

Stop de årlige nedskæringer i klima- og miljøforskningen.

Aarhus Universitet skal igen afskedige medarbejdere på grund af de årlige 2% nedskæringer i den forskningsbaserede myndighedsbetjening inden for klima, miljø, fødevarer, dyrevelfærd, biodiversitet og natur.

Vores samfund står over for omfattende udfordringer i forhold til klimaforandringer, tab af biodiversitet og fødevarerforsyning. Udfordringer som kræver velinformerede politiske beslutninger baseret på et solidt videnskabeligt grundlag, fordi de har vidtrækkende betydning for vores alles hverdag i fremtiden. Forskningen ved Aarhus Universitet er central for at sikre vidensgrundlaget bag de politiske beslutninger.

Det er naivt at tro, at flere nedskæringer er en farbar vej til at nå målene om 70% reduktion i udledningen af klimagasser eller 30% beskyttet natur i 2030.

Alligevel har skiftende regeringer siden 2009 årligt skåret i bevillingerne til disse centrale og højaktuelle forskningsområder. Nedskæringer som har reduceret den samlede bevilling fra 500 til 360 millioner i dag - et fald på næsten 30%. Det betyder, Aarhus Universitet igen i foråret 2021 skal afskedige nøglemedarbejdere inden for klima- og miljøforskningen. De mest erfarne medarbejdere er blevet bedt om 'frivillig' pensionering og de yngre medarbejdere mister modet til en fremtid i forskningen.

Vi - de unge forskere fra de påvirkede institutter på Aarhus Universitet - beder med dette opråb om politikernes og offentlighedens opmærksomhed: "De årlige nedskæringer skal stoppe". Nedskæringerne har ikke blot konsekvenser for det psykiske velbefindende hos de ansatte på universiteterne, de ødelægger også muligheden for at opnå de nødvendige videnskabelige gennembrud mod den grønne omstilling. Nedskæringerne begrænser det internationale samarbejde og de medfører potentielt, at en generation af forskningstalenter tabes indenfor essentielle forskningsområder.

Politikere i begge sider af Folketinget har i en årrække ignoreret de ødelæggende konsekvenser af de årlige nedskæringer inden for forskning i grøn omstilling. Vi er unge forskere fra forskellige lande, som arbejder i Danmark fordi her er høje uddannelses-, miljø- og tekniske standarder. Vi er klar til at finde løsninger på de udfordringer vores samfund står overfor, men den nuværende mangel på fremtidsudsigter ender med et tab af unge forskningstalenter - forskere, som er vitale for at finde løsningerne på morgendagens problemer indenfor klima, miljø, fødevarer, dyrevelfærd, biodiversitet og natur.

Forfatterne af dette åbne brev er yngre forskere ved Aarhus Universitets institutter for Agroøkologi, Bioscience, Fødevarervidenskab, Husdyrvidenskab, Miljøvidenskab, og Center for Kvantitativ Genetik og Genomforskning.

Stop the annual cuts in climate and environmental research.

Aarhus University again needs to lay off staff due to the annual 2% cuts in policy support funding for climate, environmental, food, animal welfare, biodiversity and nature research.

Society is facing massive challenges, due to the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and global food insecurity. Challenges that need well-informed political decisions based on solid scientific foundations, as they will have consequences for the daily life of all of us. The research environments at Aarhus University play a central role in providing this knowledge to the policy makers.

It is naive to think that further funding cuts are a safe road to meet the goals of 70% reductions in greenhouse gas emissions or 30% protected nature by 2030.

Despite this, changing Danish governments have since 2009 imposed annual reductions in funding for these research areas. Reductions resulting in a funding decline from 500 to 360 million DKK of today - nearly a 30% cut. In spring of 2021, Aarhus University again faces reductions in key research and technical staff. The most experienced scientists have already been asked to “volunteer” for early retirement and the prospects for young talented researchers are reduced.

We - the young scientists from the affected departments at Aarhus University - call for the politicians' and publics' awareness: “The annual policy support budget cuts must stop”. It is not only bad for the mental health of thousands of scientists in Denmark. It has devastating consequences for the crucial scientific breakthroughs needed to achieve the green transition of our society, limits international collaboration, and it creates a generation gap of scientists in core scientific fields.

The politicians on both sides of parliament have ignored how these continuous, untargeted budget cuts have damaged the long-term development of the research needed to support the green transition. We are a group of early-career, multinational researchers who work in Denmark because of the country's reputation for supporting high environmental, educational and technical standards. The current lack of clear perspectives of a university career is causing despair among young scientists and will lead to loss of the talent that is essential for solving the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The authors of this open letter are young scientists at Aarhus University's departments of Agroecology, Animal Science, Bioscience, Environmental Science, Food Science, and Centre for Quantitative Genetics and Genomics.

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