

Select Committee on the European Union

Internal Market Sub-Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Discontinuing seasonal changes of time

Thursday 5 September 2019

10.30 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Baroness Donaghy (The Chairman); Lord Carter of Coles; Lord Lansley; Lord Lilley; Baroness Prashar; Lord Shipley; Lord Russell of Liverpool; Lord Vallance of Tummel; Lord Wigley.

Evidence Session No. 1

Heard in Public

Questions 1 - 9

Witnesses

[I](#): Dr Katy Hayward, Senior Fellow, The UK in a Changing Europe; Dr Heather Rolfe, Head of Research, Demos; and Mr Pieter Cleppe, Head of Brussels Office, Open Europe.

Examination of witnesses

Dr Katy Hayward, Dr Heather Rolfe and Mr Pieter Cleppe.

Q1 **The Chairman:** Welcome and thank you very much for coming to this public evidence session. The Committee will be asking a number of questions, of which you have probably been given prior notice. Thank you very much for starting off this inquiry for us.

We have done some preliminary investigations, but we are getting down to the real nitty-gritty. It is fair to say that it has been quite difficult to get this one moving; it is a slow mover. People have realised that there might be some impact, whether we are in or out of the EU, and are starting to identify with the issue, but it is quite a slow burner. The response in Europe was quite interesting. When you analyse it, about 70% of the response was from Germany, and the total shows that only a very few states have taken any interest. We know that Ireland has had a set of public consultations, so any

comments you have about where we are at the moment would be very useful.

Would you introduce yourselves and say a few words about your background before we go into general questions? By the way, this is a public session. It will be recorded, and you will have the opportunity to correct the transcript at the end.

Dr Katy Hayward: Thank you very much for hearing evidence from me this morning. I am a political sociologist and a senior fellow at The UK in a Changing Europe. I am based in Queen's University Belfast. I have over 20 years' experience of researching the impact of European integration on the Irish border, and in relation to the Good Friday Belfast agreement. I have done a lot of work on the possible impacts of Brexit, including research in the central border region.

Mr Pieter Cleppe: Thank you for inviting me. I am a Belgian citizen. Since 2008, I have represented the British think tank Open Europe in Brussels, so I have been quite involved in looking at EU-UK relations and EU policy in general.

Dr Heather Rolfe: I am head of research at Demos. I have been in place for eight days. Before that, I was at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research where I led on employment and social policy. I am here today with my expertise in research methods, so I will be commenting on the methods that have been used so far to consult the public, both within Europe and in other countries, and on what might be the best way to proceed in consulting the public and having a truly democratic process in what looks like quite an important issue, at least to some people.

Q2 **Baroness Prashar:** How aware do you think the UK public are about the proposal now that it has been published? Do the levels of awareness differ in regions where it is likely to have greater impact?

Dr Heather Rolfe: Awareness is probably fairly limited. There are the people who have been polled or who have at least responded to the poll, but across European countries, in each case, less than 1% of the population responded, except in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg. In the UK, there has been fairly limited media coverage of the issue. It has been covered in some publications. The BBC did a piece; ITV did a short piece, including a video, explaining the proposals to people. There has been coverage in some magazines, such as *Wired* and *Cosmopolitan*. Those publications have covered issues involving health, industry and social factors.

In preparation, at Demos we have done a bit of analysis of social media, in particular Reddit, which suggests that social media have raised quite a few issues around health and road safety and concern about Ireland. In the UK, there have been a couple of opinion polls and research by YouGov that you might have come across. They have quite different findings from the European consultation and show that 39% want change, but only 29% in Scotland. That is an immediate difference that you will probably be interested in exploring. There are also some differences as to whether the population would prefer GMT or BST all year round. In answer to your

question, there is probably very low awareness in the UK that this proposal is on the cards.

Dr Katy Hayward: In relation to Northern Ireland, it is immediately a sensitive issue that could be sensationalised somewhat. Although there has been the same coverage, such as the BBC, there has not been a great public response to it, or it has not really been picked up. In a survey I conducted with the Irish Central Border Area Network, which involved 1,000 respondents, one respondent mentioned it as a potential issue. Similarly, in a deliberative forum run by a colleague of mine, Professor John Garry, one person raised it. It is very much people with an eye to these issues and who watch what is happening in the EU who are bringing it forward, but at the moment there is no great debate about it.

