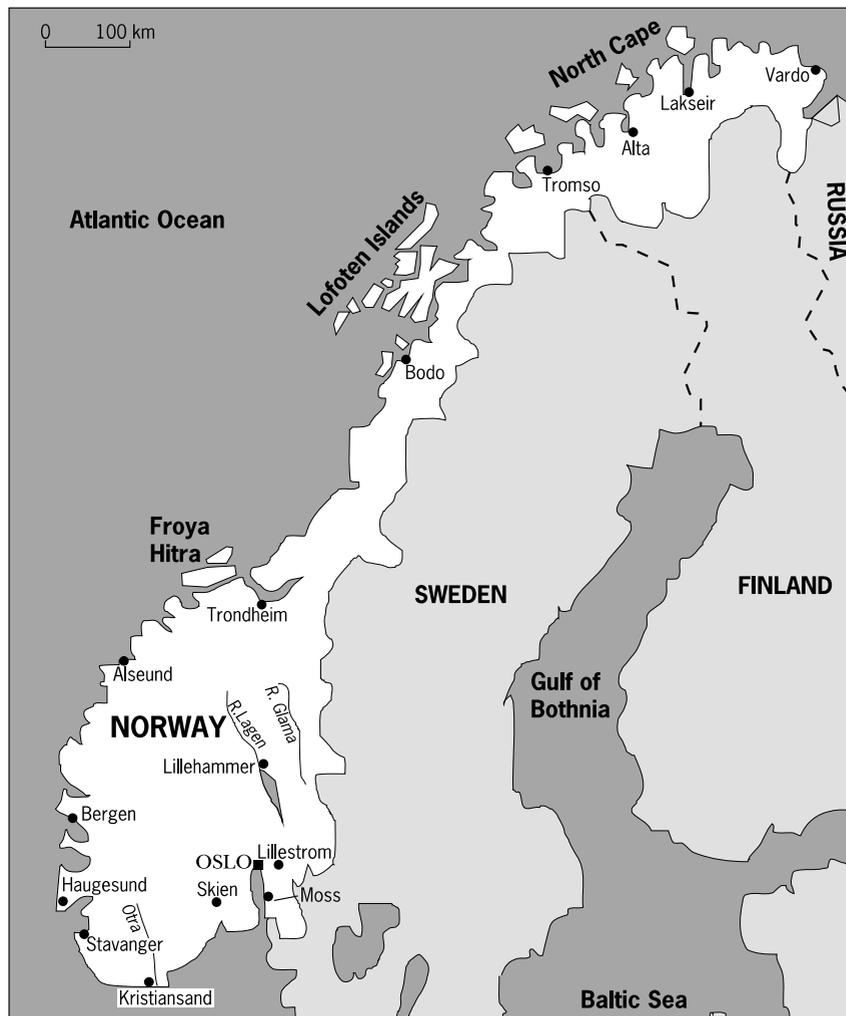


Norway



KEY FACTS

- Official name:** Kongeriket Norge (Kingdom of Norway)
- Head of State:** King Harald V (since 17 Jan 1991)
- Head of government:** Prime Minister Erna Solberg (Høyre) (from 9 Sep 2013)
- Ruling party:** Coalition lead by Høyre (Right) and including Fremskrittspartiet (FrP) (Progress Party), Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) (Christian Democrats) and the Venstre (V) (Liberal Party) (from 9 Sep 2013)
- Area:** 323,985 square km
- Population:** 5.04 million (2012)
- Capital:** Oslo
- Official language:** Norwegian
- Currency:** Norwegian krone (Nkr) = 100 ore
- Exchange rate:** Nkr5.94 per US\$ (Jul 2013)
- GDP per capita:** US\$99,462 (2012)*
- GDP real growth:** 2.99% (2012)*
- GDP:** US\$501.10 billion (2012)*
- Labour force:** 2.69 million (2012)*
- Unemployment:** 3.22% (2012)*
- Inflation:** 0.71% (2012)*
- Oil production:** 1.92 million bpd (2012)
- Natural gas production:** 114.90 billion cum (2012)
- Balance of trade:** US\$76.95 billion (2012)*
- Annual FDI:** -US\$796.10 million (2011)

* estimated figure

Norwegian politics shifted noticeably in September 2013 when, following her party's election victory, the leader of the Høyre (Right) (conservative) party, Erna Solberg, became Prime Minister. Ms Solberg was Norway's second female to hold the position, bringing to an end eight years of Det Norske Arbeiderparti (DNA) (Norwegian Labour Party)-led coalitions under the left wing leader Jens Stoltenberg. Mr Stoltenberg had not, by any means, been an unpopular leader, but the tragic events of 2011 when 77 people were massacred by Anders Breivik not only damaged Mr

Stoltenberg's credibility, but also illuminated security weaknesses for which, technically, the Stoltenberg administration could be held responsible. Much of these criticisms were felt rather than enumerated, but the net effect was that Norwegians – anxious to draw a line under a sorry national episode – sought change. Mrs Solberg – also known, a la Merkel, as 'Iron Erna' – faced a large initial challenge in putting her coalition together. Unable to do any deal with Norway's more moderate right-wing parties, she was thrown back on to some sort of deal with the anti-immigrant Fremskrittspartiet

(FrP) (Progress Party). The Høyre and other right-wing parties took 96 out of the 169 seats as the left, including the Greens with one seat, ended up with only 73.

Democracy holds good

Although the attacks of 22 July 2011 had scarred Norwegians, the ability of Norwegians – including their politicians – to be straightforward in their dealings hadn't changed. Nor did the sense of trust that characterised Norwegian society appear to have been lost. There was no general hysteria in Norway over the issue of security. Amazingly, by North American standards, even after the Breivik murders no armed bodyguard was to be seen anywhere near the Prime Minister. Norway had impressed the world, not only with its dignified mourning, but also because of the country's clear recognition of democracy and for the graceful way its people handled Breivik's trial and his outbursts in court. Norwegian opinion polls even indicated that the Norwegians' faith in democracy had grown since the attacks.

If there were cracks in this image of a tolerant and humane Norway, they focussed on the right-wing so-called Progress Party (FrP). What place could the FrP's extremist views play in a Norway of tolerance and compassion? Did the fact that 16 per cent of the Norwegian electorate cast their votes for the right-wing FrP mean that Norway, had changed irrevocably?

For a while Anders Behring Breivik had been a member of the FrP youth

organisation. Since 2000 the FrP had seen its fortunes rise again. One poll showed it with more than 22 per cent of support among voters – almost twice FrP's showing in the local elections held just weeks after the attacks. However, the Norwegian political panorama had been altered, at least in terms of perception, by the emergence of an immigrant Roma community. This had sparked racist outbursts on Norwegian Internet forums, where the Roma were insulted and threatened. Local residents had also been hostile to the nomadic groups, who mostly originated from Romania. The leader of the FrP, Siv Jensen, had even called for the Roma to be deported.

