

The ineptitude and dishonesty of BSE

Your petition signature could be worth £3,000 in benefits

Protect Workers' rights in the UK

So says a petition forwarded to us by a supporter. You can view it on this link, but if you do, take care – don't press the wrong button and sign it accidentally! The petition site Care2 is not to be blamed; it is a forum for people to start petitions about anything they like. The culprit is the petitioner, our friend Britain Stronger in Europe.

Anyway, for the benefit of anyone who does not want to click on the link, the petition goes on to say:-

£3,000 per year for every UK household.

That, according to the Confederation of British Industry, is how much UK membership of the European Union (EU) is worth. EU membership bolsters trade, jobs, investment – and vital worker protections.

Don't let these important benefits slip away. Show your support for the UK's membership of the European Union.

European law has enabled UK workers to enjoy paid maternity leave, guaranteed holiday leave, protection for women in the workplace, equal pay and anti-discrimination measures. But you may lose these protections if the UK leaves the EU later this year.

And that's not all that is at stake. Three million jobs are linked to trade with the rest of Europe. Membership in the EU also helps reduce the cost of consumer goods and travel – which is especially important as conservatives continue to pursue aggressive, across-the-board policies of austerity.

Take a stand for your economic security. Add your name to this important petition to join the fight for UK membership of the EU.

No, please don't! These assertions are inaccurate. Firstly, the CBI study suggesting each household would be £3,000 better off per year has been widely criticised. Even Open Europe, not exactly an enthusiastic supporter of withdrawal, was highly critical of the methodology, claiming it was "based on limited and selective analysis" and calling the £3,000 per year claim "flawed figures".

What of those anti-discrimination measures which European law has allowed us to enjoy? One law which comes into this category is the Working Time Directive. Would this be repealed if we left? Not unless we wanted to fall out with the International Labour Organisation, where the legislation originated. The EU merely acted as a conduit. Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that withdrawal from the EU would necessarily lead to the repeal of any pieces of employment protection legislation which did originate with the EU. What is more, if they were repealed, the action would be undertaken by the democratically elected government of the UK. That's the nature of democracy; sometimes you get a government you didn't vote for.

To round it off, we then have the absurd three million jobs myth recycled yet again. I doubt if any visitor to this site is unaware that the claim has no foundation in fact. I hardly need to put up a link to our Busting the Lie booklet or to mention that When Danny Alexander MP repeated this silly story last year when he was Chief Secretary to the Treasury, his own department countered his claim after a Freedom of Information request from Open Europe.

If this is the worst we were up against, the game would be over by now. Unfortunately, it isn't that simple. The leader of the "remain" campaign is the Prime Minister and shooting

down BSE's pathetic lies on this website is much, much easier than persuading the public that Mr Cameron's misinformation campaign is just as bad, if not worse.