

JAN-JUN '26
ISSUE 9



EASTERN
REGIONAL
COUNCIL

EASTERN REGION ● NEWSLETTER ●



INTRODUCTION

The ninth edition

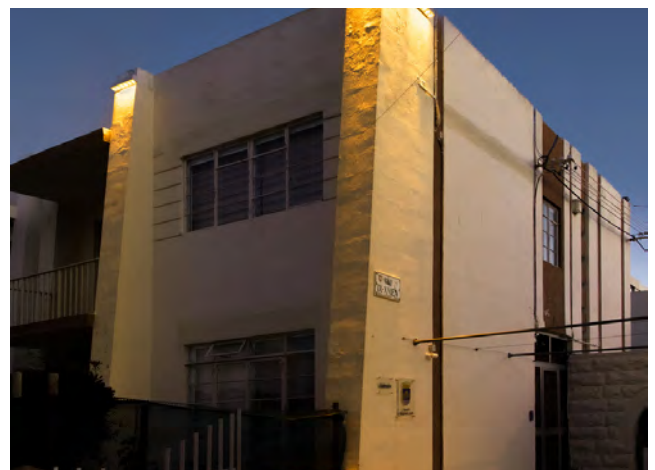
This issue highlights the Council's achievements, projects, and community initiatives undertaken during the first half of 2026. This edition showcases significant successes in sustainability and environmental stewardship, including national and European waste reduction awards, innovative water conservation projects, and ongoing clean-up campaigns. It also features educational and community-focused initiatives such as astronomy outreach programmes, environmental awareness activities, AI-driven services, cultural events, children's participation projects, and regional collaborations.

August Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 7am – 1:30pm

MAIN HEADLINES

- COSMIC CONNECTIONS
- EWWR AWARDS
- CAMPUS READS
- AI CHATBOT
- AGM 2026





WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mr. Anthony Chircop

During the first half of 2026, the dedicated team at the Eastern Regional Council continued to implement its extensive annual programme while also introducing several new noteworthy events and projects. The work carried out by the Region is widely appreciated by those who benefit from it, providing us with further motivation to continue working diligently to make a meaningful impact on the lives of our residents and reach as much residents as possible. This momentum will continue throughout the second half of 2026, with the implementation of further projects. In addition to the Region's projects, we have and will continue to support our Local Councils in any way we can, assisting them whenever needed in order to increase public trust in Local Government.

WORDS FROM THE EXEC. SECRETARY



Ms. Jeanette Galea

During the past few months, the Eastern Regional Council has continued its dedicated work across both its administrative and public functions. We can proudly say that we have succeeded in building a team and a system that consistently delivers results, enabling us to organise high-quality events that reach all sectors of society. During the second half of the year, we will continue to build on this momentum in order to further strengthen our positive impact on the community. The work being done is proof that Regional Councils are very important entities to have across the country. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone to follow our social media pages in order to stay informed about upcoming events and projects.



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AWARDS

EWWR AWARDS



The Eastern Regional Council, in collaboration with the MSPCA Charity Shops and under the creative guidance of international designer Rosanna Cirusuolo, won the Wasteserv's Innovation Category Award. This initiative focused on raising awareness about electronic waste while encouraging creative reuse and recycling solutions, empowering participants to rethink how e-waste can be managed more sustainably.



EWWR AWARDS



The Eastern Regional Council proudly achieved remarkable recognition during the European Week for Waste Reduction, securing the position of 2nd runner-up for the Waste Management Award. This accomplishment highlights the Council's ongoing commitment to promoting sustainable practices and responsible waste management within the community.



