

Cities After Dark

Network Journal #02

→ Network Highlights & Progress

Cities After Dark

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Cities**AfterDark**

The second Network Journal of Cities After Dark highlights the activities conducted at transnational and local level between May 2024 and August 2024.

During the second quarter of the Planning Action phase, the partners of Cities After Dark have been **consolidating their vision on the night-time economy while beginning to draft their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs)**. The partners took inspiration from good practices and solutions shared during online seminars and transnational meetings.

Shaping Vibrant & Safe Nightscapes

From Insights to Action: Collaborating Across Borders to transform Night-time Economies

The transnational meeting hosted by Piraeus allowed partners to explore effective policies and solutions for integrating technology into local strategies for making cities more vibrant and safer at night.

The online seminar on how to involve business actors and local communities in the night-time economy offered valuable insights into principles such as the Agent of Change, as implemented by London and other cities in the UK, but also discussed the local strategies developed by Turin and Zurich to enhance the involvement of residents and businesses in creating new services and activities at night.

During these months, the Cities After Dark partners have been actively sharing knowledge with their local stakeholders at the occasion of URBACT Local Group meetings and public events.



Colaboration between stakeholders

The practices that emerged from transnational meetings, study visits, and online seminars have inspired local stakeholders to develop a shared vision and to collaboratively plan actions that will implement the night policies in the short, medium and long term.

Cities have used the insights gained from the transnational exchanges to plan and implement testing actions. Examples include Braga, Nicosia and Paris, that are raising awareness among local communities and drawing greater attention to the night as a potential testing ground for collaborative and innovative solutions for sustainable urban development.

The lessons learned from these events will be fundamental for guiding the development of the Integrated Action Plans and will be shared at national level and the occasion of the National URBACT Campuses taking place all over Europe this autumn.



3 July 2024 – 5 July 2024

The Transnational Meeting of Piraeus



Tech for Safer, Smarter Nights

Technology can play a crucial role in transforming the management of the night-time economy

ICT offers innovative solutions to address some of the most pressing challenges cities face at night, such as enhancing public spaces safety, improving accessibility and reducing noise pollution.

The transnational meeting of Piraeus focused on the opportunities that digital and technological advancements offer for enhancing the impact of night-time economy and related services in cities.

Transforming Cities with Technology

The Night-Time Economy in the Digital Age

In the global debate on night-time economy, digital transition is increasingly recognized as an asset for fostering business development and improving the management of various urban functions. The Cities After Dark network decided to explore the potential of one of the cross-cutting topics of URBACT IV, focusing on different dimensions and practices that could be integrated by the partners into their Integrated Action Plans.



Piraeus' strategic use of ICT across various domains sparked meaningful discussions among the partners, who gathered in the port city located in the Athens urban area to witness first-hand how ICT has contributed to its urban transformation and how it is enhancing the quality of services and public spaces after dark.

The Urban Innovative Action project BeSecure-FeelSecure (BSFS) of Piraeus serves as one of the most interesting examples of how the use of ICT contributed to improve urban security and quality of life in the urban context.

Transforming Cities with Technology

An Innovative Urban Action project: BeSecure-FeelSecure

The development of an Evidence-based Collaborative Urban Risk Management ICT platform has been instrumental not only in enhancing social cohesion and active engagement of the residents while increasing the sense of safety in the urban context, but also in providing valuable information to decision-makers for an evidence-based policy making.

The application of these functions to improve the management of the city at night is one of the primary challenges that Piraeus aims to address in its Integrated Action Plan. The activation of the local community around a participatory concept of urban security, as fostered by BeSecure FeelSecure, provides solid foundation for incorporating the needs of residents and stakeholders into the debate on safety at night and the use of ICT in the urban context.

These topics will be also at the core of the URBACT Innovation Transfer Network CITISENSE, in which Piraeus will lead the process of transfer and adaptation of the innovative solutions developed through the UIA project BeSecure FeelSecure to other European cities (Naples, Liepaja, Geel, Manresa, Fòt).



Can Data Drive 24/7 Public Safety?

The visit to the ICT Control Room of Piraeus offered a glimpse into how data from various sources (police reports, open datasets, smart sensors, digital infrastructures, etc.) are collected and processed for creating safe and inclusive public spaces on a 24-hour basis.

The Lab on ICT and night-time economy, introduced by a masterclass by the Ad-Hoc Expert Eurico Neves, highlighted several possible applications of technological tools for improving urban planning and night-time functions.

Digital tools can provide valuable support in re-planning nightlife areas, simulating the impact of lights and noise on surrounding neighborhoods, but also combining sensors and other tools not only to enhance public space safety but also to improve policy-making related to mobility services and environmental management.

At the same time, chatbots and apps can be crucial for better promoting night activities and services, which can also be enhanced through active collaboration with residents and stakeholders via digital tools.



These ideas represent advanced applications of ICT to the night policies, with significant potential to improve users' behaviors and boost the quality of night jobs and services.

The interactive session with the partners of Cities After Dark explored several digital solutions that can be turned into possible testing actions or included in the Integrated Action Plans.

The ideas developed by the partners include the creation of digital twins to test the impact of new projects and services on the city at night, the use of chatbots to optimize urban mobility options and promoting night businesses and activities, the development of a database to aggregate all datasets related to night-time services (security, management of public spaces, etc.) into an integrated platform and the integration between mobile apps and chatbots for reporting anti-social behaviors or for improving the communication with city departments.

Transforming the Night-Time with Technology

8 Tech Solutions for Night-Time Economy from Cities After Dark

- A virtual tour guide of night activities
- A digital platform for services and events taking place after dark;
- A free app for drivers to avoid traffic at night and foster shared rides;
- A virtual assistant highlighting safe points for night safety;
- Acoustic sensors for signaling noise pollution and promote mitigation measures;
- A chatbot with information on municipal services, regulations and permissions for night activities;
- An app for reporting misuses of public space and noise complaints at night;
- A platform to combine data from sensors, CCTV and open data sources for improving night-time management.

