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High time we left the EU-before the clocks change

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There's now good reason to expedite our departure from the EU. That's because the EU Parliament has supported a move to end changing the clocks between summer and winter times every year. MEPs voted for a proposal for all member states to opt by 2021 for either a permanent summer time, known as daylight saving time or BST, or winter time, known as standard time. Under existing EU law, clocks in the 28 member states move forward one hour on the last Sunday in March and move back one hour on the last Sunday in October.

Jean- Claude Juncker, President of the EU Commission, stated that "Clock changing must stop. Member states should themselves decide whether their citizens live in summer or winter time." The path taken by the UK will depend on whether or not it remains a member of the EU. Conservative

MEPs, who voted against the proposal, were not happy with the result.

John Flack, Conservative MEP for the East of England, said: "We've long been aware the EU wants too much control over our lives – now they want to control time itself. We agreed when they said the clocks should change across the whole EU on an agreed day. That made sense – but this is a step too far. I know that farmers in particular, all across the east of England, value the flexibility that the clock changes bring to get the best from available daylight."

The Chief Executive of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Errol Taylor, believes the UK should adopt permanent summer time. "Clock changes were introduced in 1916 to reflect the needs of a nation at war. Our priority now should be the prevention of road accidents that cause serious injury and death. . . Road casualty rates increase with

the arrival of darker evenings and worsening weather conditions." Yet it can be argued that this is even more the case with darker mornings under BST when children recently roused from their sleep make their way to school during the morning rush hour.

Changes to the times of dawn and dusk, which affect the times of davening and the times of the onset and end of Shabbos, Yom Tov as well as every Taanis, make a huge difference to the lives of Orthodox Jews in whichever country they live. A spokesman for the United Synagogue pointed out that remaining on British Summer Time all year round would create enormous difficulties over davening Shacharis during the winter.

In London for example, it means that during the darkest mornings of the year it would not become light until around 9.07 am, unnecessarily complicating daily life for those who need to daven or drop their children at



school before they go to work. The viability of many minyanim would be put at risk especially for those who need to say Kaddish. Further north, in Manchester, Gateshead, Glasgow or other northern communities, the issue

would be even more problematic. Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, said that in Europe it would be "more manageable if countries keep to winter times".

