

# Cities After Dark

## Network Journal #03

→ Network Highlights & Progress



# Cities After Dark

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Cities**AfterDark**

The third Network Journal of Cities After Dark highlights the activities conducted at transnational and local level between September 2024 and December 2024.

As the network approaches its halfway point, the **partners of Cities After Dark have defined the first draft of their Integrated Action Plans (IAPs).**

The drafts outline the overall logic and the integrated approach of the plan, detailing actions that will pave the way to the implementation of night policies at urban level.

## Inspiration Meets Action

The innovative solutions on night-time economy shared during online seminars and the transnational meeting of Nicosia were particularly inspiring in a phase where the partners of Cities After Dark involved local stakeholders and different departments of the local authority in turning a shared vision into concrete and measurable actions.



## Revitalizing Urban Nights

## Reimagining the Night-Time Economy in a Divided Capital

The transnational meeting hosted in Nicosia offered a significant opportunity for all the partners to delve deeply into the unique challenges of the night-time economy in Europe's last divided capital. The focus on the creation of new night-time services and business opportunities was highlighted as a crucial element for enhancing vibrancy and improving the quality of life of the city after dark.

The online thematic seminars addressed topics such as impact measurement of the night-time economy and on the connection with the 15-minute city concept. These sessions showcased inspiring practices from cities across the globe, such as Melbourne, Bologna, Montréal, Barcelona and Trento, which fueled the conversation on the decisive role played by night-time economy for promoting economic and cultural development at different scales in the urban contexts.

At local level, the meetings of the URBACT Local Group of the partners of Cities After Dark provided valuable opportunities for connecting innovative solutions and approaches that emerged from transnational activities to the local context, turning these insights into actions of the IAP or elements for the creation of innovative and integrated policies.

The participation in the National URBACT Campuses made the partners of Cities After Dark leading ambassadors of the night-time economy challenges within their national URBACT communities. Their action also fostered connections with national institutions and funding agencies, creating the conditions for preparing the IAP's implementation, that will be the core of the network activities in 2025.



2 – 4 October 2024

# The Transnational Meeting of Nicosia



Better Nights for Better Cities

## Redefining the Night-Time Landscape of Our Cities

The creation of new services and business activities is a crucial element for improving the quality of life in nocturnal hours, while promoting social, economic, and environmental development of our cities.

This topic has emerged as one of the most significant challenges for the partners of Cities After Dark, that are actively working for the development of innovative functions through their Integrated Action Plans and by fostering dialogue with business actors, agencies and night leaders within the URBACT Local Groups.



Overcoming challenges

## Breaking Barriers to a Thriving Night-Time Economy

The transnational meeting of Nicosia fostered a comprehensive discussion on various aspects related to the creation of new services and business activities after dark. The dialogue with representatives of public transport agencies and cultural venues, bartenders and innovators active in the Cypriot capital shed light on key barriers hindering the growth of night-time economy in the city, such as the staff shortages (which is particularly impacting, in the case of night bus drivers, the public transport availability during nocturnal hours), restrictive licensing regulations, and rising operational costs.



Bringing life to the city after dark

The ongoing regeneration of the old city centre and the city's bid for the European Capital of Culture 2030 are contributing to revitalize an area that has a strong potential in terms of tourism attraction, but also where the introduction of new business and cultural activities after dark can be crucial for reviving a sense of community among local residents.

Revival of Nicosia's old town

## Breathing New Life into a Historic Heart



The walking tour through the iconic Ledra Street and the areas surrounding the buffer zone allowed the partners of Cities After Dark to understand the complexity of intervening in an area that is deeply affected by an international conflict and that once was one of the thriving night hotspots before the occupation in 1974. Despite these challenges, the emergence of new businesses such as craft breweries and music bars is **reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape of the area while generating new opportunities in the hospitality sector.**

In Cyprus where most of the night-time economy enterprises are predominantly concentrated along the coast, the development of new industries in the Nicosia's city centre contributes to de-seasonalizing the sector and also injects new vibrancy into areas such like the old town of Nicosia, which has suffered from significant decline over the past decades.



**Nicosia is exploring innovative use of public spaces to support night-time businesses in the old city centre. Initiatives such as street festivals and seasonal events aim to stimulate the economic revival of the area by fostering new services and activities.**

The need of leveraging public spaces for creating new alliances between the creative industries and the business sector is exemplified by the success of the Testing Action carried out by Nicosia in the framework of Cities After Dark.

The training activities for aspiring DJs and the organization of DJ sessions in Eleftheria Square were consolidated into a structured weekend programme running throughout September and October 2024, which attracted the attention of national renowned DJs and entrepreneurs interested in exploring the transformative power of music and cultural expression as catalysts for economic, social and cultural growth in the city.

Creativity through smarter regulation

## Nicosia's Night-Time Economy in Focus

The evolution of the testing action into a permanent programme of training activities on licensing rules and permits for opening new bars and clubs in the city aligns with the priorities for better knowledge and regulation, highlighted during the Transnational meeting by local representatives of the business sector, but also for raising awareness on the social and economic impact that the night-time economy has for the sustainable growth of Nicosia.

As the Cypriot capital undergoes an administrative reform merging the city with neighboring municipalities, efforts are being made to **promote economic and cultural opportunities across different precincts**. This approach aims to foster a balance between the needs of visitors, residents, business owners, and cultural stakeholders.

The walking tour of the commercial triangle, situated in the modern part of the city, and the visit to night venues located in Nicosia's newest development area highlighted the challenges in terms of licensing and permits faced by business owners, but also how the focus on quality productions and creativity is supporting the creation of new enterprises which are revamping the night-time economy of the city.



### [A notable example: The Ice Factory](#)

Renowned for being included in The World's 50 Best Bars for several years, this establishment's ice production is not only crucial to its daily operations but also supplies other bars in the area, contributing significantly to the emergence of a new district for entertainment and recreation.



**An interactive session with the partners of Cities After Dark explored how to integrate the creation of new business and services within the night policies and the Integrated Action Plans.**

The diversification of venues and audiences for night-time activities and events, the development of schemes for supporting business activities operating after dark, the extension of the operational hours of public services such as public transport, student halls and libraries are some of the key solutions highlighted by the partners in the framework of a cross-review of the IAPs on the specific aspects related creation of business activities and services after dark.

The session underlined the importance of acting on these dimensions for promoting an effective collaboration for the co-implementation of the IAPs, involving the business sector and the local community but also enhancing awareness on the potential of the night industries as drivers of sustainable development of the urban contexts.



#### Regenerating Nicosia's nightlife

The collaboration with public agencies - such as those responsible for waste management and public transport - and the business sector was also highlighted as a crucial factor for transforming the night-time economy into a driver of green transition in cities, with solutions ranging from the reduction of cars traffic during nocturnal hours through the improvement of public and shared mobility systems to the adoption of zero-waste and plastic-free policies in night venues.

