



**International Human Rights
Instruments**

Distr.: General
17 November 2017

Original: English

**Common core document forming part of the
reports of States parties**

Norway*


[Date received: 13 October 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.17-20485(E)



* 1 7 2 0 4 8 5 *

Please recycle 



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. General information about the reporting State	5
A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the State	5
B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State	22
II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights.....	28
A. Acceptance of international human rights norms.....	28
B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level	36
C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level	38
D. Reporting process at the national level	45
III. Information on non-discrimination and equality and effective remedies	47
A. Legal framework.....	47
B. Institutional framework and effective remedies.....	48
C. Gender equality and specific vulnerable groups	49
D. General measures adopted to reduce economic, social and geographic disparities	53

Abbreviations

EEA	European Economic Area
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNI	Gross national income
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NOK	Norwegian krone

Useful Websites

Equality and anti-discrimination ombudsman

European Wergeland Centre

Government

Norwegian National Human Rights Institution

Ombudsman for Children

Parliament (Stortinget) Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration

Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces

Statistics Norway

Supreme Court of Norway

Legislation¹

The Norwegian Constitution

Act relating to the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution

Act relating to the Ombudsman for Children Act relating to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration

Other Norwegian Laws in English

¹ Unofficial English translations.

I. General information about the reporting State

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the State

(a) Demography

1. On 1 January 2016, the population of Norway was 5 213 985. The population of Oslo, the capital and largest city, was 658 390.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population size</i>	<i>Population growth rate (%)</i>	<i>Inhabitants per km²</i>
2012	4 985 870	1.33	16
2013	5 051 275	1.31	17
2014	5 109 056	1.14	17
2015	5 165 802	1.11	17
2016	5 213 985	0.93	17

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population in rural areas</i>	<i>Population in urban areas</i>
2012	1 011 611	3 957 981
2013	978 344	4 050 638
2014	976 827	4 114 425
2015	973 812	4 172 804
2016	968 576	4 229 849

2. With regard to the *dependency ratio*, approximately 18 per cent of the population was below the age of 15, while approximately 17 per cent was above the age of 65. 49.7 per cent of the population were woman and 50.3 per cent were men.

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Total	2 498 871	2 486 999	2 535 908	2 515 367	2 567 434	2 541 622	2 598 824	2 566 978	2 625 111	2 588 874
<15	18.9	18.1	18.7	18.0	18.6	17.9	18.4	17.7	18.2	17.6
65< (per cent)	12.4	16.0	12.8	16.2	13.1	16.5	13.5	16.7	13.8	16.9

3. The table below shows *birth rate and mortality*.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Birth rate (live births per 1 000 inhabitants)</i>	<i>Mortality (deaths per 1 000 inhabitants)</i>
2012	12.1	8.4
2013	11.7	8.2
2014	11.5	7.9
2015	11.4	7.9
2016	11.3	7.8

4. *Life expectancy* was 84.2 years for women and 80.6 for men, as shown in the table below.

Year	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Age	m	w	m	w	m	w	m	w	m	w
0	79.4	83.4	79.7	83.6	80.0	84.1	80.4	84.2	80.6	84.2
1	78.6	82.6	78.8	82.8	79.2	83.3	79.6	83.3	79.8	83.3
2	77.7	81.6	77.9	81.9	78.3	82.3	78.6	82.3	78.8	82.4
3	76.7	80.6	76.9	80.9	77.3	81.3	77.6	81.4	77.8	81.4
4	75.7	79.6	75.9	79.9	76.3	80.3	76.6	80.4	76.8	80.4

5. *Fertility* (live births per 1 000 women) was 1.7.

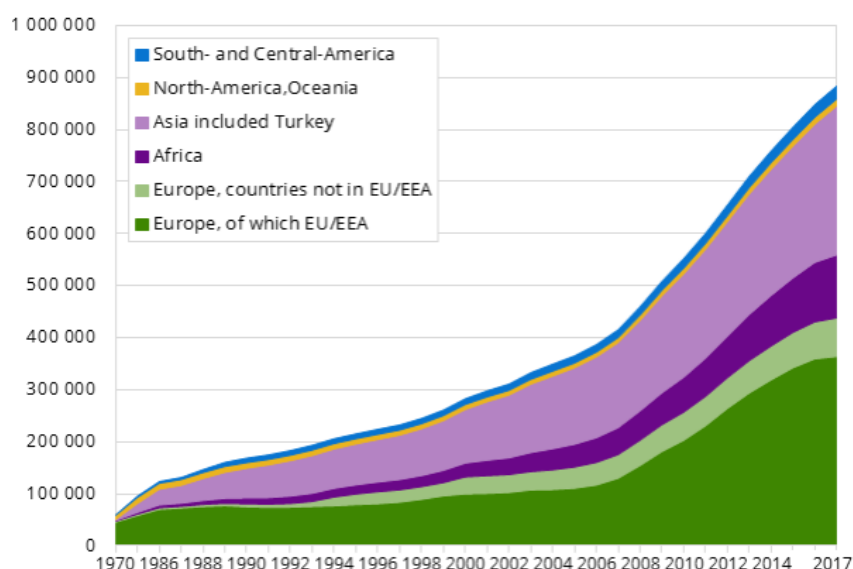
Year	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Age (years)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)	(live births per 1 000 women)
15-19		6.0		5.6		5.0		4.6		3.9
20-24		52.6		48.4		44.9		42.4		39.5
25-29		117.8		113.5		110.3		109.7		107.2
30-34		123.7		120.4		120.5		117.6		119.3
35-39		58.3		56.8		58.4		60.1		59.2
40-44		10.6		10.7		11.1		11.1		11.7
45-49		0.6		0.5		0.7		0.8		0.7

6. The *average household size* (number of persons) in 2016 was 2.2. The share of children living with either their mother or father was 24 per cent, which is an increase from 18 per cent in 1989. 38 per cent of all households consist of one person.

7. The Sami are the *indigenous people* of Norway. There is no overall registration of the Sami population. It is therefore difficult to generate statistics on the Sami as a group. However, the number of Sami living in Norway is generally estimated at approximately 40 000-65 000. Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Roma, Romani people/Tater and Forest Finns are recognised as *national minorities*.

8. At the beginning of 2017, 725 000 *immigrants* and 159 000 *persons born in Norway to immigrant parents* were registered as residents in Norway, representing nearly 17 per cent of the Norwegian population. 438 000 of them had a European background, 286 000 had a background from Asia, 121 000 from Africa, 24 800 from Latin America and 13 000 from North America and Oceania. In 2017, the largest groups of immigrants (including their children) were from Poland, Lithuania, Somalia and Sweden. In this paragraph, "immigrants" are defined as persons born abroad of two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents, and do not include asylum seekers, i.e. those who have applied for protection (asylum) in Norway and whose application has not yet been finalized.

Figure 1. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country background



Source: Statistics Norway.

9. In 2016, approximately 67 000 new immigrants were registered as residents in Norway. 88 per cent of these were persons with foreign citizenships. The net migration (immigration minus emigration) decreased from 2015 to 2016. The largest groups of new immigrants in 2016 were from Syria (17 %), Poland (9 %) and Eritrea (4 %). Almost half of the new immigrants were from the European Union (EU). The largest groups from the EU were from Poland, Sweden and Denmark. In addition, about 3 % of employees in Norway did not have a residence in Norway. A majority of them came from the EU and were predominantly short-term immigrants working in construction and manufacturing.

10. In 2016, approximately 72 per cent of the Norwegian population were members of the Church of Norway. 12 per cent of the population were members of other religious and life stance communities for whom government subsidy was received.

Members of religious and life stance communities outside the Church of Norway, by religion/life stance. Per 1 January 2016¹

	2016		Percentage change	
	Members	Per cent	2015-2016	2012-2016
Total	622 042	100.0	11.3	21.8
Baha'ism	1 149	0.2	1.3	5.6
Buddism	18 817	3.0	4.7	22.0
Hinduism	8 882	1.4	8.6	56.1
Islam	148 189	23.8	5.1	32.0
Judaism ²	770	0.1	3.1	403.3
Christianity	349 083	56.1	17.7	20.8
Sikhism ³	3 545	0.6	3.4	212.9
Philosophy	89 758	14.4	1.7	5.9
Other religious and philosophical communities	1 849	0.3	6.0	51.8

Source: Statistics Norway.

¹ Including only members for whom government subsidy is received.

² One community not represented in the statistics for 2012.

³ One community not represented in the statistics for 2010 and 2012.

11. In 2017, 17 per cent of the Norwegian population (15-66 years) answered in the Labour Force Survey that they have a *disability*, whereof 15 per cent of the males and 19 per cent of the females.

(b) Economy

12. Norway is richly endowed with natural resources, including offshore petroleum and natural gas, various ores, fish, timber and hydropower. Norway is the tenth largest net oil exporter (2014), the third largest net exporter of natural gas (2015) and the sixth largest producer of hydropower in the world (2014). Thanks in part to these natural resources, Norway has become one of the world's richest countries per capita gross domestic product (GDP).

13. Other important reasons for Norway's wealth is its proximity to the markets of Western Europe, easy access to energy, political stability and high educational standard.

14. Free markets and generally low trade barriers characterize the Norwegian economy. A significant share of the economy consists of service industries, including wholesale and retail industries, banking, engineering, and public sector services. In 2016, the service sector accounted for more than 80 per cent of total employment. Seafood and tourism are two of the fastest-growing industries in the economy.

15. The major manufacturing industries are machinery and equipment, food and beverages, construction of ships and oil platforms, refined petroleum, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, fabricated metal products, and computer and electrical equipment. Manufacturing exports have been adversely affected by the fall in oil prices, but a weaker currency (Norwegian krone) is to some extent offsetting the negative shock.

16. Since the start of North Sea oil production in 1971, Norway has developed a vast petroleum sector. For more than 40 years, this sector has given significant contributions to economic growth. In the period 1970-2016, the average gross product per employee was more than 10 times higher in the petroleum sector than in the mainland economy as a whole. However, oil production reached its peak in the early 2000s. In 2012, more than 30 per cent of public revenues came from the petroleum sector. This share was more than halved by 2016. The Ministry of Finance estimates that demand from the petroleum sector will continue to fall as a share of GDP.

17. In 2016, Norway's gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to 3 112 billion Norwegian kroner (NOK), or approximately 370 billion United States dollars (USD)². GDP was 1.0 per cent higher in 2016 than in 2015, in constant prices. In 2016, total foreign assets amounted to NOK 13 178 billion and liabilities to NOK 6 863 billion, resulting in a net external surplus of NOK 6 315 billion.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Gross domestic product (GDP) NOK million, current prices	2 965 208	3 071 134	3 140 371	3 117 433	3 111 773
Annual growth rate (per cent)	2.7	1.0	1.9	1.6	1.0
Gross national income (GNI) NOK million	2 989 601	3 103 861	3 255 999	3 274 595	3 280 435
NOK per capita GDP	590 847	604 534	611 273	600 596	594 286
NOK per capita GNI	595 708	610 976	633 780	630 875	625 156

18. Since 1970, annual economic growth has averaged 2.9 per cent in the total economy and 2.7 per cent in the mainland economy. Growth declined during the financial crisis and in the following year, but the impact of the crisis was less severe in Norway than in most other countries. Since the sharp fall in oil prices beginning in the summer of 2014, the Norwegian mainland economy has grown far below trend and unemployment has been unusually high. However, there are signs that growth will pick up. Unemployment has

² Average exchange rate in 2016.

fallen since the second half of 2016. In the revised national budget, GDP for mainland Norway is projected to increase by 1.6 per cent in 2017 and 2.4 per cent in 2018.

19. Total accrued taxes as a percentage of GDP are estimated at 38.7 per cent for 2017. When adjusted for petroleum activities, taxes amount to 42 percent of mainland GDP. The main goal of the tax system is to fund public goods and services in the most efficient manner.

Household income

20. The table below shows the Gini-coefficient for household income after tax³ for the Norwegian population as a whole. The Gini-coefficient is a number between 0 and 1 that measures income inequality. If the coefficient is 0, all individuals have the same income. Then there is no inequality. If it is 1, then all income goes to one single individual, and inequality is at its maximum.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	0.231	0.236	0.237	0.239	0.241	0.247	0.263

21. The tables below show distribution of household income after tax⁴ between persons (EU-scale)/decile shares and cumulative decile shares in per cent. Persons in student households are excluded.

Decile group										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2011	4	6.2	7.2	8	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.7	13.4	20.6
2012	3.9	6.1	7.2	8	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.7	13.4	20.6
2013	3.9	6.1	7.1	8	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.7	13.5	20.7
2014	3.8	6	7	7.9	8.7	9.6	10.5	11.7	13.5	21.2
2015	3.7	5.8	6.9	7.8	8.6	9.4	10.3	11.5	13.3	22.8

Cumulative decile shares										
2011	4	10.1	17.3	25.4	34.2	43.8	54.4	66	79.4	100
2012	3.9	10	17.2	25.2	34.1	43.7	54.2	65.9	79.4	100
2013	3.9	10	17.1	25.1	33.9	43.5	54	65.8	79.3	100
2014	3.8	9.8	16.9	24.8	33.5	43.1	53.6	65.3	78.8	100
2015	3.7	9.6	16.5	24.2	32.8	42.1	52.5	63.9	77.2	100

22. The table below shows measures of income dispersion/household equivalent income⁵ (EU-scale) between persons.

Year	Total populations			Total populations excluding persons in student households		
	Gini coefficient	P90/P10*	S80/S20**	Gini coefficient	P90/P10*	S80/S20**
2011	0.247	2.8	3.6	0.237	2.7	3.4

³ The measure is based on the so-called "EU equivalence scale". An equivalence scale is a method for dividing household income on the individuals living in the household (including children), and at the same time taking into account the economy of scale in multi-individual households. This is done by scaling up individual incomes in households with several individuals. There are several scales in use worldwide, but the most common are the scales used by the EU and the OECD.

⁴ Negative amounts have been set to zero.

⁵ Negative amounts have been set to zero.

Year	Total populations			Total populations excluding persons in student households		
	Gini coefficient	P90/P10*	S80/S20**	Gini coefficient	P90/P10*	S80/S20**
2012	0.249	2.9	3.7	0.239	2.7	3.4
2013	0.25	2.9	3.7	0.241	2.7	3.4
2014	0.256	2.9	3.8	0.247	2.8	3.5
2015	0.271	3	4	0.263	2.8	3.8

* Percentile ratio of the 9th and the 1st decile cut-offs.

** The ratio of the share of income held by the top 20 per cent of the distribution and the bottom 20 per cent of the distribution.

