

> Geneva, Friday, May 21, 2021



« The night sky: a treasure to protect. Light pollution is a grave attack on the curiosity of children .. young and old.

Michel MAYOR, Nobel prizewinner for Physics

Press Kit La nuit est belle 2021

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La nuit est belle ! Lights out in the Greater Geneva area 2nd edition: Friday, May 21, 2021

La nuit est belle! is back, under a three-quarter full moon, for a 2nd edition special on night biodiversity in partnership with La Fête de la Nature France et Suisse (The Nature Festival France and Switzerland).

In 2019, 152 communes in Greater Geneva participated actively in the event.

This new edition will go even further by encouraging the private sector – local people, shops and businesses – to turn off their lighting, to make the night sky even more beautiful.

How can you contribute on May 21 ?

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1. A second edition to open up new perspectives

1.1 Showcasing + biodiversity for the second edition:

Astronomical observations, the common thread of the first edition, has given place to night biodiversity, another world impacted by light pollution. A date in springtime has been chosen this time, since spring is favourable to the observation of evening and night time wildlife. 71% of the surface of the moon on May 21 will be lit. The sun sets at just after 9 p.m. and civil twilight starts at 9.45 p.m. Local astronomers can start watching the dark sky from 11.28 p.m.

1.2 Reducing public and ... private .. lighting:

La nuit est belle! 2021 encourages the private sector – local inhabitants, shops and businesses – to turn off their lighting to render the sky even more beautiful. In the territory it will be in the form of not turning on lighting for one night; each commune is free to participate in the action as far as their technical and financial means allow. The Canton of Geneva has decided not to turn on the lighting for a whole night.

1.3 Nearly 180 communes will reduce their lighting for the second edition of La nuit est belle!

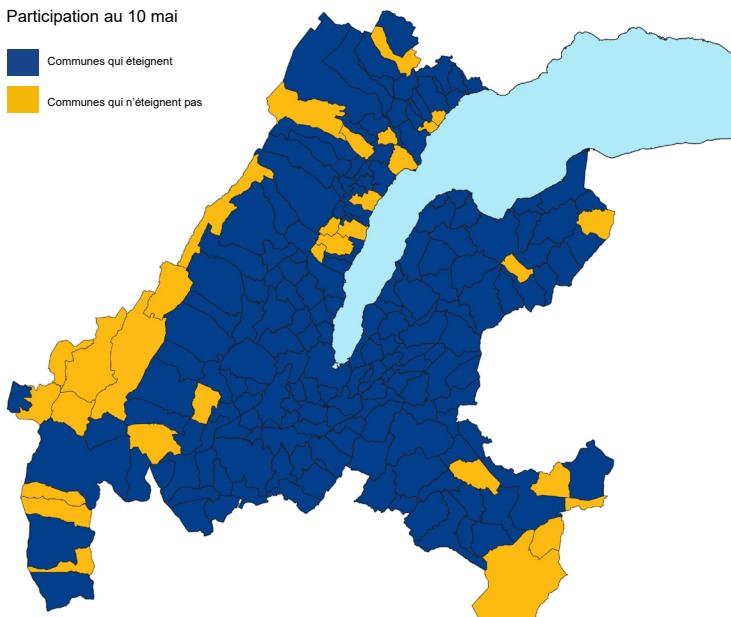
So far more than 170 communes in Greater Geneva are participating and will turn off their public lighting: 98 in Genevois français (French Geneva), 45 in the canton of Geneva, 35 in the District of Nyon: almost 30 more than in 2019.

Some communes in Genevois français (French Geneva) will take advantage of that evening to implement a new feature of diminishing public lighting at night in the future.



Participation au 10 mai

■ Communes qui éteignent
■ Communes qui n'éteignent pas



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1.4 A programme adapted to the health context

This second edition will of course be adapted to the health contexts in France and Switzerland with activities limited according to the recommended rules. In the framework of this special edition promoting night biodiversity, La nuit est belle! offers of activities for the Festival of Nature in Switzerland and France are most welcome.