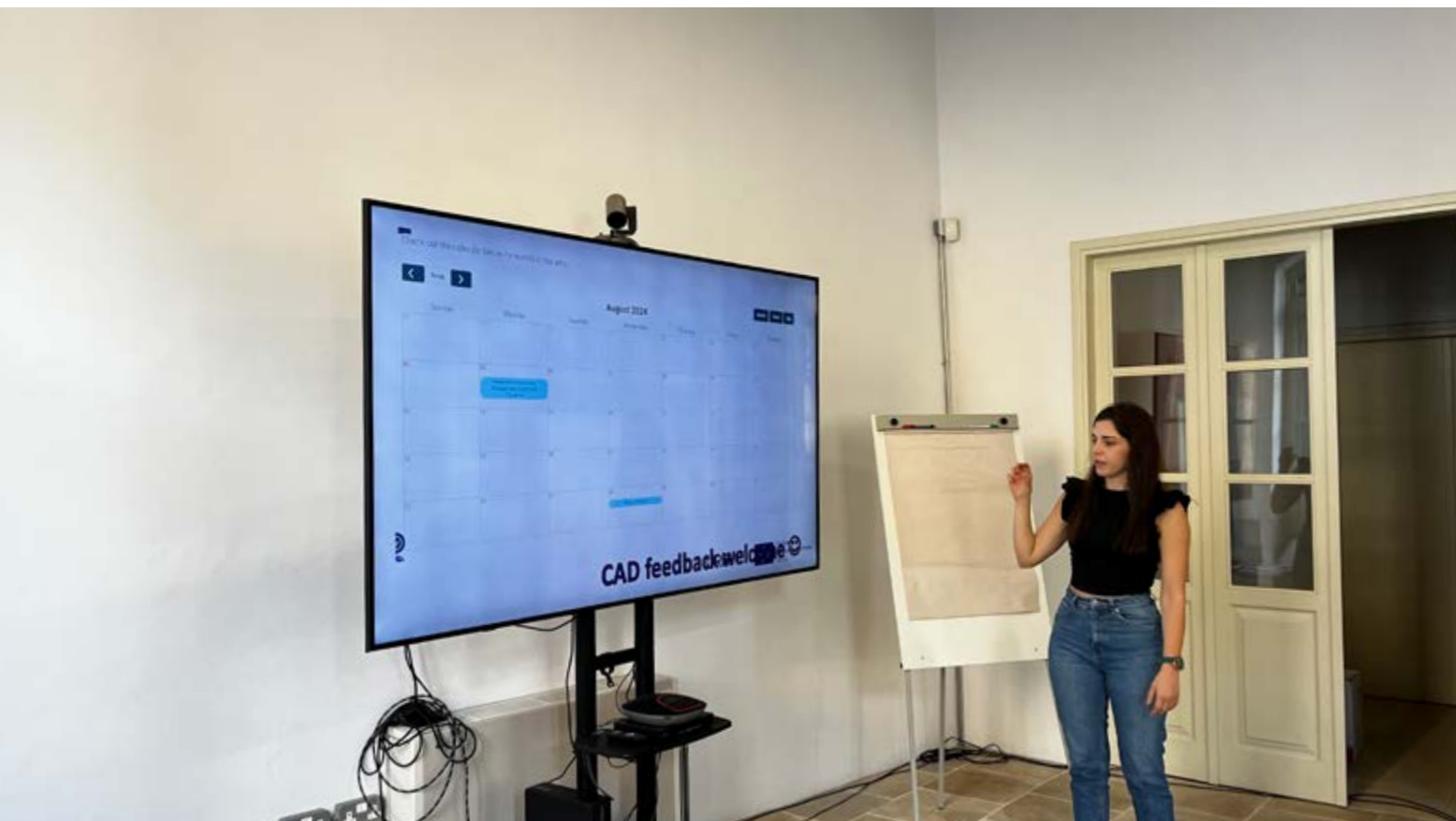
Aligning visions, driving change

## Pioneering Strategies for Night-Time Innovation

The state of progress of local activities and the strategic goals that emerged from the development of the cities' visions on night-time economy were explored during the interactive sessions of the Transnational Meeting. The partners discussed the main challenges, such as the engagement of local stakeholders in planning actions, and shared strategies for maintaining momentum as they finalize the first drafts of the Integrated Action Plan and prepare for implementation in 2025.

**The analysis of strategic goals shared by the partners underscored the alignment between the action of the cities of the networks and the European and global discussions on night-time economy.**

It also demonstrated their ability to develop collaborative solutions that can spark the conversation at local and national level on emerging challenges in the sector. Key focus areas include connection with cultural and tourism attractiveness, the changes in party-goers' behaviors and consumption habits, and the innovative use of public spaces for multiple purposes on 24-hour basis.



Driving innovation, collaboration & sustainability

## 10 Strategic Objectives of the Partners of Cities After Dark

**Enhancing cultural vibrancy.**

Budva

**Developing new spaces for night-time activities.**

Genoa and Budva

**Decentralizing night-time economy activities.**

Zadar and Malaga

**Innovative communication of night programs and activities.**

Genoa and Piraeus

**Expanding the use of public spaces in nocturnal hours.**

Nicosia

**Fostering behavioral change of night users.**

Paris and Malaga

**Enhancing the safety of streets, parks and squares at night.**

Piraeus

**Involving local youth in innovative night activities.**

Tallinn

**Mitigating noise pollution during nocturnal hours.**

Zadar and Malaga

**Reducing the use of private cars at night.**

Varna

Driving a cultural revolution in many urban contexts

As highlighted also in previous transnational meetings and bilateral exchanges with the Lead Expert, the integrated action planning process at local level brought new challenges.



Empowering cities through shared action

## Collaborative Solutions for Sustainable Night-Time Policies

Many partners found difficult to make a synthesis among proposed actions and reconcile differing ideas on the night-time policy that the URBACT Local Groups sought to develop for the city. However, the dialogue around shared challenges faced by partner cities - such as difficulties in engaging different municipal departments or the need of improving the perception of the night-time economy at local level - highlights how the action of Cities After Dark is driving a cultural revolution in many urban contexts.

The creation of mutual trust through the consolidation of collaborative forms of management of the night-time economy, the active involvement of elected representatives and effective sharing of responsibilities in the different phases from ideation to implementation are some of the key solutions that emerged from the dialogue among the partners.



Building a foundation for long-term success

These approaches will be decisive to be implemented not only for the success of the network activities but also for guaranteeing a sustainable implementation of the Integrated Action Plans on the medium and long term.

**Beyond creating impactful activities, they have been instrumental in building trust between key stakeholders.**

An update on the testing actions already implemented - or currently in the planning stages - by the partners of Cities After Dark revealed the transformational impact that these initiatives have had in the local contexts.

For examples, in Braga and in Nicosia trust was fostered between entrepreneurs, artists and local authorities, while in Tallinn, Genoa and Paris relationships were strengthened among local youth, associations and public officials.

The methodological sessions at the Transnational Meeting of Tallinn provided useful insights for refining the definition of integrated approach and actions to be included in the Integrated Action Plan. A first peer review of the IAP drafts was important for assessing their focus of action and enhancing the impact of the plans, ensuring that actions were more clearly aligned with the strategic objectives and areas of intervention.

The final session of the meeting set the framework for the Mid-Term Review process and prepared the partners for the next milestones leading to the completion of the IAP drafts and its operationalization in 2025.





Inspiring the leap to action

## Cities After Dark at the Inspire Festival

During the Transnational meeting, Cities After Dark was showcased at the INSPIRE Festival, the most important event in Cyprus on innovative entrepreneurship held in Nicosia along Makarios Avenue.

**Designed as a vibrant street festival event, the festival fostered the dialogue between local entrepreneurs and international innovators on forward-thinking topics and approaches inspiring people to take the leap from dreaming to doing.**

The INSPIRE Festival hosted a live podcast session on night-time economy and entrepreneurship, that engaged a local audience of startup founders and entrepreneurs across different sectors in the conversation about the creation of new business activities and services in nocturnal hours.



## Sparking conversations

The event was part of an integrated dissemination strategy, that during the days of the Transnational meeting of Cities After Dark **sparked the conversation on local and national media on night-time economy and solutions for improving the quality of business and cultural activities in Nicosia.**

Publications like Ekathimerini, Cyprus News Agency, Cyprus Business News and Fast Forward featured articles on Cities After Dark and the topics of the Transnational Meeting.