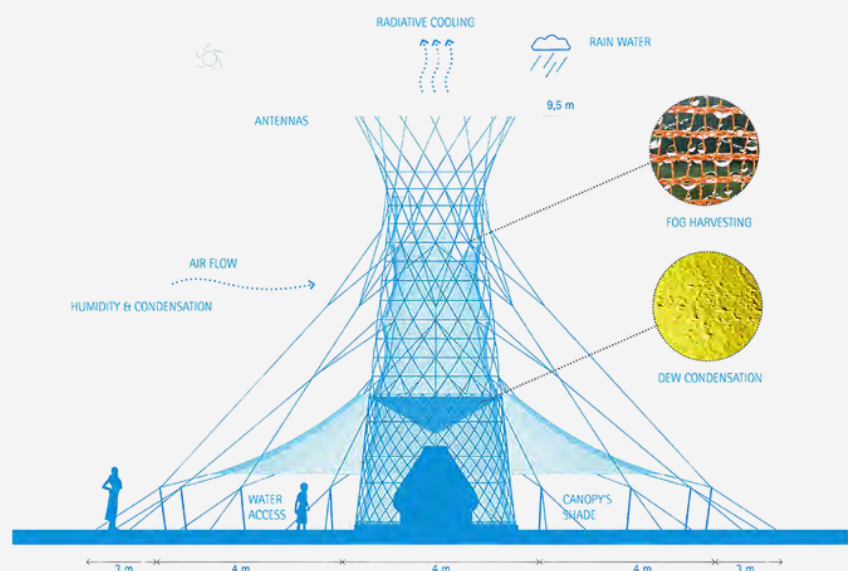
COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME

On 26th April 2026, the Region was awarded €15,464 in funds. to transform the dull, grey public stairs in Birkirkara into a vibrant large-scale piece of public art. Promote the historical function of the valley and the continuous movement of commuters. This project is done in collaboration with Birkirkara Local Council.



INTERREG EURO-MED: WATERISE

To address severe water scarcity in the Mediterranean islands due to excessive tourism, the Eastern Regional Council successfully gained €350,500 in funding to launch an innovative project with the centerpiece being the installation of a Warka Tower in Pembroke. Designed to harvest water directly from the atmosphere by capturing rain, humidity and dew, this structure will provide an alternative, sustainable water source. This project is being developed alongside seven other Mediterranean islands also facing the exact same challenges, including Pantelleria, Lampedusa, Lesbos, and Cyprus.



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PROJECTS

COSMIC CONNECTIONS: BRIDGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ASTRONOMY



***In collaboration with the Astronomical Society of Malta
With special thanks to the National STEM Community Fund by Esplora Interactive Science
Centre***

As the new year started the second phase of the Cosmic Connections: Bridging Communities Through Astronomy project funded by ESPLORA's STEM Community Fund commenced.

Towards the end of January, the Eastern Regional Council hosted the "Does It Matter?" lecture a public lecture that sparked big questions about our universe and even bigger opportunities beyond it. The lecture was held at the University of Malta and presentations were given by Prof. Alessio Magro from the Institute of Space Sciences and Astronomy, Dr. Lars Varming Jorgensen and Ms. Milena Vujanovic from CERN.

As from April the Stargazing Workshops commenced, with a total of four workshops being held after a large interest in the attendees. The workshops have taken place on the 10th of April and the 19th of June and will take place on the 3rd of July and 31st of July, both of which are already fully booked.

The Armillary Sphere is the legacy of our project and its installation will be taking place during the beginning of July. The installation will be placed at the Gżira front for all to learn about and appreciate such a structure.



BINS AT LOCAL FEASTS AND ACTIVITIES

Special thanks to Clean Malta - Cleansing and Maintenance Division

Following an agreement with the Cleansing and Maintenance Division, the Eastern Regional Council is providing a number of 120 Liter Wheelie Bins to be temporally installed during the feasts and events organised in the respective localities. During the first half of the year we provided a total of 100 bins and 2 wooden bin structures during 4 separate feasts or events. Each of these structures accommodates five bins, specifically designed for different types of waste: two for mixed waste, two for recyclables, and one for organic waste. The main aim of this collaboration is to decrease the amount of waste that is irresponsibly disposed of during such activities, increase proper waste separation during outdoor activities, while also increasing awareness about proper waste management. As a community, it's crucial that we collectively commit to utilizing these resources appropriately and adhere to responsible waste disposal practices. Special thanks are due to Clean Malta - Cleansing and Maintenance Division for their invaluable cooperation during these last five years.



