

Summer-time arrangements: consequences and timetable for 2002 to 2006 (8th Directive 97/44 /EC)

2000/0140(COD) - 23/11/2007 - Follow-up document

Article 5 of Directive 2000/84/EC on summer-time arrangements provides that the Commission must submit a report on the impact of the Directive's provisions 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. In presenting this report the Commission is fulfilling its obligations in accordance with Article 5.

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. In summary, and based on the information forwarded to it, the Commission makes the following findings :

- 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. Indeed Belgium is in favour of either maintaining the current arrangements or, alternatively, applying summer time throughout the year.
- Most Member States 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 tourism experts regard summer time as having a positive impact on tourism. 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.

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. They are as follows :

Energy: 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. This is based largely on studies conducted in Bulgaria, Latvia, France, Estonia, Slovenia and Cyprus.

Road Safety: As regards road safety, the main question that needs to be addressed 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. Two countries did conduct some studies into this question. 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 did not reveal any direct link between summer time and road safety. This view has been confirmed by several transport experts.

Health: In 2003 and 2004 two Finnish 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 studies do not allow any conclusions to be drawn for the population as a whole because of the small size of the sample.

Public opinion:

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and France sent in the results of recent opinion polls or public consultation exercises (over the internet) on summer time. However, the very small number of recent surveys on this subject do not enable valid conclusions to be drawn, especially since the degree of representation and the results of the surveys vary from one country to the next.

Eurobarometer: A 1990 Eurobarometer survey found a satisfaction index of about 57.4% for the summer time in the European Community as a whole. A 1993 Euro barometer survey, taken on the date on which summer time ended, showed that a majority of citizens in the then EU-12 were for in favour of summertime ending on the last day of October (54.5%) as opposed to the end of September (38.4%).

Contacts with associations and citizens: The Commission has been contacted regularly by ACHED, a French association opposed to summer time in France and Europe. 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).

Conclusions:

The Commission concludes its report by stating that the main objective of the Directive remains valid. Current arrangements offer a wide range of evening leisure activities and some energy savings, whilst having little or no impact on overall economic activity. 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.