Regenerating Piraeus Night-Life

The site visit to the night spots of Piraeus showcased the diversity of activities in a city that has made significant investments in regenerating its marinas to attract both local and international visitors.





Piraeus strategy

Revitalizing Piraeus Marinas for Night-Time Innovation

Marinas such as Mikrolimano and Marina Zeas not only offer a variety of bars and dining options, but also feature refurbished public spaces and sport facilities that remain open after dark. These areas serve as interesting laboratories for testing solutions aimed at creating a safer and more inclusive nightlife.

Improving the livability of these marinas is central to the strategy that Piraeus is co-designing with local stakeholders as part of the Cities After Dark initiative. Key elements of this strategy, as highlighted during the night site visit, include:

Reduction of noise pollution and the contrast to traffic with
the definition of new measures for decreasing car usage at night.

Piraeus strategy

Other Investments:

Piraeus is also investing in the transformation of public spaces and repurposing unused buildings in the 5th district, turning them into art galleries and dining spots, as well as on regenerating the Troumba area. This central district, once known for its cabarets and music venues mostly shut down during the dictatorship in 1974, is now experiencing a revival with the installation of new bars and cultural venues, celebrated through annual street parties and festivals.



The Periptero of Piraeus

The 24-hour kiosks of Piraeus serve a crucial function for both residents and visitors. They offer more than just magazines and refreshments, but they also act as points of reference, contributing to the safety of central and peripheral areas at night. In a city known as departure point for all the Greek islands, the kiosks are a local institution and an integral part of everyday life, being among the few convenience stores open all night long.



From Vision to Action

Advancing Night-Time Economy Plans

The initial steps undertaken by the partner cities in the development of Integrated Action Plans and Testing Actions and the Integrated Approach for the co-production of the Integrated Action Plans were explored during the interactive sessions of the Transnational Meeting.

Here, the partners discussed the first elements that are emerging from the dialogue with the local stakeholders, focusing on a shared vision on night-time economy and how to turn this vision into concrete actions.

The interactive sessions also provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the challenges that are emerging in managing the participatory process on night-time economy within the URBACT Local Groups.

Maintaining enthusiasm around the creation of a local night policy to prevent a potential decline in interest and commitment from local stakeholders, reaching a consensus on the focus of testing actions and ensure its alignment with the vision to be developed in the Integrated Action Plan, minimizing potential conflicts with stakeholders and residents in order to focus on concrete solutions to be implemented together for improving night-time economy: these challenges highlighted by the partners of Cities After Dark are consistent with those typically encountered in the action planning process.



However, the solutions that cities are implementing to address these challenges demonstrate how the night-time economy can be an interesting field for improving the overall city governance.

The organization of night meetings and explorations to collectively understand the situations faced by the local stakeholders and the active involvement of different city departments to motivate them to contribute to a holistic action are among the solutions that are helping the partners of Cities After Dark to better define the focus of the Testing Actions and make a synthesis among different visions on night-time economy expressed by a variety of stakeholders.



Advancing Integrated Action Plans

Enabling Partners to Drive Urban Strategies

An interactive session focused on how to incorporate the integrated approach into the co-production of the Integrated Action Plan was conducted, during which the partners engaged in a peer-to-peer evaluation of the levels of integration of the first actions developed for being included in the Integrated Action Plans.

This session helped the partners understand mandatory and optional aspects of the integrated approach and how to involve local stakeholders in the evaluation process.

Obligatory Aspects of Integrated Approaches:

- I Stakeholder involvement in planning.
- II Coherence with existing strategies.
- III Sustainable urban development (economic, social, environmental).
- IV Integration over time.
- V Stakeholder involvement in implementation.

Optional Aspects of More Integrated Approaches:

- I Sectoral integration.
- II Spatial integration.
- III Territorial integration.
- IV Multi-level governance.
- V Integration of cross-cutting thematic aspects.
- VI Complementary types of investment.
- VII Mobilising all available funding.



Refining City Visions

Progress & Next steps Towards Integrated Action Plans

The methodological sessions of the Transnational Meeting of Piraeus provided useful information for refining the definition of city contexts, needs and vision and for kicking off the creation of an overall logic, strategic objectives and actions to be included in the Integrated Action Plan.

A first check of how cities are proceeding from vision to action planning will be carried out in the next Transnational Meeting of Nicosia in October 2024 and with the active support of the Lead Expert reviewing the draft IAPs and they evolve.



Cities After Dark On Air

The local radio station Kanali 1 hosted the Lead Expert of Cities After Dark and representatives from Braga, Genoa and Tallinn in a live show to discuss about the challenges addressed by the network and the stories of urban innovation emerging from the cities working on different dimensions of the night-time economy.

Engaging the local audience with the network's topics is a crucial element of Cities After Dark.

During each transnational meeting, the network has organized public events or maintained a strong media presence to promote the innovative approaches developed by the cities on night-time economy.

11 June 2024

Business Actors and Local Community in the Night-Time Economy and the Use of Urban Planning Tools

The third online thematic seminar of Cities After Dark



The active involvement of business actors and local communities is essential for creating night policies that effectively tackle the most urgent challenges of the cities after dark.

Urban planning tools can also play a vital role in reducing conflicts and promoting a balance between the needs of the residents and those of partygoers, businesses and music venues.

The third online thematic seminar of Cities After Dark focused on some of the most interesting dimensions of the debate on the night-time economy, featuring valuable contribution from cities like Zurich, Turin and London. These cities have implemented innovative collaboration schemes between public actors, businesses and local communities, and have tested advanced urban planning tools, such as the Agent of Change

Lessons from Zurich, Turin, & London

Shaping Inclusive Night Policies & Reducing Conflicts

The online thematic seminar aimed to gather practical ideas and practices that Cities After Dark partners can incorporate into their Integrated Action Plans, particularly on some of the most sensitive topics like civic engagement in the night-time economy and conflict regulation. Attended by many representatives from the cities' URBACT Local Groups, the online seminar sparked discussion on how to ensure that the needs of different stakeholders are taken into account in local policies and actions related to night-time economy.