In a heart-searching newspaper editorial, former Norwegian prime minister, Thorbjørn Jagland, expressed the view that regardless of the decision made by the courts over whether or not Mr Breivik was sane, the question had to be raised as to whether there existed a cultural explanation for all the hate and prejudices that were now rising up against the Roma, 'namely that we have become so rich and content in this country' that people have lost focus of the things that really matter. If they are unable to suppress the rising levels of poverty, then people will quickly turn it into something 'repulsive and criminal', in order to sustain their own self-image. One commentator observed that Norwegians needed to learn how to have opposing opinions and argue without hatred. If this was the challenge, the

response was none too encouraging. In mid-2012 the trend seemed to be in the opposite direction, as the FrP recovered from the dip in popularity it experienced following Breivik's terror attacks. Mr Stoltenberg's DNA party had also slumped back to its pre-Breivik popularity level. Stoltenberg, who had been considered somewhat stiff in manner, had become something of a father to the country after the attacks. His poll ratings reaching as high as 90 per cent. He managed to comfort his people, partly because he too was personally affected, having lost colleagues in what was also an attack on his party. But even the Prime Minister couldn't hold on to that, as an increasing number of Norwegians now supported a change in government leadership. In the June 2012 polls, in a sign of things to come, the head of the Høyre party, Erna Solberg, was – for the first time – more popular than Stoltenberg.

The economy

To describe the Norwegian economy as healthy is, by European standards, almost an understatement. The current account surplus is a staggering 14 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). GDP growth in the second quarter of 2013 was 2.6 per cent and unemployment a lowly 3.4 per cent. Disposable income grew at an average 3.8 per cent in the period 2008–12 (compared to the OECD member countries' average of 0.8 per cent). Underpinning Norway's prosperity is its sovereign wealth fund, the Government Pension Fund Global (GPF) which in mid-2013 stood at US\$760 billion and was expected to pass the US\$1 trillion mark before 2020. The GPF has begun to adopt a more active role as shareholder in many of the world's best known companies. One criticism levelled at the GPF is that it under-performs the market, with an average return on capital of 3.2 per cent. Another is that it has tended to rely on hydrocarbon related investments – according to a September 2013 article in the London *Economist*, three of its ten largest holdings are in oil companies and '10–15 per cent of its overall portfolio is heavily exposed to the carbon economy.'

In its August 2013 assessment of the Norwegian economy, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) noted that the Norwegian economy continued to perform well with mainland (that is, non-oil) GDP growing steadily at 2.5–3 per cent, driven by private consumption, investment and low interest rates. Despite strong domestic demand, inflation remained subdued,

KEY INDICATORS		Norway				
	Unit	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Population	m	4.80	4.84	*4.89	*4.97	*5.04
Gross domestic product (GDP)	US\$bn	450.90	383.00	414.50	483.70	*501.10
GDP per capita	US\$	94,196	79,085	84,144	97,255	*99,462
GDP real growth	%	–	-1.7	0.7	1.7	*3.0
Inflation	%	3.8	2.2	2.4	1.3	0.7
Unemployment	%	2.6	3.2	3.5	3.2	*3.2
Oil output	'000 bpd	2,455.0	2,342.0	2,137.0	2,039.0	1,916.0
Natural gas output	bn cum	99.2	103.5	106.4	101.4	114.9
Exports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	168,816.0	121,986.0	132,691.0	159,209.0	*165,999.0
Imports (fob) (goods)	US\$m	85,985.0	66,674.0	74,300.0	89,101.0	*89,046.0
Balance of trade	US\$m	82,831.0	55,312.0	58,391.0	70,108.0	*76,953.0
Current account	US\$m	83,825.0	53,531.0	51,444.0	62,705.0	*71,160.0
Total reserves minus gold	US\$m	50,949.8	48,859.3	52,797.9	54,413.9	*51,856.4
Foreign exchange	US\$m	50,214.1	45,718.6	49,740.2	50,931.5	*47,999.5
Exchange rate	per US\$	5.64	6.28	6.04	5.56	5.68
* estimated figure						

running below the 2.5 per cent target, mostly due to declining import prices. Unemployment also remained low at around 3–3.5 per cent. The current account surplus was 19 per cent of mainland GDP in 2012, boosted by strong oil prices and production. The general government balance was in surplus in 2012 and the non-oil structural fiscal deficit was 4.8 per cent of mainland GDP or about 3.2 per cent of the GPFG capital. This is below the deficit permitted under the authorities' fiscal policy rule, but it still implies a slightly positive fiscal impulse due to the strong growth in GPFG assets.

However, in the view of the IMF, the overall strength of the mainland economy masked divergent trends. A strong and growing set of industries supplying goods and services to the offshore sector co-existed with a non-oil related subset of the mainland economy under increasing cost and competitiveness pressures. This divergence was also evident in cost pressures especially because of rapidly rising unit labour costs. Norway's real effective exchange rate had appreciated substantially over the previous decade, suggesting an erosion of long-term cost competitiveness.

In 2012 Norwegian house prices were high and increasing and household debt was also high. The authorities had tightened lending guidelines for mortgage loans in December 2011 and were considering options for a further tightening of macro-prudential limits including increasing the risk weights on mortgage loans. They were also consulting other Nordic countries on how to regulate the operations of bank branches operating in Norway but headquartered elsewhere in the region.

Growth in the mainland economy was projected to continue at a moderate pace, largely supported by high activity in the petroleum sector and strong domestic demand. However, this central scenario is subject to key risks. A substantial and prolonged reduction in oil prices could undercut growth in the event that downside risks to the global growth outlook materialise. Also, a correction in the buoyant housing market could reduce household consumption with adverse consequences for retail trade, construction, commercial real estate and lenders to those sectors.

Norway, not a member of the European Union (EU), is its fifth largest trading partner – larger than both India and Japan. The European Economic Area (EEA) market is and will continue to be by far Norway's most important market. Around

three-quarters of Norwegian foreign trade is with the EEA. This makes Norway absolutely dependent on economic stability in Europe and also on political developments in individual EU countries and in the EU as a whole. The crisis in the EU countries both affected government finances and placed the euro under pressure. This made it even more important to prevent further market decline and increased protectionism. Through its active European policy, the Norwegian government gives priority to ensuring that Norwegian companies and other Norwegian actors in these markets enjoy the equal treatment and predictability that is provided for in the EEA Agreement and Norway's other agreements with the EU.

Norway's offer to lend an additional Nkr55 billion (US\$9.2 billion) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of a broader international effort gave a strong signal to the markets. In addition, Norway also makes a considerable contribution to the EEA, providing around Nkr13.7 billion (US\$2.3 billion) for the period 2009–14 to support welfare, civil society, democracy, the rule of law and, not least, various programme areas in the environmental protection and management sector. Another important contribution is Norway's role as a long-term, stable supplier of oil and gas to the European markets. The predictability this represents is of great significance.

The Norwegian government attaches importance to maintaining an active energy dialogue with European countries on the development of renewables, which is currently on the EEA agenda, on the role of gas as an energy resource and on new visions for Norwegian hydropower in the context of a broader restructuring of energy systems in Europe.

Energy

Norway, the largest holder of natural gas and oil reserves in Europe, provides much of the oil and gas consumed on the continent. In fact, in 2012, Norway was the second largest exporter of natural gas in the world after Russia and the seventh largest exporter of oil.

In 2010, crude oil, natural gas and pipeline transport services accounted for almost 50 per cent of Norway's export revenues, 21 per cent of GDP and 26 per cent of government revenues according to the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD). Although Norway's oil production peaked in 2001 at 3.4 million barrels per day (bpd) and declined to 1.9 million bpd in 2012, natural gas production has

been steadily increasing since 1993, reaching 114.9 billion cubic metres (bcf) in 2012.

