

# Arlene McCarthy MEP

Feb 09 European Report



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## Safer Internet Day 2009

Over 50 countries in Europe and the rest of the world took part in activities to make internet usage safer for children and young people on 10th February.

Arlene said: "I have introduced new laws at European level to protect our children and young people online. But raising awareness about how to be safe on the internet is also key to protecting young people online."

"The Labour Government is taking this issue very seriously, The Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre in the UK has already educated 1 million children in safer internet usage and by June 2009 every primary and secondary school in the UK will have internet safety resources for staff, parents and children."

"For young people everyday must be Safer Internet Day"

[www.saferinternet.org](http://www.saferinternet.org)

## Need for review of EU labour law

The recent strikes at the Lindsey Oil refinery and the solidarity protests from workers at North West sites, demonstrates how unfair treatment of local workers can ignite xenophobic tensions and allow the BNP to exploit fears and concerns of British workers for their own racist agenda.

Labour's Euro MPs support the principle of freedom of movement which enables 2million British workers to take up job opportunities anywhere in the EU. But, freedom of movement must protect local workers terms and conditions. That is why in October 2008 Labour Euro MPs voted in favour of a report calling for the review of the posting of workers law to close loopholes potentially allowing companies to undermine national laws and labour agreements in the member states.

EU law should never be allowed to undermine local wages, terms and conditions. multinational companies need to recognise that in tough economic times they have a moral responsibility to help create and sustain jobs in the local economies where they operate sites. In the wake of the UK strikes and with the prospect of similar strikes across Europe the Commission has finally accepted the need to review this law.

Tories Euro MPs voted against reviewing the EU law. The Liberal Democrats were split and Chris Davies Euro MP voted against, denying North West workers equality and fairness in the workplace.

*Arlene*

## Help us beat the scammers!



Arlene is calling on the public to help beat the dodgy dealers and scam merchants during scam awareness month (February). From the 2nd to the 15th February there will be a national "Scamnesty" campaign organised by local Councils and Trading Standards Offices across the country.

Arlene, who drafted and amended the law to introduce tough standards and rules, warned the scam merchants: "There will be no hiding place for those who prey on the vulnerable and elderly. Some of my constituents have been conned out of thousands of pounds. We are determined to stop these scams. 3 million UK consumers lose a total of £3.5 billion to scams every year."

"It is European law that has delivered tougher rules and more protection for consumers. Now we need to act at local level to drive out the dodgy dealers and scam merchants. It is good news for consumers that trading standards are serious about enforcing this new law."

"The public need to help us by passing on any scam mailings that they have received so that trading standards can hit them with the full force of the law and close down their operations."

To subscribe to Arlene's e-bulletin email: [arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk](mailto:arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk)



## Justice for Michael Shields

The High Court has ruled that the Justice Minister does have the power to pardon Michael Shields. Michael has already spent three years in jail for a crime he did not commit. Arlene continues to put pressure on both the UK and Bulgarian authorities to see that justice is served for Michael.

At the end of November, Arlene arranged for Michael's family to hand over a letter to Sarah Brown asking for the UK Government to support Michael's case.

**Photo:** Arlene & Louise Ellman MP along with Michael's Mother and female relatives at Downing Street.

## Combating child pornography on the Internet

Labour Euro MPs are leading the campaign for the criminalisation of all types of sexual abuse of children including "grooming" and paedophile chat rooms on the internet. They have backed a report calling for the criminalisation of internet providers of paedophile chat rooms and forums and to require national authorities to block access to or delete the domain names of the websites concerned. The report also calls for credit card companies to cooperate to block the internet-based payment systems for websites involved in child pornography.

Arlene said: "While working on the Police Service Parliamentary scheme I saw the shocking scenes posted on these child abuse sites, where babies as young as 3 months are victims. Child abuse on the internet does not stop at national boundaries. In one case police work led to the discovery of an abuse ring involving a German foster parent and a Swedish army sergeant. We need action at a European level, we must do everything we can to close down these appalling sites."

### Good news for Dunne family

Gary Dunne was stabbed to death by a gang of youths in Benalmadena, Malaga, on 2 March 2006. At the end of a 2 year murder trial, during which Gary's body could not be released, the family were informed they could only transport his ashes due to a regional Spanish hygiene law. Arlene asked the Prime Minister to intervene with the Spanish Prime Minister to secure a derogation from this law on compassionate grounds.

Thanks to Gordon Brown's intervention Gary's body now can be flown home for local burial. The family now need to raise £15,000. Donations can be sent directly through any HSBC branch in the country to "The Gary Dunne Fund".

### Highlights from Arlene's Diary

#### In the region:

- \* Launched the Hope Not Hate campaign in Manchester.
- \* Visit to the Nightingale Centre (Europe's 1st breast cancer awareness centre) with Karin Joens MEP - Chair of the Breast Cancer Intergroup
- \* Guest Speaker at North West Network AGM
- \* Attended Labour North West Regional Conference, Southport
- \* KICKZ open evening MCFC

#### In Parliament & beyond:

- \* Hosted UNISON NW visit to Brussels to develop their Anti-BNP strategy in the run up to the European elections.
- \* Hosted Next Generation Labour Councillors visit to Brussels.
- \* Hosted with the European Association of Consumer Cooperatives a seminar on Fighting the Global Food Crisis Through Consumer Cooperation.

#### In the media:

- \* BBC Inside Out programme on Michael Shields ruling
- \* Granada Reports on Michael Shields ruling
- \* Radio 5 Live on Michael Shields ruling
- \* BBC Radio Cumbria, Dune FM, Key 103 on Scam Awareness Month.
- \* BBC North West Tonight on Gary Dunne.