Because of the curfew in France, activities in France will finish earlier than 9 p.m. and digital media will be available throughout the evening via the link below :

<https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/presse/#outils>
and social media on #lanuitestbelle

These supports are recreational and fun:

- Map of the sky and the moon for use at your window or in your garden
- Range of publications and visual and audio supports
- Biodiversity quiz
- Links to other resources
- Etc

The program will be accessible for day-time activities and will continue for some days after May 21 to fulfill further interest: a selection of literature about the night in libraries and bookshops, an invitation to write to the Lady of the Night, night time observations of the moon, etc.

1.5 And security?

No blackout

By not turning on a large part of public lighting, the project aims at considerably reducing the light intensity, but this does not mean the territory will suddenly be plunged into total darkness. All traffic lights, toll areas, customs areas etc will remain lit. And in the canton of Geneva, certain pedestrian crossings will operate with a special signalling system, while the Police will be very present for the duration of the event. It will be possible to turn on the public lighting very quickly in case of a major incident.

It is to be noted that on September 26, 2019, the communes who participated in not turning on the public lighting did not experience any accidents, incidents or incivilities linked to La nuit est belle! To the contrary, police services noted a distinct decrease in speeding on the roads



2. Editos

Antonio HODGERS, President of GLCT Greater Geneva and President of the State Council of the canton of Geneva (Switzerland)

«When almost all lights are extinguished in a certain area, what happens? Another form of approach to the night sets in. Animals feel safe in their element, traffic slows down and the sky reveals its mysteries all too forgotten in urban centres.»



This 2nd edition of La nuit est belle! is more than a simple event. It is a modest but solid attempt to remind us of the importance of the dark for biodiversity and human health. On May 21, some 175 communes in Greater Geneva will not turn on their public lighting that night. Each year public communities note the negative impact of light pollution. By means of this one exceptional night, we hope to familiarise the public with a more sober and positive view to excess lighting.»

Christian DUPESSEY, President of Metropolitan pole of French Geneva

«La nuit est belle! is an original concept which synergises institutions, environment, energeticists, astronomers and culture. It is this mix of skills, energies and creativity which make the concept rich and unifying.»



This festive evening of dark skies is the result of a long-term project which is gathering speed as a result of public enthusiasm, and we welcome the enthusiasm met by this event from areas outside Greater Geneva.

In this context, le Genevois français (French Geneva) can be considered today a truly experimental area thanks to the collaboration of its energeticists who test and carry out innovative solutions for the benefit of the communes in their fight against light pollution.»



Gérald CRETEGNY, President of the Nyon Region

«Our planet is in great danger, a fact of which we are being made aware both locally and globally. Global awareness to light pollution helps alert our local populations and their political and economic decision-makers to reasons for combatting it. This year 80 communes in Suisse Romande (French-speaking Switzerland) have been added to the 178 communes of Greater Geneva already signed up for the project, thanks to the collaboration with the Fête de la Nature Suisse (Nature Festival Switzerland). Other contacts are showing a growing interest for this event, for example: Grand Lyon (Greater Lyon), City of Berne, Haute-Marne, le massif des Bauges, the Ministry of the Environment, Chile, the county of Surrey, Great Britain.



Collective commitment must lead to legislative changes and new practises in order to sustain the reduction in light pollution which strongly affects the natural functions of living organisms and plant life.

Let us rediscover the magic of starry skies, a joyful and universal dream within reach of fulfilment. Join us on May 21, 2021, and make this dream become a daily reality.»

Badia CHALEL, President of the Maison du Salève, co-founding structure for La nuit est belle!



«If yesterday lighting was representative of progress, today it is controversial, disturbing night wild life, affecting human health, and responsible for loss of astronomical observations.

In 2015, La maison du Salève, in partnership with the State of Geneva and the Syndicate of the Vuache, became interested in the problem of light pollution in the framework of Contrat corridors transfrontalier Champagne-Genevois (transborder corridors Champagne-Geneva). Our work in this area has never stopped since. Using tools such as exhibitions, games and conferences to raise awareness we have touched a large public.

Through our contact with the Museum of Geneva and the Geneva Astronomy Society to animate conferences we came up with the strange idea of turning off the lights in the whole Geneva basin area for the space of one night. A dream turned reality thanks to fine collaboration on each side of the border, led by Greater Geneva. Politicians, technicians, astronomers, ecologists, clubs and the general public joined together to make that night the most beautiful of the year.

