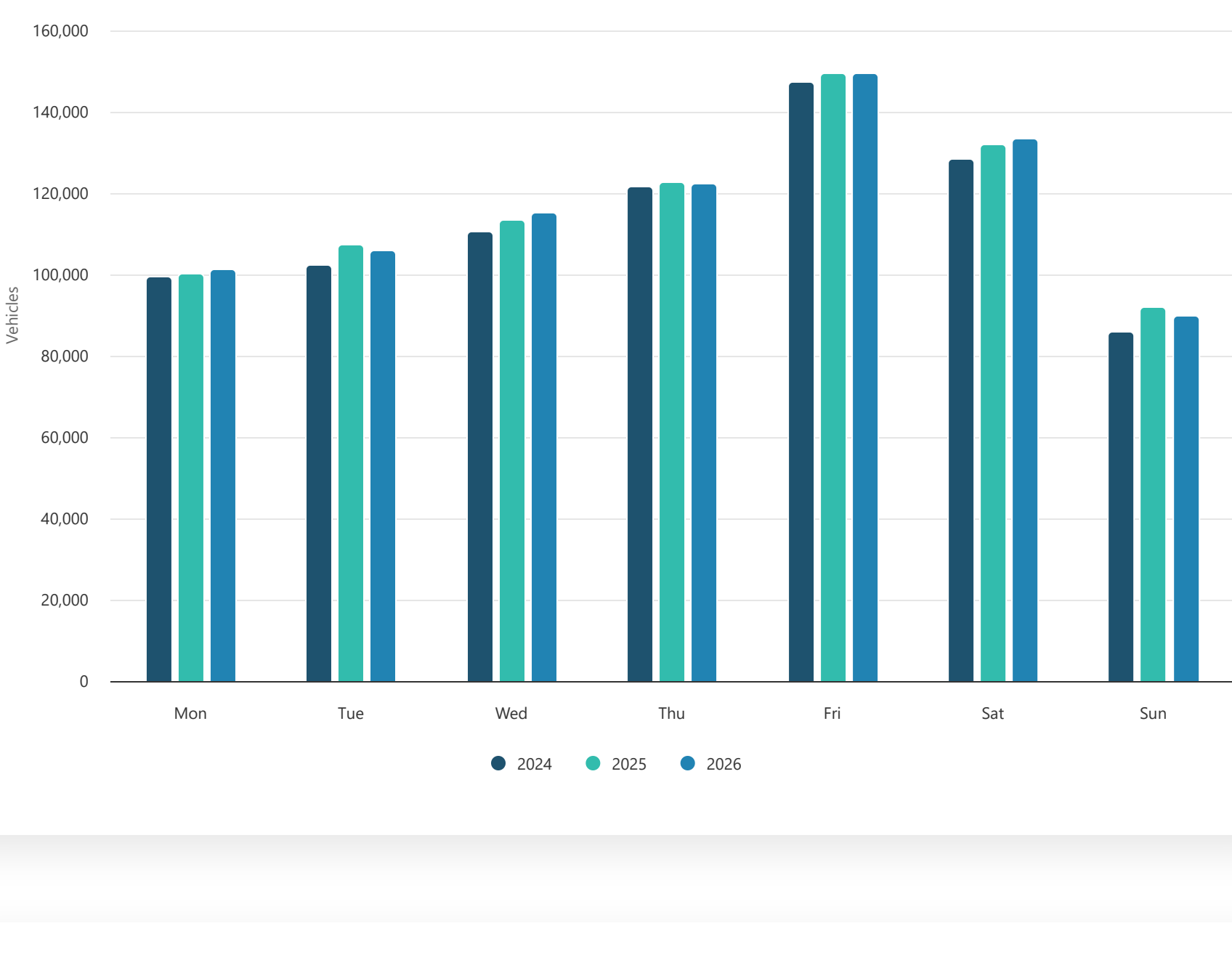


Chart 5. Passengers to and from Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by day of the week

