Cities After Dark

Braga, Portugal
Population: ~201,000 inhabitants

Challenge

As a young and growing city with an active nightlife, Braga faced rising challenges related to safety, noise, mobility and inclusion after dark, alongside the need to better coordinate cultural, economic and social activities during night-time hours.

Local heroes

BADlab is driven by the Municipality of Braga in close cooperation with cultural organisations, universities, safety services, local businesses and residents, working together through the Braga Night Council to co-create balanced and inclusive night-time solutions.



Lessons learnt

Night-time policies work best when treated as a shared responsibility. Permanent governance structures, reliable data and continuous dialogue with citizens and operators help reduce conflicts, test solutions and build trust, making nightlife safer, more inclusive and more sustainable.

Solution

Braga After Dark Lab

Braga created BADlab, a permanent night-time governance lab that coordinates policies, data and stakeholders to shape a safer, more inclusive and sustainable nightlife. BADlab brings together the municipality, cultural operators, businesses, universities, safety services and citizens to co-design and monitor night-time actions. It supports initiatives such as night-time cultural programmes, safety awareness campaigns, safe points networks, green certification for venues and sustainable night mobility. By combining data, participation and experimentation, BADlab transforms nightlife into a shared urban policy, improving quality of life while strengthening cultural vibrancy and the local night-time economy.



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BRAGA
SOUNDS LIKE FUTURE.

Cities After Dark

Budva, Montenegro
Population: ~27,445 inhabitants

Challenge

When joining URBACT, Budva faced a seasonal night economy: 852,600 tourist arrivals in 2023, but winter nights were inactive. Activity clustered in the Old Town, causing noise and congestion, while buses stopped around 23:00

Local heroes

Implementation is driven by the Municipality of Budva, with clear and personal commitment from the Mayor, who has openly supported a more balanced and inclusive night city. Grad Teatar and the Tourist Organisation guide cultural vision and promotion, while the Night Economy Council connects institutions, police, youth services and residents. Night economy drivers, especially club owners, bar operators and hospitality businesses, are recognised as partners whose experience helps align economic energy with community wellbeing and shared responsibility

Lessons learnt

Start by mapping night-time needs with residents, businesses and services, then pick one low-cost pilot that can be delivered quickly. Use clear indicators, like attendance and transport use, and adapt based on feedback. Combine cultural programming with mobility, safety and noise management so benefits are shared and conflicts reduced locally

Solution

Open-air Night Cinema programme

Starting with a pilot in summer 2026, Budva is planning to run regular outdoor film screenings in public spaces such as school courtyards and parks, creating a family-friendly alternative to bars and clubs. The plan targets 8 to 10 screenings per season and at least 1,000 total visitors, using portable projection equipment and film licences.

With an estimated cost of about €15,000 per summer, the action is designed to activate neighbourhoods after sunset, diversify Budva's offer beyond the Old Town, and help extend cultural activity outside peak season. It also tests noise management and gathers feedback for scaling in 2027



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Cities After Dark

Genoa, Italy
Population: ~565.000 inhabitants

Challenge

We joined City After Dark to address nightlife safety and risks linked to alcohol and drugs. Thanks to project we wanted to balance residents' rest with leisure, diversify nightlife beyond historic centre and promote responsible behaviours among all the actors involved

Local heroes

The ULG was crucial to the project's local success. Composed of about 20 public, private, and NGO actors, it fostered strong collaboration to address nightlife challenges and identify shared solutions improving Genoa's night-time quality of life



Lessons learnt

Key lessons learned include the need to ensure continuity of the local group beyond the project's end and to keep the night-time dimension central and complementary to daytime urban life. Only a holistic approach to night governance can transform its management into an opportunity for improving Genoa's overall quality of life

Solution

Genova After Dark

Genova After Dark is a pilot night-time event held on 30 November 2024, developed through months of collaboration within the ULG of around 20 stakeholders coordinated by the University of Genoa. The action promoted a diverse, inclusive, and decentralized nightlife offer by combining music, culture, and heritage outside the historic centre, at Villa Bombrini. A free shuttle service connected the city centre to the venue. During the event, questionnaires were collected to assess perceptions of nightlife, mobility, safety, and quality of life. The goal was to build something that, starting from what already exists, integrates with new resources and projects



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COMUNE DI GENOVA

Cities After Dark

Nicosia, Cyprus
Population: ~210,000 inhabitants

Challenge

Nicosia night-time economy lacked coordination and visibility. Early venue closures, limited public transport, poor lighting, and fragmented communication led to low participation, underused public spaces, and missed opportunities for cultural and economic activity after dark.

