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Kontakt/Contact

ZBW – Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft/Leibniz Information Centre for Economics
Düsternbrooker Weg 120
24105 Kiel (Germany)
E-Mail: [rights\[at\]zbw.eu](mailto:rights[at]zbw.eu)
<https://www.zbw.eu/econis-archiv/>

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This is Norway 2021



We are surrounded by statistics and information about Norwegian society. However, it is not always clear what the figures tell us. Figures must be compared, and differences, correlations and trends must be described and interpreted. *This is Norway* presents statistics from a variety of areas and seeks to give an overview of Norwegian society and its development over time.

The COVID-19 pandemic dominated the year 2020 and continues to impact on Norwegian society in 2021. *This is Norway* looks at long-term trends but also comments on the current situation.

STATISTICS NORWAY, AUGUST 2021

Geir Axelsen

Director General

PREPARED BY Department of communications	EDITOR IN CHIEF Ingrid Modig	RIGHTS AND USE © Statistics Norway, 2021 When using material from this publication, Statistics Norway must be cited as the source.
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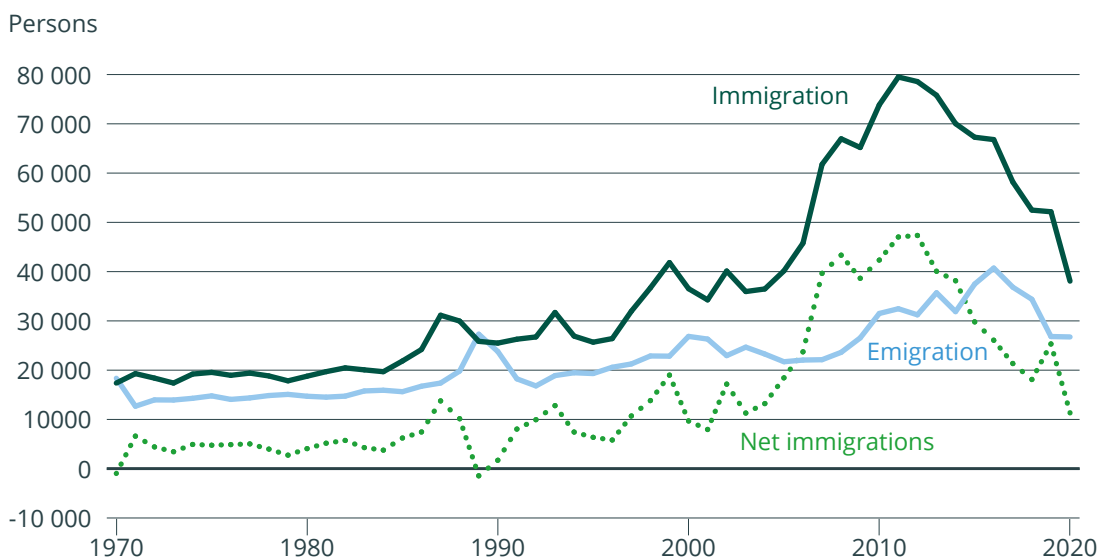
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Immigration and ageing



Decline in population growth

The figure shows immigration, emigration¹ and net immigration



¹ The low emigration figure for 2019 is partly due to a delay in the registration of many emigrants until 2020.

Source: ssb.no/en/flytting

Norway's population has increased by approximately 2.1 million since 1950, and now totals 5.4 million. In the immediate post-war years, annual population growth was about 1 per cent, primarily due to the high birth rate. Lower birth rates from the mid-1970s reduced population growth, and the rate was as low as 0.3 per cent for a number of years. However, growth started to increase again in 1990, eventually reaching more than 1 per cent, and since 2004, net immigration has had a much greater impact on population growth than the birth surplus. Since 2012, both immigration and population growth have fallen steadily, and in 2020 – the year of the pandemic – the large decline in immigration meant that the birth surplus was the biggest contributor to the increase, which was just 0.4 per cent.

Population. 1. january

Year	Population	Annual growth ¹
1950	3 250 000	-
1960	3 568 000	0.94
1970	3 863 000	0.80
1980	4 079 000	0.54
1990	4 233 000	0.37
2000	4 478 000	0.57
2010	4 858 000	0.82
2020	5 368 000	1.00
2021	5 391 000	0.44
2025	5 499 000	0.5
2030	5 629 000	0.5
2040	5 857 000	0.4
2050	6 002 000	0.2

Blue = Projection (main alternative)

¹ Average annual growth in per cent in the period.

Source: ssb.no/en/folkemengde and ssb.no/en/folkfram

The outlook

Population projections for the coming decades will obviously depend on the underlying assumptions. A projection based on medium-level fertility, life expectancy and net immigration indicates that the growth will continue over the next 30 years, but at a slower pace. By 2050, the population will have surpassed 6 million, while population growth will have fallen to 0.2 per cent.

The lower population growth in the main alternative compared to the last decade is primarily due to the fall in immigration, which is also expected to remain at a lower level than in the last decade.

The 10 largest groups of immigrants. 2021

Country	Number
Poland	102 147
Lithuania	41 322
Sweden	35 598
Syria	32 791
Somalia	28 402
Germany	25 231
Eritrea	23 523
Iraq	23 265
Philippines	23 058
Thailand	21 528

Source: ssb.no/en/innvbef

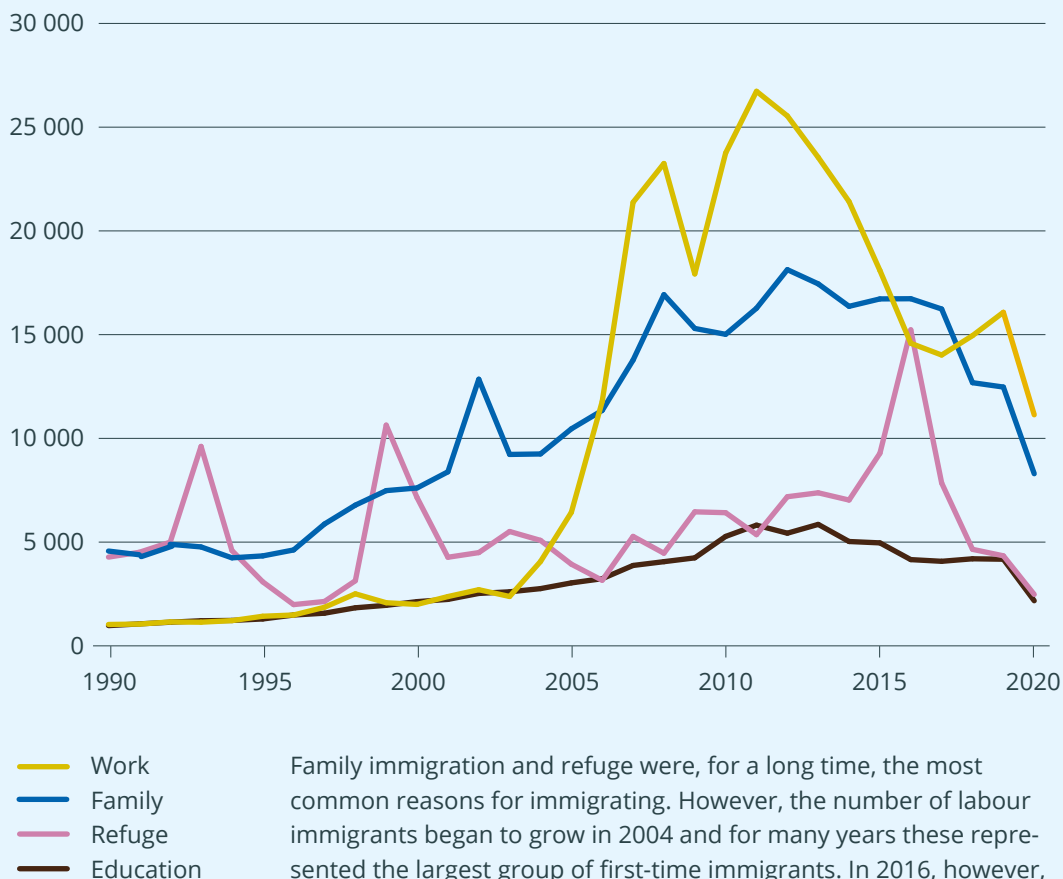
However, much of the future growth is likely to be the result of net immigration. If this is low, Norway will have a population of almost 5.8 million by around 2050, while a higher level of immigration could increase the population to almost 6.4 million.

From near and far

At the start of 2021, there were 998 000 immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway, representing 19 per cent of the entire population. Of these, 800 000 were immigrants who were born overseas, while 198 000 were born in Norway to immigrant parents. In Oslo, one in every three inhabitants is either an immigrant him-/herself or born in Norway to immigrant parents, and around half of all immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway live in Oslo (24 per cent) or Viken (27 per cent).

Work once again the main reason for immigrating

The figure shows immigrants by reason for immigrating¹



¹ Does not include Nordic citizens.

Source: ssb.no/en/innvgrunn

Family immigration and refuge were, for a long time, the most common reasons for immigrating. However, the number of labour immigrants began to grow in 2004 and for many years these represented the largest group of first-time immigrants. In 2016, however, family immigration and refuge again became the main reasons as a direct consequence of the influx of refugees to Europe in the autumn of 2015.

Following a steady decline since the peak of 2011, labour migration in the past three years is once again the most common reason for immigration. Poles have been the consistently largest group, and accounted for 2 600 of the 11 100 new labour immigrants in 2020. The largest group of refugees stems from Syria, with 1 200 newly settled refugees out of a total of 2 500. This is the lowest number of settled refugees in a single year since 1997.

In 2020, 24 400 non-Nordic citizens immigrated to Norway – 14 000 fewer than the year before. This is the lowest number of first-time immigrants since 2005. The decline is mainly due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most people live in the city

Just over 82 per cent of the population now live in urban areas. In the years immediately following World War II, this figure was only 50 per cent. As many as 44 per cent live in the Oslo Fjord region (Oslo, Viken and Vestfold og Telemark), while the proportion living in Northern Norway has fallen to 9 per cent.

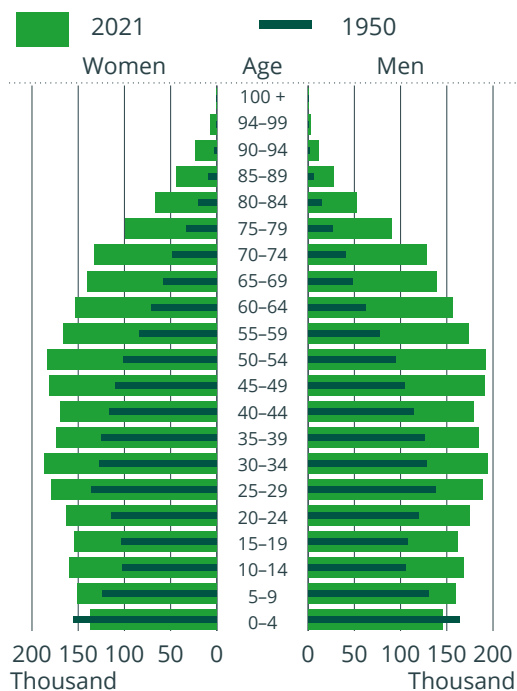
Towards the end of 2020, the number of people moving out of Oslo was untypically high and represented the first net outward migration from the municipality since 2000. The four most populous municipalities after Oslo – Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger and Bærum – also had a higher outward migration in the fourth quarter of 2020 than in the corresponding quarter in 2019. This trend continued into the first half of 2021. There are 991 urban settlements throughout Norway, and the growth in the number of inhabitants has been particularly high in the largest urban settlements.

The grey tsunami is coming

We have heard talk about the grey tsunami for a long time, and in some respects we could say that it is already here: while only about 8 per cent of the population was aged 67 and over in 1950, the figure today is almost 16 per cent. In the years ahead, when the baby boomers retire, this figure will increase further to almost 19 per cent in 2030 and 24 per cent in 2050. The proportion of children under the age of 15 will continue to decline, and will be approximately 17 per cent in 2050. By 2026, Norway will have more older people than children for the first time, and in 2060, one in five inhabitants will be over 70 years old. The ageing population is expected to be much more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas.

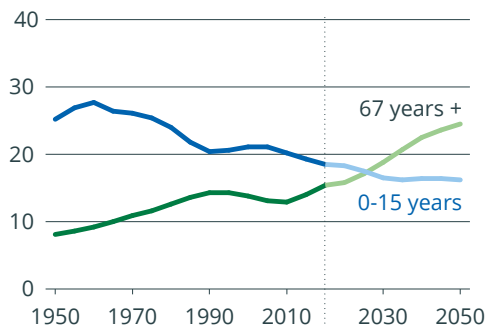
The grey tsunami is partly due to the fact that the population is living longer (more people at the top of the population pyramid). Equally important is the declining fertility rate,

Distribution in the population by age and gender



Source: ssb.no/en/folkemengde and ssb.no/en/folkfram (main alternative)

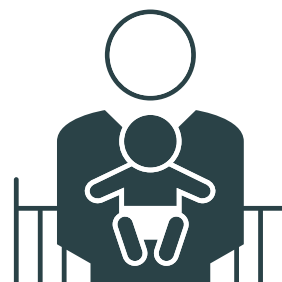
Percentage of children, young people and elderly in the population



Source: ssb.no/en/folkemengde and ssb.no/en/folkfram (main alternative)

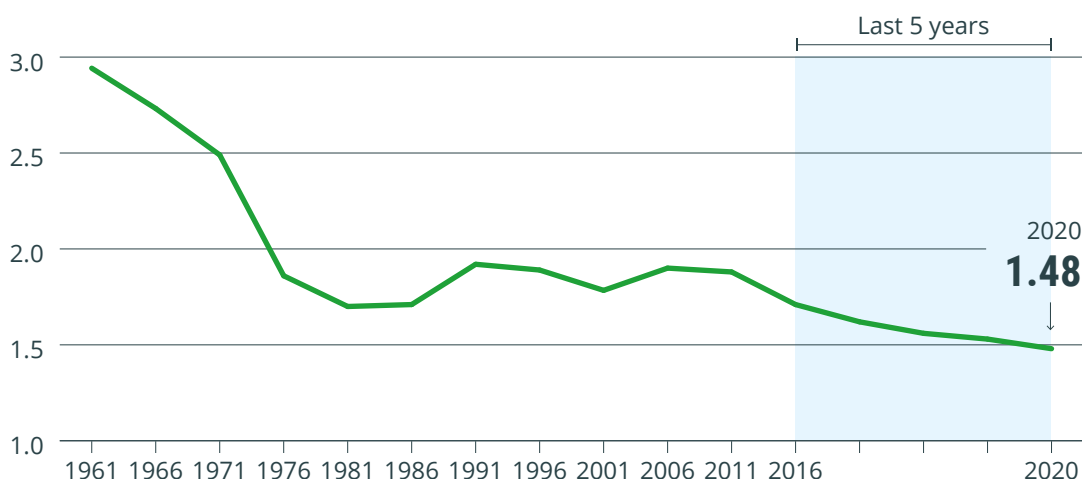
which means less growth at the bottom of the pyramid. However, the grey tsunami has not been – and is not expected to be – as strong in Norway as in many other European countries due to the relatively high fertility rate and high net immigration of young people.

From generation to generation



Low fertility rate...

The figure shows the total fertility rate¹



¹ Average number of live births per woman during her lifetime, if the fertility pattern during the period remains the same throughout the woman's fertile years and no deaths occur.

Source: ssb.no/en/fodte

The post-war baby boom lasted until the mid-1960s and was then followed by a decline which reached its lowest point at the beginning of the 1980s. The fertility rate did increase somewhat thereafter up to 2009, when it was almost 2. Since then, there has been a declining trend, and in 2020 the rate was at a record low. In times of crisis, birth rates tend to fall, but in the first half of 2021, almost 1 300 more babies were born than in the first half of 2020. If this trend continues throughout the year, the fertility rate may increase for the first time in 12 years.

If we disregard immigration and emigration, the total fertility rate in a country must be approximately 2.1 in order to avoid a decrease in population in the long term. Norway has remained below this level since the mid-1970s.

...but still higher than some other countries

The fall in the fertility rate in the past few decades is a general phenomenon in Europe, and Norway is on a par with the EU average. Relatively fewer children are born in many countries compared to Norway. For example, the fertility rate in Italy and Spain was less than 1.3 in 2019. The highest fertility rates were found in France and Iceland, and the latter, together with Portugal, is one of few countries where the fertility rate has increased in recent years.

Regional differences

In 2020, fertility was highest in Rogaland, at 1.64. Oslo had the lowest fertility rate, with 1.38. However, this is not the lowest ever measured in Oslo – in 1983 the figure was 1.34. The fertility rates were also low in the two northernmost counties in 2020, at 1.41 in both Finnmark og Troms and Nordland.

More multiple births

For a long time, the proportion of multiple births (primarily twins) remained at about 1 per cent. From the end of the 1980s this percentage began to increase, reaching nearly 2 per cent in 2002. This figure has since fallen slightly, and in recent years has remained at around 1.5 per cent. This increase is assumed to be associated with the increase in the childbearing age of mothers and the greater prevalence of assisted fertility.

Older mothers

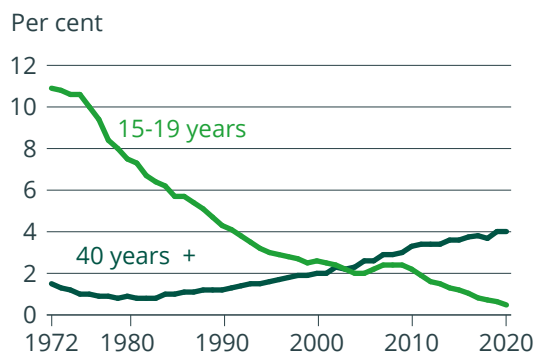
Due to longer periods of education and increased labour force participation, mothers are increasingly giving birth later in life. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the average childbearing age has increased by more than five years, to 31.4 years. The average age for the first birth was 29.9 years in 2020.

Total fertility rate in selected countries. 2019

France	1.86
Iceland	1.74
Sweden	1.71
Ireland	1.71
Denmark	1.70
Netherlands	1.57
Germany	1.54
Norway	1.53
Austria	1.46
Poland	1.44
Portugal	1.43
Finland	1.35
Greece	1.34
Italy	1.27
Spain	1.23

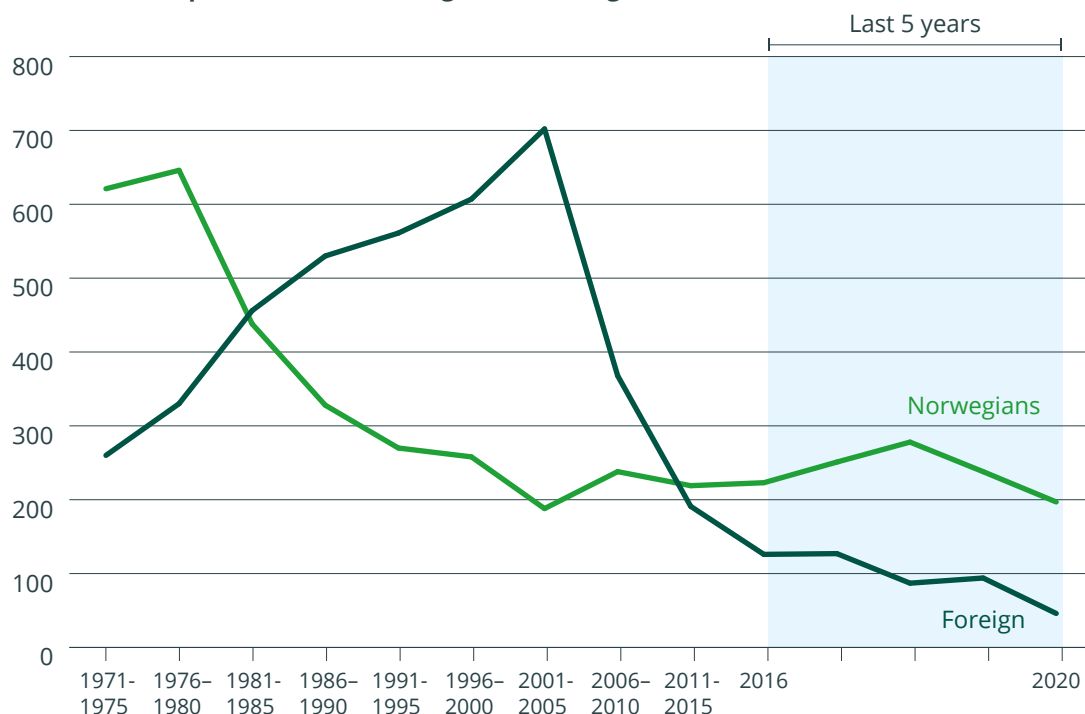
Source: Eurostat.

The figure shows the percentage of births in two age groups



Source: ssb.no/en/fodte

Number of adopted children. Norwegian and foreign



Source: ssb.no/en/adopsjon

This trend is particularly evident among the youngest. Around 1970, teenage births accounted for 10 per cent of all births, while the current figure is just 0.5 per cent. There are now eight times as many births among women who are aged 40 years and older than among teenagers.

Decline in abortion rate

Abortion rates rose sharply at the beginning of the 1970s. Following the introduction of the Abortion Act in 1978, the figures remained at between 14 000 and 16 000 per year for a long time, but a steady decline began in 2008. In 2020, in excess of 11 000 terminations were performed. This is the lowest figure recorded since the Abortion Act entered into force, and the abortion rate is now less than 10 per 1 000 women in the age group 15–49 years. For 2020, the figures were roughly the same as for the previous year until May, then from

May to November there was a clear decline compared with the previous year.

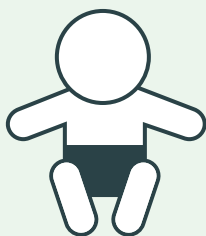
Abortion figures have seen a particular decline for women below the age of 25, and the highest abortion rates are now found among women in the age group 25–29 years.

Fewer adoptions

For a long time, the annual number of adoptions remained between 800 and 1 000. However, there has been a significant decrease in recent years, falling to 243 in 2020. This is due to the fact that there are now fewer children adopted from abroad. The proportion of adoptions from abroad increased sharply until 2005, but has since decreased. Part of the reason for this is that fewer children in the world are now put up for adoption internationally. In 2020, most children came from Colombia and the Philippines. Previously, many of the

children adopted from abroad came from China, but no children have been adopted from this country in the past three years.

Of the adopted Norwegian children, the majority are stepchild adoptions, but foster children also make up a significant group.



What's in a name?

There were no major changes in the list of favourite names in 2020, with only two new girls' names and one new boys' name. The most popular girls' name was Nora, while Jakob reigned supreme for the boys. Nora/Norah also topped the list in 2012 and 2014, and was second in 2019. It is the third most popular girls' name since the turn of the millennium, after Emma and Sara. Jakob/Jacob entered the top 10 in 2013, and since then has topped the list in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Fashions in names are cyclical, and many of the current names were very popular about 100 years ago. Despite the fact that only 45 per cent of children are baptised in church nowadays, biblical names continue to be popular, particularly for boys. Many names are also 'international', i.e. names that are also popular in other countries. Therefore, 'Norwegian' names containing the letters æ, ø and å are starting to disappear. The proportion with more than one first name is falling, while a growing number of children are being given both their mother's and father's surname.

Most popular girls' names. 2020

Nora/Norah

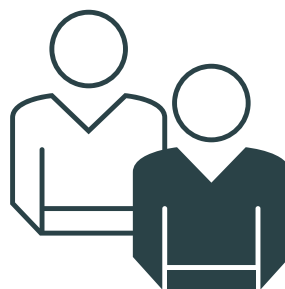
Emma
Ella
Maja/Maia/Maya
Olivia
Emilie
Sofie/Sophie
Leah/Lea
Sofia/Sophia
Ingrid

Most popular boys' names. 2020

Jakob/Jacob

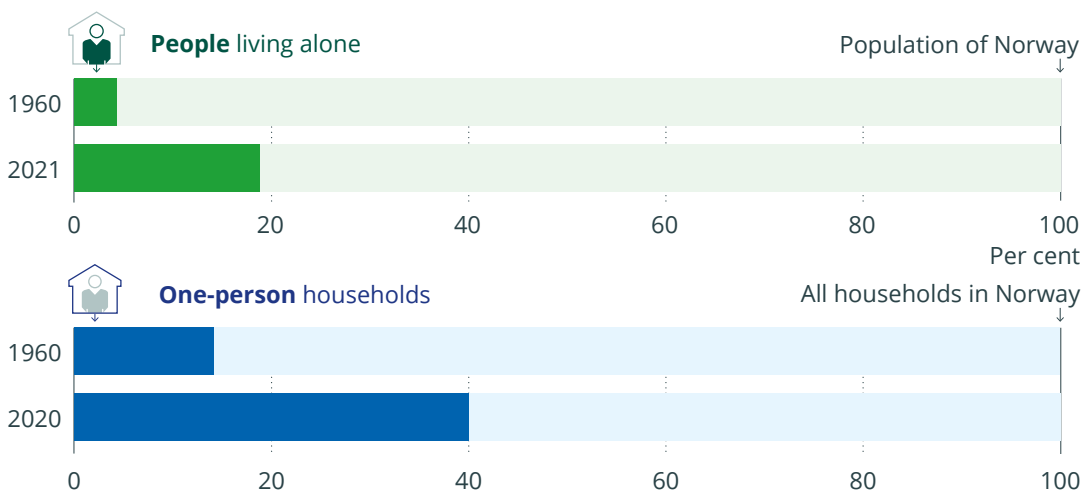
Emil
Noah/Noa
Oliver
Filip/Fillip/Philip/Phillip
William
Lucas/Lukas
Liam
Henrik
Oskar/Oscar

Single or cohabiting



More people live alone...

The figure shows the percentage of one-person households and persons in one-person households (private households)



Source: ssb.no/en/familie

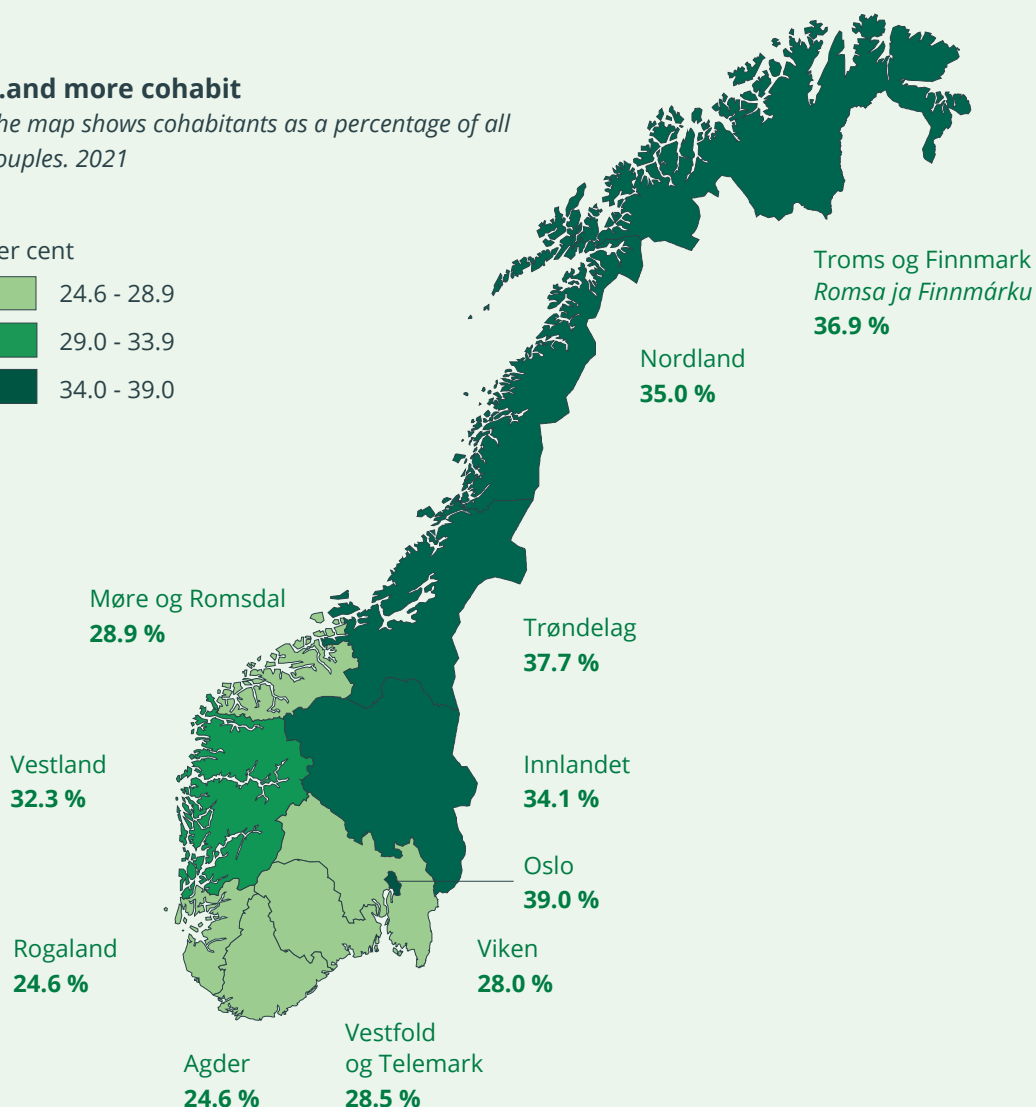
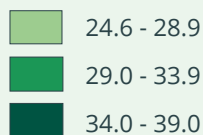
The post-war period was the golden age of the nuclear family. The marriage rate was high, and the percentage of one-person households decreased slightly. From the beginning of the 1970s, the marriage rate then declined, while the number of divorces increased. Consequently, the number of one-person households has more than doubled. A total of 40 per cent of households now consist of people living alone, and these account for 19 per cent of all people in private households.

In the population as a whole, there is no significant difference between the percentage of men and women who live alone. However, while single women are in the majority in the elderly population, men make up the majority among those who are younger. One-person households are particularly common in the centres of the largest cities and in sparsely populated areas.