Baroness Prashar: Are there regional variations? You have given a general picture, but are there regional variations?

Dr Heather Rolfe: Within the UK, yes. The YouGov survey showed more support in most regions, except in Scotland where there was more opposition to change, presumably because it would be very dark in the morning. If it gets light at 9, which is already quite late, then it would be 10 o'clock. There are small regional variations. Scotland is clearer.

Variation across social groups also came out of that survey. Women, for example, are less in favour of a change. There are some social class differences. I would conclude from it that, other than the fairly clear Scotland/England and Wales difference—the poll did not cover Northern Ireland—it is quite difficult to explain why those differences exist. One social class difference suggests that lower social classes would be less in favour of lighter mornings, possibly because of shift work, particularly in the case of NHS shift workers, who I know have submitted evidence to the inquiry.

We have those headline findings, but we do not have the reasons why people have those preferences. The danger particularly expressed in the EU consultation is that 90% of the people who responded regarded it as a very salient issue. On a scale of nought to 10 they saw it as a seven, but when NatCen asked questions of their panel about time change, 43% considered it to be a salient issue. Almost any data we have at the moment are from people who are not really informed and are making the decision very much on their own personal experiences. They have had negative experiences either way and are not really thinking of the wider public good, as they might do if they were better informed and there was a better process of consultation.

Baroness Prashar: Have you any evidence from Europe about what is happening in other member states in terms of awareness?

Dr Heather Rolfe: Other member states have carried out separate consultations, or are going to. Finland committed to starting a public consultation this month, and Germany, even though it took part in the EU consultation and had a heavy response, is going to have a consultation but hasn't committed to a date. There are various moves, but there are no comparative data that I am aware of, other than the EU survey, which is somewhat flawed because

Comment []: 43%
<http://natcen.ac.uk/blog/daylight-savings-is-it-time-for-a-change>

Comment []: Time?

of the very low response rate from the UK and does not give you anything to go on.

Lord Vallance of Tummel: In the consultations, was there any evidence to suggest that those who were consulted felt that seasonal changes were bad for their health, which seems to be one of the fundamental reasons for doing this?

Dr Heather Rolfe: I do not think it goes into that kind of detail. It is something people raise. In the Reddit analysis we did, health was one of the issues mentioned in discussion. It has been brought up. The work that has been done has not gone into that level of detail, which is why it would be a good idea, but then you have to distinguish personal perceptions that might not be correct. There is some evidence about an increased number of strokes and heart attacks around the time of clock change, but that could be because of seasonal changes; in colder weather, there are more infections and so on. To have that kind of detail, you need a different process, which has not been done yet.

Lord Vallance of Tummel: One of the fundamental reasons for the proposal in the first place is very unclear, because there is no strong evidence on whether the health issue is significant. It certainly does not seem to be terribly significant in the eyes of those who were consulted.

Dr Heather Rolfe: Okay.

Q3 **Lord Lansley:** Our starting point is that the European Commission has made a legislative proposal. Perhaps you can tell us where you think the proposal is in the decision-making process. In particular, do you think that the Finnish Government are likely to take it up in their presidency? Are we likely to see any changes? Of course, the attitude of the British Government seems to be that they would rather it went away. Is there any prospect that it will simply go away?

Mr Pieter Cleppe: The European Commission was hoping initially that 2019 would be the last year when we saw the changes. That has been postponed to 2021. It was also hoping that a decision would be made by member states before the European Parliament elections in May. That did not happen. In June, no decision was made. Politically, it looks like member states are just waiting on the consultations. A number of consultations have taken place. Maybe I can tell you more about that later, but, frankly, there is very little clarity about when member states will decide.

The reason is that everybody realises that it is very complex. On the one hand, it is between summer time and winter time, which is an important trade-off for countries to make. The further north you go, the more important it becomes. On the other hand, if you pick a certain time, they are in the same time zone as their neighbours, which is perhaps even more important for small countries such as Luxembourg. I suspect that those considerations are driving attempts simply to delay a decision.

Lord Lansley: There has been one delay at the request of the European Parliament, but what happens next in the decision-making process? As far

as I can see, it is not required to happen in 2020, because the directive has not yet been adopted.

Mr Pieter Cleppe: Exactly. It is still a proposal, and there are many proposals on the table of the Council of member states. As long as member states do not take a decision, there is no directive and the current regime continues.

