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City Buying Eco-Buses and Cars

By The Moscow Times

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This week's purchase of electric cars shows the city's conservation department is practicing what it preaches.

More than 2,000 new "environmentally friendly" buses will be employed on the streets of Moscow in the near future, Anton Kulbachevsky, head of City Hall's Department for Resource Use and Environmental Conservation said Thursday.

City Hall is going to buy more than 2,000 buses of environmental class Euro-4 or above.

Other parts of a strategy to slash emissions in the city include high-speed trams and the extension of sound screens along the side of major roads.

"In the past year, the number of vehicles on Moscow's roads grew 10 percent. We must protect our citizens from the harmful effects of the air and noise pollution produced by cars," Kulbachevsky said, Interfax reported.

The announcement comes a day after the department bought 10 Mitsubishi iMiEVs, the first

electric vehicles on sale in Russia, for use in the city's environmentally protected areas.

"In all developed countries EVs are a 'must have' in protected areas," Sergei Pankov, executive director of Mitsubishi's Russian dealer ROLF Import, said in a statement.

Moscow's air quality was among the worst of all of Russia's cities in 2010, according to a report released by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry last week, although the report noted that a large contributing factor was smog from the forest fires that afflicted the city that summer.

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