

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(76) 27 final.

Brussels, 30 January 1976.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON SUMMER TIME ARRANGEMENTS.

(submitted to the Council by the Commission)

COM(76) 27 final.

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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. In 1976 four Member States (France, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom) will apply summer time, that is a period in summer during which the clocks are put forward one hour in relation to the time of the rest of the year. In Ireland and the United Kingdom summer time will be one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and will thus be GMT + 1; in France and Italy it will be two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT + 2), as these two countries' winter time is already GMT + 1.

2. Spain and Andorra are the only non-Member States with a common frontier with the Community which adopt summer time - GMT + 2, as in France and Italy.

3. The aim of moving to summer time is to make the evenings lighter, with a view to facilitating social activities and perhaps saving energy.

4. Within the Community there will be three different summer time periods in 1976:

France : 28 March - 26 September

Italy : 30 May - 25 September

Ireland and United Kingdom: 21 March - 24 October.

Spain and Andorra have chosen a fourth different period: 11 April - 2 October.

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5. These differences of period will certainly give rise to some difficulties, particularly for transport, other communications, commerce and contacts in general between the countries concerned. To take just one example, the time relationship between London and Paris will change four times in 1976: from 1 January to 20 March the United Kingdom has GMT and France GMT + 1; from 21 to 27 March the two countries will have GMT + 1; between 28 March and 25 September the United Kingdom will have GMT + 1 and France GMT + 2; from 26 September to 23 October the two countries will again each have GMT + 1; and between 24 October and the end of the year the United Kingdom will once more have GMT and France GMT + 1.

6. Such a situation brings problems for international transport, especially passenger transport: timetables are made more complicated and the life of the traveller and of the transport undertakings is made more difficult. Moreover, international telecommunications, such as social or business telephone calls, may also suffer from the uncertainty which tends to result from repeated changes of the time relationship. All this creates certain difficulties for the economic relationships of the countries concerned.

7. It therefore seems desirable for all the countries which adopt summer time to adopt it for the same period.

8. The period of summer time currently adopted in Italy has the advantage of corresponding with that of the European railways' summer timetable. In other respects, however, the period seems too short: in particular, it seems to start too late (the end of May) for maximum benefit to be obtained from summer time in spring. The Commission therefore proposes a period of some six and a half months, that is, intermediate in length between the periods adopted by France and by Ireland and the United Kingdom.

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9. As for the dates on which the summer time period should begin and end, it is desirable to choose a Sunday so as to minimise complications for the transport undertakings and for commerce in general. The Commission proposes the following periods for the years 1977, 1978 and 1979:

1977: 3 April - 16 October
1978: 2 April - 15 October
1979: 1 April - 14 October

Among other factors, this choice reflects the fact that under current Italian legislation on the subject, summer time cannot begin before 31 March.

10. It is also desirable that the moment at which the clocks are changed should be the same in all the countries concerned. This will not be so in 1976: the change will take place at 2 a.m. in Ireland and the United Kingdom, at 1 a.m. in France and at midnight in Italy (and in Spain). Finally, it is important to choose an off-peak period in order to minimise the complications for transport in particular: the Commission proposes that as from 1977 the clocks should be changed at 1 a.m. GMT, that is at the following local times:

Start of the period:

Countries where summer time is GMT + 1	1 a.m.
Countries where summer time is GMT + 2	2 a.m.

End of the period:

Countries where summer time is GMT + 1	2 a.m.
Countries where summer time is GMT + 2	3 a.m.

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11. Adoption by the Council of this proposal would not oblige the Member States to introduce summer time. It would, however, mean that any Member State applying summer time during the period 1977-1979, or during any one of those years, would be required to conform to the prescribed periods, even if it was a country which does not yet apply summer time.

12. Since some Member States already apply summer time whereas others do not, it follows that, even after the adoption of this proposal, the time relationship between these two groups of countries will change twice a year, and this will still raise certain problems for international communications. Now, the Commission has already drawn attention, in its Communication to the Council of 23 June 1975 on the introduction of summer time in the Community (1), to the advantages, from the standpoints of economic and social life, international communications and energy saving as well as on the political and psychological level in general, of the adoption of summer time by the Member States as a whole and by as many as possible of the non-member countries concerned. In this context the Commission considers the present proposal as a first step towards a more comprehensive harmonisation of summer time arrangements, and reserves the right to propose further measures. The Council should in any case adopt before 1 April 1979, on a proposal from the Commission, summer time arrangements for the years from 1980.

13. The Council should adopt the present proposal before 1 April 1976, in order to allow the transport undertakings to take account of the new arrangements in their 1977 timetables.

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COUNCIL DIRECTIVE ON SUMMER TIME 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 those Member States which apply summer time apply it during different periods;

Whereas this situation directly affects the working of the common market by causing difficulties especially for transport and other communications, commerce and contacts in general between the States involved;

Whereas the approximation of the regulations of Member States to achieve a single period of summer time would effectively remove these difficulties and would moreover constitute a first step towards a more comprehensive harmonisation of summer time arrangements;

Whereas the first instance this period should be fixed in for 1977, 1978 and 1979;

Whereas the Council should, on a proposal from the Commission,
decide before 1 April 1979, on the basis of experience
in 1977 and 1978, on the summer time arrangements
to be adopted for 1980 and subsequent years,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DIRECTIVE:

Article 1

In this Directive, the term "summer time" means the period of
the year, including summer, during which the time is advanced by
sixty minutes in relation to the time for the rest of the year.

Article 2

Any Member State which applies summer time during 1977, 1978 or
1979 shall apply it for the following periods:

1977: 3 April - 16 October

1978: 2 April - 15 October

1979: 1 April - 14 October

Article 3

The period of summer time shall begin and end at 1 a.m. Greenwich
Mean Time.

Article 4

On a proposal from the Commission, the Council shall decide
before 1 April 1979 on the summer time arrangements to be adopted for
1980 and subsequent years.

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Article 5

The Member States shall inform the Commission of the measures taken with a view to the implementation of this Directive.

Article 6

This Directive is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