Hydropower is the principal source of Norway's electricity supply at 95 per cent, while only 4 per cent comes from conventional thermal sources, followed by 1 per cent from other renewables, namely biomass and waste and wind. In June 2012, government officials from Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom (UK) confirmed their plans for sub-sea electric power interconnects between their countries. The Norway-UK cable connection is slated for completion in 2020 while the Norway-Germany cable is to be completed in 2018; their purpose is to strengthen the northern European electricity grid and increase supply security.

The historic agreement between Norway and Russia, which defined their maritime boundaries in the Barents and Arctic Seas and resolved their 40-year old dispute, was fully ratified by both governments in early 2011 and went into effect in July 2011. As a result of the agreement, Norway gained an additional 54,000 square miles of continental shelf, according to the NPD. The agreement requires the two countries to develop jointly oil and gas deposits which cross over their maritime boundaries, a 109,360 square mile maritime area which straddles their economic zones in the Barents and Arctic Seas.

According to *The Oil and Gas Journal* (OGJ), Norway had 7.5 billion barrels of proven oil reserves as of 1 January 2013, the largest oil reserves in Western Europe. All of Norway's oil reserves are located offshore on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS), which is divided into three sections: the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. The bulk of Norway's oil production occurs in the North Sea, with smaller amounts in the Norwegian Sea and new exploration and production activity occurring in the Barents Sea.

Norway's ministry of petroleum and energy (MPE) is responsible for overseeing the country's petroleum resources. The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) works under MPE as manager and advisor. Statoil ASA was created by the merger of Statoil and Norsk Hydro in October 2007. It is an international energy company that is 67 per cent-owned by the Norwegian government and is the largest operator in Norway, controlling 80 per cent of Norway's oil and gas production. It also has interests in more than 30 other countries. State-owned Petoro manages the commercial aspects of the government's financial interests in petroleum

operations and associated activities. It acts as the licensee for production licenses and companies.

International oil majors have a sizable presence in Norway. The Norwegian government's subsidy of oil and gas exploration, introduced in 2005, refunds 78 per cent of the exploration costs to the companies. In addition, taxes on onshore oil activities and from liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipped overseas have been reduced, which has attracted additional international investment. The Norwegian government is focused on increasing recovery in producing fields, further exploring producing areas, opening new areas to exploration, as well as developing new sub-sea technology, in which Norway is a global leader.

According to the OGJ, Norway had 2.1 trillion cubic metres (tcm) of proven natural gas reserves as of January 2013. Despite the maturation of its major natural gas fields in the North Sea, Norway has been able to sustain annual increases in total natural gas production by continuing to develop new fields.

As is the case with the oil sector, Statoil dominates natural gas production in Norway. A number of international oil and gas companies, including ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Total, Shell and Eni have a sizable presence in the natural gas and oil sectors in partnership with Statoil. State-owned Gassco is responsible for administering the natural gas pipeline network. The company also manages Gassled, the network of international pipelines and receiving terminals that exports Norway's natural gas production to the UK and continental Europe.

Risk assessment

Politics	Good
Economy	Good
Regional stability	Good

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1397 Under the Kalmar Union, the Kingdom of Norway ceased to exist as a separate nation and was ruled by Danish governors.

1720 Norway, a dominion of Denmark, was lost to Sweden following the Great Nordic War.

1814 An *Act of Union* with Sweden recognised Norway as an independent Kingdom with its own constitution and parliament.

1905 The Norwegian parliament dissolved the *Act of Union* with Sweden. A plebiscite voted for full independence and

a return to a monarchy. Denmark's Prince Frederick VIII became Norway's King Haakon VII.

1911 Norwegian Roald Amundsen was the first person to reach the South Pole, 35 days before Englishman Robert Scott. 1914–18 Norway adopted a policy of neutrality in the First World War.

1920 An international agreement on the Svalbard Arctic archipelago gave full sovereignty to Norway.

1940 Despite its neutrality, Norway was invaded and occupied by the Germans in the Second World War. There was active resistance to the Nazi puppet government of Vidkun Quisling.

1945 Norway abandoned its policy of neutrality and lent troops to take part in the Allied war effort.

1949 Norway became a member of NATO.

1935–65 With the exception of the years of German occupation Arbeiderparti (AP) (Labour Party) held continuous office.

1952 Norway joined the Nordic Council, set up to promote co-operation between Nordic parliaments.

1959 Norway was a founding member of the European Free Trade Association (Efta).

1957 King Olav V came to the throne.

1965 Centre-right coalition unseated the AP government.

1960–80s From the late 1960s to early 1980s oil and gas were discovered in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea and within a decade their exploitation accounted for one-third of Norway's GDP.

1972 Norwegians rejected a proposal for membership of the European Community (EC).

1973–1981 Minority AP government held power.

1981–86 The first majority conservative government since 1928 came to power. Following labour disputes, the government was defeated on its austerity programme.

1986 Minority AP government was elected with Harlem Brundtland as Norway's first female prime minister.

1989 The election was won by a coalition of conservative, Christian democrat and centre parties.

1991 King Olav V died; he was succeeded by his son Harald V.

1992 Norway withdrew from the International Whaling Treaty, provoking international controversy.

1994 In a referendum, membership of the European Union (EU) was rejected by 52.2 per cent of voters (turnout was 88.6 per cent).

1993 Norway brokered secret negotiations for a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation that led to the Oslo Accords.

1997 Kjell Magne Bondevik led a minority centrist coalition government.

2000 The government fell after Bondevik was defeated in a vote of no-confidence over controversial plans to build new gas-fired power plants. Jens Stoltenberg led a AP government.

2001 Norway and Australia became embroiled in a diplomatic row following the attempt by a Norwegian-registered cargo ship to land Afghan refugees it had rescued at sea ashore in Australia. Parliamentary elections were inconclusive and Bondevik returned as prime minister, leading a centre-right coalition.

2003 Norway took the lead in trying to broker a peace deal in Sri Lanka.

2004 The government intervened to end a strike by oil workers seeking better pension rights and job security.

2005 In Parliamentary elections a coalition of socialist parties led by AP won 87 out of 169 parliament seats. Stoltenberg became prime minister for the second time. Norway became embroiled in two diplomatic rows, one with Russia, the other with Spain, over fishing rights off the Norwegian island of Svalbard.

2006 A law came into effect making it mandatory for all private companies to allocate 40 per cent of all board of director positions to women. The Statoil and Norsk Hydro companies announced the merger of their offshore operations.

2007 A referendum was passed which amended the constitution, abolishing the bicameral division of Storting (parliament) after the next elections.

2008 State income from the petroleum sector was a record high of net Nk356 billion (US\$61.19 billion), representing around 32 per cent of total government income and equating to some Nk80,000 (US\$13,750) for each citizen).

2009 In parliamentary elections the ruling AP-led coalition won 86 seats (out of 169); Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg remained in office. The bicameral division of the Storting was abolished following the general elections, as agreed in the constitutional changes of 2007.

2010 An agreement on the Arctic border between Norway and Russia in the Barents Sea, which cuts across an oil and natural gas rich region, was finally resolved after several decades of discussions.

2011 Anders Behring Breivik confessed to the mass-murder of 76 people in two atrocities carried out in July. Breivik gunned down around 70 people on Utøya Island in Lake Tyrifjorden (40km west of Oslo), where a youth summer-camp for members of the ruling AP was underway, having earlier exploded a car-bomb in the government district of Oslo. Breivik was identified with extreme,

nationalist ideologies following a 1,500 page manifesto posted on the internet just hours before the outrages. In August, Norway withdrew from the air attacks on Libya by a NATO-led coalition. The Norwegian air force took part in 583 missions, out of a total 6,498 missions flown by NATO since a no-fly-zone was imposed over Libya in March.