Reference months: January–September

Select Port:

Ċirkewwa

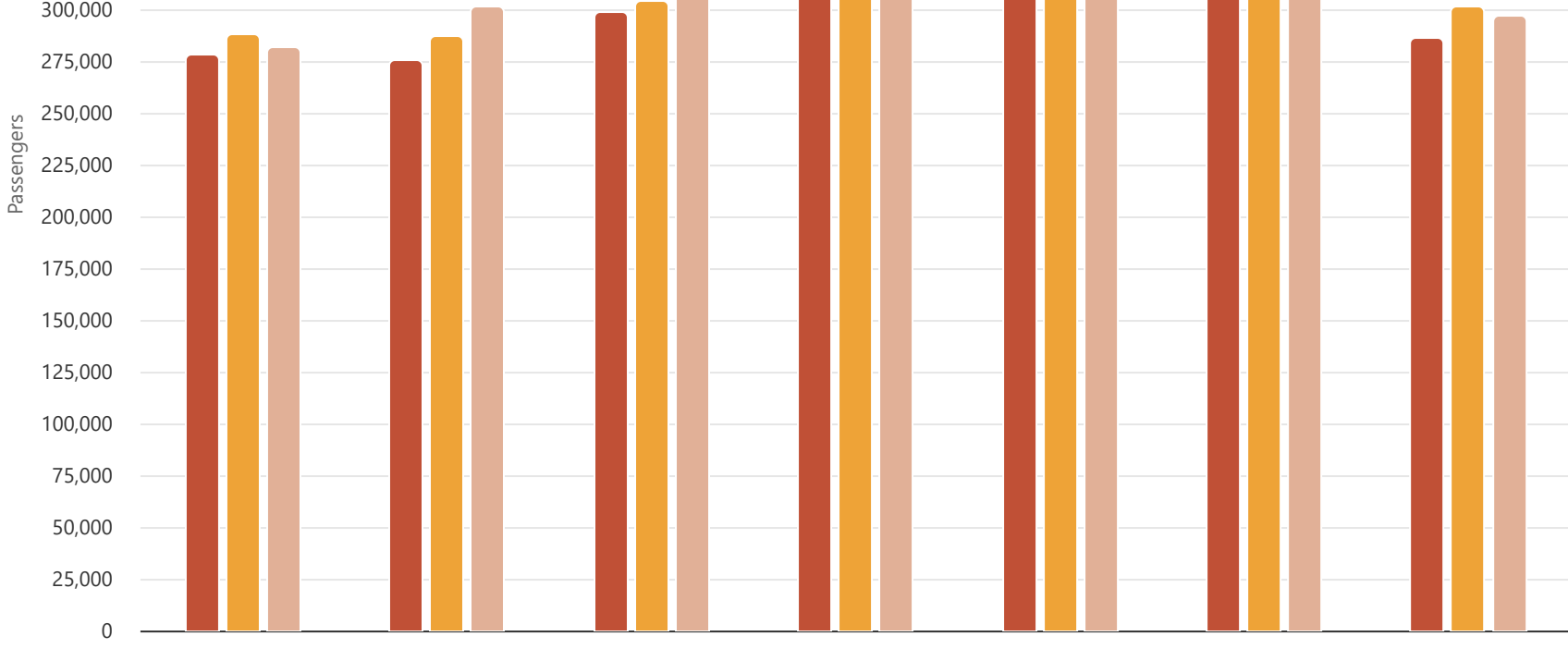


Table 1. Total sea transport between Malta and Gozo by year and quarter

Quarter		2024	2025	2026	Change	Percentage change
					2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	Q1	9,602	10,526	9,579	-947	-9.0
	Q2	11,320	11,642	12,977	1,335	11.5
	Q3	11,969	12,064	14,417	2,353	19.5
	Q4	11,463	11,829			
	Total	44,354	46,061			
Vehicles	Q1	465,108	472,813	445,351	-27,462	-5.8
	Q2	527,931	548,423	559,633	11,210	2.0
	Q3	588,664	600,695	606,745	6,050	1.0
	Q4	507,089	529,930			
	Total	2,088,792	2,151,861			
Passengers	Q1	1,450,495	1,529,105	1,511,708	-17,397	-1.1
	Q2	1,790,208	1,927,590	2,037,526	109,936	5.7
	Q3	1,977,544	2,089,047	2,141,312	52,265	2.5
	Q4	1,655,197	1,839,008			
	Total	6,873,444	7,384,750			

