

Cities After Dark

Network Journal #04

→ Network Highlights & Progress



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Cities**AfterDark**

The fourth Network Journal of Cities After Dark highlights the activities carried out at transnational and local level between January 2025 and April 2025.

The finalization of the strategic objectives and actions of the Integrated Action Plans (IAPs) is **preparing the ground for their operationalization and the identification of potential resources** for the consolidation of night policies in the medium and long term.

Midway insights to shape future impact.

The Mid-Term Reflection carried out at the occasion of the Transnational Meeting of Malaga was an important milestone to reflect on the progress made by the partners of Cities After Dark and to steer the activities in the last 12 months of the network.



Designing better nights

Innovation, Tourism & Urban Sustainability at Night

Furthermore, the Transnational Meeting of Malaga sparked an interesting conversation on the connection between night-time economy and tourism attractiveness, a topic that is particularly relevant for many partners of Cities After Dark that are working on the diversification of the night offerings for different categories of users, from residents to tourists.

At local level, the meetings of the URBACT Local Group across the network contributed to highlight the main objectives of night policies that are in many cases cross-cutting to different dimensions of urban sustainability. The active engagement of different departments and agencies but also the scouting for new stakeholders who can be responsible for the implementation of the actions co-designed in the IAPs is helping to broaden the public debate around night-time economy and to test innovative functions during the summer season.

The presentation of the network's innovative approach on night-time economy at the occasion of several European and global events, like the AfterDark Placemaking Weekend India in Bangalore or at the World Forum on Local Economic Development in Seville, is enhancing the visibility of the cities' action, forging new alliances with regional and international stakeholders which may be crucial for consolidating the conversation on the different dimensions of night-time economy beyond the duration of the network.



22 – 24 January 2025

The Transnational Meeting of Malaga



Balancing the night

Governance, Tourism and Urban Life

Night-time economy is a vital element of urban attractiveness, particularly in cities where tourism pressure has surged rapidly in recent years. Improving the management of what happens between 6 pm and 6 am is fundamental for creating a balance between the needs of residents and those of who wants to make business or profit from the city after dark.

Better nights, better balance

Rethinking Tourism, Space & Coexistence

This topic, which has sparked dialogue among the partners of Cities After Dark, was one of the central themes of the Transnational Meeting held in Malaga. The Andalusian city is one of the major actors of the Spanish debate on the effects of overtourism, an issue that has strongly influenced also the discussions around the night-time economy as an element not just to be fostered but to be regulated and improved for enhancing a more positive, year-round impact.

The dialogue involving representatives of the tourism sector, academia, DJs and local police shed light on the challenges of a city that is traditionally considered the gateway to Costa del Sol but only in recent years begun to attract large flows of tourists (12 millions cruise passengers in 2024) which were previously dispersed across the coastal towns during peak seasons.



While the night-time economy is undeniably part of the tourism attractiveness of Malaga, the intense use of public spaces by different categories of visitors (like tourists and Erasmus students), drawn by the city's favorable climate, has triggered growing concerns among residents, who require a more coordinated approach for harmonizing the needs of various city users.

The launch of public campaigns for improving the behavior of tourists has led the way for similar initiatives that CIEDES Foundation intends to carry on in collaboration with the City of Malaga in the framework of Cities After Dark, together with activities to decentralize and diversify night-time economy offerings.

The need for a stronger support to the cultural sector active at night, in particular giving visibility to music venues to promote the business and cultural offer to different target audiences, emerged as one of the main issues raised in the initial session that presented the state of the art of the debate on night-time economy and touristification in Malaga.



Governance after dark

Planning the night, shaping the city

The public event held at the Rectorate of the University of Malaga was an interesting moment of reflection on the great transformation happened in Malaga since the adoption of its strategic plan in 1992 and the impact of urban planning on the evolution of the night-time economy and cultural scene of the city.

The presentation of the experiences of cities like New York and Amsterdam, whose night mayors intervened online, highlighted how a more integrated governance of the night-time economy contributed to reframe the role of night industries in the urban context and the creation of new approaches to foster new local partnerships and alliances between public authorities, business sector, and local communities.

Notable international practices, like the creation of New York's dedicated office on night-time economy or the introduction of the night stewards in Amsterdam, inspired the conversation among representatives of the night-time economy sector in Malaga and local councilors, who called for **stronger collaboration to ensure better coexistence of different night-time functions and prevent conflicts.**



The night-time study visit to the SOHO district showcased one of the most interesting strategies for urban recovery and attraction of new business and cultural activities carried out by Malaga in recent years.