So let's turn off the lights and see the magic! May you all have a beautiful night!«

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Eric ACHKAR, Engineer and President of the Geneva Astronomy Society,
Pascal MOESCHLER, former Curator of the Natural History Museum,
co-founders of “La nuit est belle”.

«*La nuit est belle!* : no other territory of this size could have invented it!



It is amazing to see a territory of 1 million inhabitants take up an environmental cause as quickly and as resolutely as this. If a simple series of conferences – albeit given with passion and constance in close contact with the public – as well as exhibitions at the Maison du Salève and Muséum de Genève on the question, then still novel, of light pollution plus the powerful dynamic of the Assises européennes de la Transition énergétique (European Assises for Energy Transition) coorganised by Greater Geneva, incontestably played a role, it is rather a general and collective momentum over a whole territory which is noteworthy.

We know that the big environmental challenges of tomorrow can only be correctly addressed in a global, comprehensive and balanced way, meaning in a cultural, technical, societal, philosophical, scientific, economic, pedagogic but above all democratic way, as close to its actors as possible. Some people will say that this concern about globality and proximity is simply idealism, that it is the slow road to take to counter environmental challenges and their urgency. With La nuit est belle! and the concrete initiatives which are multiplying in its wake, Greater Geneva is an example of the exact opposite!



We would like to see La nuit est belle ! become both a traditional and living festival in this innovative area – a new kind of festival of the Anthropocene – and, in harmony with the DNA of our region, a generous inspiration to all, belonging as we do to this magnificent planet, so natural, so human and so fragile.»



François LETOURNEUX, President of the Fête de la Nature France (Nature Festival France)

«What joy in the morning light to watch wagtails walking by the water and the bumblebee ballet among the flowers! We are less familiar with nature's nightlife, which is in fact just as rich and marvellous as that of the daytime, maybe more so, but it is shy, not so easy to observe, and demands of its observers patience, discretion and even courage to overcome childhood fears of the dark. But well-worth the discovery.



© Guillaume Dambreville

The Nature Festival has given its theme this year the title "A thousand ways of seeing". Allow the development of all your senses and be attentive. Naturalists will guide our way in this universe which is often overlooked. They will help us hear the song of the midwife toad, feel the speed of the bats in flight, inhale the perfume of sweet clover. Let's take advantage of dimmed lighting on the evening of May 21 to discover the habitat of the horned owl ... !»

Philippe STEINER, President of the Fête de la Nature Suisse Romande (Nature Festival of French-speaking Switzerland)

«For ten years now the Nature Festival has been raising awareness of the treasures of nature in the wild and the importance of preserving them. By organising a multitude of free activities out in natural areas the Festival has touched close to 10,000 people in the heart of biodiversity.



For its 10th birthday, the Nature Festival has the great privilege to join forces with La nuit est belle! to bring to the attention of local people the evil consequences on flora and fauna of excessive artificial lighting.

Let's plunge into the fascinating world of the night! From May 21 until May 30, we will showcase night biodiversity by organising various activities relating to this theme. No doubt that this beautiful adventure will incite curiosity and interest in the general public and above all encourage them to take advantage of this precious nocturnal interlude.»



3. Our partners in 2021: they support La nuit est belle! and turn off the lights

Our [partners](#), be they institutional, technical, associative or private, are increasing in number as they join the movement by turning off their lighting and offering activities.

A list of the partners in 2021 can be found at <https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/partenaires/>. The list continues to grow daily.

«GOOD HEIDI Production is linked to La nuit est belle! by having created and edited the book for the event “Noir c’est noir” and the corners La nuit est belle at Payot and Nature & Découvertes in French-speaking Switzerland. Let’s make it happen that light doesn’t spoil our night!»

Xavier Casile, author and editor GOOD HEIDI production www.goodheidiproduction.ch

«The Payot bookshop and Nature & Découvertes can only support this wonderful idea which is in line with our preoccupations and our strategy in terms of sustainable development.»

Pascal Vandenberghe, President-Director of Payot S.A.

«We are happy to participate in this event because the project is very much in parallel with our engagement for respect for the environment and future generations.»