Dr Katy Hayward: Because it is ordinary legislative procedure, you need all three—the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council—to agree. My understanding is that the big hold-up at the moment is the lack of an impact assessment from the Commission. Until that happens, civil servants in the UK or any member state cannot make progress in imagining or preparing for the impact here or in other member states, because the impact assessment has not been done at that level.

That suggests a lack of momentum in Brussels on the issue and reflects the fact that member states have differing opinions with regard to the proposal. A final outcome would be the result of negotiations between the three of them. You would then have to have a qualified majority vote in the Council to approve it, and it would go back to the European Parliament for a plenary vote. There are still a number of hurdles to overcome before we can be sure that it will be implemented.

Lord Lansley: Is there any evidence from the parliamentary interactions with Ms von der Leyen, the new Commission President, that this is something she will or will not take up, or will the Commission simply ignore it?

Mr Pieter Cleppe: I have not seen it. Nevertheless, in Germany, in particular, it is seen as a great concern. I must admit that I did not manage to find out why precisely that is the case.

I suspect that one of the reasons is that in Germany some politicians have always seen time changes as an important problem. In addition, after the Second World War, the Soviets imposed Moscow time on East Germany, which resulted in a two-hour difference. Perhaps that may make the German population more annoyed about this, but I am speculating, because the differences are gigantic—for example, between Germany and Italy. The further north you go, the more important it becomes. That may explain it a bit, but to answer your question, Ms von der Leyen is from Germany, and in that country it is seen as a big issue. I do not think she will be a delaying factor at least.

Q4 **The Chairman:** Arising from that question, when should our Government undertake a consultation exercise? Is it safer to wait until the EU has gone through all the processes that Dr Hayward outlined, or would it help the momentum to have early sets of consultations based on our existing membership, even though that might be only days?

Dr Heather Rolfe: I think it would be best to wait. A public information campaign or public information should be put out before having some kind of process. Something like a citizens' assembly would be ideal for the process, because people have a knee-jerk response based on their own preferences, negative or positive, and they have not thought through the wider issues—for

example, how their employment might be affected. People think of the more obvious things, such as travel.

That process needs to take place. To set it up is not quick; it is a matter of months. We have much longer than a few months, but you would want to leave enough time to have the results of the citizens' assemblies, which should be in different parts of the UK, obviously including Scotland. You would want representatives from those bodies to feed into your decision-making. You would want to feed into that process, too, so you have to allow time for it.

Given the current environment around Brexit, it would be a bad idea to do much now, because all of it would be very clouded by that issue. You would want to select people to take part according to whether or not they felt strongly, but you would also have to select on the basis of leave or remain and it would become much more muddled. I suggest we hold off for now. Would there be any harm? A process of trying to inform the public that this was happening might not be a bad idea in the shorter term.

The Chairman: Mr Cleppe, do you have a view on whether the UK Government should bide their time on this subject?

Mr Pieter Cleppe: There is so much on their plate at the moment. If they came to a decision and there was insufficient polling evidence, it would not be a good thing for the decision-making process. Even if the UK was somehow in transition and outside the EU decision-making bodies, I am sure that, given the importance of the subject and the relationship with Ireland, the voice of the UK would be listened to. Personally, I think it could be a good idea to have some evidence and data ready to present, to back up certain positions that may be taken by the Government. We do not know how hard member states will push the agenda, but I guess it would do no harm to have more intel ready.

Dr Katy Hayward: I am very conscious that Northern Ireland, especially the most northern and western part, is most directly affected by this particular matter, let alone the issue of the border. I am also conscious that the YouGov polls do not include Northern Ireland, so there is a big gap in knowledge about public opinion.

At the moment, the survey in the central border region of Ireland, on which I am leading, asks a very straightforward question that looks for qualitative data on what difference managing a time difference between north and south would make to daily life. We are looking for some data on that. There are concrete plans for a small citizens' assembly-type piece of research and a wider public opinion poll across Northern Ireland, which I am developing with a colleague. It will also ask that question, simply to begin to have some data, because the position of Northern Ireland is critically important in any decision to be made on the matter.

Q5 **Lord Russell of Liverpool:** Regardless of what happens with Brexit, if this proposal goes ahead, the United Kingdom will be faced with having to make a choice. A report prepared for the EU Commission in 2014 on summer-time arrangements stated that, "international evidence suggests that cross-

border trade and investment is stronger when time is harmonised". It is interesting that there is no comment about the health implications, or anything else. Thinking about the implications of potential non-alignment between the United Kingdom and some of our neighbouring countries, what do you see as the potential positive or negative factors that should be taken into consideration?

