WRITTEN QUESTION P-6393/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Resetting of clocks between summer and winter

Each year, winter begins with the clocks being put back. The main aim of doing this is supposed to be to save energy, as previously it was sufficient to switch on public lighting one hour later.

Nowadays, however, the situation is far more flexible: street lights switch themselves on and off in response to the light level rather than the time of day. In addition to technological development, changes in consumer behaviour call into question the attainment of the objective previously envisaged.

An article published in the Los Angeles Times on 12 March 2008 cites research performed in the State of Indiana which showed that 92 towns had abolished the resetting of clocks, while 15 had adopted it. An analysis of energy consumption revealed that the transition to summer time did not save a single cent: on the contrary, it resulted in extra consumption to the tune of $8.6 m in one year.

According to data from the Budapest Electricity Works, because of changes in behaviour and technological development, there is no longer any perceptible reduction in electricity consumption in Hungary on account of the clocks being reset by an hour.

In the light of the Union's energy saving objectives, does the resetting of clocks genuinely result in reduced energy consumption and yield economic benefits, particularly if account is taken of the additional expenditure involved (timetables, technical resetting, etc.)? If not, will the Commission make a recommendation to the Member States with regard to uniform European system requirements?