Local heroes

The Municipality of Nicosia led the reuse of public spaces, working closely with local artists, DJs, and grassroots cultural organisers. Partnerships with local radio stations, the Nicosia Tourism board, and local businesses helped attract diverse audiences and bring new energy to underused night-time spaces.

Solution

Reactivating Underused Public Spaces After Dark

Nicosia piloted the transformation of underused public spaces—such as Eleftheria and Solomou Squares— into active night-time destinations through pop-up DJ sets, performances, and creative collaborations. Over 2,000 people attended events, with 70% aged under 35.These events reimagined quiet spaces as social and cultural hubs, especially appealing to younger residents. Low-cost, high-impact interventions proved that coordinated reuse of public space can unlock participation, increase visibility for the night-time economy, and guide future investments in inclusive, community-led urban transformation.



Lessons learnt

Collaborate with local creatives, activate existing spaces with cultural events, and promote them well. Pilot actions, build trust with communities, and show that night-time public space can be inclusive, lively, and locally led.

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Δήμος Λευκωσίας
Nicosia Municipality

Cities After Dark

Paris, France
Population: ~2.175,601 inhabitants

Challenge

Paris sought to strengthen dialogue and shared responsibility between residents, nightlife actors and public authorities, in a city hosting one of Europe's largest night-time economies, where noise and safety concerns required more communicative and inclusive approaches.

Local heroes

Paris' action relies on a strong multi-stakeholder ecosystem. Key actors include municipal services (Night-time Policy, Municipal Police, Youth, Health, Communication, Gender Equality and Tourism), professional unions such as UMIH and Culture Nuit, prevention and mediation NGOs including Consentis and Pierrots de la Nuit, as well as research partners like APUR. Together, they co-design, test and scale solutions adapted to Parisian nightlife realities.

Lessons learnt

Do: work with grassroots collectives and nightlife venues, support trusted intermediaries, adapt actions to local night-time contexts, and lead by example through public events.

Don't: apply one-size-fits-all solutions, underestimate experimentation, or expect quick results : lasting cultural change requires time and learning.

Solution

Building a Culture of Positive Nightlife in Paris

Since 2023, Paris has been developing an integrated action plan to positively influence night-time behaviours across venues, public spaces and private settings. Co-designed with nightlife professionals, associations, residents and public services, the plan brings together around 25 actions structured around four objectives: promoting positive nightlife values, engaging young people, strengthening nightlife stakeholders, and reinforcing institutional responsibility. Actions include awareness campaigns on consent and respect, training for venue staff and festival volunteers, tailored interventions for youth and tourists, and improved night-time mobility and mediation. The initiative aims to enhance safety, inclusivity and coexistence for millions of residents, night owls and visitors, positioning Paris as a European reference for responsible nightlife.



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VILLE DE PARIS

Cities After Dark

Piraeus, Greece
Population: ~168,151 inhabitants

Challenge

Piraeus is a city that lives day and night, welcoming over 20 million port passengers each year, with lively streets, cafés, bars, restaurants and an active cultural scene. Yet despite this energy, activities were hard to discover and people lacked a clear guide to what was happening across the city after dark.

