



## Public Holidays in Europe for 2019



*Free time: Independence Day - Friday 6th December - is a major Public Holiday in Finland.*

**CONTINUING** our series on holidays, this issue focuses on holidays in Europe and how they could potentially affect your business and orders in 2019.

European public holidays for Christmas are, obviously, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. However, unlike the United States, the 26th of December is also a public holiday in many European countries, including the UK. Many businesses close - or are on reduced capacity - for up to two weeks from around 24th December until 2nd January.

This year, Easter Sunday falls on 21st April and, as is customary, the majority of businesses will be closed on Good Friday on 19th April and Monday 22nd April.

Other religious holidays observed by many European countries include Ascension Day - on Thursday 30th May in 2019 and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on Thursday 15th August.

Individual countries also celebrate days important to their own national history, such as Independence day in Finland on Friday 6th December, marking its declaration of independence from Russia in 1917.

In our experience, however, the European holiday period that causes the most issues for our clients is the month-long summer shutdown. This is not a public holiday, so you will not find it in any calendar!

The summer holiday shutdown in Europe has its roots in the industrial revolution and the mechanisation of production. In the past, a few workers absent from a production line could halt production. Therefore, factories tended to close and all workers took their holidays at the same time.

Today, it is as much about European attitudes to life-work balance as it is about tradition.

- ✔ The month-long holiday shutdown in August continues most strongly in France, Spain and Italy.
- ✔ In Germany there is no general shutdown, as all 16 German federal states have staggered holiday periods from June through to August.
- ✔ It is important to note that in Finland the shutdown is in July, not August.
- ✔ In the Netherlands, the shutdown is around July - August, as school holidays are staggered across

three regions. A similar scheme of staggered holidays is also practised in Poland.

- ✔ Here in the UK, few factories now completely close, but not all personnel will be available in the last week of July or throughout August (which are the UK summer holidays. Scottish summer holiday periods can differ).

As regards the UK, it is also important to note the three 'bank holidays' that take place annually - Early May (Monday 6th May), Spring (Monday 27th May) and Late Summer (Monday 26th August).

If your sub-supplier or contractor is in Europe, the summer shutdown should be considered when order planning, alongside the actual implementation process. In our experience, an order with a proposed shipment date of 30th August from a factory in Italy, for example, has very little chance of actually leaving the factory on that date.

Moreover, it is often impossible for our inspectors to gain access to factories in many parts of Western Europe during August to inspect or expedite, if the factory concerned is on summer shutdown. Even if we were to gain access, factories on shutdown are almost always run by a skeleton staff, who may not know any details about your order, or any prospective delays. Our advice to clients is, therefore, to check with sub-suppliers and contractors in advance, regarding planned shutdowns.

Lastly and, perhaps, most importantly, always try to book in early with Turner & Coates, in order to make expediting, inspecting and auditing visits ahead of the European shutdown, to help avoid any issues or potential headaches. Late spring and early summer is one of our busiest times of year.

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