



M'ILLUMINO DI MENO Energy Saving Day

What is Energy Saving Day

Energy Saving Day is an annual Italian communication campaign dedicated to saving energy that was launched on February 16th, 2005. Energy Saving Day is sponsored by the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Protection of Land and Sea since its third edition on February 16th, 2007.

Why on February 16th?

On the 16th of February, 2005 the Kyoto Protocol, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from developed nations, came into force.

Who started Energy Saving Day?

The initiative was first launched by Caterpillar, a popular and successful live radio program which reaches more than a million listeners per day. Caterpillar is broadcast by Radio2, the entertaining channel of RAI, the Italian Public Service Broadcaster. The program debuted on January 17th, 1997. The program airs from 6pm to 7:30pm, Monday to Friday. Caterpillar deals with major issues and themes in the world in an informal and ironic way which aims at underlining contradictions and paradoxes in our society.

What is Energy Saving Day about?

The day's philosophy is to convince as many people as possible to be dedicated to saving energy. It is asked that everybody reduce to the minimum of their own private energy use during the show's airtime from 6:00-7:30pm. By doing this the maximum visibility in the media and the largest participation by common people are concentrated on Energy Saving Day.

- The most visible effect is created by the "energy silence" which consists in the symbolic turning-off of most important monuments and the main Italian city squares.
- Institutions, general public, companies, shop-owners, schools, restaurants, gyms and any other kind of association will be participating in their own peculiar way: i.e. turning off shop window sign, computers or electronic equipment in laboratories, organizing candlelight dinners and so on.

Note: Being that February 16th, 2008 is a Saturday the fourth Energy Saving Day will be held on Friday February 15th, 2008. The main institutional sponsor will be the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea. In 2008 Energy Saving Day aims to be an international experience.

The education campaign

A month before the event will take place, during Caterpillar radio programme it will be explained what we can do to contribute to the initiative and moreover, how by changing our routine energy habits we may effectively reduce waste. Good practices, suggestions, hints and initiatives to emulate are described on Caterpillar by scientists and by common people. Hints explained by experts and "grandma's remedies" involve the audience in a thrilling, ethical and environmental competition of good practices.

The aim

- Contrast the changing global climate.
- Reach the less educated citizens on environmental issues.
- Talk about energy saving through media with spectacular turn-outs.
- Stimulate people to participate in order to feel important that they have also given their own personal contribution to change their energy use.

How to participate

- Switching off lights and all of the non-vital electrical devices on the Energy Saving Day from 6pm to 7:30pm.
- Sharing, during the show's program, one's personal contribution to improve the use of energy and resources such as electricity, heating, fuel and water.
- Listening to private or administration experiences that have saved on their own budget therefore reducing wastes.
- Inserting and writing on the show's website your own way to participate.
- Downloading and spreading available on-line material of the program site (advertisements, posters and dialogues on saving).

Participating examples

- The President of the Italian Republic, the Presidents of the Senate of Italy and the President of the Chamber of Deputies have turned off external buildings lights of Quirinale, Palazzo Madama and Montecitorio.
- These are the town administrations of the most important Italian cities joined the campaign: Rome has turned off The Colosseum, Pantheon and the Trevi Fountain; in Milan, the Cathedral, Palazzo Marino and Piazza della Scala; in Turin, the Mole (remarkable the switch-off during the Torino 2006 Olympics Games in 2006) and the Superga Basilica; in Verona, the Arena; in Florence, Palazzo Vecchio; in Bologna, Piazza Maggiore; in Venice, Piazza San Marco; in Naples, the Maschio Angioino; in Siena, Piazza del Campo; in Catania, Piazza Duomo; in Palermo, Piazza Pretoria; in Agrigento, Valle dei Templi.
- The British Embassy, in Rome, joined the campaign re-enforcing their "Think Green" initiative which has looked at every aspect of the Embassy's activities to improve its environmental performance.
- Thousands of restaurant owners have organized candle-light dinners and have offered menus prepared using low energy consumption, this, in 2007, was encouraged by a specific statement by the Ministry of Agriculture. City Hall meetings, association meetings, and sport team's trainings have been held in the dark.
- In schools, students have been appointed in charge of energy saving. Evaluations of the use of energy by the school buildings have been made. Education meetings and lectures on energy savings have been held, according to the classes' level.
- In stores and shopping centers - the reduction of shop window's illumination and the distribution of free kits on saving water and electricity.

Initiative success

- The participation and the media impact of the initiative has been growing on a yearly basis.
- Real savings of the day (as measured by the National Electricity Network) in 2006 was reduced by the equivalent of the daily consumption of a city the size of Turin. In 2007, it was as if 5 million lamps had been turned-off!
- Strong visibility reached through the media (national and local press, news and radio news) for the message of the urgent need to change our energy policies.
- Prizes and awards in environment communication have been obtained by the radio program's staff for this initiative.

www.caterueb.rai.it

caterpillar@rai.it