Bin Structure installed at Iklin for Festa Fjuri

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

In celebration of International Women's Day on the 8th of March, the Eastern Regional Council's President and Executive Secretary visited Local Councils across our region, presenting beautifully crafted flower-shaped crochet keychains. This gesture symbolises our deep appreciation for the dedication and hard work in serving our communities.

Together, we honor the strength, resilience, and contributions of women everywhere.

"For all you give,
for all you do,
for working hard,
for being you.
For being there
day in, day out...
THANKS is what
today's about!"



EASTER CRAFT COMPETITION

***In collaboration with the Swieqi Local Council
With special thanks to Planet Play, Mercury Malta, M.T.S Arts & Craft, Malta National Aquarium,
Eden Cinemas, Eden Leisure Group, L-Aġenzija Nazzjonali tal-Litterizmu, Kite Group, Playmobil,
MULTIMAXX, Atelier Manuel and The Crafts Room by mtp***

The Eastern Regional Council in collaboration with the Swieqi Local Council hosted the 5th annual Easter Competition Awards together with their Easter Activity Fun event.

Those interested in submitting their application for the Easter Competition were expected to create an Easter-related craft from recycled or upcycled items.

Congratulations to our outstanding winners!

Young Creators: Deina Galea (6 years)

Junior Artists: Rayden Labada Muscat (10 years)

Teen Visionaries: Julian Galea Filletti (12 years)



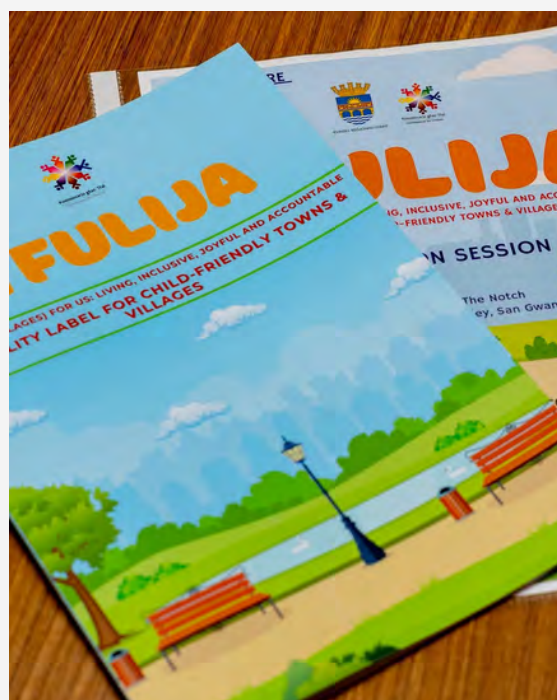
TFULIJA SEMINAR

In collaboration with the Commissioner for Children Malta

The Eastern Regional Council held an informative session on the TFULIJA (Towns (& Villages) For Us: Living, Inclusive, Joyful and Accountable) quality label for child-friendly towns and villages

During the morning, the Commissioner for Children, Ms. Antoinette Vassallo, and the Head of Strategy and Implementation, Ms. Suzanne Garcia Imbernon (Gili), delivered an engaging presentation outlining the different sections and criteria required for obtaining the quality label.

This information session also provided valuable insights for Local Councils, encouraging them to begin implementing innovative ideas and concepts aimed at creating more inclusive, safe, and enjoyable open spaces for children.