Dr Heather Rolfe: Employers will want to submit evidence and have their say, but the obvious implications are for transport, tourism and trade, where there are also implications for the public in the scope for confusion. There is a week when the UK and the US are out of alignment in clock changes, and that causes a lot of confusion.

There have been estimates of some of the costs. There are solutions to them, but it just adds an additional layer of complexity. If the UK is leaving the EU, that is potentially a further problem that employers will have to address. All those kinds of complexities add cost at a time when businesses will be under more strain because of Brexit. Those are probably the key issues.

Dr Katy Hayward: I can talk in more detail about the Irish case later on, but generally most of the evidence shows that adding a time difference to trade is like adding distance to trade. It certainly has a negative impact on trade and market productivity. It increases co-ordination costs, et cetera. We should acknowledge that there are time zone differences within countries, sometimes not even on the hour. The means of overcoming the impact of those time differences include, for example, cultural similarities, including language and technology. The fact that information can be shared instantaneously makes a difference to managing time differences compared with how it used to be in the past.

Lord Lilley: We have an example in Europe. Portugal has a different time zone from Spain. Rather than theorising, are the Portuguese upset about that? Does it impede their trade? As you mention, America has time zones. Is there not trade between the different time zones? Is there any evidence that it impedes trade, or are we just talking pure theory without any facts?

Dr Heather Rolfe: There is certainly concern in Norway and Switzerland about possible non-alignment.

Lord Lilley: I am talking now about actual alignment now, rather than theoretical.

Dr Heather Rolfe: If there is non-alignment all year round, it is predictable, and people know. You know that Portugal is on our time, and people living in Spain and Portugal know that there is that difference. If for half the year there is alignment and for the other half there is not, that is when complexity is added.

Lord Lilley: You think it would be added, but you have not had any practical experience. Are there countries where half the year they are aligned and half the year they are not?

Dr Heather Rolfe: There are parts of Australia where there is non-alignment, and some states change and some do not, but you are talking about quite a

different context within a country. There would be very big problems with non-alignment—Katy will say more about this—in the context of Ireland and Northern Ireland where people cross the border the whole time for education and social activities.

Lord Lilley: Do people cross between Portugal and Spain?

Dr Heather Rolfe: I do not know whether people do it for work, but there would be a language difference, a very long existing border and differences between those countries. Here we are talking about Ireland and Northern Ireland as being the biggest problem.

Mr Pieter Cleppe: There is a practical example. Switzerland had a referendum on this in 1978. When European countries went to daylight saving time, the Swiss people rejected the idea; they did not like the idea of changing clocks twice a year, but after three years the Swiss Government, because of economic considerations and the experience that it was not practical, decided to ignore that referendum and follow neighbouring countries. This year, the Swiss Government said that, no matter what, they will follow neighbouring countries, which would of course be a problem in the case that France and Germany opted for different arrangements, but I suspect that avoiding that will be a very high priority.

Dr Katy Hayward: What I was summarising is based on empirical research; it is not pure theory. I am happy to submit to the Committee the references to support that in writing. One important point to bear in mind in all this is that we are talking about non-alignment for half the year, which is an unusual situation and complicates the matter somewhat, not least because it affects predictability. Predictability is one of the key concerns in trade.

The Chairman: What I found fascinating, and had not realised, was that this was regarded as a wartime issue. It was instituted in the First World War and dropped at the end of it, and reintroduced in the Second World War and dropped. There was a brief experiment for three years in Britain, but that coincided with other issues, such as legal limitations on speed, and safety belts and other things, so it is quite difficult to get reliable figures about whether that three-year period of seasonal change had a real impact or whether a combination of those things made an impact on road safety. I think it saved 30 lives every winter, or something like that.

I find it fascinating. When countries do things in wartime, there is a reason for it, I assume. Lord Lilley wants the facts and figures and empirical research, but opinions are pretty important on this subject. You get the Queensland effect, where local businesses say it is a disadvantage. We do not know whether or not that is true, but local businesspeople think it is. Sometimes opinion can matter, even though you might not have all the scientific research about it.