23. The table below shows household equivalent income (EU-scale) for different percentiles of the income distribution in NOK.⁶

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% change 2014-2015
P05	167 800	171 500	172 400	172 700	172 000	-0.4 %
P10	200 600	204 700	206 200	207 200	206 800	-0.2 %
P20	244 200	250 900	253 500	255 300	255 000	-0.1 %
P30	277 600	286 000	289 600	292 300	292 500	0.1 %
P40	306 600	316 500	321 100	324 700	325 100	0.1 %
P50	334 800	346 000	351 600	356 200	356 600	0.1 %
P60	365 000	377 700	384 400	389 900	390 900	0.3 %
P70	400 500	415 200	423 000	429 900	431 200	0.3 %
P80	448 700	466 100	475 800	484 400	486 300	0.4 %
P90	532 600	554 600	567 000	579 000	583 700	0.8 %
P95	628 800	654 700	669 600	686 600	697 900	1.6 %
P99	981 700	1 017 100	1 041 500	1 084 300	1 204 800	11.1 %
Number of persons	4 812 393	4 866 107	4 94 8395	5 001 062	5 053 468	

Consumer price index

24. Consumer price inflation picked up after the fall in oil prices in 2014. The Norwegian krone exchange rate has weakened substantially following the lower oil prices. This has contributed to a higher increase in prices, first for imported goods and then for domestically produced goods and services. In 2016, the rise in consumer prices was especially high, with a growth in consumer price inflation of 3.6 per cent from 2015. Core inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjusted for changes in taxes and excluding energy (CPI-ATE), rose by 3 per cent. High growth in electricity prices has contributed significantly to the difference between growth in core and headline inflation in 2016. Looking forward, CPI is expected to increase by a more moderate 1.9 per cent in 2017 and 1.6 per cent in 2018. The corresponding growth in CPI-ATE is expected to be 1.7 per cent in 2017 and 1.8 per cent in 2018.

Year	Annual rate of change in CPI	Annual rate of change in CPI-ATE
2009	2.2	2.6
2010	2.4	1.3
2011	1.3	1

⁶ Persons in student households are excluded.

Year	Annual rate of change in CPI	Annual rate of change in CPI-ATE
2012	0.6	1.3
2013	2.1	1.5
2014	2.1	2.5
2015	2.1	2.7
2016	3.6	3.1

(c) **Social expenditures**

25. The table below shows social expenditures in mill. NOK and per cent of total government expenditure.

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
Housing and Community	18 906	1.5	19 058	1.4	21 290	1.5	23 140	2.2	25 872	2.4
Health	210 688	16.8	224 394	16.9	241 559	17.0	255 530	24.3	265 069	24.1
Education	144 353	11.5	150 216	11.3	160 426	11.3	169 485	16.1	174 824	15.9
Social services	505 651	40.3	540 029	40.6	569 643	40.2	605 172	57.5	633 356	57.6
Total social expenditures	879 598		933 697		992 918		1 053 327		1 099 121	
GDP	2 968 258		3 075 575		3 146 665		3 118 116		3 117 040	
Social expenditures/GDP	0.3		0.3		0.3		0.3		0.4	

Source: Statistics Norway. Expenditure by function is based on UN's The Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG).

The National Insurance Scheme

26. The Norwegian National Insurance Scheme is a universal scheme, covering all the traditional branches of social security as set out in ILO Convention No 102. As a general rule, membership in the scheme is compulsory for all those who either live or work in Norway. In 2016, total expenditures under the National Insurance Scheme were NOK 439 658 million. This amount represents approximately 35.9 per cent of the State budget and 13.4 per cent of GDP. The National Insurance Scheme is financed by contributions from the State, employers, employees, self-employed persons and other members of the scheme. In 2016, the contributions from the State were NOK 127 389 million, equal to 29.0 per cent of the total expenditures under the scheme.

The Government Pension Fund

27. The Government Pension Fund was established in 2006, and encompassed the former Government Petroleum Fund and the National Insurance Scheme Fund. The purpose of the Government Pension Fund is to facilitate the government savings needed to meet the expected rise in public pension expenditures in the coming years, and to support long-term management of petroleum revenues.

28. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the management of the Government Pension Fund. The Ministry sets the general investment strategy of the Fund including the strategy for responsible investing. Operational management is carried out by Norges Bank (Norwegian Central Bank) and Folketrygdfondet for the Government Pension Fund Global and Government Pension Fund Norway, respectively.

29. The total market value of the Government Pension Fund was NOK 7 719 billion at the end of 2016. This amounted to an increase of NOK 50 billion from 2015. Favourable returns on the investments measured in foreign currencies increased the value of the Government Pension Fund Global, whilst appreciation of the Norwegian krone, when taken in isolation, reduced the value of the Pension Fund Global. However, changes in the Norwegian krone exchange rate does not affect the international purchasing power of the Fund.

(d) Health

30. *Infant mortality* (deaths within the first year of life per 1000 live births) was 2.2 in 2016. The average for the five last years has been 2.4. The table below shows infant mortality for the period 1966-2015.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Deaths under one year of age per 1 000 live births</i>
1966-1970	13.9
1971-1975	11.6
1976-1980	9.0
1981-1985	8.1
1986-1990	7.9
1991-1995	5.3
1996-2000	4.1
2001-2005	3.3
2006-2010	3.0
2011-2015	2.4

31. The table below shows *maternal mortality*/100 000 live births for the period 2005-2015.

<i>Year</i>	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
0		3.5	8.5	5.8	5.0	1.6	4.9	5.0	0	3.4	3.4	0

32. The table below shows the *proportion of induced abortions as a percentage of live births* for the period 2005-2015.

<i>Year</i>	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	24.4	24.4	25.7	26.2	25.1	25.2	25.1	24.9	24.7	25.23.5	23.5

33. The tables below show the *number of new cases of HIV, AIDS, syphilis and gonorrhoea* per year.

All ages

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>								
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
HIV	Men	184	173	189	166	158	184	145	157	
	Women	100	85	79	76	76	65	76	63	
AIDS	Men	14	21	17	23	19	15	8	9	
	Women	5	2	2	2	10	3	3	7	
Syphilis	Men	72	111	123	106	163	172	162	174	
	Women	4	7	7	3	22	17	10	14	
Gonorrhoea	Men	235	365	314	394	438	564	690	876	
	Women	34	47	56	51	68	118	161	220	

Age group 15-24

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>							
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
HIV	Men	12	18	11	13	11	23	17	13
	Women	10	13	8	2	2	6	7	3
AIDS	Men	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
	Women	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syphilis	Men	5	21	7	10	18	16	22	9
	Women	2	4	3	0	5	6	4	4
Gonorrhoea	Men	61	81	67	106	103	148	159	214
	Women	24	25	24	27	33	57	87	132

Age group 25-44

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>							
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
HIV	Men	102	98	123	89	109	107	71	81
	Women	64	54	58	59	64	50	51	47
AIDS	Men	7	9	10	15	9	7	3	3
	Women	2	2	0	1	8	2	3	2
Syphilis	Men	49	69	78	50	83	97	94	95
	Women	2	2	4	3	11	6	5	10
Gonorrhoea	Men	127	216	196	219	254	328	416	536
	Women	8	18	25	20	30	54	60	78

34. The table below shows the number of *new cases of communicable diseases*.

<i>Communicable diseases</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
AIDS	19	25	29	18	11	17
Botulism	-	-	8	4	13	1
Brucellosis	2	4	2	2	2	4
Campylobacteriosis	3 005	2 934	3291	3386	2307	2317
Chlamydia infection, genital	22 530	21 489	22946	24810	25207	na
Cryptosporidiosis	-	4	31	70	86	255
Diphtheria	-	-	-	2	2	1
E. coli enteritis	272	373	281	973	1419	1704
Echinococcosis	3	2	2	-	2	3
Encephalitis	311	270	250	334	235	288
Fleck typhus	-	-	-	-	1	1
Giardiasis	234	179	227	265	248	343
Gonorrhoea	370	443	506	682	851	1096
Yellow fever	-	-	-	-	-	-
Haemorrhagic fever	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hepatitis A	22	40	51	75	32	42
Hepatitis B, acute	56	46	30	22	19	23
Hepatitis B, chronic	707	660	706	673	795	741

<i>Communicable diseases</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hepatitis C	1 643	1 512	1320	1214	1186	772
HIV infection	268	242	234	249	221	220
Influenza A (H1N1)	885	39	-	-	-	-
Pertussis	4 405	4 244	2609	3032	1904	2208
Cholera	-	-	-	-	1	1
Smallpox	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mumps	16	30	35	18	180	83
Legionellosis	33	25	40	51	61	43
Leprosy	1	-	1	-	-	-
Listeriosis	21	30	21	29	18	20
Lyme disease	247	256	315	322	426	409
Malaria	30	37	87	120	94	75
Measles	39	4	8	3	14	-
Anthrax	-	-	-	-	-	-
MRSA infection	563	575	660	832	785	na
MRSA carrier	496	635	823	1035	1446	na
Nephropathia epidemica	39	13	19	42	11	10
Paratyphoid fever	11	7	16	7	7	9
Plague	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poliomyelitis	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prions disease	7	9	9	6	8	6
PRP infection/carrier	3	11	9	13	17	29
Rabies	-	-	-	-	-	-
ESBLcarba-carrying Gram Negative Bacilli	-	13	24	32	58	54
Rubella	2	1	3	3	-	-
Salmonellosis	1 290	1 371	1362	118	928	865
SARS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shigellosis	163	77	104	93	85	83
Syphilis	130	109	185	189	172	188
Group A streptococcal diseases	179	137	190	189	206	197
Group B streptococcal diseases	191	203	201	209	229	246
H. influenzae infections	85	78	86	71	98	85
Meningococcal diseases	38	24	27	18	19	23
Pneumococcal diseases	728	626	620	569	522	599
Tetanus	-	1	-	1	2	-
Tuberculosis	358	378	392	324	313	298
Tularaemia	180	50	28	46	42	40
Typhoid fever	15	13	10	7	7	16
VRE infection/carrier	289	168	117	109	78	132
Yersiniosis	60	43	55	211	76	57
Total	39 977	37 460	38 165	40 288	40 442	

35. The table below shows the *ten leading causes of death* in Norway.

<i>The ten leading causes of death in Norway</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Heart infarction	3 219	3 100	2 797	2 544	2 467

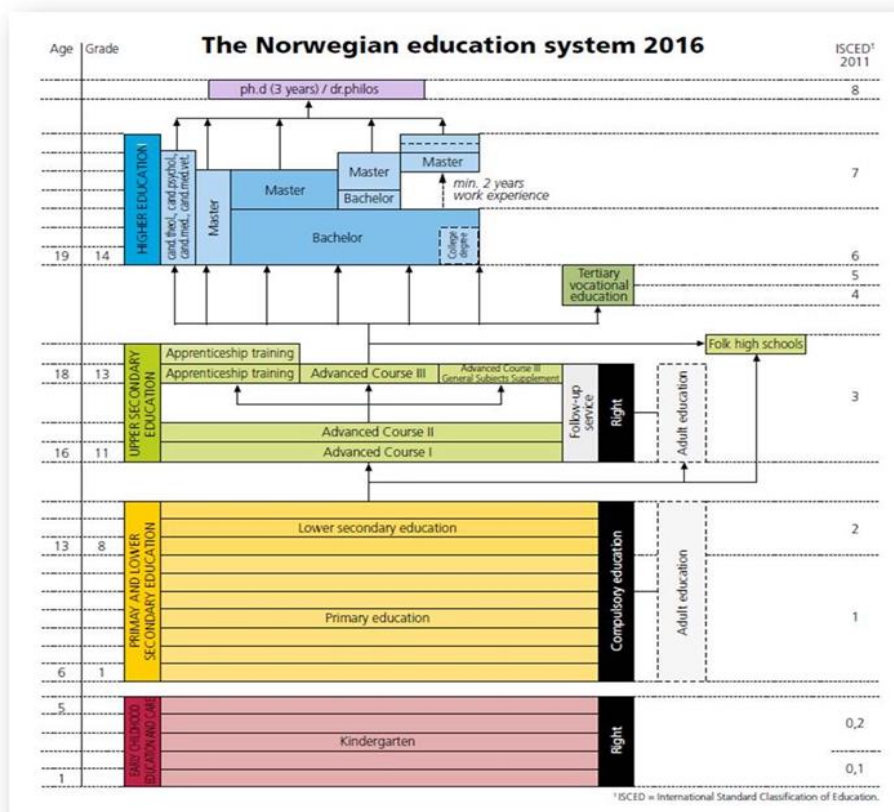
<i>The ten leading causes of death in Norway</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Males	1 645	1 603	1 505	1 384	1 315
Females	1 574	1 497	1 292	1 160	1 152
Malignant neoplasm of lung	2 182	2 183	2 207	2 163	2 174
Males	1 269	1 241	1 232	1 203	1 191
Females	913	942	975	960	983
Chronic ischaemic heart disease	1 609	1 658	1 588	1 439	1 634
Males	935	896	897	802	950
Females	674	762	691	637	684
Unspecified pneumonia	1 550	1 590	1 433	1 244	1 450
Males	704	704	635	563	653
Females	846	886	798	681	797
Other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	1 841	1 988	1 942	1 850	1 997
Males	941	977	974	937	1005
Females	900	1011	968	913	992
Stroke, not specified as haemorrhage or infarction	1 524	1 466	1 203	1 204	1 105
Males	548	501	454	414	417
Females	976	965	749	790	688
Heart failure	1 419	1 493	1 505	1 440	1 338
Males	526	583	591	579	536
Females	893	910	914	861	802
Senile dementia	1 565	1 801	1 798	1 948	2 149
Males	451	516	501	588	581
Females	1 114	1 285	1 297	1 360	1 568
Malignant neoplasm of colon	1 156	1 210	1 197	1 140	1 152
Males	534	614	571	545	547
Females	622	596	626	595	605
Malignant neoplasm of prostate	1 051	1 008	1 013	1 095	1 045
Males	1 051	1 008	1 013	1 095	1 045

36. The table below shows *new cases of tuberculosis per 100 000* for the period 2008-2016.

<i>Year</i>	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	6.6	7.5	6.9	7.4	5.9	6.2	7.7	7.6	7.2

(e) **Education and training**

37. The figure below illustrates the Norwegian education system.



38. Primary and lower secondary education (basic school level) is compulsory. In 2015, 72.8 per cent of men and 73.3 per cent of women aged 16 and older had attained upper secondary education or higher. 27.1 per cent men and 26.7 per cent women had only attained basic school level, compared with 45.2 per cent and 52.2 per cent, respectively, in 1980. The proportion of the population attaining tertiary education has increased a lot over the last 35 years.