Recognized as URBACT Good Practice, **SOHO Malaga** is a central neighborhood that became a hub of urban art and underground culture following a grassroots initiative by residents and business owners in 2010. Facing declining activity and poor use of public space in a strategically located area, locals organized and pushed the municipality to take action. This led to the development of the SOHO Art District Master Plan, which set the foundation for collaborative governance between institutions and citizens, aiming to revitalize the Ensanche de Heredia area through art, culture, and urban regeneration.

A new rhythm after dark

Culture, Collaboration and Night-Time Revival

The project emphasized public-private collaboration in this area located near Malaga's port and city center, which was revitalized also by the reopening of cultural premises like the Teatro del Soho, fostered by the Tercero Acto Group owned by the Malaga-native actor Antonio Banderas.

After being closed for decades, the reopening of the theatre contributed not only to attract new forms of cultural tourism in the area but also to revive the neighborhood after dark, with the opening of new bars and restaurants which transformed this area a vibrant night hotspot for both residents as visitors.

SOHO Malaga exemplifies a people-centered urban regeneration model that prioritizes cultural identity, economic diversification, and inclusive participation, aligning with Malaga's broader vision for sustainable and creative city development that contributed to its vibrancy after dark.



Revitalising spaces, unlocking opportunities

The diversification of the offerings in nocturnal hours has been pursued by Malaga not only with the revitalization of formerly deprived areas, such as the zone surrounding the port and the central market, but also with a series of activities that are creating fresh and unexpected business opportunities.

The thriving dining and clubbing scene of Malaga is undoubtedly one of the main factors of attractiveness, but many businesses are actively contributing to reframe the perception of the night-time economy as a factor of social and economic growth of the city.

The virtual night tours across the historical landmarks of the city centre through the use of virtual reality tools is an interesting example of how immersive technologies can foster the fruition of city attractions also in nocturnal hours. The night tour around the Alcazaba, the Arabic palace-fortress of the city, with virtual reality headsets was guided by the local cultural association Zegrì, which is now exploring the night as a possible ground for expanding and innovating its services to promote cultural and artistic heritage of the city.

The iconic restaurant and tapas bar El Pimpi is not only a symbol of the richness of the local cuisine but also a meeting place that since the 1970s represents the cultural traditions of the city, hosting since its creation flamenco classes and poetry slams.



Where tradition meets solidarity

El Pimpi: Food, culture, and community

In 2017 the restaurant launched the El Pimpi Foundation, with a mission to promote culture, tradition, and solidarity with a series of initiatives having a strong social impact.

A cornerstone of the foundation's social impact is the flagship initiative Soles de Málaga, which supports urgent solidarity projects in the city. This program highlights the work of local NGOs, raising awareness of their missions and emphasizing their importance in the urban context. The initiative benefited various organizations addressing poverty and social exclusion through a series of concrete initiatives: among these, the training activities for workers with migrant background contributed to foster active work inclusion in the hospitality sector and in the restaurant itself with the development of new skills for chefs and waiters.

Beyond financial support, the foundation actively supports cultural preservation and community engagement, collaborating with artists, projects, and entities passionate about Malaga's heritage, aiming to create new movements that strengthen the city's cultural identity. Flamenco classes, music shows and other cultural activities related to local heritage are contributing to make El Pimpi both a culinary and cultural institution of the city.

The visit to other symbolic spots of the Malaga's nightlife, like the nightclub Sala Gold, gave a broader insight into the challenges faced by the night-time economy actors in the local context. A key issue raised was the lack of structured dialogue with local institutions: **filling this gap is fundamental for destigmatizing a sector that gives a strong contribution to the identity of the city but it's often hindered by the protests from a minority of residents.**





“Many people just refer to nightclubs when they think about nightlife. But it’s not true. The night-economy starts during the day. Night-time economy is the architect who planned our club, the technicians who installed our soundproofing system, the factory that is creating the glasses that we use. We help the city to develop culture and opportunities for social mingling. We are more than just entertainment; we are part of the economy of the city.”

Juan Rambla Soto
Owner of the Sala Gold,
President of the Association of
Night Industries of Malaga
and Member of the ULG.

Listening, locating, improving

Mapping Perceptions of the Night-Time Economy

Evaluating the perception of the night-time economy by different types of stakeholders is going to be the core of the testing action carried out by CIEDES Foundation in the framework of its participation in Cities After Dark.

The Foundation in charge of the strategic planning of Malaga is going to produce a map which highlights the perception of the night-time economy by local youth, business owners and residents, gathering all the answers to a questionnaire that is going to be launched in late Spring 2025.



The survey will evaluate different topics usually associated to the conversation on night-time economy, ranging from safety, noise pollution, gender equality, mobility, use of digital tools. The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) will associate the perceptions to different areas of the city, highlighting where best and worst practices are located while paving the ground for tackling the most urgent challenges that emerge from the collaborative mapping.