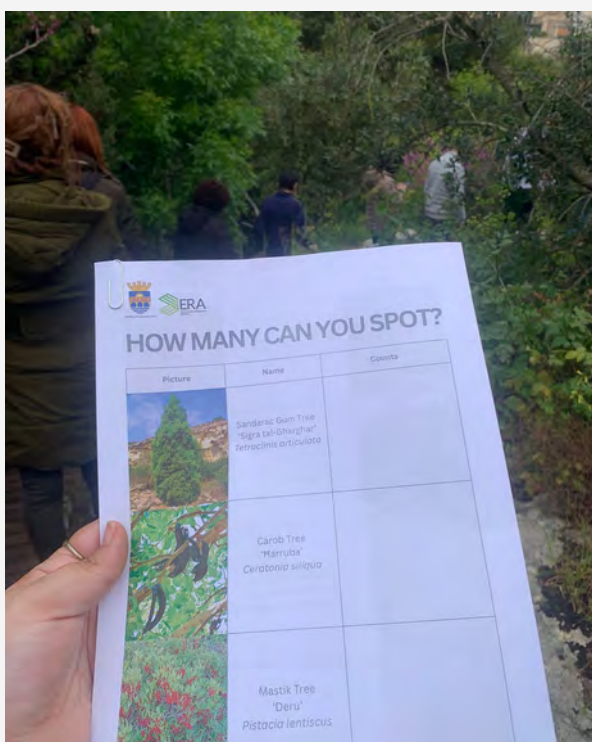
PASSI FIL-WIED

In collaboration with the Environment & Resources Authority and University of Malta

The Eastern Regional Council have conducted two outing titled "Passi fil-Wied" for the King's Trust International Achieve Programme Malta together with St Clare College Secondary School, Pembroke and St Theresa College Secondary School, Mrieħel.

During the morning the students were guided through Wied Għolliet in Msida (managed by Nature Trust FEE) and were provided with a Spotting Handout for species (flora/fauna) which may be found in the valley. Later, the ERA team guided the students through a Questions & Answers and Board Game.

Throughout the morning the students learnt more about how we should care for our valleys and natural environment, about flora, fauna and habitats.



AI CHATBOT

In collaboration with the University of Malta

Designed to bridge academic excellence with practical, real-world applications, the project was spearheaded under the expert guidance and supervision of Professor Matthew Montebello from the Department of Artificial Intelligence within the Faculty of ICT. To ensure maximum accessibility, the chatbot has been seamlessly integrated directly into our official facebook page. This sophisticated integration functions as a reliable, round-the-clock support, delivering instantaneous responses to anyone who reaches out.



VIRTUAL MALTA

With special thanks to the Malta Tourism Authority

Towards the end of last year, the Region managed to secure added funding from the MTA for the expansion of virtualmalta.com. The funding covers a three year period that will see the project expand to include heritage sites from all 6 regions of Malta. Since January, we have started working with the Western Regional Council to create virtual tours of their localities.

In February, in collaboration with the Gozo Regional Council, we launched the new Gozo VR tours on the platform.

We have also organised a series of VR cinema experiences at different events including: Festa Fjuri and Odyssey Day.



COLLABORATION WITH PISCOPO GARDENS

The Eastern Regional Council, in collaboration with Piscopo Gardens, organised seven educational school visits and another two community events, benefiting a total of 430 Year 3 students. The participating schools were; STC Achille Ferris Msida Primary School, St Francis School Msida, Il-Kulleġġ San Ġorġ Preca, Skola Primarja J. Hookham Frere, Pietra' ,Stella Maris College Gzira, St Monica Gzira, Verdala International School Pembroke and St. Dorothy's Junior School Sliema, while the community events were held at Swieqi and Hal Gharghur. Each visit included an interactive presentation followed by a hands-on planting activity, aimed at teaching children about the importance and diversity of plants while encouraging a stronger connection with nature. Students also received vouchers that can be used at Piscopo Garden's premises to purchase their own plants at home. The initiative was well received by both pupils and teachers. The Regional Council expressed its sincere thanks to Piscopo Gardens for their support, reaffirming its commitment to fostering environmental awareness among younger generations.