Notes:

1. During the fourth week of 2026 (namely on the 20th and 21st of January), sea transport between Malta and Gozo was affected by Storm Harry.
2. The new fast ferry routes between Mgarr and Sliema via Buġibba commenced operations on 5 May 2026. Data for these routes are included from this date onwards.

Table 2. Sea transport between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by year and quarter

Quarter		2024	2025	2026	Change	Percentage change
					2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	Q1	7,867	8,213	7,743	-470	-5.7
	Q2	8,963	8,925	9,178	253	2.8
	Q3	9,226	9,238	9,286	48	0.5
	Q4	9,059	9,142			
	Total	35,115	35,518			
Vehicles	Q1	465,108	472,813	445,351	-27,462	-5.8
	Q2	527,931	548,423	559,633	11,210	2.0
	Q3	588,664	600,695	606,745	6,050	1.0
	Q4	507,089	529,930			
	Total	2,088,792	2,151,861			
Passengers	Q1	1,294,314	1,314,294	1,321,358	7,064	0.5
	Q2	1,537,248	1,591,820	1,640,258	48,438	3.0
	Q3	1,657,345	1,711,511	1,654,505	-57,006	-3.3
	Q4	1,406,265	1,526,411			
	Total	5,895,172	6,144,036			

Table 3. Sea transport between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by year and month

Month		2024	2025	2026	Change	Percentage change
					2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	January	2,471	2,486	2,202	-284	-11.4
	February	2,674	2,644	2,585	-59	-2.2
	March	2,722	3,083	2,956	-127	-4.1
	April	2,952	3,002	3,016	14	0.5
	May	3,011	2,906	3,125	219	7.5
	June	3,000	3,017	3,037	20	0.7
	July	3,098	3,114	3,128	14	0.4
	August	3,122	3,118	3,140	22	0.7
	September	3,006	3,006	3,018	12	0.4
	October	3,083	3,118			
	November	2,990	2,945			
	December	2,986	3,079			
	Total	35,115	35,518			
Vehicles	January	147,656	150,384	128,842	-21,542	-14.3
	February	152,004	146,613	146,350	-263	-0.2
	March	165,448	175,816	170,159	-5,657	-3.2
	April	169,962	182,435	187,424	4,989	2.7
	May	180,953	183,030	187,976	4,946	2.7
	June	177,016	182,958	184,233	1,275	0.7
	July	196,257	199,190	201,090	1,900	1.0
	August	205,246	210,290	209,783	-507	-0.2
	September	187,161	191,215	195,872	4,657	2.4
	October	180,867	189,444			
	November	167,055	172,920			
	December	159,167	167,566			
	Total	2,088,792	2,151,861			
Passengers	January	391,744	392,919	372,449	-20,470	-5.2
	February	411,272	396,611	431,085	34,474	8.7
	March	491,298	524,764	517,824	-6,940	-1.3
	April	518,144	549,469	582,251	32,782	6.0
	May	524,731	542,111	561,705	19,594	3.6
	June	494,373	500,240	496,302	-3,938	-0.8
	July	543,928	556,970	538,782	-18,188	-3.3
	August	578,090	603,080	573,847	-29,233	-4.8
	September	535,327	551,461	541,876	-9,585	-1.7
	October	519,888	573,413			
	November	448,566	493,340			
	December	437,811	459,658			
	Total	5,895,172	6,144,036			

