



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 23.11.2007
COM(2007) 739 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE**

under Article 5 of Directive 2000/84/EC on summer-time arrangements

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(Text with EEA relevance)

BACKGROUND

On 19 January 2001 the Council and the European Parliament jointly adopted the Directive on summer-time arrangements¹.

Article 5 of the Directive provides that the Commission is to submit a report on the impact of the provisions of the Directive on the sectors concerned to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. It also provides that the report is to be drawn up on the basis of the information made available to the Commission by each Member State by 30 April 2007.

This Communication constitutes the report required under Article 5 of Directive 2000/84/EC.

1. CHRONOLOGY OF EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Most Member States introduced summer time in the 1970s, although some had started applying it much earlier for varying lengths of time.

The *First Directive of 22 July 1980*, which entered into force in 1981, laid down a common date only for the beginning of the summer-time period. Successive Directives laid down a common date for the beginning, i.e. the last Sunday in March, and two dates for the end: one on the last Sunday in September applied by the continental Member States, and the other on the fourth Sunday in October for the United Kingdom and Ireland. This situation continued until the adoption of the seventh Directive (94/21/EC) of 30 May 1994, which for the first time provided for a common ending date, i.e. the last Sunday in October, from 1996 onwards. That Directive at last brought about the complete harmonisation of the calendar 16 years after the adoption of the first Directive. The eighth Directive (97/44/EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 1997² extended the provisions of the seventh Directive for a period of four years (from 1998 to 2001 inclusive).

Lastly, the present Directive extends the provisions of the eighth Directive for an unlimited period (in contrast to all the previous Directives). This is because, as is set out in the recitals to the Directive, the proper functioning of certain sectors requires stable, long-term planning. However, it is also stated that implementation of the Directive should be monitored by means of a report from the Commission.

¹ OJ L 31, 2.2.2001, p. 21.

² OJ L 206, 1.8.1997, p. 62.

2. SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUMMER TIME

Before it proposed the ninth Directive, the Commission conducted an in-depth analysis of the implications of summer time in the European Union Member States, i.e. changing the time twice per year and the fact that it is darker in the morning and lighter in the evening.

A study was carried out at the time by an independent consultant. The consultant's task was to review the various existing studies on the subject at both Community and national level, question experts in the various areas concerned, consult stakeholders and the Member States, and present conclusions and submit recommendations on the basis of the analyses and investigations carried out.

The Commission's main conclusions, based on that study and set out in the proposal for the current Directive, can be summarised as follows³:

1. More than 20 years on from the adoption of the first Directive in this field, the economic sectors seen as being the most affected, i.e. **agriculture, tourism and transport**, have embraced summer time and no longer question its *raison d'être*.
2. As regards **transport**, the introduction of complete harmonisation of the timetable has led to the removal of the major obstacles encountered in the past.
3. Summer time provides greater opportunities for all sorts of evening **leisure activities** because of the natural light available.
4. Given that studies in this area contradict one another, it is impossible to draw valid conclusions on the impact of summer time on the **environment**. This applies in particular to the question as to whether summer time leads to an increase or reduction in ozone production as compared with a scenario with no change in the time.
5. Summer time helps to **save energy** since less electricity is used for lighting in the evening due to the fact that it is lighter. However, the increased energy consumption for heating during the morning when the time is adjusted and the higher fuel consumption caused by a potential increase in traffic in the evenings when it is lighter have to be deducted from these savings. Also, the savings actually achieved are difficult to gauge and in any event are relatively small.
6. Most of the possible effects of summer time on **health** are linked to the fact that the body has adapted to the change in time in April and October. Specialists recognise that, at the current stage of research and know-how, most of the difficulties experienced are of short duration and are not a health hazard.
7. As regards **road safety**, the question is whether darker mornings, in particular in spring and autumn, and lighter evenings have an impact on the number of traffic accidents. The lack of sufficient data and the interaction of other factors such as weather conditions do not enable a definite causal link between summer time and the number of accidents to be established.

³ See summary of the conclusions set out in the explanatory memorandum to the proposal for Directive 2000/84/EC.

The information provided by the Member States for drawing up this report should make it possible to update and/or supplement the conclusions of the study.

3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUMMER TIME – SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE MEMBER STATES

Twenty-five Member States sent the Commission their comments on the impact of the summer-time arrangements in their country. As regards the other Member States, the Commission concludes that they do not have any specific information on the impact of summer time⁴.

The Member States' contributions can be summarised as follows:

3.1. Member States' opinion of the current arrangements

No Member State is calling for changes to the current arrangements. The majority of the Member States stress the importance of harmonising the summer-time timetable in the EU, in particular as regards transport.

Belgium is in favour of maintaining the current arrangements or, alternatively, applying summer time throughout the year.

3.2. Impact on the economic sectors most affected

Most Member States, partly on the basis of the results of consulting the sectors concerned, conclude that there is no indication of any significant impact of summer time on the economic sectors most affected in their country, i.e. agriculture, transport and tourism.

In *Latvia* the tourism experts regard summer time as having a positive impact on tourism to the extent that, for example, there is greater demand for leisure products (cycling, boating, etc).

Italy reports that the construction and agriculture sectors benefit from summer time, particularly in the south of the country, due to the fact that it is cooler in the morning than it would be at the same time of the day without summer time.

On the basis of the information available in the Member States it appears that the conclusion drawn in the proposal for the current Directive is still valid: the various economic sectors have embraced summer time.

3.3. New studies

A few Member States sent in information on recent quantitative studies, relating to the impact of summer time on *energy consumption, road safety and health*.

