

5 questions with... Margrete Auken

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Opinion

Palestine, tapestry and poetry.



Margrete Auken | *Photo credit: European Parliament audiovisual*

1. Which person you have worked with has most inspired you in your career, and how?

Uri Avnery, the 94-year-old Israeli writer and founder of the peace movement Gush Shalom peace movement and former member of the Knesset. I have followed Palestinian politics for 50 years - almost since the occupation - and I have been active in Palestinian politics for 17 years. I have followed Uri's writings for 12 years and met him twice. His solutions for the conflict, and his resilient, brave and humorous optimism are a great inspiration to me.

2. What is the smallest change you have made in your career that has had the biggest

positive result?

After the 2004 parliamentary election, despite resistance in my national party, the Socialist People's Party (SF), I decided to join the Greens/EFA group. Today, SF is a member of the European Green Party and enjoys great political influence in Europe thanks to this.

3. What one item would you save from your house or apartment/ house if it was on fire?

A large Icelandic tapestry that my mother-in-law embroidered for my husband and me before she died. It would be irreplaceable.

4. Is there anything you have personally achieved or done that would surprise people?

I used to belong to the anti-EU wing of my party. But when I gathered my arguments against Danish EU membership in the early 1970s, I realised that the pro-EU arguments were much stronger. Ever since, I've been fighting fiercely for a strong Union with greater citizen participation.

5. What was the most inspirational and influential book you have read and why?

Besides the Bible of course, it is the environment essays and nature poems by Thorkild Bjørnvig (winner of the Aristeion prize in 1996 for his translation of selected poems by Rainer Maria Rilke). Bjørnvig's writings from the early 1970s inspired me to lead the fight for the environment in my party, and they still do. I was so lucky to read his poems before they were published, because he was a friend of mine.

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