Q6 **Lord Carter of Coles:** We have touched on this, but perhaps we can expand it a bit. It is about the reactions from non-EU countries that are EU neighbours. We have talked about Switzerland, and what the Swiss thought, and Norway. I would like you to expand on that and say whether there are any lessons from their reaction that we could draw on.

Dr Heather Rolfe: In Norway, the Trade Minister said, as regards the process, that it would make sense to see what happens in the EU, particularly in neighbouring Scandinavian countries. We have already mentioned the situation in Switzerland, where the question is about alignment and non-alignment. Sorry, can you say your question again?

Lord Carter of Coles: It is about whether their reaction can teach us anything, so that we do not need to relearn. They have possibly given more or different thought to what might happen.

Dr Heather Rolfe: Pieter talked about the situation with the earlier referendum in Switzerland being overturned because, in practice, the country found that it was a problem. There is practical learning from when they had non-alignment.

Lord Carter of Coles: Yes, I think the word "sensible" was used. The Swiss Government said that it would be sensible, which seems a pretty logical thing to suggest, does it not? Switzerland is a good example. If Italy chose to do something different from Germany, it would again create alignment problems. It is probably more complex, and we have no evidence about that at all. Do you think that everybody will just move into one big zone and then everybody will align? What then happens where the zones change?

Mr Pieter Cleppe: There are two big choices to make. First, do we need a change, or not? Secondly, if we change, do we go for winter or summer time? Those are the choices for countries to make. In the change camp, we have Germany and, most of all, Finland, which is very keen to change, because it does not like the current arrangement. The UK, Greece and Portugal are the most hostile to changing it. Most other countries are on the fence or trying to make up their minds.

On whether we go to winter or summer time, typically, the more north you go, the more people are keen for winter time, because it is a trade-off between more accidents in the morning during the winter, to put it simply, or long summer nights. Even then, in an opinion poll in Sweden, people seemed to prefer summer time, which goes against what many scientists would recommend. In Germany, politically at least, the party of Angela Merkel, the CDU, is in favour of summer time, whereas you would expect it to prefer winter time. In a way, it is an emotional debate, with lifestyle preferences sometimes trumping other considerations.

Lord Carter of Coles: We touched on another point: why bother? A lot of political capital could be used up on this. Is the German experience driving it in Europe?

Mr Pieter Cleppe: The European Commission came up with the consultation, which I suspect was driven by some of the activists who were really keen. It must be said that the responses to the consultation were the highest number ever for any European Union consultation, at 4.5 million. It is true that it was disproportionately responded to by Germans, but it has some legitimacy from the fact that many people took the trouble to respond.

Rightly or wrongly, it is seen to be a problematic issue in one country, or a group of countries, whereas other countries ask, "Why change?" If you have changed and you have these dramatic choices coming up, perhaps, given that it is so important, northern European and Scandinavian countries could co-ordinate and say that they are going to go for one choice, winter or summer time.

Then you could have a difference of time between Denmark and Sweden on the one hand and Germany on the other hand. But, even then, there are differences. The Baltics are at the level of Denmark, but they are keen to follow Germany and have summer time. At the moment, they are in one zone with Finland, but Finland is keen to follow Sweden, apart from its concern that it wants to go for winter time. There are all kinds of demands and requests that need to be reconciled.

Dr Heather Rolfe: Too much credence should not be given to the European consultation. Even in the countries that had a high level of responses, only about 1% of the population responded. We are talking about some people who are quite fired up about this. When there have been proper opinion surveys, rather than consultations, they have shown much higher proportions of people who do not know; around 17% in the YouGov survey did not know. NatCen looked at the attitudes of people who said that they did not know, and they were more likely to want no change. That is important. The "don't knows" in this field are important to look at, because they still have opinions.

The consultations that are going to be carried out, or have been carried out, including the Irish consultation, are open consultations where people respond online or by email. That is a problem, because 10% of people in the UK are not connected online, and it is more in some parts of the UK; in Northern Ireland it is 14%. There are also groups such as disabled people who do not have a say. Consultations are flawed; you get people who are fired up about it, who do not represent the public and are not necessarily well informed.

Pieter is right in saying that there probably are different country preferences, depending on longitude and latitude, and how far north or south they are. There are those differences, but within countries it is probably quite nuanced.

Q7 **Lord Lilley:** Can we go back to Northern Ireland? Clearly, if we were foolish enough to have a different time system from Europe, either there would be a difference between Northern Ireland and southern Ireland or between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. What do you think the implications of that would be? Secondly, are there any countries in Europe that have different time zones within their own territory?