The connection between the scope of the testing action and the strategic objectives highlighted by the partners of Cities After Dark was at the core of an interactive session that highlighted the progress of the co-design phase of the IAPs but also some of the challenges that are emerging from the active involvement of different city departments and local stakeholders.

The creation of thematic focus groups targeting specific dimensions of the night-time economy, the development of small-scale actions and events that can attract new stakeholders to be active in the night strategy and the connection between night policy and broader policies of the city are some of the solutions that emerged from the breakout groups, that analyzed also how to improve the level of commitment and the share of responsibilities in view of the implementation of the Integrated Action Plans.



Bridging action and policy

The connection between experimental actions on night-time economy and local policies can be crucial especially in the key policy area of sustainable tourism, a major challenge for all network cities due to their popularity as travel destinations.



The breakout session on the theme identified some possible solutions which may be included in the IAPs and are aligned with the state of the art of the debate on contrast to the negative impact of overtourism in European cities.

The inclusion of the principles of tourism diversification across space and time in the Action Plan of the Urban Agenda for the EU on Sustainable Tourism with a dedicated action led by Zadar, one of the partners of Cities After Dark, highlights how the challenges tackled by the partners of the network are also crucial within broader European policy frameworks.

The creation of maps of disabled-friendly night venues, the development of communication campaigns for promoting alternative venues and destinations in nocturnal hours, the temporary use of public spaces for cultural events at the occasion of summer festivals or events like White Nights, are some of the examples of possible actions which foster diversification of night offer while promoting better nightlife for residents and tourists.





Rethinking tourism after dark

Tourism and Night-Time Economy: 10 Ideas on Diversification by Cities After Dark

Effective communication tools promoting night-time events to tourists, also with the use of bots and AI.

Awareness campaign for promoting more respectful behaviors in nocturnal hours.

White Nights with pedestrian streets and public transport after dark.

Map of accessible night venues.

Cultural and music shows in public spaces and peripheral areas at the occasion of major festivals and events.

Museums opening until late hours

Night activities for cruise passengers

Rebranding destinations as night capitals and/or night-friendly cities

After dark toolkit for tourism operators

Residents as local nocturnal guides

The Mid-Term Reflection of Cities After Dark



Midway insights, future actions

The Mid-Term Reflection (MTR) marks a critical point for the Action Planning Networks. Designed as a checkpoint, the MTR serves to assess the state of progress, support knowledge exchange and learning processes across the partner cities, while identifying emerging challenges and setting priorities for the second half of the project.

Reflection that drives results

Assessing Progress Across the Network

Conducted between October 2024 and January 2025, the MTR helped realign the project roadmap based on each city's evolving context and collective insights.

The MTR process in Cities After Dark unfolded in three main stages: a comprehensive survey distributed in October 2024, a dedicated MTR session at the occasion of the Transnational Meeting in Malaga in January 2025, and the consolidation of findings into an actionable report delivered to the URBACT Secretariat.

The survey, filled by all ten partner cities, gathered qualitative and quantitative insights into the state of Integrated Action Plan (IAP) development, URBACT Local Group (ULG) engagement, testing actions, thematic learning, and support received by experts and the Secretariat.



On track, with shared ambition.

The MTR session analyzed the survey results with an open discussion process that revealed that the network is broadly on track with its objectives.

Although areas like funding strategies and risk analysis are still under development, partners expressed confidence in finalizing them by the end of 2025.

Nine out of ten cities reported progress consistent with their plans, while one city even exceeded its own expectations. Six cities had completed the IAP sections on vision and strategic objectives, and most had made substantial progress on the detailed action tables, result indicators, and integration checks.

Testing Actions emerged as vital components of the IAP co-creation process. These small-scale initiatives, ranging from public events to minor infrastructure investments, helped validate the innovative approaches on night-time economy co-designed by the cities, but also to engage local stakeholders, and improve the strategic planning process. Eight out of ten cities rated Testing Actions as very or extremely useful, with many cities conducting more than one. In places like Piraeus and Nicosia, such activities proved instrumental in deepening stakeholder involvement.



The URBACT Local Groups of Cities After Dark present an average of around 20 members and play a central role in the participatory development of IAPs, being in most of the cases the first experiment of integrated governance of night-time economy. The Mid-Term Reflection noted generally positive engagement levels, but challenges persist. Four cities cited lack of time among participants as a barrier, while three reported declining interest due to thematic misalignment. Another three partners pointed to stakeholders prioritizing other agendas. **Yet, despite these challenges, most cities maintain a core group of committed actors driving the process forward.**

Setting standards for success

Keeping stakeholders committed for a better night-time economy

The network also explored innovative solutions to maintain engagement. Tallinn, for example, integrates ULG meetings with other regular stakeholder gatherings, while Piraeus uses co-design software tools to enable wider participation.