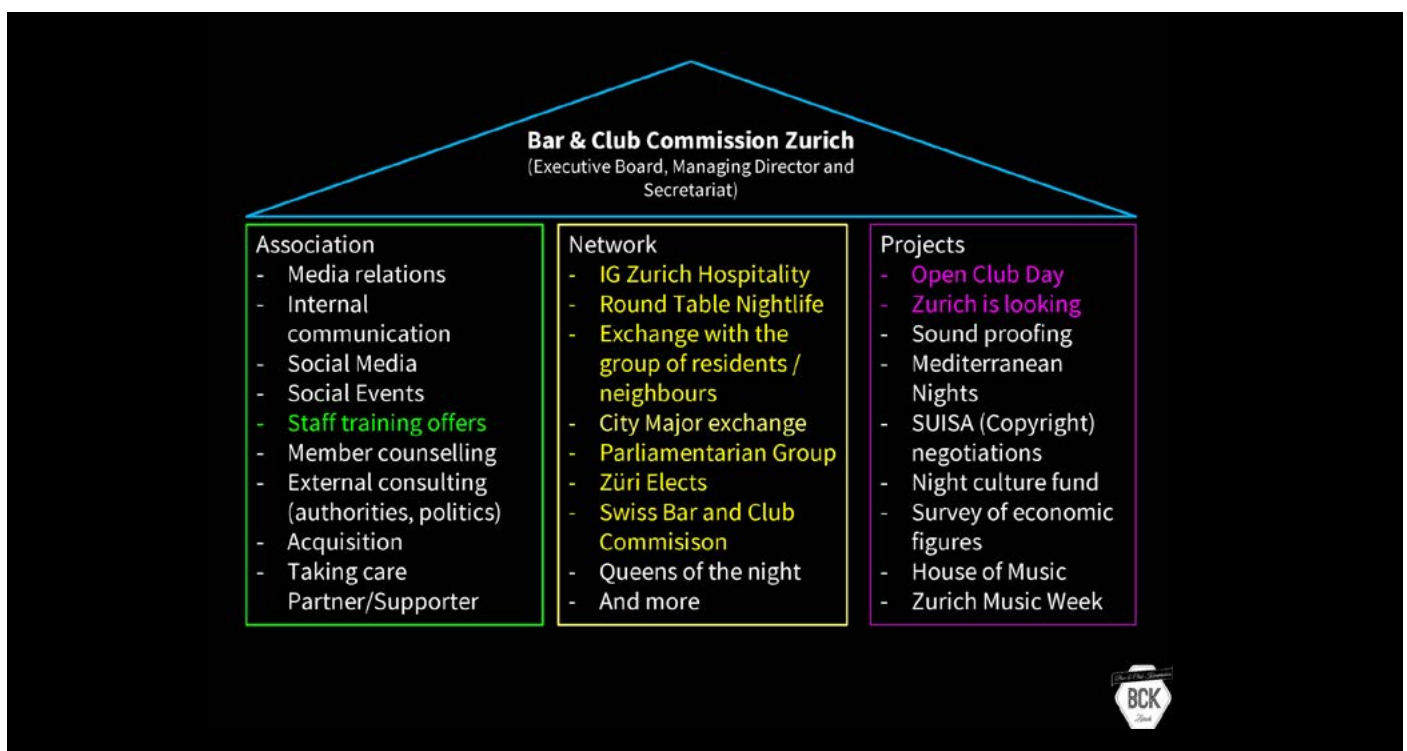


Insights from Zurich, Turin, and London:

The models presented by Zurich, Turin, and London during the thematic seminar offered interesting insights into the evolution of local debates on the night-time economy. They also highlighted the role played by night unions, micro-grants for local projects and urban planning tools in enhancing civic engagement and fostering community cohesion around sensitive issues raised by the night-time discourse.

Zurich · The Bars & Clubs Kommission

In a city like Zurich, which boasts 600 night cafes and 180 clubs and nightlife venues, the Bars and Club Kommission plays a pivotal role in representing the diverse interests of all night-time stakeholders, from clubs to underground cultural spots.



About the Commission

Established in 2011, the Commission is a non-profit association acting as the voice of the Zurich’s nightlife, advocating for it at various institutional levels.

The Commission’s mission is to gain recognition for the importance of the night culture, not only as an economic factor and a contributor to city’s attractiveness, but also for its cultural value, equating with traditional cultural institutions like the opera house. This mission is achieved by bridging the needs of the hospitality sector, its employees, and the local community.

The Bars and Club Kommission curates a range of activities designed to increase the visibility of the night-time sector within the urban context and to enhance the quality of the nightlife experience for everyone. These activities include training programs for night venues staff and events like the Open Club Day and the Mediterranean Nights, which create new opportunities also through partnerships with nightlife venues and the business sector.

Financial schemes for supporting the soundproofing of night venues, the Night Culture Fund and the organization of events such as the Zurich Music Week support cultural production and raise public awareness about the role played of night culture for city's vibrancy.



Efforts & Interests

Guiding Principles for Collaborative Night-Time Policy Development

Alexander Bücheli, General Manager Bar & Club Kommission Zürich, presented the Commission's efforts in institutional lobbying and for unionizing the night sector. He also highlighted the annual meetings between representatives of the nightlife sector and the City of Zurich as key institutional points of reference for fostering mutual understanding between the public and private sectors.

The Commission's success in mediating between different interests over the last decade has underscored some principles that may be valuable also for the action of the partners of Cities After Dark: the importance of face-to-face communication in addressing night-time challenges, a focus on the contribution given by the night-time economy to the well-being of the society rather than just on the economic impact, the need for a balance between the political pressure and the potential for innovative solutions in a collaborative environment.