Dr Katy Hayward: First, in considering the implications for Northern Ireland, if there is a difference in time zone between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, one thing to bear in mind is the close integration across the Irish border that affects so many areas of life beyond trade. That is one difference between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, for example. There is very close integration in other ways, but in daily life, such as going to school on the

other side of the border or having health services on the other side of the border, we see it manifest across the Irish border.

Before talking in detail around what that means in practice, it is worth acknowledging the implications of geography, including the sea and land borders, and the difference that makes in managing a time zone difference across them. Politically, too, we need to acknowledge the fact that Northern Ireland has a lack of democratic representation at the moment and the lack of a sitting Assembly. If that is not corrected, we will have problems in decision-making for Northern Ireland in managing the working out of any time zone change. Also, we cannot understand any impact on Northern Ireland without bringing in the social dimension: how it will be responded to, reported and reacted to by different communities in Northern Ireland.

Looking in substance at the detail of what the implications might be for managing a time zone difference across the Irish border, the Irish interdepartmental consultation that was run by the Republic of Ireland and the report that was written is quite helpful in setting out the key areas. Unsurprisingly, the areas that would be most affected are already formalised as areas for north-south co-operation. As such, they are identified as areas of substantial co-operation for the North South Ministerial Council.

First and foremost, we have the question of labour and the issue of workers, bearing in mind the importance of cross-border workers for certain parts of the border. Most particularly, Derry/Londonderry and Donegal is a very closely integrated economic region, and the vast majority of cross-border workers work across that border. According to the 2015 Irish census, 9,000 people live in the Republic of Ireland and work in Northern Ireland, and about twice that number live in Northern Ireland and work in the Republic of Ireland. Immediately, if we are thinking about managing a time zone difference, it is not just the fact of having to get to work earlier or come home later; it is also about practical things, such as managing transport, picking up your children from school and creche, and that kind of thing.

Dr Rolfe mentioned nursing earlier. Nurses and shift workers would be particularly affected, especially in the provision of public transport. That most acutely affects nurses, who are a substantial proportion of the cross-border workers, most particularly for Altnagelvin hospital in Derry/Londonderry. There is also the South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen, in Fermanagh, and nurses who live in Northern Ireland and work in Monaghan. That is a very particular constituency. It will have knock-on effects if people feel that they cannot maintain their jobs or that they will have to move to the other side of the border. That kind of fragmentation would be significant.

Lord Lilley: Why would anyone change their job because they have to get up an hour earlier?

Dr Katy Hayward: If you rely on public transport, for example, to get to your work, and the bus will not connect you to where you need to get in time, and it just makes it practically more difficult to attend your job, it will be easier to get a job on your side of the border.

Lord Lilley: It might be easier to get a bus connection at a different time. Why should it be more difficult rather than easier?

Dr Katy Hayward: We are talking about shift workers who work at unusual hours.

Lord Lilley: They do so at present, presumably.

Dr Katy Hayward: Well, yes, but the public transport would be designed for the same time zone, not anticipating that you would have an hour's difference. It could be managed, but this is where we get on to the question of transport. If we were managing a time zone difference for six or seven months of the year, it would be a matter not just of changing schedules but of synchronising timetables so that you can make sure that a bus meets a particular train to get to a particular ferry, for example.

Lord Lilley: I wish that was so. I travel back and forth between France and England, and the trains and ferries do not co-ordinate. Never mind. I think this whole issue is trivial and therefore we should just align with our neighbours. But it does not matter whether we do or not. I used to be in the City. If we wanted to trade with America, we got up early and started the day early. If we were trading with Asia, we got up late and traded late. You adapt.

There is no point making extra problems, so we should have the same time zone. That is my view. Because it is essentially trivial, does that not mean that decisions will be made for symbolic reasons, that the real concerns will be nationalists who want a time zone the same as Ireland and unionists who want the same time zone as Great Britain?

The Chairman: The Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce sent in strong evidence about alignment. I imagine that it is not cooking that up from emotional reasons.

Lord Lilley: I cannot remember what it said, actually.

The Chairman: It was the evidence from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce that came in just after our transport report came out. First of all, it got involved in the Irish consultation exercise on the cross-departmental communications system. Its view was very strong; there would be major implications if there was a different time zone.

Lord Lilley: Different time zone where?