Highest completed education in the population 16 years and older⁷

		1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015
Males	Basic school level	45.2	38.3	31.4	30	28.6	27.1
	Upper secondary education*	41.6	44.8	46.5	46	45.3	44.1
	Tertiary education short**	8.9	11.7	15.3	16.5	17.6	18.7
	Tertiary education long***	4.3	5.2	6.7	7.5	8.5	10
Females	Basic school level	52.2	44.6	35.9	32.4	29.6	26.7
	Upper secondary education	38.3	41.1	42.1	41.3	39.9	37.7
	Tertiary education short	8.8	12.9	19.1	22.3	24.9	27.3
	Tertiary education long	0.7	1.4	2.9	4	5.7	8.3

* Upper secondary education: Includes intermediate-level courses based on completed upper secondary level, but not accredited as tertiary education.

** Tertiary education, short: comprises higher education up to 4 years in duration.

*** Tertiary education, long: comprises higher education exceeding 4 years in duration.

⁷ People with unknown or no education are not included.

Kindergarten

39. An individual legal right to kindergarten was introduced in 2009, and as from May 2017 the right is as follows: A child born before the end of November has a right to a place in kindergarten by the end of the month it turns one year old. The Government has the overall responsibility for quality-development, management and financing of the sector, and kindergarten operation is included in the general block grants to the municipalities. The county governors implement kindergarten policy through development activities, administrative tasks, supervision and guidelines for municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for providing and operating municipal kindergartens, as well as approving and supervising both public and private kindergartens in the municipality.

Percentage of children attending kindergarten by different age groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>1-5 years</i>	<i>1-2 years</i>	<i>3-5 years</i>
2006	80.3	61.8	92.8
2012	90.1	80.2	96.6
2013	90.0	79.8	96.6
2014	90.2	80.1	96.7
2015	90.4	80.7	96.6
2016	91.1	82.0	96.9

Primary and secondary education and training

40. Primary and lower secondary education is compulsory, encompasses education for children aged 6 to 15 and is administered by the municipalities. This includes pupils from 1st to 10th grade level. The municipalities are required to offer before and after-school care from 1st to 4th grade. Upper secondary education and training normally comprises three years of general education or four years of vocational training after the 10-year compulsory education. The norm for apprenticeship is two years of vocational training in upper secondary education followed by two years of apprenticeship. The county authorities administer upper secondary education and training.

41. 92.4 per cent of the age-group 16-18 attend upper secondary education and training, with no significant gender differences (2016). 48,6 per cent of pupils in the first year attend a vocational education programme (2016-17). 58.3 per cent complete their education in three to four years; after five years 73 per cent have completed (2011-2016). Completion rates are lowest for male pupils and for pupils starting vocational training. These rates have been stable during the past ten years.

Pupils, apprentices and trainees in upper secondary education in per cent of registered cohorts, 16-18 years

	<i>2010</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2016</i>
Total population	91.0	91.8	91.9	92.4
Immigrants	64.4	71.5	71.6	69.7
Norwegian-born to immigrant parents	90.1	91.3	92.1	93.0

Higher education

42. Higher education is mostly provided by state institutions directly under the Ministry of Education and Research. In 2016, 84 per cent of the Norwegian students are at state higher education institutions, where tuition is free. Most of the private higher education institutions receive state allocations to cover part of or all the costs of educational provision. Students attending higher education institutions charging tuition fees are entitled to receive support to cover such fees from the State Educational Loan Fund, according to set regulations. Each higher education institution has a board, which is responsible for the direction and organisation of operations. Accredited institutions have extensive academic

autonomy. Universities are accredited to freely establish study programmes in all fields and at all levels from bachelor's to PhD level, whereas other accredited higher education institutions are only free to establish programmes at all levels in the fields in which they are accredited to offer PhD programmes. In other fields, they need to apply for accreditation for master's and doctoral programmes from the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, NOKUT. Private providers without institutional accreditation need to apply to NOKUT for accreditation for all new programmes, including at the bachelor's level.

Students in higher education in Norway and abroad

	2006	2015	2016
Students in higher education			
Total	222 975	283 115	288 989
Males	88 705	113 833	116 528
Females	134 270	169 282	172 461
Percentage of persons 19-24 years in higher education			
Total	30.6	34.9	35.1
Males	24.6	27.9	28.1
Females	36.8	42.3	42.6
Percentage of persons 25-29 years in higher education utdanning			
Total	15.7	15.6	15.9
Males	14.1	13.7	14
Females	17.4	17.6	17.8

Source: Statistics Norway.

New entrants to higher education and awarded qualification after 8 years. Numbers and per cent⁸

Academic year and awarded qualification	Total	Males	Females
1997			
Total	36 033	15 180	20 853
Doctorates, PhD	0.2	0.3	0.1
Tertiary graduates from programmes longer than 4 years	14.3	18.8	11.0
Tertiary graduates from programmes lasting 2-4 years	45.0	33.7	53.3
No awarded qualification	40.5	47.2	35.6
Academic year and awarded qualification			
2007			
Total	40 603	16 158	24 445
Doctorates, PhD	0.5	0.8	0.4
Tertiary graduates from programmes longer than 4 years	23.4	26.6	21.3
Tertiary graduates from programmes lasting 2-4 years	40.8	32.0	46.6
No awarded qualification	35.3	40.6	31.8

Source: Statistics Norway. Published 28 June 2016.

⁸ Students who enrolled in tertiary education for the first time from 1.10.yyyy -1 to 30.09.yyyy. (Example: 2007 is referring to 1.10.2006-30.09.2007).

Teacher-student ratio in public funded schools

43. Norway does not have a national standard for teacher density.

Literacy rates

44. Although the literacy rate in Norway is close to 100 per cent, literacy tests have shown that a small amount of the adult population lacks basic competencies in reading and writing.

(f) Employment

45. The drop in oil and gas prices in 2014 marked the start of a slowdown in the Norwegian economy, featuring lower income growth, higher unemployment and lower employment. The *employment rate* decreased from 68.5 % in 2014 to 67.3 % in 2016 for the age group 15-74 years. The employment rate is still higher for men than for women, but decreasing more for men than for women. Nearly 52 per cent of all employees are registered with trade unions (2015).

46. The *unemployment rate* in Norway increased to 4.7 % in 2016, up from 3.5 % in 2014, but has decreased to some extent in 2017. The unemployment rate is higher for men than for women. The unemployment rate among youth (15-24 years) was 11 % in 2016, and 7.8 % in 2014.

Employment rate (in percent of population) and unemployment rate (in percent of labour force) by age group. 2014-2016

	<i>Employed persons</i>			<i>Unemployed</i>		
	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>
Both sexes						
15-74 years	68.5	68.0	67.3	3.5	4.4	4.7
15-24 years	50.9	51.1	49.2	7.8	10.0	11.0
25-54 years	83.9	83.1	82.7	3.3	4.1	4.4
55-74 years	49.0	49.0	48.4	1.2	1.5	1.8
Males						
15-74 years	70.9	70.5	69.5	3.7	4.6	5.4
15-24 years	49.5	50.0	48.1	8.9	11.1	12.6
25-54 years	86.2	85.3	84.5	3.5	4.3	5.0
55-74 years	53.5	53.6	52.9	1.4	1.6	2.3
Females						
15-74 years	66.0	65.5	65.0	3.3	4.1	4.0
15-24 years	52.5	52.2	50.3	6.6	8.8	9.3
25-54 years	81.4	80.7	80.8	3.2	3.8	3.7
55-74 years	44.6	44.4	43.9	1.0	1.4	1.1

Source: Labour force survey, Statistics Norway.

Numbers of employed persons by major industry and age group. Per cent female and men in each industry, 2016

	Total	<i>15-74</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-39</i>	<i>40-54</i>	<i>55-74</i>
		<i>years</i>	<i>years</i>	<i>years</i>	<i>years</i>	<i>years</i>
0 The whole country	2 591 899	319 532	831 751	891 614	549 009	
Males	53 %	50 %	53 %	52 %	54 %	
Females	47 %	50 %	47 %	48 %	46 %	

		<i>15-74 years</i>	<i>15-24 years</i>	<i>25-39 years</i>	<i>40-54 years</i>	<i>55-74 years</i>
01-03 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Total	57 138	7 729	11 791	16 256	21 401
	Males	79 %	72 %	77 %	80 %	82 %
	Females	21 %	28 %	23 %	20 %	18 %
05-09 Mining and quarrying	Total	52 964	1 708	16 500	23 747	10 965
	Males	79 %	83 %	77 %	78 %	85 %
	Females	21 %	17 %	23 %	22 %	15 %
10-33 Manufacture	Total	207 802	17 979	61 999	81 545	46 280
	Males	77 %	75 %	76 %	76 %	78 %
	Females	23 %	25 %	24 %	24 %	22 %
35-39 Electricity, water supply, sewerage, waste management	Total	30 469	1 982	7 821	12 691	7 989
	Males	79 %	81 %	77 %	77 %	85 %
	Females	21 %	19 %	23 %	23 %	15 %
41-43 Construction	Total	212 287	30 307	74 641	69 021	38 297
	Males	91 %	93 %	92 %	90 %	91 %
	Females	9 %	7 %	8 %	10 %	9 %
45-47 Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Total	349 043	87 139	107 174	101 490	53 242
	Males	53 %	44 %	55 %	57 %	57 %
	Females	47 %	56 %	45 %	43 %	43 %
49-53 Transportation and storage	Total	137 257	11 443	38 683	50 650	36 497
	Males	80 %	73 %	80 %	79 %	83 %
	Females	20 %	27 %	20 %	21 %	17 %
55-56 Accommodation and food service activities	Total	89 757	29 583	34 640	18 239	7 280
	Males	43 %	36 %	47 %	44 %	44 %
	Females	57 %	64 %	53 %	56 %	56 %
58-63 Information and communication	Total	87 789	5 019	36 467	33 722	12 622
	Males	71 %	67 %	71 %	71 %	73 %
	Females	29 %	33 %	29 %	29 %	27 %
64-66 Financial and insurance activities	Total	45 695	1 515	15 846	17 763	10 542
	Males	52 %	51 %	55 %	51 %	51 %
	Females	48 %	49 %	45 %	49 %	49 %
68-75 Real estate, professional, scientific and technical activities	Total	160 465	8 689	56 100	57 506	38 180
	Males	59 %	48 %	55 %	58 %	69 %
	Females	41 %	52 %	45 %	42 %	31 %
77-82 Administrative and support service activities	Total	125 473	17 069	47 531	40 704	20 181
	Males	57 %	61 %	57 %	56 %	58 %
	Females	43 %	39 %	43 %	44 %	42 %
84 Public administration, defence, social security	Total	165 472	16 554	44 155	64 571	40 173
	Males	51 %	67 %	51 %	48 %	50 %
	Females	49 %	33 %	49 %	52 %	50 %

		15-74 years	15-24 years	25-39 years	40-54 years	55-74 years
85 Education	Total	212 960	12 066	64 952	82 304	53 640
	Males	34 %	43 %	35 %	31 %	36 %
	Females	66 %	57 %	65 %	69 %	64 %
86-88 Human health and social work activities	Total	540 465	52 636	179 550	186 003	122 270
	Males	19 %	21 %	20 %	18 %	19 %
	Females	81 %	79 %	80 %	82 %	81 %
90-99 Other service activities	Total	100 504	17 795	31 197	30 531	21 017
	Males	42 %	36 %	38 %	42 %	51 %
	Females	58 %	64 %	62 %	58 %	49 %

Source: Register data, Statistics Norway.

47. *Immigrants* from the Nordic countries have the highest employment rate (72.2 per cent in 2016), as shown in the table below. Immigrants from Asia and Africa have the lowest employment rates, 51.9 and 42.3 per cent respectively. In general, women have a lower employment rate than men.

**Employed immigrants in per cent of the population by background.
15-74 years. 2014-2016**

	Both sexes			Males			Females		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
The Nordic countries	76.0	73.3	72.6	77.9	74.6	74.0	73.9	72.0	71.2
Western Europe else	70.6	67.2	67.2	74.5	70.2	70.0	64.9	62.9	63.2
EU countries in Eastern Europe	73.2	68.9	70.1	76.4	71.2	72.5	67.6	65.0	66.3
Eastern Europe else	63.7	61.8	62.3	65.8	63.5	64.5	62.1	60.5	60.8
North-America and Oceania	66.0	62.0	61.6	72.1	67.5	67.0	59.4	56.2	55.9
Asia	56.0	53.0	51.9	61.5	57.2	54.8	51.3	49.5	49.3
Africa	42.0	40.8	42.3	45.7	43.5	45.4	37.5	37.2	38.5
South- and Central-Amerika	62.6	60.1	60.6	67.4	63.4	64.2	59.1	57.6	58.1

Source: Register data, Statistics Norway.

48. The registered unemployment rate for immigrants is higher than for the non-immigrant population, as shown in the table below. In the second quarter of 2017, the registered unemployment rate⁹ for all immigrants was 6.1 per cent (in average). For the non-immigrant population, the registered unemployment rate was 1.9 per cent. Both for non-immigrants and for immigrants, the unemployed rate has been reduced from 2016 to 2017.

⁹ Registered unemployed persons cover unemployed persons registered at NAV (The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service). The registered unemployment rate is usually lower than the unemployment rate from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This is partly because people who say they are unemployed in the LFS have not necessarily registered themselves with NAV.

Registered unemployed persons in per cent of the labour force by country background. Per 2. Quarter 2014-2017

	<i>Both sexes</i>				<i>Males</i>				<i>Females</i>			
	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>
Total	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.9	3.1	3.3	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.2
Non-immigrant population	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.2	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.5
All immigrants	7.0	7.2	7.0	6.1	6.8	7.3	7.2	6.1	7.2	7.0	6.7	6.0
The Nordic countries	2.7	3.1	3.0	2.5	3.2	3.9	3.7	3.1	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.9
Western Europe else	3.3	3.8	4.1	3.5	3.4	3.9	4.3	3.7	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.0
EU countries in Eastern Europe	7.7	8.8	8.3	6.9	7.5	9.0	8.5	7.0	7.9	8.1	7.6	6.7
Eastern Europe else	6.9	6.8	6.6	5.5	6.9	6.7	6.6	5.2	7.0	6.9	6.6	5.8
North-America and Oceania	3.1	3.5	3.1	3.2	2.7	3.7	3.1	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.0	3.3
Asia	8.2	7.6	7.4	6.6	7.4	6.9	6.9	6.3	9.0	8.3	7.9	7.0
Africa	13.3	11.4	11.1	10.0	13.2	11.4	11.2	9.9	13.4	11.3	10.7	10.0
South- and Central-Amerika	6.8	7.4	7.7	6.4	6.5	7.7	7.9	6.3	7.1	7.2	7.7	6.6

Source: Registered data, Statistics Norway.