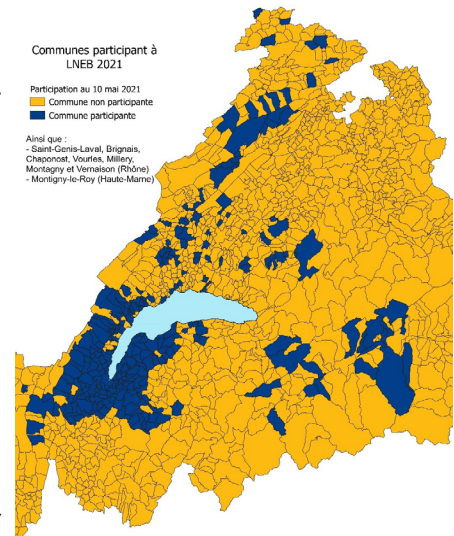
Philippe Echenard (Director Migros Geneva)



4. La nuit est belle !... elsewhere

La nuit est belle ! has »pollinised « neighbouring territories in France and Switzerland. This pollinisation is partly due to the collaboration with the Fête de la Nature Switzerland, rallying to its cause 80 communes in the French-speaking cantons outside Greater Geneva.

On the French side, 7 communes of the Communauté de communes Pays d'Évian and Vallée d'Abondance, and plus 8 communes in the south of Lyon near the Saint-Genis-Laval observatory, have decided to participate. La nuit est belle! also welcomes Montigny-le-Roy, commune of origin of Camille Flammarion, famous astronomer, father figure for his way of communicating astronomy to the public, founder of the Société astronomique de France (SAF) and who was also Honorary President of the Geneva Astronomy Society (SAG).



«I wanted to develop the event La nuit est belle! in the Lyon basin because it is a very good opportunity of bringing awareness to the problems of light pollution to our general public. Lyon is well-known for its Fête des Lumières (Festival of Lights), it should also be recognised for its festival of stars! Holding this Geneva-Lyon event has a particular attraction because of the strong ties between our two cities and La nuit est belle! team from Greater Geneva have been great collaborators in sharing their experience. We are hearing good echos from the communes of the Lyon basin. For La nuit est belle! on May 21, 2021, the communes of Saint-Genis-Laval, Brignais, Chaponost, Vourles, Millery, Montagny and Vernaison will turn off their public lighting, creating a vast dark area in the south of Lyon. Many activities will be on hand for the public to take part in to enhance their experience of a naturally dark night. And of course we hope that the whole of the city of Lyon will turn out its light in the next edition of La nuit est belle!»

Dr. Isabelle VAUGLIN, Astrophysicist – head of training and relations with teaching staff - Lyon University

«At Montigny-le-Roi, cradle of the famous Camille Flammarion, the starry sky sparkles as far as Greater Geneva.»

Romary DIDIER, Maire of Montigny-le-Roi, birthplace of Camille Flammarion (commune of Val-de-Meuse)



5. Why turn the lights off?

La nuit est belle! aims to bring awareness to the population of the Greater Geneva area of the impacts of light pollution caused by an excess of artificial lighting. The ensuing modification of the day/night cycle is very harmful to the biological rhythms of flora and fauna, degrades natural habitats, not to forget the risks on human health and unnecessary consumption of energy.

Zoom in on the four major reasons for reducing light pollution:

5.1 Protecting night biodiversity

Many species find themselves trapped or blocked because of the excessive illumination of towns: animals lose their sense of direction, habitats are fragmented, there is a change in the relationship prey - predator, natural habitats are destroyed and migration is perturbed. Artificial lighting also has an impact on plants, delaying the fall of leaves in autumn, creating a poor photosynthesis, disturbing germination and preventing pollination of plants by moths at night.



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«FNE AuRA who have set up the project “La nuit je vis” (I live at night) is happy to be associated with La nuit est belle! with the goal of drawing attention to the harm done to animals and in particular to insects, by night illumination. Night lighting is the second cause of mortality of insects after pesticides. Each lamp kills more than 100 insects per night and France has more than 10 million lamps. Thus it is easy to see why moths, which represent 95% of the species in our regions, are disappearing.»