Table 4. Sea transport to and from Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by year and month

Month		Ċirkewwa - Mġarr		Change	Percentage change	Mġarr - Ċirkewwa		Change	Percentage change
		2025	2026	2026/2025	2026/2025	2025	2026	2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	January	1,243	1,100	-143	-11.5	1,243	1,102	-141	-11.3
	February	1,322	1,292	-30	-2.3	1,322	1,293	-29	-2.2
	March	1,542	1,478	-64	-4.2	1,541	1,478	-63	-4.1
	April	1,501	1,508	7	0.5	1,501	1,508	7	0.5
	May	1,453	1,563	110	7.6	1,453	1,562	109	7.5
	June	1,508	1,519	11	0.7	1,509	1,518	9	0.6
	July	1,557	1,564	7	0.4	1,557	1,564	7	0.4
	August	1,559	1,570	11	0.7	1,559	1,570	11	0.7
	September	1,503	1,509	6	0.4	1,503	1,509	6	0.4
	October	1,559				1,559			
	November	1,473				1,472			
	December	1,540				1,539			
	Total	17,760				17,758			
Vehicles	January	74,973	64,381	-10,592	-14.1	75,411	64,461	-10,950	-14.5
	February	75,360	74,679	-681	-0.9	71,253	71,671	418	0.6
	March	86,703	85,852	-851	-1.0	89,113	84,307	-4,806	-5.4
	April	92,190	95,555	3,365	3.7	90,245	91,869	1,624	1.8
	May	92,778	94,997	2,219	2.4	90,252	92,979	2,727	3.0
	June	91,347	93,277	1,930	2.1	91,611	90,956	-655	-0.7
	July	101,010	103,390	2,380	2.4	98,180	97,700	-480	-0.5
	August	106,239	105,843	-396	-0.4	104,051	103,940	-111	-0.1
	September	95,823	99,442	3,619	3.8	95,392	96,430	1,038	1.1
	October	96,689				92,755			
	November	86,841				86,079			
	December	86,278				81,288			
	Total	1,086,231				1,065,630			
Passengers	January	193,880	189,320	-4,560	-2.4	199,039	183,129	-15,910	-8.0
	February	200,732	219,715	18,983	9.5	195,879	211,370	15,491	7.9
	March	256,839	265,748	8,909	3.5	267,925	252,076	-15,849	-5.9
	April	275,163	301,892	26,729	9.7	274,306	280,359	6,053	2.2
	May	273,254	290,059	16,805	6.1	268,857	271,646	2,789	1.0
	June	249,923	252,849	2,926	1.2	250,317	243,453	-6,864	-2.7
	July	280,809	277,325	-3,484	-1.2	276,161	261,457	-14,704	-5.3
	August	300,997	287,122	-13,875	-4.6	302,083	286,725	-15,358	-5.1
	September	277,001	275,523	-1,478	-0.5	274,460	266,353	-8,107	-3.0
	October	294,825				278,588			
	November	253,116				240,224			
	December	233,778				225,880			
	Total	3,090,317				3,053,719			

Table 5. Sea transport between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa by year and day of the week: January-September

