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Car-loving Milanese asked to get out of their vehicles

Andy Sharman, Motor Industry Correspondent



Italy is known for its people's love of food, football and fast cars. But the city of Milan is asking residents to forgo one of those pleasures to help ease its crippling traffic congestion problem.

The northern industrial metropolis has teamed up with Unipol, an insurer, the local ATM transport network, and a maker of automotive "black boxes" to offer Milanese drivers public transport vouchers if they leave their cars at home.

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Milan suffers from the worst congestion of any city in Europe and North America, according to data from Inrix, a traffic information provider, as well as some of the highest pollution levels in the continent.

The city is using connected car devices made by Octo Telematics, a Rome-based company, installed behind the dashboards of Unipol customers' vehicles, to transmit location data and ensure that cars remain parked on the driveway.

"Previously, the connected car has been all about navigation, infotainment and insurance," said Jonathan Hewett, chief marketing officer at Octo Telematics. "What we're seeing with this project is organisations from public and private spheres can get together and make life better for Europe's

citizens."

Unipol policyholders taking part in the scheme receive vouchers by SMS worth €1.50 — the cost of one public transportation ticket — for every weekday their vehicles remain parked at home between 7.30am and 7.30pm.

The "Park Your Car and Go Public!" project is the latest example of the potential of onboard telematics systems, which can be used to track speed, location and driving style — such as harsh braking or acceleration — and transmit that data to insurers.

The attempt to increase public transport use was welcomed by Marco Percoco, assistant professor of transport economics at Milan's Bocconi university.

"Italians are very attached to their cars, even though they are more expensive than public transport and more inconvenient, given the congestion," he said. "To me, it's a matter of culture."

Italy is the biggest market for telematics insurance worldwide, with owners of 2.7m vehicles signed up to usage-based policies,

Paris mayor declares war on diesel cars



Paris's leftwing mayor has thrown down the gauntlet to motorists, promising to restrict cars in the historic centre and ban diesel-run vehicles throughout the city by 2020, writes Adam Thomson.

In an interview on Sunday, Anne Hidalgo said she would limit the use of cars in the capital's four central arrondissements to create a large "semi-pedestrian" zone in the heart of Paris.

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according to Ptolemus Consulting Group.

The Milan project is one of a number of ways cities have sought to address the problem of congestion. Milan, like many cities, introduced congestion charging zones and has instituted temporary bans to ease smog. Chinese cities have voucher systems to ration registration plates.

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