23 September 2024

# Measuring the Impact of the Night-Time Economy

The fourth online thematic seminar of Cities After Dark



Shaping policies & designing new initiatives

**Measuring the impact of night-time economy is crucial for shaping policies and strategies that support this sector, as also emerged from the analysis of the local contexts of the partners of Cities After Dark.**

The fourth online thematic seminar aimed at highlighting some of the most interesting approaches carried out at global level to measuring the impact of night-time economy. These methods use different datasets and serve various purposes, from supporting policy decisions to designing new initiatives and strategies on night-time economy.

Learning from global examples

## Global Perspectives on the Night-Time Economy Impact

Several cities worldwide have adopted different techniques to assess the night-time economy's impact, using these tools not only for enhancing decision-making but also for fostering a sense of community among the different actors of the sector.

The examples of Australian cities like Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide, or other global hubs such as Berlin, Tokyo, Montréal and European cities like Bologna provided interesting contribution to the reflection on a topic considered as sensitive by most of the partners of Cities After Dark since the inception of the network activities.



Measuring impact, driving innovation

The online thematic seminar aimed to collect interesting ideas, practices and techniques which can be included in the process of IAP co-production. This integration will ensure that impact measurement becomes a cornerstone of the innovative governance framework of night-time economy developed by the partners through Cities After Dark.

## How Australian Cities Measured the Impact of Night-Time Economy

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Australian cities are global leaders in assessing the contribution given by the main sectors of the night-time economy to local economies.



Setting standards for success

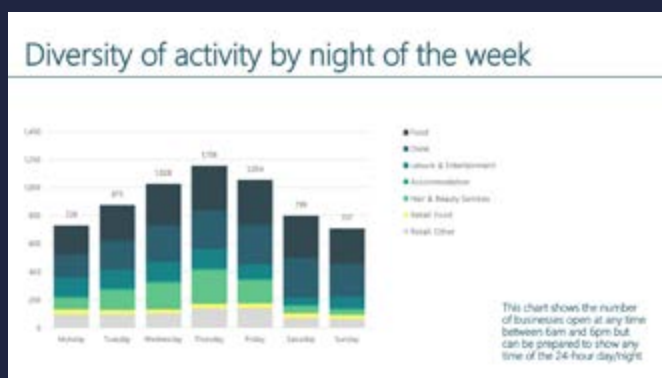
### Australia: Global Leader in Night-Time Economy Analysis

For over a decade, the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors has commissioned studies to measure key metrics such as the number of establishments, employment levels and sales turnover that were modelled by Ingenium Research using datasets from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Food, drink, leisure and entertainment are considered by the study, carried out by Ingenium Research, as core sectors of the night-time economy in the country, while retail, transport and accommodation are considered by the research as non-core sectors.

Anna Edwards, director of Ingenium Research, presented the key findings from the 2023 research, which showed that Australia now has more core night-time economy businesses than ever before, with an increase of 20,000 businesses compared to pre-pandemic levels.

**The study is not only counting the number of business activities operating after dark, but also examines the diversity of the activities by night of the week in different cities and the proportion of businesses open by time and day.**



The use of tools available online such as Google Places is fundamental for analyzing the diversity of the businesses open after dark (restaurants and cafes, bowling alleys, movie theaters, gyms), trading patterns by time/day and concentration of night-time establishments in different areas of the city.

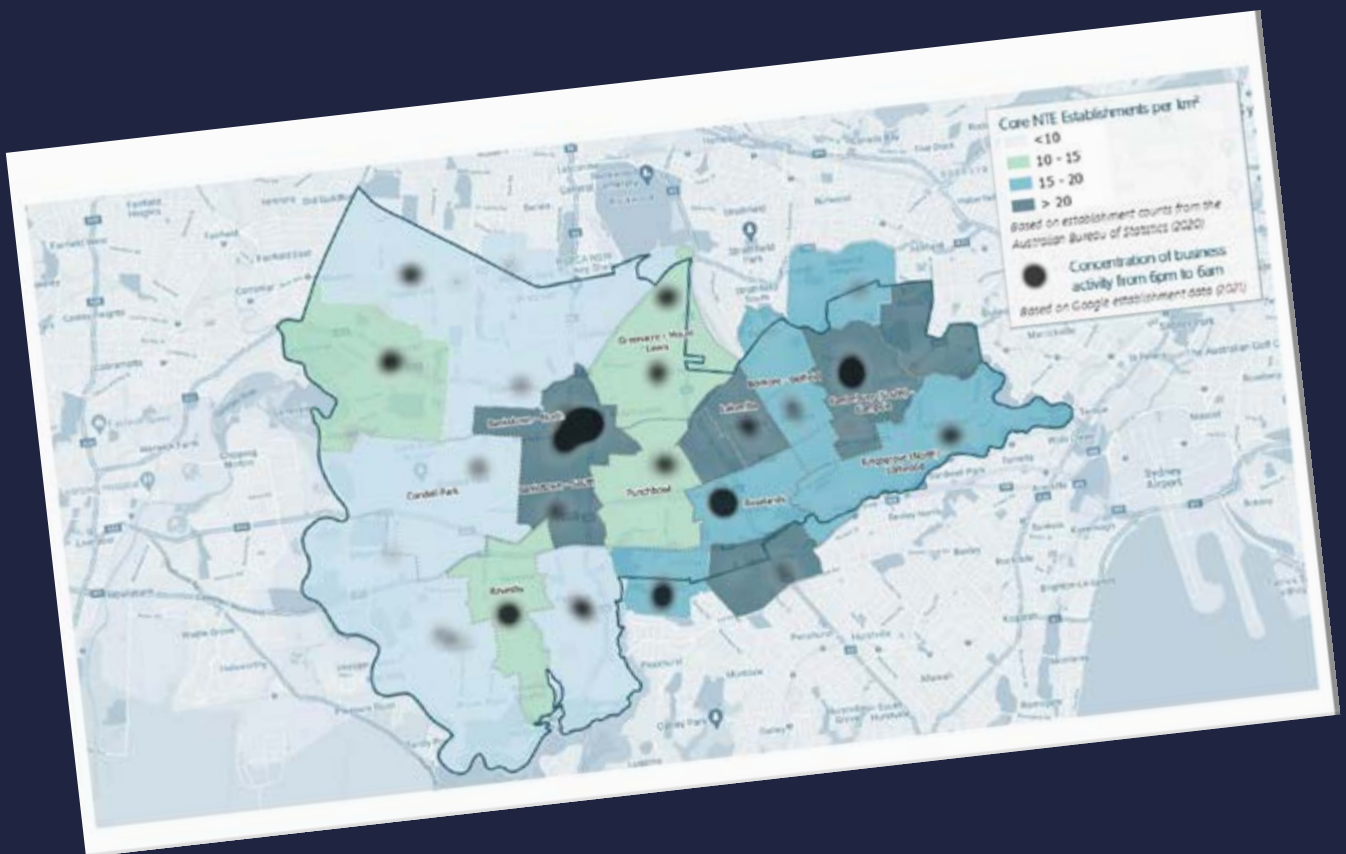
**Measuring the diversity of the activities in Darwin or the concentration of Night-time economy activities in different precincts of Adelaide contributed to improve policy-making, as happened also in Sydney where the New South Wales government is making substantial investments to boost the sector’s vibrancy.**

Unveiling those who sustains the night

## Shedding Light on Night-Time Workforces

The research is now progressively including new elements, such as the night shifts and the working conditions of those who works at night.

The analysis of the employees in the different sectors at different times between 6pm and 6am gives current evidence of what really happens in an urban context at night, and offers useful elements on how to improve the working conditions of specific categories of workers, such as the ones employed by the accommodation, food, arts and recreation sectors (who are prevailing between 7pm and 11pm) or by healthcare and social assistance (who are prevailing between 11pm and 6am).