2012 On 24 August, despite psychiatric opinion that Anders Behring Breivik was a paranoid schizophrenic, the final judgement against him was that he was sane and must serve 21 years in prison for terrorism and premeditated murder. In an annual survey on e-commerce, published on 26 November, 89 per cent of people aged over 18 shop online for tickets, small electronic items and books. The ease of shopping was quoted as the primary reason for the popularity of e-commerce.

2013 General elections were held on 9 September, resulting in a change of government. Although the leader of the previous coalition, the Det Norske Arbeiderparti (DNA) (Norwegian Labour Party), again won the highest vote with 30.8 per cent (55 of 169 seats), it was the centre-right who were able to form a governing coalition of Høyre (Right) 26.8 per cent (48), Fremskrittspartiet (FrP) (Progress Party) 16.3 per cent (29), Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) (Christian Democrats) 5.6 per cent (10) and the Venstre (V) (Liberal Party) 5.2 per cent (9).

Political structure

Constitution

Norway has the oldest constitution in Europe and the second oldest worldwide (after the US) still in operation. The constitution dates from 17 May 1814 and is grouped into five areas of interest, the form of government, executive power, rights of the citizen and legislative power, judicial power and general provisions. Any amendment to the constitution requires majority support in both the Storting and approval in a referendum.

Form of state

Parliamentary democratic monarchy

The executive

Executive power (nominally held by the monarch) is exercised by the Statsråd (Council of State), which is led by the prime minister, who is responsible to the Storting (parliament). The Council of State is appointed by the monarch, with the approval of parliament. Following parliamentary elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed as prime minister by the monarch, with the approval of the parliament.

National legislature

A referendum held in 2007 approved changes to the constitution whereby the previous bicameral parliament became unicameral.

Legislative power is vested in a unicameral Storting (parliament) comprising 169 members elected by proportional representation in 19 multi-seat constituencies for four-year terms. There is no constitutional mechanism for dissolving the Storting between elections.

Legal system

The legal system is a mixture of customary law, civil law, and common law traditions. The Høyesterett (Supreme Court) renders advisory opinions to the legislature, when asked. Justices are appointed by the monarch. Norway accepts compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction, although with reservations.

Last elections

9 September 2013 (parliamentary)

Results: Parliamentary: Det Norske Arbeiderparti (DNA) (Norwegian Labour Party), won 30.8 per cent of the vote (55 of 169 seats), Høyre (Right) 26.8 per cent (48), Fremskrittspartiet (FrP) (Progress Party) 16.3 per cent (29), Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) (Christian Democrats) 5.6 per cent (10), Senterpartiet (SP) (Centre Party) 5.5 per cent (10), Venstre (V) (Liberal Party) 5.2 per cent (9), Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV) (Socialist Left Party) 4.1 per cent (7), Miljøpartiet De Grønne (Green Party) 2.8 per cent (1). Turnout was 78.3 per cent.

Next elections

September 2017 (parliamentary)

Political parties

Ruling party

Coalition lead by Høyre (Right) and including Fremskrittspartiet (FrP) (Progress Party), Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF) (Christian Democrats) and the Venstre (V) (Liberal Party) (from 9 Sep 2013)

Main opposition party

Red-Green coalition of Det Norske Arbeiderparti (DNA) (Norwegian Labour Party), Senterpartiet (SP) (Centre Party) and Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV) (Socialist Left Party).

Population

5.04 million (2012)

Last census: November 2001:

4,520,947

Population density: 15 inhabitants per square km. Urban population 79 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 0.7 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Predominantly Norwegian. In addition, there are about 60,000 Sami (Lapps), mainly in the north of the country,

although there are substantial Sami communities in larger cities.

Religions

More than 90 per cent of all Norwegians belong to the Church of Norway, an Evangelical Lutheran denomination. There are also small Roman Catholic, Jewish and Muslim communities.

Education

All public education in Norway is free. Primary education lasts for seven years; lower secondary education and upper secondary education, which is not compulsory, last for three years, from 13 to 16 and 16 to 19 respectively. On completion of a three-year course at an upper secondary school, students can apply to university. Alternatively, students may, at aged 16, undertake either technical training at vocational schools or practical training at apprenticeship schools; for three years.

Primary and lower secondary education is founded on the principle of every individual having a statutory right to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in a unified school system that provides equal education for all on the basis of a single national curriculum. The right to upper secondary education has been in force since 2000, while the right to primary and lower secondary education was implemented from August 2002.

Higher education in Norway is mainly offered at state institutions, notably four universities, six university colleges, 26 state colleges and two art colleges. A degree candidate may combine studies from universities and colleges, as the courses offered are at the same academic level. The 26 colleges primarily offer shorter courses of a more vocational nature than those offered by the universities.

Compulsory years: Six to 16

Enrolment rate: 100 per cent gross primary enrolment of the relevant age group (including repeaters); 119 gross secondary enrolment (World Bank).

Pupils per teacher: Seven in primary schools

Health

A national health insurance scheme covers medical treatment in hospitals and the reimbursement of costs for medical attention and medicines for certain chronic diseases. Sickness benefit is paid for short-term illness, while chronic or long-term illness is covered by a disability allowance. A small sum is charged for medicine and primary care. The majority of hospitals are state-run.

HIV/Aids

HIV prevalence: 0.1 per cent aged 15–49 in 2003 (World Bank)

Life expectancy: 80 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 1.9 births per woman, 2010 (Unicef); maternal mortality 6 per 100,000 live births (World Bank).

Birth rate/Death rate: 13 births and 10 deaths per 1,000 population (World Bank).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 3 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Head of population per physician: 3.13 physicians per 1,000 people, 2003 (WHO 2006)

Welfare

The extensive welfare system has greatly reduced the gap between rich and poor. Social security legislation stipulates that everyone has the right to employment, housing, education, welfare and healthcare. The main general social insurance schemes are the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and the Family Allowance Scheme. The NIS is a compulsory insurance and pension system and covers pensions, unemployment pay and healthcare for all Norwegians.

A basic retirement pension, adjusted annually, is guaranteed for all Norwegians of 67 years and older regardless of assets or previous income.

Non-pensioners whose income falls below a certain minimum qualify for supplementary benefits. These may include loans or other financial assistance from the local municipality. All families with children under 16 receive a family allowance according to the number of children.

The government subsidises low-cost housing through loans with low rates of interest and easy repayment terms. Families living in housing financed by a state bank can receive an allowance for housing costs should they have difficulties meeting their living expenses.

Main cities

Oslo (capital, estimated population 932,533 in 2012), Bergen (239,249), Stavanger (206,309), Trondheim (170,851), Fredrikstad (100,458), Drammen (94,901).

Languages spoken

Norwegian has two main dialects: Bokmål and Nynorsk. Finnish and Sámi are also spoken. English is widely understood and spoken, especially in urban areas.

Official language/s

Norwegian

Media

Press

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by the constitution. The majority of the press is privately-owned and explicitly partisan. Since the early 1990s only three media

owners have accounted for 55–60 per cent of the total sales of newspapers – Schibsted, Orkla and A-Pressen, all of which are Norwegian companies. There are over 200 newspaper titles, Norway has the world's highest level of newspaper readership. Activity is concentrated in south-eastern Norway, especially around Oslo where the majority of papers are published, while local papers tend to dominate each particular region.

