

Seasonal changes of time

2018/0332(COD) - 12/09/2018 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to end seasonal changes of time.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: EU legislation on summer-time arrangements was first introduced in 1980 with the objective of unifying existing national summer-time practices and schedules. Since 2001, EU summer-time arrangements have been governed by [Directive 2000/84/EC](#) setting out the obligation on all Member States to switch to summer-time on the last Sunday of March and to switch back to their standard time ("winter-time") on the last Sunday of October.

The system of bi-annual clock changes has been **increasingly questioned**, by citizens, by the European Parliament, and by a growing number of Member States.

In [its resolution](#) of 8 February 2018, Parliament asked the Commission to carry out an assessment of summer-time arrangements as provided for in Directive 2000/84/EC and, where appropriate, to submit a proposal for revision. The Commission has also carried out a public consultation, which generated around 4.6 million replies, of which **84%** were in favour of discontinuing the bi-annual clock changes while 16% wanted to keep them.

Against this background, the Commission considers that the **arrangements for summer time should be terminated in a coordinated manner** in order to avoid any major disruption to the internal market caused by divergences between Member States in this area.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: based on the evidence available on the effects of the EU summer-time arrangements, the conclusion can be drawn that a continued harmonised regime – whereby all Member States abolish the bi-annual time changes – would remain beneficial for the functioning of the internal market.

Effects on other areas are rather inconclusive and are likely to depend on the geographical location and whether Member States choose to stay with permanent summer- or permanent winter-time. The impact of this choice therefore needs to be assessed at national level. A change of system will also bring about transition costs that should be considered.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes to **end seasonal changes in European time from 2019 onwards**, while leaving the Member States free to decide whether to permanently apply summer time or winter time. Directive 2000/84/EC will be repealed. The proposed directive provides that **the last mandatory summer-time period will start on 31 March 2019** at 1.00 a.m.

Member States wishing to return permanently to winter time may make a final change of seasonal time on Sunday 27 October 2019 (at 01.00 in the morning). From this date, seasonal time changes will no longer be possible.

Member States remain free to make changes to their standard time that are not linked to seasonal changes. In order to avoid disturbances Member States should **inform the Commission** of their intention to change their standard time 6 months before changes take effect.

Given that the Member States will have to apply Directive as from 1 April 2019, the Directive provides that each Member State must, by **27 April 2019 at the latest**, on the basis of possible consultations and assessments at national level and in concertation with other Member States, **notify the Commission of its intention to permanently apply a standard time corresponding to their current winter-time, rather than to their current summer-time.**