## Vibelab: The Creative Footprint

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The Creative Footprint, developed by Vibelab, stands out as one of the most interesting approaches to measuring nightlife, which analyzes the cultural impact of nightlife, rather than just its economic impact.



Measuring culture, not just commerce

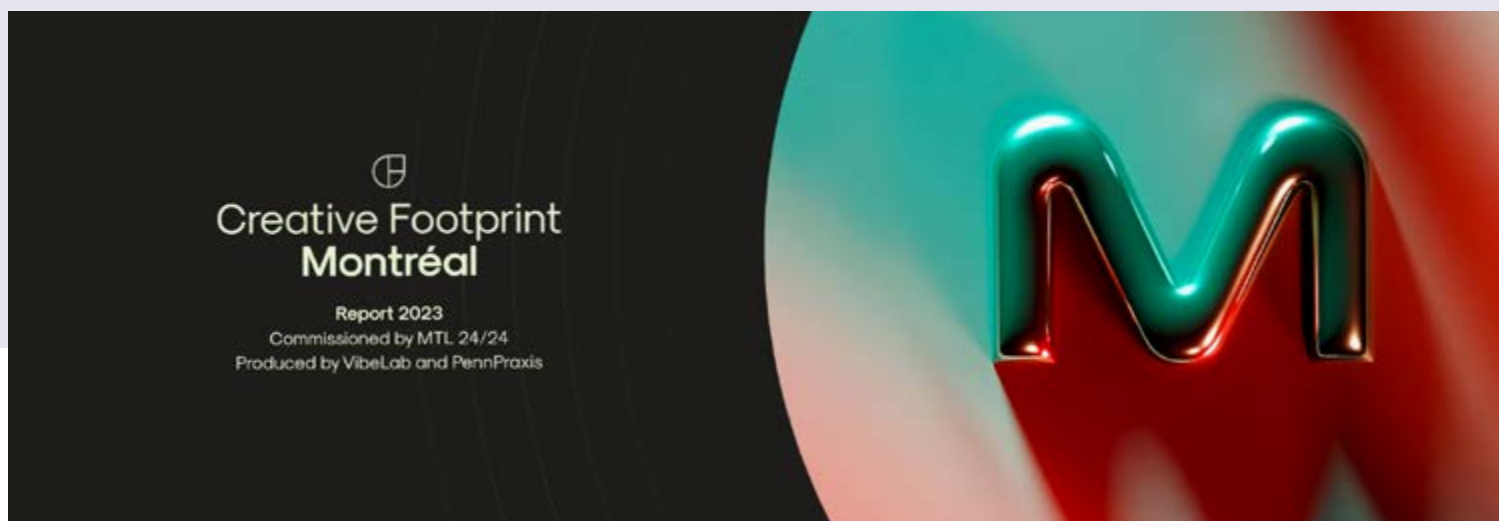
**This type of analysis is more challenging than the ones just focusing on the number of business activities operating after dark, because it doesn't produce eye-catching figures but highlights the impact of nightlife on local communities.**

The studies carried out by the Berlin-based research, consultancy and advocacy agency, that collaborated with Cities After Dark also at the occasion of the study visit to Berlin in April 2024, explore nightlife governance through cultural, social and economic lenses.

## Creative Footprint: Why Does It Matter?

According to Diana Raiselis, Vibelab's Research Director, who presented the methodology used for the Creative Footprints, conducting a study is also part of the engagement process of nightlife stakeholders and advocacy activities on night-time economy, fostering the creation of new coalitions, educating people and recognizing community expertise.

Creative Footprint is a data-driven study that maps creative spaces and communities, in order to study the cultural strength and assets of a city's music and nightlife ecosystem. This kind of studies emerged from the need of Berlin to examine its nightlife beyond traditional economic metrics.



The study was then carried out in many other cities globally such as Tokyo, Montréal, Rotterdam and others, employing 15 different indicators and 3 sets of parameters (framework conditions, communities and contents, spaces) to examine the interdisciplinarity and the infrastructure for cultural night-time economy, with a strong focus on music performance spaces.

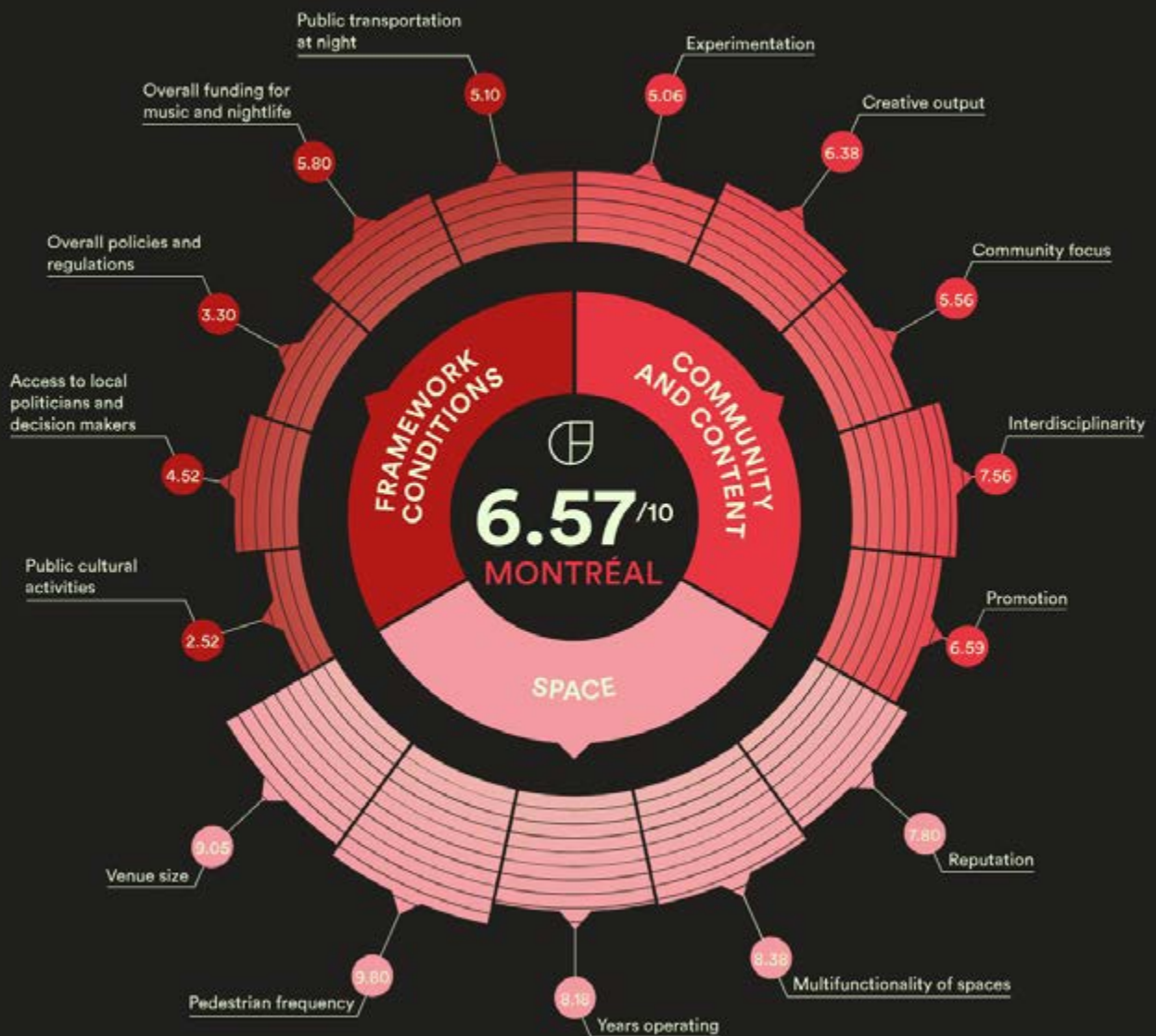
**The combination between qualitative and quantitative data results in a score acting as a benchmark for identifying areas of improvement.**



**Each study is tailored to the unique aspects of the local nightlife scene, providing useful recommendations for decision-makers and night-time economy stakeholders.**

For example, the Creative Footprint study of Montréal was carried out with the participation of more than 75 music and nightlife stakeholders participating in online and in-person focus groups sessions.

