

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(81) 137 final

Brussels, 27 March 1981

Proposal for a  
Second Council Directive  
on Summertime Arrangements

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(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

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Proposal for a Second Council Directive on  
Summertime Arrangements

Explanatory Memorandum

Introduction

The Council of Ministers adopted on 22 July 1980 a Directive on summertime arrangements which set 29 and 28 March as the dates on which summer time should begin in each Member State in 1981 and 1982 respectively (1). Article 4 of the Directive states that the Council, acting on a Commission proposal and as soon as possible, will adopt more comprehensive measures for the harmonisation of summertime.

2. The case for adopting uniform summer time arrangements in the Community in the interests of cross-frontier transport and telecommunications and as a practical demonstration of Community solidarity has lost none of its force. Indeed, it is desirable for a single summer time period to be adopted as widely as possible in Europe as a whole. The indications are that the best way of achieving this may be for the Community, having taken full account of the views and practice of other countries, to take the lead in adopting suitable arrangements.

3. The Commission has already proposed common end dates for summer time in the Community in 1981 and 1982 (11 and 10 October respectively). The purpose of the present proposal is to propose common dates for starting and ending summer time in 1983 and subsequent years. For the sake of convenience the proposed dates are expressed in terms of formulae.

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(1) Council Directive no. 80/737/EEC, OJ no. L 205/17 of 7.8.80

Start of the period

4. Although agreement has already been reached on common starting dates for summer time in 1981 and 1982, some Member States continue to harbour national preferences which would normally tend to produce different dates. For example, two Member States have until now employed a formula which produces dates between 16 and 22 March, always before their Easter. At least one of these Member States attaches importance, on general social grounds, to Easter's always falling within the summer time period. In informal discussion with the Commission's services another Member State has suggested the penultimate Sunday in March, which gives a similar range of dates (18 to 24 March) to the formula just mentioned. One delegation suggested the last Sunday in March, which would give the range 25 to 31 March. Finally, two Member States see attractions in choosing the Sunday nearest to 1 April, which gives a range of dates from 29 March to 4 April.

5. In spite of these differences it is nevertheless clearly essential to preserve in the years after 1982 the common position on the start of summer time which has been agreed for 1981 and 1982. A compromise between the national preferences is required which cannot escape a degree of arbitrariness. The best way ahead might be to propose dates falling somewhere near the middle of the preferred ranges, subject to ensuring that Easter always falls within the summer time period, a criterion whose attractions the Commission recognises. On this basis, the Commission's proposal is that each Member State should start summer time on the last Sunday in March, unless this is celebrated as Easter in one or more Member States, in which case summer time should start on the previous Sunday<sup>(1)</sup>. This formula would give starting dates falling between 19 and 31 March in the years 1983 - 2000, as follows :

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(1) Easter Sunday as celebrated by the western churches is due to fall on the last Sunday in March in 1986, 1989, 1991 and 1997. The Orthodox Easter does not fall in March.

	<u>March</u>
1983	27
1984	25
1985	31
1986	23
1987	29
1988	27
1989	19
1990	25
1991	24
1992	29
1993	28
1994	27
1995	26
1996	31
1997	23
1998	29
1999	28
2000	26

It will however be noted that except in 1989, when the Easter of the western churches falls very early, all the dates fall within the eight day range 23 - 31 March.

End of the period

6. The Community has not yet been able to adopt common dates for the end of the summer time period. Two Member States currently employ a formula which produces dates between 23 and 29 October. Two other Member States are inclined to prefer the last Sunday in September, which implies a range of dates from 24 to 30 September. The other Member States could probably accept a compromise between these two positions, which, in the years 1983 to 2000, would produce dates usually four but on three occasions five weeks apart. In these circumstances there are two possible simple compromise formulae: that summer time should end either on the second Sunday in October (producing a range of dates from 8 to 14 October) or on the third Sunday (producing the range 15 to 21 October). The option which comes much closer to splitting the difference between the existing preferences of certain Member States is the second Sunday, and this the Commission proposes.

Time at which the clocks should be changed

7. Council Directive no. 80/737/EEC provides for summer time to be introduced in each Member State at 1 a.m. G.M.T.. The Commission proposes that this precedent should be followed for both the beginning and the end of summer time in the years from 1983 onwards.

Exclusion of Greenland and overseas territories of Member States from scope of measure

8. It seems appropriate, as it was done in Council Directive no. 80/737/EEC, to exclude these areas from the scope of the Directive now proposed.

Conclusion

9. The time has come for the Community to adopt uniform summer time arrangements on a permanent basis. The starting and end dates proposed by the Commission in the attached proposal for a Council Directive represent reasonable compromises between the preferences of certain Member States, and would involve these in only marginal adjustments of their present positions.

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Proposal for a Second Council Directive on Summertime Arrangements

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 100 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the Opinion of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee ;

Whereas Council Directive 80/737/EEC of 22 July 1980 on summertime arrangements (1) introduced a common date and time for the beginning of the summertime period in the Community for the years 1981 and 1982 ;

Whereas Article 4 of that Directive states that the Council, acting on a Commission proposal and as soon as possible, will adopt more comprehensive measures for the harmonization of summertime ;

Whereas such measures are highly desirable, in particular in the interests of facilitating and reducing the costs of transport and telecommunications between Member States ;

Whereas they should provide for common dates for the beginning and end of the summertime period for the years from 1983 onwards ;

Whereas for geographical reasons common summertime arrangements need not be applied to Greenland or to the overseas territories of the Member States ;

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE :

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(1) OJ no. L 205/17 of 7.8.80

Article 1

For the purposes of this Directive the expression "summertime period" means the period of the year during which the time is advanced by sixty minutes in relation to the time for the rest of the year.

Article 2

Member States shall take the necessary measures in order that, in 1983 and subsequent years, the summertime period shall, in each Member State :

a) begin at 1 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time on the last Sunday in March, unless this is celebrated as Easter in one or more Member States, in which case it shall begin on the previous Sunday ;

b) end at 1 a.m. GMT on the second Sunday in October.

Article 3

This Directive shall not concern Greenland or the overseas territories of the Member States.

Article 4

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at

For the Council

The President