Cities with a tradition of collaborative governance, like Paris and Tallinn, found it easier to mobilize stakeholders. However, even in these cities, siloed municipal structures often hampered cross-departmental coordination—an issue commonly reported across the network. Still, the Cities After Dark initiative is encouraging internal reflection and coordination reform in several local governments.



Learning together, planning better

A notable success of the first half of the project has been the expansion of thematic knowledge on night-time economy across the network. Cities reported significant gains in understanding the main dimensions of night-time economy, such as economic and cultural vibrancy, service creation, safety and noise reduction, and use of public space.

Site visits during Transnational Meetings, including the study trip to Berlin in April 2024, were particularly valued, with eight out of ten partners rating them as extremely useful. Online thematic seminars and inter-city exchanges were also positively received.

In terms of support mechanisms, URBACT's structured guidance tools stood out. The URBACT Toolbox was found to be very or extremely useful by nine partners. Additionally, guidance from the URBACT Secretariat and National URBACT Points (NUPs) was highly appreciated: NUPs' participation in ULG activities and URBACT Campus events added practical value to the planning process.



Despite the positive momentum, several risks were identified that could undermine the effective implementation of the IAPs

Among these, the lack of financial resources and limited political support are seen as main risks affecting the potential implementation of the Integrated Action Plans by most of the partners of CitiesAfterDark. Six cities mentioned implementation capacity and stakeholder gaps as primary risks, while similar numbers flagged the need for stronger political backing and financial stability.

To mitigate these issues, cities proposed enhancing the focus on financial planning, fundraising, and governance models. Partners stressed the need for training on crafting funding strategies and writing effective grant applications. Seven out of ten cities found such support very or extremely useful. Peer-review mechanisms and alignment workshops were also highly appreciated and will be expanded in the final part of the project.

Furthermore, cities called for a framework to ensure the sustainability of Cities After Dark beyond the network's lifespan.

They emphasized the importance of transforming temporary structures like ULGs into permanent Night Commissions and embedding night-time policies into broader urban strategies. This would require not only administrative commitment but also a shared long-term vision across departments and stakeholders.



The Mid-Term Review process of Cities After Dark has affirmed the network's strengths in knowledge sharing, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative planning.

The commitment of partner cities to developing inclusive and strategic approaches to the night-time economy remains strong, and that is particularly significant for a network where most of the cities focused on this specific topic for the first time. Challenges related to resources, coordination, and political support are relevant, but the network has shown adaptability and a strong willingness to test and consolidate innovative solutions.

Looking ahead, the focus of Cities After Dark will be on refining implementation frameworks, securing funding, and embedding night-time policies in urban governance structures. If successful, Cities After Dark will leave a legacy that redefines how cities approach life after dark, seen as a dynamic frontier of urban innovation and inclusivity.

The Actions of the **Integrated Action Plans**



Strategies grounded in local reality

Translating the strategic objectives on the different dimensions of the night-time economy into concrete actions to be implemented at local level has been the core of the work carried out by the partners of Cities After Dark within their URBACT Local Groups.

Refining actions through dialogue

The dialogue over the actions and their coherence with the strategic objectives sparked dynamic exchanges during the peer-review session at the Transnational Meeting of Malaga, which completed the iteration across the different sections of the IAPs taking into account also suggestions and insights from the other partners facing similar challenges.



From Ideas to Impact

Emerging Actions from the Draft IAPs

The first actions that emerged from the draft IAPs presented in Malaga reflect not only the richness of the local conversations on night-time economy but also how the variety of insights collected during study visits and online training activities was translated into concrete actions by the cities.

The actions on night-time economy proposed by the partners of Cities After Dark vary across different levels of engagement and experience on the topic. Together, they form a compelling collection of ideas that are likely to inspire the European debate on night-time economy in the coming years.

Braga: Green certification for night-time economy venues

Encouraging eco-friendly practices in nightlife businesses is one of the priorities addressed by Braga within the activities of Cities After Dark, with the objective of integrating sustainability and innovation in the management of the night-time economy.

The introduction of a green certification for night-time economy venues, ranging from cultural premises to business activities, is part of a wider scheme of collaboration with the municipal authorities for enhancing the role of the night-time economy as a driver of growth and attractiveness.

Together with training activities for cultural actors and business owners and the provision of a financial and logistic support for innovative nightlife entrepreneurs, with the implementation of the green certification **Braga aims at connecting the night-time economy to its broader strategies of localization of SDGs implementation.**



Budva: Night opening of parks and alternative venues for cultural activities and events

The revitalization of abandoned areas and the expansion of nightlife offerings with a particular focus on the residents are the main strategic objectives of the IAP of Budva. Creating new opportunities for enjoying the city at night beyond the Old Town and out of touristic season is the main objective that the city intends to carry out through the active involvement of local associations and groups of residents, in order to improve the quality of life and make the city more attractive and livable not only for the visitors.