Dailies: In Norwegian, two newspapers dominate the national press, VG (www.vg.no) and *Dagbladet* (www.dagbladet.no). Other newspapers include *Aftenposten* (www.aftenposten.no), which stopped its online English publication in 2008; *Dagsavisen* (www.dagsavisen.no) and *Nardlys* (www.nordlys.no). Some regional newspapers publish daily such as *Stavanger Aftenblad* (www.aftenbladet.no) and *Bergens Tidende* (www.bt.no). In English, *The Norway Post* (www.norwaypost.no) provides general and international news.

Weeklies: A number of daily newspapers publish weekend editions. In Norwegian, *Se og Hør* and *Her og Hå* vie with one another for readership, with popular articles on celebrities and royal news. Others magazines include *Allers*, for the older woman, *Norsk Ukeblad* for younger women and *Vi Menn* for young men.

Business: A large number of business publications cover various aspects of trade and industry. In Norwegian, the leading daily financial newspaper, in tabloid form is *Dagens Naeringsliv* (DN) (www.dn.no), it is owned by Norge Handels og Sjøfartstidende (www.nhst.no) media conglomerate, which also publishes other trade papers. Hegnar Media (www.hegnar.no) publishes several business publications including *Kapital*, a comprehensive financial magazine and *Finansavisen*. Other, weekly publications include *Handelsbladet FK* (www.handelsbladefk.no) a retail trade magazine, *Fiskeribladet Fiskaren* (www.fiskeribladefiskaren.no), a magazine for the fishing industry and *Bondebladet* (www.bondebladet.no), an agricultural newspaper.

Periodicals: A large number of general and special interest magazines exist. Those aimed at women of all ages have the largest circulations, including, in Norwegian, the monthly magazines *Éva* for women, the bi-monthly *Tigue* (www.tique.no) is aimed at young women and *Henne* (www.henne.no) for women's fashion and style. The popular magazine *Mann* is aimed at young men. The quarterly *Vinduet* (www.vinduet.no) is a literary publication.

Broadcasting

The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) (www.nrk.no) is the national, public broadcaster providing domestically produced programmes for radio, television and digital services, which is funded by a licence fee.

Radio: There are many radio stations broadcasting, with a wide variety of programming. NRK Radio (www.nrk.no) operates three national networks P1, P2 and P3 (Petre), along with several regional and local stations. It also runs an overseas, shortwave service, Radio Norway International. Other, private, commercial stations that comprise networks are NRJ (www.nrj.no), Radio Modum (www.radiomodum.no) and Radio 1 (www.radio1.no).

Television: The switch over from analogue television to digital services is expected to be completed by December 2009.

NRK (www.nrk.no) operates two TV channels. The main, commercial channel is TV2 (www.tv2.no), which broadcasts a combination of local and imported programmes. TV Norge (www.tvnorge.no) provides commercial TV via satellite. There are other, interest-led TV stations such as Rikstoto Direkte (www.rikstoto.no), a horse-racing channel or Visjon Norge (www.visjonnorge.no) a Christian content channel.

There are over a dozen different European channels broadcasting via satellite or cable, including several pan-Scandinavian channels.

National news agency: NTB (Norsk Telegrambyrå)

Other news agencies: NW (Nyhetsbyrået Newswire): www.newswire.no

Economy

The population of Norway has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world at US\$97,255 in 2011. The economy is unique among Western European countries for its large and dominant offshore oil sector. It also has one of the world's largest and most modern maritime fleets, which supports its metalworking and shipbuilding skills. Other industrial sectors include timber, pulp and paper products, chemicals and fishing.

Norway had proven oil reserves of 6.9 billion barrels at the end of 2011, with production of 2 million barrels. Proven natural gas reserves were 2.1 trillion cubic metres (cum) at the end of 2011, with production of 101 billion cum, of which 96.8 billion cum was exported.

Oil and gas extraction accounted 24.2 per cent of exports in 2011, but was projected to fall to around 22.6 per cent in 2012. Since the 1980s the economy has

experienced a major structural change, becoming increasingly focussed on service industries, which account for about 37 per cent of GDP. The manufacturing sector is important, particularly in metals and chemicals. Traditional primary sectors, like agriculture, forestry and fishing, have declined; forestry and forest products account for around 0.6 per cent of GDP, farming accounts for 0.5 per cent and fishing 0.4 per cent of GDP; an increasing amount of foodstuffs have to be imported. However, Norway has a thriving aquaculture industry, farming salmon, cod, halibut and shellfish, of which salmon accounts for 85 per cent of total farmed and sold, and typically accounts for around 5 per cent of total export revenue.

The economy did not grow in 2008 recording 0.0 per cent GDP growth in 2008, before falling into recession with -1.7 per cent in 2009, as the global economic crisis cut exports of oil and forced the banking sector to impose a credit squeeze. Domestic credit grew by 14 per cent in 2007 but had fallen to around 5 per cent by 2009. All growth in credit began to decline sharply in the last half of 2008, commercial credit growth (excluding financial enterprises) peaked at around 22 per cent in 2007 before plunging to around -2 per cent by 2009. The economy grew by 0.7 per cent in 2010, as world trade picked up, and grew stronger with GDP growth estimated at 1.7 per cent for 2011.

A key challenge for the government was the tight nature of its labour market, especially in the construction and health sectors. Norwegian firms have had to look abroad to fill vacancies, as the unemployment rate is relatively low at around 3.1 per cent in 2009 and 3.5 per cent in 2010. A shortage in the labour market in the recent past has caused high wage growth, leading to a loss of competitiveness in Norwegian exports.

External trade

Norway is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) which maintains an internal market with, although not joining, the EU. The EU consults EEA members before making its decisions on community legislation. The EEA agreement allows freedom of movement of goods (excluding, to a significant degree, agriculture and fisheries), persons, services and capital.

Norway is the third largest exporter of oil and gas worldwide that, along with shipping, provides the county's principal foreign exchange earnings.

Norway has a thriving aquaculture industry, farming salmon, cod, halibut and shellfish, of which salmon accounts for 85

per cent of total farmed and which is sold mostly to the EU, accounting for 4.5 per cent of total export revenue.

Imports

Main imports include machinery, vehicles and equipment, consumer goods, chemicals, metals and foodstuffs.

Main sources: Sweden (13.4 per cent of total in 2011), Germany (12 per cent), China (9.1 per cent).

Exports

Principal exports are crude oil and petroleum products, natural gas, machinery and equipment, metals, chemicals, ships, manufactured items, primary goods such as timber, ore, fish and foodstuffs.

Main destinations: UK (28 per cent total in 2011), The Netherlands (11.6 per cent), Germany (10.6 per cent).

Agriculture

The agricultural sector typically accounts for 2 per cent of GDP and employs around 6 per cent of the workforce.

Grain and fodder are main lowland crops; mountain farms mainly raise livestock and grow fodder. Grain production is increasing, especially barley and oats, although wheat and rye are increasing in importance. The main grain-growing districts are in southern and central Norway. Coarse fodder, mostly hay and silage, can be cultivated at high altitudes and in the far north. Other crops include potatoes, other roots, berries and fruits. Crop yields per hectare have risen consistently over the last three decades. Some dairy produce is exported and there is self-sufficiency in meat, milk, cheese, butter, fish and potatoes.