Turin · The Experience of ToNite

The Urban Innovative Action project ToNite, carried out by Turin, is an interesting example of how public authorities can effectively engage local communities in co-designing and implementing innovative solutions to improve the city after dark.



Revitalizing Spaces, Enhancing Community Life:

The project, whose approach will be transferred and replicated in other European cities with the URBACT Innovation Transfer Network 2Nite, redesigned public spaces along the Dora River and refurbished an abandoned alley with benches, communal tables and other amenities for students from the nearby University campus.

This action had a relevant impact also on the University, which decided to keep its libraries open on 24-hour basis, offering new services to students and contributing to the revitalization of the area.

ToNite also funded 19 small-scale projects carried out by alliances of local NGOs and groups of residents, which revitalized parks and public spaces in Aurora neighborhood with sports and cultural activities after dark. **These projects successfully engaged various sectors of the local community, including local youth, elderly persons and migrant communities, while fostering the right to the city at night for all.**



Night-Time into Opportunities

Revitalizing Urban Spaces After Dark: The ToNite Project Legacy

The organization of events and social gatherings in public parks and streets regenerated by ToNite was instrumental in the social growth of the local community. These initiatives expanded the access to public and cultural services for different resident groups and reimagined the city after dark as a space of opportunity rather than as a dangerous dimension.

Chiara Lucchini of the Turin Urban Lab highlighted the project’s legacy, noting that it fostered a new perception of safety in the targeted areas and catalysed new projects to complete the regeneration of the area through the use of different types of national and European funding sources.

Moreover, the ToNite project contributed to mainstream how urban spaces and services are planned to remain fully operational after dark. This created a solid foundation for the development of an urban night policy and for extending the experience of the small-scale projects to create new night-time activities and services in other suburban areas of the city.



London – The Agent of Change Principle

The introduction of the “Agent of Change” principle in the UK has been particularly significant in ensuring effective integration between new real-estate developments and existing businesses and community facilities, such as pubs, music venues and nightclubs.



Reducing Conflicts, Preserving Night-Life

The enforcement of this principle, which is potentially replicable in other urban contexts, has helped reduce conflicts over noise pollution.

This urban planning tool, that is now a reference for many cities across Europe and UK, played a decisive role to save a flagship nightclub like the Ministry of Sound in South London, which was threatened from the construction of new residential blocks.



Balancing Development & Night-Life

London's Early Adoption of the "Agent of Change" Principles

London was among the first cities to test the incorporation of this regulatory tool within its 2021 London Plan through a dedicated policy. This policy explored mitigation measures early in the design stage, with the objective of ensuring construction standards that prevent noise nuisance inside residential apartments.

Philip Kolvin KC, a Licensing Barrister and former Chair of London's Night-Time Commission, recounted the steps leading to the incorporation of the "Agent of Change" principle into the National Planning Policy Framework. He also discussed its implementation in other major projects of urban regeneration, such as the Crystal Palace Park. At this 85-hectare site, the coexistence between music festival sites and neighboring housing was facilitated by the establishment of a Trust, a charity that took over the park from the local council and agreed on terminal event hours and decibel levels.



Lessons Learned and Inspiring Elements

During the thematic online seminar, the partners of Cities After Dark discussed the most inspiring elements of the solutions showcased with the speakers, highlighting what could be integrated into their Integrated Action Plans, which are currently being co-designed with local stakeholders.

Strategies and Challenges Unveiled

Emerging Strategies and Addressing Challenges for Night-Time Economy

Some of the suggestions that emerged from the discussion included creating a register of cultural venues to ensure greater protection in case of new developments, the active involvement of “unusual suspects” such as migrant communities and elderly persons in actions reviving the public space at night and the collaboration with industries and key players having interest in the development of the night sector, including food and beverage companies.

Challenges such as the lack of financial resources, the complexity of introducing new regulatory tools like the “Agent of Change” or on updated licensing requirements, and the low sensitivity of political leaders to the needs of the night-economy industry were also presented by the partners. These issues were further explored in discussions with local stakeholders to identify possible solutions to be introduced in the Integrated Action Plans.

Driving Change Beyond Cities After Dark:

Although the solutions showcased in the online seminar were applied in urban contexts that differ significantly from those of most network partners, the online thematic seminar paved the ground for a broader reflection on how to enhance the active participation of business sector and local communities, even beyond the completion of Cities After Dark activities.

The Testing Actions of Braga, Nicosia and Paris



Testing Innovative Night-Time Solutions

The night-time economy experiences a significant boost during the summer, which is one of the reasons why some Cities After Dark partners chose to kick off their testing activities during this season. These activities have led to development of innovative approaches which may prove valuable in consolidating the vision defined with the URBACT Local Group.

Raising Awareness: Night-Time Industries in Action

While most partners are still collaborating with their local stakeholders to develop the actions they plan to test, Braga, Nicosia and Paris have already implemented some initiatives inspired by a common principle: raising awareness within the local community on the role that the night-time industries and workers play in the social, cultural and economic growth of the urban context.



Berlin and Zurich in Focus

Promoting Stronger Cities and Celebrating Night Culture

This principle is widely recognized at an international level, with many cities that carried out interesting events that highlight the importance of the night-time economy and promote stronger cities with the local communities as a way to balance diverse needs. Among the experiences explored by Cities After Dark during study visits and online thematic seminars, Berlin's Tag der Clubkultur and Zurich's Open Club Day stand out as initiatives that celebrate the vibrant night culture of these cities, through site visits, live performances, DJ sets, exhibitions and debates.



This model, which emphasizes the role of clubs and night venues in fostering cultural and economic growth, creativity and community cohesion, served as an inspiration for **Braga**. The city recognized the need to make its night-time economy industries more visible to both residents and tourists with innovative approaches.

The Braga After Dark booklet was created to help visitors and residents explore the city at night, highlighting the best places to visit, including a selection of restaurants, bars, music venues and nightlife establishments.