Day of the week		January-September			Change	Percentage change
		2024	2025	2026	2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	Monday	3,779	3,800	3,841	41	1.1
	Tuesday	3,686	3,749	3,679	-70	-1.9
	Wednesday	3,711	3,728	3,704	-24	-0.6
	Thursday	3,724	3,759	3,709	-50	-1.3
	Friday	3,790	3,816	3,794	-22	-0.6
	Saturday	3,654	3,706	3,715	9	0.2
	Sunday	3,712	3,818	3,765	-53	-1.4
	Total	26,056	26,376	26,207	-169	-0.6
Vehicles	Monday	219,394	223,570	223,174	-396	-0.2
	Tuesday	206,967	216,550	215,296	-1,254	-0.6
	Wednesday	217,105	222,859	223,413	554	0.2
	Thursday	225,942	229,329	227,418	-1,911	-0.8
	Friday	248,963	251,388	250,316	-1,072	-0.4
	Saturday	236,325	239,945	242,319	2,374	1.0
	Sunday	227,007	238,290	229,793	-8,497	-3.6
	Total	1,581,703	1,621,931	1,611,729	-10,202	-0.6
Passengers	Monday	593,574	626,774	604,083	-22,691	-3.6
	Tuesday	560,077	573,376	589,527	16,151	2.8
	Wednesday	591,874	603,144	615,015	11,871	2.0
	Thursday	625,724	628,546	616,735	-11,811	-1.9
	Friday	683,735	697,730	711,774	14,044	2.0
	Saturday	723,121	744,914	762,551	17,637	2.4
	Sunday	710,802	743,141	716,436	-26,705	-3.6
	Total	4,488,907	4,617,625	4,616,121	-1,504	0.0

Table 6. Sea transport between Mġarr and Valletta by year and quarter

Quarter		2024	2025	2026	Change	Percentage change
					2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	Q1	1,735	2,313	1,836	-477	-20.6
	Q2	2,357	2,717	2,589	-128	-4.7
	Q3	2,743	2,826	2,991	165	5.8
	Q4	2,404	2,687			
	Total	9,239	10,543			
Passengers	Q1	156,181	214,811	190,350	-24,461	-11.4
	Q2	252,960	335,770	319,535	-16,235	-4.8
	Q3	320,199	377,536	343,046	-34,490	-9.1
	Q4	248,932	312,597			
	Total	978,272	1,240,714			

Note: The fast ferry service does not allow for the transport of vehicles, thus, only foot passengers are included.

Table 7. Sea transport to and from Mġarr and Valletta by year and month

Month		Valletta-Mġarr		Change	Percentage change	Mġarr-Valletta		Change	Percentage change
		2025	2026	2026/2025	2026/2025	2025	2026	2026/2025	2026/2025
Trips	January	379	265	-114	-30.1	406	281	-125	-30.8
	February	364	276	-88	-24.2	391	292	-99	-25.3
	March	374	347	-27	-7.2	399	375	-24	-6.0
	April	389	363	-26	-6.7	416	393	-23	-5.5
	May	467	429	-38	-8.1	498	455	-43	-8.6
	June	459	461	2	0.4	488	488	0	0.0
	July	440	473	33	7.5	468	505	37	7.9
	August	476	478	2	0.4	505	507	2	0.4
	September	454	500	46	10.1	483	528	45	9.3
	October	437				468			
	November	401				431			
	December	458				492			
Total		5,098				5,445			
Passengers	January	29,513	20,700	-8,813	-29.9	32,389	22,040	-10,349	-32.0
	February	35,290	29,923	-5,367	-15.2	36,734	31,566	-5,168	-14.1
	March	38,627	40,904	2,277	5.9	42,258	45,217	2,959	7.0
	April	48,518	51,892	3,374	7.0	52,268	57,577	5,309	10.2
	May	56,226	49,808	-6,418	-11.4	61,593	55,200	-6,393	-10.4
	June	55,494	49,248	-6,246	-11.3	61,671	55,810	-5,861	-9.5
	July	54,107	53,447	-660	-1.2	59,010	59,887	877	1.5
	August	64,671	56,073	-8,598	-13.3	72,723	62,805	-9,918	-13.6
	September	59,955	52,504	-7,451	-12.4	67,070	58,330	-8,740	-13.0
	October	59,775				65,995			
	November	45,900				50,455			
	December	43,033				47,439			
Total		591,109				649,605			

Note: The fast ferry service does not allow for the transport of vehicles, thus, only foot passengers are included.