The reactivation of natural areas and parks for hosting cultural events, also at the occasion of flagship events like the Theatre City Festival, is an action that can have multiple positive effects and stimulate a creative use of public spaces and an enhanced community spirit.



Genoa: Creation of a networks of safe spaces open at night

Making the city more accessible and safer at night for all is one of the strategic objectives that Genoa intends to implement through the valorization of existing night initiatives and cultures and the active collaboration with night stakeholders and local NGOs.

The development of a citywide network of spaces which can offer information and support to residents and visitors in nocturnal hours in different areas of the city can contribute to improve the sense of safety while enhancing the night-time economy and the diversification of night activities.

Inspired by the model of the “purple points” open in many cities across Europe and by the nightlife safe spaces implemented by Amsterdam, the action proposed by Genoa will be implemented also through a series of training activities involving NGOs and groups already active in improving the quality of nocturnal offering in the historical centre of the city.

Malaga:
Extension of frequency
of urban and interurban
bus services

Broadening the range of activities available at night and decentralizing the night-time offer in order to ease the pressure on the city centre are two of the main strategic objectives of Malaga.

The improvement of public transport is crucial for achieving these objectives, but also to support the creation of a night culture that valorizes a wide range of cultural and business activities at urban and metropolitan level.

The extension of the public mobility service of specific lines connecting the city centre to the suburbs can be useful for residents and tourists but also give boost to the creation of new activities which may improve the profile of Malaga as a vibrant nocturnal city and make night-time economy a factor of growth rather than an element of conflict.



Nicosia:
Creation of the House
of Music: the Town Hall
of the Night Mayor

Supporting the skills of the different actors involved in the night-time economy, from business owners to local DJs, is a crucial strategic objective that Nicosia is addressing through a series of pilot training activities carried out also in the public spaces of the city.

The creation of a multifunction venues that could serve both act as a library of things for local DJs and producers and a community space for hosting workshops and training activities is an action that can consolidate the night community in Nicosia and revitalize an abandoned or semi-abandoned space in the old city centre.

The House of Music will also host a donated vinyl collection and will play a decisive role in promoting the cultural legacy of Nicosia's nightlife, paving the ground to multimedia production and collaboration among local creative people, artists and night champions.



Paris: Mapping of the accessible venues on a dedicated website

Making the nightlife better and more respectful of the needs of all the different night users is one of the main objectives that Paris is carrying out with its participation to Cities After Dark, which is consolidating what the city was previously doing with the working groups of its Night Council.

The promotion of an inclusive and visible nightlife offering passes also through the improvement and centralization of information on accessible nightlife venues, that Paris intends to map on a brand-new website that will provide user-friendly and geolocated search tools.

The action will be carried out through the identification of key venues in collaboration with networks of night professionals, the collection of data through a survey and on-site verification. **This action will particularly important also for improving the perception of Paris as an attractive city for its night-time economy, improving the accessibility of night venues both for local party-goers as for tourists.**

Piraeus: Night opening of the public libraries

Cultural and economic activation after dark is the main priority of Piraeus, that has tested the organization of after dark events and the extension of the opening time of shops and business activities.

Leveraging on the warm climate to promote night activities not only during the summer period, Piraeus wants to extend the opening of public libraries in nocturnal hours to create new opportunities for residents and students but also for paving the ground to the organization of events which can make cultural venues more accessible after dark.

This action, together with the creation of night events calendar and other initiatives for promoting what happens after 6pm, can be crucial also for enhancing the perception of safety for all and creative reuse of city infrastructures in nocturnal hours.



Tallinn:
Incentives schemes
for creative businesses
to ensure quality and
diversity of the nightlife

The support to creativity, culture and economic growth is at the core of the Tallinn's vision as a safe, inclusive and diverse nightlife destination.

Cultural diversity and innovation are seen as key drivers of nightlife and the definition of an incentive scheme for enhancing high-quality cultural production in night venues can be crucial for enhancing the profile of the city at night for both residents and visitors.

Tallinn considers the night-time economy as a support for creativity and cultural identity. The implementation of this action will support the local creative community and attract new talents who can contribute to make the night-time economy of the city more vibrant.



Varna:
Innovative noise
monitoring and control
system in live music areas

Fostering cultural industries while minimizing noise impact is one of the strategic objectives that Varna is carrying out with Cities After Dark, with the objective of reviving a sector that contributes to the attractiveness of the urban context, in particular for local youth, international students and visitors.