Eric FERRAILLE, President France Nature Environnement Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes AURA



«In general, artificial lighting can modify the structure and functioning of an ecosystem in its entirety. For example, insects attracted by artificial lighting are clearly exposed to night predators and the lights thus play a role in an ecological trap. This simple aspect can create an imbalance within the food chain. Bats are among the predators of insects and some species such as the Common Pipistrelle are quick to chase insects collecting round lamplights. In the short term, this is an advantage (easy prey and lots of it), but in the long term these lamps will have a negative impact on the life-line of an individual or a colony. In fact, bats tend to flee from lighting, which results in the break-up or abandon of their habitats, (hunting grounds, resting place, zone of transit). This escape behaviour also applies to other night mammals and micromammals.»

Centre of coordination ouest for bats - Canton of Vaud

5.2 Saving energy

Today more and more communes are turning off their public lighting to reduce their energy costs. In fact, studies by the Agence française de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie (ADEME) have revealed that public lighting represents 18% of the energy consumption of the communes – i.e. 37% of their electricity bill. The Agence estimates that they could save around 40% on their public lighting expenses by adapting their present installations.

«SIG is very proud to be participating in the second edition of La nuit est belle! A strong action that raises the public awareness in Greater Geneva to saving energy. For SIG, this action is part of its engagement for the preservation of the environment and energy efficiency. The best way to save energy is not to consume it.»

Christian BRUNIER, Director General of SIG





© Boymond

«La Syane and La nuit est belle ! what could be more natural! This event presents us yearly with the collective question "Should we use public lighting at night?" we have to look at the impact of our artificial lighting on our environment, analyse the economic, societal and ecological reasons for not using public lighting, imagine other alternatives, set up lighting remote control ... and appreciate the starry sky. All these themes, reflections and actions against light pollution are at the heart of Syane's mission.»

Jean-Paul AMOUDRY, *President of Syndicat des Energies et de l'Aménagement numérique de la Haute-Savoie (SYANE)*

«The Syndicat intercommunal d'Énergie et de l'e-communication de l'Ain (SIEA) advises and assists communes by proposing technical solutions, such as the replacement of old energy-consuming lamps (mercury vapour and high-pressure sodium) by the more efficient LED lamps. These allow us to control the brightness at night. SIEA also installs astronomical clocks which are more precise at controlling times of artificial lighting than the lumandar type.»

Stéfany DOUILLET, *Director General of Services du SIEA and Director of the agency Li@atin.*

« Since 2019, Enedis, management of the public reseau for the distribution of electricity, have supported the event La nuit est belle! Enedis works in favour of biodiversity in regional nature parks, the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO) (League for the Protection of Birds) and ASTERS (Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Haute-Savoie). Together they identify the most sensitive zones for large birds (birds of prey) and mountain galliforms. With this information, systems of neutralisation are put in place to prevent the birds flying into electrical cables or electrocuting themselves.»

Sylvian HERBIN, *Directeur Régional Alpes ENEDIS*

«Using the right amount of lighting
Cut lighting? With growing awareness of climate change and the choice of the Swiss people to phase out fossil fuels and reduce our energy consumption, focus is now turning to lighting in towns and villages. Energy transition concerns us all!
For the administration of a commune, answering the growing demands of our citizens, businesses and visitors has become a top priority. All energy usage must today be reconsidered to make it efficient and optimal.»

Romande énergie

5.3 Observing the stars



Astronomers were the first to denounce light pollution back in the 1970s when they could no longer see the stars and carry out their research. They called for the attention of the public authorities to the increase in artificial light sources and their effect on the starry sky. It wasn't until the Grenelle de l'environnement in 2009 that the public authorities took a serious look at the question of harmful lighting, and from 2013 that the term "light pollution" was used by the Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie.

« The night sky: a treasure to protect. Light pollution is a grave attack on the curiosity of children .. young and old.»

Michel MAYOR, Nobel prizewinner for Physics

5.4 Preserving human health

Intrusive lighting, meaning the penetration of an exterior source of artificial light (lamplight, illuminated advertising panels) into the habitation, affects our organism and health adversely. Sleeping disorders caused by the constant presence of lighting bring with it a reduction in the production of melatonin, vital for the good working order of our organism. Melatonin is a hormone released by the pineal gland at night in the absence of light and which regulates our circadian rhythm (24 hour internal clock).