...and more cohabit

The map shows cohabitants as a percentage of all couples. 2021

Per cent



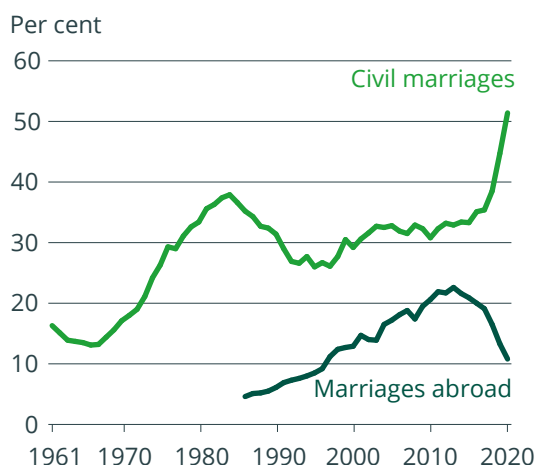
Source: ssb.no/en/familie
Map data: Norwegian Mapping Authority

31 %
of couples were
cohabiting in 2021

The falling proportion of married couples in recent years is not only due to more people getting divorced and living alone; there is also a growing percentage of those aged 30 and over who choose to live together without getting married.

The proportion of unmarried, cohabiting couples has gradually increased since the 1980s. In 1990, around 10 per cent of those who lived together as couples were cohabiting, while unmarried cohabiting couples accounted for 31 per cent of all couples in 2021. Among young people (under 30 years), it is more common to cohabit than to be married. Oslo and the three northernmost counties have the largest proportions of cohabiting couples. The lowest proportions are found in Agder and Rogaland.

Percentage of civil marriages and marriages abroad



Source: ssb.no/en/ekteskap

More marriages are civil marriages

After the number of marriages bottomed out at the beginning of the 1990s, the number then grew until 2008, before the trend started to turn again. In 2020, almost 16 000 couples tied the knot, which is a 19 per cent fall from 2019, and the lowest number since 1927. Much of the decline over the past year is likely to be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated infection control measures, which led to many couples postponing their wedding. The age at first marriage has gradually increased, reaching 34.1 years for women and 36.7 for men in 2020.

The percentage of civil marriages increased sharply in the 1970s and peaked in the mid-1980s at 38 per cent. Thereafter, the proportion declined slightly before increasing again, and 51 per cent of all marriages in 2020 were civil marriages.

The rise in popularity of civil marriages is assumed to be partly due to the fact that approximately 20 per cent of brides and grooms have been married at least once before.

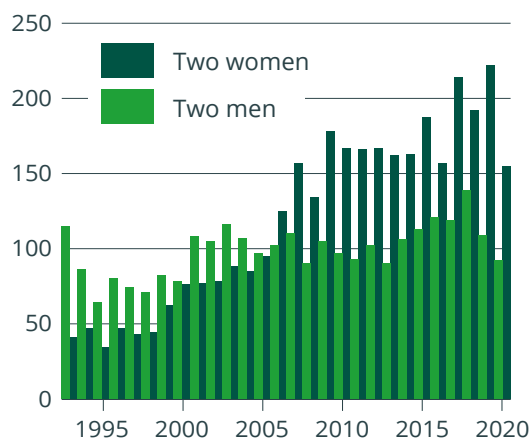
Tying the knot abroad now seems to be a declining trend. In 2013, the proportion peaked at 23 per cent, falling steadily to 11 per cent in 2020.

More lesbians than gay men marry

In 1993, registered same-sex partnerships were included in the statistics for the first time. Since then, more than 6 000 same-sex partnerships or marriages have been registered.

In the early years there was a clear dominance of male partnerships. However, since 2006, more women than men have entered into same-sex partnerships or marriages on an annual basis.

The figure shows the number of registered same-sex partnerships/marriage¹



¹ From and including 2009.

Source: ssb.no/en/ekteskap

Slightly fewer divorces

The number of divorces increased steadily up to the early 1990s, when it stabilised at about 10 000 per year. Since 2012, however, the number of divorces has declined slightly. This means that 30 per cent of all marriages will end in divorce if the current divorce rate continues.



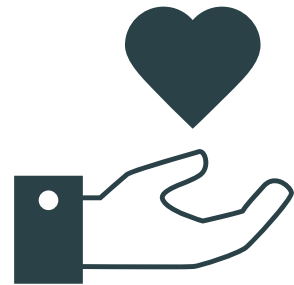
However, we have no data on the number of cohabiting couples who split up, and the growing share of cohabiting couples means that divorce figures are gradually becoming less indicative of relationship break-ups.

Number of households and persons per household

	Number of households	Persons per household
1950	959 310	3.3
1960	1 077 168	3.3
1970	1 296 734	2.9
1980	1 523 508	2.7
1990	1 759 363	2.4
2001	1 961 548	2.3
2010	2 170 893	2.2
2014	2 286 455	2.2
2015	2 316 647	2.2
2016	2 348 797	2.2
2017	2 376 971	2.2
2018	2 409 257	2.2
2019	2 439 242	2.2
2020	2 475 168	2.2
2021	2 512 317	2.1

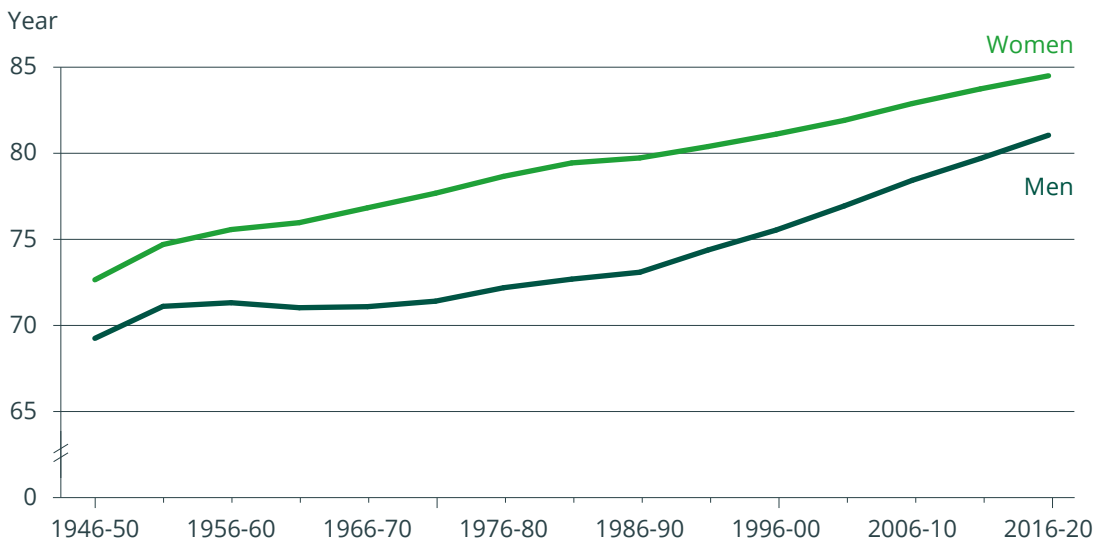
Source: ssb.no/en/familie

Life and death



A long life

The figure shows life expectancy at birth



Source: ssb.no/en/dode

Life expectancy is often used as an indicator of public health. Today, a newborn boy can expect to live to 81.5 years of age, while a newborn girl can expect to live to 84.9. This is a marked increase since the period 1946–1950, when the respective figures were 69.3 and 72.7.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the gender disparity in life expectancy was increasing, primarily due to an increase in the male mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases. This gap has gradually narrowed since the mid-1980s.

Regional variations in life expectancy

Women also live longer than men in countries that are comparable to Norway. Norwegian women live to about the same age as other Nordic women, but there are others who live longer. Japanese women top the list, with a life expectancy of almost 88 years, and many Southern Europeans also outlive their Norwegian counterparts. The international figures refer to 2019 however, so whether the pandemic will change this remains to be seen. What we know based on national figures is that the increasing life expectancy trend continued in

Norway and Denmark in 2020. However, the high fatality rate in Sweden due to COVID-19 has reduced life expectancy in the country significantly and halted this trend.

Similar to the large international variation in life expectancy, there are also clear regional differences within Norway. For example, men in the counties of Vestland and Møre og Romsdal can expect to live 1.5 years longer than men in Troms og Finnmark.

Expected remaining years of life at selected ages. 2020

Years	Women	Men
0	84.9	81.5
10	75.1	71.7
20	65.2	61.9
30	55.3	52.2
40	45.5	42.5
50	35.8	33.0
60	26.5	23.9
70	17.8	15.7
80	10.3	8.7

Source: ssb.no/en/dode

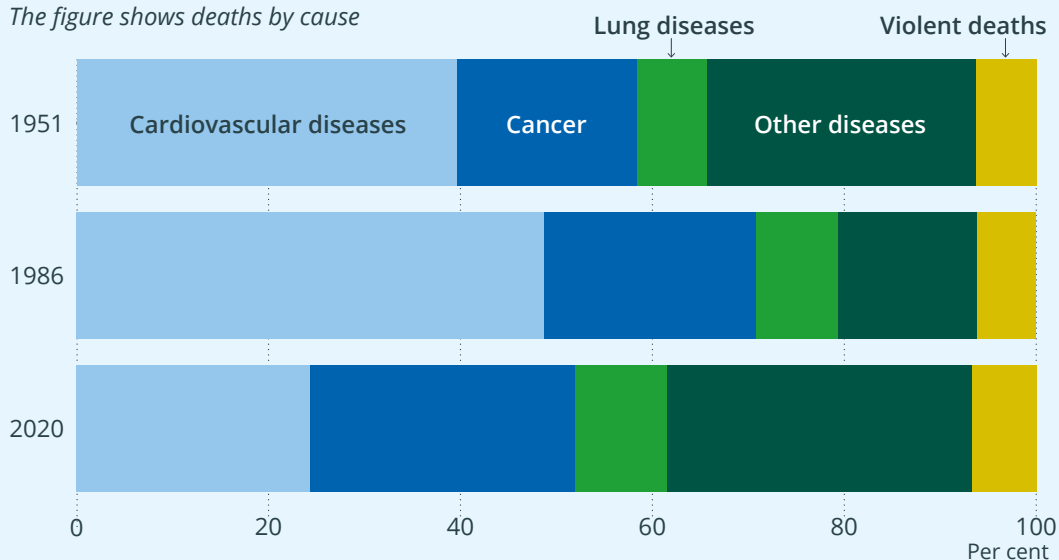
Life expectancy at birth in selected countries. 2019

	Women	Men
Japan	87.5	81.4
Spain	86.7	81.1
France	85.9	79.9
Italy	85.7	81.4
Sweden	84.8	81.5
Finland	84.8	79.3
Portugal	84.8	78.7
Iceland	84.7	81.7
Norway	84.7	81.3
Ireland	84.7	80.8
Greece	84.2	79.2
Netherlands	83.7	80.6
Germany	83.7	79.0
Denmark	83.5	79.5
Poland	81.9	74.1
Latvia	80.1	70.9

Source: Eurostat and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Japan).

Causes of death

The figure shows deaths by cause



Source: The Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

In the years following World War II, cardiovascular diseases were already the most common cause of death, and during the 1960s and 1970s increasing numbers died from these types of diseases. In 1986, cardiovascular diseases caused nearly half of all deaths, but this rate has since declined significantly.

In contrast, deaths from cancer have been on the increase throughout almost the entire period. Cancer has been the most common cause of death from 2017 onwards, and in 2020 accounted for 28 per cent of all reported deaths. Deaths from lung diseases such as pneumonia and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) continued to increase for many years, but have since levelled off, and fell markedly in 2020. Deaths with dementia as the underlying cause of death have risen steadily over the last ten years along with the increasing life expectancy of the population, but some

of the registered increase may also be related to the increase in knowledge on the subject.

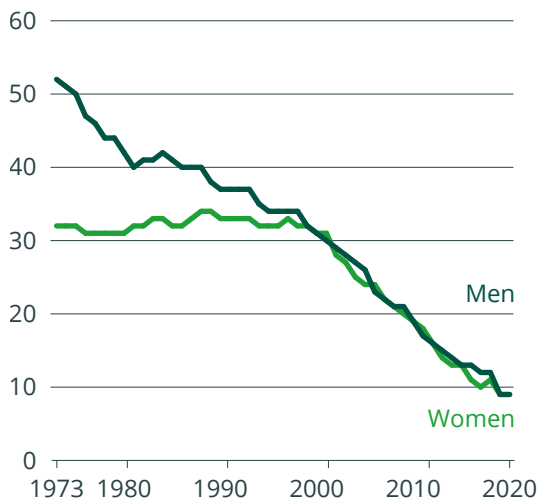
The number of violent deaths, which mainly involve accidents, suicides and poisoning, has remained relatively stable since World War II.

A total of 411 deaths were registered with COVID-19 as the underlying cause in 2020, but far fewer cases of influenza and other viruses that cause respiratory infections were registered than in previous years. This may indicate that the population has followed the advice on, for example, social distancing, hand hygiene and the use of face masks, and this is the most likely cause of the reduced mortality from lung diseases.

There was also no excess mortality in 2020, and the number of deaths was actually slightly lower than normal.

Percentage daily smokers aged 16-74

Per cent



Source: ssb.no/en/royk

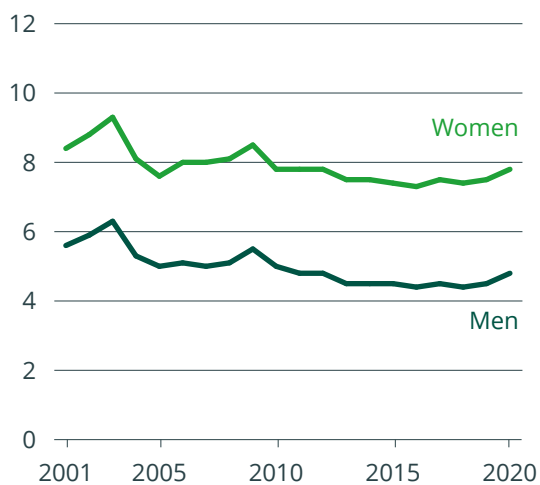
Fewer daily smokers, but more snus users

Since the beginning of the 1970s, the proportion of daily smokers has decreased considerably. For men, the percentage has fallen from over 50 to 9 per cent. For women, the figure remained stable at just over 30 per cent for a long period, but has now also fallen to 9 per cent. Another 8 per cent of the population report that they smoke occasionally.

In parallel with the decline in the proportion of men who smoke, there has in recent years been an increase in the percentage of snus users. Nineteen per cent of men aged 16–74 report that they use snus daily and 6 per cent use it occasionally. Snus use is most widespread among young men, but some young women are also users. Among women over the age of 34, only 3 per cent use snus daily, compared to 15 per cent of those aged 16–34. Twenty-five per cent of the population report that they have tried cannabis, while 4 per cent have done so in the past year.

Sickness absence

Per cent



Source: ssb.no/en/sykefratot

More years in good health

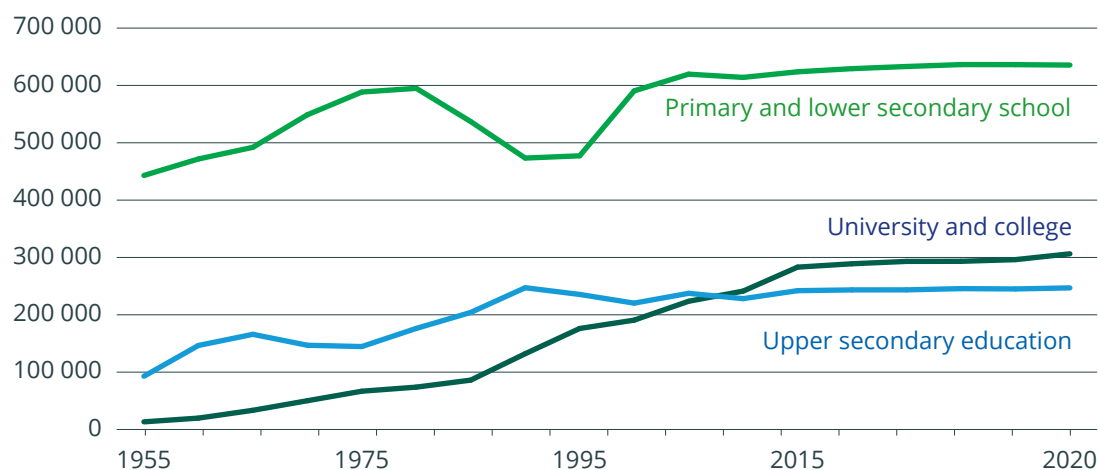
Both men and women now spend more years of their life in good health, and since 2005, the number of years in good health has increased more than life expectancy. We are thus living a greater part of our lives in good health than we were previously. Nearly eight in ten Norwegians reported that they were in good health in 2019; 81 per cent of men and 78 per cent of women. Also in most other European countries, a slightly larger proportion of men than women state that their health is good.

Sickness absence rates have remained fairly stable in recent years, both for self-reported and doctor-certified absence, but a slight increase was seen in 2020. Women take more sick leave than men, but men injure themselves at work more frequently. Men accounted for approximately 56 per cent of all registered workplace accidents in 2019, and also make up the majority of those who are killed at work.

Wise women



Number of pupils/students in primary and lower secondary education, upper secondary education, and university/college



Source: ssb.no/en/utdanning/faktaside

Since 1955, the total number of pupils and students has increased from about 550 000 to almost 1.2 million, and more than one-fifth of all Norwegians are now attending school.

Fewer and larger primary and upper secondary schools, more private schools

With the transition from a seven-year to a nine-year compulsory education, the number of pupils grew in the 1960s and the early 1970s, before increasing sharply when six-year-olds started school in 1997 (Reform 97). In the autumn of 2020, there were 635 500 pupils in primary and lower secondary schools.

From 2002 to 2020, the number of primary and lower secondary schools fell by almost 16 per cent, from 3 333 to 2 776. During the same period, a steady increase was seen in the number of private schools, from 110 to 267. A total of 4 per cent of all primary and lower secondary school pupils went to private schools in 2020.

Fewer drop out of upper secondary school...

The number of pupils (including apprentices and trainees) in upper secondary education and training saw a sharp increase in the 1990s, but has not changed much in recent years. In 2020, there were 122 900 and 75 400 pupils in programmes for general studies and vocational education programmes respectively. In addition, there were approximately 46 800 apprentices and 1 760 trainees. Girls are in the majority in general studies programmes (56 per cent), while there is a majority of boys in vocational education programmes (57 per cent).

More than nine out of ten Norwegians aged 16–18 are currently enrolled in upper secondary education, which can thus almost be regarded as compulsory. The completion rate is increasing. More than three-quarters complete a general study programme or vocational education programme within five years, while around 10 per cent drop out. The dropout rate is highest among pupils in vocational studies. There are also clear gender disparities, with boys dropping out more often than girls.

....and more take a vocational education

The number of students in tertiary vocational education has increased considerably in recent years, and reached a record high in 2020. Between 2011 and 2020, the number of students almost doubled, from just over 11 700 to nearly 22 400.

Wise women – with doctoral degrees

The marked growth in higher education levelled off in the late 1990s, but record numbers applied to study in 2020. The total number of students was 306 400 (including international students), and 38 per cent of 19–24-year-olds were in higher education in 2020.

More 19-year-olds started studying in this year than previously, and the number of older students also went up. At least part of the increase can be attributed to the pandemic, which has reduced young people's opportunities to travel and take a gap year, while those slightly older have faced lay-offs and a precarious employment situation.

Since the mid-1980s, women have been in the majority among students, and today six out of ten students are women. Women also make up the majority of graduates from universities and university colleges. When it comes to PhDs, the proportions have been more or less equal in recent years.

Out in the world...

Many young people go abroad to study, and between 1960 and the peak year of 2015 when 16 700 students from Norway were studying abroad, the number increased more than five-fold. Since then, the number has been declining, and in 2020 there were 13 500 students abroad.



Number of students abroad: the most popular countries. 2020

United Kingdom	3 509
Denmark	2 166
Poland	1 548
USA	1 326
Hungary	718
Netherlands	632
Slovakia	500
Sweden	460

Source: ssb.no/en/utuvh

This is a greater decrease than the trend of recent years, and is most likely a result of the travel restrictions and fewer opportunities to study abroad due to the pandemic.

...and to Norway

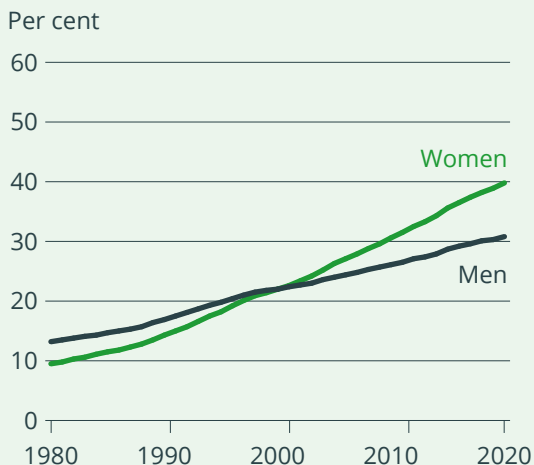
Like students from Norway studying abroad, the number of foreign students in Norway has also increased considerably over time. Here, too, 2015 was a peak year, with 25 600 students, and the number has fallen steadily since then. A significant drop was seen in 2020. At that time, 18 000 foreign nationals were studying at Norwegian educational institutions, according to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data's statistics on higher education.

More women than men have a higher education

The proportions taking a higher education have increased considerably since 1980, particularly among women.

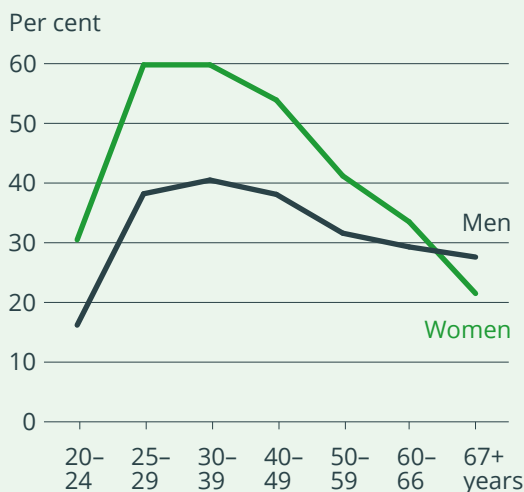
Among those under the age of 60, there are now far more women than men with a higher education. The gender disparities are particularly significant among the 25–29 age group, in which 60 per cent of the women have a higher education compared to 38 per cent of the men. However, in the oldest age group, the proportion is still higher for men.

Percentage of women and men aged 16 and over with higher education



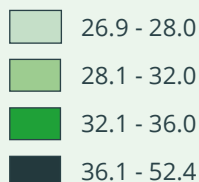
Source: ssb.no/en/utniv

Percentage of women and men in different age groups with higher education. 2020

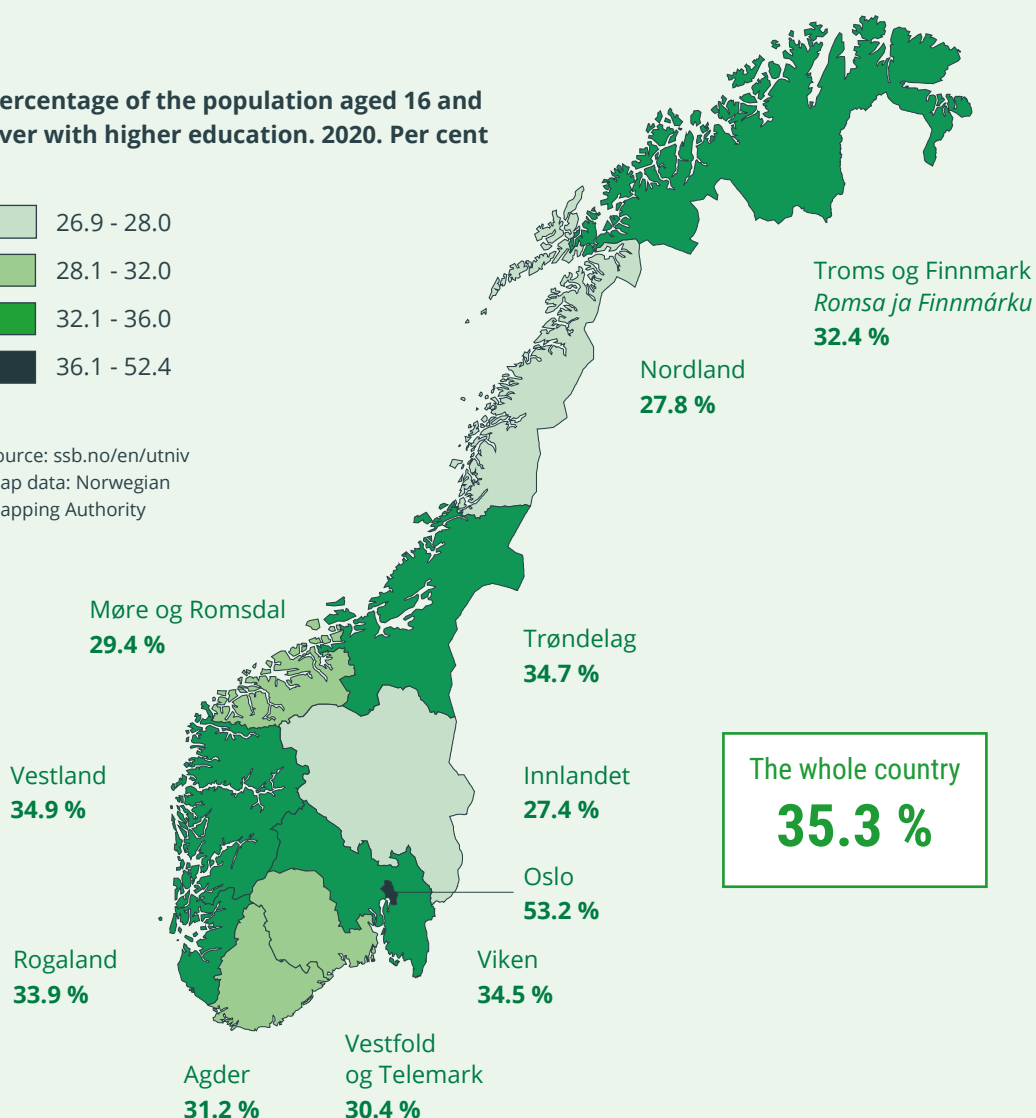


Source: ssb.no/en/utniv

Percentage of the population aged 16 and over with higher education. 2020. Per cent



Source: ssb.no/en/utniv
Map data: Norwegian Mapping Authority



Municipalities with the lowest percentage of residents with higher education. 2020. Per cent

Iveland	16.5
Namsskogan	16.3
Værøy	15.4
Røst	15.4
Beiarn	14.3

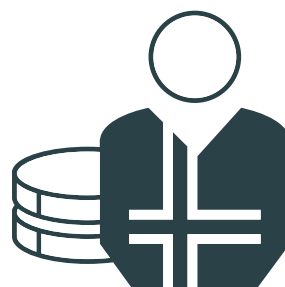
Kilde: ssb.no/en/utniv

Municipalities with the highest percentage of residents with higher education. 2020. Per cent

Bærum	54.0
Oslo	53.2
Nesodden	47.7
Ås	45.8
Asker	45.3

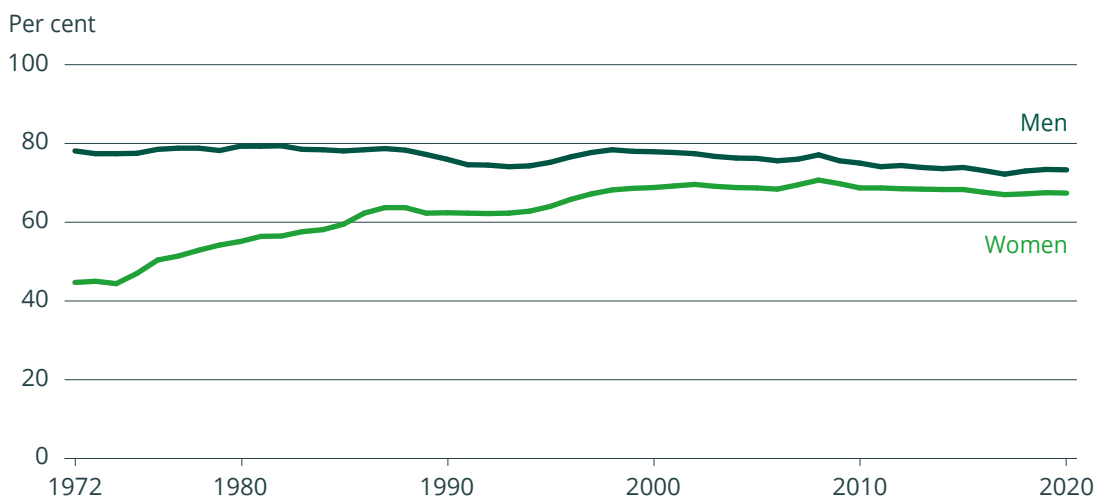
Source: ssb.no/en/utniv

Nine to five



Almost as many women in work as men

The figure shows the labour force participation rates for men and women aged 15–74



Source ssb.no/en/aku

In 2020, the labour force numbered 2.8 million people, equivalent to slightly more than 70 per cent of the population aged 15–74. Women made up 47 per cent of the labour force.

LABOUR FORCE

= the sum of those who are employed and unemployed. Also referred to as the economically active population.

Labour force participation saw a marked increase for women from the mid-1970s to 1987. During the economic recession from 1987 to 1993, the participation rate for women remained stable, while declining slightly for men. From 1993 until the turn of the millennium, the labour force participation rate increased again. After the economic downturn in 2008, the rate then fell in the years that followed, before gradually levelling off for both sexes. The largest decline has been among the under-25s, which is linked to the growing numbers taking higher education.