EOI REGIONAL CALENDAR 2027

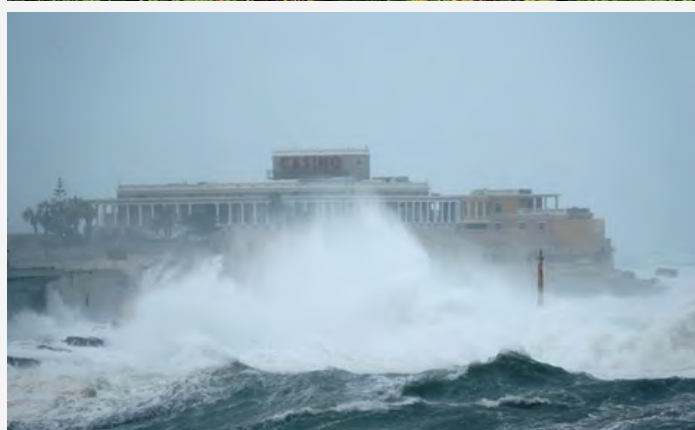
The Eastern Regional Council is inviting photographers to submit high-quality photos for its 2027 calendar. Images must be full-colour, at least 1080p, and taken in one of these localities: Ħal Għargħur, Swieqi, Pembroke, St Julian's, Sliema, Gżira, Ta' Xbiex, Msida, Pietà, Birkirkara, Iklin, or Lija.

Photos should capture weather or natural phenomena such as rainbows, lightning, fog, sunsets, big waves, wildflowers, waterspouts, Mount Etna views, flooded valleys, and similar scenes. Preference will be given to images that clearly show recognisable local landmarks.

Photographers should include the date, exact location, and price per image. Watermarked images are preferred for submission, with unwatermarked versions requested only if selected. Both portrait and landscape formats are welcome, especially mixed submissions. Selected photos will appear in the 2027 Regional calendar giving photographer credits.



The poster features the Eastern Regional Council logo at the top left, followed by a row of ten local council crests. The main text reads: "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST", "Would you like to have your photographs featured in our 2027 Regional Calendar?", "THE EASTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL IS LOOKING FOR LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHS, FEATURING DIFFERENT WEATHER PHENOMENA, TAKEN FROM OUR LOCALITIES". At the bottom, it says "SEND US YOUR IMAGES ON REGJUN-LVANT.DLG@GOV.MT" and "EOI DEADLINE 30/04/2026". The bottom right corner shows a partial view of a calendar for January and February.



COLLABORATION WITH SAVING OUR BLUE

The Eastern Regional Council teamed up with 'Saving Our Blue' and organised an educational event at St George's Bay St Julian's on Tuesday 23rd June 2026. We set up a stand on the beach and handed out reusable pocket ash trays, coolers, reusable cups and bottles to beach goers, in order to reduce cigarette butt littering and raise awareness on the importance of our seas and the urgent need to protect them. During the remaining summer months we will be organizing similar events at other popular beaches across our Region, in order to continue raising awareness and bring about positive change.



HOLY WEEK DIRECTORY

For the third consecutive year the Eastern Regional Council published a Holy Week directory during the Easter period. This directory collected information on Holy Week activities and exhibitions organised within the Region.

The information on these activities was collected through a public call.



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EVENTS

CAMPUS READS

***With special thanks to Campus Hub.
In collaboration with YMCA Malta, Heal & Teach Foundation, MSPCA Charity Shops, FSWS,
Malta Libraries and Poetry Jam Malta.***

The Eastern Regional Council held its second annual Regional Book Fair with second-hand book stalls to creative activities, poetry readings, and community moments.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended, supported, donated, and took part in the activities. Your energy and enthusiasm made the day so special. We're also incredibly grateful to our sponsors and to all the volunteers and collaborators who helped bring this event to life.

