



Lighting Ourselves Less: Lights Out to Save Energy



On Friday, February 24th, "M'illumino di Meno" (Lighting Ourselves Less) is back for its 13th edition. "M'illumino di Meno" is the most important awareness campaign dedicated to energy conservation. The initiative is organized by Caterpillar, an Italian radio program that is produced and transmitted by Rai Radio 2. The i-Italy team on Central Park West is participating in Caterpillar's energy conservation initiative "M'illumino di Meno" (Lighting Ourselves Less). The staff will turn off their office's lights and work by candlelight for one hour. Stay tuned and take part in the initiative yourself! Turn off your lights in solidarity, even for a brief moment, and let us know via e-mail at editors@i-italy.org or on Facebook.

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Over the past several years, the topics of environmental sustainability, protection of the planet, and the dangers of climate change have become fundamental points of discussion in the media, art, politics, and society at large.

[Caterpillar](#) [3], Rai Radio 2's popular show hosted by [Massimo Cirri](#) [4] and [Sara Zambotti](#) [4], proposes ideas and practical solutions for anyone who wishes to participate in the great challenge to protect and to improve the quality of our ecosystems.



M'illumino di meno

The energy-conservation day entitled [M'illumino di Meno](#) [5] will take place this year on February 24th. Two hours of “energy silence” are held from 6pm to 8pm with the goal of turning off the lights in homes, offices, and institutions. Refraining from the use of other energy-consuming devices is also encouraged.

Caterpillar invites all listeners to share resources. Some possibilities include carpooling with coworkers, organizing community dinners at home, opening wifi networks to neighbors, and in general, sharing resources that are anti-waste and promote social interaction.

The initiative was born in February 2005, and it was the first social campaign both invented and enacted by Caterpillar, which, at the same time, functions as a communicative platform.

Little Actions for a Big Initiative

The gesture of reducing energy consumption is only the tip of the iceberg. The most important result of M'illumino di Meno is to spread a clear message regarding daily energy-consumption habits: from the shutting-down of appliances in standby to the use of energy-efficient lightbulbs, from the addition of low-flow faucets, to car-sharing and the separation of trash and recyclables.

The initiative involves public and private institutions such as town squares, schools, businesses, museums, sports teams, volunteer groups, shopkeepers, and even local artisans. The goal of the initiative is to promote a more balanced use of energy resources, to suggest ways to avoid waste, and to optimize energy use.

Over the course of the years, many important groups have participated in the *spegnimento* (switching-off). Some of Italy's most iconic locations are Rome's Colosseum, Pisa's Leaning Tower, Verona's Arena, and Siena's Piazza del Campo. In past years, the international edition of the *spegnimento* included Paris's Eiffel Tower; Vienna's Prater; London's Trafalgar Square, Nelson's Column, and Foreign Office; Sofia's National Theater; Edinburgh's Castle; and Athens's government buildings and the Chapel of St. George.

Another exceptional contribution was that of astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti who, from the International Space Station, photographed and Tweeted the *spegnimento* of the Italian peninsula: “There are things that only the darkness can frame. Turn off the light and turn on the imagination. [#MilluminoDiMeno](#) [6]” [[@AstroSamantha](#)].

Beyond Italy and Europe

Several incidents have recently shaken up the United States, and there has been much talk regarding climate change and its effects on the planet. It's important to spread this message of conservation here in the United States. This year, we ask that you make a concrete motion towards energy conservation and against wasting resources, perhaps regarding food, transport, or communication. Caterpillar states, “Together with you, we've turned off the lights on some of the most significant Italian and European monuments as a symbolic gesture of energy conservation. We would like this initiative to involve as many people as possible in the United States in order to shock the status quo and to raise awareness about energy conservation.”

*Caterpillar, a popular program on Rai Radio 2 hosted by Massimo Cirri and Sara Zambotti, has treated current events and modern society's matters in an informal and ironic way for the past 20 years.



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