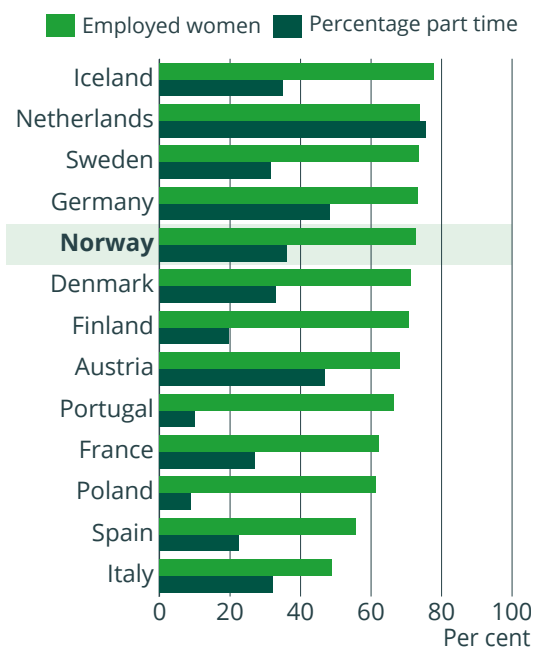
In 2020, 67 per cent of women and 73 per cent of men aged 15–74 were part of the labour force.

Shorter working hours

Many women still work part time, but the rate is declining. While 53 per cent worked part time in 1980, this proportion had fallen to 35 per cent by 2020. The percentage of men who work part time remains stable at about 15 per cent, and pupils and students make up a large share of part-time workers.

Since the 1970s, the number of actual hours worked per week for men has fallen steadily, and in 2020 was 36 hours. Weekly working hours for women fell slightly until 1983, as employment growth at that time was mostly in the form of part-time work. Full-time work has accounted for much of the subsequent growth, and the average number of working hours for women is now 31 hours.

Employed women aged 15–64 and the percentage working part time. Selected countries. 2020



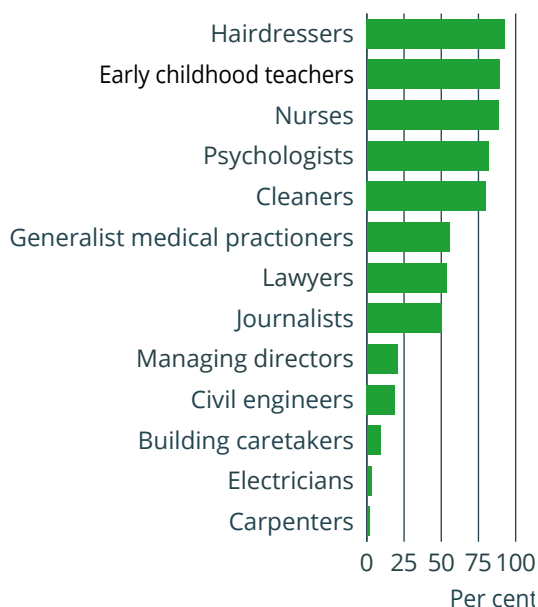
Source: Eurostat.

Gender divide continues in choice of occupation

Despite increasing levels of education, both men and women tend to choose quite traditional career paths. Typical female occupations include hairdressers, pre-school teachers and nurses. Examples of typical male occupations include tradesmen, caretakers and engineers.

Today, approximately one-third of all employed people work in the public sector: 48 per cent of women compared to only 18 per cent of the men. Women are more often employed in local government, while the men are more equally distributed between local and central government.

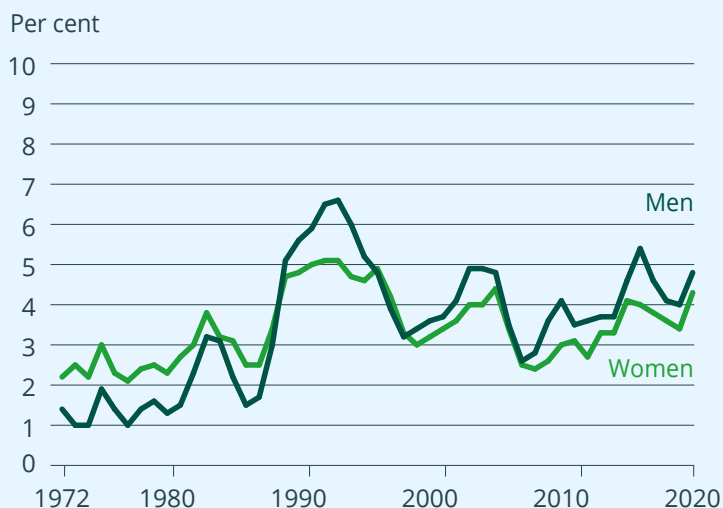
Percentage of employed women in selected occupations. 2020



Source: ssb.no/en/aku

Unemployed aged 15-74 years. Percentage of the labour force

Source: ssb.no/en/aku



Fluctuations in unemployment

From the beginning of the 1970s and until the recession of 1983–1984, the unemployment rate remained stable at just below 2 per cent of the labour force. Throughout this period, the unemployment rate remained approximately one percentage point higher for women than for men.

When unemployment rose in the 1980s, the gender disparities levelled out, and since 1988 the unemployment rate has either been higher for men or the same for both sexes. The downturn in the oil industry that began in autumn 2014 has also hit men the hardest. At the start of 2020, 3.8 per cent of men and 3.5 per cent of women were unemployed, and unemployment appeared to be on a downward trajectory again before the outbreak of the coronavirus. During the national lockdown to control the virus in March 2020, the number who were unemployed or laid off increased dramatically within a short period of time.

Unemployment varied throughout 2020, reaching 5.4 per cent in the autumn. However, the annual figure increased to 4.6 per cent from 3.7 per cent in 2019. In the first months of 2021, there were only minor fluctuations in unemployment, and the 141 000 unemployed in April accounted for 4.9 per cent of the labour force.

Considerable pay gap

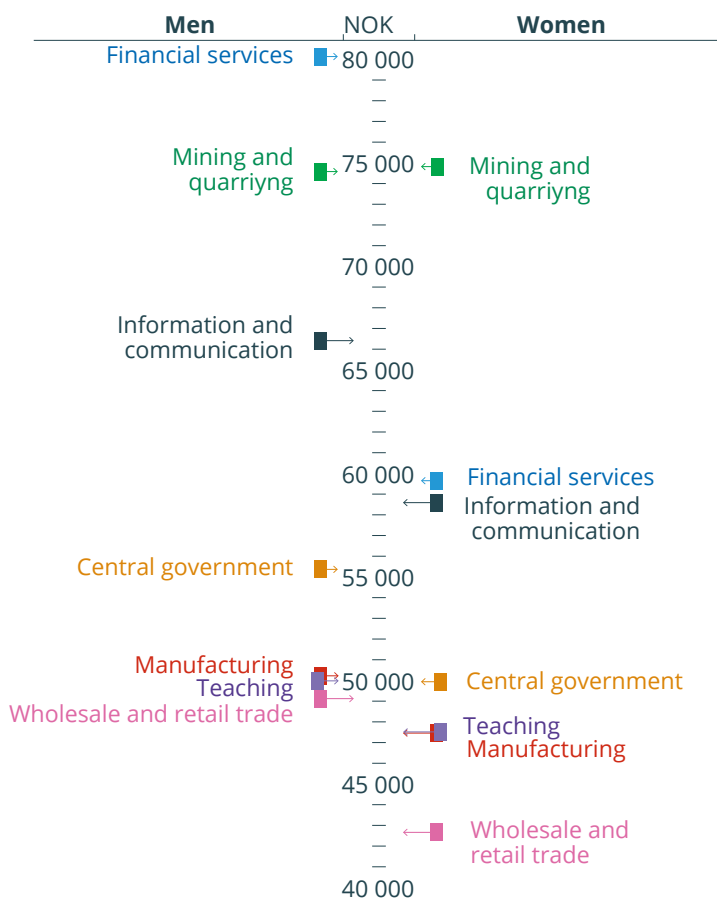
In 2020, average monthly wages for men and women amounted to NOK 51 630 and NOK 45 190 respectively. In other words, women's monthly wages make up only 88 per cent of the men's. This gap has changed little over the last years. However, when seen in a somewhat longer term perspective, the gap has narrowed: around 1960, women's wages amounted to just 60 per cent of the men's. However, the pay gap varies from one industry to another. In financial services, women's salaries are only 74 per cent of those that men receive, whereas in the education sector the ratio is 95 per cent.

The pay gap also varies greatly between different occupations. At the higher end of the scale, we find commodity brokers and shipbrokers, with an average monthly wage of almost NOK 124 000, as well as various types of managers, financial brokers and pilots, all of whose average monthly wage is in excess of NOK 90 000. At the other end, we find farmhands and fast food and café workers, who all have an average monthly wage of less than NOK 30 000.

Monthly wages in selected industries. Full-time employees¹. 2020

¹ Employees with a 100 per cent position or more.

Source: ssb.no/en/lonnansatt



Rich and poor



MEDIAN INCOME

The income that divides the population in two.

There will therefore be an equal number of people with an income higher than the median income to those with an income lower than the median income.

Slight growth in households' real income

Since 1990, the after-tax income in Norwegian households has increased in real terms by 68 per cent, with a median income of NOK 540 300 in 2019. This means that, adjusted for inflation, there was a growth of 0.8 per cent in income from the preceding year, which followed a significant fall and little growth from 2016. Income is therefore once again approaching the 2015 level, but the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic are also likely to be reflected in the income figures when the statistics for 2020 are published.

Percentage change

1990-2019

Median income after tax¹ for different types of households. NOK

	1990	2015	2018	2019	
All households	321 900	544 100	535 800	540 300	68
Persons under 45 living alone	215 500	310 500	310 500	318 500	48
Persons aged 45–64 living alone	205 100	349 500	346 500	351 300	71
Persons aged 65+ living alone	135 500	281 100	280 100	283 700	109
Couples without children. Eldest under 45	416 500	639 800	643 800	660 500	59
Couples without children. Eldest 45–64	429 600	805 000	809 600	823 600	92
Couples without children. Eldest 65+	266 200	605 000	603 300	609 200	129
Couples with children. Youngest child 0–6	470 100	815 200	805 200	822 700	75
Couples with children. Youngest child 7–17	516 500	943 600	939 000	956 900	85
Couples with adult children. Youngest child 18+	567 100	1 050 000	1 052 200	1 071 500	89
Single mothers/fathers with children 0–17	270 400	440 400	430 500	438 400	62
Single mothers/fathers with adult children 18+	360 300	578 700	579 100	589 500	64

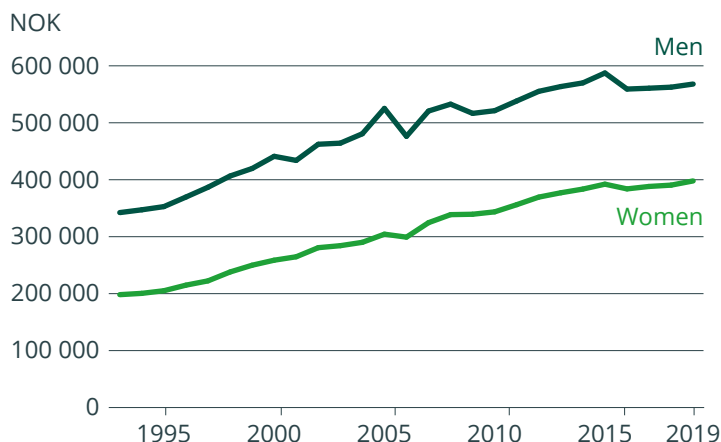
¹ Constant 2019 NOK. Student households not included.

Source: ssb.no/en/ifhus

Women's income around two-thirds of men's

The figure shows average gross incomes. 2019 NOK

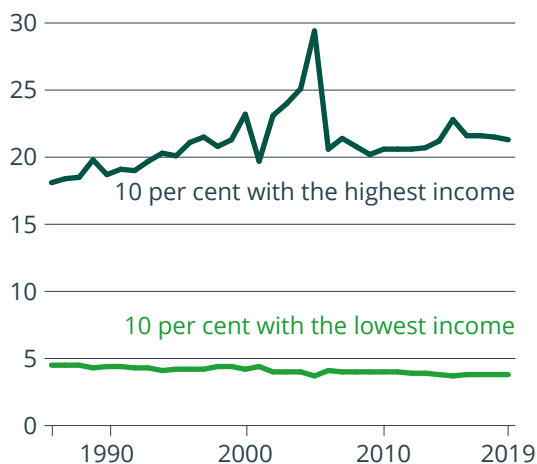
Source: ssb.no/en/selvangivelse



In 2019, the average gross income for adults as a whole amounted to NOK 483 300, and the average assessed tax was 25 per cent. The monthly pay of women in full-time employment amounts to 88 per cent of that of men, while women's annual gross income is just 70 per cent of the men's. The corresponding figure for 1984 was 47 per cent.

The gender disparities in income are much larger than the disparities in wages primarily because there are fewer women in the labour force, coupled with the fact they are more likely to work part time. Men also receive a relatively higher proportion of the capital income. Furthermore, a large majority of the pensioners who receive a minimum state retirement pension are women.

The figure shows the proportion of total after-tax income per consumption unit which falls to those with the highest/lowest income¹. Per cent



Stable income inequality

The proportion of total income earned by the 10 per cent of the population with the lowest household income has declined slightly since 1986, but has been stable in recent years. Meanwhile, among the 10 per cent with the highest income, the rate has increased from 18 to 21 per cent, but this proportion has also remained fairly stable in recent years. Announcements of changes to the tax rules for share dividends tend to prompt larger payments of dividends in the years before such tax rules enter into force. This was seen in both 2004 and 2005 and again in 2015, for example. As a result, a marked increase was seen in the income inequality in these years.

¹ Does not include people in student households.

Source: ssb.no/en/ifhus

Composition of household wealth. NOK

	2010	2015	2019
Real capital ¹	1 952 300	2 613 600	3 117 300
Total gross financial capital	763 600	1 026 300	1 406 900
Bank deposits	335 000	453 800	518 900
Other financial capital	428 600	572 500	888 000
Gross wealth	2 715 900	3 639 900	4 524 200
Debt	991 600	1 288 300	1 529 000
Net wealth	1 724 400	2 351 500	2 995 200

¹ Including estimated market value of property.

Source: ssb.no/en/ifhus

Increased concentration of wealth

The housing assets of households represent the main part of their gross assets, which in 2019 averaged NOK 4.5 million. Net wealth, with debt deducted, amounted to almost NOK 3 million. In 2019, well over half of all Norwegian households owned net assets worth more than NOK 1 million. However, this obscures major inequalities, and the distribution is heavily skewed. In 2019, the 10 per cent of the households with the largest wealth owned about half of the total wealth, with an average of NOK 16 million, while the very richest 1 per cent had 23 per cent of the wealth.

The concentration of wealth has increased in recent years, partly due to the increase in the value of shares and securities funds. The

inequality of wealth is far greater than of income since the former has been accumulated over a longer period of time (often over generations), while income figures refer to a single year.

Heavy debt burden for many

Average debt per household has soared in recent years, and amounted to approximately NOK 1.5 million in 2019. The proportion of households with debt amounting to at least three times their total household income is 20 per cent. Five per cent have debt that is more than five times their income.

Compared to other OECD countries, the debt burden in Norway is high, and only Denmark has a higher debt burden in relation to income.

10 per cent have persistently low incomes

The percentage of people with a low income largely depends on how 'low income' is defined. According to the EU definition, which is the most frequently used measure, 13 per cent of the population had an income below the low-income threshold in 2019.

According to this definition, low income means a household income per consumption unit that is less than 60 per cent of the median income in the population as a whole.

Excluding students, the low-income group constitutes 11 per cent of the population.

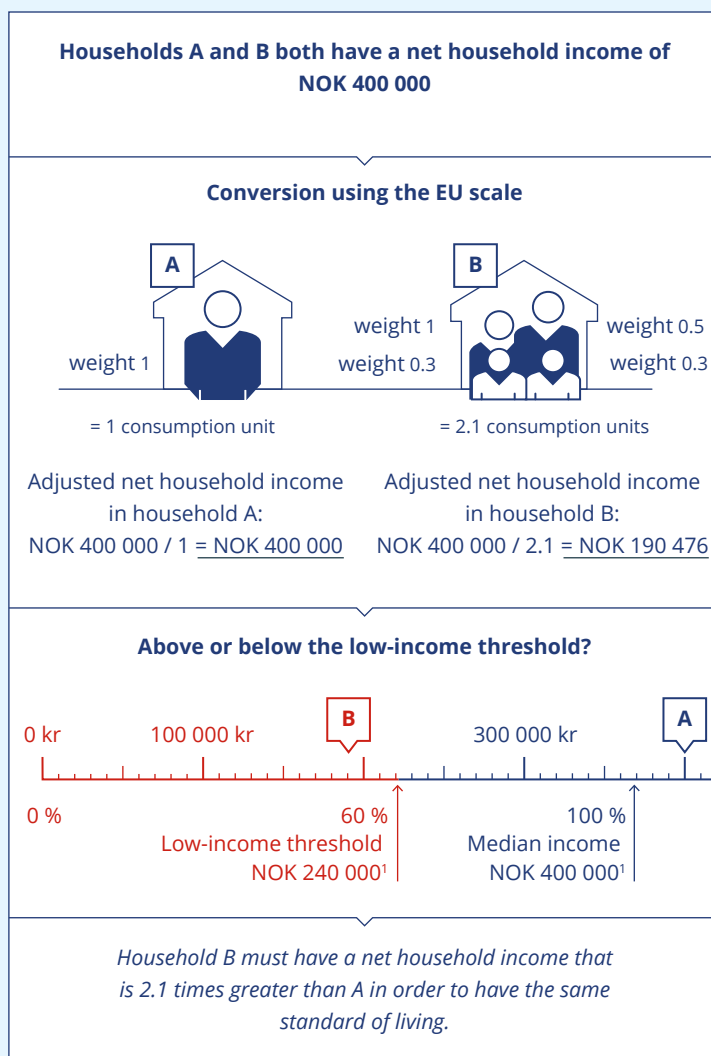
When estimating the proportion of people with low incomes over a three-year period, the proportion is somewhat lower. In the period 2017–2019, 10 per cent had persistently low incomes according to the EU definition, and this percentage has increased every year since 2011.

Low income, the EU scale

In the statistics on income and wealth, household income is normally adjusted using consumption weights or equivalence scales, the most common of which is the EU scale.

Here, the first adult in the household is allocated weight 1, other adults weight 0.5, and children under 17 weight 0.3.

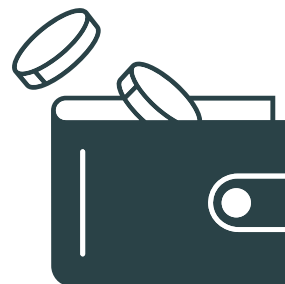
Consumption weights are used to ensure that equal comparisons can be made of different types of households, regardless of the number of household members. Large households need a higher income than smaller ones in order to have the same standard of living, but large households also benefit from economies of scale in areas such as electricity, insurance etc.



¹ 2019 figures

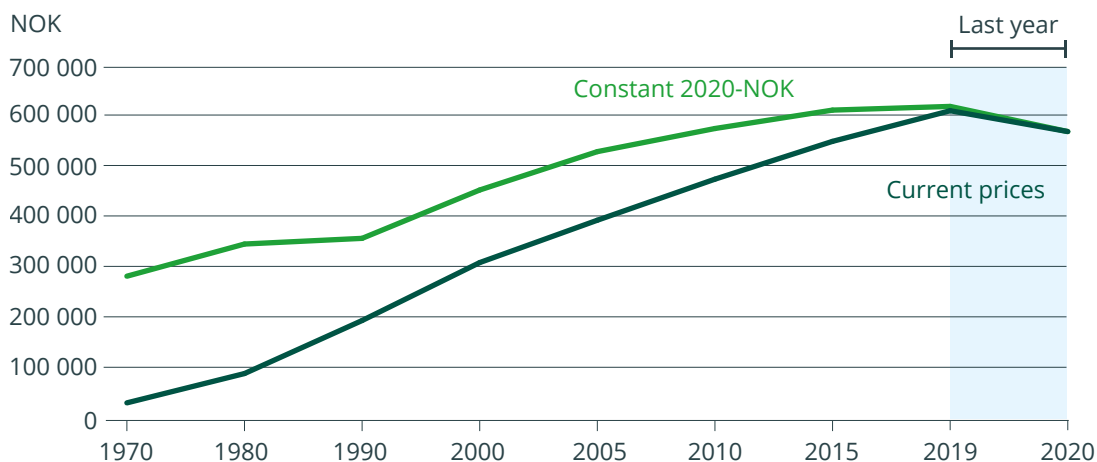
Source: ssb.no/en/ifhus

Big spenders



Consumption has more than doubled since 1970

The figure shows consumer expenditure per household. Current and constant prices



Source:

ssb.no/en/knr and ssb.no/en/familie

In 2020, the annual total consumer expenditure for households amounted to NOK 1 417 billion, which equates to NOK 573 000 per household and NOK 263 000 per person. In 1970, the corresponding amount per household was NOK 34 868, which corresponds to approximately NOK 286 000 when adjusted for inflation. Of the total consumption in 2020, 23 per cent went towards housing, lighting and fuel, while 14 per cent was spent on transport and 13 per cent went towards food. However, consumption expenditure was lower in 2020 than in 2019, and a larger proportion of total consumption related to food and housing.

Consumption expenditure has grown in pace with the increasing spending power. With some exceptions, including in 2020 when pensions and welfare benefits made up the largest

proportions, wage growth has been the largest contributor to the increase in real disposable income. This is the amount we have left after income tax and other deductions, adjusted for inflation. In 2020, this amounted to NOK 293 100 per person. Figures from the national accounts show that real disposable income in households increased by an average of 2.8 per cent per year from 1980 to 2020.

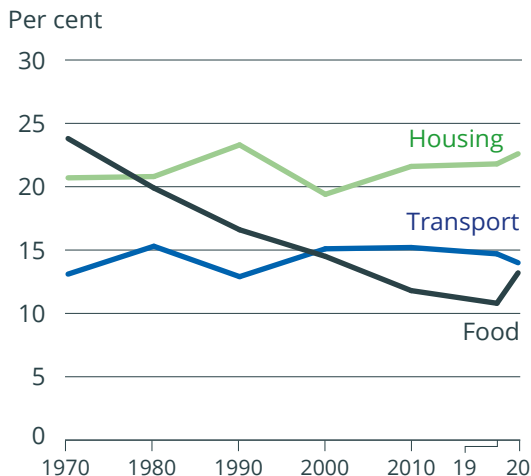
Less spent on food and clothing and more on pleasure

Over time, an ever-smaller part of the household budget is being spent on food. Despite spending on food and non-alcoholic beverages increasing slightly in 2020, from 11 to 13 per cent of the total consumption expenditure, it was still much lower than the 24 per cent in 1970. This is not exactly surprising, because the higher our spending power, the smaller the share of the budget that is normally spent on necessities.

Perhaps more surprising is that we are also spending a smaller proportion of the household budget on clothing and footwear. In 2020, we spent almost 5 per cent of the household budget on these items, which is about half that of 1970. This does not mean that we are buying less clothing and footwear than before, only that these products have become relatively cheaper, because the price growth for these items has been much lower than for most other goods.

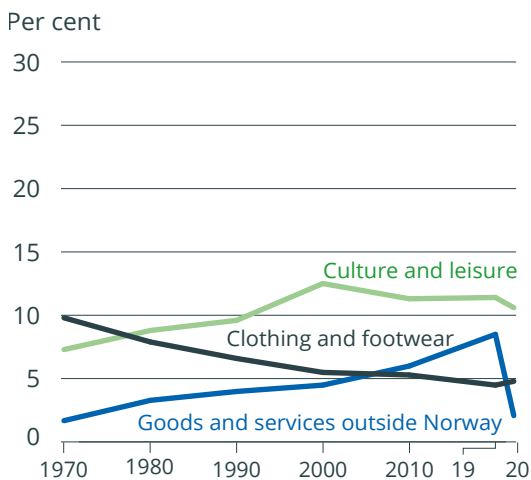
In normal years, an increasingly larger proportion of the household budget is being spent on goods and services related to travel, culture and leisure. The proportion spent on travel and consumption abroad has seen a particularly large increase, from 2 per cent in 1970 to 9 per cent in 2019. The proportion spent on culture and leisure went up from 7 to 11 per cent in the same period.

The figure shows the percentage of household consumption expenditure spent on food, housing and transport



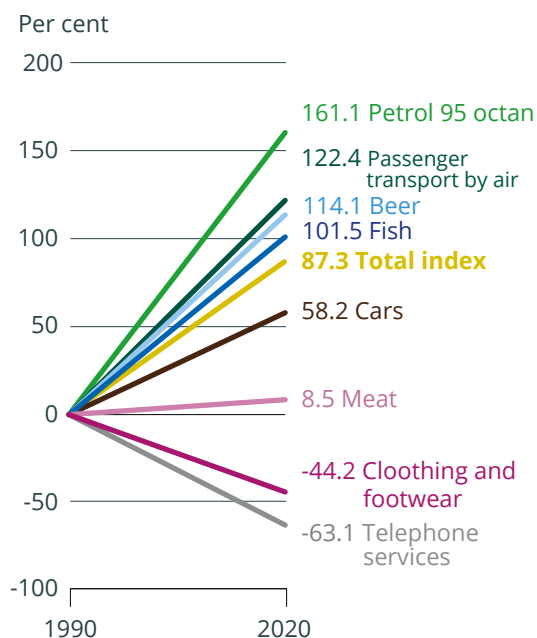
Source: ssb.no/en/knr

The figure shows the proportion of households' consumption expenditure spent on goods and services outside Norway, culture and leisure, as well as clothing and footwear.



Source: ssb.no/en/knr

The figure shows price growth, selected goods and services. 1990-2020



Source: ssb.no/en/kpi

However, foreign travel and the uptake of cultural and leisure services were dramatically reduced in 2020 due to travel restrictions and the closure of cultural activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the proportion of the total consumption expenditure that was spent on travel and consumption abroad was roughly the same as in 1970.

Not that different from the rest of Europe

The consumption pattern of Norwegian households does not differ significantly from the EU average, although some variations can be found. Norwegian households spend more on culture and leisure activities, but less on housing, food, health and education. This is a reflection of the high spending power of the population, as well as the fact that most health and education costs are covered by the government in Norway, unlike in a number of other countries. The excess payable for these services therefore constitutes a modest share of the total consumption.

Changed eating and drinking habits

Not only are we spending less money on food, but we are also buying different kinds of foods.

A report by the Norwegian Directorate of Health on how the Norwegian diet has evolved (*Utviklingen i norsk kosthold 2020*) found that the consumption of vegetables, fruit and berries has increased considerably over time, despite the consumption of fruit and berries falling slightly in recent years. In contrast, the consumption of potatoes has fallen dramatically since the 1970s, while the consumption of potatoes consumed in the form of products such as crisps and chips has more than doubled.

Meat consumption has increased significantly over time, particularly up to 2008. In recent years, however, the overall meat consumption

has decreased. Poultry consumption has been increasing significantly for many years, and also increased slightly in 2019. The consumption of seafood, including fish, has decreased over time, and is now lower than in 2015, but has changed little in recent years.

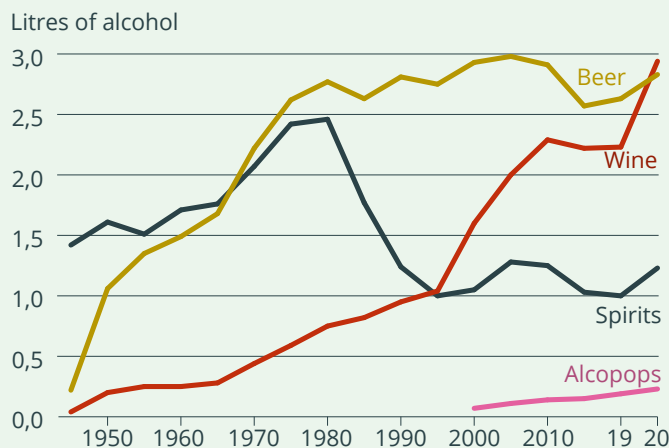
The consumption of milk has also declined significantly over time, from more than 200 litres per person in the 1950s to just over 80 litres per person in 2019. While most people previously preferred whole milk, the current favourites are mostly semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, but consumption of these has also been falling. The sales of fizzy drinks and mineral water has increased more than ten times over since the 1950s, and we bought 119 litres each in 2020 compared to 9 in 1950.



More wine, less spirits

The figure shows alcohol sales per inhabitant aged 15 and over

Source: ssb.no/en/alkohol

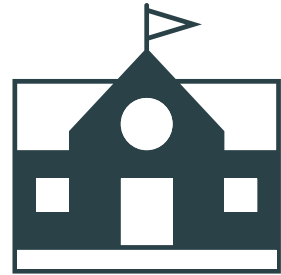


The proportion of the household budget spent on alcoholic beverages has been decreasing since 1970, but measured in quantity, we are buying more alcohol.

Alcohol sales increased steadily up to around 1980, with an increasing consumption of beer and spirits. The consumption of spirits then fell by more than 50 per cent, while beer consumption stabilised and wine consumption rose. After 2011, total sales fell slightly but have levelled off in recent years, until rising again in 2020.

In 2020, every adult bought an average of more than seven litres of pure alcohol, compared with just under five litres in 1970. This was an increase of almost 20 per cent from 2019, but this must be viewed in the context of most alcohol sales taking place in Norway in 2020. Due to the strict travel restrictions in 2020, duty-free sales at airports, tourist imports and cross-border trade (unregistered sales) were almost non-existent.

My home is my castle



Detached houses in the majority...

The figure shows dwellings. 2021



Source ssb.no/en/boligstat

There are approximately 2 638 000 dwellings in Norway, of which 49 per cent are detached houses, 21 per cent are semi-detached or link-detached houses, terrace houses and other small houses, and 25 per cent are flats in multi-dwelling buildings.