The implementation of a technological system for automating the sound measurement and the control of the installations in Varna's live music district will be based on a noise audit, that will analyze disturbance claim and propose an updated local framework for contrasting noise pollution in nocturnal hours.

The implementation of this action will be crucial for enhancing the use of digital solutions for night-time economy management and the adoption of new systems for monitoring compliance to the local frameworks, in order to reduce possible conflicts over the cultural and entertainment activities organized in different areas of the city centre in nocturnal hours.

Zadar:
Creation of a new cultural
zone for after dark events
in the public spaces

The redistribution of night activities across the territory goes hand in hand with increasing social and cultural vibrancy in Zadar. The development of an “After City” that gives broader access to nocturnal activities out of the Old Town is in line with the commitment of the city on diversification of night activities expressed also by the pilot action of the Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on Sustainable Tourism, led by the Dalmatian city.

The action includes the definition and implementation of a set of physical interventions in the public space, particularly related to public art, which are going to make these spaces able to host a series of cultural events especially in previously neglected areas of the city.

Together with the creation of new cultural programming schemes carried out in collaboration with local artists, NGOs and the local youth centre, this action will enhance the vibrancy of different areas of the city while creating new opportunities in terms of nightlife for different categories of residents.



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



Laying the Foundations for Implementation

In the first quarter of the year, the partners of Cities After Dark finalized the actions and specific objectives developed within their Integrated Action Plans, paving the ground for the identification of resources for its implementation.

Expanding the dialogue

From Local Insights to European Inspiration

Insights shared during the Transnational Meeting of Malaga and the Mid-Term Reflection process continue to inspire the ULG members, night-time innovators and various city agencies and departments of the cities, with the objective of focusing on how to implement these pioneering night policies on the medium and long-term.

Participation in national seminars organized by the National URBACT Points and European events, like the URBACT City Festival of Wroclaw (where some cities of the network, like Braga, Tallinn and Genoa, presented their newly appointed good practices) expanded the scope of reflection and introduced new elements to be included in the final versions of the Integrated Action Plans.



As Cities After Dark entered its core phase, the conversation around night-time economy intensified in all the local contexts of the network. This momentum was particularly precious not only for enriching public debate around the strategic objectives and ambitious actions of the Integrated Action Plans, but also fostered a fertile environment which stimulate the creation of new bottom-up initiatives on the topic.

Bringing Plans to Life

Pioneering Steps Across Cities

An interesting example is given by the creation of the evening childcare pilot project L'Asilo di Sera (The Evening Nursery) in **Genoa**. This innovative pilot project, conducted between March and April 2025, addressed the challenge that many parents face in finding affordable and reliable evening childcare. By offering this service for children aged 3 to 6, the project encourages parents to engage in social and cultural activities, thereby contributing to the revitalization of Genoa's evening economy. Each evening session accommodated up to 10 children under the care of professional educators from a tagesmutter social cooperative. The initiative met with high demand and enthusiastic feedback from participating families.

Supported by the City of Genoa and funded by the bank foundation Compagnia di San Paolo, the evening childcare was conceived by the Stradanuova Theatre (which was also involved as stakeholder in some of the meetings of the Genoa's ULG) with the aim of supporting parents by providing a safe and engaged environment for their children during evening hours, allowing parents to enjoy some time for attending cultural events or dining out.



Similar to the night nursery implemented by Braga in its university district, the Genoa's initiative highlights the variety of the solutions to the challenges of the night-time economy, with a focus on inclusivity and well-being of all the categories of residents.

Another creative initiative aligned with the topics fostered by Cities After Dark is the Moving Cinema in **Piraeus**. This cultural project transformed a two-floor bus into a mobile cinema offering immersive screening of The Piraeus Journey, a movie on local cultural heritage landmarks, using virtual reality technology.



Operating both day and night, the Moving Cinema travels through different neighborhoods, temporarily reviving the areas where the bus stops and attracting a wide audience. By bringing cinema directly into the streets of Piraeus, this initiative is breaking traditional limitations of cultural venues while enriching Piraeus' urban life beyond standard cultural hours.

This initiative is also aligned with the priority axis on cultural and economic activation included in the Integrated Action Plan of Piraeus, with the objective of promoting the vibrancy of the night-time economy by expanding cultural offerings and engaging local businesses and residents.

In a city that is scaling up the use of smart systems for enhancing the quality of the urban spaces with the consolidation and transfer of the BeSecure-FeelSecure model through the Innovation Transfer Network CITISENSE, the Moving Cinema initiative adds a new dimension not only to the city cultural landscape but also provide experimentation in terms of use of VR technologies. The initiative is showing how blending innovation with local heritage can revitalize the night-time economy and promote active engagement of both residents and visitors.

