

VareseNews

“Too much light pollution; Italy is like a funfair”

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In the last few days, the cabinet office has [asked people](#) to make suggestions on how to reduce wastage in government spending. The opportunity was immediately taken up also by **amateur astronomers throughout Italy**, who, represented by the Italian Union of Amateur Astronomers, UAI, decided to make their contribution to various proposals to limit USELESS spending.

Proposals and ideas **have also come from Tradate**. **Cesare Guaita**, the President of **GAT (the Astronomical Group of Tradate)**, said, “We think that **one of the most significant areas of wastage at the national level is the exaggerated and uncontrolled lighting**. It is absurd that, in night-time satellite images, Italy looks like a **fun fair**, whereas Germany, which is much more industrialised than us, is far less lit up! This is what has happened in Italy **for 20 years**, despite the fact that a number of regions, including Lombardy, have laws against light pollution. But, as we all know, nobody respects the laws in Italy.”

It is well-known that the astronomers of GAT and throughout the country have always battled against light pollution, because the excess lighting obstructs the view of the starry sky. But this might resolve some economic problems as well.

“From this point of view, Varese Province could do a lot,” the astronomers at GAT explain. “There are monuments and suburban streets that are lit up all night long, and what is bewildering is that, in Lombardy, we have twice the number of street lamps installed per person than the European average. And very often, the light output of these lamps is abnormal.”

Guaita adds, “We can point all of this out to President Monti and to Dr. Bondi: it’s a unique opportunity to make up for the mistakes of the past (and, unfortunately, still present) wasteful lighting culture, that only benefits those who sell energy.”

According to the astronomers, on the homepage of [Cielo Buio](#) (Dark Sky), there is a brief and concise “manifesto” encouraging people to write to the Government (by filling in a simple on-line “form”), to demand real actions, which would save millions of euros per year.

From 1 July, in France, luminous signs will have to be turned off, in Liechtenstein, lights are turned off at a certain time; Taiwan has placed a tax on light pollution, in several cities in the United States, the street lamps stay on only at crossroads. Several cities in Italy and Europe are beginning to turn off the lights in public parks and on the bypasses/roundabouts in the suburbs; in short, the spending on public lighting is being felt, and local authorities would willingly receive a “signal” from the government to turn off several lighting systems.”

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