Although detached houses are in the majority overall in Norway, there are major geographical differences, and blocks of flats are the most common dwellings in the cities. This is especially true for Oslo, where the proportion of blocks of flats is 72 per cent and the proportion of detached houses is just 8 per cent.

... but blocks of flats are on the rise

Eighty-one per cent of today's housing stock was built after 1945, and detached houses are the most common type of housing. However, when we look at the year and type of construction, we can see that the type of homes we are building has changed over the years. Until 1990, detached houses accounted for more than half of all new builds most years, and almost 60 per cent in the 1980s. Since 1990, the proportion of detached houses has fallen steadily, and in the period 2011 to 2020, only 27 per cent of new dwellings were detached houses, while the proportion of flats rose to 43 per cent. This shift is not only seen in the largest cities; during the period, the construction of detached houses outweighed new build flats in just two counties: Innlandet and Møre og Romsdal.

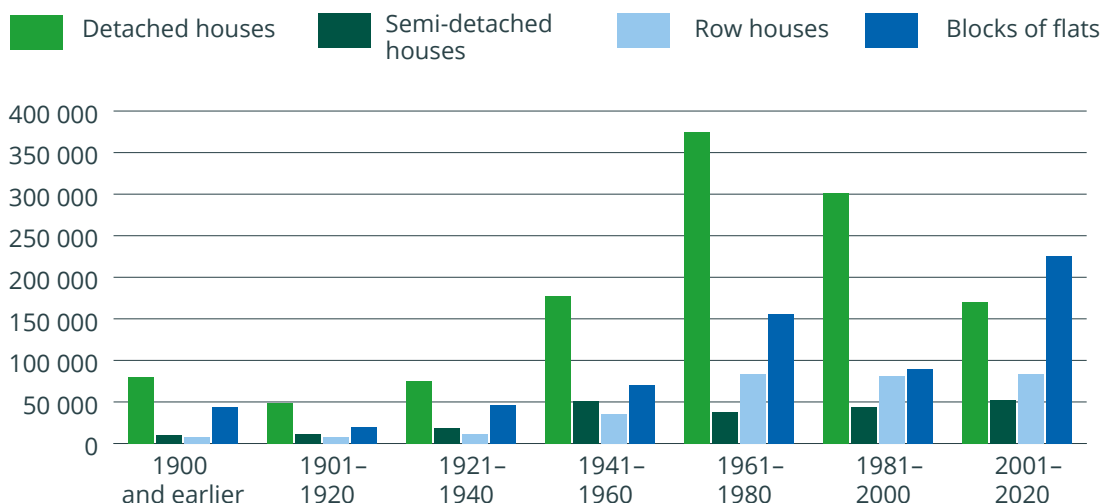
Housing construction was at its peak in the 1970s. At that time, an average of 41 000 new homes were built per year, while in the 50s,

60s and 80s, around 31 000 homes were built each year. After a decline to around 20 000 homes per year on average in the 1990s, construction has increased at a relatively steady pace, and in 2020, 29 000 new homes were built.

Nearly eight out of ten households own their own home

A total of 76 per cent of households own their homes, while 24 per cent are tenants. Self-ownership is the most common form of ownership; 63 per cent of all households are owner-occupiers, while 14 per cent are members of a housing cooperative or cooperative leaseholders. A total of 82 per cent of the population lives in a dwelling owned by the household. This proportion has remained fairly stable since 1997, in a period when housing prices have risen dramatically. The proportions who own and who live in a detached house in Norway are high compared to most other European countries.

Number of dwellings by type of dwelling and year of construction¹



¹ Does not include dwellings with unknown year of construction.

Source: ssb.no/en/boligstat

Higher housing standards...

In 1973, 26 per cent of the population still did not have their own bathroom or toilet, but by 1988 this proportion was already down to 2 per cent. At the same time, the percentage of people with two or more bathrooms in the home rose from 18 per cent in 1988 to 38 per cent in 2018.

Although homes are becoming smaller, this also applies to households. If we define a very spacious dwelling as one having at least three rooms more than the number of residents, this applies to approximately one-third of the population, compared to a quarter in 1980. However, not everyone lives in such spacious surroundings. Seven per cent live in cramped conditions, where there are fewer rooms than people in the dwelling (or one person lives in one room) and 10 per

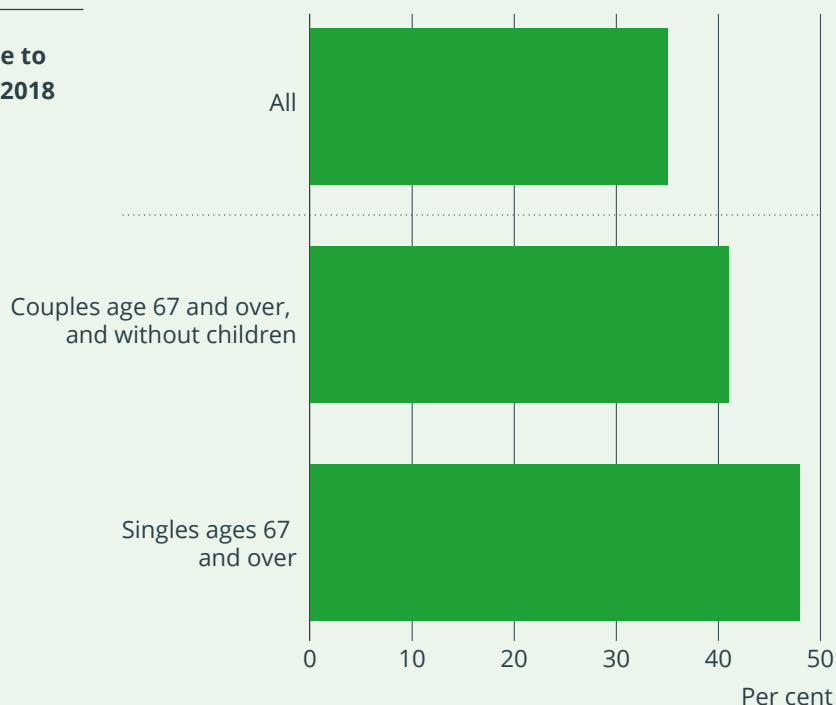
cent perceive their dwelling to be too small. In 1980, 16 per cent were living in cramped conditions. This fell to 8 per cent in 1995 and has remained at this level.

...but poor accessibility for wheelchair users

The grey tsunami is upon us, and we are going to need more homes that are accessible to people with reduced mobility. Eight out of ten homes are not accessible to wheelchair users, and in 2018 just over one in three people lived in a dwelling without any stairs, steps, steep inclines or other obstacles that make access difficult for wheelchair users. Almost half of people over the age of 67 in one-person households live in an accessible home, while the corresponding figure for people who live with a spouse/partner in this age group is four out of ten.

Dwelling accessible to wheelchair users. 2018

Source: ssb.no/en/bo



Housing prices up more than sixfold since 1992

Prices of existing dwellings increased by almost 550 per cent from 1992 to 2020. The increase has been greatest for blocks of flats, with an 870 per cent rise. In comparison, general inflation during the same period amounted to approximately 77 per cent. The increase in prices has been especially steep in the Oslo area: in Oslo and Bærum, house prices increased by almost 900 per cent during the period.

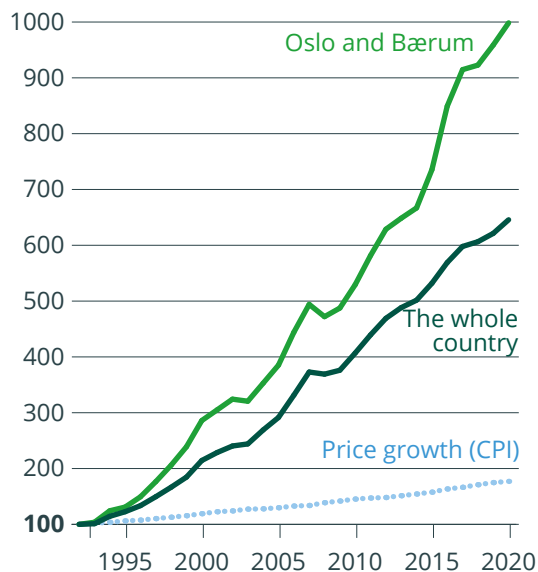
Only once since 1992 has the price of existing dwellings fallen, and that was in 2008 – the year of the financial crisis. Contrary to what was generally envisaged when the pandemic hit Norway last spring, prices of detached houses, small houses and blocks of flats have risen throughout the country. The price of existing dwellings in 2020 was on average 3.9 per cent higher than in 2019. The increase was strongest in Vestfold og Telemark, as well as Viken excluding Akershus, with 5.8 per cent.

474 000 cabins and other holiday homes

At the start of 2021, a total of almost 474 000 cabins, summer houses and dwellings were used as holiday homes in Norway. Ringsaker (7 300) and Trysil (6 900) municipalities had the most. The number of holiday homes per square kilometre was highest in Hvaler (48) and lowest in Kautokeino (0.05). A total of 15 800 cabins were sold on the open market in 2020, which is an increase of 30 per cent from the previous year, and a new record. Eleven per cent of the cabins that were sold on the open market in 2020 were new builds.

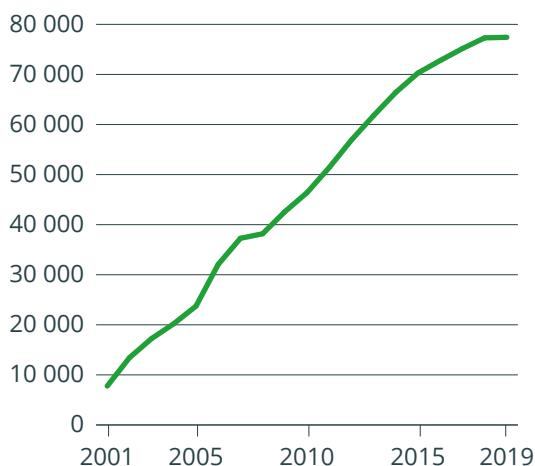
Buying a holiday home abroad has been a growing trend in recent years. In the tax statistics from 2019, just over 77 000 people are registered as owners of property abroad, which is a tenfold increase since 2001. Ninety-one

The figure shows the house price development on existing dwellings. 1992=100



Source: ssb.no/en/bpi and ssb.no/en/kpi

The figure shows the number of people who own property abroad



Source: ssb.no/en/selvangivelse

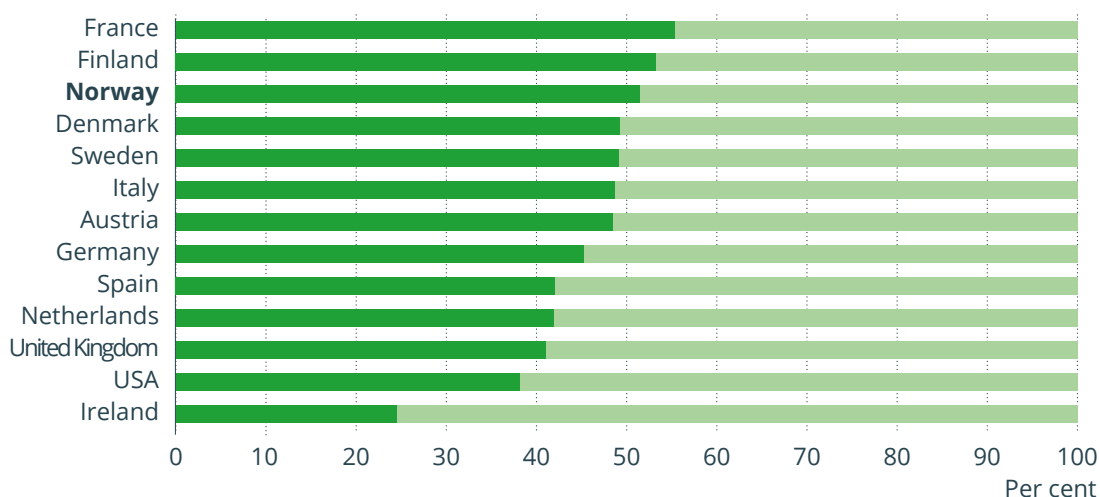
per cent of these own property in Europe, with Spain and Sweden attracting the most buyers, with a 61 per cent share, followed by France and Turkey. Outside Europe, Thailand is the most popular country for buying property.

From cradle to grave



The evolution of the welfare state

The figure shows public expenditure as a percentage of GDP in selected countries. 2019



Source: OECD.

In addition to taking responsibility for the health and education of the population, the primary remit of the welfare state includes the care of children, the elderly and others who are in need of care, as well as the provision of economic security for each individual. The development of the welfare state has meant that the public sector has assumed responsibility for care and welfare services that were previously provided by the family.

The development of the welfare state is reflected in various ways in the statistics, for example in public expenditure as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP). Around 1960, public expenditure accounted for approximately 30 per cent of the GDP. This proportion gradually increased to over 50 per cent in the early 1990s, before falling again, partly due to the high oil revenues and high GDP. In recent years, the proportion

has hovered at almost 50 per cent once again, but a reduced GDP and extensive government spending to support the economy during the pandemic pushed this up to 57 per cent in 2020.

More day care, fewer parents receiving cash benefit

There were just over 5 600 kindergartens in Norway in 2020. More than one-half (53 per cent) of these were private, accounting for 50 per cent of the daycare provision for children.

More than 272 000 children attended kindergarten in 2020, and the coverage rate appears to have stabilised: 93 per cent of all children aged 1–5 are in kindergarten, which is an increase of over 70 percentage points since 1980.

Almost all (97 per cent) of the oldest children (aged 3–5) had a kindergarten place. The coverage rate for the youngest children declined for some years following 1998 when the cash benefit for parents with young children was introduced, but has since increased to 85 per cent.

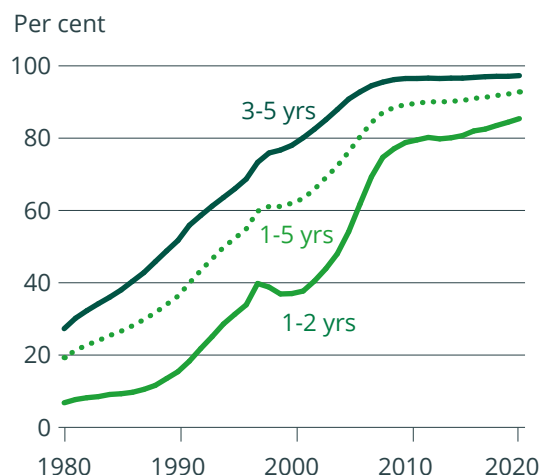
In recent years there has been a clear decline in the number of parents receiving the cash benefit: from over 88 000 in December 2000 to just under 11 000 at the end of December 2020. According to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the reduction over time is partly linked to the expansion of kindergarten places by the local authorities, the end to the cash benefit for two-year-olds in 2012 and the introduction of more stringent regulations on 1 July 2017.

Slightly fewer children subject to child welfare measures

Since 1970, the number of children receiving assistance from the Child Welfare Service each year has more than quadrupled, from 9 000 to 36 800. However, over the past three years, there has been a reduction in terms of

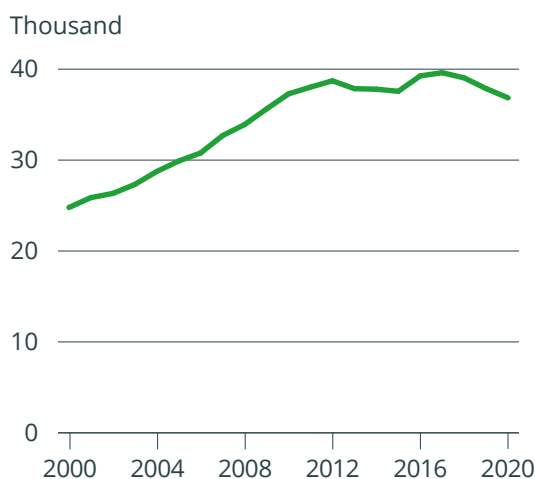
investigations and measures. The number of children who received some form of support in 2020 was 52 900. This is a decrease of 3 per cent from 2019, but still corresponds to almost 4 per cent of all children and young people aged 0–22.

Kindergarten coverage



Source: ssb.no/en/barnehager

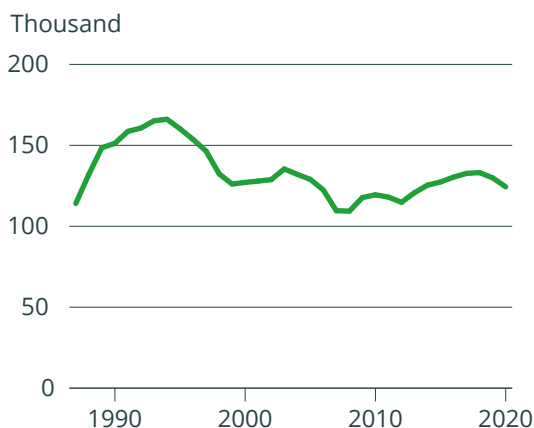
Number of children and young people with child welfare measures per 31. desember



Source: ssb.no/barneverng

Different forms of assistance are provided for these children and young people, such as personal support families, a place in a kindergarten/after school care, support contacts or advice and guidance for the parents. In 2020, almost 40 per cent of the children receiving such assistance were placed outside the home, mostly in foster homes.

Economic social assistance¹. Number of recipients



¹ Figures for 2003–2004 include benefits to refugees and immigrants.

Source: ssb.no/en/soshjelpk

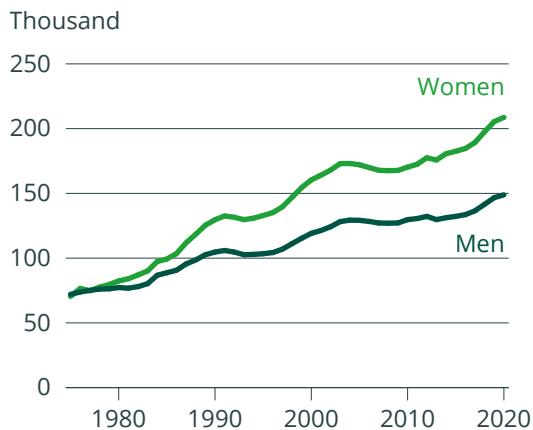
Drop in number of social assistance recipients

The number of social assistance recipients rose steeply in the 1980s and reached a peak of 166 000 in 1994. This figure then declined until 2008, to 109 000. Since then, there has been an increase almost every year, but for the first time since 2012, the number fell again between 2018 and 2019. The decline continued in 2020, and during the course of the year, 124 400 people received financial social assistance. This is a decrease of 4.3 per cent from the previous year, but still constitutes almost 3 per cent of the population aged 18 and over.

In 2020, the average recipient stayed on benefits for five and a half months and the average amount received was NOK 9 964 per month.

The proportion of social assistance recipients is particularly high among young people, single people (especially men) and single parents, but the trend of fewer young recipients and more older recipients continues. Immigrants are also overrepresented, making up 47 per cent in 2020.

Number of disability benefit recipients¹



¹ As from 2004, people with time-limited disability benefits are included.

Source: NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration).

Growing number of disability benefit recipients

In the mid-1970s, around 140 000 people received disability benefit, with men and women equally represented. In the 1980s, this number increased dramatically, especially among women. In the early 1990s, the increase levelled off, and the number was in decline for some years before increasing again after 1995.

At the end of 2020, a total of 357 600 people were receiving disability benefit: 208 700 women and 148 900 men. This represents 10 per cent of the population aged 18–67. Among the recipients up to the age of 30, men outnumber women slightly, but women are in the majority to an increasing extent in each subsequent age group.



Increase in young care service users

Municipal care services include being given a place in an institution (mainly nursing homes for the most elderly) and home-based health and care services for those living at home and in sheltered housing.

The total number of users has steadily increased since the mid-1990s, both as a result of an increase in the population and new services. At the end of 2020, 290 000 people were receiving one or more municipal care services. The greatest increase has been in users of home-based health services. All age groups use these services, and 45 per cent of home-based health service users in 2020 were below the age of 67, compared to 38 per cent in 2010.

Meanwhile, fewer and fewer people are living in institutions, either temporarily or permanently; approximately 41 000 in 2020 compared with 43 500 in 2010. This may be partly due to the general improvement in the elderly population's health, as well as the authorities' focus on providing home-based round-the-clock services for the elderly.

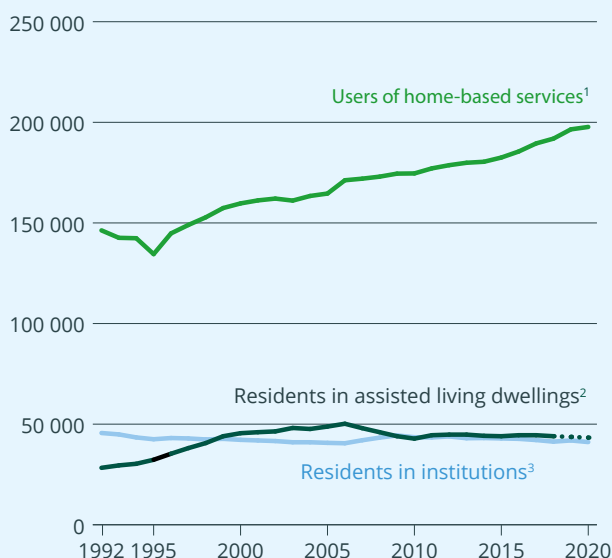
Users of various care services

¹ Includes home-based practical assistance and health services.

² The introduction of a new IPLOS version has led to some erroneous registrations. 2019 figures for 'Sheltered housing residents' have therefore not been published.

³ Applies to nursing homes, care homes, sheltered accommodation for children and respite facilities.

Source: ssb.no/en/pleie



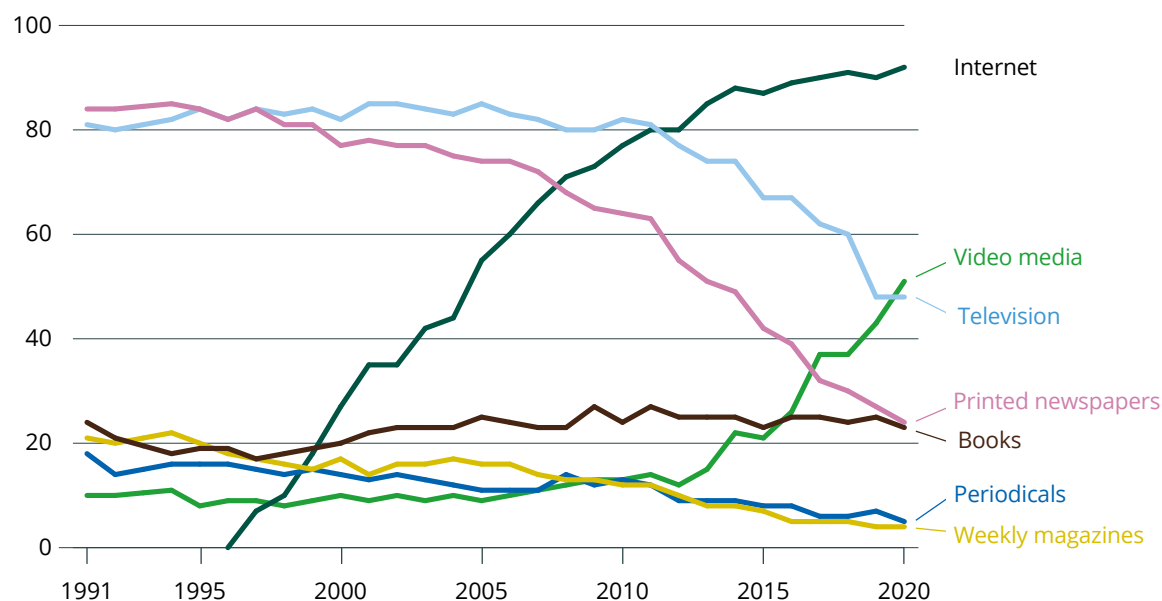
Books and bytes



Screen media taking over

The figure shows the percentage of the population that uses various media on a typical day

Per cent



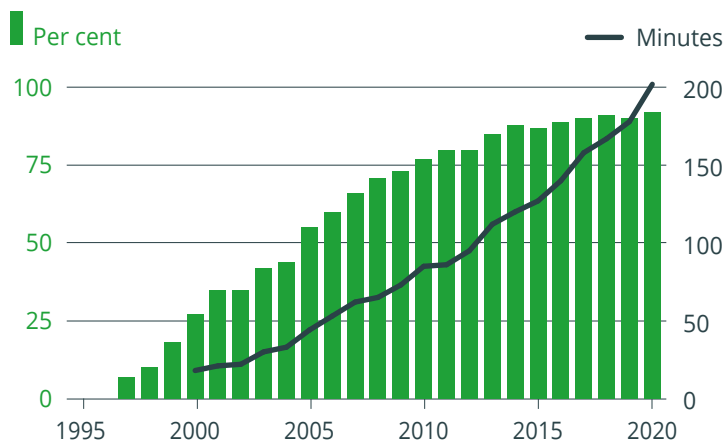
Source: ssb.no/en/medie

There is nothing new about the dominance of screens, and as early as 1991 we were spending almost twice as much time watching TV as reading.

Newspapers and television have been the dominant media in Norway since 1991, when more than four out of five people typically read newspapers and watched TV daily. However, the proportion who read newspapers has fallen, and this trend continued in 2020. In 2020, the number of people using digital media increased, as did the time spent on such activities. The book-reader proportion has, on the other hand, remained relatively unchanged since the 1990s.

The figure shows the percentage of internet users and the population's time spent on this activity on an average day

Source: ssb.no/en/medie



Young men most frequent internet users

Since the mid-1990s, the share of the population using the internet daily has increased from less than 10 per cent to over 90 per cent. Those who use the internet daily spend an average of almost 3 hours and 50 minutes online on a typical day, and men aged 16–24 are the most frequent users, with over 5 hours and 30 minutes on an average day.

Those who used the internet daily in 2020 spent an average of **3 h.50 min.**

Since 2007, when Facebook established itself in Norway, the use of social media has increased sharply. Today, eight out of ten internet users use social media daily. Facebook is still the most popular site, with 63 per cent, followed by Snapchat and Instagram with 47 and 44 per cent respectively.

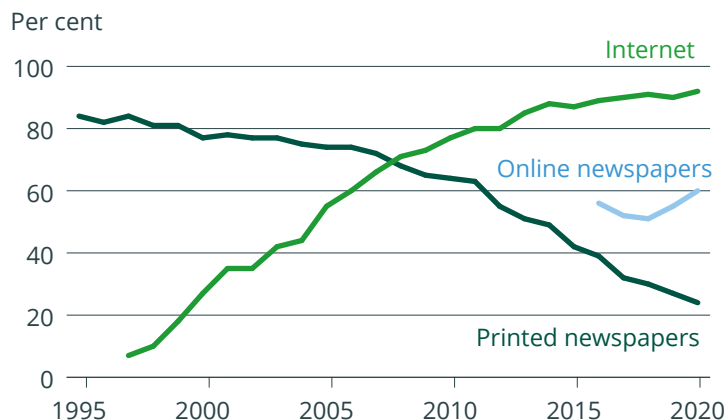
Digital gaming for all ages

Thirty-five per cent of the population take part in digital gaming for an average of 30 minutes every day. Children and young people up to the age of 24 are the most frequent users. The time spent on gaming increased in 2020 among 20–24-year-olds, making them the most prolific users, with average daily use of two hours. However, 15 per cent of the 67–79 age group also report that they take part in digital gaming, mainly via the internet or their mobile phones.

Men are more frequent gamers than women by a large margin. In the age group 16–24 years, men spend almost four times longer on gaming than women. However, in the oldest age group, 67–79 years, the majority of players are women.

The figure shows the percentage of readers of printed newspapers, online newspapers and internet users in the population on an average day

Source: ssb.no/en/medie

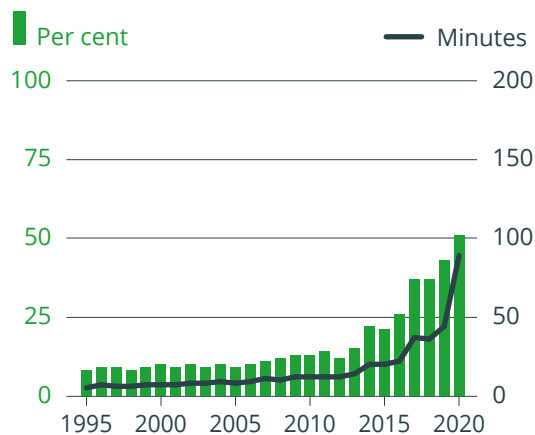


Online news more popular

The circulation of newspapers increased up to about 1990, but has since stagnated and fallen. At the same time, the percentage of daily newspaper readers has fallen from 85 to 24 since the mid-1990s.

However, we have not stopped reading newspapers. In 2020, the population was particularly interested in the news. The combined proportion of people reading printed newspapers, online versions of printed newspapers and online newspapers that are not issued in a printed format, such as *Nettavisen* and *nrk.no*, totalled 77 per cent in 2020. The highest readership is among those aged 45 to 66, with 87 per cent.

The figure shows the percentage of the population who used video media and the time they spent on a typical day.



Source: ssb.no/en/medie

Half of the population no longer watch television

The proportion of television viewers remained relatively stable throughout the 1990s and 2000s at around 80 per cent, while the amount of time spent watching TV increased. Since 2011, both the percentage of viewers and the time spent in front of the screen have fallen every year, and in 2020, less than half the population watched TV. The proportion of viewers who watched live news programmes increased from the year before. The elderly (aged 67–79) are the most avid television viewers, 75 per cent of whom watched TV on a typical day in 2020.

The percentage using video media, which includes streaming services, has seen a marked increase over several years, and an even greater increase was seen in 2020. Fifty-one per cent of the population watched video or film media on a typical day in 2020, and viewing time increased from 1 hour and 45 minutes in 2019 to almost 2 hours in 2020.

Streaming is the most common way to watch film and video content, and seven out of ten have access to at least one paid streaming service. Adolescents and young adults are the most prolific users, and 82 per cent of those age 16–24 watched streamed content on a typical day in 2020.