Energy

⁴ The Commission wrote to the Member States in June 2007 informing them of its intention to do so in cases where a Member State had not responded by the end of July 2007. This report is therefore based on all the information available to the Commission on 31 July 2007.

In *Bulgaria*, a statistical analysis carried out by the operator of the electricity system covering electricity consumption over the last three years shows that savings have resulted from non-use of artificial lighting estimated at 20.5 GWh per year, i.e. about 0.01% of the country's overall consumption in 2005⁵.

A study carried out in *France* in 2006 compared, on the basis of simulations, the present situation with a “without summer time” scenario. The study showed that summer time led to energy savings of 684 GWh (lighting and air conditioning) and additional consumption of 14 GWh for heating, i.e. a saving of 0.014% in overall consumption in 2005⁶. The study also showed that bringing forward the adjustment to summer time by one month would provide an additional saving of 45 GWh for lighting.

In *Slovenia*, various statistical analyses carried out by the electricity companies show that changing the time in March and October has only very little or no impact on electricity consumption.

In *Estonia*, the statistics show that in 2000 and 2001, when summer time was exceptionally not applied in that country, household electricity consumption during the period April-October was higher than in the years before and after 2000 and 2001. However, the difference was less than 10% and the ratio of consumption in summer to that in winter was similar to that found in years in which summer time was applied.

In *Latvia*, electricity consumption and the maximum load on the electricity system before and after the date on which the time was changed in spring were compared at the end of March 2006. The changes found in these two parameters were minimal.

In *Cyprus*, the Astronomical Society proposes in a report that the duration of summer time should be shortened and should only be applied between May and September. This would include those months with more than 12 hours of sunlight, except April, and an average temperature above 24°C. The report claims that energy savings could thus be achieved as compared with the current time system, although the claim is not backed up by any quantitative analysis.

Road safety

In *Estonia*, a comparative study of the number of accidents involving fatalities and casualties 30 days before and after the time adjustments in 2004 to 2006 did not show any significant statistical variations of the annual number of accidents.

Research by *Estradas de Portugal*⁷ did not reveal any direct link between summer time and road safety. This view has been confirmed by several transport experts.

Health

In *Finland*, in 2003 and 2004 two studies looked into the impact on the body of changing the time in March, based on a sample of 10 people. The studies found some impact on sleep and biorhythm in the four days following the time change. However, the authors stress that the

⁵ Source: statistics published by EURELECTRIC.

⁶ Source: statistics published by EURELECTRIC.

⁷ The public body in charge of road management in Portugal.

studies do not allow any conclusions to be drawn for the population as a whole because of the small size of the sample.

In *conclusion*, particularly as regards the impact on energy, some recent quantitative studies confirm that energy savings have been made, albeit small ones, in relation to overall energy consumption, but they do not take account of a potential rise in consumption due to the possible increase in road traffic in the evenings. It is also true that the energy savings on lighting will probably tend to decline as a result of the more widespread use of low-consumption bulbs, as pointed out by the French Association Against Double Summer Time (ACHED). However, only future experience will show to what extent these reductions in savings will be offset by greater savings in the field of air conditioning as a result of more widespread use of air conditioning in offices.

3.4. Public opinion

Opinion polls in the Member States

Some Member States sent in the results of recent opinion polls or public consultation exercises (over the internet) on summer time.

In *Estonia*, a poll conducted in 2001 showed that the number of proponents and opponents of summer time was almost identical.

In *Lithuania*, a poll conducted in 2006 showed that 55% were against and 32% for summer time.

In *Latvia*, two internet consultations were carried out in 2006. They showed that about 60% of those taking part were opposed to summer time. However, it should be pointed out that this result was not obtained using a representative sample of people but on the basis of people who decided to take part in the consultation.

According to a survey conducted by the CREDOC institute in *France* in 2005, about two thirds of the French are in favour of or do not care about summer time, i.e. since 1993 positive opinion has increased by 12 points while negative opinion has decreased by 13 points. However, in a survey conducted by SOFRES in 2002, 45% were in favour of summer time *throughout the year*, 31.4% did not care and 26.3% were opposed to summer time.

To conclude, the very small number of recent surveys on this subject do not enable valid conclusions to be drawn, especially since the degree of representativeness and the results of the surveys vary from one country to the next.

EUROBAROMETER

The Eurobarometer survey conducted in 1990 arrived at a satisfaction index of about 57.4% for the European Community as a whole.

The Eurobarometer survey conducted in 1993 on the date on which summer time ends showed that most people in the Community of Twelve were for the end of October (54.5%) as opposed to the end of September (38.4%), i.e. the current arrangements.

Contacts with associations and citizens

The Commission was regularly contacted by ACHED, a French association opposed to summer time in France and Europe. Among other things, ACHED sent in letters, notes, articles and reports – most of them from the 1980s and 1990s – in which the authors expressed their opposition to summer time for one reason or another. The association also referred to a number of older studies on the impact of summer time.

No other associations, including associations in the various sectors concerned, made their opinion known to the Commission.

However, the Commission occasionally receives correspondence from ordinary citizens calling for a change to the current arrangements (e.g. the abolition of summer time or the introduction of summer time all year round).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The information made available to the Commission for drawing up this report allows the conclusion to be drawn that the analysis set out in the proposal for the Directive remains valid: apart from the fact that it provides greater opportunities for a wide range of evening leisure activities and produces some energy savings, summer time has little impact and the current arrangements are not a subject at the forefront of people's minds in the EU Member States.

Against this background, the Commission takes the view that the summer-time arrangements as introduced by the Directive continue to be appropriate. No Member State has expressed a wish to abandon summer time or change the provisions of the current Directive. On the contrary, it is important to maintain the harmonised timetable to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market, which is the main objective of the Directive.