

Senator Walker lied to Jersey

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I think it's worth noting [this blog on the TJN site](#) from October 2006, written by John Christensen:

Earlier this year Richard Murphy and I met with senior European Commission officials to discuss - amongst other things - the EU Code of Conduct on Business Taxation. During the course of these discussions, we raised various concerns that the tax changes proposed by Jersey's government (generally referred to as the Zero/Ten proposals) were not compliant with the spirit of the Code, which is based on principles rather than rules, and would therefore fail. We were told, emphatically, that the proposals of the Jersey government, had not been referred to ECOFIN either in broad principle or in their detailed provisions.

Returning from Brussels we alerted colleagues in Jersey to our concerns that fiscal reforms which will shape the island's destiny for years if not decades, were uncertain and could fall foul of the Commission. Our concerns were strongly refuted by the island's chief minister, Frank Walker, and the finance minister, Terry le Sueur, both of whom sought to reassure the local finance industry that ECOFIN had been advised of the policy proposals and - via the UK Treasury - had agreed the principle and detail.

Mr Walker declared on BBC Radio Jersey that he had received confirmation in 'black and white from the UK Treasury that our commitments have been agreed by ECOFIN.'

We now know Walker lied: there was not then, never had been and has never been since an agreement that Jersey complied with the EU Code of Conduct — which ECOFIN would have had to agree.

As John continued:

He has not produced the black and white evidence, and it is clear from his subsequent statements to the Island's [Corporate Services Scrutiny Sub-Panel](#) that he lied (I feel under no obligation to give him the benefit of the doubt since I have known him for many years and know his weaknesses in this respect). The Scrutiny Panel confirms this

in its report when it states: "that the general approach of zero/ten had been accepted by Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo MP, (who as well as being the UK's Paymaster General is also Chair of the EU Code of Conduct Group), but that the more detailed provisions had not been discussed in any detail."

The problem with the Zero / Ten proposals arises in the [detail](#). And the fact that Terry le Sueur has had to implicitly concede our critique by radically reshaping the proposals in their original form, confirms our analysis.

Which still leaves open the question of how large the budget deficit will be once the proposals come into force within just a very few years. Walker will retire shortly. Ditto Le Sueur. Both seem to have adopted the classic political stance of 'apr?®s moi le deluge.'

Precisely.

But people in Jersey should know that they were lied to by their former Chief Minister — because it was impossible for him to have claimed what he did. But that two people — John Christensen and myself consistently told the truth, and got the analysis right as well.