Radio for the elderly, mobile phones for the young

From 1991 to 2009, the proportion of daily radio listeners dropped from 71 to 53 per cent. After a slight upturn in popularity in 2014, the proportion of radio listeners fell again, and in 2020 was 49 per cent. Listeners primarily tune in to hear pop music and news programmes, and from 2019 to 2020 there was a slight increase in the number listening to the news on the radio.

The largest proportion of listeners is found in the age group 67–79, with 64 per cent. This group also spends the most time listening to the radio, typically tuning in for an average of more than three hours each day.

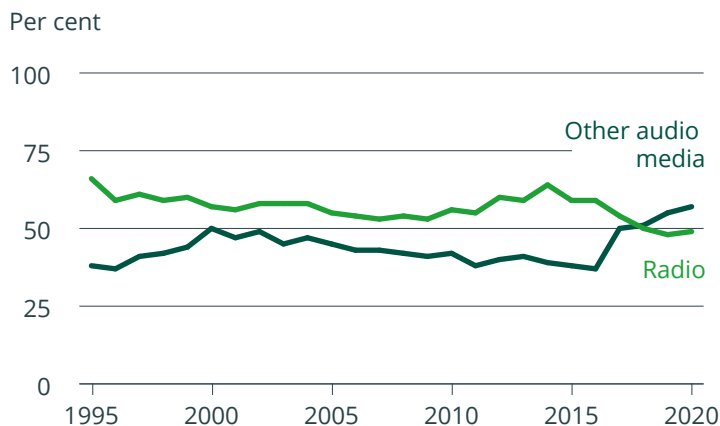
The proportion that listens to other media, such as streamed music, podcasts and CDs, is increasing. Fifty-seven per cent listened to audio media on an average day in 2020. The average listening time for audio media was 1 hour and 45 minutes, which is 10 minutes more than in 2019. CDs dominated the audio market for a long time, but their popularity has waned significantly in recent years. Almost nine out of ten listeners now use their mobile phone for audio media.

Young adults spend the most time using audio media. The 20–24-year-olds who use audio media listen for an average of 2 hours and 30 minutes on a typical day, and music is the most popular media with this age group.

Twenty-one per cent of people who used audio media in 2020 listened to podcasts. The typical podcast listener has a high level of education and is between 25 and 44 years old.

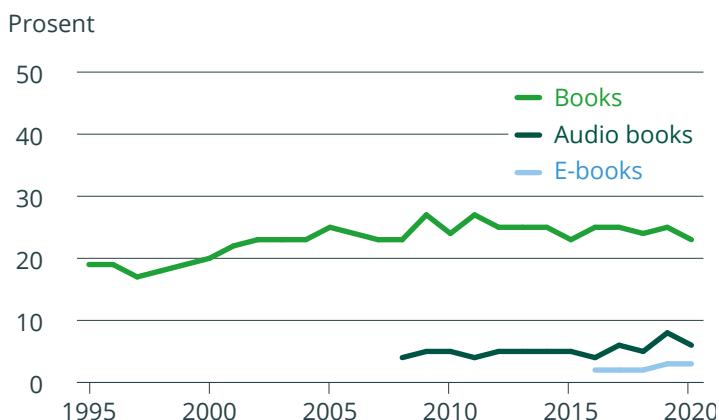
The figure shows the percentage of the population who listen to radio and other audio media on an average day.

Source: ssb.no/en/medie



The figure shows the percentage of the population who read books, e-books and audio books on an average day.

Source: ssb.no/en/medie



1 in 4
read books for leisure
on an average day

More women than men read books

The trend for reading books for leisure remains stable. Following a slight decrease in the 1990s, the percentage who read books during the course of a day increased, and in recent years has been around 25 per cent. The proportion of book readers is higher among women than men, with 28 and 18 per cent respectively in 2020, compared to 28 and 19 per cent in 1991. In the last year, the proportion of young women (aged 16–24) who read printed books has fallen sharply, from 27 to 14 per cent.

Literature is the most popular genre for both sexes, but men are more likely to read factual prose on topics such as society, politics and history. The proportion of book readers is highest in the oldest and the youngest age groups. The average time spent reading books is typically 58 minutes daily.

Only 3 per cent read an e-book on an average day in 2020, a share that has remained stable for a number of years. Six per cent have listened to an audio book.

Few read weekly magazines or comics

The proportion of readers of weekly magazines was 21 per cent in 1991, but now only 5 per cent of the population read weekly magazines (printed and online versions) on a typical day. Family magazines, such as *Hjemmet* and *Norsk ukeblad*, are the most popular.

Comics are most popular with children, and particularly boys. Three per cent read comics on a typical day, while the proportion for children aged 9–15 is 12 per cent. In 1991, the proportion for this age group was 52 per cent. The most popular comic is, and always has been, *Donald Duck*.

Cinema attendance remains stable

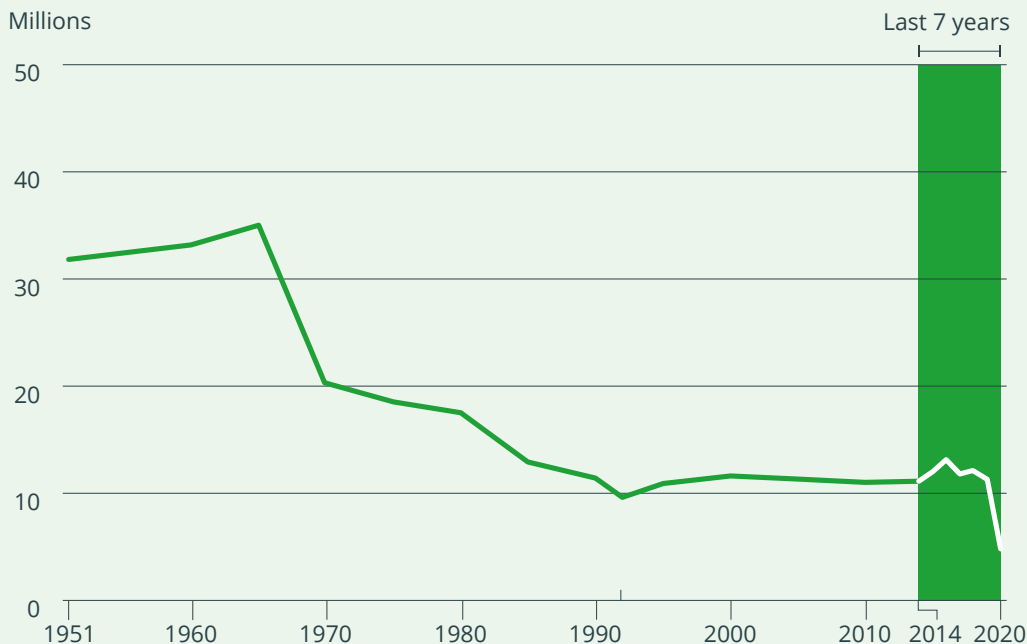
The 1950s were the golden age of cinema in Norway and Europe as a whole. Attendance figures reached approximately 35 million in 1960, equal to nearly ten cinema visits per inhabitant.

In the early 1960s, television was introduced in Norway, and by 1970 cinema attendance had nearly halved, followed by a slight decline during the 1970s. Another decline followed in the 1980s, with attendance bottoming out in 1992 at 9.6 million visits. Cinema attendance has hovered between 11 and 13 million in recent years. However, in 2020, the year of the pandemic, the number of cinema visits was more than halved, from 11.3 million in 2019 to 4.8 million, which is the lowest ever recorded.

Before the pandemic, cinema attendance figures had been stable for a number of years, and two shifts are apparent: between 2004 and 2019 the proportion of people who went to the cinema in a 12-month period increased from 70 per cent to 75 per cent, while the average number of cinema visits has been declining throughout this century, from just over four to three in 2019. Young people in particular are now visiting the cinema less frequently, but still go more often than any other group.

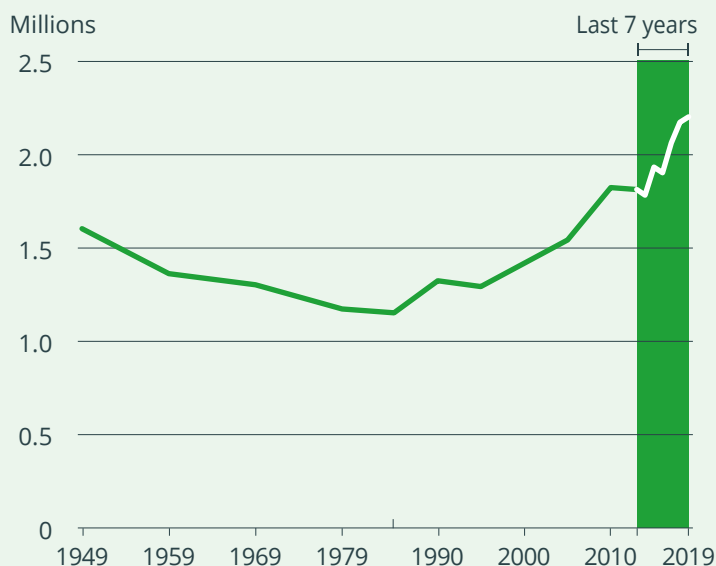
The number of cinema visits

Source: ssb.no/kultur_kostra



Number attending theatres and the opera/ballet

Source: <https://www.ssb.no/en/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/culture-statistics-2019>



More people go to the opera and concerts

Theatre, ballet and opera attendance were in decline for a long time. Starting from the mid-1980s, however, attendance rates increased, and following a stagnation around 1990 rose again to just over 2 million in 2019. Half of the population report having been to the theatre in the course of a year, while 8 per cent went to the opera and 14 per cent watched a ballet in the year before the pandemic. The figures for 2020 will not be available until the autumn, but they are expected to show a substantial decline due to the impact of infection control measures and lockdown.

The proportion of people who went to a concert in a 12-month period increased significantly in the period from 1991 to 2008, from 48 to 62 per cent. This percentage has since remained stable.

Approximately 40 per cent of the population had visited an art exhibition and/or a museum in the years prior to the pandemic. In 2019, the figure was 10.4 million, which fell to 5.1 million in 2020.

Football attracts most spectators

The proportion who attends sports events during the year has remained stable between 50 and 60 per cent for a number of years. The sport that attracts most spectators is football, followed by handball. Most sports enjoy relatively stable numbers of spectators, although skiing reached an unusually high number in 1994, most likely because of the staging of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer.



Libraries offer more than books

Book loans from public libraries increased throughout the entire post-war period until the early 1990s: from 3.3 million loans around 1945 to more than 20 million. In the subsequent period, loans have decreased to somewhat less than 17 million in 2016. Since only first-time loans and not renewals are included in the statistics now, the latest figures are not comparable with figures from 2016 and earlier. In 2020, the number of first-time loans was 9.7 million, which is a decrease from the 12.2 million in 2019. First-time loans of other media, such as music, audio books and DVDs, totalled 1.6 million in 2020, compared with 2.7 million the year before.

Nearly one-half of the population visits a public library in the course of a normal year, and many also participate in various arrangements held in libraries. In 2019, there were almost 64 000 such arrangements, with a total of 1.7 million participants. The figures were almost halved in 2020, to approximately 30 000 arrangements and 650 000 participants.

Mostly for women – and the well educated

More women than men attend traditional cultural events. Women more often go to theatre, ballet and dance performances, art exhibitions and public libraries. Men, on the other hand, far more frequently attend various sports events. Men and women go to the cinema and cultural festivals, museums, concerts and opera/operetta performances in equal numbers.

In addition to the gender disparities, the most striking divergence is found between groups with different levels of education: people with a higher education participate far more frequently in most cultural activities. This divergence is especially evident for 'niche' cultural events such as art exhibitions, theatre, ballet and opera.

Children aged 9–15 are the most frequent users of libraries, and opera is most popular among the oldest age group (67–79 years). Cinemas and sporting events are most attended by the under 45s, while people of all ages visit museums and attend concerts.

Percentage of people aged 9–79 who visited various cultural institutions last year. Per cent

	1991	1994	1997	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
Cinemas	58	61	60	65	68	70	67	72
Sporting events	57	59	54	57	55	56	55	55
Public libraries	49	51	52	52	54	51	49	46
Museums	41	45	44	45	42	43	41	44
Theater/musicals/revues	44	45	44	50	49	53	45	50
Art exhibitions	41	44	43	44	42	42	38	36
Concerts	48	55	57	58	61	62	61	62
Ballet/dance	8	9	8	11	12	13	14	14
Operas/operettas	5	5	6	6	5	7	8	8
Cultural festivals	28	32	31	32

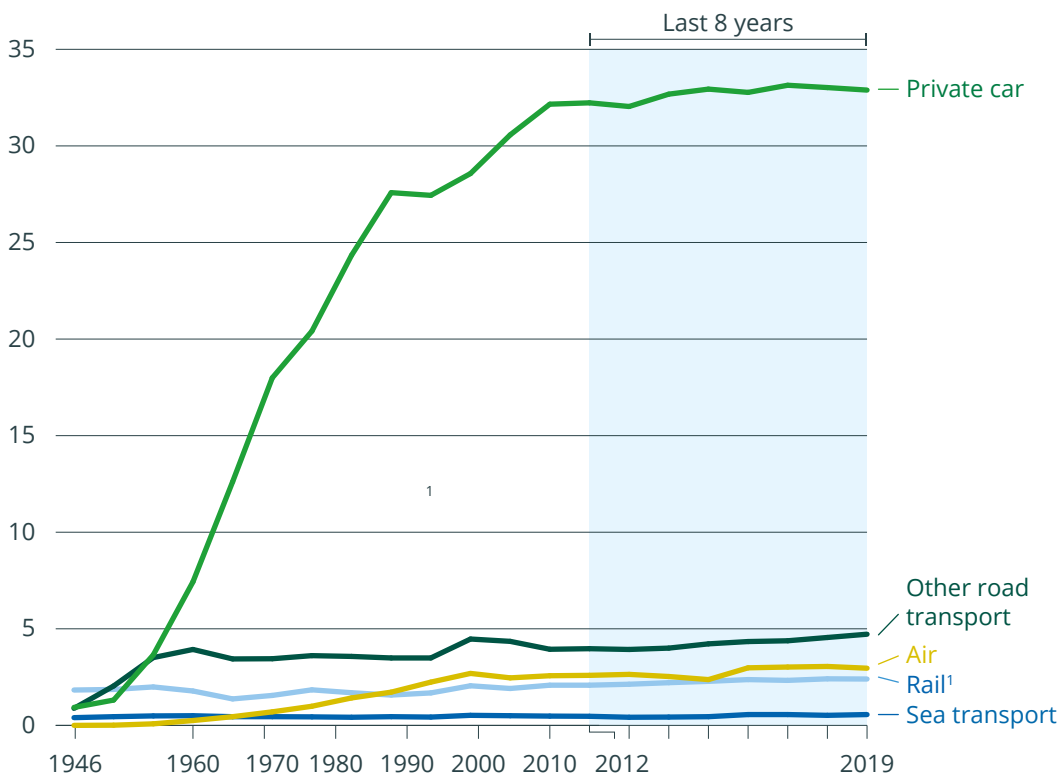
Source: ssb.no/en/kulturbar

On the road



Mile after mile...

The figure shows domestic passenger transport. Passenger kilometres per inhabitant per day



¹ Incl. tramways/suburban railways.

Source: ssb.no/en/transpinn

In 1946, Norwegians travelled an average of 4 km per day within Norway and almost half of the journey (1.8 km) was by rail. Today we travel ten times farther (44 km), and 76 per cent of all domestic travel is undertaken by car. The main increase is in the use of private cars and planes. Figures for rail and sea transport have remained more or less the same for the past 70 years.

...bumper to bumper

The rationing of cars in Norway that was introduced after World War II was abolished in 1960, and by the end of that year, 338 000 vehicles (cars, vans, lorries and buses) were registered in Norway. The car fleet continued to grow up until 1987, when there were 1.9 million vehicles on the road, and this was followed by a few years of little or no growth. Since the second half of the 1990s, there has again been steady growth. The number of vehicles (including vans, lorries and buses) in Norway at the end of 2020 was 3.4 million, of which 2.8 million were private cars.

Car density was 521 private cars per 1 000 inhabitants, and was highest in Innlandet (619) and Viken (563), and lowest in Oslo (432) and Vestland (475). According to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration's survey from 2019 on travel behaviour, 87 per cent of the population lived in a household with access to a car, while 43 per cent had access to two or more cars. The proportion of households in Oslo that do not have access to a car has increased from 32 to 37 per cent in five years.

In Bergen, the figure is 24 per cent, in Trondheim 23 per cent, and in Stavanger only 15 per cent of households do not have access to the use of a car.

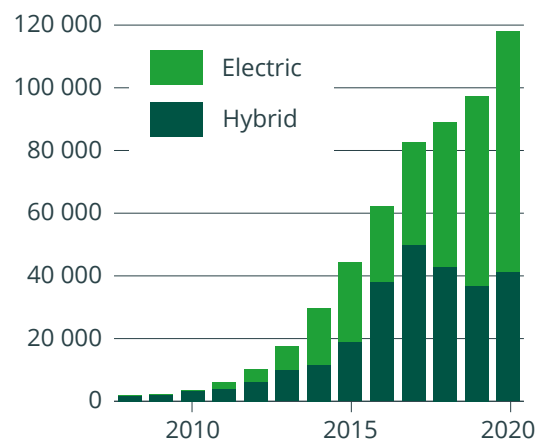
Petrol was the most commonly used fuel for a long time, but since 2007, more diesel has been sold than petrol every year. In 2020, diesel accounted for 75 per cent of total fuel sales, but both petrol and diesel sales have fallen in recent years.

Meanwhile, sales of electric and hybrid cars have soared in recent years, and in 2020 accounted for more than 83 per cent of all newly registered private cars. By the end of 2020, electric and hybrid cars constituted 22 per cent of the car fleet.

On two wheels

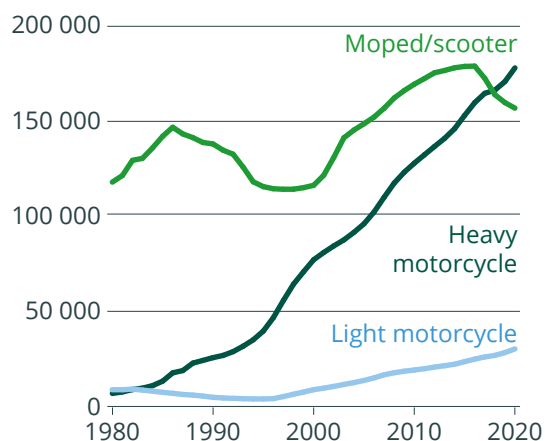
It is not only the number of cars that has grown; two-wheeled vehicles were also on the rise for a while. Sales reached an initial peak in the mid-1980s and then levelled out. Meanwhile, the number of heavy motorcycles rose as mopeds became less popular.

Newly registered electric and hybrid cars¹



¹ Private cars excluding used imported vehicles.
Source: OFV (Opplysningsrådet for Veitrafikken).

Number of two-wheeled vehicles



Source: ssb.no/en/bilreg

However, moped sales have seen an upsurge since the turn of the millennium, except for a slight decline in the last four years. Now it is mainly scooters that are taking the place of traditional mopeds.

Electric bicycles, electric scooters and personal transporters also seem to have made their mark. In 2020, around 194 200 such items were imported to Norway, which is an increase of 8 per cent from the year before.

The price of mobility

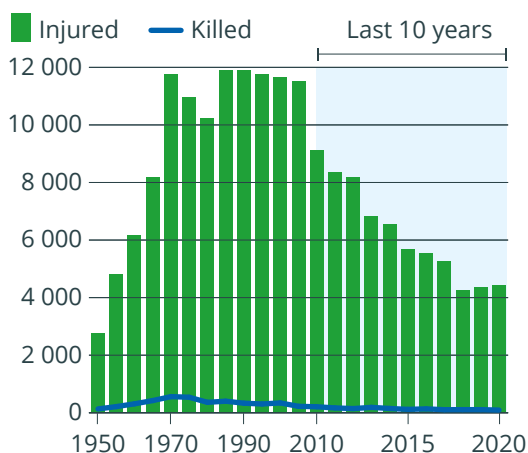
There is a price to pay for increased mobility. Since 1940, more than 23 000 people have died on Norwegian roads. The number of fatal traffic accidents increased after World War II, reaching a peak at the beginning of the 1970s when almost 500 people were killed annually. Since then, there has been a downward trend in the number of fatalities. In 2020, a total of 93 people died in road accidents, which is the lowest figure since 1947. As was the case 70 years ago, men have made up a large majority (81 per cent) of those killed in recent times.

The number of people injured showed a similar increase up to around 1970. However, the injury figures did not fall to the same extent as the number of fatalities, and for a long time remained fairly stable at around 11 000–12 000 per year. However, in recent years, the number of injuries has fallen to less than half, and in 2020, 4 436 people were injured in traffic accidents.

East and south worst

A total of 2 or fewer people per 100 000 inhabitants have been killed on Norwegian roads in the last three years, which makes Norway the safest country in Europe for road users. At the other end of the scale is Romania, with almost 9 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants.

Number killed or injured in road accidents



Source: ssb.no/en/vtu

Road fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in selected European countries. 2020

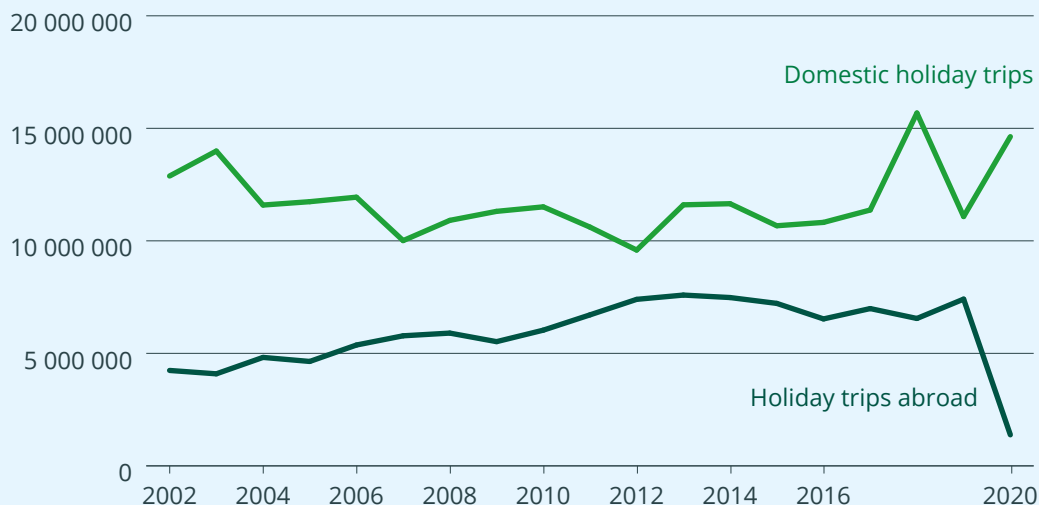
Romania	8.5
Latvia	7.3
Poland	6.6
Croatia	5.8
Greece	5.4
Portugal	4.7
Italy	4.0
Finland	4.0
France	3.9
Germany	3.3
Spain	2.9
Denmark	2.7
United Kingdom	2.4
Sweden	2.0
Norway	1.7

Source: ETSC (European Transport Safety Council).

In Europe¹, 21 600 people lost their lives in traffic in 2020. This is a decrease of 16 per cent from the previous year, and the largest annual

decrease on record. Less traffic as a result of lockdown during the pandemic is assumed to be the main reason for the decline.

Number of holiday trips



Source: ssb.no/en/reise

'Staycations' more popular

Since the turn of the millennium, the total number of trips (with at least one overnight stay) we take in a year has remained relatively stable; between 21 and 24 million. The exceptions were 2018, when we made as many as 27 million trips, and 2020 when the number dropped to 18.3 million. The decline is mainly due to reduced travel activity due to the infection control measures introduced in mid-March, such as travel restrictions and quarantine. Holiday trips abroad and business trips experienced the greatest decline. In 2020, the latter accounted for just over 12 per cent of all travel, compared with almost 25 per cent in 2019.

The number of holidays abroad started to increase considerably in the 2000s, peaking at 7.6 million trips in 2013. Since then, the figure remained stable, between 6.5 and 7.5 million, before falling to 1.4 million in 2020. The most popular holiday destinations have long been Sweden and Spain, and this continued to be the case in 2020, but Denmark is catching up, and in recent years has been almost as popular as Spain.

Meanwhile, the number of domestic holidays fell slightly, but has increased in recent years and reached a record high of 15.7 million in 2018. In 2020, as many as 88 per cent of all holiday trips were within Norway, but the 14.6 million trips taken were not a record. Twice as many as the year before stayed at home during the holidays.

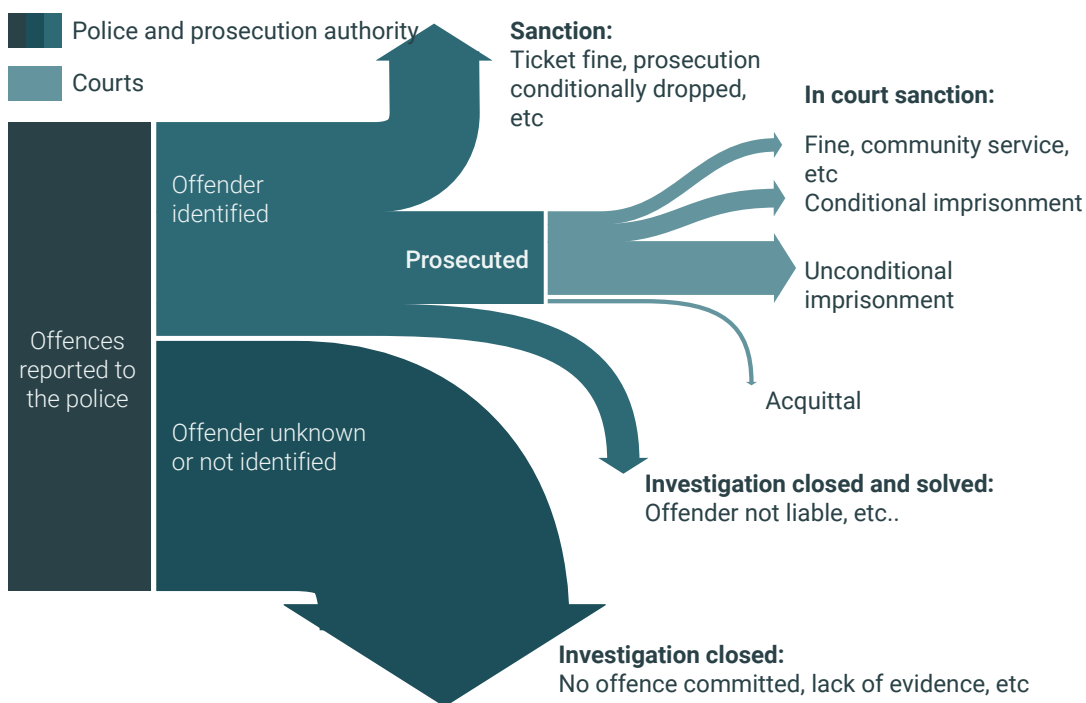
¹ The EU plus Norway, the United Kingdom, Serbia, Switzerland and Israel.

The arm of the law



From reported crime to punishment

The illustration is a schematic presentation of the path of offences through the legal system

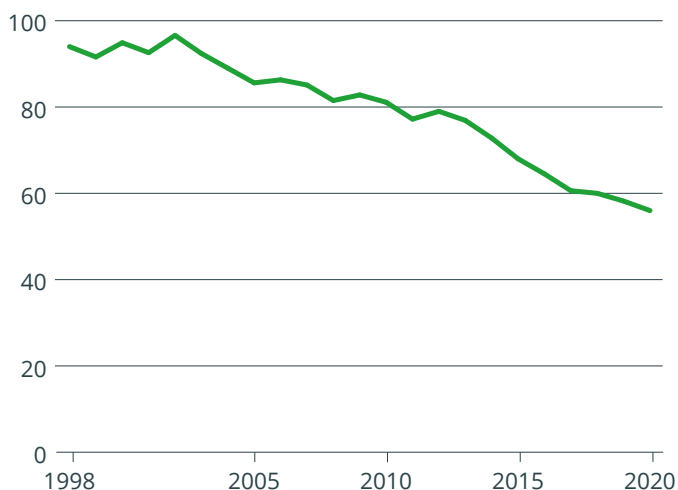


Source: <https://www.ssb.no/en/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/artikler-og-publikasjoner/from-abuse-to-sanction>

If we track all offences reported to the police through the legal system, we can check their status in later years. Charges are dropped for a small number of offences because no criminal offence is found to have taken place. Around 50 per cent of all offences that are fully investigated and closed are left unsolved. Of the offences that are solved, the majority are settled through fines or a decision is made not to prosecute. Around

Offences reported per 1 000 population

Source: ssb.no/en/lovbrudda



one-fifth of offences result in a court prosecution, and almost all of these result in penal sanctions. Just over 10 per cent of offenders receive an unconditional prison sentence.

An increase followed by a decline

In a longer-term perspective, the number of offences reported has increased sharply. The number of crimes investigated has increased around tenfold since the end of the 1950s, but if we also consider population growth during this period, the increase is fivefold.

On the whole, registered crime has seen a marked fall since 2000, and we would perhaps have to go back more than 30 years to find a period with a lower crime rate than today.

Fewer reported offences

After an increase in the 1980s and 1990s, the number of offences reported peaked in 2002 at 437 300. Since then, the number has fallen to 300 600 in 2020. This is a decrease of 3 per cent from the year before. The decline is mainly due to a drop in the number of thefts, but societal changes and various restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past year have also impacted on other types of crime. For example, there were fewer public order and integrity violations, but more reported cases of traffic offences and criminal damage.