The lead partner of Cities After Dark focused on two main initiatives. During the UNESCO Creative Cities Network Annual Conference, hosted by **Braga** in early July 2024, the city published an innovative guide promoting its nightlife. Distributed during the event and through the hospitality sector, the guide encourages residents to discover the city’s night attractions as part of its tourist appeal.



Celebrating Braga

On 27th July 2024 Braga organized the Braga After Dark Fest, a public celebration of the city’s vibrant nightlife. The festival provided an important opportunity to underscore the importance of the night-time economy in tourism and urban development.



Braga After Dark Fest

Celebrating and Enhancing Night-Life

The testing action was co-designed with DJs, cultural actors, bars and clubs owners involved in the URBACT Local Group with the objective of making the entire sector more visible to different segments of the resident population. Attendees were invited to enjoy DJ sets, concerts and performances organized in Praça da Republica from 7pm onwards.

The event promoted strong cooperation among various stakeholders of the night sector, strengthening collaboration between the public and private sectors and fostering greater synergy among different departments of the local authority, which is a central topic of the action of Braga within the Cities After Dark network.

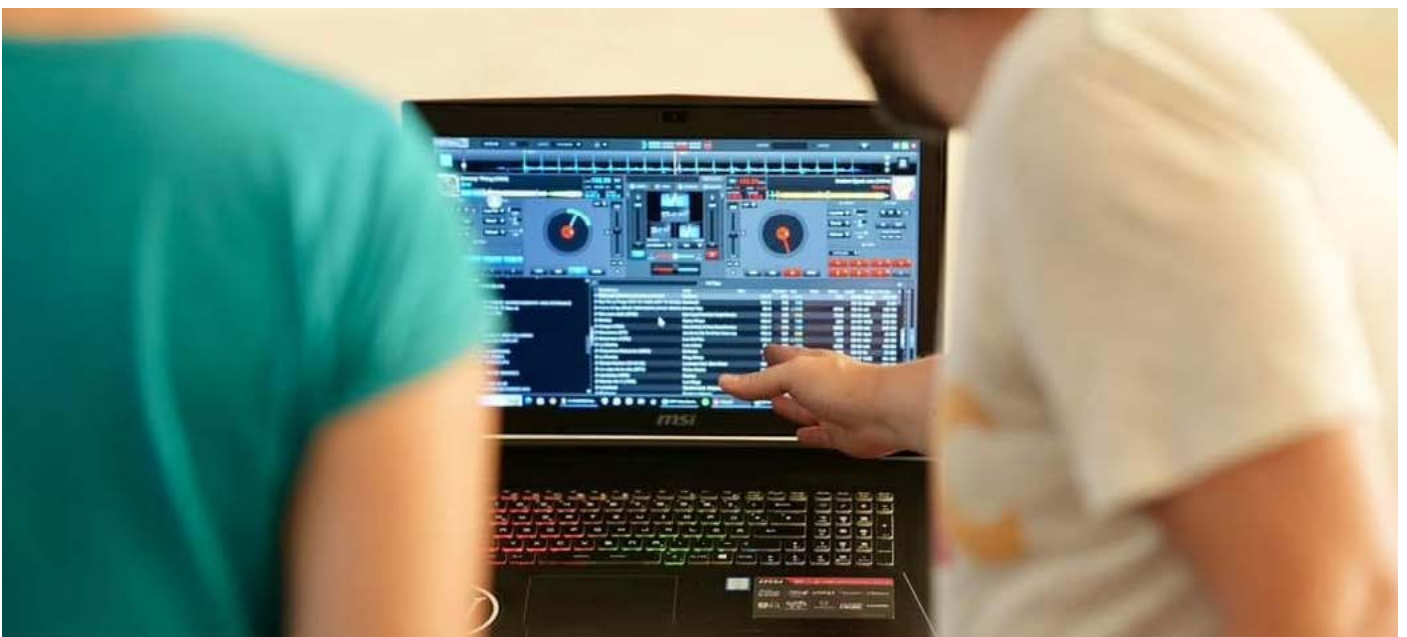


Building Skills & Opportunities

Empowering Nicosia's Youth in the Night-Time Economy

In **Nicosia** one of the key needs identified during the initial meetings of the URBACT Local Group was the necessity of providing more opportunities for young people interested in working in the nightlife sector. This includes offering training activities and strengthening possible collaborations between cultural and business sectors.

In a city where unregulated night-time economy activities often lead to noise pollution and public nuisance, raising awareness about the positive impact of the night-time economy on economic and cultural growth of the urban context, particularly for the local youth, is essential.



To address these challenges, on 29th August 2024 the Cypriot capital organized a DJ Workshop and Party in Eleftheria Square. The event kicked off with a DJ training session led by VJ Tony Steel, who covered the basic techniques of mixing music and creating playlists. The workshop also focused on essential equipment for beginners and advice on choosing a DJ controller that suits the music style they wish to play. The event was designed to bring together people with varying levels of expertise but a shared passion for playing music.



The testing action also provided an interesting opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by night workers and to better connect business representatives with aspiring DJs, who had the chance to showcase their music in the square, which was transformed into an open-air dancefloor.

Bridging Talent and Businesses

The night party, which continued until midnight, featured some of Nicosia's most famous DJs, who played their sets in various locations such as public spaces, bars or restaurants that participated in the initiative.



The experiences that we have and people that we meet act as the bricks for our own city. Over the course of our lives everything adds up and creates this intricate city that is our thoughts and personality. Everything being moments, people, places, and experiences.

Cities After Dark gave me the motivation to do things for my city. People must participate more. Don't just wait from others to organize something. Be a volunteer to help your city, no matter your age/ gender/profession.