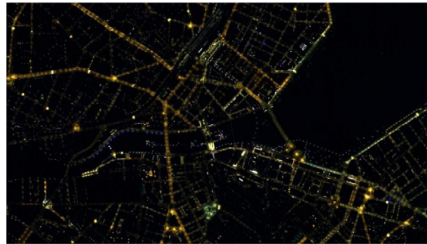
« Screen light harms our sleep ... and our imagination! For the darkness of night is the living screen of our dreams. »

Professeure Sophie SCHWARTZ, Neuroscience, Medical School, University of Geneva



6. A region committed to the cause:

6.1 Greater Geneva is working towards a wildlife corridor and encouraging awareness of light pollution



In parallel with the movement *La Nuit est belle!* and historically, action has been taken to witness the awareness of Greater Geneva in the fight against light pollution.

2013: photographing the canton at night from the air

2015: exhibition “Night corridors” cross border contract Champagne-Genevois

2018: spotlight on the night during the OFF of the Assises européennes de la transition énergétique

2018-9: exhibition “La nuit est belle ! » at the Museum of Natural History of Geneva

2021: prelude to the work on the cross border wildlife corridor

In 2021, Greater Geneva starts substantive work on a cross border wildlife corridor. First step: the acquisition of a satellite photo at night in Autumn, in collaboration with the canton of Vaud and Fribourg (French-speaking part) with the Communauté de communes du Pays d’Evian et Vallée d’Abondance, France.

The departments of Ain and the Haute-Savoie have also been approached.



«To make progress and sustain the collective momentum of La nuit est belle! Greater Geneva is adding a wildlife corridor of which the object is to preserve or recreate an ecological network favourable to night life. Thanks to the mobilisation of elected representatives and scientists from various disciplines, this major project will start in Autumn 2021. Rendez-vous at the assises européennes de la transition énergétique in Geneva, in January 2022, to see the first results.»

Sébastien JAVOGUES, Vice President for ecological transition and air quality at the Pôle métropolitain du Genevois français

«Territorial cooperation is essential to speeding up our action. The impact is stronger. That is why the Communauté de Communes du Pays d’Evian et Vallée d’Abondance have linked up with Greater Geneva for work on the wildlife corridor, a precious tool for our 22 communes who are in full swing concerning the renovation of public lighting and the preservation of night biodiversity.»

Nadine WENDLING, Vice President delegated to la Transition Ecologique et au Développement Durable à la communauté de communes du Pays d’Evian et Vallée d’Abondance

6.2 100 communes in the territory who turn their lights off all year round

In the Greater Geneva area, more than a hundred communes are engaged in a campaign against light pollution: about 50 of them extinguish night lighting totally or partially, others diminish the intensity of their public lighting, others reflect on how to suppress unnecessary lamps in accordance with the updating of their public light fixtures.

«Saint-Cergues will be participating in the second edition of La nuit est belle! by turning off its public lighting. And we will continue to do so after May 21. The commitment of the commune with regard to biodiversity and the preservation of the environment will continue until September 1 by reducing to a minimum artificial lighting. A beautiful way to see the night in a different light!»

Gabriel DOUBLET, Mayor of Saint-Cergues

«Positive feed-back from our citizens after the first edition of La nuit est belle! was a comfort to us in our desire to establish an ambitious Light Plan. Now finalised, it has been widely acclaimed by the Municipal Council and is at the stage of implementation as a work in progress. By the end, we will economise up to 70% on our costs for electricity for public lighting.»

Daniel ROSSELAT, Mayor of Ville de Nyon

«Turning off lamps in the darkness of the night all year round is one of the engagements of Vernier in our new approach to public lighting.»

Mathias BUSCHBECK, Administrative Councilor of the municipality de Vernier

The map of the communes which turn off their lighting over the year and other comments:

<https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/extinction-quotidienne/>



7. Going further

- How the project came about: <https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/lebilan-2019>
- Review of the first edition: <https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/le-bilan-2019>
- Centre of resources – bibliography: <https://www.lanuitestbelle.org/presse/outils>

8. Contacts

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