Still many thefts, but fewer homes and cars broken into

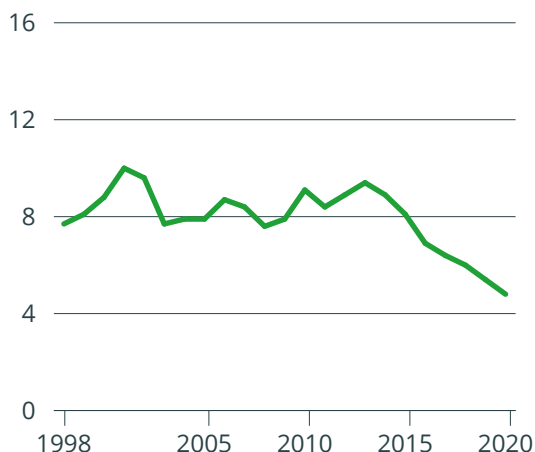
Although the number of property thefts fell by around 8 per cent from 2019 to 2020, they still account for almost 30 per cent of all offences reported. However, this group has also seen the greatest decline over time, and car thefts and thefts from private homes and cars have shown a particularly marked decrease. The lower figure in 2020 was mainly due to the drop in thefts from public places, particularly from private individuals, and must be viewed in the context of the restricted movements of the population during the pandemic.

Almost 30 %
of all offences reported are property
thefts

Less drugs in the last few years

Since the introduction of the term 'drugs' to the crime statistics at the end of the 1960s, the number of such crimes has soared. However, since the peak year of 2013, with almost 47 300 drugs offences reported, the number has declined by 45 per cent, to 25 800 in 2020. Aggravated narcotic offences under the General Civil Penal Code accounted for almost 4 per cent of the total number of drug-related crimes, while less serious violations under the Act relating to medicines etc. (use and minor possession) fell to 48 per cent.

The figure shows narcotic offences reported per 1 000 population



Source: ssb.no/en/lovbrudda

No increase in violent crimes, but more sexual offences

Violence and maltreatment account for almost 12 per cent of all offences reported to the police, and in 2020 amounted to 37 100 cases. It is still the less serious crimes, i.e. threats and common assault, that dominate. In a survey about victimisation and fear of crime, 4.7 per cent of the population said in 2018 that they had been the victim of violence or threats of violence during the past year. This proportion is considerably lower for young men and women than it was 10–20 years ago.

In the period from 1960 to the mid-1980s, nearly 1 000 sexual offences were reported annually. Since then, the registered number has increased considerably for most types of sexual offences, and in 2020 almost 6 900 sexual offences were reported.

Some offences are more likely to be solved than others

Whether offences are solved or not varies. The categories of offences with the highest clearance rates are traffic offences and drug and alcohol offences, with 81 and 80 per cent respectively in 2019. Public order and integrity violations also have high clearance rates, with 69 per cent in 2019.

Criminal damage and property theft have the lowest clearance rates, with 21 and 19 per cent respectively. However, among the more specific offences, there is a relatively large disparity in the proportions that are solved or not. For example, 69 per cent of all petty theft from shops and other retail outlets were solved, while the corresponding figure for bicycle thefts was just 2 per cent.

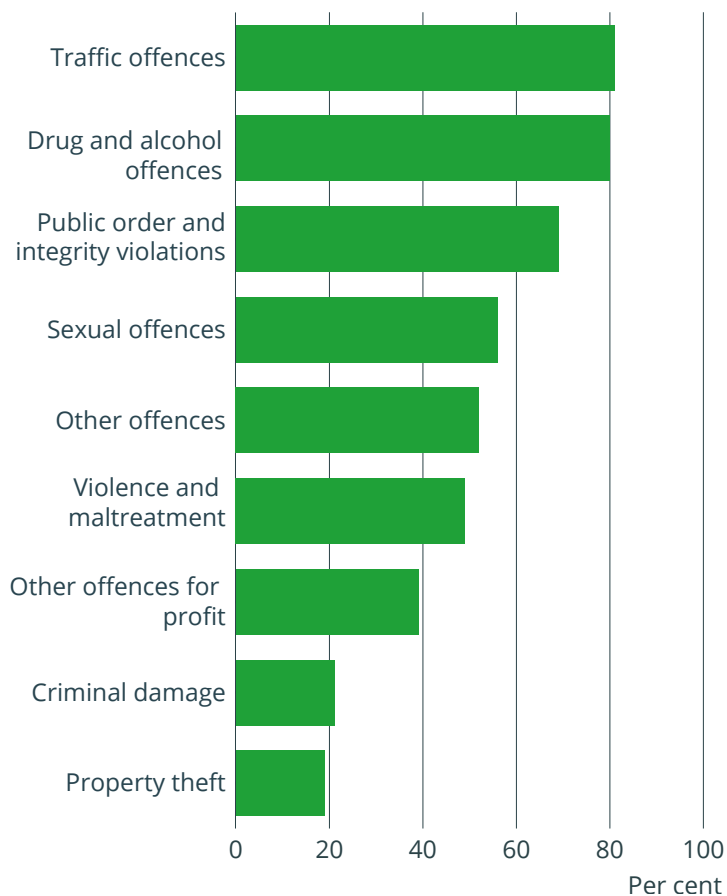
Few female perpetrators

The number of young people being charged with offences has fallen over time. Taking into account changes in the population, the number of persons charged under the age of 30 has fallen by almost one-third in the period 2009–2019. However, young people between the ages of 18 and 21 still have the highest rate. In 2019, approximately 6 per cent of all men in this age group were charged with one or more offences. The corresponding share for their female counterparts was around 1 per cent.

Women account for just 16 per cent of people charged with criminal offences. However, the proportion of women who commit theft is 35 per cent, and the figure is highest for petty theft from shops, at 44 per cent.

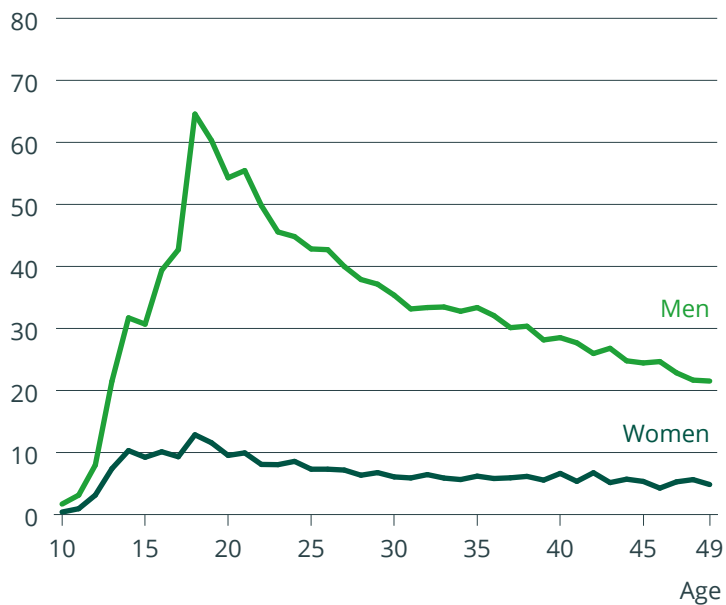
Percentage of offences solved. 2019

Source: ssb.no/en/lovbrudde



Persons charged with offences, by age. Per 1 000 population. 2019

Source: ssb.no/en/lovbrudde

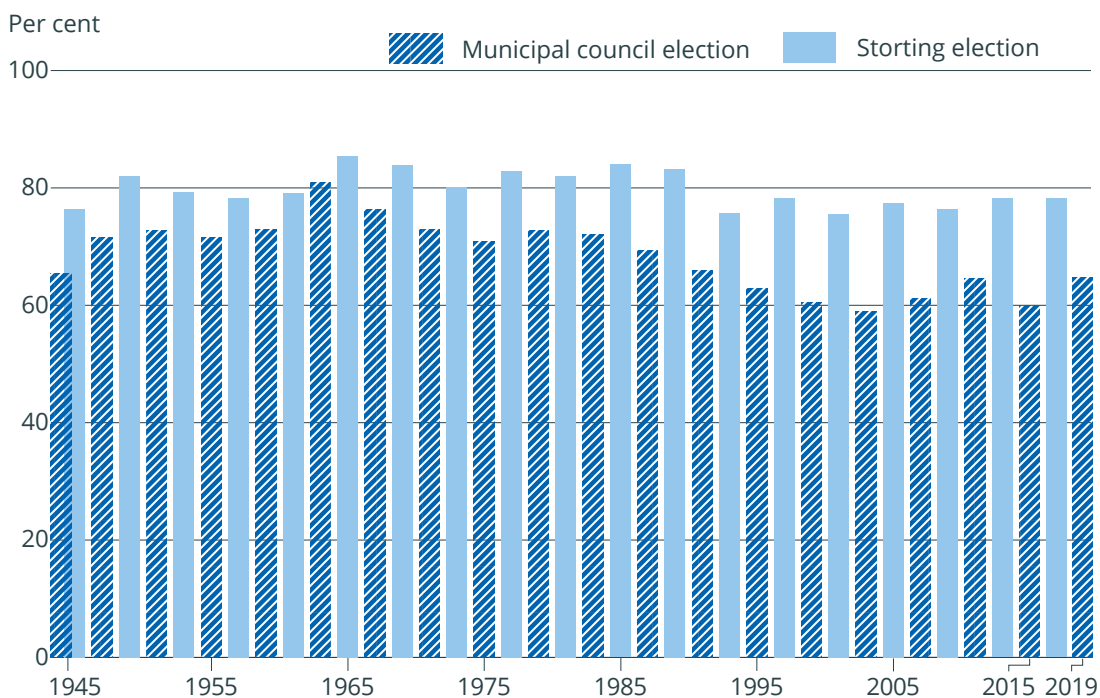


Promises, promises



Rise in local elections turnout

The figure shows the electoral turnout for Storting elections and municipal council elections



Source: ssb.no/en/stortingsvalg
and ssb.no/en/valgdeltakelse

The electoral turnout for municipal council elections has long been in decline. In 2003, barely six out of ten eligible voters cast their vote, compared with more than eight out of ten in 1963. For the elections in 2007 and 2011, voter participation increased slightly, before dropping to 60 per cent again in 2015. In 2019, however, voter turnout increased again, to 65 per cent, and also at the county council elections that year, a large percentage of the electorate decided to exercise their right to vote, resulting in a turnout of 61 per cent, compared to 56 per cent in 2015. The under 30s had a particularly strong turnout.

Participation in the Storting (parliamentary) elections peaked in 1965, when 85 per cent of eligible voters cast their vote. This figure fell to 76 per cent in 2001, but has since increased to 78 per cent in 2017.

At the Sameting (Sámi parliament) election the same year, the participation rate was 70 per cent. Among Norwegian citizens with an immigrant background, the participation rate at the Storting election was 55 per cent.

Every year, a varying number of local referendums are held on different themes, from one in 2020 to 204 in 2016. In that year, a record number of referendums were held in connection with the reform of the municipalities. Since 1970, almost 1 000 referendums have been held, and voter participation has varied from less than 10 per cent to more than 90 per cent.

Voter turnout rates vary, but it would seem that the peak was reached in the 1960s. The apparent waning interest in party politics is confirmed by figures showing that the proportion of people who are members of a political party has fallen. From 1983 to 2014, the percentage more than halved – from 17 to 7 per cent – and has remained low despite increasing to 8 per cent in 2020.

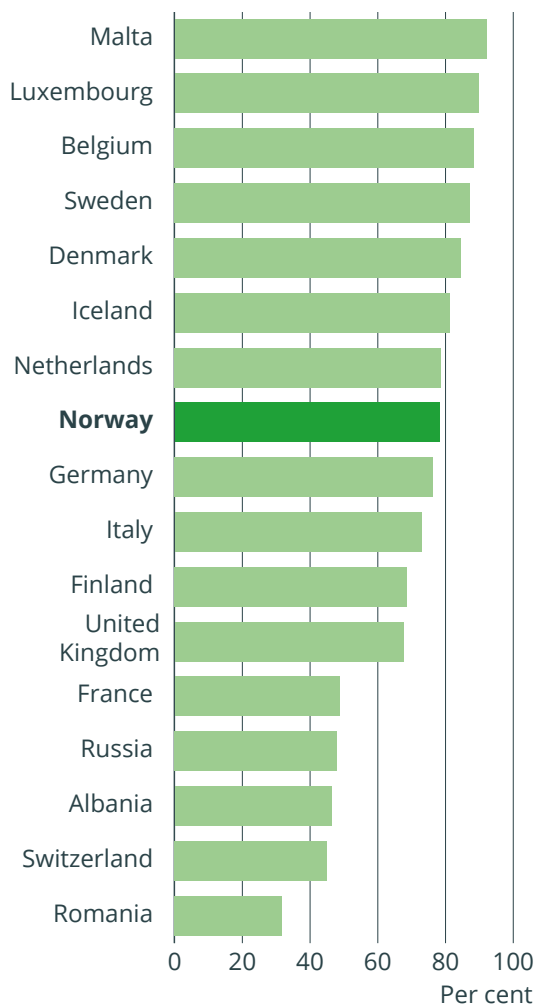
Relatively higher voter turnout in Norway

Participation in Norwegian parliamentary elections is not particularly high in a Nordic context. Our Nordic neighbours Sweden, Denmark and Iceland all have a higher election turnout than us.

In a European context, however, Norway is in the top ten in terms of voter participation. The highest voter participation can be found in Malta, with 92 per cent, and in Luxembourg and Belgium, where voting is mandatory, with

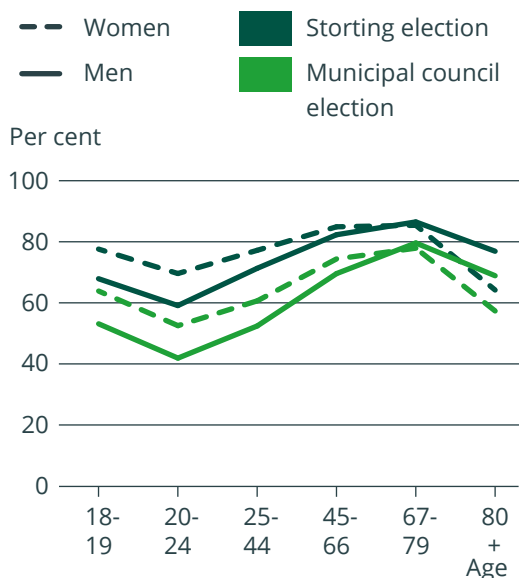
about 90 per cent. The lowest voter participation rates are found in Romania, with 32 per cent, and the rate is also below 50 per cent for Switzerland, Russia and France.

General election turnout in selected European countries. Last election



Source: IDEA (The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance).

Electoral turnout. The Storting election 2017 and Municipal council election 2019



Source: ssb.no/en/valgdelaktelse

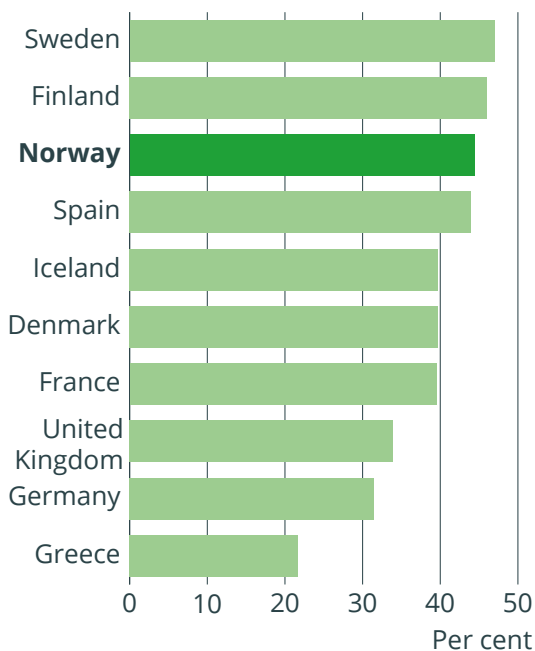
Increased voter turnout among young people

Despite an increase in voter turnout for first and second-time voters in 2013 and 2017, and also in the local elections in 2019, the participation rate is still much lower than that of older voters. From the age of 26, voter turnout increases with age and then falls dramatically after 80.

Women vote more frequently than men

Traditionally, men are more likely to vote than women, and in the first elections after World War II the participation rate for men was 6–7 percentage points higher than for women. This disparity had evened out by the end of the 1980s, and since then the voter turnout for women has been slightly higher than for men. Young women in particular have higher participation rates, while the situation is reversed among the oldest group.

Percentage of women in the national assemblies of selected countries per 1 April 2021



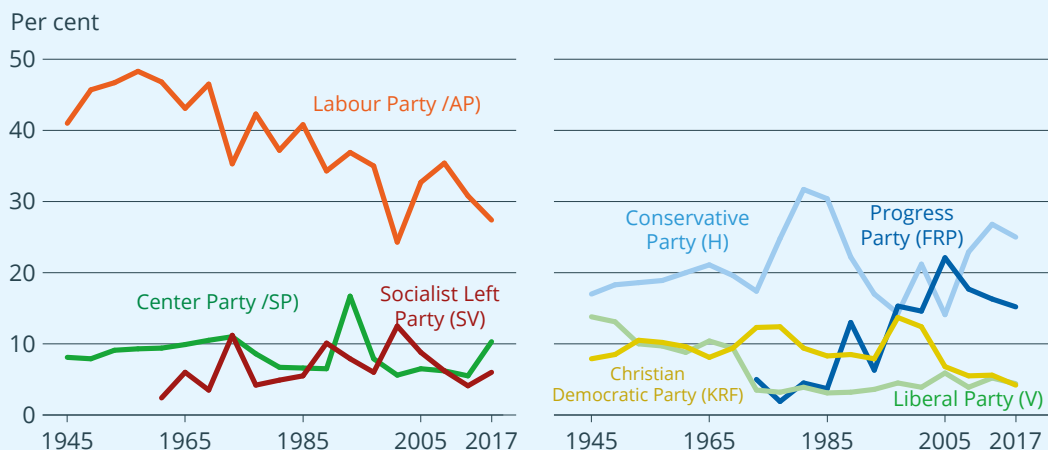
Source: IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union).

More women – in the Storting and on municipal councils

The proportion of women in the Storting and on municipal councils has risen sharply since the beginning of the 1970s. In recent years, the proportion of women in the Storting has been around 40 per cent, while for municipal councils the share is still slightly lower. In the Storting, the proportion of women is highest in the Centre Party, at 53 per cent, followed by 49 per cent for the Labour Party, 44 per cent for the Conservative Party, 36 per cent for the Socialist Left Party, 26 per cent for the Progress Party, 25 per cent for the Christian Democratic Party and 13 per cent for the Liberal Party. The two parties with just one representative each – the Red Party and the Green Party – are not statistically significant in this context.

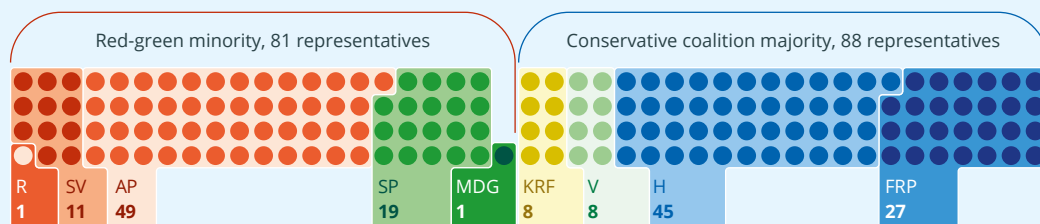
Compared with other European countries, Norway is high up on the list. Only in Sweden and Finland do we find a higher proportion of female members in legislative assemblies.

Percentage of votes cast for the main parties at the Storting elections



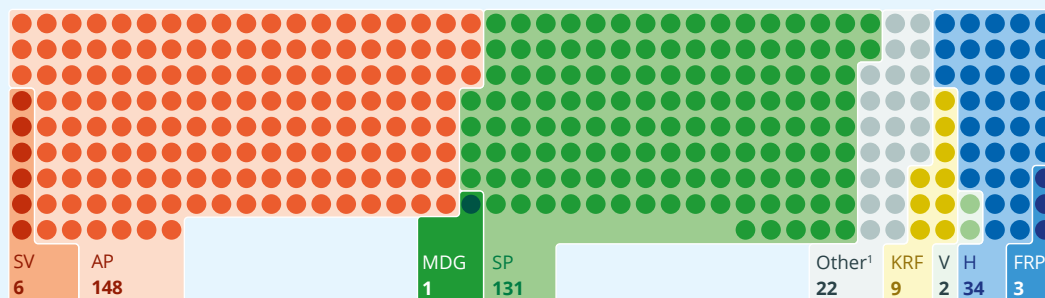
Source: ssb.no/en/stortingsvalg

Storting election 2017. Elected representatives per party



Source: ssb.no/en/stortingsvalg

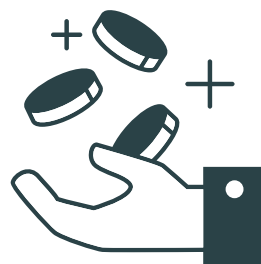
Municipal elections 2019. No. of mayors per party



¹Local lists and joint lists

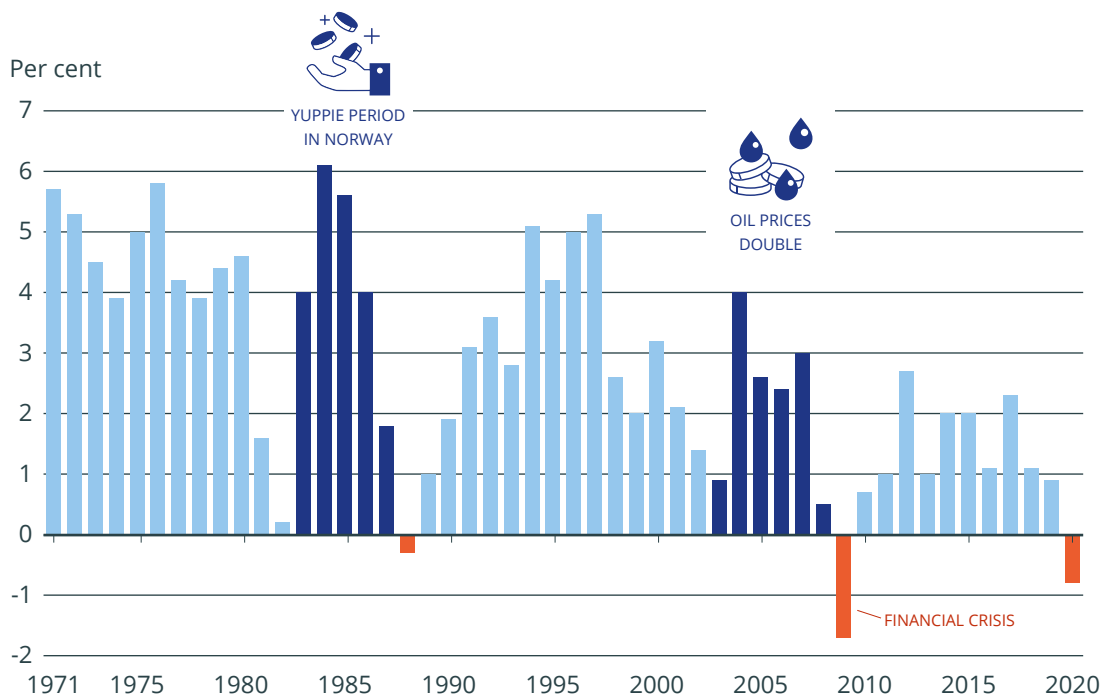
Source: ssb.no/en/kommvalgform

Growth and prosperity



GDP is an indicator of the economy

The figure shows gross domestic product (GDP) 1971-2020. Annual percentage change in volume



Source: ssb.no/en/knr

The gross domestic product (GDP) is an important measure of the state and development of a country's economy. GDP is equal to the sum of all goods and services produced in a country in a year, minus the goods and services that are used during production.

In 2020, Norway's GDP was NOK 3 413 billion, which is a clear fall from NOK 3 568 billion in 2019.

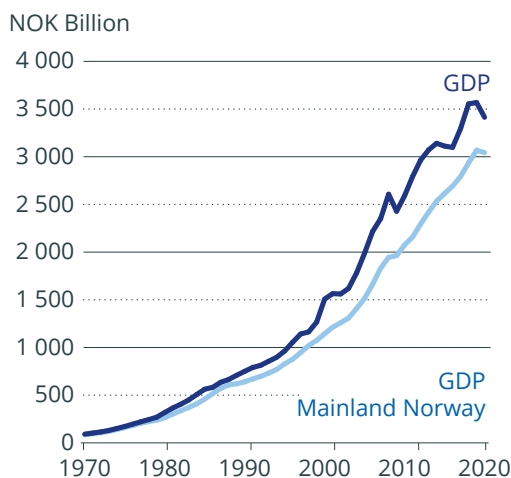
Because of the importance of the oil sector to the Norwegian economy, it is also common to calculate the GDP for mainland Norway, which includes production from all industries in Norway, excluding oil and gas extraction, pipeline transport and foreign shipping.

Part of the increase in GDP and the GDP for mainland Norway is due to general inflation. The consumer price index (CPI) shows that since 1970, prices for goods and services have grown by 777 per cent. This means that a household that spent NOK 1 000 on goods and services in 1970 will have to spend NOK 8 770 in 2020 to buy the equivalent goods and services.

By eliminating the effect of price changes, we can estimate volume growth. Volume growth in GDP from 2019 to 2020 was negative, at -0.8 per cent. From 1970 to today, the year 1984 stands out with the highest volume growth of 6.1 per cent. The weakest development is seen in connection with the financial crisis in 2009, with a volume decline in GDP of -1.7 per cent.

GDP can also be seen as a measurement of end-use of goods and services. In 2020, 44 per cent of GDP was consumed by households and non-profit organisations, almost 27 per cent was consumed by public administration and 30 per cent was invested. There was a trade deficit in 2020, which means that we exported less than we imported.

GDP and GDP Mainland Norway¹



¹ Market values. Source: ssb.no/en/knr

GDP expenditure. 2020

Consumption expenditure
in households and
non-profit institutions

43.8 %

Gross investments

30.1 %

Consumption expenditure
in public administration

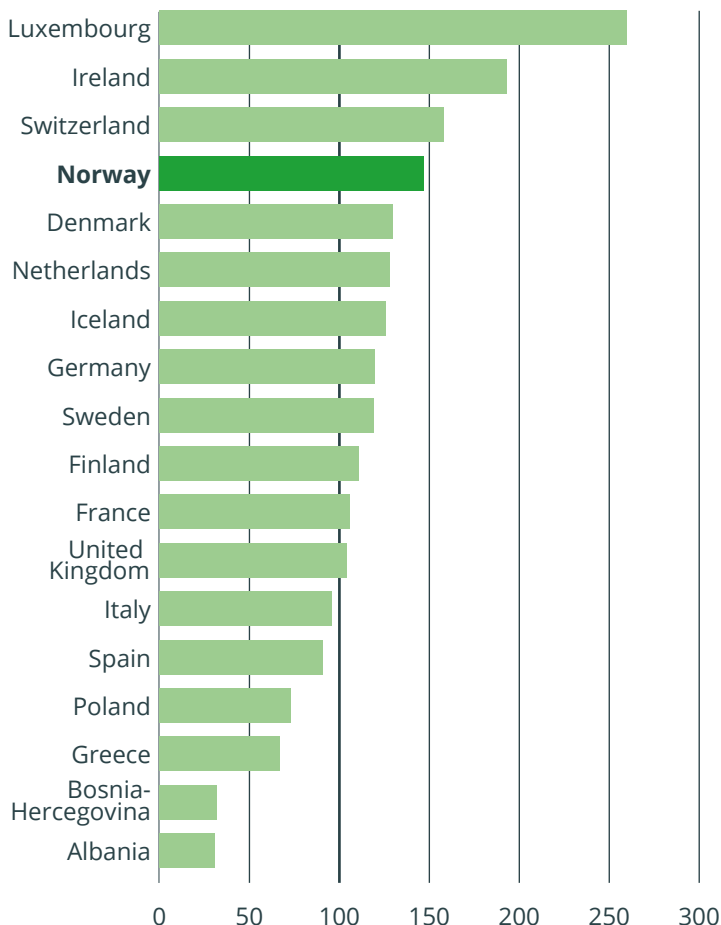
26.5 %

Source: ssb.no/en/knr

Export surplus **-0.4 %**

GDP per capita in selected countries. Adjusted for price level. 2019. EU27=100

Source: ssb.no/en/ppp



GDP per capita above the EU average

When comparing countries, it is useful to consider GDP in relation to the number of inhabitants in the country. Norway has gradually become one of the world's richest countries. In 2019, Norway's GDP per capita was 47 per cent above the EU average, adjusted for price differences between countries.

The figure for Luxembourg here is particularly high because many of the country's workers live in neighbouring countries. These workers contribute to GDP, but are not included in the per capita calculation.

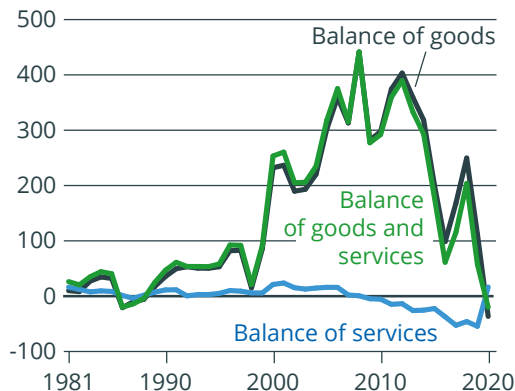
Norway – a small, open economy

Like most other countries in the world, Norway is dependent on participating in international trade. Norway is also a small country, and without access to international trade our welfare in terms of material goods would be at a significantly lower level.

Since 1978, Norway has had a surplus international trade balance in most years. This means that we export more goods and services than we import. The exceptions were 1986 to 1988 and 2020. Much of the decline last year was due to the large drop in prices of key export products. In 2020, Norway's export value was NOK 1 110 billion, and the import value was NOK 1 125 billion.

Balance of goods and services

NOK billion



Source: ssb.no/en/ur

Over the years, the international trade in goods has been greater than the trade in services, despite the fact that the global production of services exceeds the production of goods. This is because goods are easier to exchange between countries than services, since service providers are more dependent on proximity to users of the service.