Norway's agricultural policy has two main aims. The first is to promote a high degree of self-sufficiency in animal products and secondly to ensure an adequate livelihood for the country's 120,000 farmers and smallholders. In many regions, agriculture and related activities are the main source of income. Farm prices are set annually by agreement between the government and agricultural organisations. Almost all farmland is privately owned and farms tend to be small. Produce is bought and distributed by large co-operative purchasing and sales organisations. The total cultivated area is just over 868,500 hectares (ha), only 3 per cent of the mainland area. Agricultural production is hampered by difficult topographical conditions and an unfavourable climate. However, Norwegian agriculture is generally efficient, with a high degree of mechanisation and emphasis on training and research.

Fishing is a significant industry in the northern and western regions. Fish, including farmed fish, is Norway's second largest export group, accounting for 20

per cent of all exports. Mackerel, cod and capelin are the main species caught, but catches have been falling because of overfishing. The typical annual export value of fish is between Nkr 25–30 billion (US\$3.3–4 billion) and as a whole the fishing industry provides work for 23,000 people.

Fish farms produce mainly salmon and trout, although some are experimenting with other fish, such as halibut. Norway has the world's largest farmed salmon industry, producing about half the total supplies of Atlantic salmon. Demand for farmed salmon has increased by 20–30 per cent annually, but production normally exceeds demand. The emerging new markets in southern Europe are seen as a useful outlet for the surplus, even though salmon exports are in competition with EU production and the EU sets a minimum price requirement for sales from Norway. Salmon comprises 31 per cent of Norway's fish exports.

In October 2008, Norway was forced to undertake the decontamination of infected rivers by culling fish to kill off a deadly parasite (*Gyrodactylus Salaris* (Gs)). After the rivers were purged of fish, fry of replacement stocks, particularly Atlantic salmon, were re-introduced.

Forest cover is estimated at 8.8 million hectares (ha). In 1990–2000, forest cover increased by an annual average of 31,000ha. Some 22 per cent of the total land area is productive woodland. Most forests are situated in southern and central Norway. Spruce, used for making pulp and paper, makes up about 50 per cent of the forest. Pines account for about 30 per cent and broad-leaved trees for around 15 per cent. Mechanisation and automation have allowed logging in previously inaccessible forest land.

About 85 per cent of forest land is privately owned by farmers. The forestry sector has a well-developed co-operative sales apparatus. Forest-owner organisations have become more active in processing.

The forestry and the forest-products industry, contributes heavily to local economies. Norway exports nearly 90 per cent of the paper and paperboard production and nearly a quarter of the pulp production. Imports of roundwood and sawnwood, mainly from Sweden, have increased considerably. Per capita consumption of forest products is among the highest in Europe.

Industry and manufacturing

The industrial sector typically accounts for around 32 per cent of GDP and employs 19 per cent of the workforce. Manufacturing accounts for barely 13 per cent of both GDP and employment (compared

with around 22 per cent in 1970) and has developed more slowly than in most other industrial countries. The main industries include chemicals, fish processing, metals, timber and pulp and paper production. The goals of industrial policy have traditionally been to maximise employment and the quality of production, maintain the rural population, promote a just and equitable distribution of wealth and income, and keep control over natural resources. Secondary goals have been to control inflation, protect the environment and achieve a balance between imports and exports.

The state channels financial resources to industry on concessionary terms through its Industry Fund and via state banks. Enterprises in depressed or uncompetitive markets are also given soft loans through the state-run District Development Fund. The government aims for around 2 per cent of GDP to be invested in research and development (R&D). Priorities for R&D spending are biotechnology, communications, electronics, metallurgical technology and aquaculture. Industrial production increased by an estimated 5.2 per cent in 2004.

Tourism

Norway is marketed for its landscape and history. Its famous fjords provide spectacular locations for hotels and cruises that travel along the coast. Resorts and communities provide centres in the mountains for winter sports and summer hiking. Tourists may visit some of the nature reserves on Svalbard, Norway's most northerly territory, which lies within the Arctic Circle or other places of interest, including cultural centres such as historic Viking settlements and Norway's cities.

Travel and tourism is an important component of the economy, averaging 6.74 per cent of GDP over 2007–11. The sector was adversely affected by the downturn in the global economy, so that in 2010–11 growth fell by 6.75 per cent. In response, the government backed a comprehensive package of promotion, which coincided with the expansion of low-cost airline operations in Norway in 2010. This resulted in an increase in visitor numbers, although overall visitor spending declined. However, as domestic spending on foreign holidays were also cut and Norwegians decided to stay at home, in 2011 venue in the industry reached US\$11.9 billion, whereas visitor receipts were US\$5.4 billion. Growth in the sector in 2012 was forecast at 0.5 per cent.

Environment

With the highest environmental standards in the world, sulphur emissions have plummeted by over 80 per cent since 1980. Pollution is kept low by the

country's extensive hydroelectric production, although per capita nitrogen oxide emissions are among the highest in the world. In December 2001, environmentalists accused Norway December 2001 of undermining the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol for announcing plans to triple coal production in Svalbard.

Mining

Norway has a highly skilled workforce, experienced in mining, quarrying and processing.

Activity is confined to small-scale mining of iron ore, copper, titanium, coal (on Spitsbergen), zinc, lead and pyrites. Most of these ores and concentrates are exported.

Mining continues to contract, causing many problems in areas where there is no alternative employment. However, the country's mining potential has yet to be fully explored and it is believed that Norway has the capacity to develop super-quarries.

On the south coast, near Lillesand, feldspars and quartz are found. Graphite, with differing carbon content and quality, is produced on the island of Senja and research is being carried out to upgrade the quality. Large dimension stones like granite, marbles and quartzites, are available in large quantities. Larvikite is one of the most predominant stones, there are also exclusive marbles, including Norwegian Rose, to be found in the north. From the quarries in northern and central Norway high quality quartzite and phyllite-slate are processed. Rock aggregate is found along the coast, in both large sizes and quantities, making transportation very easy.

Hydrocarbons

Proven oil reserves were 6.9 billion barrels in 2011, with production at 2.0 million barrels per day (bpd), a reduction of -5.2 per cent on the 2010 figure of 2.1 million bpd. Domestic consumption was only 253,000bpd and the remainder is exported.

Norway is the world's third largest net oil exporter after Saudi Arabia and Russia and is also a major non-Opec (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) member and is not bound by cartel export limits. All of its reserves are located offshore in three sites, the North Sea (where most production takes place), the Norwegian Sea (where production is smaller) and the Barents Sea (where no production takes place but reserves are considered to be extensive).

Statoil (71 per cent owned by the government) controls 60 per cent of all oil and gas production and administers subsidiaries in concomitant industries.

Pipelines link offshore platforms with onshore terminals through an extensive sub-sea network. One pipeline links the Ekofisk system in the North Sea to the north-east of England, supplying 900,000bpd of oil.

Proven natural gas reserves were 2.1 trillion cubic metres (cum) in 2011, with production of 101.4 billion cum. This was a decrease of -4.6 per cent on the 2010 figure. However there has been a steady increase in not only production from 46 billion cum in 1998 but also an increase in reserves from 1.48 trillion cum as new fields came online.

Norway is a major supplier of natural gas to Western Europe, exporting 96.8 billion cum in 2011, principally to the UK, Germany and France.

