

## A fair deal for energy consumers!

While British Gas raised their prices by 35% pleading the increases were due to increases in world market prices for gas, Centrica the retail arm of British Gas posted £1billion profits the next day.

In Europe's internal energy market French consumers of EDF only face a 4% increase in prices, while British consumers are hit by the same company, with a 19% increase in gas and 22% increase for electricity.

I am working in the European Parliament for a **European Charter for Energy Consumers** to give power back to the consumer and enable them to challenge the companies' bad and unfair practices. Some of these rights such as the installation of smart metres would not only help the consumer but even cut back on usage helping reduce the burden of CO2 emissions in the environment. Other rights are basic and simple:

- The right to regular and accurate billing information
- The right to switch supplier quickly
- The right to transparent and comparable contracts

The European Commission and the national regulators – OFGEM in Britain - need to demonstrate the backbone to take on the companies and enforce these rights for consumers. Its time consumers got a fair and better deal in the monopoly world operated by the energy companies.

Arlene McCarthy MEP  
Local Labour Euro MP  
Express Networks  
1 George Leigh Street  
Manchester M4 5DL  
T: 0161 906 0801  
E: [arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk](mailto:arlene.mccarthy@easynet.co.uk)  
[www.arlenemccarthy.labour.co.uk](http://www.arlenemccarthy.labour.co.uk)