

## ***Experts present a transition plan to end clock changes and establish permanent natural time zones in Europe***

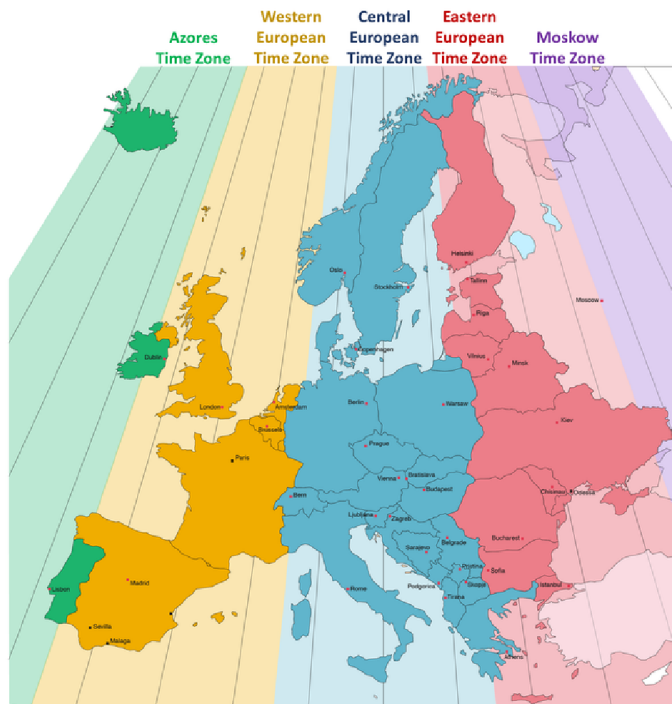
*The European Union Parliament approved the end of seasonal clock changes back in 2019 but the Member States cannot decide on how to proceed. Now, a group of renowned experts have proposed a transition plan showing an easy and beneficial solution for all Member States.*

The European Commission presented in 2018 [a proposal to end seasonal time changes](#) in 2019, leaving the Member States the freedom to decide their standard time. The European Parliament also adopted its [position](#) in 2019, supporting the stop to the seasonal clock changes by 2021. **It is now in the hands of the EU Council**, in which all Member States are represented, **to adopt a final position** on the issue and to agree amongst Member States which should be their standard time.

The current energy crisis, together with health and economic crises faced because of COVID-19 and the Ukraine war, make a decision about clock changes even more urgent, as eliminating clock changes and living in the correct time zone could provide benefits in terms of health, economy, and the environment. According to the proposal presented, maintaining clock changes has no significant effects on energy saving, with some studies even showing that **it increases energy spending**.

After signing the [Barcelona Declaration on Time Policies](#) (2021), that has as one of its goals to “*Promote the debate among the scientific community and the relevant policy makers regarding the end of seasonal time changes, establishing health and well-being as main criteria while respecting individual freedom.*” a group of experts and advocates was created. The group includes renowned chronobiologists such as **Till Roenneberg**, **Martha Merrow**, and **Erik Herzog**, as well as key organisations advocating for healthy time zones, namely the **International Alliance for Natural Time**, the **European Biological Rhythms Society**, and the **European Medical Association**.

They have worked together this past year in order to help Member States finally take that decision, by elaborating a [proposal on implementing permanent time zones in the European Union](#). The proposal involves aligning the different countries' time zones as close as possible to their solar time. This means that each country will have the time zone that better reflects their geographical situation, as this is the best way to reap the benefits for health, economy, safety, and the environment, without disrupting international trade. The time zones map proposed would be as shown below:



To adopt this final situation, the experts propose a two-step plan:

- **Step 1:** All EU countries **abolish the clock change in spring** and remain on the clock time they use in winter. For those countries whose recommended time zone is their current standard time, no further steps need to be taken.
- **Step 2:** Those countries whose recommended time zone is not yet their current standard time, additionally **turn back their clocks one last time by one hour in autumn**, in order to adopt their recommended time zone as their new standard time.

These countries are: Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

According to the experts, this should go together **with awareness-raising campaigns**, as well as **support** for those sectors that will be most affected by the change, so they can **swiftly adapt** to the new situation.

The key argument to adopt this proposal is that misaligned clocks **increase sleep deprivation** and **social jetlag** in the majority of the population, which is the main cause for the **significant negative effects** on human **health, economy, and safety**, as has been demonstrated by numerous researchers covering many fields of expertise.

As Ariadna Güell, co-coordinator of the Barcelona Time Use Initiative and one of the promoters of the group, states: “This proposal is easy to implement and will improve the health of many and save energy. We hope that this proposal will help **unblock the debate**, and have a practical conversation on how to make the end of clock changes possible within the EU”

**Additional material:**

For general enquiries about the proposal and the group that wrote it, please contact us at: [communication@timeuse.barcelona](mailto:communication@timeuse.barcelona)

If you would like to reach to someone on the group for a specific country, find below the contact details:

- **Belgium** - Belgische Vereniging voor Stabiel, Natuurlijk Uur (Ann Ceusters): [info@zomerruur.com](mailto:info@zomerruur.com)
- **France** - La Méridienne (Maryvonne Bauer): [lameridienne@hotmail.fr](mailto:lameridienne@hotmail.fr)
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- **Netherlands** - Platform Betere Tijden (Ticia Luengo Hendriks): [ticia@beteretijden.org](mailto:ticia@beteretijden.org)
- **Sweden** - NormalTid Alltid (Christina Svensson): [info@normaltidalltid.nu](mailto:info@normaltidalltid.nu)
- **Spain** - Barcelona Time Use Initiative for a Healthy Society (Marta Junqué): [communication@timeuse.barcelona](mailto:communication@timeuse.barcelona)

If you would like to set an interview with a scientist that has studied the effects of DST/ time zones on our society, we can facilitate the contact to the following list of researchers:

Name	Institute	Country
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Eva C. Winnebeck	Institute for Medical Psychology, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	DE
Thomas Kantermann	Institute Director at FOM University	DE
Marijke Gordijn	Department of Chronobiology, University of Groningen	NL
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Dr. Gonzalo Pin	Head of the paediatric unit at Quiron Hospital, Valencia, Spain	ES

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