Together, we raised an amazing €488 for the NGOs. Every book bought and every moment shared helped make a difference





REGIONAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

In collaboration with Sportify Sports Academy in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund.

For the second consecutive year, the Eastern Regional Council organised a Regional Football tournament in aid of the Malta Community Chest Fund. This year, over 500 children took part in the tournament from 9 different nurseries within the Region. The age groups ranged from U5s to U13s. During the tournament close to €2000 euros were collected for the MCCFF.

A big thank you to Innocent Malta and the Farsons Foundation for supporting this tournament.



FUNDING INFO SESSION

In collaboration with SEM, SPI, LGD and EUPA

The Eastern Regional Council organised a Funding Info Session designed specifically for our local councils. This initiative offered an invaluable, hands-on opportunity for representatives to consult directly with key experts, explore the latest funding streams and align them with their community goals. The session focused also on mastering application writing, providing practical strategies to effectively turn innovative project ideas into funded realities.



HAMIS IX-XIRKA

On the occasion of Maundy Thursday, the Eastern Regional organised a shuttle bus between various Holy Week Exhibitions organised by local councils and parishes in the Region.

In total, over the period of the night, people who registered for this shuttle bus were able to visit 5 holy-week exhibitions in the following localities: San Ġiljan, Ғal Għargħur, Birkirkara, Msida and Tal-Pieta'.



AI SEMINAR

In collaboration with the Faculty of ICT

The Eastern Regional Council with the professional aid of Prof. Vanessa Camilleri, held an inspiring seminar designed specifically for Local Councils, exploring how Generative AI can support smarter, safer, and more engaged communities

From live demonstrations and local council use cases to interactive citizen science labs and discussions on ethics & responsible AI use — today was all about empowering councils to become co-creators of innovation.

Together, we're reimagining the future of local communities through AI. We would like to express our gratitude to all who attended.



REGIONAL AGM

The Eastern Regional Council successfully held its Annual General Meeting during mid-May at Trident Park in Mrieħel. The event provided a platform for Regional Council members to present the Administrative Report and deliver informative presentations on a range of key topics, including waste management, environmental initiatives, cultural affairs, local and European funding opportunities and financial accounts.

A highlight of the evening was a panel discussion entitled "From Nature to Neighbourhood: Safeguarding Our Region's Natural Heritage While Shaping the Built Environment", which focused on the importance of protecting and preserving our region's natural environment, be it its landscapes, biodiversity, and open spaces. The panel featured distinguished speakers from various sectors: Perit. Dorianne Cachia Senior Associate Architect at Studjurban, Ms. Annick Bonello Cassar, Conservation Officer at Nature Trust and Environmental Science lecturer at Junior College, Mr. Alex Camilleri, Deputy Director of Regulatory Affairs in ERA and Perit. Edgar Rossignaud, Councillor at Swieqi Local Council.

The Regional Council extends its sincere appreciation to all those who participated and contributed to the success of the event.



CLEAN-UPS

Special thanks to McDonald's Malta

Following a meeting with McDonald's Malta, a shared commitment to more regular environmental cleanups was established. In partnership with the McDonald's Volunteer Programme, we are organising monthly clean-up events at various locations across the region, with a particular focus on valleys and other sensitive natural areas. During the first half of 2026 a total of 5 clean-ups have been organised at: Gzira, Imsida, Hal Għargħur and St Julian's. More clean-ups will be organised during the second half of 2026.



Gzira



L-Imsida



San Ġiljan

CLEAN-UPS

In collaboration with schools

The Eastern Regional Council was approached by two schools, St Clare College Dun Anton Manchè Gżira Primary School and Sacred Heart College St Julian's Malta, to host a clean-up with us. The Gżira Primary School clean-up was held at Pembroke Natura 2000 site (next to Pembroke Athleta) while the clean-up with Sacred Heart College was held at 'Telgha Ta' Birkirkara' and Triq Charles Sciberras in St. Julian's.



