

# Workers' & women's rights come from the UK, not the EU

## The EU doesn't even have minimum wage legislation

Factsheet No.11 – Workers' rights - 09 Nov 2019

From official EU and UK Government sources, for MPs and for ordinary members of the public



**One of the many myths about the EU is that it has been responsible for the minimum statutory workers' rights and women's rights enjoyed in the UK today. The truth is very different.**

Let's start with possibly the most obvious and basic statutory workers' right: that of a minimum wage.

### 1. There is no EU statutory right to a minimum wage

- Within EU treaties, laws, directives, & regulations, there is no requirement to have a minimum wage
- Six EU countries don't have one at all (Denmark, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Finland, Sweden)
- Where they exist, the uneven playing field has Latvia at the bottom, with Luxembourg's almost 5 times higher
- The UK is seventh on the list, with its own legislation since 1998

### 2. EU healthcare rights are way below UK standards

- Healthcare in the EU is generally not free – most people pay for top-up private insurance
- In many countries you pay, and get only partially reimbursed later
- In France it costs £26 just for 5 minutes with your GP, paid at the time
- With the UK's NHS, treatment is **free at the point of delivery**

### 3. EU workers' rights laws are lower than UK's

- UK statutory paid holiday entitlement is 28 days, in EU only 20 days
- UK National Minimum Wage Act 1998 – there's no minimum wage in the EU
- 'Statutory maternity pay' – UK: up to 39 weeks, EU: 14 weeks. UK employees can take up to 52 weeks' leave
- Under EU laws, the Britons' rights would only **decrease**

### 4. UK established workers' rights long before EU

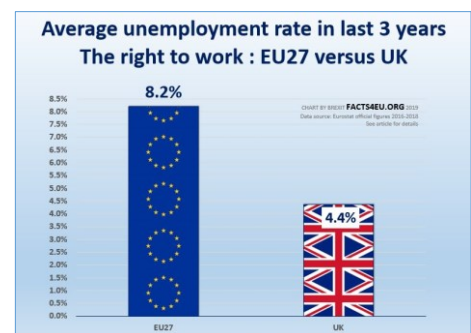
- "Protection against sex, race and disability discrimination in the UK **pre-dated** EU law" (from TUC report)
- Women's rights: Equal Pay Act, Abortion Act and Divorce Reform Act were all passed **before UK even joined EU**
- Sex Discrimination Act, Domestic Violence Act, Employment Protection Act – **no EU involvement**
- EU's Posted Workers Directive means EU workers can be employed in UK for fraction of the cost of UK workers

### 5. Finally, workers' rights are only relevant if you have work

- In the Eurozone, austerity has taken the jobs of millions of workers
- You're almost twice as likely to be out of work in the EU27
- An entire young generation across southern Europe has been devastated by 30-50% unemployment for years

(Click chart to enlarge)

**In all the workers' and women's rights above,  
the UK's statutory arrangements are better  
than those which would be applicable under EU law**



[ Sources: Hansard, EC Working Time Directive 93/104/EC, TUC report 2016 on Workers' Rights, EU Commission, Competences between UK and EU Social and Employment Policy (UK Gov't), National Minimum Wage Act, EU Parliament report Mar 2019 ]

Researched and produced by Brexit Facts4EU.Org. Endorsed independently by 10 Brexit organisations, 09 Nov 2019.

For more information: [https://facts4eu.org/news/2019\\_nov\\_brexit\\_initiative\\_factsheet\\_11](https://facts4eu.org/news/2019_nov_brexit_initiative_factsheet_11)