That's why I will organize the first testing action-event by sharing my knowledge of DJing and bring new people to Nicosia

Antonis Stylianou
Officer at the Municipality of
Nicosia and DJ (aka Tony Steel)

Inclusive & Cultural Night-Time Initiatives

Energizing Nicosia's Night: Engaging Youth and Expanding Access

The testing action in Nicosia drew younger crowds and injected new energy into the city's night-time scene, in line with the vision of a thriving, culturally rich and socially inclusive night-time economy that Nicosia is developing with its URBACT Local Group. By targeting different audiences, the event also offered a diverse range of activities catering to different demographics. It tested an innovative use of pedestrian-friendly spaces with the goal of replicating similar initiatives, such as night openings of local museums or, more in general, for making cultural heritage accessible and engaging during the evening hours.



Promoting the principles of respect, tolerance and non-judgment within the night-time economy is at the heart of the “care at night” vision that **Paris** is developing with its URBACT Local Group. This vision aims to foster responsible behavior and prevent the risks associated with festive practices.

Care and Innovation in Night-Life

Paris incorporated these principles into its first Testing Action, the Marateuf festival, which was held on 7 June 2024. The 42-hours event featured cross-cutting workshops on the concept of care within the party scenes, as well as experimentation of integrated interventions on site in partnership with different associations.

Organized in collaboration with the stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Group, the festival took place at six different venues in the North-East of Paris. These venues and event organizers, including La Bellevilloise, Point Ephemere and La Cité Fertile, are already active in creating inclusive and sustainable night-time activities.

The debates and workshops conducted during the Marateuf by groups such as Consentis and Fêtez Claire helped to popularize the discourse on respectful behavior, engaging participants in the development of new activities for harm reduction and combating sexual violence.



Under the Spotlight: The Action of the Cities at Local Level



The Impact of Meetings and Seminars

The partners of Cities After Dark are progressively deepening the understanding of different dimensions of the night-time economy. This is achieved not only through participation in transnational meetings and online seminars but also exploring these topics with local stakeholders and different departments within the local authority.

Turning Visions into Actions

Developing Night-Time Economy Plans

Cities are getting to the core of co-production the Integrated Action Plans, focusing on a shared vision on night-time economy. They are initiating discussion on how to connect the vision to strategic objectives and concrete actions to be included in the plan.

In the second quarter of the year, all the partners organized several meetings of the URBACT Local Group and promoted the participation of their local stakeholders in transnational activities, such as the online thematic seminar on how to engage business actors and local communities in the night-time economy.

The definition of the Testing Action and its connection to a broader policy framework on the night-time economy were also significant topics discussed by the partners of Cities After Dark within their URBACT Local Groups.



Strategizing for Impact: Key Discussions on Testing Actions

The definition of the Testing Action and its connection to a broader policy framework on the night-time economy were also significant topics discussed by the partners of Cities After Dark within their URBACT Local Groups.

Testing Actions

How are Cities Engaging Local Stakeholders and Enhancing Night-Life?



Tallinn engaged the stakeholders of the URBACT Local Group in planning a one-night festival designed to engage and channel the local youth energy in a positive environment. The Testing Action, set to be implemented at the end of September 2024, is aimed at addressing one of the most relevant challenges in the nightlife in Tallinn: the presence of large groups of youth in public spaces during night-time hours, which often leads to disruptive behavior which negatively impact the overall atmosphere and safety of the city's nightlife.

The coordination among different city departments, such as urban planning, public services, cultural affairs and youth services, was crucial for defining the scope of the event. The festival will feature a lineup of entertainment options, including live music, sports activities, food stalls, and art installations, to attract a wide range of young people.

The dialogue within the local authority and with local stakeholders was also useful for linking this action to a broader strategy aimed at developing a safer and more vibrant nightlife in the Estonian capital.

A series of communication initiatives will soon be launched to encourage active participation from local youth to the event. In recent months several articles on local media have highlighted the issues identified by the URBACT Local Group of Cities After Dark, with the aim of building awareness and informing the residents on the process of enhancement of Tallinn's nightlife.

For **Nicosia**, the organization of the Testing Action provided a significant opportunity for collaboration among different municipal departments and with key external stakeholders, testing new concepts for night-time activities.

Cooperation among sectors such as culture, communication, health and safety, land use and permissions and European affairs was instrumental not only in developing a coordinated approach to the organization of the event or for the network activities, but also in initiating discussion on the extension of the operational hours of cultural institutions for the organization of events after dark.

In alignment with the topics of Nicosia’s bid for European Capital of Culture 2030 and its vision of a thriving, culturally rich and socially inclusive night-time economy, the meetings of the URBACT Local Group addressed how municipal services such as lighting, public transportation and sanitation facilities can be improved to better support event organizers and enhance public communication. The wide promotion of the DJ Workshop and Party made by Nicosia on its official social media channels is a first example of effective night-time events promotion made in collaboration between public institutions, local media and stakeholders.

The connection between transnational knowledge exchange and the activities of the URBACT Local Group is particularly strong among Cities After Dark partners. This is evident in the formulation of actions to be beta-tested or included in the Integrated Action Plans.

During the last meetings of the URBACT Local Group in Budva, the stakeholders explored potential testing actions aligned with the city’s goal of becoming a sustainable and vibrant night-time destination. Proposed ideas include the creation of a Budva After Dark mobile app designed to provide comprehensive information about all nighttime experiences available in Budva and the organization of unusual night-

time activities in the rural outskirts to engage both residents and tourists. These ideas incorporate some cross-cutting aspects targeted by Cities After Dark, such as digital and environmental transition.

In the 5th ULG Meeting, **Budva** engaged local stakeholders in a comprehensive discussion on strategic objectives to be included in the Integrated Action Plan, linking them to concrete actions. Key topics included the decentralization of night events to enrich the cultural fabric of the entire municipality and surrounding areas and the improvement of Budva’s urban image at night. Discussions highlighted innovative uses of public spaces that remain often underutilized after dark and the creation of new economic opportunities for night-time sectors.

The improvement of public services available at night, including the introduction of innovative services such as night-time babysitting for families and workers, and the consolidation of the URBACT Local Group with the establishment of a Budva Night Council were also explored as essential elements for supporting a dynamic, inclusive and accessible night-time economy.