Many cities of the network deepened the conversation on night-time economy by engaging a broad range of local stakeholders who are bringing their contribution to refine strategies and approaches developed in the framework of Cities After Dark.

In January, **Paris** organized a focus group with nightlife professionals, queer collectives and independent party organizers to identify both the levers and the obstacles for promoting more respectful behaviors during night-time, which is the central theme of the IAP developed with Cities After Dark. The discussions over the notions of care and benevolence to be used as key drivers to improve nightlife experiences for all will also continue during the Marateuf event in May, which will build upon the success of the last year's edition as testing action of Cities After Dark to involve more international and local experts in engaging debates over the topic.

To mark the third anniversary of its municipal police, which has reinforced its strategy of ultra-proximity through the development of a community-oriented model of policing adapted to night-time dynamics, Paris held a series of workshops in eight districts between February and March 2025, in order to collect ideas and proposals to improve the link between police and population with a specific focus on night-time issues.

The participatory meetings confirmed the need of reinforcing the concept of the 15-minute city applied to night-time governance, producing insights that will be discussed by the members of the URBACT Local Group for being included in the Integrated Action Plan.



Strengthening the link between night-time economy and the tourism sector was the objective of the meeting that Tallinn organized bringing together nightlife entrepreneurs and representatives from Visit **Tallinn**, the tourism marketing and development organization of the city.

The meeting echoed the themes of the Transnational Meeting of Malaga but also highlighted the needs that emerged from the last Tallinn's URBACT Local Group meeting where strategic directions for future night policies were outlined, with a particular attention to balance vibrant nightlife with public safety and residents' well-being

The discussion with Visit Tallinn identified opportunities for greater collaboration with the local night-time economy sector, like the promotion of night events through the city's official platform Visit Tallinn, with the objective of increasing the visibility of the night sector within the city's cultural landscape, an issue that is shared also by many other cities of the network.

The need for greater integration between urban planning and nightlife was strongly emphasized by the stakeholders of the URBACT Local Group of **Braga**, who claimed for a coordinated action in favor a sustainable and inclusive night-time economy.

The co-design of the Braga After Dark awareness campaign, which was beta-tested in 2024 with a Sunset Party and a Guide aimed to inform and guide residents and visitors about the city's nightlife, is an important step for redefining the night as a time for collective socialization and creativity.

Proposed improvements to the local regulations on the use of public space and lighting in nocturnal hours are supported by a renewed climate of trust, accessibility and diversity that is inspired also by the ideas and contribution that emerged from the dialogue with the other partners of the network.

Braga is also drawing inspiration from the gender equality initiatives fostered by Paris and the night mediation activities recalled by Genoa, integrating these themes into its After Dark campaign, to raise awareness on the latest trend in the European and global debate among the stakeholders of the night-time economy.



The Night Policies of Paris on Liberation

The night-time strategy of Paris and the main topics at the core of the Parisian debate on the night as driver of growth were highlighted by the French newspaper Libération with an in-depth article in the weekend edition of 1st and 2nd March.



The article entitled “Paris, la fête haute” highlighted the innovative and inclusive night-time policies developed by the City of Paris, showcasing the municipality’s efforts to balance safety, diversity, and celebration.

Cities After Dark Going Global: The Presentations in Birmingham, Bangalore, Seville and Krakow



Sharing local innovation on the global night stage

In the first quarter of 2025, Cities After Dark actively promoted its strategies and innovative approaches at the occasion of several European and global events dedicated to night-time economy.

Participation in these events was not only fundamental for showcasing the value added by the cities of the network to the European and global debate on the different dimensions of the night-time economy, but also for creating new partnerships that can extend the impact of Cities After Dark well beyond its current scope.



On 5th and 6th February the innovative actions carried out by the partners of Cities After Dark were featured at the Night Time Economy Summit 2025 in Birmingham.

Organized by the Night Time Industries Association, the event brought together over 250 speakers, with representatives from 20 countries across the globe, and six stages filled with inspiring discussions, performances, and strategic initiatives aimed at shaping the future of global nightlife.

The event, that was mostly attended by participants from different UK and Irish cities active in the night-time economy, hosted among the speakers the Lead Expert of Cities After Dark Simone d'Antonio and the Nighttime Advisor of Tallinn Natalie Mets, who contributed to the roundtable discussion on nightlife across the territories with night mayors and representatives of night industries from around the world, and participated in panel discussions exploring topics such as the strategies for developing 24-hours economies and the global power of nightlife.

Shaping inclusive nights globally

Night Placemaking Beyond Borders



The nocturnal use of public spaces was the main topic addressed by the presentation of Cities After Dark at the After Dark Placemaking Weekend India in Bangalore, which gathered urban planners, experts and innovators from Spain, Pakistan and different regions of India.