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VISITS

SOUSEEU

In collaboration with the Local Councils' Association

Last March, the Eastern Regional Council formed part of a Maltese delegation sent by the Local Councils' Association to Sardinia for the SOuSeEU project. This project brought together delegates from Sardinia, Sicily and Malta in order to discuss the similarities between these Mediterranean islands, as well as share best practices and showcase what makes us unique



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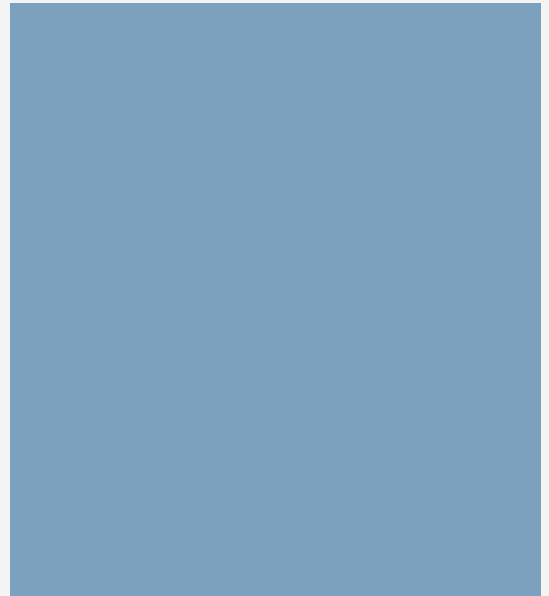
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MEETINGS



MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Eastern Regional Council has been continuously holding monthly meetings with all the Executive Secretaries of the Local Councils since November 2022. These monthly gatherings foster collaboration and ensure that the Executive Secretaries can discuss important issues, share best practices, and coordinate efforts to address the needs of their respective localities effectively. The President and the Executive Secretary would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Executive Secretaries for attending these monthly meetings and for their continuous support and cooperation throughout the whole year.



THE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

The Regional Interactive Guiding Hub & Training Society (RIGHTS) was established to create local and regional children's councils to enable child participation within each community.

The Għargħur Local Council was the first in Malta to hold a council meeting under this new initiative. This effort provided a platform for children to engage in local governance, voice their opinions, and actively contribute to the development of their community. Through these meetings, young members are encouraged to learn about civic responsibilities, develop leadership skills, and understand the importance of active citizenship from an early age.

To continue promoting this initiative, representatives from the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society participated in one of the monthly meetings held by the Eastern Regional Council with the Executive Secretaries.





UPCOMING EVENTS

Chess Tournament

Friday 17th July 2026 6pm-10pm
Ġnien Dun Victor Grech, Swieqi

Stargazing Workshop 2

Friday 19th June 2026 8pm-10:30pm
Pembroke Natura 2000 Site

Stargazing Workshop 3

Friday 3rd July 2026 8pm-10:30pm
Ġhargħur Top of the World

Stargazing Workshop 4

Friday 31st July 2026 8pm-10:30pm
Pembroke Natura 2000 Site

IVANT

5th July - 5th August 2026

Quizzes

24th June 2026 7pm-10pm
Railway Bar, Birkirkara

Minn Pjazza Għal Pjazza

13th June 2026 7pm-onwards
Ġnien Dun Victor Grech, Swieqi

10th July 2026

Vjal it-Trasfigurazzjoni, Lija

8th August 2026

Fort Tigne, Sliema

6th September 2026

Pembroke

Clean-Up The World Campaign

Gżira Underwater Clean-Up
7th September 2026

Birkirkara Clean-Up

12th September 2026

Pietà Clean-Up

15th September 2026 (Underwater)

16th September 2026

Pembroke Clean-Up

19th September 2026

Sliema Clean-Up

26th September 2026

Thrift Pop-Up

Friday 27th November 4pm-10pm

Saturday 28th November 9am-2pm

Waterfront Hotel, Sliema



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