

## “NOCTURNES” (night transport), Mobility services in Europe and on other continents

### Summary

**Background.** Human activities progressively spread at night and rebuild a new working and leisure space requiring a quasi-permanent offer of mobility services to which our organizations aren't always prepared. In order to answer these developments, new mobility services are being established. Supported by PREDIT, the Maison du temps et de la mobilité (the *House of Time and Mobility*) in Belfort-Montbéliard launched the “Nocturnes” project so as to have a first approach of this kind of services in Europe and to create a network of international and specialized professionals and experts.

**Methodology.** An international survey carried out in 7 languages among 900 towns of 106 countries on the five continents as well as parallel field explorations led at night allowed to spot good practices and to show some main trends in mobilities, services and cities evolution at night. The organization of several international colloquia, among which the colloquia of Rome and Brussels, the creation of an interactive website ([www.u-night.org](http://www.u-night.org)), the participation in events, the publication of scientific articles or articles aimed at the general public and the institution of academic training courses contributed to raise awareness among the different actors, to put the set of themes on the agenda and to let projects emerge.

**Main lessons.** Since the early nineties, we do witness a progressive colonization of the urban nighttime through economic activities. Everywhere in Europe, the question of transport and mobilities raises facing the development of festive or working night activities. Most of towns noticed an increase in the night transport demand and developed their night or evening network by means of variable strategies: increasing time-slots, developing special lines or establishing a system at request. The aims are clearly showed: improving the inhabitants' safety, diminishing risks of accident, developing night life, reducing car traffic or strengthening the attractivity. Insecurity, limited profitability, service costs and degradations are restraining the development of night transport. Associations and enterprises imagine additional services. New kinds of transport are often tested when night events (sleepless nights, etc.) take place. Intermodal and multiscalar mobility services, reinforced security, organization of transit centres, information, (...) and public conveniences may contribute to make towns more accessible and hospitable.

**First impact.** This research-action started at the end of 2003 has allowed to put the question of night mobilities and urban nighttime on many local authorities' agenda as well as to create an international network of professionals and experts. It contributed to the development of transport projects as it was the case in Lyon, to ease tensions or to launch operations such as the *Observatoire de la nuit* (the “Night watchdog”) and the first *Université de la nuit* (Night University) in Brussels. The progressive interest shown by the media in this matter and for our works is another success of the programme.

**Potential consequences.** Our interlocutors are interested in networking and developing common initiatives: *international Colloquium* on restitution and discussion, *International research programme* on the transport demand and the different practices, *International night watchdog* based on the initiatives of Lyon, Brussels, Rennes or Rome in particular, *network of good practices sharing, transfers* and experimentations. The “Ergonomy of the town at night” and the “night design” are other ways to explore.

**Questioning.** The choice of developing night mobility services relates back to the emergence of a non-stop society and a non-stop town 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. And everybody becomes schizophrenic from then on: the consumer wants a personalized town whereas the salaried employee refuses atypical working hours. We contributed to launching the debate. It's up to everyone to take part in it and to ask oneself if the game is really worth the candle.