49. In the 2017 Labour Force Survey, 43 per cent of persons who answered that they had a disability were employed, whereof 47 per cent of the males and 40 per cent of the women, as shown in the table below. 3.9 per cent of persons with a disability were unemployed. The unemployment rate is higher for men than for woman.

Employed and unemployed persons with disabilities in the age group 15-66 year. 2 Quarter 2014-2017. Per cent

		<i>2014Q2</i>	<i>2015Q2</i>	<i>2016Q2</i>	<i>2017Q2</i>
Employed persons with disability %	Both sexes	43	43	44	43
	Males	43	44	48	47
	Females	43	43	41	40
Unemployed persons with disability %	Both sexes	2.9	2.5	3.9	3.9
	Males	3.9	3.7	6.0	5.5
	Females	2.0	1.5	2.1	2.6

Source: Disabled people, Labour force survey, Statistics Norway.

(g) Proportion of international assistance provided in relation to GNI

50. Norway has achieved its official development assistance target of 1% of the gross national income (GNI) since 2013, and there is a cross-party consensus to maintain this spending level. In 2017, the aid budget amounts to NOK 33,9 billion. This corresponds to 1% of GNI.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

(a) Form of government

51. Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The Norwegian Constitution is based on a separation of powers, with an independent

legislature, executive and judiciary. However, since the introduction of the principle of parliamentary government in 1884, it can no longer be maintained that the executive is independent of the legislature, as it cannot govern without the confidence of the legislative assembly. Together with constitutional customary law, the Constitution forms the legal framework for Norway's political system.

(b) Democracy, political parties and the electoral system

52. The legislative assembly of Norway is the Storting. The Storting has 169 members, and parliamentary elections take place every four years. There are no by-elections, nor does the Constitution provide for dissolution of the Storting between elections. Because Norway has a parliamentary form of government, the Storting determines the composition of the Government. The Storting can also decide that a referendum should be held on a particular issue. The Storting has a Presidium, which is chaired by the President of the Storting and whose responsibilities include determining the Storting's order of business and ensuring that constitutional rules are upheld in all matters. As far as possible, the President avoids taking a stand on purely political issues on which there are divergent opinions. Laws are enacted by the Storting, usually on the basis of a bill submitted by the Government.

53. Elections to the Storting are held every fourth year. The voting age is currently 18 years. Norway practices universal suffrage. Everyone who is entitled to vote is eligible to stand for election. The Norwegian electoral system is based on the principles of direct election and proportional representation in multi-member constituencies, which are coherent with the counties. As of October 2017 nine political parties are represented in the Storting (the Labour Party, with 49 representatives, the Conservative Party, with 45 representatives, the Progress Party, with 27 representatives, the Centre Party, with 19 representatives, the Socialist Left Party, with 11 representatives, the Christian Democratic Party, with 8 representatives, the Liberal Party, with 8 representatives, the Green Party, with 1 representative, and the Red Party, with 1 representative). There are a number of smaller political parties that are not represented in the Storting. Groups that are not political parties may also put up lists of candidates for election. At the general election in September 2017, the voter turnout was 78.2 per cent, and 42,1 per cent of the 4 437 candidates were women. In the current Storting 41,4 per cent of the members are women.

Distribution of seats in the Storting by party

<i>Party</i>	<i>Election period</i>	<i>No. of seats</i>
The Centre Party (Senterpartiet)	2009-2013	11
	2013-2017	10
	2017-2021	19
The Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig folkeparti)	2009-2013	10
	2013-2017	10
	2017-2021	8
The Conservative Party (Høyre)	2009-2013	30
	2013-2017	48
	2017-2021	45
The Green Party (Miljøpartiet de Grønne)	2009-2013	0
	2013-2017	1
	2017-2021	1
The Labour Party (Det norske arbeiderparti)	2009-2013	64
	2013-2017	55
	2017-2021	49
The Liberals (Venstre)	2009-2013	2
	2013-2017	9
	2017-2021	8

<i>Party</i>	<i>Election period</i>	<i>No. of seats</i>
The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet)	2009-2013	41
	2013-2017	29
	2017-2021	27
The Red Party (Rødt)	2009-2013	0
	2013-2017	0
	2017-2021	1
The Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk venstreparti)	2009-2013	11
	2013-2017	7
	2017-2021	11

Number of recognised national political parties

<i>Year of election</i>	<i>No.</i>
2017	21
2013	20
2009	22

Number of eligible voters

<i>Year of election</i>	<i>No.</i>
2017	3 765 245
2013	3 643 600
2009	3 530 785

Percentages of women members of the Storting

<i>Parliamentary period</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
2017-2021	42.1
2013-2017	39.6
2009-2013	39.6

54. Six national referendums have been held in Norway, and these have traditionally had a higher turnout than Storting elections, reaching a record 89 per cent when Norway voted on membership of the European Union (EU) in 1994. In 1905 Norwegians voted in favour of the dissolution of the union with Sweden and of offering the throne to Prince Carl of Denmark (who accepted and became King Haakon VII). In a referendum in 1919, Norwegians voted for the introduction of a ban on spirits, but after a new referendum in 1926 the prohibition was repealed. Norway voted against membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1972 and of the EU in 1994.

(c) The Norwegian Government

55. The Government is formed by the party or parties that have a majority of the seats in the Storting or that constitute a minority capable of governing. Thus the Government is indirectly selected by the electorate. The Government consists of the Prime Minister and a number of ministers (18 ministers in September 2017). The Office of the Prime Minister assists the Prime Minister in leading and coordinating the work of the Government. The ministries are responsible for executing the policies decided by the ministers in the various sectors of the government administration. Formal decisions by the Government are made in the form of a Royal Decree.

56. The executive power is invested in the King, but Royal Decrees are adopted by the King in Council, which consists of the government ministers. The King fills an important symbolic function as head of state and Norway's official representative.

(d) Counties and municipalities

57. Norway is divided into 19 counties and 426 municipalities (2017), and a number of political decisions are made at these two levels. The Government delegates autonomous powers in certain policy areas to the county and municipal councils, and these areas are specified in legislation. Much of the public administration is also carried out at these levels.

58. The Government is in the process of transferring more power and responsibility to local government, as well as developing the regional governmental level. The local government reform aims to establish larger municipalities in order to strengthen the provision of public services. In 2020, the number of municipalities will be reduced to 354. The regional governmental level will be given new responsibilities and a more pronounced role in regional development. The number of counties will be reduced to 11 from 2020.

59. Elections to the municipal and county councils are held every fourth year. The voter turnout for the municipal and county council election in 2015 was 60,2 per cent. Unlike the Storting elections, where the vast majority of candidates represent registered parties, lists of local independent candidates are very common in county and municipal elections.

(e) Legal structure

60. The administration of justice is carried out by the courts of law, which are fully independent of the other constitutional powers. There are three levels of courts: the District Court of first instance, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court at the highest level. Civil and criminal cases may be heard at all levels. Civil cases are brought before the courts by the parties in the case, whereas criminal cases are brought by the prosecution authority. The legality of administrative decisions may be subject to control by a court. As a main rule, civil disputes are considered initially by a conciliation board, which is to be found in every municipality and consists of laypeople. The ordinary courts are supplemented by special courts, including the Labour Court and the Land Consolidation Courts.

61. In 2002, administrative control of the courts was moved from the Ministry of Justice, where it had been since the creation of the Norwegian state in 1814, to the National Courts Administration. This body was established in order to safeguard the independence of the courts in relation to the other branches of government. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has no power to instruct the National Courts Administration, but has the main responsibility for drafting legislation relating to the courts.

62. The public administration agencies are also supervised by the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration. The Ombudsman investigates complaints from citizens concerning an injustice perpetrated by a public agency. The Ombudsman processes complaints concerning administrative decisions at government, county and municipal levels, and may also take the initiative to investigate a matter.

63. The legal system is based on both legislation and customary law as sources of law. To meet the requirements under customary law the custom must have been consistently practised over a long period of time, and both the legal practitioners and society must have considered the custom to be legally binding. Customary law plays a considerable role in the law of damages, law of torts, contract law, public administration law and constitutional law.

(f) Indigenous peoples

64. The Sami are the indigenous people of Norway. The Sami traditionally live in the northern and eastern parts of Norway, and in parts of Sweden, Finland and Russia.

65. Norwegian policy towards the Sami is based on the recognition that the State of Norway was established on the territory of two peoples, the Norwegians and the Sami, and that both these peoples have the same right to develop their culture and language.

66. The rights of the Sami are protected under Article 108 in the Norwegian Constitution, which states that “it is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life.” The rights of the Sami are also protected in more specific provisions in the Act concerning Sámediggi (the Sami parliament) and other Sami legal matters (the Sami Act), in other legislation, and through Norway’s obligations under several international conventions, particularly article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

67. The Sami have their own parliament, Sámediggi, which was established in 1989 under the Sami Act. It is a representative and elected political body for the Sami in Norway, in particular as a party in the dialogue with central government. The business of Sámediggi is any matter that in the view of Sámediggi particularly affects the Sami people. Approximately 17 000 Sami were registered on the electoral roll for elections to Sámediggi in 2017.

68. In recent years, policies towards the Sami have given priority to recognising and strengthening minority and indigenous rights and on development of an infrastructure of institutions in Sami society. Legislation, procedures and programmes have been established to strengthen the Sami languages, culture, industries and society. Of particular importance are the Sami Act, the Finnmark Act and the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and Sámediggi.

69. The Sami languages are official languages in Norway, together with the two written Norwegian languages, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*. North Sami, Lule Sami and South Sami are also recognised as regional or minority languages in Norway and are protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

70. As an indigenous people, the Sami are entitled to be consulted on matters that may affect them directly. Sámediggi and the central government authorities have concluded an agreement on how these consultations are to be carried out in the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and Sámediggi of 11 May 2005. In some matters the authorities may also be obliged to consult with other Sami interests in addition to Sámediggi, particularly in matters that directly affect Sami land use, such as reindeer husbandry.

71. In 2005 the Storting adopted the Finnmark Act. Through the Finnmark Act, ownership rights to areas in Finnmark County to which the State either held formal title or was considered owner without formal title (about 95 per cent of Finnmark County) were transferred to an independent entity, the Finnmark Estate (“Finnmarkseiendommen”). A board consisting of six members, three of whom are appointed by Sámediggi and three by the Finnmark County Council, governs the Finnmark Estate. The Act also regulates the local population and other people’s use of certain natural resources on the Finnmark Estate’s grounds.

72. The Finnmark Act confirms that the Sami have, collectively and individually, acquired rights to the land in Finnmark through prolonged use of land and water areas. It follows explicitly from the act that it does not interfere with any rights acquired by Sami and other people through prescription or immemorial usage. The Finnmark Commission was established to clarify the existence of such rights. The Commission’s task is to investigate rights of use and ownership to the land that was transferred to the Finnmark Estate through the Finnmark Act. As of September 2017, the Commission has completed its investigations in five geographical fields, and is currently working on another two fields. Disputes that arise after the Commission has finished its investigations in a field may be brought before the Uncultivated Land Tribunal for Finnmark. The judgments of the Tribunal may be appealed to the Norwegian Supreme Court.

(g) National minorities

73. Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Roma, Romani people/Tater and Forest Finns are recognised as national minorities in Norway. National minorities are defined as groups with a long-term connection to the country.

74. Norway ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1993 and the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1999. Kven, Romanes and Romani are recognised as regional or minority languages.

75. The goal of the public authorities is to develop a coherent policy for national minorities in dialogue with the national minority organisations. The organisations take part in the regular Contact Forum between national minorities and central authorities, thereby helping to promote awareness of the status of national minorities in society and the activities of national minorities in civil society. In addition to the Contact Forum, the ministries have meetings with representatives from national minorities whenever relevant.

76. A grant for national minorities is provided each year from the central government budget. The aim of the grant scheme is to support activities that promote active participation in society, ensure equal opportunities for all and combat discrimination. The grant scheme is intended to help to ensure that the principles enshrined in the European Framework Convention are implemented in practice.

77. Applications may be submitted for basic support for the operating costs of organisations based on a national minority or funding for projects aimed at disseminating information on the situation of national minorities, self-help activities and cooperation between minority groups.

78. In order to promote active participation in society and prevent discrimination, there is a special focus on education, both for adults and children. In addition, efforts are made to promote reconciliation and confidence-building between the Norwegian authorities and the national minorities.

(h) Recognition of non-governmental organisations

79. The Norwegian Register of Non-Profit Organisations was established in December 2008, and more than 40 000 non-profit organisations are registered there. The register is operated by the Brønnøysund Register Centre. Registration is voluntary. The main objective of the Register is to facilitate and improve interaction between the Government and the voluntary sector.

(i) Crime and justice

80. In 2016, there were 182 *police personnel* per 100 000 inhabitants. In 2017, there were 379 regular *judges* and 111 deputy judges in the courts of first instance, 173 judges in the courts of second instance and 20 judges in the Supreme Court.

81. In 2014 (newest available statistics), 269 600 persons received a total of 302 600 *sanctions*, a decrease of 1.7 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively, from the previous year. 10 per cent of all persons who received sanctions in 2014, were sanctioned more than once during that year. 19 600 sanctions were imposed by the courts. This was a decrease of 10 per cent from the previous year. The distribution of types of sanction imposed by the courts was: 54 per cent unconditional imprisonment, 27 per cent conditional imprisonment, 12 per cent community sentence and 8 per cent fines.

82. In 2015, an average of 3 746 persons were *imprisoned* in Norway, an increase of 4.3 per cent from 2012. On average, 2 583 persons were convicted prisoners, 92 were held in preventive detention, 1000 were remanded in custody and 71 were imprisoned for non-payment of fines. The number of convicted prisoners increased from 2012 to 2015 by 3.6 per cent and the number of prisoners on remand increased by 5.8 per cent. The proportion of female prisoners has remained fairly stable in recent years, at 5.6 per cent of the prison population in 2015 as opposed to 5.1 per cent in 2014. 24 children (between 15 and 18 years) were imprisoned in 2015, 27 in 2014, 27 in 2013 and 51 in 2012. In 2005, the earliest year with comparable figures, 59 persons under 18 years were imprisoned.