The only coal reserves in production come from Spitsbergen, on the Svalbard Islands, off the country's northern coast, which provides for the only coal-fired power plant in operation.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 28 gigawatts (GW) in 2007, producing over 135 billion kilowatt hours, which typically exceeds domestic demand; all surplus is exported to Sweden and Denmark.

The electricity industry is deregulated, but state-owned entities remain active within the sector, particularly in generation and distribution. Statkraft, the largest publicly owned utility, controls over 30 per cent of total generating capacity and is increasing its market share by acquiring interests in regional power companies.

Hydroelectric plants supply 99 per cent of total output, but seasonal weather conditions may impact on output, requiring imports to meet needs at such times; Norway is connected to the Scandinavian power grid.

The government has encouraged diversification in the energy market and licences have been issued for gas-fired power plants and wind farms.

Financial markets

Stock exchange

Oslo Børs (Oslo Stock Exchange)

Banking and insurance

Central bank

Norges Bank (Bank of Norway)

Main financial centre

Oslo

Time

GMT plus one hour (daylight saving, late March to late October, GMT plus two hours)

Geography

Norway lies on the west side of the Scandinavian peninsula, in north-west Europe. Its extended coastline faces the North Sea

and the North Atlantic Ocean. It is the fifth-largest country in Europe and it has the third-lowest population density in Europe after Greenland and Iceland. The coastline measures 28,000km if fjords and inlets are included, 2,650km if they are not.

The capital, Oslo, in the south, lies on the same latitude as Greenland and Alaska, while Hammerfest on the northern tip of the Norwegian mainland, is the most northerly town in the world. The Svalbard Arctic archipelago is part of Norway, and sovereignty is also exercised over Jan Mayen island and the uninhabited island dependencies of Bouvet and Peter I. In Antarctica, Queen Maud Land is a Norwegian dependency.

Norway shares a 1,619km land border with Sweden, and within the Arctic Circle, a 716km frontier with Finland and a 196km border with Russia.

The terrain mostly consists of high plateaux, deep fjords and mountains. More than 70 per cent of the mainland consists of mountains, glaciers, lakes, forest and moorland. The highest peak is Galdhoepiggen in the south which reaches 2,469 metres above sea level. Only 2.8 per cent of the land area is cultivable soil, while another 20 per cent is productive forest.

Hemisphere

Northern

Climate

Influenced by the Atlantic Gulf Stream and westerly winds, the climate is much warmer than that of other countries on the same latitude. The temperature varies little from north to south, but there is a big contrast between the inland and coastal regions. In winter, while the interior freezes hard, most fjords and harbours remain ice-free. The average annual temperature is 8 degrees Celsius (C) along the west coast, and minus 2 degrees C in the northernmost county, Finnmark. January and February are the coldest months, while July and August are the warmest. The average annual rainfall is 1,960mm in Bergen and 740mm in Oslo. Northern Norway is popularly known as the 'Land of the Midnight Sun'. In Finnmark the midnight sun is visible from mid-May to late-July, and the period of darkness lasts from mid-November to late-January.

Dress codes

Clothing to suit the climate is vital because of the extremes in weather; heavy coats, warm boots, gloves and ear protection are required in winter and light clothing in summer. Normal European business attire, otherwise dress is generally casual.

Entry requirements

Passports

Passports are required by all and must be valid for three months beyond the date of stay. Nationals of countries which are signatories of the Schengen Agreement may visit on national IDs.

Visa

Visas are not required by nationals of most European countries, US, Canada, Australasia, Japan or transit passengers. For further exceptions, contact the nearest embassy. AA Schengen visa application (offered in several languages) can be downloaded from <http://europa.eu/abc/travel/> see 'documents you will need'.

Business visitors require a letter of invitation from a Norwegian entity, giving the nature and duration of the stay, with proof of accommodation.

Currency advice/regulations

The import and export of local currency is limited to Nkr25,000. The export of foreign currency is unlimited if proof of import or conversion from another currency can be produced.

Travellers cheque are widely accepted.

Customs

Personal effects duty-free, plus duty-free allowance. Imported products from certain countries such as Japan, South Korea and some East European countries require a licence. Imported cars are heavily taxed.

Prohibited imports

Illegal drugs, firearms.

Health (for visitors)

Nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and Switzerland can access reduced cost and sometimes free medical treatment using a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) while visiting the EEA. Exceptions include nationals of the 10 countries which joined the EU in 2004 whose EHIC is not valid in Switzerland. Applications for the EHIC should be made before travelling.

Mandatory precautions

None

Hotels

There is a wide range of hotels available in most towns. There is no official rating system in operation. Private accommodation can be obtained through local tourist offices or accommodation offices in central railway stations. There is a service charge of 15 per cent included in the bill, but tipping is also expected.

Credit cards

Major credit and charge cards are accepted. ATMs are widely accepted.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

31 Dec–1 Jan (New Year, from midday 31 Dec), 1 May (Labour Day), 17 May

(Constitution Day), 24 Dec (Christmas Eve, afternoon only), 25–26 Dec (Christmas).

Variable dates

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday.

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Thu: 0900–1600; Fri: 0900–1700; Sat: 0900–1200.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0900–1600.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0830–1600.

Shops

Mon–Wed: 0900–1700; Thu: 0900–1900; Sat: 0830–1300.

Many shops are increasingly introducing longer opening hours, and some are open on Sundays.

Telecommunications

Mobile/cell phones

GSM 3G, 900 and 1800 services are available in inhabited areas.

Electricity supply

220V AC

Social customs/useful tips

Punctuality is expected. Shake hands on meeting. Business lunches are rare. The main meal of the day is generally taken at home at 1700 hours, though people will expect to eat later if invited out.

Security

Serious crime is not a big problem. It is usually safe to walk at night in major cities, such as Oslo and Bergen, although some neighbourhoods are less safe than others. Car theft, on the other hand, is fairly common, especially in the major cities.

Getting there

Air

National airline: SAS Braathens

International airport/s: Oslo International Airport (OSL) (Gardermoen) 47km north of city. Facilities include duty-free shops, banks/bureaux de change, restaurants, car hire and dry cleaning. Business lounge including Internet facilities.

Other airport/s: Bergen (BGO), 19km from city; Stavanger (SVG), 14.5km south-west of city.

Airport tax: None

Surface

Road: There are several routes across the border from Sweden in the east and Finland in the north. These roads may be closed in winter.

Rail: There are daily train connections between main centres. There are also train connections between Oslo-Gothenburg-Copenhagen-Helsingborg.

Water: There are frequent ferry services to Denmark, UK and Germany.

Main port/s: Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen and Larvik.

Getting about National transport

Air: Efficient services, operated by various carriers, link all major and many smaller towns. Charter sea and land planes are widely available.

Road: The road network is extensive; main highways are kept open although certain roads in the mountainous areas could be closed in winter and spring.

Buses: There is an extensive bus network. The main bus company is the Nor-Way Bussekspress with routes connecting every main city. Tickets can be purchased on the buses.

Rail: Norway has a good, though somewhat limited, national rail system. All railway lines are operated by the Norwegian State Railways (Norges Statsbaner or NSB). From Oslo, the main lines go to Stavanger, Bergen, Åndalsnes, Bodø and Sweden.

Water: There are regular and efficient motor ship services visiting all the major ports. There are also numerous local ferry, hydrofoil and catamaran services.