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The decentralization of night events, the integration with tourism strategies and the need for better promotion of night activities and events were also priorities discussed by **Zadar** in the ULG meetings. These meetings addressed the main challenges associated with the city's night-time economy.

The second meeting of the ULG, hosted by a local brewery, focused on potential solutions for the concentration of night-time activities in the city centre, a phenomenon particularly noticeable in the summer months. Ideas discussed with local stakeholders included the introduction of night-time public transport services, especially for the night-time workers, and the launch of zoning policies and micro-mapping actions to identify potential locations for cultural and business activities after dark outside the city centre. The stakeholders agreed on a shared vision of a vibrant and balanced nightlife that empowers cultural revival and sustainable growth while enhancing residents' quality of life.



The introduction of an “After City Zone” in Zadar, where people can be redirected from lingering in city centre after bars and restaurants close, is an interesting solution that emerged from the conversation with the stakeholders involved in the URBACT Local Group of Zadar.

This innovative approach could lead to the creation of a new area for night activities, alleviating the pressure on the city centre and balancing distribution of night activities in different areas of the city while reducing potential disturbances to the residents.



The promotion of a safe and inclusive night-time economy is also a key focus for **Piraeus**, which worked with the URBACT Local Group members to create an awareness campaign centered on inclusion and safety. The Testing Action, scheduled for launch Autumn 2024, is aimed at educating the public on the significance of responsible behavior among nightlife patrons and inform the community about available resources and support for those who feel unsafe or marginalized.

The campaign, led by the City of Piraeus in collaboration with the Municipal Police and the Local Council for Crime Prevention, will include seminars, workshops and meetings with local business owners and night-time workers along with the distribution of informational materials. The initiative will not only target Piraeus' night-time stakeholders but also train 70 new local police officers that will be hired by the end of 2025, aiming for lasting improvements through engagement and education on night-time economy issues.

Among other ideas discussed by the ULG of Piraeus, the installation of noise monitoring devices in residential areas with high evening activity was proposed as an ICT solution. These devices would provide real-time feedback on noise levels, using red light indicators to signal when noise exceeds acceptable limits and, more in general, supporting the city's broader efforts to manage public spaces after dark.

As emerged also in other cities of the network, the need for stronger cooperation between public authorities, cultural businesses and the local artistic scene emerged from the URBACT Local Group as an essential element for supporting Piraeus' cultural and entertainment scene. Proposals from the first phase of action planning include the extension of the opening times of the public library and the creation of an event calendar available for residents and tourists to explore Piraeus' night-time activities.

Ranked 13th city in Europe as Top Nightlife Destination in a study published in August 2024 by No Deposit Friend, **Malaga** has focused the dialogue within its URBACT Local Group on the relationship between night-time economy and overtourism, a sensitive topic that is shaking local public debate this summer.

Finding solutions to balance the needs of residents, night-time economy stakeholders and partygoers is the topic at the core of the ULG discussions. Challenges to be tackled with the Integrated Action Plan include the lack of information quantifying the importance of the night-time economy in the city, and identifying alternative night destinations outside the city centre, where most of the night-time economy activity is concentrated.





Similar challenges were also highlighted by the URBACT Local Group of **Genoa**, which is developing an integrated vision for a night that reflects the real identity of the city and promotes culture, education and awareness.

In the last two ULG meetings, Genoa focused on the spatial aspects of the night-time economy, emphasizing the valorization and regeneration of existing spaces, and the promotion of a night culture which encourages respectful behaviors and safe access to city services at night, such as extended public transport lines connecting the city centre to suburban areas.

The projection of a short film made by two university students, exploring different perception of public spaces and services at night according to a gender perspective, inspired the members of the URBACT Local Group of Genoa. This led to discuss possible actions to be included in the Integrated Action Plan for making the city safer and more inclusive for all at night.



The connection between sustainable tourism strategies and the promotion of night-time economy was also explored by Genoa during the City-to-City Exchange of the European Urban Initiative with Prague, held between May and June 2024. The bilateral visits provided insights into Prague's approach to rebranding its city offer to visitors, which helped reduce noise pollution and nuisance in the city centre while promoting its vibrant night cultural and dining scene as attractions to higher targets of visitors.



Methodological Tools



Following detailed guidance provided by the network's Lead Expert, all the partners of Cities After Dark have successfully drafted the IAP section on context, needs and vision.

The partners of Cities After Dark are using several tools to define priorities of action on the night-time economy and to connect the shared vision developed with the stakeholders of the URBACT Local Group with specific objective, areas of intervention and actions to be included in the Integrated Action Plan.

The use of tools such as the vision board and the vision statement for defining a shared vision with the local stakeholders, was complemented by brainstorming sessions carried out both internally with different city departments, in order to share a common vision of the local authority on the night-time economy, as with the night-time stakeholders of the city.

Problem and Solutions Table

The tool was presented at the Transnational Meeting in Piraeus and was used to highlight possible solutions and resources needed to address current problems related to the night-time economy.

After having used traditional tools such as the Problem Tree or the Stakeholders Map, many cities of the network found this tool useful for going to the heart of the problems related to the night-time economy and make initial step towards the definition of concrete actions to be tested or included in the IAP for being implemented on the medium and long-term.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TABLE		
Theme		
Problems	Solutions	Resources

ACTION TABLE					
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE					
ACTION	intended result	resources / Assets	Lead Agency	Key partners	Timescale