Local heroes

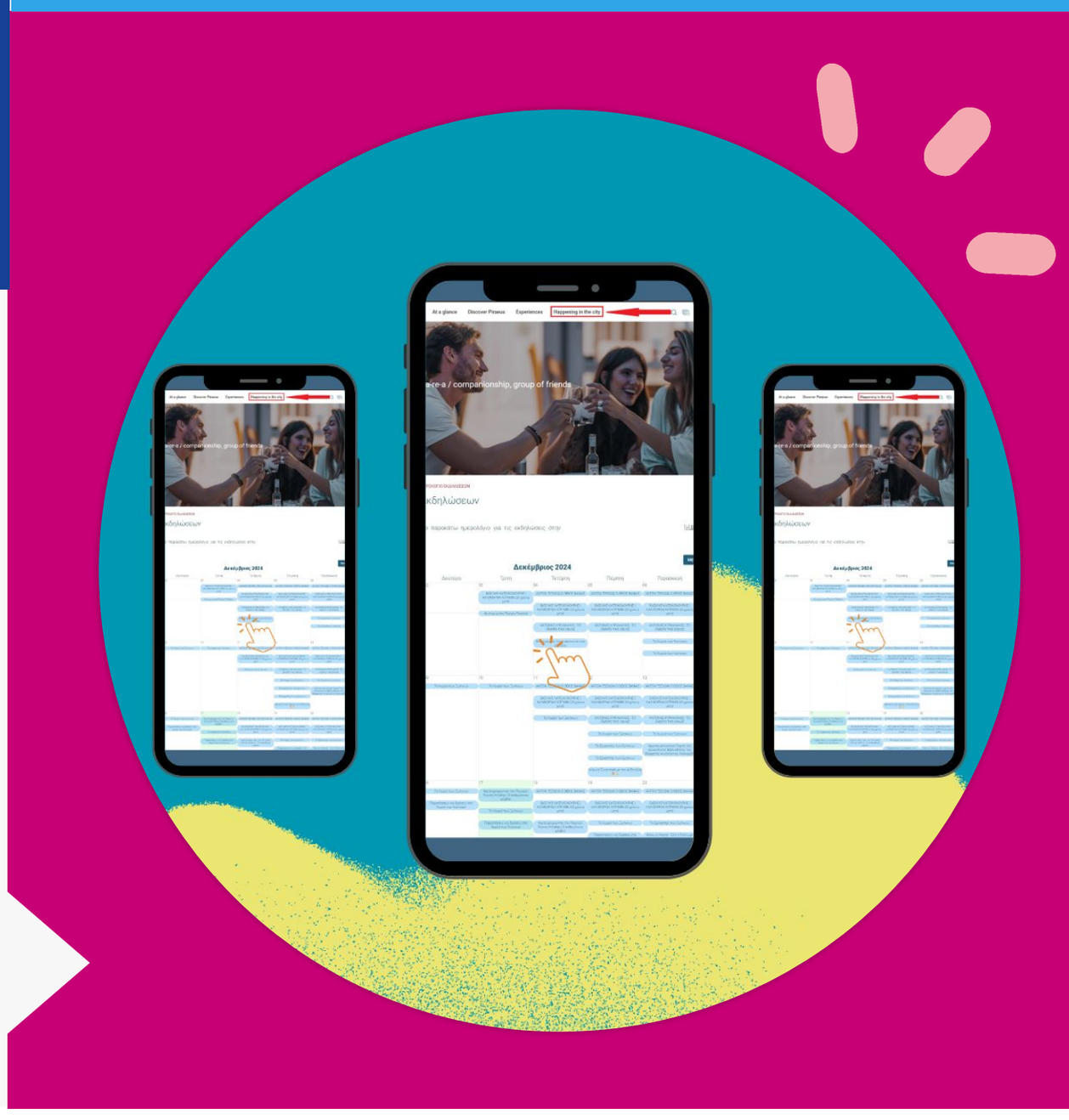
Developed through collaboration in the URBACT Local Group, the calendar united city services, police, cultural and tourism actors, businesses, equality bodies and residents to co-design a shared tool that builds trust and connects Piraeus' local ecosystem



Solution

Digital Event Calendar

In 2024, Piraeus brought together day and night events into one easy-to-access platform. Working with cultural organizations, event organizers and tourism actors, the city collected and published activities on its official tourism portal, DestinationPiraeus.com. QR-code posters placed across the city allow residents and visitors instantly explore what's happening. In the first two months, nearly 200 events were added. With everything in one place, events became easier to find and better connected, inviting more people to discover, enjoy and take part in Piraeus' vibrant, always-on life.



Lessons learnt

When Piraeus began to look at the night differently, the lesson was clear: change starts with listening.

- Open dialogue with the stakeholders
- Make existing activities visible before creating new ones
- Share and centralize data
- Start with simple tools and test them with users
- Use small actions to build trust and long-term cooperation

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MUNICIPALITY OF PIRAEUS

Cities After Dark

Tallinn, Estonia
Population: ~456,578 inhabitants

Challenge

The City of Tallinn decided to participate in the URBACT Cities After Dark programme as it offers an opportunity to develop and optimise the economic, cultural, and social potential of the city's nightlife

Local heroes

The action relied on young people themselves, who contributed ideas and helped shape the programme. Youth workers and the City Centre District Government were crucial for permissions, coordination and the later investment in permanent lighting. Key partners included the Police (presence and prevention work), Brain Games, the performer Gameboy Tetris and Laura Mallene. Local residents and the park management were also important stakeholders, while media coverage helped broaden the message and reinforce a positive narrative around the space

Lessons learnt

Define clear objectives and indicators before you start, and consult your target group early to understand their real needs. Plan safety and logistics with partners, but build in flexibility for on-site surprises. Collect feedback in the moment and follow up quickly with visible improvements (such as lighting), as this builds trust and long-term impact

Solution

Kanuti Aed Youth Evening

A youth evening took place in late September 2024 Kanuti Garden. Young people helped shape the programme. It included a DJ-rapper Gameboy Tetris performance, a sandwich-making workshop, self-defence training with journalist Laura Mallene, board games from Brain Games and friendly conversations with the Police. A TV programme also covered the event because a violent incident had happened in the same park earlier.