The analysis considered factors such as venue density and multi-use space and highlighted, among the conclusions, the tendency of the venues to cluster in areas with good pedestrian flow and the need for contrasting the lack of spaces for night activities, due to issues like geographic distribution, accessibility and closing hours.



## Bologna: The Night Plan

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The introduction of measuring principles to the night-time economy is decisive not only for assessing the impact of the activities taking place after dark, but also for understanding the perception of the residents and paving the ground for an integrated night policy.



### Balancing the night for all

**Bologna is one of the first Italian cities to commit to developing a Night Plan, a strategic framework designed to manage the city's nightlife by addressing various aspects, such as culture, society, economy and safety, with the goal of balancing the interests and rights of different segments of residents.**

Following the appointment of a Vice Mayor in charge of night-time economy and the establishment of a technical unit within the General Directorate of the Municipality in 2021, Bologna launched a study in order to collect data and information from stakeholders and city users for the creation of a local night strategy.

**The study was carried out with a series of focus group and surveys and also measured the perception of the city at night and identified the primary sources of noise and disturbance after dark perceived by the residents.**

The key areas targeted by the study, conducted by the in-house foundation on urban innovation (Fondazione Innovazione Urbana) were mobility, noise pollution, use of public spaces, culture and economic activities. The objective was to better understand the identity of the city at night and improve the quality of life. The study also examined the behaviors of different categories of residents, such as the places they visited at night and the frequency of their night-time activities.



The findings of the study, presented during the webinar by the Head of the Night Plan at the General Directorate Valentina Lanza, were shared during local events with the participation of night mayors and representatives of London and Amsterdam.

**The results were crucial for raising awareness on the main challenges of the city at night and were used as the basis for a participatory process that designed a series of actions on night-time economy carried out in central and peripheral areas of the city.**

## Lessons Learned & Inspiring Elements

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During the online thematic seminar, the partners of Cities After Dark reflected on the insights emerged in a final brainstorming that involved all the speakers, highlighting the current state of impact measurement on night-time economy and explored how these measurements could be integrated into their Integrated Action Plans.

Studying the night holistically

## Expanding Night-Time Knowledge Through Data and Research

**The cities underlined the difficulty in identifying the right datasets and the limited availability of data collected specifically with a night-time perspective.**

The importance of developing alliances with universities and research centers to access expertise which is not always available within the local authorities was highlighted as crucial by most of the participants.

Experiences such as the one carried out by Paris, which is using the opportunity offered by Cities After Dark to carry out a study with a university department on behavioral science on how to contrast harmful behaviors at night, were presented as positive examples of inclusion of research and analysis in the development of night policies.

Furthermore, the partners of Cities After Dark underscored the necessity of considering not only the economic dimension of the night-time economy but also its social, cultural and environmental dimensions, as also highlighted by the experience of Vibelab's Creative Footprints.

# How to Include Impact Measurement of Night-Time Economy Within the Integrated Action Plans?

## The Recipe of Cities After Dark

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**01** Explore the different datasets already available at local and national level to assess the feasibility of studies for measuring the impact of night-time economy

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**02** Include the studies for measuring the impact of night-time economy as a cross-cutting action of the Integrated Action Plan, addressing various dimensions from economic to cultural.

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**03** Foster the collaboration with a series of stakeholders (universities, business associations, global players, etc.) in order to make them part of the measurement journey and involve a variety of actors in the creation of a night policy based on the use of data.

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6 December 2024

# 15-Minute City and the Night-Time Economy

The fifth online thematic seminar of Cities After Dark



A Vision for Day and Night

## Integrating the Nocturnal Into Urban Living

The 15-minute city concept, popularized by Carlos Moreno, has gained significant traction in urban planning in recent years, spreading a model of city where essential services are accessible within a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

While this concept offers solutions to several challenges such as improving quality of life, reducing social isolation, and addressing traffic and pollution, the global discussion around the 15-minute city didn't take fully into account the nocturnal dimension of the cities.

Bringing the night closer to home

Increasing the quality and quantity of services and activities available after dark closer to the places where people live emerged as one of the most interesting and unexpected dimensions of the conversation raised by Cities After Dark in its partner cities.



Designing 24-hour proximity

## Integrating Night & Proximity in Urban Planning

The fifth online thematic seminar explored **how to connect the main pillars of Cities After Dark** (Business and Cultural Vibrancy, Creation of new services, Use of public spaces and green areas, Safety and contrast to noise) to the proximity-focused framework of the 15-minute city for creating a holistic, 24-hour approach to urban living.

Topics such as the decentralization of the night-time activities that are emerging from the local reflections by the partners of Cities After Dark and from EU policy documents like the Urban Agenda for the EU on Sustainable Tourism highlights the need of keeping into account the dimension of proximity into urban planning through a chrono-urbanism perspective.

Cities After Dark also drew inspiration from case studies, such as the UIA ToNite project in Turin (which is going to be transferred to other European cities through the URBACT Innovation Transfer Network 2Nite) which fostered the accessibility of night-time activities by organizing after dark programs in public spaces and parks.

The online thematic seminar aimed to gather useful insights from the experience of scholars, practitioners and elected representatives working on the night-time economy of cities like Barcelona, Trento and Melbourne. **These experts shared strategies that align closely with the Integrated Action Plans developed by the Cities After Dark partners.**





## The Challenges of Proximity in the Night-Time Economy of Barcelona & Melbourne: An Academic Perspective

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The lack of references to the city at night by the theorists of the 15-minute city concept has prompted Jorde Nofri, Associate Research Professor in Urban Geography at the University of Lisbon, to investigate the complex factors and processes characterizing the planning models of the nocturnal city.



Extending nightlife's reach

### Revitalizing Nightlife Beyond the Superblocks

Flagship city of the 15-minute city model, Barcelona is a great example of how the implementation of innovative policies, such as the Superblock programme which fostered walkability and resilience in various neighborhoods of the city, has just a limited impact on reviving nightlife if these policies are not included into a broader framework.

The concentration of most of the night-time establishments in the city centre of Barcelona has left peripheral areas with few opportunities for recreation in nocturnal hours, with a negative impact on the cultural and business vibrancy in wide areas of the city.

The need to plan and design the nocturnal 15-minute city is emerging as a decisive element of Barcelona’s upcoming night-time economy strategy. This approach aims not only to preserve nightlife industries, which play a crucial role for tourism attractiveness, but also to maintain informal nightlife practices in the city and grant the right to the city at night for all, a principle strongly advocated by Cities After Dark.

**Making night-time economy more accessible is not just a matter of urban design, but also requires continuous adaptation of licency and safety regulations.**

In Barcelona, as in other cities across Europe, these regulations must evolve alongside urban strategies on sustainability. Granting the right to sustainable mobility options also after 10pm is one of the elements that Barcelona wants to enforce in order to promote better access to cultural events and activities after dark



In Melbourne, the extension of the Yarra Trams - the world’s largest tram network - to operate during nocturnal hours with the Night Network, made permanent in 2017, and the Free Tram Zone in the city centre had a considerable impact for making night-time economy more vibrant and accessible.