Action Table

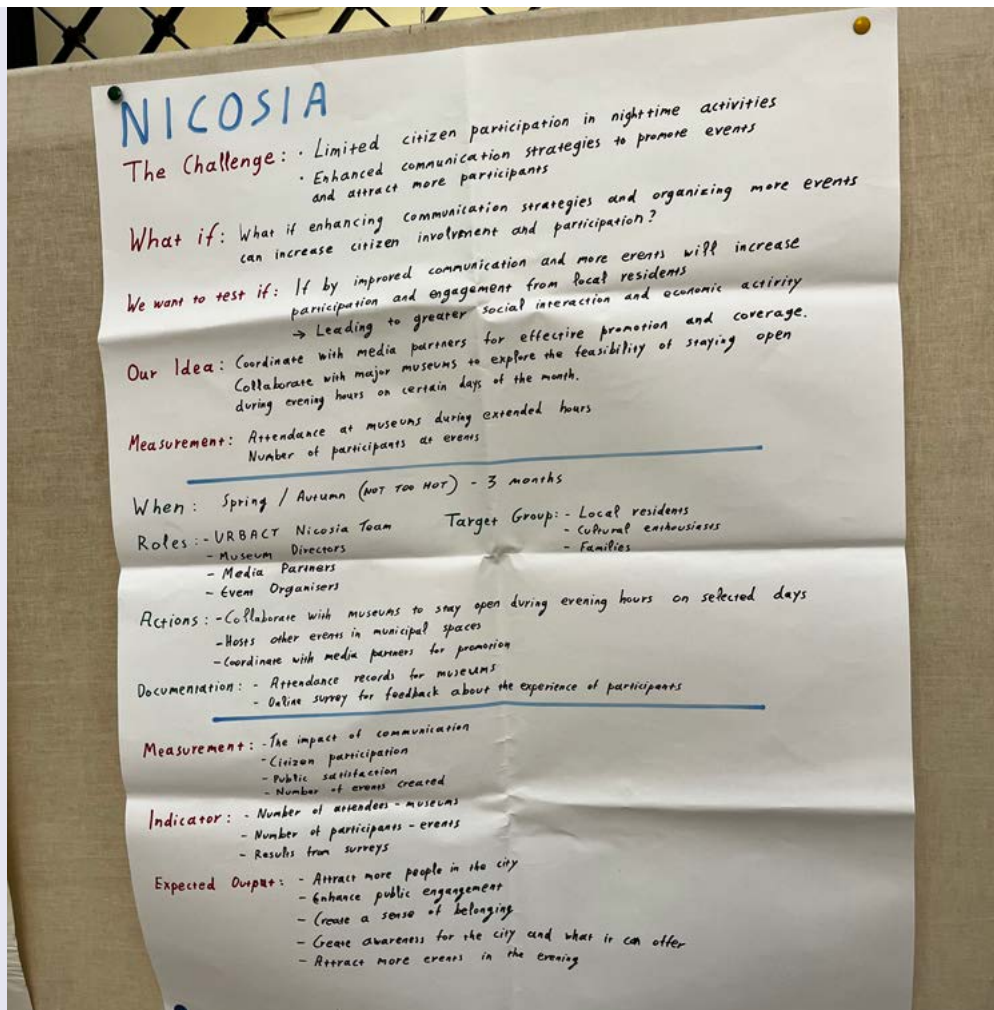
The tool was also presented at the Transnational Meeting in Piraeus and it was used for defining possible actions to tackle the first strategic objectives identified through discussions with the members of the URBACT Local Group.

This tool proved particularly useful for planning the initial Testing Actions implemented by the partners of Cities After Dark. At the same time, it was also important for prioritizing specific interventions and familiarizing with integrated planning methods in which a plurality of stakeholders can be involved from planning to the implementation.

Action Ideation and Peer-To-Peer Evaluation of the Levels of Integration

During the Transnational Meeting of Piraeus, all partners were asked to focus on one of the actions that emerged from discussions with the URBACT Local Group stakeholders. Prior to the meeting, these actions were drafted on a poster and then discussed in peer-to-peer sessions. Cities evaluated how the suggested mandatory and optional aspects of integrated approach were incorporated in each action.

This exercise was particularly useful for assessing how to evaluate the level of integration of the current state of the art on the night-time economy in each city (an element to be included in the context section of the Integrated Action Plan). It also helped to evaluate the overall logic and the actions to be included in the IAP from this perspective.



Next Steps



Key Actions and Upcoming Milestones

The development of the core sections of the Integrated Action Plans will be the main focus of the next quarter (September 2024 to December 2024). A series of URBACT Local Group meetings will be held before or after the Transnational meeting of Nicosia (2-4 October 2024) to define the overall logic of the IAP, establish strategic objectives and detail the action planning.

Additionally, the meeting will delve into the action planning process, preparing cities for the IAP peer review methodology, which will be conducted at the next Transnational Meeting of Malaga at the end of January 2025.

The meeting of Nicosia will provide an opportunity to review progress of the IAP., with a focus on testing and planning actions. The meeting will also address the creation of new night-time services and business activities, a key topic of interest for Cities After Dark.

The online thematic seminar on how measuring the impact of the night-time economy is scheduled for 23 September 2024, with the participation of experts from different corners of the Australia, USA and Europe who tested the use of innovative tools for measuring the vibrancy of the cities at night and the impact of the night-time economy on urban growth. The dialogue over these tools will be particularly useful for incorporating similar studies and techniques into the actions that the partners of Cities After Dark commit to implementing in their future night policies.



From planning to action:

Many cities will begin implementing their testing actions in Autumn 2024, keeping useful elements for refining the approach to the night-time economy developed by the Integrated Action Plans.

The experiences shared during the online seminars and the initial testing actions carried out by Braga, Nicosia and Paris have provided valuable insights and stimulated further exchanges on specific solutions and techniques to be adopted.

These elements will also be shared during the URBACT National Campus, which will be attended by the partners of Cities After Dark across Europe in Autumn 2024.

The training activity carried out by the National URBACT Points will be crucial for identifying possible tools and resources for the implementation of the action and for connecting IAPs to thematic national strategies that could enhance the impact of each network's topic in the coming years.

Furthermore, Cities After Dark will be showcased at several events and meetings organized across Europe and beyond. The approach and actions developed by the cities of the first network of cities ever funded by the European Union on night-time economy will be presented at thematic panels at the Reeperbahn Festival in Hamburg, at the NEON Conference in Sidney and at the WUF12- World Urban Forum of UN Habitat in Cairo.

Cities After Dark

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