City transport

Taxis: Taxis are available in most cities. They can be obtained at ranks or by telephone (Oslo 388-090, Bergen 900-990, Stavanger 526-040). Telephone numbers of taxi stands are listed in the directory under *Drosjer*. Meters are compulsory. It is not expected that the tip will be more than small change.

In addition to regular taxis, there are airport taxis, cheaper taxis which must be ordered in advance by groups of up to three people, and wheelchair taxis.

Buses, trams & metro: There are eight tram lines and five metro lines in Oslo, plus numerous bus services. Public transport runs from 0530–2400 everyday. Tickets are best pre-purchased and self-cancelled, there is one hour's free transfer between any of the modes. (www.trafikanten.no can offer more information). Buses serving the airport take about 45 minutes and there is also a new regional bus station for services further afield.

Trains: A high-speed airport express train leaves every 10 minutes to and from Oslo's central station (20 minutes).

Ferry: Ferries from Oslo to Bygdøy leave from Rådhusbrygge, while ferries to the island in Oslofjord leave from Vippetangen.

Car hire

Available from airports and major towns. For travel between towns public transport tends to be quicker and much cheaper. Studded or winter tyres are recommended during winter. There are strict laws against drinking and driving and wearing

seatbelts is compulsory. The speed limit in built-up areas is 50kph and 80kph on highways.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Norway is +47, followed by subscriber's number.

Chambers of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce in Norway, 20C Drammensveien, PO Box 2604 Solli, 0203 Oslo (tel: 2254-6040; fax: 2254-6720; email: amcham@amcham.no).

Bergen Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 11 Olav Kyrresgt, 5014 Bergen (tel: 5555-3900; fax: 5555-3901; email: firmapost@bergen-chamber.no).

British-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce, 1 Dronning Maudsgate, 0250 Oslo (tel: 2311-1790; fax: 2283-4120; email: bncc@c21.net).

Kristiansand Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 269, 4663 Kristiansand (tel: 3812-3970; fax: 3812-3979; email: post@kristiansand-chamber.no).

Oslo Chamber of Commerce, 30 Drammensveien, PO Box 2874 Solli, 0230 Oslo (tel: 2212-9400; fax: 2212-9401; email: mail@chamber.no).

Stavanger Chamber of Commerce, 1 Rosenkildetorget, PO Box 182, 4001 Stavanger (tel: 5151-0880; fax: 5151-0881; email: post@stavanger-chamber.no).

Trondheim Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 778 Sentrum, 7408 Trondheim (tel: 7388-3110; fax: 7388-3111; email: firmapost@trondheim-chamber.no).

Tromsø Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 83 Grønnegata, PO Box 464, 9255 Tromsø (tel: 7766-5230; fax: 7766-5253; email: firmapost@tromso-chamber.no).

Banking

Christiania Bank og Kreditkasse, PO Box 1166, N-0107 Oslo (tel: 2248-5000; fax: 2248-4749).

Den norske Bank, Stranden 21, Aker Brygge, N-0021 Oslo (tel.: 2248-1050; fax: 2248-1870; internet: www.dnb.no; email: dnb@dnb.no).

Fokus Bank A/S, Vestre Rosten 77, PO Box 6090, N-7466 Trondheim (tel: 7288-2011; fax: 7288-2061).

Postbanken, Akersgata 68, N-0180 Oslo (tel: 2297-6000; fax: 2297-7665; internet: www.postbanken.no).

Central bank

Norges Bank, Bankplassen 2, PO Box 1179, Sentrum, 0107 Oslo (tel: 2231-6000; fax: 2241-3105; email: central.bank@norges-bank.no).

Stock exchange

Oslo Børs (Oslo Stock Exchange), www.oslobors.no

Travel information

Norges Automobilforbund (NAF), Storgata 2, N-0155 Oslo (tel: 2234-1400).

Nor-Way Bussekspress, Karl Johans gate 2; NO-0154 Oslo (tel: 8154-4444; fax: 2200-1631; email: administrasjon@nor-way.no; internet: www.nbe.no).

Road User Information Centre (tel: 2265-4040).

SAS Braathens, Oksenhøyveien 3, Fornebu; PO Box 0080, Oslo (tel: 9150-54000; internet: www.sasbraathens.no).

National tourist organisation offices

Norwegian Tourist Board, Stortorvet 10, N-0155 Oslo; PO Box 722 Sentrum, N-0105 Oslo (tel: 2414-4600; fax: 2414-4601; e-mail: norway@ntr.no; internet: www.visitnorway.com).

Ministries

Department of Transport and Communications, Akersgaten 59, PO Box 8010 Dep, N-0030 Oslo (tel: 2224-9090; fax: 2224-9571).

Ministry of Agriculture, PO Box 8007 Dep, N-0032 Oslo (tel: 2224-9090; fax: 2224-9555).

Ministry of Finance (Finansdepartementet), Akersgaten 40 (Blokk G), PO Box 8008 Dep, N-0030 Oslo (tel: 2224-9090; fax: 2224-9510; internet: www.finans.dep.no).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 Juni-Plassen/Victoria Terrasse, PO Box 8114 Dep, N-0032 Oslo (tel: 2224-3600; fax: 2224-9580/81).

Ministry of Industry and Trade, Grubbeggt 8, PO Box 8148 Dep, N-0033 Oslo (tel: 2224-9090; fax: 2224-9565).

Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Einar Gerhardsens Plass 1, PO Box 8148 Dep, N-0033 Oslo (tel: 2224-6107; fax: 2224-9525).

Other useful addresses

Directorate of Immigration, PO Box 8108 Dep, N-0032 Oslo (tel: 2335-1500; fax: 2335-1504).

Næringslivets Hovedorganisasjon (Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry), Middelthuns Gate 27, Pb 5250

Majorstua, N-0303 Oslo (tel: 2296-5000; fax: 2296-5593).

Norges Eksportråd (Export Council of Norway), Drammensveien 40, N-0243 Oslo (tel: 2292-6300; fax: 2292-6400).

Norges Varemesse (the Norwegian Trade Fair Foundation), PO Box 75, NO-2001 Lillestrøm (tel: 6693-9100; fax: 6693-9101; internet: www.messe.no).

Norinform, Norwegian Information Service, PO Box 241 Sentrum, N-0103 Oslo (tel: 2211-4685; fax: 2242-4887).

Norwegian Trade Council, N-0243 Oslo (tel: 2292-6300; fax: 2292-6400).

Oslo Børs (stock exchange), Tollbugaten 2, Box 460, Sentrum, 0105 Oslo (tel: 2234-1700; fax: 2234-1925; email: info@ose.no; internet: www.oslobors.no).

Royal Norwegian Embassy (US), 2729 34th Street, NW, Washington DC 20008 (tel: (+1-202) 333-6000; fax: (+1-202) 337-0870; email: emb.washington@mfa.no).

Statistics Norway, PO Box 8131 Dep, N-0033 Oslo 1 (tel: 2109-0000; fax: 2109-4973; internet: (English section) www.ssb.no/www-open/english/).

National news agency: NTB (Norsk Telegrambyrå)

PO Box 6817, St Olavs Plass, N-0130 Oslo (tel: 2203-4400; email: marked@ntb.no).

Other news agencies: NW (Nyhetsbyrået Newswire): www.newswire.no

Internet sites

National bus company: www.nbe.no

National railway company: www.nsb.no

Nordic Pages: www.markovits.com/nordic

Yellow Pages: www.gulesider.no