

Ten Years? Not likely

It could be a full-time job just to debunk all the nonsense that is doing the rounds at the moment.

The latest scare story to do the rounds is a suggestion that UK withdrawal would trigger “ten years of uncertainty.” This is partly based on fears about the validity of trade deals negotiated by the EU on our behalf (and the other member states too, of course).

Lord Lawson, interviewed on the *World At One*, disputed this and he is right. At a recent seminar Robert Oulds, a CIB Committee member, explained that there was a “presumption of continuance” when one party to a trade deal underwent a change of circumstances. Thus, we would still be able to participate in such trade deals as those negotiated between the EU and Chile, Mexico and South Korea on leaving the EU. Let’s face it, this is sheer common sense; why would either party not want to continue? All that would be needed is for the two parties to sign an agreement stating that they wish the deal to continue.

Of course, trading with the EU could be more complex and this is why there has been much support for using the so-called Norway Option (re-joining EFTA to allow seamless access to the EEA) to tide us over. It is possible that the desired Europe-wide genuine Free Trade agreement which would replace the EEA **COULD** take another 10 years, but as long as trade continues seamlessly throughout the withdrawal period, as it would with the EEA/EFTA scenario, no one need be worried. Indeed, as Richard North has put it, this ten years would be a Decade of opportunity.

While we’re at it, claims that we need to stay in the EU for security grounds have also been dismissed by Richard Walton, Scotland Yard’s former head of Counter Terrorism. According

to an article in the Daily Telegraph, he said that reducing terror plots is “absolutely not” dependent on being a member of the European Union. “So let’s not scare the horses with fears about Brexit.” How many more scare stories are we going to have to debunk?

Returning to the World At One feature, it was correct on one point. An academic was quoted saying that once Article 50 is invoked. “the train has left the station” – in other words, withdrawal MUST happen.

Is this scary? Hardly. If you were told, “After 43 years in prison, we’re going to let you out soon, but beware! Once you go through that prison door, we’re never going to let you back in again”, would you really worry about that?

Photo by infomatique 