The event, held from 13th to 16th February 2025 at the BLR Centre, highlighted the enormous potential of the action on the public spaces in nocturnal hours for promoting active inclusion of minority groups, public safety and cultural and economic vibrancy.

Indian cities are an important testing ground for innovative solutions after dark, and the dialogue between the Lead Expert of Cities After Dark and practitioners from different major cities in India emphasized the transformative potential of night-time placemaking, underlining possible paths of collaboration for promoting the global transfer of the innovative approaches developed by the partners of Cities After Dark.



On 1st-4th April Cities After Dark was also presented in a panel discussion at the 6th World Forum on Local Economic Development in Seville, hosted by OECD.

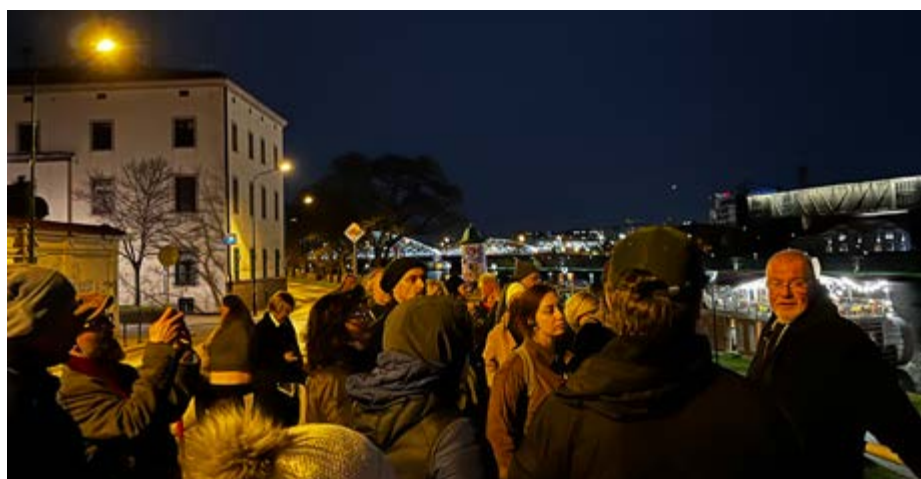
The session titled **Governing After Dark: Building a Vibrant and Safe Night Economy** examined how local development strategies can incorporate night-time planning to strengthen economic resilience, cultural dynamism, and the creation of safe, inclusive spaces.

Night-time economy was also a key theme of the Historical Cities 3.0 conference held in Krakow on 10th and 11th April.

Held during one of the most influential global forums on local economic development through multi-stakeholder collaboration, the panel discussion provided an interesting platform to explore how local governments can develop inclusive and sustainable governance models for the night-time economy while balancing economic growth, safety, and social well-being.

The innovative approach developed by Cities After Dark was presented in a panel on Building a Sustainable Night-time Economy, that shared international experiences and models, like the ones developed by cities such as Barcelona and Berlin which are at the forefront of the debate on night-time economy in Europe.

The event also provided an interesting opportunity to engage Krakow in the debate fostered within the URBACT community on the night-time economy, especially considering that the introduction of the Night Mayor Office in the Polish city is the result of the implementation of the Integrated Action Plan developed in the framework of the URBACT III network Tourism-Friendly Cities.



Next Steps



[Turning strategies into action](#)

The consolidation of the implementation framework of the Integrated Action Plans will be the main focus of the upcoming quarter (May 2025 – August 2025). A series of URBACT Local Group meetings will be held before and after the Transnational Meeting of Genoa (2-4 July 2025) to complete the Integrated Action Plan with useful indications on the resources to be activated for its implementation on the medium and long-term.

Insights, reviews & strategies

Shaping the Future of Night-Time Economy

The meeting of Genoa will also serve as an important opportunity to reflect on the impact of night-time economy on events, festivals and cultural services, a topic that will be explored also with a public event that will reignite discussion on night cultures and their impact on cultural and economic growth of the cities.

The online thematic seminars on environmental impact of night-time economy, funding strategies and innovative business models for venues and innovative urban mobility at night-time will also take place between April and August 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, Malaga and Zadar, will finalize the implementation of their Testing Actions, while some of them (Budva, Varna and Zadar) will also host study visits of the partners of Cities After Dark, who will provide useful insights at the occasion of night events and festivals carried out during the summer period.



Europe's night-time innovation on global stages

Furthermore, these months will be crucial for preparing the final event of Cities After Dark, that will take place in Tallinn at the end of September, and the participation of the cities of the network in a dedicated panel during the Stadt nach Acht festival of Berlin, one of the major conferences on night-time economy in Europe.

Cities After Dark

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