According to Michele Acuto, Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Bristol and former director of the Melbourne Centre for Cities, **the combination between the 15-minute city model and the night-time economy strategy can have a positive impact for night workers**, in order to reduce commuting times and improve the quality of life of a large section of population working night shifts.

Working on planning and mitigation after dark is a pressing need for cities willing to foster resilience through proximity strategies, especially considering that rising temperatures are pushing several activities from daytime to nocturnal hours.

A stronger focus on informal spaces, which emerged also as a relevant topic by many partners of Cities After Dark, can contribute to make the cities more livable at night and improve access to parks and public spaces for activities that engage local youth, families and elderly persons.



Community and sustainability

## Redefining Nightlife for Growth & Connection

In medium-sized cities such as Trento (118,000 inhabitants) the implementation of proximity policies for improving the quality of the nightlife is crucial for reducing conflicts among different categories of residents.

In a city where most of the night-time economy activities are revolved around a growing students population, **redefining the night as a space for growth, expression and hybridization has strengthened the connection between night policies and ecological transition.**

The diversification of night-time activities in space and time and the enhancement of lighting infrastructures in public parks has fostered the organization of activities involving night establishments and the local student community, with a positive impact on the reduction of conflicts among different generation of residents.

Managing nightlife as you would manage day life is not only the mantra followed by Trento, but is also the principle guiding the action of the Time-Use Initiative, that promotes the right to time and time policies at global level.



#### Using time wiser

**Launched in Barcelona in 2014, the global initiative was presented by the director Marta Junqué Surià, who highlighted the connection between the 15-minute city concept and the night-time economy as part of a global reflection strengthening alliances between cities and networks on time-based urbanism for improving well-being, equality and efficiency at urban level.**

## Lessons Learned and Inspiring Elements

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The partners of Cities After Dark are focusing on several elements that are strongly related to the implementation of the 15-minute city at night.



Innovative approaches in action

### Bringing nightlife closer to communities

The night bus systems of Tallinn and Varna, the policies for decentralizing night-time activities of Zadar, Genoa and Budva, the use of public spaces at night in Piraeus and the revival of bars and commercial activities out of the tourist areas in Malaga and Nicosia are some interesting examples of how the action of Cities After Dark can promote proximity and time-based policies through innovative approaches.

The brainstorming discussion among the partners highlighted the importance of stronger coordination among different city departments and the active engagement of the residents as enabling factors for bringing night-time activities closer to communities, while reducing potential conflicts over noise pollution and misuse of public spaces.

# The Testing Actions of Tallinn, Genoa and Piraeus



## Aligning Actions with Night-Time Visions

In the second half of 2024, many partners of Cities After Dark finalized their Testing Actions, aligning them to the vision on the night-time economy and the strategic objectives outlined in the Integrated Action Plans co-designed with local stakeholders.

Transforming Public Spaces into Creative Night Hubs

The activities carried out by Tallinn, Genoa and Piraeus experimented interesting approaches to the night-time economy, through the active involvement of different segments of population and the implementation of initiatives that reimagine traditional ways of experiencing the night.



Rethinking Urban Nights

**Engaging Youth Through Creativity and Play**

Local youth was a target cross-cutting to the testing actions carried out by these cities, which involved also associations, NGOs and night users in planning and implementing activities that go beyond the ordinary and rethink how public spaces, such as parks, squares and historical palaces, can be used as alternative night spots.

Maximizing the potential of the night-time economy to enhance the diversity and vitality of urban space is one of the strategic objectives on which Tallinn is working within its Integrated Action Plan, involving local stakeholders in the development of innovative actions.

This approach was tested on 27 September 2024 with a youth activity night held at Kanuti Garden. The aim of the event was to provide free and educational activities for young people in public spaces. The event included a variety of workshops to help young people develop their creative potential. Young people were able to try their hand at rapping and DJing under the guidance of renowned rapper Gameboy Tetris, and make sandwiches using recipes from Michelin's Young Chef of the Year, Daanius Aasa, under the guidance of SAI! chefs. Self-defense training for girls was provided by Laura Mallene.

In addition, participants enjoyed exciting outdoor games with Linda Marii Aljasmäe from the Inviting School to Move and took part in popular board games led by the Brain Games club. The Police and Border Guard Board (PPA) also provided valuable information on law and order and road safety. The evening ended with a dance camp, where the instructors on stage performed their dance moves for the audience.



**How can we create a safe and open environment for these young people and provide engaging activities, particularly in public spaces, that are accessible without financial barriers?**

The question raised by Tallinn is common to many partners of Cities After Dark, which are working on the creation of so-called “third spaces” for making night-time activities accessible to everyone.

The enthusiastic response to the youth evening event at Kanuti Garden significantly contributed to change the perception of at-risk youth, who was the primary target group of the event, and confirmed the need to work in engaging local youth in planning and implementing events spreading different concepts of night-time economy also beyond the traditional night spots and enabling stronger use of public spaces after dark.



### Genova After Dark

## Redefining Nightlife with Inclusivity and Heritage

Testing the use of unconventional venues for night activities was also at the core of the action of Genova, which carried out an all-night event on 30 November 2024 called Genova After Dark.

The event was aimed at showcasing the different elements of the shared vision on night-time economy developed in collaboration with the URBACT Local Group, in order to creating a nightlife that is diverse, plural and inclusive.



The event took place in different locations of the city. The traditional nightlife areas of the historic city centre hosted activities for raising awareness on harm reduction and safety of public spaces at night while peripheral locations such as the 17th-century palace Villa Bombrini hosted guided tours through which many Genoese residents had the opportunity to rediscover an important and lesser-known part of the city, and a DJ-set that showed the potential for repurposing local heritage sites for night-time use.

### The importance of public transports

The event served also as an important opportunity for testing the extension of the public transport service during nocturnal hours connecting the city centre to the Cornigliano area in the western part of Genoa. A free shuttle service was provided by the local public transport company AMT, showing the importance of public transport linking the centre to the suburbs for diversifying the activities at night.



Genoa actively involved in the event many NGOs member of the ULG, which distributed questionnaires designed to gather feedback from residents and tourists on their perceptions of the night-time activities in different areas of the city.

**The analysis of these responses provided by the participants will give useful elements for highlighting the priorities of the future action on night-time economy towards the finalization of the Integrated Action Plan.**



“The first action of the Cities After Dark project in Genoa was a success, not just for the musical event itself but for the message that was received by the public. The dedicated shuttle bus that allows a move from the centre to the suburbs was very appreciated, the event inside a 17th-century villa with DJ set was superlative. I believe that this is the right way to involve the inhabitants of a city to live the night more consciously, and safely”.

**Alex Bianchi DJ**  
Member of the URBACT Local  
Group of Genoa and DJ

Santa Night Run

## Reimagining Night-time Events in Piraeus

The Testing Actions of Piraeus included a series of events aligned with the strategic objectives of its Integrated Action Plan, focusing on expanding city thematic festivals and promoting sport activities during night-time, in order to support local businesses, boosting tourism and fostering community engagement.

On 21 December 2024, the longest night of the year, the streets of Piraeus came alive with the 5th annual Santa Run. Unlike previous years, this year's event was reimagined as a vibrant night-time spectacle, perfectly aligned with the objectives of the Cities After Dark project and thus was renamed to Santa Night Run.



*A change that brought new energy*

**The transformation from a daytime activity to a night-time celebration brought fresh energy to the event and inspired greater public participation.**

Hundreds of runners, all dressed in Santa Claus costumes, illuminated the city's streets with a sea of red and white as they made their way through a designated route. The event drew over 1,000 participants, a significant increase from previous years, when it averaged around 700 participants.