Table 8. Sea transport between Mġarr and Sliema via Buġibba by year and quarter

Quarter		2026
Trips	Q1	-
	Q2	1,210
	Q3	2,140
	Q4	
	Total	
Passengers	Q1	-
	Q2	77,733
	Q3	143,761
	Q4	
	Total	

Notes:

1. The fast ferry service does not allow for the transport of vehicles, thus, only foot passengers are included.
2. A trip from Mġarr to Sliema via Buġibba (and vice-versa) is considered as one trip.

Table 9. Sea transport to and from Mġarr and Sliema via Buġibba by year and month

Month		Buġibba-Mġarr	Mġarr-Buġibba	Sliema-Mġarr	Mġarr-Sliema
		2026	2026	2026	2026
Trips	January	-	-	-	-
	February	-	-	-	-
	March	-	-	-	-
	April	-	-	-	-
	May	275	275	275	275
	June	330	330	330	330
	July	334	336	334	336
	August	341	345	341	345
	September	392	392	392	392
	October				
	November				
	December				
	Total				
Passengers	January	-	-	-	-
	February	-	-	-	-
	March	-	-	-	-
	April	-	-	-	-
	May	6,042	5,986	12,175	11,396
	June	7,736	7,784	13,255	13,359
	July	8,751	8,557	12,181	11,791
	August	9,890	9,887	13,683	14,163
	September	10,369	10,693	16,939	16,857
	October				
	November				
	December				
	Total				

Notes:

1. The fast ferry service does not allow for the transport of vehicles, thus, only foot passengers are included.
2. A trip from Mġarr to Sliema via Buġibba (and vice-versa) is considered as one trip.

Methodological Notes

1. The source of the data included in this release is administrative information provided by the Gozo Channel Co. Ltd and Transport Malta.
2. The fast ferry service operating between Mġarr and Valletta commenced on 1 June 2021.
3. The fast ferry service operating between Mġarr and Sliema via Buġibba commenced on 5 May 2026.
4. The table below illustrates the vehicle and passenger capacity of each Gozo Channel vessel:
- | Vessel | Vehicles | Passengers |
|-------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| MV Gaudos | 72 | 900 |
| MV Malita | 138 | 900 |
| MV Ta' Pinu | 138 | 900 |
| MV Nikolaos | 160 | 650 (Summer) / 350 (Winter) |
- Periods when vessels were out of service for docking purposes:
- MV Gaudos: 08/11/2023-30/11/2023 and 08/01/2026-05/02/2026.
- MV Malita: 09/01/2024-30/01/2024.
- MV Ta’ Pinu: 09/01/2023-02/02/2023, 27/02/2023-02/03/2023 and 07/01/2025-06/02/2025.
- MV Nikolaos was put temporarily out of service between 18/04/2023-26/04/2023, 15/02/2024-25/03/2024, 05/05/2025-19/05/2025 and 05/03/2026-17/03/2026.
5. The table below illustrates the passenger capacity of each fast ferry service vessel:
- | Vessel | Passengers |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Your Wisdom (Gozo Fast Ferry) | 296 |
| Your Faith (Gozo Fast Ferry) | 296 |
| Gozo Express (Virtu Ferries) | 308 |
| San Frangisk (Virtu Ferries) | 316 |
6. The two fast ferry service providers (Gozo Fast Ferry and Virtu Ferries) have merged and are providing service under one company, namely Gozo High Speed.
7. Data for passengers travelling between Mġarr and Ċirkewwa comprises foot and vehicle passengers and vehicle drivers. The fast ferry service does not allow for the transport of vehicles thus, only foot passengers are included.
8. Different approaches to data collection are being applied at the Mġarr and Ċirkewwa harbours regarding the Gozo Channel service. On the Mġarr side the data source is based on the Automated Ticketing System (ATS), while data for the Ċirkewwa side is dependent on the manual clicking system.
9. The data is not normally subject to revision.
10. More information relating to this news release is available in the [Sources and Methods](#).
11. A detailed news release calendar is available [online](#).
12. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately. For guidance on access and re-use of data please visit our [dedicated webpage](#).
13. For further assistance send your request through our [online request form](#).