

Adios Siesta!

Tuesday's World Events — Posted on April 12, 2016



Revellers sleep on a bench after the second running of the bulls during the San Fermin festival in Pamplona.

SPAIN – Spain might finally get rid of its country-wide nap time

Spain's prime minister wants to shorten the working day — by saying adios to the **siesta**.

A typical Spanish worker now checks in at about 10 a.m., takes a two-hour mid-afternoon snooze, and then clocks out around 8 p.m.

But center-right **Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy** wants to get rid of nap-time, and make Spain more like its European counterparts.

“I will find a **consensus** to make sure the working day ends at 6 p.m.,” declared Rajoy.

The Spanish siesta has been in place for centuries, since before the Industrial Revolution when workers needed an hours-long break to take cover from the day's hottest hours.

But Spanish workers' average productivity is much lower than in places such as Germany, a Spanish parliamentary commission said in a 2013 report. [“We need more flexible working hours, to cut our lunch breaks, to **streamline** business meetings by setting time limits for them, and to practice and demand punctuality,” the report read.]

Over the years, modern Spaniards across the political spectrum have pushed Madrid to **align** their workday with other European nations.

Rajoy's support is seen as an attempt to **curry favor** with voters ahead of the general election in June, the Independent reported.

The move could have a **widespread** impact on all Spanish life. Prime-time television now runs from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. in Spain. Midweek soccer matches, in Spain's La Liga, typically kick off at 8:30 p.m.

Rajoy also wants to bring Spain back to **Greenwich Mean Time** (GMT).

Even though Spain is directly south of England, it's been an hour ahead of GMT for more than seven decades.

The time change dates to 1942 when Generalissimo Francisco Franco ordered the nation's clocks put forward in a symbol of unity with Nazi Germany.

[The mid-day siesta [harks back](#) to a time when Spain was an agricultural economy and workers struggled to work at the hottest time of the day, with temperatures rising to 104F. These days, though, the majority of Spanish work indoors where air-conditioning is commonplace.]



Activities for after reading:

1. Vocabulary – can you guess the meaning of the words in blue? Look up the meaning of 3 new words in a dictionary and write it down.
2. What does Spain's Prime Minister want to do?
3. Why does the Spanish Prime Minister want to change the Spanish working day?
4. Why has Spain's working day always been different to many other European countries?
5. Do you think Siestas are a good idea?