

> Geneva, July 17, 2019

> « La nuit est belle », the first lights out transborder challenge on September 26, 2019



Is it possible to turn off all public lighting for a whole night in the Greater Geneva area? This is the challenge the Natural History Museum of Geneva, the Geneva Astronomy Society, the Maison du Salève and Greater Geneva have proposed to the 209 communes of the transborder Swiss/French agglomeration, to highlight the damage caused by light pollution. It presents a first-time opportunity to its one million inhabitants to visit the night sky and its planets, stars and the Milky Way. Named « La nuit est belle» this entirely novel project already has the backing of 109 communes.

Light pollution has a negative impact on the day/night natural biological rhythm of flora and fauna by degrading their natural habitat, it affects human health, and causes an excessive consumption of energy.

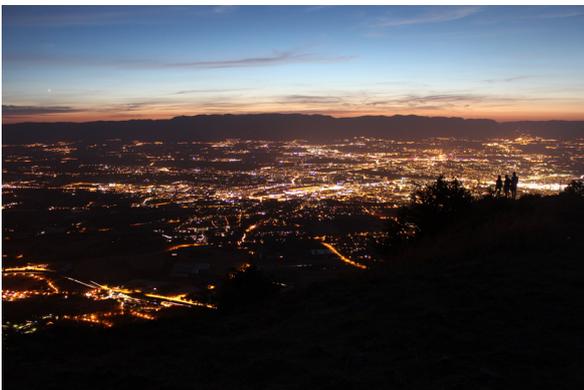
Faced with these facts, all the communes of the canton of Geneva, a large majority of the bordering French communes and a decade of Vaudoise communes, adding up to more than 109 on either side of the border, have joined forces to support the project « La nuit est belle » (even more are coming) and will specifically not turn on their public lighting on September 26. This is a first within the framework of a transborder territory comprising over a million inhabitants !

Astronomical conditions are ideal on the evening of September 26, with a new moon, the Milky Way overhead after sunset and Saturn and Jupiter visible. There will also be various activities encouraging a different view of the night: stargazing with local astronomy clubs, candle light meals, walks under the night sky etc.

Everyone can propose an activity on www.lanuitestbelle.org.

The final programme will be made available on that website.

Follow the event on social media with #lanuitestbelle.



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Mrs. Gudrun RUSSIG, political chief of the environment in the Nyon region (Switzerland).
« This action is an opening for our transborder territory to become aware of an all too neglected theme. There are excellent reasons for reducing night lighting: to consume less energy; to avoid disturbing animal nightlife, for example of bats and insects whose rhythm is affected by excess lighting. But also and especially to limit the bad effects on our quality of sleep and therefore our health. The communes of the Nyon region have been invited to join this movement which I hope is only just beginning. »

Mr. Antonio HODGERS, President of GLCT Greater Geneva and President of the State Council of the canton of Geneva (Switzerland).
« In Greater Geneva, exterior lighting has increased two-fold over the last thirty years. The best way to economise on energy is simply not to use it, therefore it is important we change our habits. This symbolic action favours an efficient energy consumption. More than a simple gesture, it offers us the chance to rediscover our daily night hours and respect our biodiversity. »

Mr. Pierre-Jean CRASTES, Vice-President of Metropolitan pole of French Genevans, delegate for the development of the territory and energy transition (France).
« We are pleased to take up the challenge, as mad, even as utopian, as it seems, to offer the inhabitants of Greater Geneva, for the space of one night, the sight of a starry sky. I am proud to see the exceptional participation of the French communes in this unique movement. Let's not stop here; we must continue our joint engagement not just because of energy and environmental interests but so we don't forget that our excess lighting deprives us of a priceless spectacle. And who knows, maybe we can hope that one day it will once again be normal to see the Milky Way from Greater Geneva. »

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