A large part of the surplus trade balance is due to the export of crude oil and natural gas. The surplus was at its peak in 2008, and the decline in the price of oil has reduced the export surplus considerably in recent years. While crude

oil services and natural gas dominate Norway's exports of goods, the imports cover a wide range of goods.

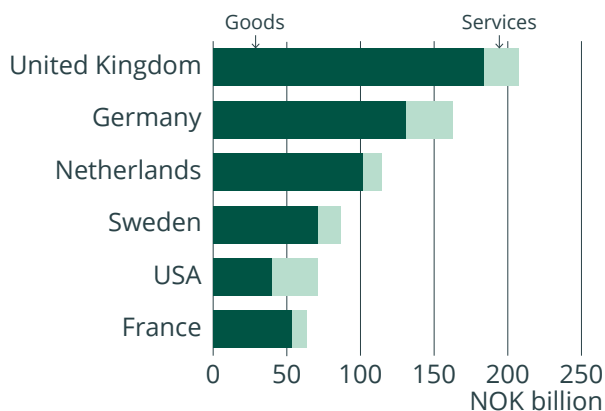
Foreign shipping has long dominated service exports, but services such as finance and business services have shown major growth in recent times. When foreigners travel to Norway or Norwegians travel abroad, this is also reflected in the figures for service exports and imports. Tourism (in relation to Norwegians who travel abroad) accounts for a major proportion of the import of services.

Trading partners from near and far

Norway trades with many different countries throughout the world. The UK is our biggest export market due to the high volume of crude oil and natural gas exports. Considerable volumes of petroleum products are also exported to Germany and the Netherlands. Norway's largest trading partner in relation to our goods and services import is Sweden, and a significant volume of imported goods also come from China.

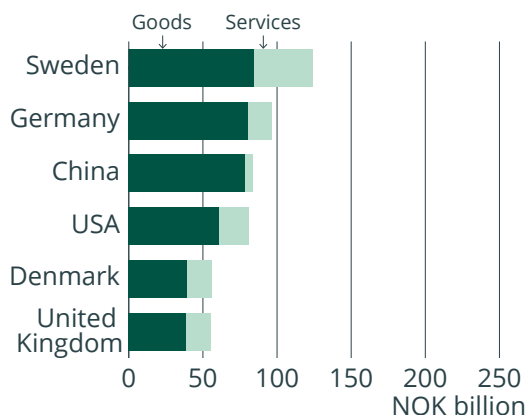
EU countries previously accounted for around 80 per cent of Norwegian exports of goods, but since Brexit, this has been reduced to 55 per cent.

The figure shows export of goods and services. 2019



Source: ssb.no/en/ur

The figure shows import of goods and services. 2019



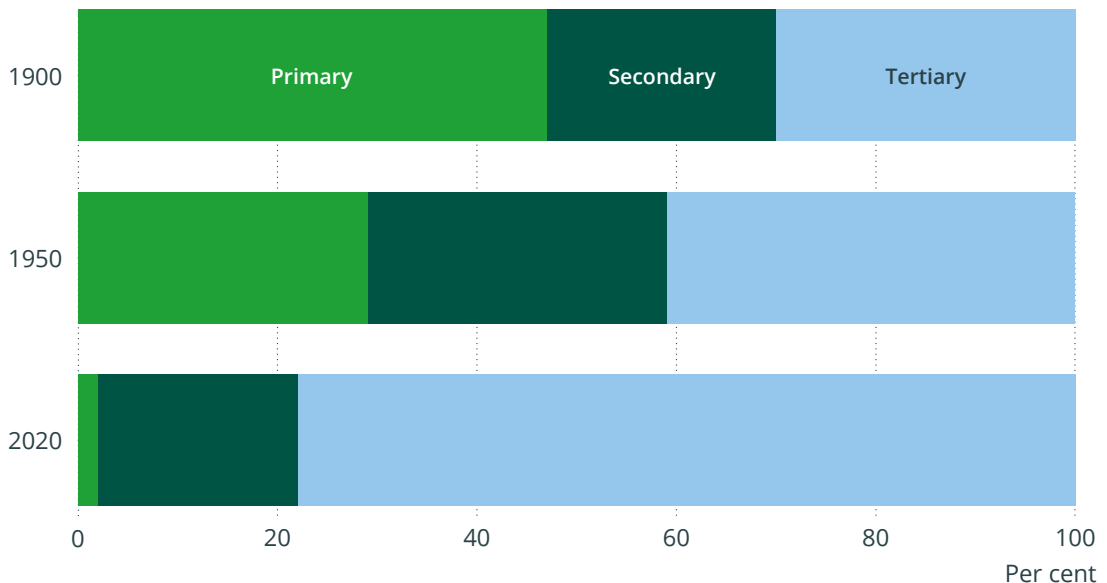
Source: ssb.no/en/ur

Change and innovation



Structural changes in business and industry

The figure shows the percentage employed in primary, secondary and tertiary industries



Source: ssb.no/en/knr

The economy and the business sector are not static – they are constantly changing. New activity is created, while other activity diminishes, and some disappears completely. The production methods for goods and services are also changing. Analyses of the development over time reveal major changes in business and industry.

During the last 50 years, Norwegian industry has seen dramatic structural changes. Generally speaking, there has been a move from primary and secondary industries towards tertiary industries. Agriculture and manufacturing have lost out

ENTERPRISES

An enterprise is defined as 'an economic entity with independent decision-making authority', and in most cases, this will entail a legal entity. Enterprises are also known as companies or businesses.

Examples of enterprises' organisational forms are limited companies and general partnerships. An enterprise can be further divided into several establishments if it has activity in different industries or in different locations.

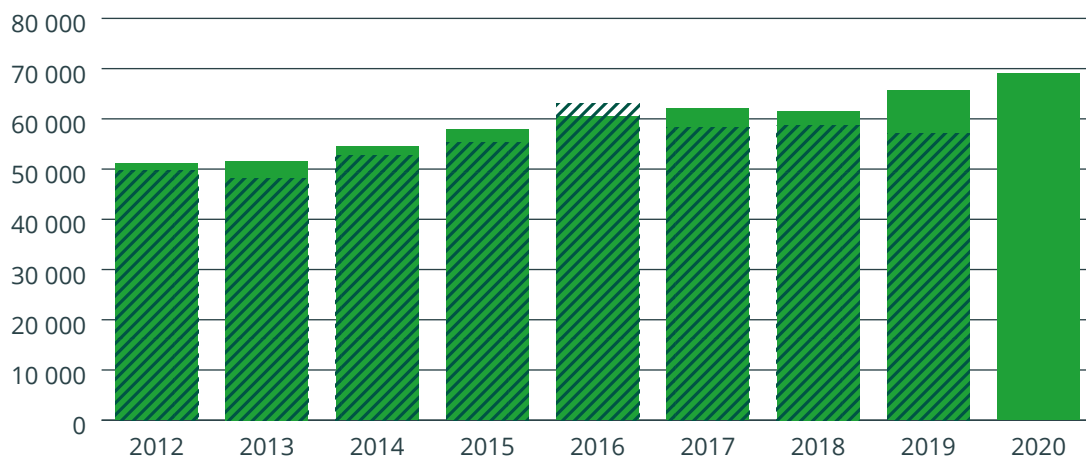
to service industries, and we are now less likely to work in fields and factories and more likely to work in shops, offices and institutions. For many years now, the primary industries have accounted for just over 2 per cent of all employees, compared to 13 per cent in 1970. The corresponding figure for secondary industries has fallen from 31 per cent to 20 per cent, and this decline mainly stems from manufacturing. Tertiary industries now account for a total of 78 per cent of all employment, compared to 56 per cent in 1970.

Another way of measuring the dominance of industries is to look at their contribution to GDP. This gives a slightly different picture. The secondary industries contributed 29 per cent in 2020, compared to 20 per cent of total employment. Oil and gas extraction contributes far more in terms of economic value than in employment, and the added value per employee is extremely high. The primary industries contribute 2 per cent, while tertiary industries account for 68 per cent.

Newly established and discontinued enterprises¹

¹ 2020 figures for discontinued enterprises are not yet available.
Source: ssb.no/en/foretak

■ Newly established
▨ Discontinued



Start-ups and closures

The start-up and closure of businesses both have an impact on the economy. The type of activity can also change, mainly from the production of goods to the production of services.

At the start of 2020, there were 427 800 businesses in Norway, and a total of 69 000 new start-ups during the year. In 2019, 65 600 new businesses were started, and 57 000 closed down. Such changes vary somewhat from one industry to another and from year to year, and tertiary industries tend to have more start-ups and closures than secondary industries.

20 %
fewer bankruptcies in
2020 than in 2019

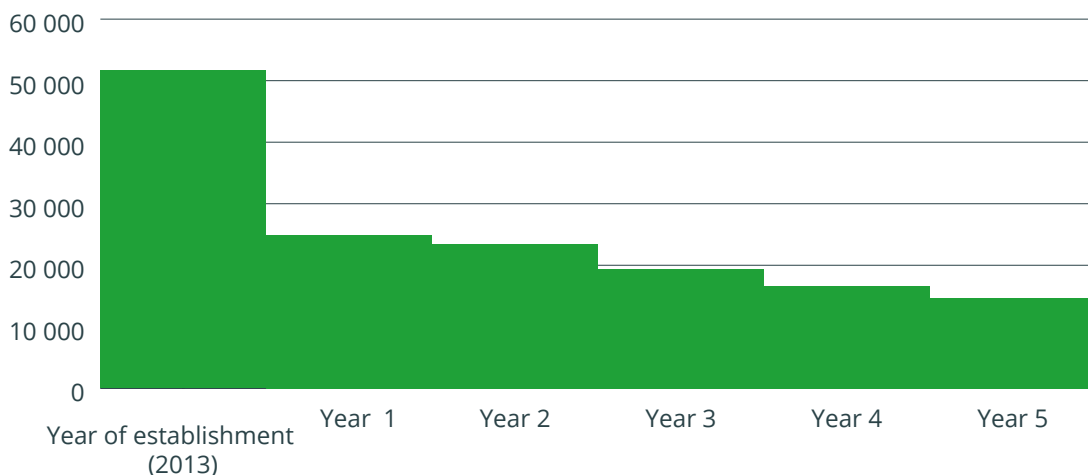
Thus, more companies were established in 2020 than the year before, and many of the start-ups were at the end of the year. An unusually large number of new companies were also registered in the first quarter of 2021. One possible explanation may be that people who lost their job during the pandemic started their own business.

Bankruptcy figures have not yet risen as they did during the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009. Despite an ongoing economic crisis, the number of bankruptcies fell by 20 per cent from 2019 to 2020. This figure was also lower in the first quarter of 2021 than the corresponding quarter in previous years. In 2020, a total of 4 100 bankruptcies were registered.

Many newly established enterprises only survive for a short time before they close down. Less than half of the new start-ups in 2013 were still in operation one year later. After five years, the figure was 28 per cent. Limited companies are the most likely to survive, and 46 per cent of these enterprises were still in operation after five years.

Number of enterprises established in 2013, and by number of years in operation

Source: ssb.no/en/fordem





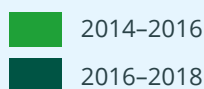
Innovation

In order to be competitive, enterprises need to develop new or better goods and services and improve their production routines. Profitable innovations are crucial for survival in a competitive market. Innovation is a generic term for the creative processes that take place in enterprises.

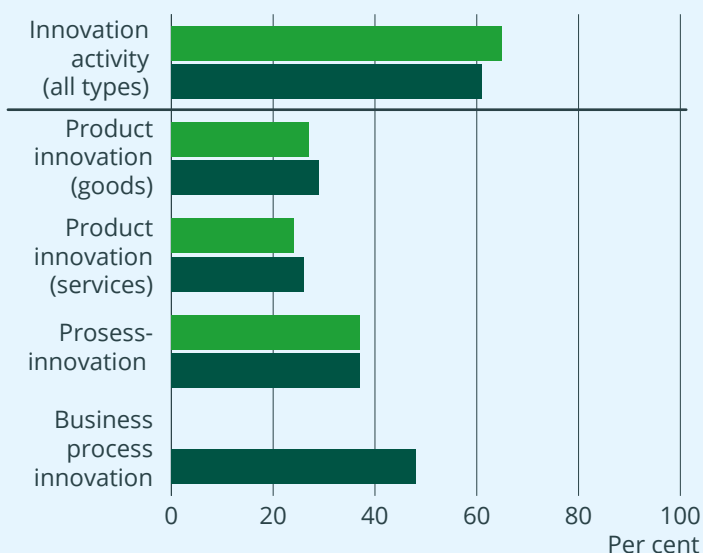
Over 60 per cent of all enterprises in Norwegian industry undertook some form of innovation activity in the period 2016–2018. Thirty-nine per cent introduced new goods or services; either products that were new to the market or new to the enterprise. Of the enterprises whose innovations were new to their markets, 92 per cent introduced products that were new to a market in Norway, while 39 per cent had a product or service that was new to a foreign market. Approximately 8 per cent of business turnover in 2018 was generated from new and improved products introduced to the market in the period 2016–2018.

In 2019, Norway was ranked 8th in the European Innovation Scoreboard, which the Norwegian Research Council believes was due to Norway's large number of innovative enterprises and the extent of innovation in small and medium-sized businesses.

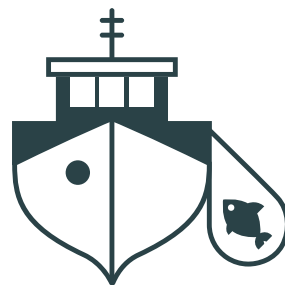
Proportion of innovative enterprises, by type of activity



Source: ssb.no/en/innov

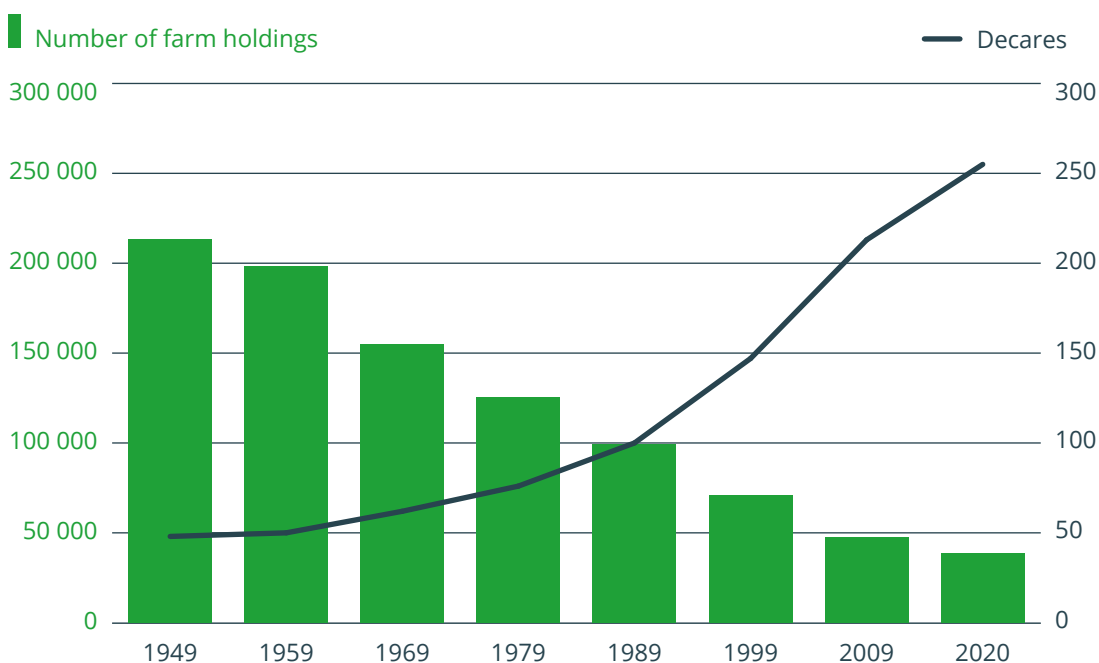


From agriculture to aquaculture



Major structural changes in agriculture

The figure shows the number of farm holdings and agricultural area in use per holding



Source: ssb.no/en/stjord

Between 1949 and 2020, the number of farms declined by more than four-fifths, from 213 400 to 38 600. This means that on average, seven farms were closed down every day in the period. More and more of the agricultural area is being rented, and this proportion has increased from 12 per cent at the end of the 1950s to 46 per cent in 2019.

The proportion of agricultural land in use has been reduced by almost 6 per cent from 1949 to 2020. Nevertheless, the agricultural landscape has undergone major changes. In central

regions, many areas have been reassigned for transportation purposes, housing and other buildings. Throughout the country, and particularly in rural areas, land that is difficult to cultivate is no longer used, and is left to grow over.

Employment in agriculture has fallen considerably. In 1950, more than 20 per cent of the working population was employed in agriculture. In 2020, this proportion had fallen to less than 2 per cent. Agriculture currently accounts for just 0.5 per cent of GDP. Only 30 per cent of farmers' income is generated from agriculture. The remainder is made up of wages, income from second jobs and pensions, capital income etc.

Fewer cattle, but more chickens

From 1949 to 2020, the number of milk cows fell by almost three-quarters, while the annual milk yield per cow increased from 2 000 litres to 8 000 litres.

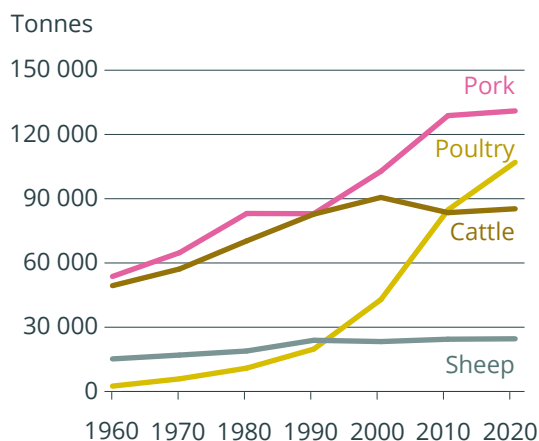
The production of broiler chickens has increased steadily since the late 1960s, and today poultry accounts for about 30 per cent of the total meat production, compared to approximately 2 per cent in 1949.

Fewer potatoes – more grain

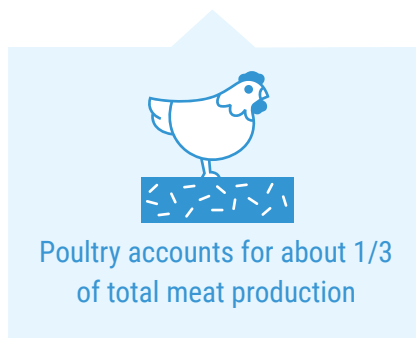
Agricultural crops vary considerably from one year to the next, as reflected in the poor grain crop following the dry summer of 2018. However, the long-term trend is clear: the production of potatoes has been reduced to less than one-third of that in the 1950s, while grain production in a typical year has tripled.

Organic farming, including land undergoing conversion to organic farming, now accounts for less than 5 per cent of the agricultural area. Sweden has the largest area of organic farmland in the Nordic region and uses 20 per cent of its agricultural land on organic production.

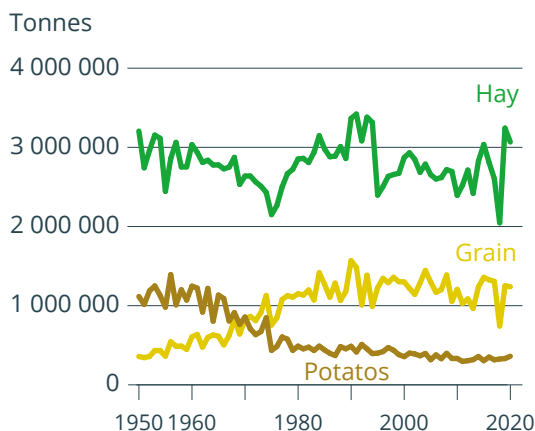
Meat production



Source: ssb.no/en/slakt



Agricultural yields



Source: ssb.no/en/jordbruksavling and ssb.no/en/korn

Finland and Denmark also have a much higher proportion of organic farmland than Norway.

More timber cut and increase in export

Forestry's contribution to the economy has fallen significantly. Tree-felling machines have replaced manual labour, and employment in this industry has seen a marked decline. In 1950, forestry made up 2.5 per cent of GDP, while in 2020 this figure was just 0.2 per cent. The quantity of timber cut for sale varied between 6.6 and 11 million cubic metres per year during this period, and has increased in recent years.

Many of the forest properties are small. In total, there are almost 125 000 properties with an average area of almost 56 hectares. In 2019, timber was cut for sale on 11 per cent of these properties. Since much of the traditional wood processing industry has gone, more than 30 per cent of this timber was exported.

2 500 000

tonnes of fish in 2020

Fewer fishermen

Around the start of the 1950s, there were approximately 100 000 fishermen in Norway. In 2019, the figure was 11 000. Of these, fishing was the main occupation for 9 400.

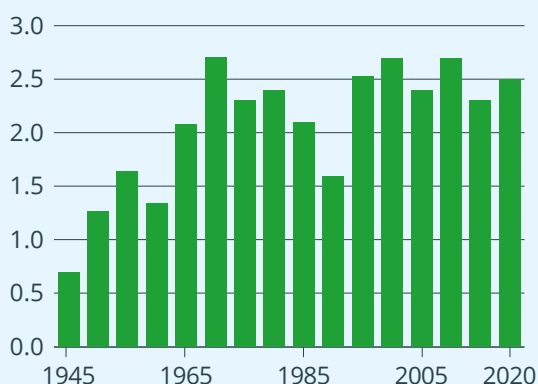
Catch volumes vary considerably from one year to the next. From 1945 to 1977, which was a record year, the catch more than quadrupled, from 0.7 to 3.4 million tonnes. In 2020, this figure had fallen to 2.5 million tonnes. In economic terms, the cod catch has the highest value, followed by mackerel, herring and saithe.

World leader in farmed salmon

While employment and production have both declined in the fishing industry, the aquaculture industry has seen major growth in recent decades. Fish farming originally formed part of the agriculture industry along the coast, but is now one of coastal Norway's main industries, with a production of 1.5 million tonnes in 2020.

Catch quantity for Norwegian fisheries¹

Million tonnes



¹Does not include seaweed and kelp.

Source: ssb.no/en/fiskeri and Directorate of Fisheries.



Since 1990, the industry has been characterised by takeovers and mergers, and the number of enterprises producing salmon and trout has been reduced from 467 in 1999 to 162 in 2020. The ten largest enterprises accounted for 66 per cent of the production in 2020, which has increased considerably from the annual production of less than 1 000 tonnes in 1971 when this activity began.

Salmon is the most dominant species in the fish farming industry, while trout production has remained fairly stable, and in recent years has accounted for about 5 per cent of the production value. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ranks Norway as the world's seventh largest fish farming nation after China (47.6 million tonnes), India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Egypt. In 2018, Norway was the largest exporter of fish after China.

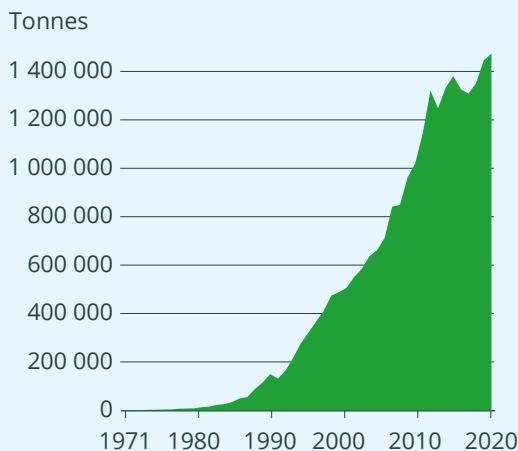
Few employees – economically important

In 2020, the aquaculture industry had a workforce of just under 10 000 employees, almost 7 000 of whom were involved in the production of fish for food. The landed value of this production now far exceeds the value in the traditional fisheries, with NOK 69 billion and NOK 22 billion respectively in 2020.

The total export value of fish and fish products was NOK 102 billion in 2020. Exports of fish therefore account for 13 per cent of the total goods export value. Exports of farmed fish represent about 70 per cent of all fish exports.

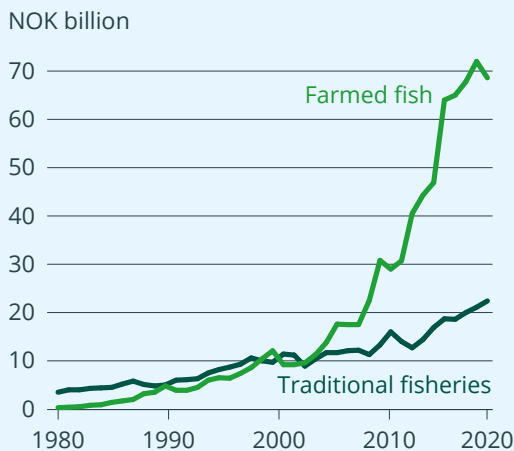
Over 60 per cent of all fish exports go to EU countries, and the largest single market in terms of monetary value is Poland, followed by Denmark and France.

Farmed fish. Total sales of salmon and trout



Source: ssb.no/en/fiskeoppdrett and Directorate of Fisheries.

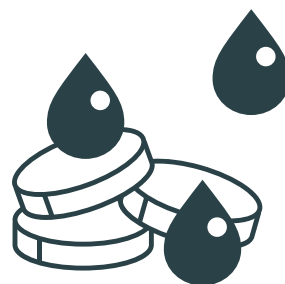
First-hand value of the fish farming industry and traditional fisheries¹



¹Does not include seaweed and kelp.

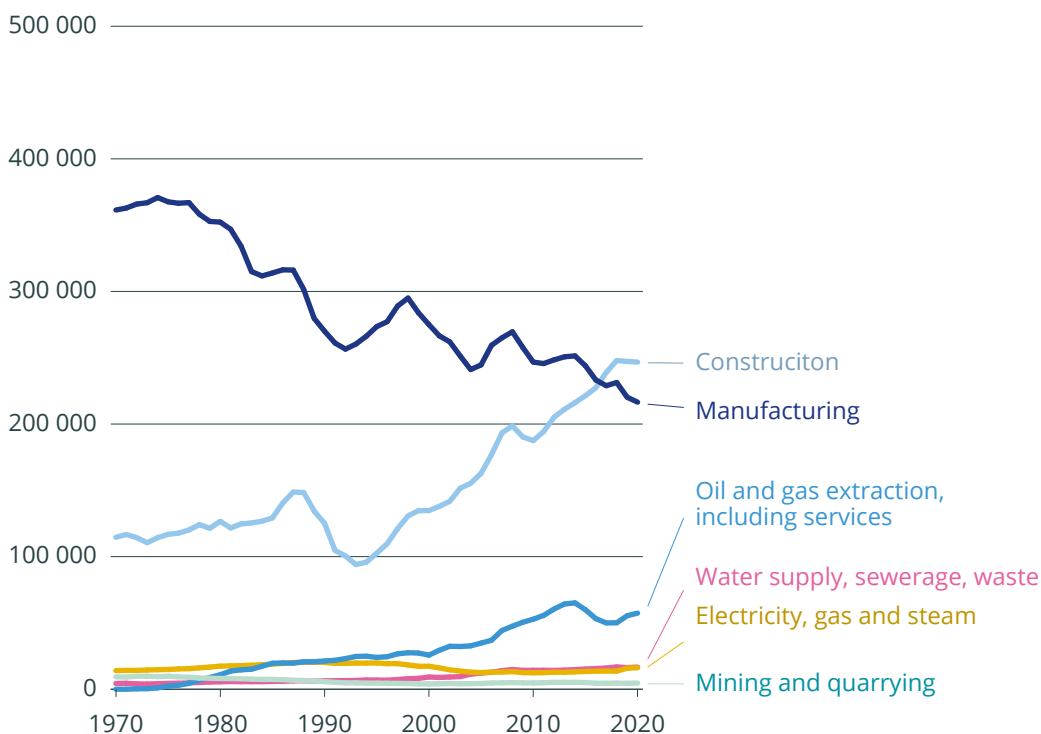
Source: ssb.no/en/fiskeri and ssb.no/en/fiskeoppdrett and Directorate of Fisheries.

From manufacturing to oil



Fall in manufacturing

The figure shows the number employed in secondary industries



Source: ssb.no/en/knr

When viewed as a whole, secondary industries (manufacturing, mining, oil extraction, building and construction, electricity and water supplies) have seen an increase in employment over the last 20 years, and in 2020, 558 000 people were employed in secondary industries. However, in relative terms, there has been a decrease: secondary industries today account for 20 per cent of the working population, compared with almost one-third up to around 1970.

The fall in employment levels is primarily due to the decline in the manufacturing industry. Since the record year of 1974, the number of jobs in manufacturing has fallen from 371 000 to 217 000. Today, almost 8 per cent of all employees work in manufacturing. The industries with the greatest decline are textiles and clothing, and paper and paper products. Developments in the shipbuilding industry have varied over the years, with a high level of activity in the late 1970s and the construction of oil platforms since the 1990s.

Most of the general decline is due to the closure of production activity in Norway. Parts of the activity have been moved abroad, but the decline is also due to the outsourcing of auxiliary activities and the introduction of more service-based products at the expense of goods.

Growth in the construction industry

Conversely, construction activities have experienced more or less sustained employment growth from the mid-1990s to the present day. Employment has more than doubled in the period, and amounted to 247 000 in 2020. The construction and completion of buildings have been the largest contributors to this strong growth, in addition to specialised building works, such as electrical installations, heating, ventilation and sanitation, and other installation work.