The Chairman: Between the north and south of Ireland.

Lord Lilley: There were no implications for a different time zone between the north of Ireland and Great Britain, or did they just want the same as me, to align it?

The Chairman: I suspect that it might be symbolic, but from a trade point of view their interest would be in the amount of export between north and south.

Lord Lilley: Exports between Northern Ireland and Great Britain are a multiple of exports and imports between Northern Ireland and southern Ireland.

Dr Katy Hayward: They are in value, but not in volume. That is the difference. You are absolutely right that it would be taken up as a symbolic question, but it has enormous practical implications. I shall come to trade in a second. A specific example relates to schoolchildren who live on one side of the border and go to school on the other side of the border. On the southern side of the border, they would follow the EU. The Department of Education in the south has said that, if that was the case, it would adjust school times so that schoolchildren, particularly in rural areas, were not going to school in the dark, for example. They would have to adjust. That immediately makes it much more difficult for schoolchildren coming from Northern Ireland to attend school in the south, because they would be at a disadvantage in that regard.

Lord Lilley: But they could set the same time vis-à-vis the sun in the sky.

Dr Katy Hayward: It goes back to linking up all those other matters. It is not just whereabouts the sun is in the sky; it is about whether you can get the bus and whether your parent has to be in work. The linking up of all those matters means that this is enormously significant.

On the trade question, all the evidence suggests that you would want to avoid, if at all possible, a time zone difference within your country. That is obvious and logical. The nature of the cross-border trade on the island of Ireland, as distinct from Britain and Northern Ireland, which is in no way to diminish the significance of intra-UK trade, is that we have a different type of trade going on. It is predominantly micro-businesses and small enterprises. We have very closely integrated supply chains, and a third of that trade is in agrifood, so we have just-in-time elements coming in there.

If we were to have a hard Brexit, we would have the question of SPS checks and so on. We have enormous complexity in a post-Brexit scenario for cross-border trade straight up. If you add to that a time zone difference for a portion of the year, there would be all sorts of knock-on effects, which I would be happy to talk about. It is the nature of those, and the fact we have those supply chains, particularly in the areas that would be most vulnerable to time differences, that make it slightly different from Great Britain and Northern Ireland in terms of the movement of goods.

Lord Carter of Coles: In the Second World War, did the Republic of Ireland move to double summer time?

Dr Katy Hayward: No.

Lord Carter of Coles: Okay.

Dr Heather Rolfe: Could I make an additional point? Regardless of all this, I am aware that there have been various Private Members' Bills on the issue of clock changes over many years. My former colleague at the Policy Studies Institute, Mayer Hillman, felt very strongly about it and did some work on it way back—in the 1980s or the 1990s—in which he cited evidence of more accidents on dark mornings than dark evenings, or one way or the other. This is a genuine opportunity to put the matter to wider consultation to the

public, because it is something that people are concerned about, or feel strongly about, as we see from the EU consultation, even though, as I said, that is not representative. It is an opportunity to consider whether the UK wants a clock change at all and, if so, in what kind of direction. Regardless of Brexit, this represents an opportunity to raise with the public an issue of quite strong importance to people's daily lives.

The Chairman: Thank you for that. We have had some interesting evidence from RoSPA already about road safety, and I hope that we will get more about issues of health and mental health, but at the moment it is a bit thin on the ground. I am anxious that we cover the two substantial final questions, and we have time to do that. If you do not mind, Lord Lilley, we will move on to the next question.

Q8 **Lord Shipley:** I would like to pursue two things that Dr Rolfe said in the past few minutes. One was, I think, that we should not place too much credence on opinion polls. You have also just said that we need a wider consultation to ascertain exactly what public opinion is. If the UK is required by EU law to discontinue seasonal time changes, or we decide to do so, how should the Government approach the choice between permanent winter and summer time?

Dr Heather Rolfe: I was not making a point about opinion polls; it was more about the consultations that have happened, whereby people are encouraged to go online and have their say, as with the EU consultation and the Irish consultation. You get a very skewed sample of the population who feel strongly one way or another. Opinion polls are a much better way of doing it, particularly if they are from a randomly selected sample of the public, people who are already on panels. A panel is a group of thousands of people who sign up to answer questions on a particular issue, so they do not have a vested interest. The more reliable evidence we have is from the YouGov poll and the work done by NatCen.