A major result was improved park safety: temporary string lights were installed for the event, and later the district government added extra permanent lighting



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Tallinn

Cities After Dark

Varna, Bulgaria
Population: ~319,900 inhabitants

Challenge

When the City of Varna joined the "Cities After Dark" project, its main challenge was to more effectively manage and develop the city's night-time economy while balancing the needs of residents, visitors and local businesses.

Local heroes

Varna's Urban Local Group (ULG) brings together a broad and diverse coalition of partners from the public sector, private sector, and civil society, ensuring that the city's urban strategies are co-created with all relevant voices at the table. By weaving together these diverse actors, Varna's ULG embodies the integrated and participatory approach promoted by URBACT, creating a platform where governance, business, education, and community interests converge to drive forward a shared vision for the city's sustainable future.

Lessons learnt

Cities planning similar after-dark cultural activities are encouraged to adopt an integrated and area-based approach. Coordinating multiple cultural venues within the same neighborhood helps concentrate audiences, improve safety and visibility, and reduce pressure on residential areas. Early involvement of residents, cultural operators, transport services and municipal departments is essential to balance cultural vibrancy with quality of life. Pilot testing, supported by data collection on noise, mobility and attendance, allows cities to adapt measures gradually and build sustainable evening and night-time cultural ecosystems.

Solution

Varna After Dark: The Path of Art

The aim of the testing was to validate public interest in accessing cultural venues—such as galleries, museums and other cultural spaces—during evening hours on a regular, monthly basis, rather than as isolated events. The concept focused on coordinated nighttime programming in multiple cultural venues located within the same area or neighborhood, taking place after regular working hours.
The testing also sought to introduce measures essential for a sustainable after-hours economy, including resident-friendly waste collection schedules, continuous municipal noise monitoring, noise data collection, noise-aware transport planning, and stricter enforcement of noise regulations for venues with extended opening hours.



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BAPHA

Cities After Dark

Zadar, Croatia
Population: 70,770 inhabitants

Challenge

Zadar's night-time economy is heavily concentrated in the historic Old Town and driven by summer tourism, generating noise conflicts with residents, seasonal closures of businesses in winter, and inadequate night-time public transport for workers and visitors

Local heroes

This action would not have been possible without the active participation of Zadar's URBACT Local Group, bringing together over 25 stakeholders across public, business, cultural and civil sectors. Key contributors include Liburnija d.o.o. (local public transport operator), the Zadar Tourism Board, the Zadar Concert Office, the KvartArt Festival network, and local NGOs working with youth and cultural communities

Lessons learnt

Start pilot actions early - they generate visibility and build trust among stakeholders. Free services lower the barrier for testing new ideas. Engage the transport operator from the beginning, as operational details take time. Lighting interventions are a low-conflict way to activate public space at night and demonstrate impact quickly

Solution

Zadar After Dark – A Night-Time Economy Action Plan

Through the Cities After Dark network, Zadar developed an Integrated Action Plan to transform its seasonal, tourism-driven nightlife into a year-round, inclusive model. Two pilot actions were implemented in late 2025: a free night bus line (Line 12), operating on weekends between November 29 and December 28, with departures at 00:15 and 02:15, improving mobility and safety for residents and night-time workers; and a heritage lighting intervention on the central square, using targeted light and colour effects to animate public space sustainably, without generating noise. Both pilots were developed with local stakeholders through Zadar's URBACT Local Group



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Cities After Dark

Málaga, Spain
599,063 inhabitants

Challenge

Malaga's core challenge is a classic case of success-induced strain, where a thriving, tourism-centric NTE concentrated in its Historic Center has created a critical imbalance with the quality of life for its residents. This tension manifests as a competition for space, tranquillity, and resources, threatening the city's long-term social sustainability and cultural identity

Local heroes

Our URBACT Local Group, aligned with the quadruple-helix model, has played a strategic and indispensable role in shaping our Integrated Action Plan, acting as the core platform for collective intelligence and participatory decision-making. The consistent involvement of its members throughout the project, including the milestone transnational meeting in Málaga in January 2025, has enabled a robust co-creation process grounded in evidence, dialogue, and shared priorities.

