

Could become the world's first time-free zone:

– We're throwing away our clocks

While daylight savings time is up for debate in numerous countries, the people of Sommarøy ("Summer Island") in Norway are going one step further: They want to be a time-free zone.

– When you live in Northern Norway, it doesn't make sense to talk about daylight savings time, bedtime, dinner time, or any other time. During summer, the sun does not go down for 69 days, and there's no need to know what time it is. The midnight sun makes clocks an unnecessary nuisance, and we wish to be a time-free zone, Kjell Ove says.

He's one of the key islanders behind the initiative on Sommarøy, which literally means "summer island". It all started a few weeks ago, when the islanders signed a petition for a time-free zone during a town hall meeting. On Thursday, June 13, Kjell Ove met with a member of Parliament to hand over the locals' signatures and to discuss the practical and legal challenges of the world's first time-free zone.

The passionate islanders firmly believe in the initiative, and they're surprised by the massive media attention. Sommarøy's initiative has been covered by numerous news outlets all over the world, including [CNN](#), [FOX News](#), and [Daily Mail](#). The islanders' video about their initiative has more than [one hundred fifty thousand views](#).

– The widespread popularity of the initiative has gone far beyond our expectations. This is not a new concept to us. We merely want to formalize our island's way of living. We don't want to know what time it is, we want to have fun together and enjoy what the moment, the nature, and our community provides, Kjell Ove says.

"Time-free living" on Sommarøy

If the central government decides to approve the islanders request, it would mean they can't have stagnant opening hours, deadlines, or other time-related requirements during the summer months.

– To many of us, getting this in writing would simply mean formalizing something we have been practicing for generations, that is, time-free living. There's constantly daylight, and we act accordingly. In the middle of the night, which city folk might call "2 AM", you can spot children playing soccer, people painting their houses or mowing their lawns, and teens going for a swim, Kjell Ove says.

Time-free living aligns well with one of the island's largest industries, fishing. According to Kjell Ove, local fishermen and women spend days on the ocean with no regard for time or sleep, while their families at home have no clue when they will be home.

For visitors, the quirkiness of the island becomes apparent immediately when crossing the bridge from the mainland. It isn't covered by padlocks like many bridges are, it's covered by watches.

Could help stressed out tourists

The enthusiastic islander Kjell Ove believes a timeless community on Sommarøy will have many positive consequences.

– If Sommarøy legally becomes a time-free zone, it would constitute an important yet fun step for us. It would make us happy – and it might even attract some visitors who wish to stress less and forget about what time it is, he says.

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About the initiative:

Kjell Ove, Sommarøy's driving force, came up with the idea of a time-free society together with his contacts. He wishes to formalize the fact that the people of Sommarøy do not care about what time it is – at least not during summer.

Throughout the process, there are many parties already cheering the initiative on. The travel industry is very excited about the initiative, and both Visit Norway and Northern Norway Tourist Board have become a part of Sommarøy's journey to get the status as the world's first time-free zone.