83. In 2016, 336 500 *crimes* were reported to the police, a decrease of 4.3 per cent from 2015 and 9.6 per cent from 2014. When the population increase is taken into account, the level of crime is at its lowest in the last 24 years, which is the period with comparable statistics. The decrease in the total number of crimes is mainly due to a decrease in crimes for profit (various types of thefts). In 2016, 35 000 cases of violence and threats were

reported to the police. The number of such crimes has increased over several years, mainly due to an increased number of reported cases of domestic violence. When the population increase is taken into account, the proportion of violent offences reported to the police has, however, remained relatively stable since the turn of the millennium.

84. Norway has abolished the *death penalty* for all crimes both in peace and in war time.

85. In 2016, close to 7100 *sexual offences* were reported to the police. This is an increase of 24 per cent from 2015 and 48 per cent from 2014. There has been an increase in the number of reported rapes, as well as incidents of sexual intercourse with children. Increased focus on such offences from the police and other agencies is considered to be a factor in explaining the rise in numbers.

86. Theft and other *offences for profit* made up almost 40 per cent of crimes reported to the police in 2016. Around 105 000 cases of thefts were reported to the police, a decrease of 10 000 cases from 2015 and 28 000 cases from 2014. The number of cases of pickpocketing, car thefts and thefts from private property has been declining for several years.

87. One death was registered in prison in 2015. Two *prisoner deaths* were registered outside prison (on the way to hospital or on leave).

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

(a) Main international human rights conventions and protocols

88. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Signature (S) Ratifications (R)</i>	<i>Reservations Declarations</i>	<i>Acceptance of optional procedures</i>
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to reservations to Article 8, paragraph 1 (d) “to the effect that the current Norwegian practice of referring labour conflicts to the State Wages Board (a permanent tripartite arbitral commission in matters of wages) by Act of Parliament for the particular conflict, shall not be considered incompatible with the right to strike, this right being fully recognised in Norway.”	
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to reservations to Article 10, paragraph 2 (b) and paragraph 3 “with regard to the obligation to keep accused juvenile persons and juvenile offenders segregated from adults” and to Article 14, paragraphs 5 and 7 and to Article 20, paragraph 1. 19 September 1995 [The Government of Norway declares that] the entry into	31 August 1972 “Norway recognises the competence of the Human Rights Committee referred to in Article 28 of the Covenant to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that another State Party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant.”

Convention/ protocol	Signature (S) Ratifications (R)	Reservations Declarations	Acceptance of optional procedures
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, (ICERD), 1965	R 06/08/1970	<p>force of an amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act, which introduces the right to have a conviction reviewed by a higher court in all cases, the reservation made by the Kingdom of Norway with respect to Article 14, paragraph 5 of the Covenant shall continue to apply only in the following exceptional circumstances:</p> <p>1. “Riksrett”(Court of Impeachment)</p> <p>According to Article 86 of the Norwegian Constitution, a special court shall be convened in criminal cases against members of the Government, the Storting (parliament) or the Supreme Court, with no right of appeal.</p> <p>2. Conviction by an appellate court</p> <p>In cases where the defendant has been acquitted in the first instance, but convicted by an appellate court, the conviction may not be appealed on grounds of error in the assessment of evidence in relation to the issue of guilt. If the appellate court convicting the defendant is the Supreme Court, the conviction may not be appealed under any circumstances whatsoever.</p>	<p>23 January 1976</p> <p>Norway recognises the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within the jurisdiction of Norway in accordance with Article 14, with the reservation that the Committee shall not consider any communication from an individual or group of individuals unless the Committee has ascertained that the same matter is not being examined or has not been examined under another procedure of international</p>

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Signature (S) Ratifications (R)</i>	<i>Reservations Declarations</i>	<i>Acceptance of optional procedures</i>
			investigation or settlement.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979	R 21/05/1981		
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984	R 09/07/1986		Norway recognizes the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that another State Party is not fulfilling its obligations under this Convention. Norway recognises the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of individuals subject to its jurisdiction who claim to be victims of a violation by a State Party of the provisions of the Convention.
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989	R 08/01/1991		
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990		In 2002, Norway decided not to become party to this Convention, as the wording was considered to be so vague and imprecise on a number of points that it would be difficult to clarify the consequences and obligations that ratification would entail. Norway was also concerned that the Convention could undermine existing obligations under the ICCPR and the ICESCR. The duplication of existing rights, to some extent with variations, could be unfortunate, since this could lead to ambiguity. Norway has ratified the ILO core conventions on workers' rights. These also apply to foreign nationals resident in Norway. Norway participates actively in the UN, the Global Forum on Migration and Development and various other international forums where migrants' rights are on the agenda. Norway gives high priority to efforts to improve labour standards, which are also crucial in the context of migrants' rights.	

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Signature (S) Ratifications (R)</i>	<i>Reservations Declarations</i>	<i>Acceptance of optional procedures</i>
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006	R 03/06/2013	<p>Declarations:</p> <p>Article 12</p> <p>“Norway recognises that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life. Norway also recognizes its obligations to take appropriate measures to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity. Furthermore, Norway declares its understanding that the Convention allows for the withdrawal of legal capacity or support in exercising legal capacity, and/or compulsory guardianship, in cases where such measures are necessary, as a last resort and subject to safeguards.”</p> <p>Articles 14 and 25</p> <p>“Norway recognises that all persons with disabilities enjoy the right to liberty and security of person, and a right to respect for physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others. Furthermore, Norway declares its understanding that the Convention allows for compulsory care or treatment of persons, including measures to treat mental illnesses, when circumstances render treatment of this kind necessary as a last resort, and the treatment is subject to legal safeguards.”</p>	
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), 2006	S 21/12/2007		
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-CRC-AC), 2000	R 23/09/2003		

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Signature (S) Ratifications (R)</i>	<i>Reservations Declarations</i>	<i>Acceptance of optional procedures</i>
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography (OP-CRC-SC), 2000	R 02/10/2001		
Optional Protocol to ICCPR, concerning individual petition (ICCPR-OP1), 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to the following reservation to Article 5, paragraph 2: "... The Committee shall not have competence to consider a communication from an individual if the same matter has already been examined under other procedures of international investigation or settlement."	
Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (ICCPR-OP2), 1989	R 05/09/1991		
Optional Protocol to CEDAW, concerning individual complaints and inquiry procedures (OP-CEDAW), 1999	R 05/03/2002		
Optional Protocol to CAT, concerning regular visits by national and international institutions to places of detention (OP-CAT), 2002	R 27/06/2013		
Optional Protocol to CRPD, concerning individual complaints (OP-CRPD), 2006		In September 2016, the Government presented a white paper to Parliament on the individual complaints mechanisms to CRPD, ICESCR and CRC. The conclusion was that the Government would not at present submit proposals to the effect that Norway should become party to the relevant Optional Protocols. This was due to considerable uncertainty about the consequences. The Government's view is that many of the provisions on economic and social rights in ICESCR and CRC are not well suited for international review based on	
Optional Protocol to ICESCR, concerning individual complaints (OP-ICESCR), 2008			
Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications			

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Signature (S) Ratifications (R)</i>	<i>Reservations Declarations</i>	<i>Acceptance of optional procedures</i>
procedure, 2011	individual complaints, because they set out vague and far-reaching goals which give the States Parties a considerable margin of appreciation. Decisions on how to realise these rights should be taken by institutions elected by popular vote. As for OP-CRPD, the Government's main reason for not proposing to become a party at present was that the CRPD Committee in some areas interprets the Convention in a far-reaching manner that does not correspond with the understanding of most of the States Parties. In January 2017, a large majority in Parliament concurred with the Government's conclusion.		

(b) Other United Nations human rights and related conventions

89. Norway is party to the conventions listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R) Accession (A)</i>
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	R 22/07/1949
Slavery Convention, 1926 as amended in 1955	R 11/04/1957
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949	A 23/01/1952
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, and its 1967 Protocol	R 23/03/1953
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	R 19/11/1956
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	A 11/08/1971
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998	R 16/02/2000
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, and its Protocols against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, and to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children	R 23/09/2003
Arms Trade Treaty, 2013	R 12/02/2014

(c) Conventions of the International Labour Organization (a selection)

90. Norway is party to the conventions listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)	R 07/07/1937
Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	R 01/07/1932

<i>Convention/protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	R 09/11/2015
Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)	R 05/01/1949
Migration for Employment Recommendation, 1949 (No. 86)	R 17/02/1955
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)	R 04/07/1949
Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No. 97)	R 17/02/1955
Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)	R 17/02/1955
Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100)	R 24/09/1959
Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)	R 30/09/1954
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	R 14/04/1958
Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106)	
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	R 24/09/1959
Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)	R 28/08/1963
Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)	R 06/06/1966
Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)	R 14/04/1971
Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131)	
Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132)	R 22/06/1973
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	R 08/07/1980
Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	R 24/01/1979
Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)	R 19/03/1980
Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)	R 22/06/1982
Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)	R 22/06/1982
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries Convention, 1989 (No. 169)	R 19/06/1990
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	R 21/12/2000
Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)	R 09/11/2015
Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	R 10/2/2009

(d) Conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

91. Norway is party to the convention listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960	R 08/01/1963

(e) Conventions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law

92. Norway is party to the conventions listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Convention concerning the recognition and enforcement of decisions relating to maintenance obligations towards children, 1958	R 02/09/1965
Convention on the Recognition of Divorces and Legal Separations, 1970	R 15/08/1978
Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions relating to Maintenance Obligations, 1973	R 12/04/1978
Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980	R 09/01/1989
Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, 1993	R 25/09/1997
Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, 1996	R 30/04/2016

(f) Geneva Conventions and other treaties on international humanitarian law

93. Norway is party to the conventions listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 1977	R 14/12/1981
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 1977	R 14/12/1981
Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, 1997	R 09/07/1998
Convention on Cluster Munitions 2008	R 03/12/2008

(g) Conventions of the Council of Europe (a selection)

94. Norway is party to the conventions listed in the table below.

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 (Norway has also ratified additional Protocols Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7 and 13 to the Convention)	R 15/1/1952
European Social Charter (revised) 1996	R 07/05/2001

<i>Convention/ protocol</i>	<i>Ratification (R)</i>
European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1987	R 21/4/1989
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992	R 10/11/1993
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1995	R 17/3/1999
Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems, 2003	R 29/04/2008
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005	R 17/01/2008
Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents, 2009	R 11/09/2009
Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against woman and domestic violence, 2011	R 05/07/2017

B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

(a) Legislation

95. Human rights are protected in the Constitution, the Human Rights Act and specific legislation in a number of different areas.

96. Norway is a dualist country. In order to be directly applicable in Norwegian law, international human rights conventions must therefore — in principle — be incorporated or transformed into Norwegian law. Incorporation means that the convention as such is incorporated into Norwegian law through specific provisions, for instance in the Human Rights Act. Transformation means that national legislation is worded so as to be in accordance with the convention. Transformation may be either active or passive. In active transformation the Storting implements new legislation or amends existing legislation in order to comply with the convention concerned, whereas in passive transformation the Storting considers that existing Norwegian legislation is already in accordance with the convention.

97. It is also a principle of general Norwegian law that Norwegian law should be interpreted in accordance with obligations in public international law that are binding on Norway. The principle is particularly strong with respect to international human rights obligations. The principle has been cited a number of times by the Norwegian Supreme Court.

98. In some areas of law sector monism applies, i.e. that a particular Act explicitly states that provisions in the Act apply with the limitations that follow from public international law, including human rights. The Norwegian Civil Procedure Act and the General Civil Penal Code are examples of such legislation.

The Constitution

99. The Norwegian Constitution, which was adopted in 1814, is founded on the principles of the sovereignty of the people, the separation of powers and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Constitution of 1814 did not, however, contain a complete bill of rights, but specified those human rights and fundamental freedoms that were agreed on at the time. Articles relating to human rights have been added in recent years and in December 2011 a Human Rights Committee appointed by the Storting presented a report with proposals on strengthening human rights in the Constitution. The report included several proposed amendments to the Constitution, relating to civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as securing children's rights in the Constitution.

100. All of the proposals from the report were put forward in the Storting by different groups of elected representatives consisting of members of all parties represented in the Storting. In 2014 a number of the proposals were adopted, and a new bill of rights was added in Chapter E of the Constitution. The first article of the chapter establishes a general duty for all public authorities to respect and safeguard the human rights established in the Constitution and in human rights treaties binding on Norway, cf. Article 92.

101. According to the Supreme Court, the reference to international human rights treaties binding on Norway in Article 92 cannot be seen as incorporating these treaties at a constitutional level. Instead, the article imposes a duty upon the courts and other public authorities to enforce human rights at the level in which they are implemented in national law.¹⁰ The seventeen articles that follow, contain a number of important human rights, including most of the rights established in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and certain key rights established in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The human rights articles in the Constitution are inspired by the corresponding articles in international law and, in essence, cover the same aspects. According to a 2015 Supreme Court judgement, the articles in chapter E must be interpreted in light of their international counterparts, but nevertheless future practice from the international enforcement bodies should not have the same judicial precedent in the interpretation of the Constitution as in the interpretation of the corresponding convention provisions.

102. Freedom of religion has been enshrined in the Constitution since 1964. In 2012, the provisions which established the constitutional state church system were amended. The Constitution now states that the Christian and humanist heritage will remain our values, and that the Church of Norway will remain the Established Church of Norway and will as such be supported by the State. The Church Act was amended in 2016 to establish the Church of Norway as an independent legal entity as of 1 January 2017.

The Human Rights Act

103. Under the Human Rights Act of 21 May 1999, the following conventions have been incorporated into Norwegian law:

- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, with subsequent amending protocols and the following additional protocols: Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7 and 13
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including the first and second Optional Protocols thereto
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the Optional Protocols on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the Optional Protocol thereto

104. Section 3 of the Human Rights Act states that if national legislation is in conflict with provisions in the human rights conventions incorporated by the act, the latter shall prevail.

Other legislation

105. Other conventions relating to human rights have also been incorporated or transformed into Norwegian law. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has been incorporated into Norwegian law through Section 5 of the Ethnicity Anti-Discrimination Act of 21 June 2013, and the Convention against

¹⁰ Reference: HR-2016-2554-P.

Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment has been transformed into Norwegian law through the Penal Code.

(b) Competencies of judicial, administrative and other public authorities concerning human rights

106. All public authorities are obliged to respect and ensure human rights as they are expressed in the Constitution and in human rights treaties that are binding for Norway, cf. Article 92 of the Norwegian Constitution. Some public authorities have a more general responsibility; for example, the Minister of Justice and Public Security is responsible for the Human Rights Act, and the Parliamentary Ombudsman has a duty to help ensure that all public authorities respect and secure human rights.