The problem with the polls is that people are not necessarily informed about the issue, so they just ask, "How does it affect me?", and not about the wider implications. A lot of people have not really thought about how it affects them; we see that from the high proportion of "don't knows" in those surveys. There is a wider issue of how somebody can make an informed decision. That is why there would be a case for a citizens' assembly where people were presented with evidence from experts.

There have been various examples; a citizens' assembly was formed for the social care Bill, which fed into the Green Paper. In the design of a citizens' assembly, a poll is carried out first of all, and then a selection of people is taken from the poll so that they represent the public in various ways. You can screen out people who feel strongly one way or the other. That would be one possible method. Then those people, probably over a couple of days, take evidence and decide. They could be asked to decide what they think about two proposals and then come back to you. You could be involved in drawing up the materials and selecting the experts, which would be a much better way of coming to grips with what the issues are for the public and making a decision on that basis.

Having a consultation is a good idea, but probably more for informing people about the process, than for relying on the results that come out. A better way is to make sure that you involve various stakeholder groups, people who represent those who might be affected by the change who might not be able to take part in consultations.

Lord Shipley: Thank you. Is there anything the other witnesses want to add? You do not need to.

Dr Katy Hayward: The process of consultation that the Irish Government carried out is an interesting example. It was quite thorough; they had the opinion poll, which was carefully conducted, plus the open survey, which got 16,000 responses, and the stakeholder submissions as well. One thing worth noting about the opinion poll, which was quite solid data, is that two-thirds were in favour of the time changing. Most of them were in favour of moving to summer time, but when people were asked whether they would be willing to see two time zones on the island of Ireland, they completely changed their mind; 82% said they were opposed to it, particularly those in Connacht and Ulster, which is not too surprising. If we had the same process in the UK, I do not know whether the responses would be the same, bearing in mind what that opinion poll allowed for. But those are potential implications that are worth considering.

Q9 **Lord Wigley:** We have already touched to some extent on the differences between Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I preface my question by saying that I think it would be totally ridiculous to have a different time zone within Britain, for obvious reasons. Given that that is the case, the opinions of the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly, when it is there, are particularly important to make sure that decisions taken centrally take those elements into account. Is there any idea of how we can ensure an appropriate level of input by the different regions of the UK, and the devolved Administrations in particular, in any decisions that are taken? Is there any mechanism?

Dr Katy Hayward: There is the Joint Ministerial Committee. There should be a means by which it could properly co-ordinate input from the devolved nations and regions, and respond to what is coming from them. Absolutely.

Lord Wigley: I realise that it is a difficult question to answer, and that it is easier to ask it than to answer it, but it is important that that is on the agenda and that the Government take notice of it. You probably agree.

Dr Katy Hayward: Absolutely. It would be absolutely critical.

The Chairman: It is a question we will ask the Government at some stage.

Lord Vallance of Tummel: I have a slight variation on that. If you were doing a cost-benefit analysis, which is ultimately what you would have to do in the impact assessment, do you have any feel for what the variables would be? Would you, for example, weight the Scots, because the impact would be greater on Scotland than elsewhere? This is susceptible, presumably, to some kind of economic cost-benefit analysis. Is that right?

Dr Heather Rolfe: That is quite problematic because, although a smaller number of people would be affected in Scotland, the implications for the Scottish economy and the wider issues around alignment and cohesion between the various constituent countries of the UK would be at stake. I do not think that you could consider the changes in those terms, other than the metrics that Katy mentioned for trade and industry and, possibly, accidents, although, as I said, I think that is flawed.

Lord Vallance of Tummel: You do not think that it would be possible to weight, in a cost-benefit analysis, the relative impact in different parts of the country, given that, in some parts of the country, it will be significantly greater than in other parts of the country.

Dr Heather Rolfe: You could consider it, but ultimately it would have to be a kind of qualitative analysis rather than something you could bring hard metrics to.

The Chairman: That is the end of our questioning. Do you have any further points that you would like to make before we close this public session? If you have any thoughts on the bus on the way home, or any additional empirical evidence, it will be very welcome for our study, which will continue for a few months. We are not quite sure what the gap will be before we resume our consideration, or even if it will be us doing it. But we carry on regardless; that is the best bet. If you have any additional written thoughts, they would be very welcome.

Thank you very much for coming and for enlightening us on this more and more complex area. You will get a transcript, as I indicated, and members of the Committee will indicate in the report any interests that they have in the area.