

The Taxpayer's Alliance – out by a factor of...

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The Taxpayers' Alliance may finally have over-reached themselves. They have just launched a [cinema advert](#) claiming the EU costs each UK citizen £2,000 per year. As Left Foot Forward [show](#), the actual figure is £15 per year according to the EU Budget. That's not a typo: the TPA are genuinely claiming that each UK taxpayer pays £1,985 more than the figure stated by the EU.

Left Foot Forward are asking people to complain to the Advertising Standards Authority [here](#). It would be great if the TPA's rather, shall we say, 'relaxed' approach to fiscal data got a formal rap but I think hitching themselves so closely and publicly to a cause beloved of the hard right reveals to everyone where they really stand. It is also worth noting that the advert (rather subliminally) includes a clip of Gordon Brown stating that the "UK benefits from EU membership" while an anxious taxpayer looks at the bill from the EU. And there was I believing the TPA didn't get involved in party politics.

Of course, none of this will make any difference to their high profile in the right wing press but it does make it ever more difficult for reputable and unbiased media sources to use them as a neutral voice. As the Other Taxpayers' Alliance [pointed-out](#) a couple of weeks ago, the BBC seem to be getting increasingly wary of the TPA.

It all points to a paradox in the TPA strategy: as their profile and their confidence grows, the more people (and journalists) become aware of who they really are. As a result, it becomes more difficult for them to pull off the trick of claiming to be the disinterested voice of the ordinary taxpayer. You can fool some of the people some of the time etc.,¶

NB: this blog originally on the Touchstone blog by Adam Lent but too good to miss