(c) Remedies

107. There are many ways in which a question of human rights may be brought before a Norwegian court or administrative authority, for example in connection with civil or penal proceedings such as a claim for compensation, as a ground for declaring an administrative or a court decision null and void, or as a question of procedure (for example a fair trial) in civil or penal proceedings. Furthermore, an individual who considers that his human rights have been violated may, subject to the ordinary limitations in the Civil Procedure Act, demand that the courts pass a judgment on the case.

108. Several public authorities and complaint mechanisms address specific human rights issues, such as gender equality and children's rights. On a more general level, an individual has the right to submit a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman concerning an alleged injustice — including human rights violations — committed by any public authority. The Ombudsman may point out that an error or negligence has been committed by the public authority. He may also point out that the decision is clearly unreasonable or contrary to good administrative practice. If he finds sufficient grounds, he may recommend that compensation should be awarded. The opinion of the Ombudsman is not legally binding, but is normally followed.

The European Court of Human Rights and other regional complaints mechanisms

109. As party to the European Convention on Human Rights, Norway has accepted the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Norway is also party to the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints.

C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

(a) Introduction

110. The paramount objective of a constitutional government is to protect individuals against abuse of power and arbitrary treatment by public authorities and to ensure equal treatment, welfare and democracy. Both the Government and the public administration at national, regional and local levels are bound by Norway's human rights obligations in the exercise of their authority. The same applies to the Storting and the judiciary. The implementation of human rights instruments in Norwegian law and their status within the legal system is described above.

111. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature, and has a right and a duty to review the constitutionality of acts passed by the Storting, cf. Article 89 of the Constitution, and the power to review whether legislation is compatible with Norway's human rights obligations. It may also review administrative decisions.¹¹ Administrative

¹¹ See Chapter D above.

decisions may also be appealed to a higher administrative level, and complaints concerning administrative decisions may be submitted to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.¹²

112. Responsibility for national implementation of human rights obligations is divided between the ministries, which are all responsible for following up the recommendations of various treaty bodies within their sectors. Human rights are integrated and mainstreamed into all sectors of government and administration. All ministries and administrative bodies have an obligation to take human rights into account when drafting legislation, drawing up guidelines for administrative practice and adopting decisions.

113. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Justice and and Public Security has a particular responsibility to ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practice is consistent with Norway's human rights obligations. The Ministry revises draft legislation in order to assess its compatibility with the Constitution and international human rights obligations, and provides advice to other ministries and government bodies on the interpretation of human rights standards in relation to sector legislation and administrative practice.

(b) National and regional parliaments and assemblies

The Storting (the Norwegian Parliament)

114. Under the Norwegian parliamentary system, the Government is accountable to the Storting, which exercises continuous control over the Government's activities, including the protection and promotion of human rights.

115. In the Storting, as in all the government structures, human rights are mainstreamed and taken into account by each committee and by the plenary when passing legislation and adopting decisions. The Storting does not have a separate human rights committee.

County and municipal authorities

116. Norway has a two-tier system of local government. The county and municipal authorities have the same administrative status. In accordance with the principle of local autonomy, it is up to each local authority to organise its work as it deems best, but as on central government level, the promotion and protection of human rights must be taken into account by all local authorities in their areas of responsibility.

117. In order to ensure the rights of citizens and the legality of adopted decisions, county and municipal authorities are subject to state supervision and control. According to section 59 of the Local Government Act, the county governor reviews the legality of county and municipal decisions, either upon the request of at least three of the members of the county or municipal council or ex officio. The county governor also deals with appeals from the public over certain county and municipal decisions on the basis of sector legislation.

118. The county governor serves as a guardian of civic rights. He may review county or municipal decisions regarding the rights of any individual in the fields of health and social welfare, education, building and planning, and may reverse the decision to the benefit of the individual.

119. Since 2009, the County Governor of Troms has methodically worked to introduce a local practice of applying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in municipalities through the Giant Leap program. The program is an analysis and follow-up tool that municipalities can use to ensure that the Convention is applied actively across their services.

120. In some areas, sector legislation confers central control of counties and municipalities to bodies with specific competence in the area in question. Examples are the Board of Health, which supervises the local authorities in the area of health services, and

¹² See paras. 126-130 below.

the County Social Welfare Board, which reviews certain administrative decisions under the Child Welfare Act.¹³

(c) **National human rights institutions**

The Norwegian National Human Rights Institution

121. The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), which is organised under the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo, was Norway's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) from 2001 until 2015. In 2012, the Sub-Committee of the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions (ICC) recommended that the accreditation of the Norwegian national institution should be downgraded from A to B status. In 2013, the University's board decided that NCHR would cease to function as Norway's NHRI.

122. Due to this decision, the Government established an inter-ministerial working group to consider changes to Norway's NHRI, including the creation of a new national institution with another organisation and structure. The working group started its activities in 2012, and held broad consultations both nationally and internationally. Based on the working group's evaluations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a consultative paper that was circulated for review to a wide range of stakeholders in June 2013.

123. In 2014, the Storting adopted a resolution on the establishment of a new NHRI. The Norwegian National Human Rights Institution was established on 1 July 2015. The institution is administratively subordinate to the Storting, but acts as an independent body. The Act relating to the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution was passed in 2015. It regulates the Institution's structure and the exercise of its functions. A Regulation for the National Institution has also been adopted by the Storting. In December 2016, an application for accreditation was submitted to the Sub-Committee on Accreditation of the International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Institutions. In June 2017, the 'A' status accreditation of the institution was confirmed.

124. In the travaux préparatoires of the Act relating to the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution, it is stated that strengthening Sami rights is an important part of the Institution's broad mandate. Section 5 of the Act requires at least one member of the Institution's board has special knowledge of Sami issues. According to section 6 of the Regulation for the Norwegian NHRI, the same requirement applies to the advisory committee. Additionally, when employing new staff, consideration shall be given to competence in Indigenous Peoples' and Minorities' Rights (section 8).

125. Gáldu Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was integrated into the National Institution on 1 January 2017. Both the Sami Parliament (Sámediggi) and the board of Gáldu were involved in the process and supported it.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration

126. The ombudsman institutions also play a key role in monitoring the Norwegian authorities' fulfilment of their human rights obligations. The Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration was established in 1962, and the terms of reference for this office are to deal with complaints from citizens concerning an injustice perpetrated by the public administration at any of the three levels: government, county or municipal. The Ombudsman may also raise an issue on his own initiative.

127. The functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman are set out in the Constitution, in section 75, litra 1, of the Act of 22 June 1962 No. 8 relating to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration and in the Instructions of 19 February 1980 No. 9862 to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration. The Ombudsman is appointed by and administratively subordinate to the Storting, but acts as an independent body in the exercise of his functions.

¹³ <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/doc/Laws/Acts/the-child-welfare-act.html?id=448398>.

128. In 2007, the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act was amended in order to strengthen the human rights mandate of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. According to the amended Section 3 of the Act, the Ombudsman shall: “seek to ensure that individual citizens are not unjustly treated by public authorities and help to ensure that public authorities respect and protect human rights.”

129. In 2013, the Ombudsman was also appointed as Norway’s National Preventive Mechanism, in compliance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

130. The Ombudsman’s opinions are not legally binding on the public authorities, but they are widely respected and followed. The opinions are published on the website and in the Yearbook of the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration.

The Ombudsman for Children

131. In 1981, Norway established the world’s first Ombudsman for Children. The Ombudsman’s main tasks are to promote the rights of children in the public and private sectors and to monitor the development of children’s living conditions. The Ombudsman also monitors the compliance of Norwegian legislation and practice with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and submits its own supplementary reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

132. The Ombudsman for Children is independent of the Storting, the Government and other public authorities, and may freely raise issues and criticise government policy. The Ombudsman has the power to investigate, criticise and publicise issues that will improve the welfare of children and youth, and may demand access to case files and official documents in order to fulfil this function. However, the Ombudsman cannot reverse an administrative action or decision. There is no formal complaints mechanism such as those for complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsman or the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, but the Ombudsman for Children may raise issues on his or her own initiative, and address opinions and recommendations to any public authority.

Other ombudsman institutions

133. The *Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud* and Tribunal are described in Chapter 3 (paras. 183-188) below.

134. The *Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces* was established in 1952, and was the world’s first parliamentary military commissioner. The Ombudsman works to safeguard the rights of all personnel in the Armed Forces, and deals with a number of cases involving human rights, such as the right to privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of religion. The Ombudsman submits inspection reports with appropriate recommendations to the Minister of Defence, Chief of Defence and military authorities involved, and an annual report to the Storting.

135. The terms of reference of the *patient ombudsmen* is to safeguard patients’ needs, interests and legal rights in the health services, and to improve the quality of such services. There is one patient ombudsman in each of the 19 counties. The system of Health and Social Services Ombudsman is regulated in the Health & Services Act Chapter. Any individual who claims that his or her rights or interests have been violated by the county/regional specialist care service or by the municipal primary health care service, may address a complaint to the Patient Ombudsman. The Ombudsman may give his views on the matter and propose actions and improvements, but his views are not legally binding.

136. *Other ombudsman institutions* have been established in some counties and municipalities, such as an ombudsman for the elderly and for social services. These ombudsmen may also play an important role in monitoring the authorities’ observance of human rights and in raising awareness among government employees and the general public.

(d) Dissemination of human rights instruments

137. The core international human rights treaties ratified by Norway have all been translated into Norwegian. The conventions that are incorporated into Norwegian law by the Human Rights Act or other acts of law are published on the legal information database Lovdata¹⁴ in Norwegian and English. The conventions are also published on the Government website, and on the websites of the ombudsman institutions. Hard copies may be obtained from all these agencies and institutions on request.

138. Some of the core human rights instruments have also been published in brochures and widely distributed. For example, a short version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, translated into Norwegian and North Sami, has been distributed to all primary schools in Norway. In addition, Norwegian translations of the Council of Europe's Charter on Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training were provided in 2011 and 2012, respectively. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have all been translated into Sami. The documents are available on the Government's website.¹⁵

139. Summaries in Norwegian of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights which are categorised as judgments of high importance by the Court, and decisions in cases where Norway is party are published on Lovdata. Furthermore, Lovdata publishes the decisions and opinions of the UN human rights treaty bodies in full text in English in individual cases where Norway is a party and in a number of cases concerning other states. In some of these cases, there are summaries in Norwegian.

(e) Raising human rights awareness among public officials and other professionals

140. National curriculum regulations have been drawn up for teacher training and for professional training in the health and social services sector, and human rights have been included as a compulsory component in these training programmes. Knowledge about human rights is also included in the curricula for other professions, such as lawyers, police, military personnel and prison wardens. Universities and university colleges are by law autonomous institutions. This is to ensure academic freedom. In principle the Government is therefore not in a position to impose specific requirements on these institutions regarding the content of teaching or research, but it may and does lay down a national curriculum for certain types of training and certain subjects.

141. Further education programmes for public officials are organised by the Government and other public authorities, and by professional and other civil society organisations.

(f) Promotion of human rights awareness through educational programs and Government-sponsored public information

142. Including human rights education in all levels of the education system has high priority in Norway. In 2008, the Storting decided to amend the purpose clauses for day-care institutions and primary and secondary schools, and the amendments to the Education Act, which regulates primary and secondary education, entered into force in January 2009.

Kindergartens

143. According to the purpose clause, kindergartens should, in cooperation with the parents, ensure that children's need for care and play is met, and promote their holistic development. Kindergartens must base their activities on the fundamental values of the Christian and humanist heritage, which are also those inherent in human rights, such as

¹⁴ www.lovdata.no.

¹⁵ [https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/likestilling-og-inkludering/likestilling-og-inkludering/konvensjoner/id2510574/;](https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/likestilling-og-inkludering/likestilling-og-inkludering/konvensjoner/id2510574/)

respect for human dignity, intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity.

144. The curriculum for the content and tasks of kindergartens, laid down by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in 2017, has similar objectives. Thus kindergartens should base their activities on a common set of values such as human worth, equality, honesty and fairness, and these values should be taught in accordance with the human rights conventions to which Norway is a party. International conventions and Norwegian law both emphasise the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with their religion and ideological beliefs and the right of children to learn about the society in which they are growing up.

Primary and secondary education

145. An amended purpose clause for education and training entered into force in January 2009. Ever since the first objectives for state schools were decided in 1848 and until 2008, the purpose clauses were amended primarily by adding new objectives and without changing the core principle of Christian and moral upbringing. The objectives in the present Education Act represented a clear break with this tradition, as they are based on fundamental human rights, and take account of the fact that while Norwegian society has its own cultural tradition it is also marked by cultural diversity.

146. The purpose clause states that “Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights.” It also states that education and training should provide insight into cultural diversity, respect the individual’s convictions, and promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking. Pupils and apprentices are to learn to think critically and act ethically and to have joint responsibility and the right to participate. Furthermore all forms of discrimination are to be combated.

147. Human rights are also integrated in the compulsory subject curricula for primary and secondary education. In social studies subjects, the children are expected to have acquired various competencies concerning human rights by the end of grades 4, 7, 10 and 11/12. The same applies with regard to the subject Christianity, religion, philosophies of life and ethics. An optional subject on human rights and politics (140 lessons) is offered to pupils in grade 12 of the general studies program, and human rights are also incorporated in the optional subjects of sociology and law.

The European Wergeland Centre

148. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, Norway has established a resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. The European Wergeland Centre, named after the Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845), has been operative since 2009. The centre aims to be a resource for all member states of the Council of Europe. It will build on and promote the values and goals shared by the Council of Europe and Norway.

149. Education is seen as a key factor to creating living democracies in Europe. The main task of the Centre is to promote democratic culture and social belonging through education. The centre shall contribute through relevant projects and activities in cooperation with the Council of Europe. An important element in the work of the centre is to maintain an accessible and informative web site, which can serve as an online hub and through this create a network for actors in the field. The target groups are teachers, teacher-training professionals, scientists, practitioners, policy-makers and other relevant actors.

The Sami Pathfinders

150. *The Sami Pathfinders* is a program managed by the Sami University College and financed by the Government. In this arrangement, four young Sami receive a grant each year to visit upper secondary schools and organisations around the country to meet young people at their own age. The aim is to provide young people with information on Sami

issues and what it is like to be a Sami person in Norway today. Experience shows that the pathfinder concept is a good way of approaching prejudice and mistaken notions about the Sami and Sami culture.

(g) Promotion of human rights awareness through the media

151. Freedom of expression and of the press is guaranteed both through international human rights instruments and in the Norwegian Constitution. The press and other mass media regularly highlight important human rights issues in Norway and play a vital role in facilitating public debate on these questions. Civil society organisations also make use of the media to put human rights issues on the public agenda.

