

21st November
2017

Meeting of the Council of the European Union (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 4th and 5th December 2017

“ANY OTHER BUSINESS” REQUEST BY THE FINNISH DELEGATION

Topic: EU summer-time arrangements and recent developments in Finland

Finland is asking for the inclusion of an “Any Other Business” point on the agenda of the December (5th) Transport Council.

Objective:

By raising this AOB point at the December Transport Council, Finland would like to inform the delegations about the national discussions on the summer-time arrangements, currently regulated at the EU-level and harmonized through directive 2000/84/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on summer-time arrangements.

By raising the AOB, Finland would also like to inquire whether the Commission has been reviewing or is planning to review EU-wide summer-time arrangements in the near future.

Reasons:

The abolition of summer-time, or daylight saving time (DST) as it is more commonly known, has recently been discussed in some EU Member States and the European Parliament. The European Parliament and its research service published a research on this topic in October 2017, signaling benefits and inconveniences caused by the DST. The European Commission provided its most recent report on the effects of the summer-time arrangements in 2014.

The Finnish Parliament received in June 2017 a citizens’ initiative on the abolition of summer-time legislation, signed by over 70 000 citizens and raising concern i.e. about the negative impacts of summer-time arrangement on citizens’ health.

Following the Citizens’ initiative, the Finnish Parliament and its Transport and Communications Committee produced a report on the matter. In conclusion, the Committee decided to support the abolishment of summer-time changes and noted that, according to experts consulted, the practice has more disadvantages than advantages.

However, the EU directive 2000/84/EC regulates summer-time changes unequivocally and has a binding effect on all EU member states. Thus, the Committee concluded that it is not possible to abolish summer-time changes by a national-level decision. With this in mind, the Committee urged the Government to raise the issue on EU level and work actively with the aim of abolishing summer-time changes preferably in a uniform manner across the European Union.

Finland and Ms. Anne Berner, Minister of Transport and Communications, has sent a letter to Commissionaire Violeta Bulc in November, informing about the developments on this topic in Finland and inquiring about the more recent Commission reviews and possible plans to repeal the Directive 2000/84/EC on summer-time arrangements.

By raising this AOB point at the December Transport Council, Finland would like to inform delegations about the national discussions on the topic. Key point for the AOB is also to enquire whether the Commission has been reviewing or is planning to review EU-wide summer-time arrangements in the near future.