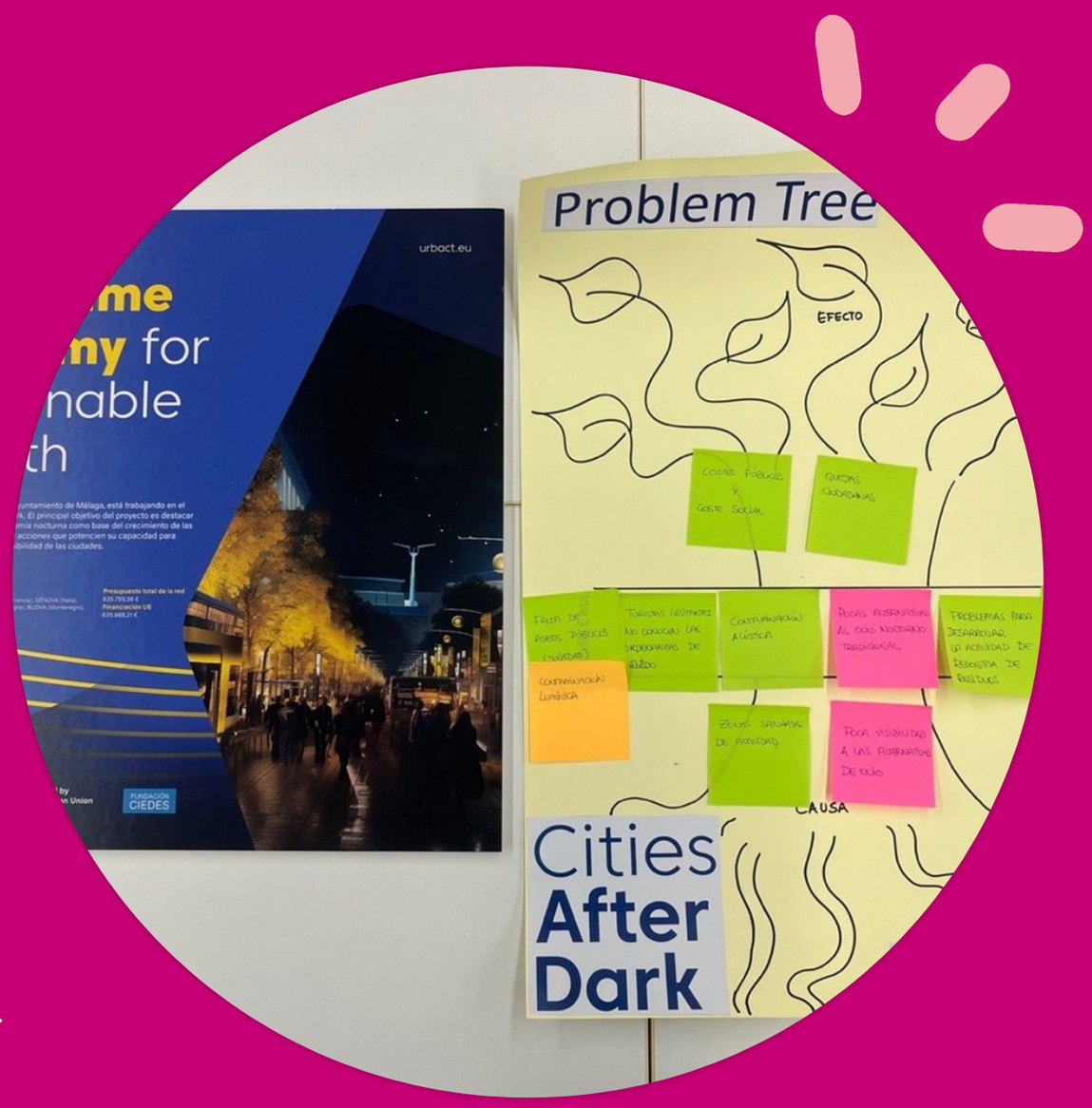
Lessons learnt

A final book summarising the main lessons learned throughout Cities After Dark has been produced by us with the collaboration of some NTE leaders and will be published soon.

Solution

Malaga After Dark – A Night-Time Economy Action Plan

Within Cities After Dark network, CIEDES Malaga has produced an Integrated Action Plan with the vision to create a new balanced space for coexistence between night time users and residents, particularly in the Historic Center of the city, preserving the tranquillity, relaxation and rest of the neighbours, ensuring they are not subjected to undesirable or uncivilized behaviour. At the same time, spaces and regulations must also be developed to allow the Night time Economy to thrive, bringing its social and economic benefits to the city's development. All of this must be approached through a lens of Sustainable Urban Development and incorporating cross-cutting principles such as Gender Equality, Green Transition, and Digital Transition



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CIEDES

Ciudad de Málaga