**The initiative was not only a joyful celebration of the festive season but also a strategic move to activate Piraeus' night-time economy.**

The event was promoted through an integrated communication campaign, with posters, articles on local media platforms and news on the official Christmas in Piraeus website. This creative approach to the communication of events after dark is in line with another piece of the Testing Action, which is the creation of an online event calendar dedicated to the city's night-time activities.

Strongly proposed by the members of the ULG to centralize information, increase visibility, and encourage greater public participation in night-time events, the integration of the calendar of the night events into the city's official tourism website, DestinationPiraeus.gr, ensuring broad reach and easy accessibility for both locals and tourists.



**The festive season provided also other opportunities for reimagining Piraeus as a dynamic night-time destination and promote the vibrancy of the local economy after dark.**

On December 20, 2024, the city hosted the "Red Night" event from 5pm to 11pm. Within this initiative, a major testing action was made under the Cities After Dark framework, encouraging businesses to offer exclusive deals to late-night diners and partygoers, while city's shops and malls remained open until late at night hosting creative activities such as DJ sets and artistic performances.

Beyond its economic impact, Red Night encouraged exploration of the city's cultural and leisure offerings after dark. The extended shopping hours and late-night offers enticed people to stroll through Piraeus' streets, shop for holiday gifts, and experience the city's dining and entertainment venues in a whole new light.



More than 50 restaurants and bars participated in the Red Night, that was advertised with a promotional campaign that raised visibility on the extended shopping hours and showed the relevance of these initiatives for improving cultural and economic vibrancy of Piraeus after dark.

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



*Turning objectives and actions into reality*

The partners of Cities After Dark continue to refine areas of intervention, specific objectives and actions which are turning into reality the shared vision of the night-time economy developed within the Integrated Action Plans.

Connecting local action & global insights

## Empowering Cities as Night-Time Innovators

Insights shared during transnational meetings and online thematic seminars are proving decisive for inspiring the members of the ULG and different departments of the cities involved in the networks and in connecting their action to the latest trends of the debate on night-time economy.

Participation in national initiatives, such as the National URBACT Campuses, and European events are reinforcing the action of the partners of Cities After Dark as ambassadors of innovative models of night-time economy management. These models are based on the role of the local authorities as brokers of innovation and connectors among different types of stakeholders who are active in the different dimensions of the night-time economy locally.



### Shaping the future of the night together

In final quarter of the year all the cities involved the members of the ULG in meetings aimed at defining strategic objectives and actions to be included in the first draft of the Integrated Action Plans.

This action was useful for clarifying innovative approaches that emerged at different stages of the process, but also for developing new concepts arising as strategic frameworks for the management of the night-time economy in the years ahead.



Reimagining the night

## Pioneering Inclusive and Sustainable Night-Time Economies

**Braga** refined the Braga After Dark Lab (BADLab) with the stakeholders of the ULG with the objective of reimagining the future of the local night-time economy as sustainable, inclusive and vibrant. This transformative concept also included the promotion of a digital platform for real-time event and safety information and partnerships for eco-friendly mobility options, in order to foster inclusivity of night-time activities and the alignment with broader Braga’s goals on urban sustainability.

A shared reflection on the success of the Testing Action, carried out last summer with a one-night festival showcasing the diversity of Braga’s nightlife, highlighted the need of reinforcing the collaboration between municipal departments and local stakeholders on a permanent basis, in order to ensure the implementation of a collaborative approach to advancing the night-time economy in the city.



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The conversation on how to turn into reality the vision of a sustainable, inclusive and vibrant night-time economy in **Varna** led to the organization of a series of public activities for raising awareness among the local stakeholders on different dimensions of the nightlife.

Among these, during the Car Free Day held on 22 September 2024 the URBACT Local Group of Varna delivered a public talk about the connection between the night public transport and the vitality, affordability and sustainability of the cultural agenda and the night economy, while on 19-20 October 2024 a training workshop for cultural managers and volunteers was organized for co-designing a series of proposals for improving the quality of cultural activities carried out at night in the city.

Ambitious ideas such as the pedestrianization of the Talyana district, the organization of after dark cultural activities in Spring/Summer 2025 and the extension of operating hours of public transport lines were also included in the municipal Action Plan for Noise Reduction in Varna, which acknowledged and recommended the implementation of a series of measures discussed by the ULG and included in the first draft of Varna’s Integrated Action Plan.

For many cities of the network, the co-design process of the Testing Actions constituted a powerful opportunity for better clarifying the scope of their Integrated Action Plans and its strategic objectives. It also laid the ground for building alliances with local stakeholders who are expected to play a decisive role in the implementation of the IAP on the medium and long-term.

**Genoa** used its After Dark pilot-event not only as a platform to raise awareness on strategic areas of intervention, such as cultural growth, organization of spaces, promotion of innovative services and governance, but also as an opportunity to test its implementation with concrete activities. The success of the Testing Action promoted in the framework of the network activities demonstrated Genoa's progress in enhancing social gathering spaces, increasing the availability of night-time public transport, and using unconventional venues for night events.

Coordination with different municipal departments, such as the ones in charge of events and communication, will be crucial also for implementing further actions aimed at enhancing the value of the night-time economy in the urban context, such as the activation of a Nightlife section in the Genoa's events portal or the creation of a dedicated unit in charge of designing policies and initiatives related to the city's night-time economy.

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In **Tallinn** the reflection on how to create safe and inclusive night-time urban spaces that supports quality of life and business development was enhanced by the evaluation of the results of the Testing Action, but also by the success of



other night events carried out in the last months at urban level such as the Cultural Night organized by the Tallinn's Department of Culture.

The URBACT Local Group developed a series of areas of intervention which were in line with what emerged from pilot testing. Among these, the functional and safe design of urban night-time spaces to meet the needs of different target groups, the development of mechanisms to regulate nightlife and ensure security, and the creation of a city branding strategies to position Tallinn as a "City of Night" destination.

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In **Piraeus** the discussion on themed festivals and night events paved the way for future actions that implement the vision developed by the URBACT Local Group on a dynamic, inclusive, and secure night-time environment that supports local businesses, promotes tourism, and enhances the quality of life for residents.

While the incorporation of night-time activities into city events, such as the Christmas program, confirmed the importance of cultural and economic activation among the areas of intervention of the IAP, other priorities such as urban safety, mobility and active inclusion are still under discussion with bold proposals such as the pilot extension of childcare services and introduction of late-night bus routes.

Piraeus is also connecting night-time economy to topics on which the city developed innovative actions, such as urban safety, engaging the Local Council for Crime Prevention to explore ways to make night-time activities safer and more



inclusive. Building upon existing strategies and initiatives like the UIA project BeSecure FeelSecure, that will be transferred to other EU cities with the URBACT Innovation Transfer Network CITISENSE in the next months, Piraeus aims to enhance the use of ICT platforms to manage urban security risks in nightlife hotspots.

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**Nicosia** has involved various municipal departments and stakeholders to develop concrete actions to implement the vision developed with Cities After Dark of night-time economy activities accessible to different demographic groups and integrating local traditions and creative industries with a minimum environmental impact.

After having tested the creative use of public spaces with DJ courses and cultural activities, in November 2024 the Cypriot capital continued the revitalization of underused public spaces with the organization of cultural events and social gatherings in an abandoned underground space.

This learning by doing approach of the city was valorized by the active participation of local artists and performers, involved in the network activities, who are collaborating with the city for the development of a pipeline of cultural programs of night-time events in line with the strategic objective of the IAP of creating economic opportunities for creative professionals active after dark.



Several cities in the network are reflecting on how to de-seasonalize night-time activities. Among these, **Budva** is emphasizing the participation of local stakeholder on the activation of neglected spaces, for creating new opportunities for different segments of population.