(h) Role of civil society, including non-governmental organisations

152. Civil society, including human rights defenders and the social partners, plays a key role in the realisation of human rights in Norway and has laid much of the foundation for democracy and welfare in Norwegian society. They promote diversity, disseminate knowledge, stimulate debate on policies and priorities, contribute proposals to public consultations, engage in voluntary work and promote social cohesion. In many cases matters have been placed on the agenda as a result of initiatives taken by civil society stakeholders.

153. Norway has always had a strong civil society. In the population, nearly eight out of ten are members of one or more organisations, in fields such as nature conservation, sport, religion, human rights, development cooperation, culture, the trade unions and trade and industry organisations. Close to half the population consider themselves active members of such organisations. In Norway a high rate of participation in such organisations is perceived as an indicator of a good society characterised by diversity, community and civic engagement. The Government wishes to involve a broad cross-section of society in the efforts to promote human rights and support and facilitate voluntary engagement and the development of a vibrant civil society. The State's provision of public funding for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) without imposing guidelines for their activities is an important means of achieving this objective.

154. The role of the trade unions and industry organisations — the social partners — must be emphasized in this context. These organisations have played and play a significant role in Norwegian working life and are instrumental in implementing and promoting labour rights, including the right to organise and collective bargaining.

155. The Government organises regular meetings with human rights organisations and the main social partners, and all draft legislation is subject to a broad consultation process that includes these organisations where relevant. They often provide valuable input and are able to influence government policy.

156. A number of Norwegian civil society organisations that focus on human rights have created a network, the NGO Forum for Human Rights, through which they share information and coordinate their efforts. A similar network has been established specifically for children's rights, the Forum for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has a membership of more than 50 institutions and NGOs.

(i) Budget allocations and trends

157. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter (E), human rights are mainstreamed in all areas of national public administration. Funding for human rights is therefore not specifically allocated in the national budget, but appears under a wide range of items, such as education, health and care, social welfare and courts administration.

(j) Development cooperation and assistance

158. In line with the 2030 Agenda, Norway established a holistic perspective on its development efforts in a 2017 white paper on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Norway's development policy. In order to be effective, Norway has chosen to prioritize education, global health, private sector development and job creation, humanitarian

assistance, climate, renewable energy and environment. Human rights is a cross-cutting theme in all development assistance, along with anti-corruption, gender, climate and environmental considerations. These priority areas account for most of the aid budget.

159. Development assistance which supports the promotion of human rights is financed over many different budget chapters. Out of a total budget of NOK 36,6 billion for development assistance in 2016, the policy marker for Human rights/Participatory Development/Good Governance/Democratisation was identified as a main objective with regard to NOK 3,8 billion (10.4 %) of the budget and a significant objective with regard to NOK 4 billion (10,9 %), in total NOK 7,8 billion (21.3 %). NOK 296,9 million was disbursed over a dedicated budget line for human rights, and NOK 292,9 million was disbursed over a dedicated budget line for women's rights and gender equality.

160. Norway seeks to apply a human rights based approach to its national and international efforts to implement Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The principle of "leaving no one behind" is seen as a matter of promoting human rights and fighting poverty. Norwegian development cooperation is people-centred, climate smart and gender sensitive, with an emphasis on respect for human rights and giving priority to the most vulnerable. White paper No. 10 (2014-2015) *Opportunities for All: Human rights in Norway's Foreign Policy and Development Cooperation* outlines the approach and priorities of Norway's international efforts to promote human rights.

D. Reporting process at the national level

(a) The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

161. In November 2012, Norway was examined before the Committee against Torture in Geneva with regard to its sixth and seventh periodic reports under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, delivered in 2011. The Committee's follow-up questions after the examination were responded to by the Norwegian Government in 2013. Norway's eighth periodic report, responding to the Committee's list of issues, was delivered on 23 November 2016, as requested by the Committee.

(b) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

162. In October 2011, Norway was examined before the Human Rights Committee in Geneva with regard to its sixth periodic report under the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, delivered in 2009. The Committee's last follow-up questions after the examination were responded to by the Norwegian Government in June 2013. Norway's seventh periodic report was delivered on 7 July 2017.

(c) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

163. In January 2010, Norway was examined before the Committee on the Rights of the Child with regard to its fourth periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC Committee forwarded its concluding observations to Norway on 29 January 2010. In light of the concluding observations, there has been an increase in grants, the knowledge about the CRC has been promoted, and new laws, regulations and directives have been adopted.

164. These measures are described in Norway's fifth and sixth periodic report, submitted to the Committee of the Rights of the Child in October 2016. A draft report was submitted for consultation to civil society and other stakeholders. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs prepared a children's report, which was annexed to Norway's periodic report, and describes what it is like to grow up in Norway in the words of children and young people. Every year, the ministries conduct meetings with civil society and NGOs, such as the Forum for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Norwegian Children and Youth Council, Norwegian Young Disabled, the Norwegian

association for child welfare children, and other parties. The idea is to share experiences and views in relation to the rights of children and young people.

(d) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

165. In February 2016, Norway submitted its ninth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Ministry of Children and Equality coordinated the Government's report. Consultations were held with a number of women's and gender equality organisations, human rights organisations, the social partners and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud. The responses were incorporated into the Government's final report, which was distributed to all stakeholders.

(e) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

166. The reporting process to CERD is similar to that of the CRC and CEDAW, with several ministries contributing to the Government's periodic report. The Ministry of Children and Equality is responsible for coordinating activities. Norway's twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic report was submitted in September 2017. A broad range of organisations were been invited to submit written comments to the draft report, and all the relevant documents have been published on the Ministry's website. The draft report has also been forwarded to Sámediggi (the Sami Parliament) for comment.

(f) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

167. In November 2013, Norway was examined before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with regard to its fifth periodic report under the ICESCR, submitted on 28 June 2010. The Committee published its concluding observations on 12 December 2013.

168. A preparatory inter-ministerial meeting of more than ten participating ministries was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Civil society involvement and a transparent governmental process was considered vital to the content of the report. The Ministry published all the relevant documents pertaining to the reporting process on the government website in order to facilitate NGO participation in the process. There were two open consultation meetings with civil society. Norway's National Human Rights Institution submitted a parallel report to the Committee and several civil society organisations also submitted information.

(g) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

169. The reporting process to CRPD is similar to that of CRC, CEDAW and CERD, with several Ministries contributing to the Government's periodic report. Norway's initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was submitted in June 2015. The report is intended to give a general picture of Norway's policy for persons with disabilities, as well as an account of measures taken and challenges posed by the respective articles in the Convention. The Ministry of Children and Equality coordinates Norway's policy for persons with disabilities. Input was obtained from relevant sector Ministries, and from civil society organisations through dialogue meetings and a written consultation process. Sámediggi was also heard.

III. Information on non-discrimination and equality and effective remedies

A. Legal framework

(a) The Constitution

170. The new bill of rights in the Constitution, adopted in 2014, includes the following provision in Article 98: “All people are equal under the law. No human being must be subject to unfair or disproportionate differential treatment.”

(b) Incorporation

171. A number of the *core international human rights instruments* and the European Convention on Human Rights have also been incorporated into Norwegian law, including provisions on non-discrimination and equality.

(c) The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act

172. A new comprehensive Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act was adopted in June 2017, and will enter into force in January 2018. It replaces four former equality and anti-discrimination acts, and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, maternity/paternity leave in connection with birth or adoption, caring for children or close family members, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, or a combination of the above mentioned grounds. The Act applies to all areas of society.

173. The purpose of the Act is to promote equality and prevent discrimination on the above mentioned grounds, and discrimination based on other essential personal characteristics. The Act defines equality as equity, equal opportunities and equal rights, and underlines that accessibility is a precondition for equality. The Act is particularly aimed at strengthening the position of women and minorities, and reducing and preventing barriers for equal participation for persons with disabilities.

174. Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and instructions to discriminate against an individual on the basis of the above-mentioned grounds is prohibited. The Act also contains provisions for the protection of a person who brings a suit for discrimination, and anyone that assists him or her, from being subjected to unfavourable treatment (reprisals) on account of his or her action. In addition, the Act prohibits being an accessory to discrimination. Discrimination is defined as unjustified unequal treatment. Unequal treatment is considered justified and legal if it has a just cause, is necessary to achieve the cause, and does not disproportionately affect the person or persons subject to the unequal treatment in a negative way.

175. The Act enables authorities and others to introduce special measures for a limited period of time in order to promote equality.

176. The Act imposes certain obligations upon public and private enterprises to secure accessibility (universal design) and individual accommodation for persons with disabilities. Universal design is defined as designing or accommodating the main physical features of the undertaking in such a way that the normal function of the undertaking can be utilised by as many people as possible. This duty applies to undertakings that offer goods and services to the general public.

177. Norway adopted a regulation on universal design of information and communications technology (ICT) solutions in June 2013, which covers both public and private sector enterprises. The scope of the regulation will be extended to cover ICT in schools and other education facilities from January 2019.

178. The Act requires public authorities, employers and employer and employee organisations to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote the purpose of the equality legislation in their undertakings.

179. The Act includes a shared burden of proof and civil law sanctions for violations of the prohibition against discrimination, in the form of compensation for economic and non-economic loss. It also contains a separate penal provision for serious contraventions of the prohibition against discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or belief that are committed jointly by several persons.

(d) The Working Environment Act

180. The Working Environment Act prohibits discrimination in employment relationships on the basis of political views, membership of an employee organisation, age, or temporary or part-time employment. The prohibition applies to all aspects of employment and to the employer's selection and treatment of self-employed persons and contract workers.

(e) Housing legislation

181. In the housing legislation, discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and age.

(f) The Penal Code

182. The Penal Code also provides for protection against discrimination and hate speech.

B. Institutional framework and effective remedies

(a) The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud

183. The office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud was established on 1 January 2006. It is an independent body administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Children and Equality. The Ministry cannot instruct the Ombud with respect to professional activities.

184. The Ombud's task is to combat discrimination and promote equality regardless of factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and age. The Ombud must also ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practices are in conformity with Norway's obligations pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

185. The Ombud's role includes promoting equality and preventing discrimination in society as a whole. Among other things, this entails identifying and drawing attention to factors that hinder equality and equal treatment, raising awareness and educating the public, providing general information and guidance, advising employers on ethnic diversity in working life, and monitoring the nature and extent of discrimination.

(b) The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal

186. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal was established by law on 1 January 2006 and enforces the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act and the prohibitions on discrimination in the Working Environment Act and the housing legislation.

187. The Tribunal is not subject to instruction by the Government. It is accessible to the general public and its services are free of charge. The decisions of the Tribunal are administratively binding, but may be overruled by a court of law. The Tribunal may impose coercive fines to ensure compliance with its orders, and can also award compensation for economic and non-economic loss in discrimination cases.

188. On 1 January 2018, changes in the organisation of the Tribunal will enter into force in order to make it more efficient.

(c) Organisation within the central public administration

189. The Ministry of Children and Equality plays a leading role in the efforts to promote an equal rights perspective in all policy areas and at all administrative levels. However, each ministry is responsible for promoting equal rights and preventing discrimination within its sector, in accordance with the principle of sector responsibility. Over the last few years, the competence of the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs has been strengthened in the field of equality and anti-discrimination, and some operational tasks have been delegated from the Ministry to the Directorate. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is responsible for coordinating integration policies for immigrants and their children. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) has a central role in coordinating the efforts to ensure that people with an immigrant background obtain equitable public services. Compliance with the requirements of universal design of ICT is enforced by the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (DIFI).

C. Gender equality and specific vulnerable groups**(a) Strategy against hate speech**

190. The Government has launched a Strategy against hate speech¹⁶ on the grounds of ethnicity and religion, disability, gender and sexual orientation within the legal system, children and youth, the media sector, workplace, knowledge and research and forums for dialogue.

(b) Gender equality

191. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the ground of gender in all areas of society.

192. In order to achieve gender equality in the workplace and at home, it is important for fathers to take a larger share of responsibility for childcare and family life. To promote gender equality, the parental benefits scheme is designed to give parents incentives to a more equal share of the parental leave period. Today working parents are entitled to 49 weeks with 80 per cent coverage or 59 weeks with 100 per cent coverage. Three weeks are reserved for the mother and must be used prior to birth. The remaining part of the parental leave is divided in three: 10 weeks is reserved for the father, 10 weeks is reserved for the mother, and the remaining period can be divided between the parents.

193. In Norway today, 6 out of 10 students are women. Women's share among PhD students passed 50 per cent for the first time in 2014, and the gender balance has been stable over the last three years. Welfare benefits such as paid parental leave, flexible working hours and well-developed childcare facilities have made it easier to combine family life with paid employment. The employment rate is still somewhat higher for men than for women, but decreasing more for men than for women., cf. statistics on page 23. More women than men work part-time. Among mothers with children below 16, 81 per cent are in paid work. Almost 70 per cent work full time, independent of the age of the child. Adjusted for working hours, women's average monthly pay is 86.1 per cent of men's (2016).

194. In 2003, Norway was the first country in the world to require balanced gender representation on the boards of public limited companies. This means that the boards of these companies must include a minimum of 40 per cent of each gender. Overall, the representation of women has risen from approximately 7 per cent in 2003 to approximately 42 per cent in 2016.

195. Universal conscription, i.e. conscription for women as well as men, came into force as of 1 January 2015, extending conscription to women on equal terms with men. Universal

¹⁶ Available here: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/the-governments-strategy-against-hate-speech-20162020/id2520975/>.

scription applies to women born in Norway from 1997 onwards. The first conscripted women started military service in the summer of 2016.

(c) Equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI)

196. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in all areas of society.

197. There have been significant developments in gay and lesbian rights in Norway over the last few years. Same-sex couples have been entitled to get married since 2009, and they have the same rights as others to adopt children. Lesbian couples are also entitled to In Vitro Fertilization treatment.

198. In July 2016, a new “Legal Gender Change Act” entered into force. The law grants all individuals the right to have their gender marker changed in public registers and passports through a simple and transparent procedure. Persons who are 16 or older can require their gender marker to be changed through a simple “self-declaration procedure”. Children/youngsters between the ages 6 and 16 can follow a similar procedure, provided they have their parents’ consent. If only one of two parents with parental responsibility consent, the application may still be granted if it is considered to be in the best interest of the child. Parents can apply for intersex children who are 6 years old or younger. In the first six months after the law entered into force, approximately 500 persons had applied to have their legal gender changed.

