

## POLITIKEN

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### The farming industry files a complaint against Ida Auken with the UN

[Photo]

Professor curious to see the outcome of a complaint filed in a case on river basin management plans.

In 1998, the then Minister for the Environment in Denmark, Svend Auken of the Social Democrats, had the so-called Aarhus Convention adopted, ensuring that citizens of UN countries have the right to be heard in environmental cases.

Now, his niece, Minister for the Environment, Ida Auken of the Socialist People's Party, is accused of being in breach of the Aarhus Convention by giving a far too short consultation period in connection with the so-called river basin management plans.

"We are filing a complaint with the UN because we believe that the involvement of citizens has not been observed", says Henrik Frandsen, vice-chairman of the Danish Agriculture & Food Council.

The river basin management plans are to implement EU requirements of clean water in Danish rivers, lakes and fiords, and such plans were greatly delayed during the reign of the Conservative and Liberal Parties. In December, in order to speed up the process, the new government gave the farmers only five working days to submit their objections, which was not at all enough, the Danish Agriculture & Food Council believes.

"The river basin management plans may have massive financial consequences for our industry. Especially if they are not carefully prepared and are rushed through", Frandsen says.

#### **Professor: Exciting case**

Peter Pagh, professor of environmental law at the University of Copenhagen, finds the complaint "exciting", also because there are no precedents. "And with regard to the contents of the complaint, I believe that they are well-founded", he says.

It was Peter Pagh who, two weeks ago, strongly criticised a bill introduced by Ida Auken limiting citizens' right to complain retrospectively. A procedure which, according to the environmental law professor was contrary to the Aarhus Convention and could generally be compared to similar restrictions in democracy in countries such as Belarus and Kazakhstan. This criticism made the Minister for the Environment promptly withdraw the bill.

Ida Auken is in Kenya, but has made this statement on the complaint to Politiken:

"In my capacity as Minister, I am a great believer in openness and cooperation between all parties in the political process. And the exact purpose of the Aarhus Convention was to ensure such principles. Now the

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legal experts of the UN must be left to work in peace and, therefore, I do not wish to comment on the case as long as it is pending".

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## Landbruget klager til FN over Ida Auken



**Professor er spændt på, hvad der kommer ud af klage i sag om vandplaner.**

I 1998 fik daværende miljøminister Svend Auken (S) vedtaget den såkaldte Aarhuskonvention, der sikrer borgere i FN-landene retten til at blive hørt i miljøsager.

Nu anklages hans niece miljøminister Ida Auken (SF) for at bryde Aarhuskonventionen ved at give alt for kort høringsfrist i de såkaldte vandplaner.

»Vi sender en klage til FN, fordi vi mener, at borgerinddragelsen er trådt under fode«, siger Henrik Frandsen, viceformand i Landbrug & Fødevarer, L & F.

Vandplanerne skal gennemføre EU-krav om renere vand i danske åer, søer og fjorde, og de blev kraftigt forsinket under VK-regeringen. For at speede processen op gav den nye regering i december blot fem arbejdsdage til landmændene til at komme med deres indsigelser. Det var slet ikke nok, mener L & F.

»Vandplanerne kan få massive økonomiske konsekvenser for vores erhverv. Især hvis de ikke er gennemarbejdede og bliver hastet igennem«, siger Frandsen.

### **Professor: Spændende sag**

Professor i miljøret på Københavns Universitet Peter Pagh finder klagen »spændende«, også fordi der ikke er fortillælde. »Og med hensyn til indholdet i klagen mener jeg, at den er velfunderet«, siger han.

Det var netop Peter Pagh, der for to uger siden kraftigt kritiserede et lovforslag fra Ida Auken om begrænsning af borgernes klageadgang med tilbagevirkende kraft. En fremgangsmåde, der ifølge miljøprofessoren var i strid med Aarhuskonventionen og i øvrigt kunne sammenlignes med tilsvarende indskrænkninger i demokratiet i lande som Hviderusland og Kasakhstan. Kritikken fik miljøministeren til prompte at trække lovforslaget tilbage.

Ida Auken er i Kenya, men har sendt denne udtalelse om klagen til Politiken:

»Som minister lægger jeg stor vægt på åbenhed og samarbejde mellem alle parter i den politiske proces. Og Aarhuskonventionen er sat i verden netop for at sikre de principper. Nu skal de juridiske eksperter i FN have lov til at arbejde i fred, og jeg ønsker derfor ikke at kommentere på sagen, så længe den kører«.

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