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

2000/0140(COD) - 20/06/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal for a Directive on summer-time arrangements in order to harmonise the beginning and end dates in every Member State. CONTENT : most of the Member States introduced summer-time during the 1970s, while others had taken such action much earlier for periods of greater or lesser length. The first Council Directive of 22 July 1980 on summer-time arrangements took effect in 1981. Its sole aim was gradually to harmonise the dates on which summer-time began and ended. The first Directive did not achieve that aim entirely since only the starting date was harmonised in all of the Member States. The subsequent Directives laid down two finishing dates: the last Sunday in September in the continental Member States and the fourth Sunday in October for Ireland and the United Kingdom. The timetable for summer time was fully and finally harmonised when the Seventh Directive 94/12/EC was adopted in 1994. This provided for common starting and ending dates for summer-time in all of the Member States without exception, beginning in 1996. Finally, the Eighth Directive 97/44/EC of 22 July 1997 extended the arrangements under the Seventh Directive for a period of four years (1998-2001 inclusive). Consequently summer-time begins on the last Sunday in March and ends on the last Sunday in October throughout the European Union without exception. When the Member States adopted the 8th Directive after thorough legal consultation and extensive discussion they refused, by a broad majority, to include an exemption in the Directive that allowed one Member State not to apply the summer-time arrangements. In so doing, they felt that the Community Directive was binding in its entirety and that it required the application, at one and the same time, of summer-time arrangements and a common timetable for the dates and times when summer-time arrangements must begin and end. This Directive provides that from 2002 onwards, the summer-time period shall begin, in every Member State, at 1.00a.m, Greenwhich Mean-Time, on the last Sunday in March and that it shall end in every Member State at 1.00 a.m on the last Sunday in October. Member States shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 31 December 2001 at the latest.