199. Norway’s second national LGBTI Action Plan, *Safety, diversity, openness. The Norwegian Government’s action plan against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression 2017-2020*¹⁷ was launched in 2016. The Plan is based on updated research and input from civil society and has three focus-areas: Safe social environments and public spaces, equal access to public services and improving the quality of life for vulnerable groups. The current Plan is the first to include measures concerning intersex persons. It contains more than 40 specific measures, covering most government sectors. Nine ministries are responsible for implementing the Plan. Supplementing, in addition to the interministerial coordinating committee on LGBTI policies, the Directorate For Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) has established a coordinating group with members from other relevant directorates. This group is responsible for ensuring systematic follow-up of the Action Plan, and will also be a platform for sharing ideas and experiences across sectors. An advisory forum of civil society actors and a research forum will also be established. Bufdir will coordinate and support the operative implementation of the Action Plan and its measures, and also submit an annual status report to the Ministry. The Action Plan is available in English.

(d) Equal rights for persons with disabilities

200. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the ground of disability in all areas of society and contains provisions on universal design and individual accommodation.

201. Norwegian sign language is given official status through different laws. Provisions in the Primary and Lower Secondary Education Act are essential for the acquisition of Norwegian sign language. The National Insurance Act includes provisions on the right to interpretation into sign language in daily life, free of charge. The Public Administration Act gives the hearing impaired the right to sign language interpretation when in contact with government agencies.

202. Many people with disabilities encounter obstacles in their daily lives due to lack of accessibility in their physical surroundings. Accessibility is crucial for ensuring full participation in society. Universal design is therefore particularly important for persons

¹⁷ Available here: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/6e1a2af163274201978270d48bf4dfbe/safety-diversity-opennes.pdf>.

with disabilities. The priority areas in the Government's Action Plan for Universal Design 2015-2019¹⁸ are ICT and welfare technology.

(e) Equal rights for ethnic and religious minorities

203. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief in all areas of society.

204. Studies show that people from ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. Many complaints handled by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud have to do with ethnic discrimination in connection with working life and goods and services. Hate crime that targets minority groups is another challenge. Although the police receive few reports of hate crime, there is reason to believe that the true figures are much higher.

205. The Action plan against antisemitism 2016-2020¹⁹ is part of the Government's efforts to combat discrimination, racism and hate speech.

206. Freedom of religion has been enshrined in the Constitution since 1964. The Constitution also sets out that all life stance and religious communities should be equally supported by the State. Religious and life stance communities other than the Church of Norway have a statutory right to claim an annual financial grant per member of the community from both the State and the municipalities. The amount is approximately equivalent to the sum budgeted for the Church of Norway per member of the Church. About 780 religious and life stance communities claimed financial grants under this scheme in 2016.

(f) Immigrants, including asylum seekers and refugees

207. According to the Immigration Act, a foreign national who applies for protection in Norway (an *asylum seeker*) must be offered accommodation while waiting for the immigration authorities to reach a decision.

208. The Government white paper *from reception centre to the job market — an effective integration policy* from May 2016 is based on the migration situation in Europe and Norway in 2015 and 2016. It outlines how the integration policy and measures should be organised in order that newly-arrived immigrants with refugee backgrounds enter the labour market or start an education without delay and acquire a steady connection to the job market. The white paper emphasises that the time spent in a reception centre shall be productive. Settlement in a municipality shall take place as soon as possible after a residence permit has been granted. Acquired skills and qualifications shall be put to use. An effective integration policy shall prepare for a society without vast social and economic differences. Neither society nor the individual can afford to let many years go by before a newly-arrived immigrant is qualified to enter the workforce. Training must to a greater extent than before take place in the workplace and in consultation with the local business community, to ensure that the labour market has access to the right type of skills.

209. *Asylum seekers* residing in a reception centre are offered Norwegian language training free of charge from the municipalities. From 2016, the number of hours offered was reduced from 250 to 175 hours. 51 per cent of the 19 300 persons who resided in a reception centre in the period between 01.07.15-30.06.16, participated in this training. In 2017, the Government granted NOK 23 mill. to a new course in Norwegian culture and values for asylum seekers. The goal is both to provide meaningful activities to counteract passivity and to ensure that people living in Norway have basic knowledge of our society. In addition to information about daily life, the course includes information about family structures, equality, health, children and parenting, democracy and preventing domestic

¹⁸ Available here: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/regjeringens-handlingsplan-for-universell-utforming/id2473299/>.

¹⁹ Available here: <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/dd258c081e6048e2ad0cac9617abf778/action-plan-against-antisemitism.pdf>.

violence and radicalization. Asylum seekers have the same right to health care as Norwegian citizens.

210. If the application for protection has been rejected, the foreign national will be offered accommodation pending his or her exit from Norway. *Refused asylum seekers* are only entitled to emergency health care, except pregnant asylum seekers who are entitled to the same medical support as other pregnant women. Asylum seekers under 18 years of age are always offered health care on the same basis as Norwegian children.

211. The Government has established the schemes *Introduction Program, Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies and Job Opportunity* to strengthen the chances of immigrants to find a job and participate in society. The Introduction Act regulates the first two schemes.

212. The aim of the *Introduction Program* is to provide each participant with fundamental skills in the Norwegian language and some insight into Norwegian society, as well as to prepare for employment or further education in Norway. The right and obligation to participate in this program applies to refugees and their family members, in addition to persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds and their family members. The rights and obligations only apply to those between the age of 18 and 55 who need to acquire basic qualifications in order to find employment or to participate in further education.

213. The Introduction Program is an individually adapted full-time program to acquire basic qualifications. Participants in the program are entitled to an Introduction Benefit. The benefit amounts to twice the basic amount of the National Insurance Scheme annually (EUR 20 000 in 2016). Participants under 25 years receive two thirds of the benefit.

214. During 2016, 24 000 persons participated in the program, compared to 17 900 in 2015. 44 per cent of the participants were women. In November 2015, 58 per cent of the participants who had finished the program in 2014 were employed or participated in education. A larger proportion of the men had found work or were attending education.

215. The goal of the scheme for *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies* is that an adult immigrant should sufficiently master Norwegian to be able to find employment and participate in society. The municipalities are responsible for the teaching of the Norwegian language and social studies. The program consists of 600 hours of tuition, of which 50 hours are social studies in a language the participant understands. Immigrants who need further training may receive up to 2 400 additional hours, depending on individual needs. In 2015, 37 100 persons participated in the training, compared to 36 250 in 2014. Fifty-three per cent of the participants were women.²⁰

216. The right and obligation to participate in free Norwegian language training and social studies applies to foreign nationals between the ages of 16 and 67 who have been granted a residence permit under the Immigration Act which forms the basis for a permanent residence permit, or collective protection in mass refugee situations. The right to participate does not apply to foreign nationals with a residence permit to work or engage in self-employment and their family members. These have an obligation to participate in Norwegian language training and social studies of up to a total of 300 hours, which may be charged by the local authority.

217. Having completed language training or demonstrated corresponding language skills is a requirement for a permanent residence permit and for Norwegian citizenship. Immigrants holding an EEA-EFTA work/residence permit are not obliged to take a language course. Since 2014, it has also been mandatory for the participants of the *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies* scheme to take a test in social studies in a language they understand after completing the 50 hours of training in social studies. The test is available in 27 languages, in addition to two of the official Norwegian written languages. In 2015, 6 820 candidates took the test, and 78 per cent of the candidates passed.

²⁰ Source: Statistics Norway.

218. The aim of the *Job Opportunity Program* is to increase the employment rate among immigrants who need basic skills and are not covered by other schemes or are in need of individualised education. From 2017, the program is divided into three different schemes with three different target groups. One scheme (Part A) is for women outside the labour market who are not receiving supplementary public benefits, nor attending any form of language or labour market training. The second scheme (Part B) subsidises school owners that offer additional primary and secondary education for young people. The third scheme (Part C) give the municipalities the opportunity to try out a fourth year in the Introduction Program for those who need it. In 2016, 40 municipalities received project funds for 53 projects. Altogether, these projects had 1 777 participants. Of the 780 participants who completed the program in 2016, 68 per cent were employed or participated in education by the end of the program. This compares to 64 per cent of participants in 2015.

219. *Student financial support* may be granted to immigrants and foreign citizens who meet certain criteria defining ties to Norway. As a general rule, immigrants are eligible for student support if they have legal residence in Norway and if the studies do not comprise the legal basis for residence. For instance, immigrants who have been granted protection (asylum) or who have been granted a residence permit in connection with a family reunion with a Norwegian or a foreign citizen are entitled to student support on the same footing as Norwegian citizens. Citizens of EEA or EFTA countries with permanent residence in Norway and/or with status as worker or family member of a worker in Norway are also eligible. Foreign citizens who meet the criteria for eligibility receive the same support for maintenance, travel and tuition as Norwegian students. Norwegian student support includes additional grant schemes for provision of children and for sickness. There are also a special grant scheme for pupils in upper secondary education who have been granted protection (asylum) in Norway.

220. Some of the *labour immigrants* are in a vulnerable position in the labour market. Norway puts great emphasis on ensuring that they enjoy the same pay and working conditions as Norwegian workers. A strategy for combating work-related crime has been implemented, which contains a number of measures to prevent social dumping and to ensure that labour immigrants are paid according to Norwegian standards.

221. Overall labour market policy in Norway consists of three main labour market schemes — vocational training, work practice and wage subsidies. An individual work capability assessment determines whether or not an individual is offered the opportunity to participate in a labour market scheme.

222. Unemployment benefit for an unemployed person represents partial compensation for loss of income and is intended to provide an incentive to find a new job. In principle, labour immigrants have the same right to unemployment benefit as others. However, the duration of their residence permit will determine the period during which they may receive the benefit. EEA nationals who have acquired some connection with working life in Norway by working here for a certain period and paying social insurance contributions may submit claims for Norwegian unemployment benefits on the basis of unemployment benefit rights earned in another EEA country.

D. General measures adopted to reduce economic, social and geographic disparities

223. The Nordic welfare model is marked by a relatively large redistribution of wealth through the income tax system, universal welfare systems, a comprehensive, publicly financed education system, an active labour market policy and a flexible labour market. The welfare model has resulted in less poverty and inequality and a more equitable income distribution in Norway than in many other countries. Norway continues to build on this model, and is reforming and further developing the welfare system, in cooperation with the social partners.

(a) Education and training

224. The education system lays the foundation for social cohesion and economic growth and is vital to the development of a democratic and unified society. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination are basic principles and objectives for promoting access, stable attendance and learning. The education system is meant to give equal access to, and accommodate optimal learning for *all* individuals, thereby helping to reduce social inequality.

225. Several measures target specific vulnerable or under-privileged groups and individuals. Children and youth with special educational needs are catered to in mainstream primary and lower and upper secondary schools and in some specialised schools.

226. Norway has also implemented several measures to ensure access to higher education for all. These include a comprehensive system for student financial support, subsidised student housing schemes and several other welfare benefits. Public higher education is also without tuition fees. All qualified applicants are ranked according to their merits from upper secondary education and/or training. It is also possible to be admitted on the basis of an assessment of prior learning.

227. Although the literacy rate in Norway is close to 100 per cent, literacy tests have shown that a small amount of the adult population lacks basic competencies in reading and writing. In order to meet the needs of this heterogeneous group, measures have been implemented by the formal schooling system, in cooperation with employers' organisations and study associations for adults. Adults in Norway have a statutory right to primary and lower secondary education. Adults over 25 years of age have a right to upper secondary education and training. Norway has established a national qualification framework for lifelong learning, based on formal qualifications, including a system for validation of non-formal competence.

(b) Employment

228. In spite of weaker economy in Norway, Norway still aims to achieve a high level of employment, low unemployment and an inclusive labour market with room for everyone who is able and willing to work. The main goals of labour market policy are therefore to facilitate high participation in employment and efficient utilisation of the available workforce by ensuring a well-functioning labour market and inclusive and well-ordered workplaces. Extensive labour market and rehabilitation measures are aimed at contributing to high employment and low unemployment, and combating exclusion by helping people with labour market-related problems to find and keep a relevant job.

229. The Norwegian Employment and Welfare Administration is responsible for implementing labour market policy. The Administration facilitates efforts to match jobseekers with vacant jobs and to ensure comprehensive help and security for persons who need work-oriented assistance to find and keep employment.

(c) The National Insurance Scheme

230. The Norwegian National Insurance Scheme is a universal scheme covering all nine traditional branches of social security set out in ILO Convention No. 102. As a general rule, membership is compulsory for all those who either live or work in Norway, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, place of residence, gender, age, etc.

231. The social insurance schemes, by definition, target vulnerable groups, as they are all designed to improve the living conditions for persons who are in one or more specified circumstances that often lead to economic hardship, e.g. old age, sickness, disability, unemployment and/or maternity.

232. An annual publication entitled "The Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme" provides a comprehensive presentation of the scheme, and is available on the Government's website. Reference is also made to Norway's most recent reports on implementation of ILO Conventions Nos. 102, 128 and 130.

(d) Social Services

233. The local government sector is responsible for services that ensure that all inhabitants in their respective areas experience good living conditions. The municipality is responsible for providing services according to the Social Services Act. Those unable to support themselves by working or exercising financial rights are entitled to financial support, which is intended to make the person self-supporting.

(e) Other measures to promote social inclusion and poverty reduction

234. Norway has also developed strategies and action plans in several other areas that promote social inclusion and poverty reduction, such as *Housing for welfare — National strategy for housing and support services 2014-2020* and *Children Living in Poverty — cross-sectorial strategy to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty 2015-2017*.

235. The Government has its strengthened cooperation and communication with user and other organisations and associations in the voluntary sector. These organisations are important cooperation partners for both central and local government. There is a liaison committee to strengthen the dialogue between the Government and self-appointed representatives of socially and financially disadvantaged persons.

(f) Measures to reduce geographic disparities

236. The aim of the Government's regional and rural policy is regional balance through growth capacity, equal living conditions and sustainable regions across the country. A well-developed infrastructure is vital to positive development in a country like Norway, with its sparse population and long distances.

237. Even if Norway has a fairly good regional balance, some municipalities and areas have specific demographic challenges. In these areas, the Government is focusing on developing local communities with growth potential. This is done by focusing on business development in rural areas, and strengthening development skills in the most sparsely populated areas. A successful regional policy requires measures on a wide range of policy fields, such as infrastructure, tax, health services, municipal income rates, education and innovation, in order to create more jobs and improve public and private services. The primary resource of a modern economy is the creativity and ingenuity of its people, particularly their ability to deal with socio-economic change through innovation.

238. Northern Norway faces particular challenges because of its sparse population, the long distances between settlements and the small labour markets. A new strategy for the High North was launched by the Government in 2017, focusing on international co-operation, economic development, competence, infrastructure, environment and security.