The development of new cultural events not only during the summer season and the creation of night cultural hubs in the rural hamlets of the city emerged as some of the most interesting ideas discussed by the URBACT Local Group to be included in Budva's Integrated Action Plan.

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Reducing the concentration of night-time activities in the city centre and creating the conditions for a better balance between the needs of residents and tourists for improving coexistence and prosperity are the main topics discussed by the URBACT Local Group of **Malaga**, that is connecting the reflection on the governance of the night-time economy to the growing debate on the negative effects of over-tourism.

The topic, that will be targeted by the next Transnational Meeting of Cities After Dark that will take place in January 2025 in the Andalusian city, was also discussed with the local youth during the presentation of the network activities held at the Municipal Youth Council on 8 November 2024.





The active involvement of local youth and party-goers is a distinctive element also of the action carried out by **Paris** within the network. On 20 November 2024 the first focus group of Cities After Dark was organized in collaboration the Parisian Psycho-Social Laboratory (LAPPS) and included 8 members of the Parisian Youth Council. Using a cartographic analysis of Paris, the group analyzed night problems and levers by territory and party scene, identified potential obstacles to the solutions proposed by local actors and assessed the stakeholders to be included in further reflections on the topic.

The results of the analysis will be crucial for identifying the psycho-social levers which could be mobilized to influence positively the behaviours at night, which is at the core of the vision that Paris is developing with Cities After Dark. The ULG carried out another workshop for identifying the communities to be targeted and the criteria for defining a community (social-professional category, age, sexual orientation, concerned territory in the city, musical scene, typology of night activities).

Furthermore, on 26 November 2024 a workshop was organized by the city services in charge of circular economy for the night clubs and event organizers to support them in their green transition by meeting local resource centres, training operators and co-financers.

The action carried out by Paris within Cities After Dark is aligned with the development of innovative national policies on the topic. At the end of November 2024, the French Min-

ister of Culture inaugurated the new “Club Culture – venues of artistic expression and celebration” program, a system proposed by nightlife unions which welcome the recognition of night clubs by the Ministry of Culture as cultural actors, a practice already established in cities like Berlin.

The programme aims to identify among the night clubs those which, through their activity of programming and broadcasting of concerts, support artistic creation, production and the broadcast of DJ artists. It gives access to a label which considers the efforts made by the venues in terms of alcohol and drug related harm reduction, preventing gender-based and sexual violence and social and environmental responsibility.

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The dialogue with national institutions is a crucial element also of the National URBACT Campuses that involved **Zadar** and other cities of the network in the last quarter of 2024. The Campuses fostered the dialogue with other cities participating in URBACT Action Planning Networks, raising the attention on innovative funding mechanisms and useful tools for the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans, which we will be at the core of all the network activities in 2025.

The partners of Cities After Dark brought to the Campuses their vision for vibrant, inclusive, and safe night-time economies, presenting pilot actions and developing alliances through their active participation in briefings, workshops, and collaborative sessions.

# Cities After Dark Going Global: The events in Sydney, Hamburg and Cairo



## Shaping global conversation on night-time economy

In these months Cities After Dark has gained global attention for the innovative approach to the collaborative governance of the night-time economy promoted by the first network of cities ever funded by the European Union on this topic.

The participation in several European and global events was an opportunity for presenting the activities carried out by the partners of the network, but also for establishing collaborations with networks and public institutions active on night-time economy.

Empowering cities through music

## Music as a Catalyst for Urban Growth

On 20 September 2024 the approach developed by Cities After Dark and role played by music and cultural activities for local growth on 24-hour basis was presented in Hamburg at the occasion of the Reeperbahn Festival.

The Policy Dialogue on music in local place-making, organized by the Center for Music Ecosystems, involved the Lead Expert Simone d'Antonio in a conversation with representatives from Reykjavik, London, Torshavn and Pristina. The discussion focused on the strategies carried out by these cities and on the main challenges tackled by the local authorities that wants to promote music as a driver for growth.



### NEON Forum of Sydney

The innovative actions carried out by the partners of Cities After Dark were showcased on 30 and 31 October 2024 at the NEON Forum of Sydney, one of the major global events on night-time economy organized by the New South Wales government.

The conference, that brought together participants from different Australian cities active in the 24-hour economy such as government agencies, local governments, industries, businesses and creative communities, hosted among the speakers the Lead Expert of Cities After Dark and the Nighttime Advisor of Tallinn Natalie Mets, who participated in the introductory panel with other international speakers, delivered keynote presentations and participated in interactive panel discussions on topics such as the activation of urban environments at night and the future of clubbing.

**On 6 November 2024, at the World Urban Forum 12 in Cairo, Cities After Dark partnered with Vibelab in the organization of a workshop on 24-Hour Cities Against Climate Change nighttime strategies to address the challenges of climate crisis.**

The session is part of a wider programme of activities on the night-time economy organized by Vibelab in collaboration with UN-Habitat at the major UN event on urbanization, with focus on topics such as urban spaces, social cohesion, culture, innovation and talent retention.



**In the framework of the activities of Cities After Dark, representatives of the URBACT Local Group of Paris participated in prominent European events on night-time economy such as the Vienna After Dark conference and the Amsterdam Dance Event.**

The participation in the event constituted an interesting opportunity for representing the action carried out by Paris within the network, but also to study some of the good practices implemented by Amsterdam. These include the Night taxis for collective transportation, the nightlife care network providing a multi-partners monthly information service for night owls, and the night changing room, a safe space where queer individuals can change into their nightlife attire without fear of discrimination or harassment when travelling on public transports dressed.

## Cities After Dark on Monocle Magazine

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The night-time strategy of Tallinn and the stories of some partners of Cities After Dark (Braga, Malaga and Paris) portrayed among the most interesting Europe's nightlife hotspots appeared on Issue 175 of Monocle Magazine.



Monocle Magazine included also the Baseline Study of Cities After Dark in the Episode 665 of its podcast The Urbanist, mentioning the study among some research and developments that underline the need to support creative and cultural communities in urban areas.



# Next Steps



## Refining Plans for Action

The development of the implementation framework of the Integrated Action Plans will be the main focus of the next quarter (January 2025 – April 2025).

A series of URBACT Local Group meetings will be held after the Transnational Meeting of Malaga (22-24 January 2024) to refine the draft of the Integrated Action Plan and get it ready for making implementable on short, medium and long term.

Insights, reviews & strategies

## Shaping the Future of Night-Time Economy

The meeting of Malaga will provide an opportunity to update the implementation of the network activities through the Mid-Term Review, but also to share useful information on how to revise the Integrated Action Plans according to the insights that emerge from the Peer Review session. The meeting will also address the connection between night-time economy and tourism attractiveness, a key topic of interest for many partners of Cities After Dark.

The online thematic seminars on funding strategies for night-time economy and innovative business models for venues and innovative urban mobility at night-time will also take place between January and April 2024, offering useful elements for supporting the implementation of strategic objectives and actions included in the Integrated Action Plans.



Some cities of the network, such as Budva, Varna, Zadar, will finalize the phase of planning of their Testing Actions, with the objective of fostering stronger connection with the specific objectives and areas of interventions of the Integrated Action Plans, while other cities of the network will consolidate the approach developed with their Testing Actions within the IAP in course of completion.

The partners of Cities After Dark will also participate in the URBACT City Festival of Wroclaw in April 2025, that will be an important opportunity for showcasing the good practices selected by the programme but also for establishing connection with other European cities in view of the launch of the call for URBACT Transfer Networks.



Europe's night-time innovation on global stages

**Furthermore, Cities After Dark will be featured at various events and conferences 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 annual Night-Time Economy Summit in Birmingham and at the Placemaking Weekend After-Dark in Bangalore.**

# Cities After Dark

## Network Journal #03

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→ Network Highlights & Progress

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