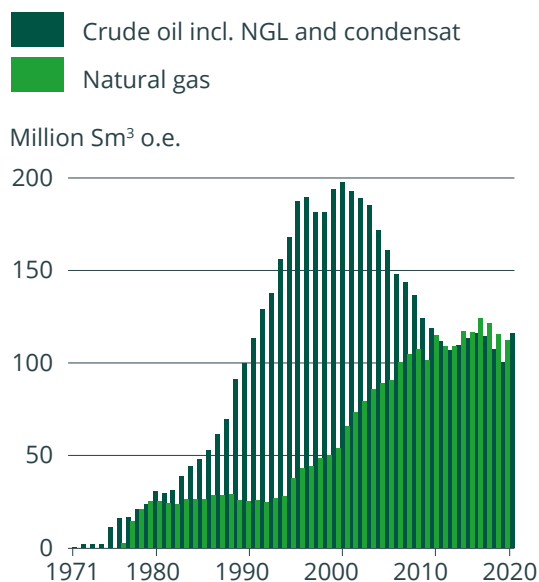
Electricity and water supplies are less significant for total employment and have had a relatively stable development during the period.

Downturn at the Norwegian continental shelf

From modest beginnings in 1972, the workforce in oil and gas extraction gradually increased to 67 000 in 2014, including related services.

However, falling oil prices since the autumn of 2014 led to a decline in employment. In 2020, 25 000 people were directly employed in the extraction of oil and gas, while almost 33 000 worked in related industries. While oil production has fallen since 2001, gas production has increased, and today makes up over half of the total production in the North Sea. After 2017, however, gas production declined, while oil production increased slightly in 2020.

The figure shows the production of oil and natural gas



Source: norskipetroleum.no/en

Sm³ o.e.

1 Sm³ (standard cubic metre) o.e.

(oil equivalents)

= 6.29 barrels

1 barrel = 159 litres

High value continues

The importance of petroleum activities to the economy is far greater than the employment figures suggest. While the number of people employed in this industry amounts to 2 per cent of the total working population in Norway, petroleum activities still constitute the largest industry in terms of value, and in 2020 made up 12 per cent of Norway's GDP.

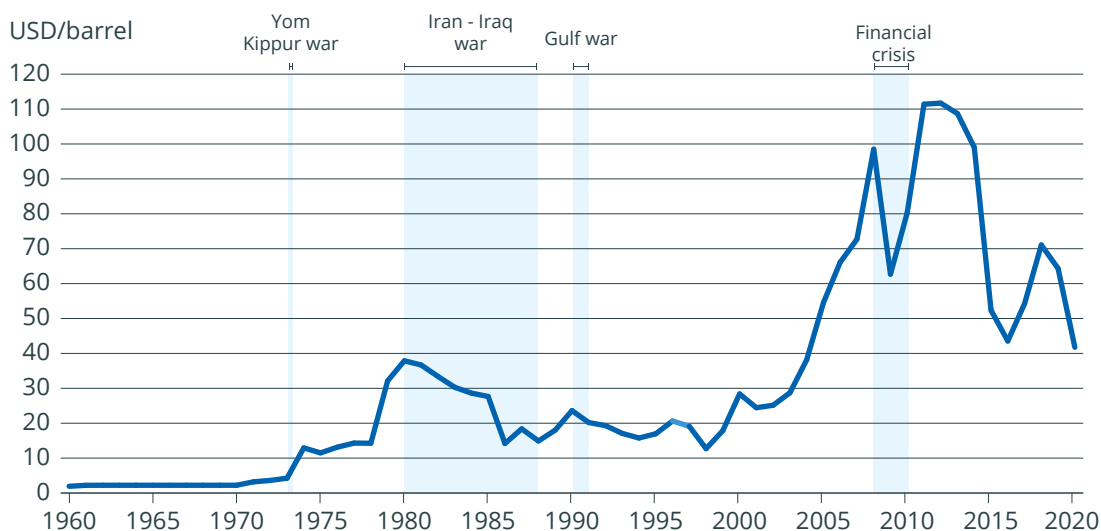
The petroleum sector's share of total export revenues is now 32 per cent, but has often exceeded 50 per cent, most recently in 2012. By comparison, traditional goods from the primary, manufacturing and mining industries make up 37 per cent of total export revenues, while services account for 31 per cent. The large economic significance of the oil is of course related to the production volume, but it is also due to the occasionally high oil prices.

Oil price

The oil price graph shows that Norway started producing oil at a very favourable time. Throughout most of the 20th century, a barrel of oil cost approximately USD 2. However, the price increased dramatically in the 1970s, partly due to two crises in the oil industry.

Oil prices. Brent blend

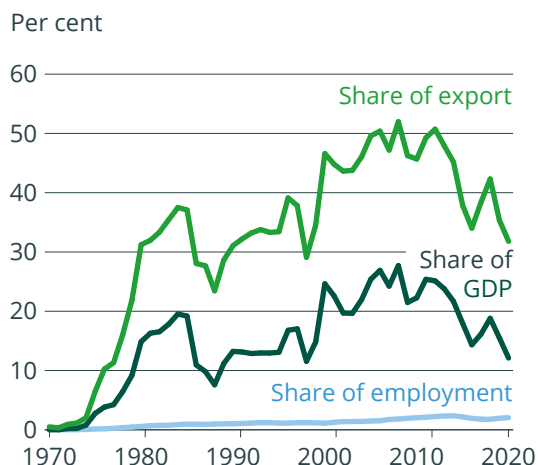
Source: norskipetroleum.no/en



BRENT BLEND

A benchmark used to indicate oil that has been extracted from the North Sea.

Oil and gas extraction. Share of GDP, exports and employment¹



¹ Including services.

Source: ssb.no/en/knr

From the mid-1980s to 2003, the price fluctuated between USD 15 and USD 30 per barrel, before increasing sharply again after 2004. Following an annual average of around USD 110 per barrel from 2011–2013, the oil price fell substantially in the autumn of 2014. The average oil price in 2020 was USD 41.8 per barrel, but prices started to rise again in early 2021.

Oil and gas reserves still remain

The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate estimates there to be 8 billion Sm³ oil equivalents of remaining oil reserves available for exploitation on the Norwegian continental shelf. By comparison, total production up to the end of 2020 amounted to 7.8 billion Sm³.

In other words, around half of the total extractable petroleum resources still remain on the Norwegian continental shelf for future extraction. Of this, the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate estimates that 47 per cent is oil and 48 per cent is gas. The rest is NGL (natural gas liquids) and condensate.

Money in the bank

Oil revenues will gradually decrease, and the increase in the number of elderly people will lead to higher pension, nursing and care expenditures. In order to address this, the Government Pension Fund Global (the Oil Fund) was established. The fund is administered by Norges Bank (the Central Bank of Norway) and is funded by the oil revenues that are not allocated in the national budget. The fund increased from NOK 48 billion in 1996 to NOK 10 914 billion at the end of 2020. Despite fluctuations as the result of a turbulent year, the market value of the fund increased by NOK 826 billion in 2020.

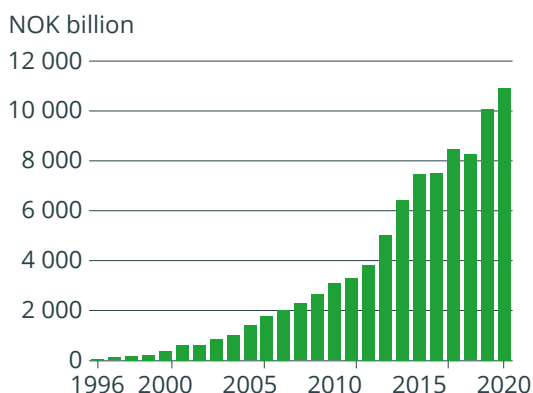
Source: Norges Bank.

Largest oil-producing countries 2020. Millions of barrels per day

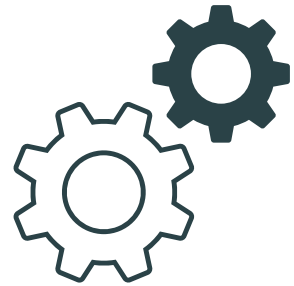
USA	16.5
Saudi-Arabia	11.0
Russia	10.7
Canada	5.1
Iraq	4.1
China	3.9
United Arab Emirates	3.7
Iran	3.1
Brazil	3.0
Kuwait	2.7
Norway	2.0
Mexico	1.9
Kazakhstan	1.8
Qatar	1.8
Nigeria	1.8

Source: norskipetroleum.no/en

The figure shows the Government Pension Fund Global. Market value by the end of year

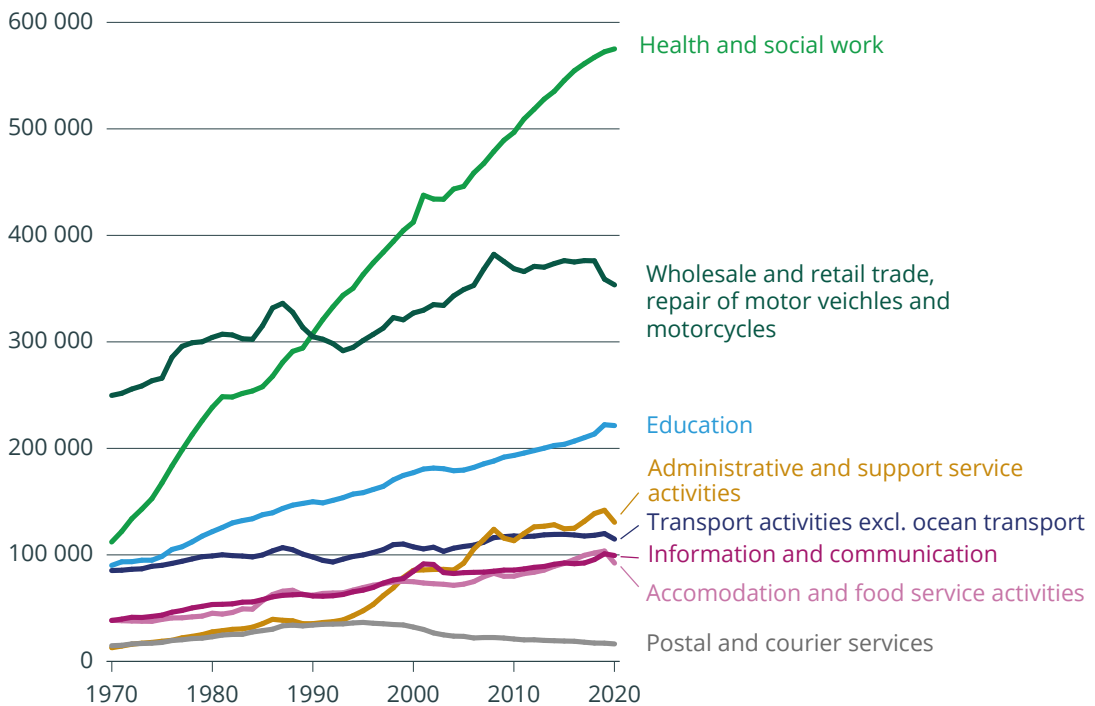


At your service!



More than three in four work in the service sector

The figure shows the number employed in selected industries



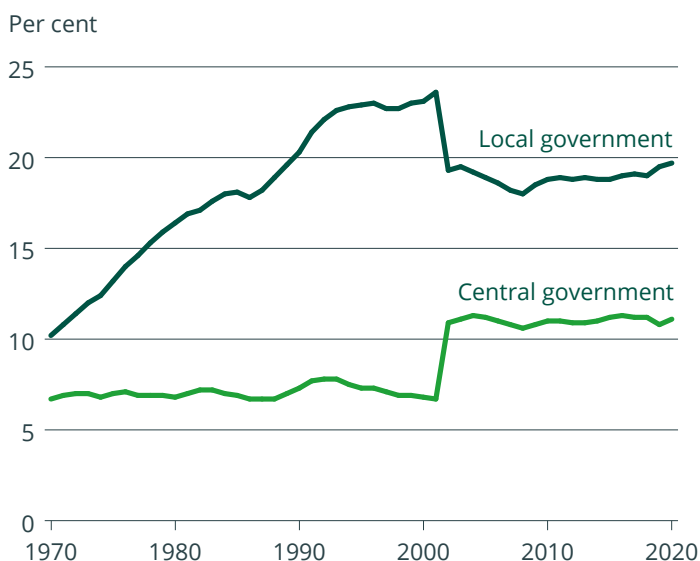
Source: ssb.no/en/knr

Overall, employment in the tertiary or service industries has grown from 750 000 at the beginning of the 1960s to almost 2 200 000 in 2020, representing 78 per cent of the working population in Norway. The dominance of the tertiary industries has given rise to various general characterisations of today's society, such as 'the post-industrial society', 'the information society' and 'the service society'.

Employees in public administration as a percentage of total employment¹

¹ The marked employment increase in central government in 2002 is due to the takeover of county hospitals.

Source: ssb.no/en/knr



We can divide the service sector into market-oriented and non-market-oriented activities. Industries in the former include retail trade, hotel and restaurants, and tourism. Non-market-oriented activities are the services provided by central government, county authorities and local authorities. Examples of these include social services, health care, education and administration.

Strong growth in public administration

Public administration is made up of municipal and county administration, and central government. In addition to general administration, it also includes public sector activity, such as schools and health care. The number of people employed in public administration has been rising for many years, and today 862 000 people are employed in this sector, compared with just 278 000 in 1970. The proportion of the working population in Norway who are employed in the public sector has increased from 17 to just over 30 per cent. Nearly two-thirds of public sector employees work in the municipal administration.

More healthcare services, retail and teaching

With 575 000 employed in 2020, the health and care sector is the dominant industry in the tertiary sector. In 1970, only 112 000 people worked in healthcare services. In relation to the total working population in Norway, more than one in five now work in health and care-related services.

Retail trade is another major industry that has seen strong growth over many years, but which has levelled off in the past decade in terms of workforce numbers, and the last year has seen a reduction of almost 2 per cent. In 2020, 354 000 people were employed in retail, compared to 250 000 in 1970. Retail sales increased, however, by 11 per cent from 2019 to 2020. Many stores have experienced problems due to the restrictive infection control measures, but online sales increased by 38 per cent and grocery sales went up by 17 per cent.

The education sector has grown markedly since the 1970s, and now employs 221 000 people compared to 90 000 in 1970.

Reduced turnover in some industries

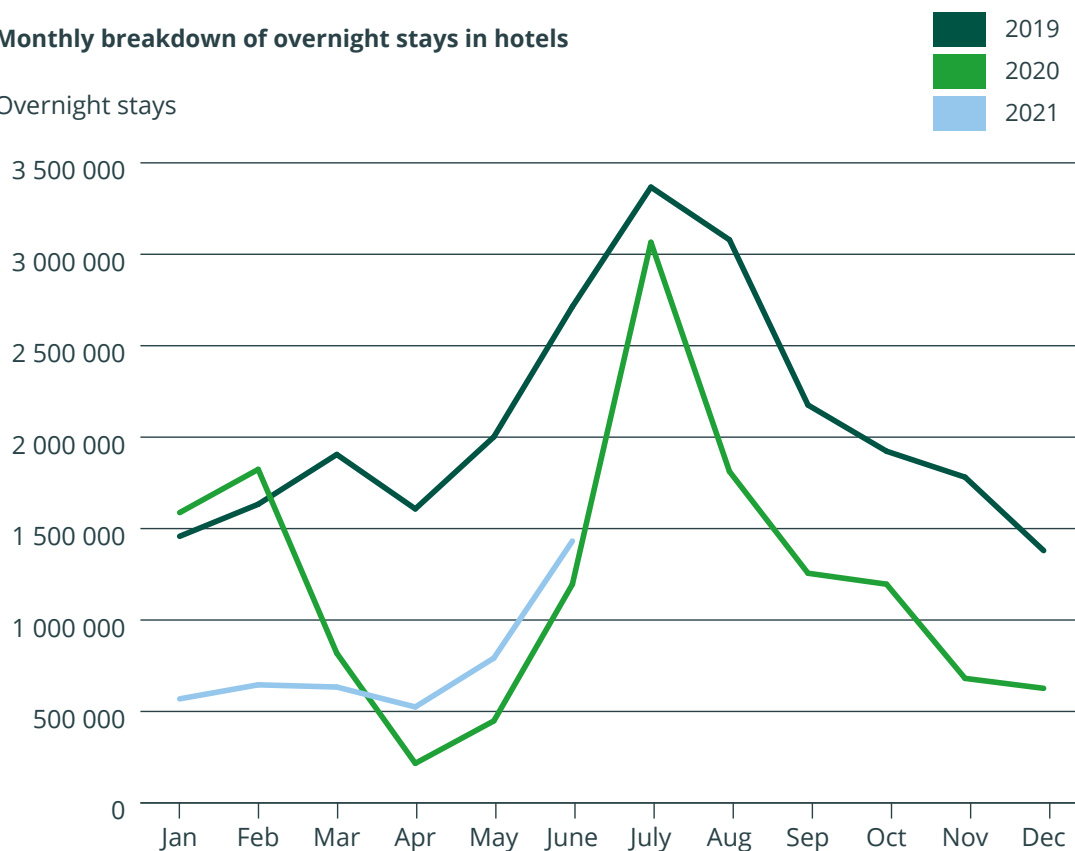
Norwegians' consumption of services fell sharply as a result of the requirement to close or adapt operations to limit the spread of COVID-19 in 2020, and many industries whose core activity is providing services have struggled recently. Some service industries whose staffing levels have increased significantly over the past 50 years experienced a decline from 2019 to 2020. One example is the business service industry, which includes employment services, travel agencies and tour operators, as well as security services. In this industry, more than a tenfold increase was seen in the workforce from 1970 to 2019, from 12 800 to almost 142 000, compared to just 131 000 in 2020.

The tourist industry also experienced growth for many years, with steadily more record years in the hotel industry and 25 million overnight stays at Norwegian hotels in 2019, compared to 5.5 million in 1970. The number of employees increased from 38 600 to almost 104 000 in the same period.

Travel restrictions, lockdown and lay-offs during the COVID-19 epidemic, however, have had serious repercussions for the tourist industry since March 2020, and the number of overnight stays fell to below 15 million in 2020, while the number of employees was 92 000.

Monthly breakdown of overnight stays in hotels

Overnight stays



Source: ssb.no/en/overnatting

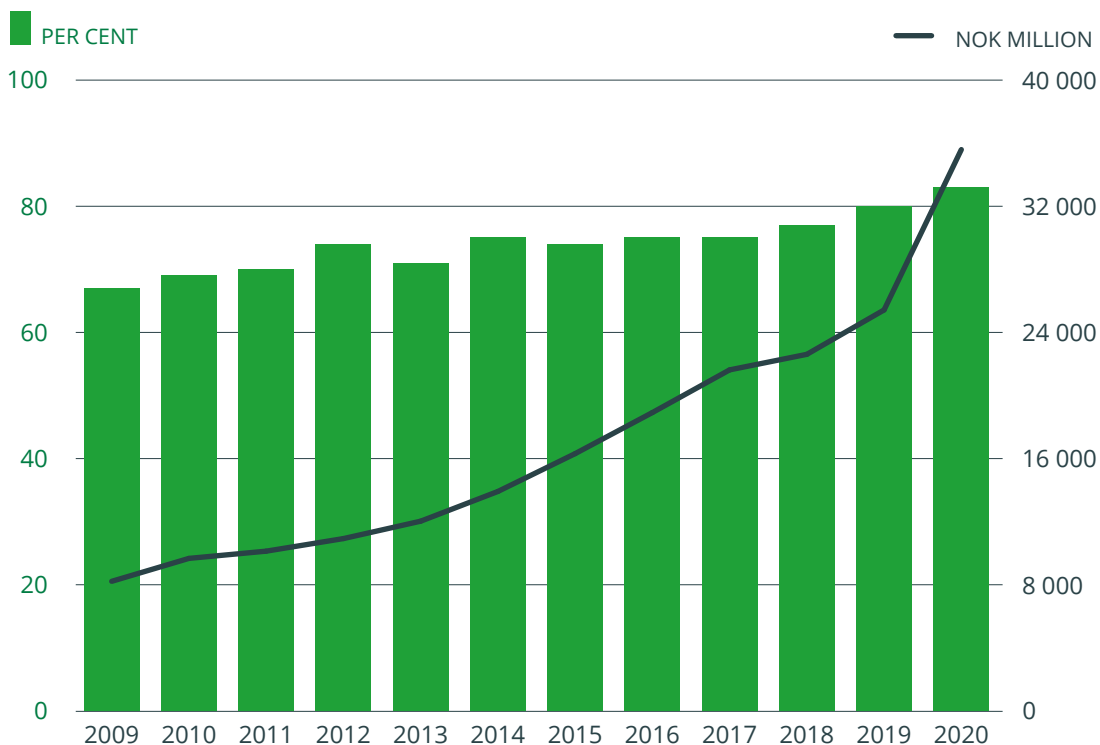
From letters to e-mails

Some service industries have, however, also been experiencing a drop in employment levels for many years. In the past 20 years, the number of people employed in postal and courier services has been halved. This is of course due to the growth of the ICT sector and the use of new technology by both businesses and households. Almost everyone under the age of 55 uses the internet daily, and not just social media, but online banking, contact with public authorities, e-mail and online newspapers. Many also shop online, and in a

normal year, booking travel and accommodation is particularly popular. In 2019, 60 per cent in the age group 16–79 years used the internet for this purpose, compared to just 34 per cent in 2009.

In 2020, a total of 99 000 people worked in information and communications, compared to fewer than 40 000 in 1970. In other words, the number of people working in publishing, radio and TV, telecommunications and other information technology services has more than doubled in this period.

Percentage of Norwegians (aged 16-79) who shop online, and online retail sales (NOK million) since 2009



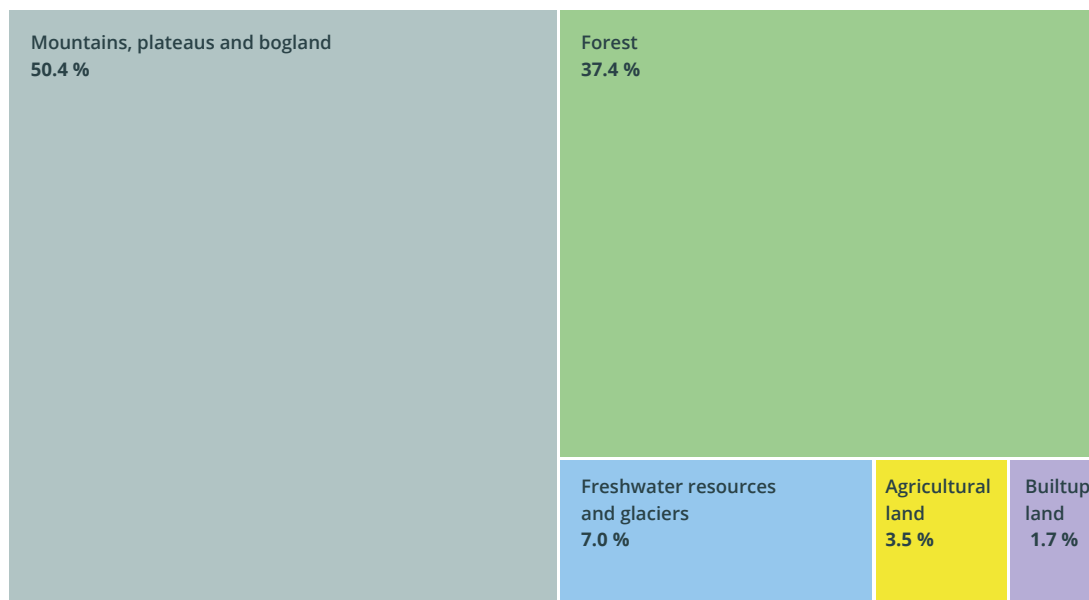
Source: ssb.no/en/ikthus and ssb.no/en/vroms

In full flow



Mountains and forests

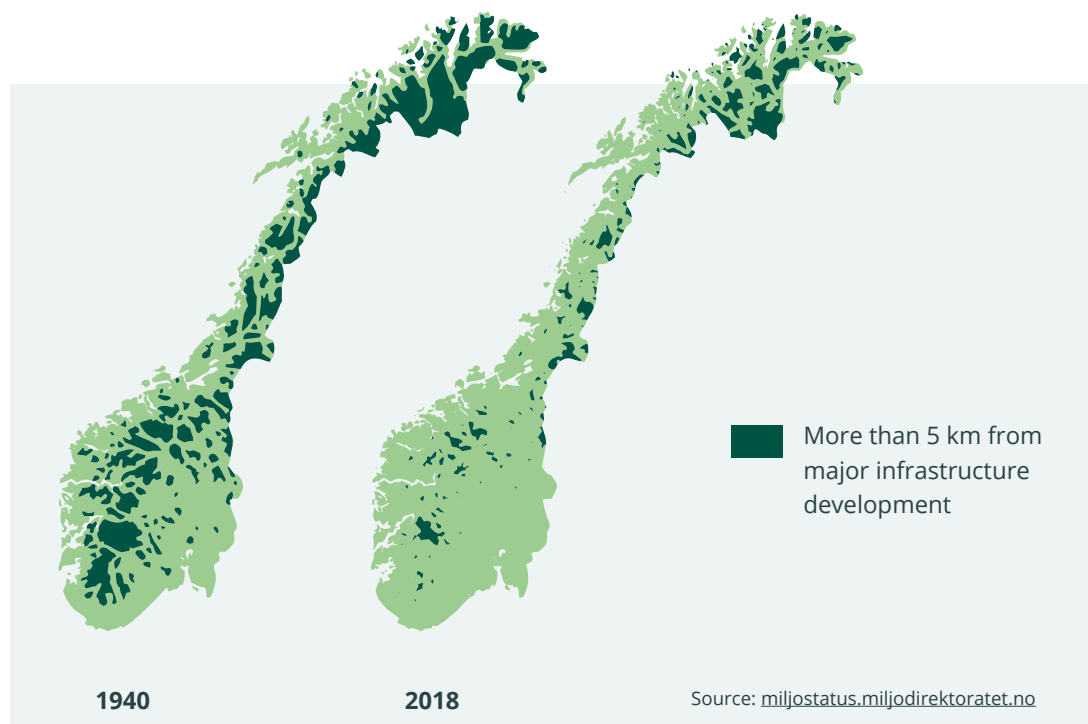
The size of each square reflects the proportion of the total area in Norway 2021



Source: ssb.no/en/arealstat

With a total area of 324 000 km² and 5.4 million inhabitants, Norway is one of the least densely populated countries in Europe, with 17 inhabitants per km².

Built-up land (including roads) amounts to just under 2 per cent. Almost 4 per cent is agricultural land and 37 per cent is forest. Fresh-water resources and glaciers make up 7 per cent, and the remaining 50 per cent consists of mountains, plateaus and bog land.



From wilderness to conservation

Around 1940, one-third of the total land area was still wilderness or unspoiled nature. By 2018, this percentage had fallen to less than 12 per cent, mainly due to the construction of roads and power plants.

At the same time, the area under protection pursuant to the Nature Diversity Act has increased, and now stands at 18 per cent of the total area. Over half of the protected areas are national parks, and at the start of 2021 we had 40 national parks on mainland Norway and 7 on Svalbard.

Norway among the highest consumers of electricity

Norway has extensive hydro-electric resources, and electricity is an important energy source. Norway has the world's second highest electricity consumption per capita: 24 000 kWh. This is three times the OECD average, which is about 8 000 kWh. This figure includes electricity consumption in all industries, not just household consumption.

Electricity consumption per inhabitant in selected countries. 2018

	kWh
Iceland	54 605
Norway	24 047
Finland	15 804
Canada	15 438
Sweden	13 331
USA	13 098
France	7 141
Germany	6 848
Denmark	5 764
Poland	4 343

Source: IEA (International Energy Agency).

Compared with other countries, electricity accounts for a relatively large proportion of Norway's energy consumption – almost 50 per cent. This is obviously related to the fact that electricity has traditionally been relatively cheap. In 2019, the price per kWh for households remained low compared to many other European countries.

Energy consumption slightly higher than average

Since 1990, total domestic energy consumption has increased by 20 per cent, from 200 to 240 TWh in 2020. The use of most energy products, excluding coal and coal products, has increased during the period. In the period 2010 to 2020, however, total energy consumption fell, particularly in the use of oil products, while other energy consumption has risen. A large part of Norway's industrial activity is made up of energy-intensive heavy industry and oil and gas extraction, and energy consumption per capita is slightly higher than in other western countries. However, it is not as high as Iceland, with its energy-intensive manufacturing industry, or Canada, with its oil and gas extraction.

Price of household electricity in selected countries. 2019

	NOK/kWh
Germany	2.94
Denmark	2.83
Netherlands	2.20
United Kingdom	2.06
Finland	1.81
France	1.75
Sweden	1.72
Norway	1.11

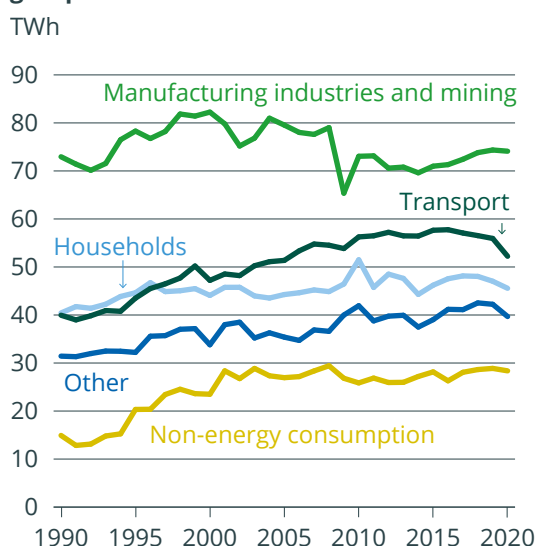
Source: IEA (International Energy Agency).

Minor changes in emissions to air, major changes in emission sources

The emissions of climate gases peaked in 2007, when they were 10 per cent higher than in 1990 (the base year for the Kyoto Agreement). Since 2007, emissions have fallen by almost 13 per cent. Although the total emission level has seen little change since 1990, the emission sources have changed significantly. Increased production of oil and gas and higher levels of transport activity have had a major impact on emissions from these sources since 1990.

Conversely, emissions from manufacturing and from heating in households and businesses have fallen considerably. The reduction in manufacturing emissions is due to technology improvements, company closures and a lower oil consumption. In 2007, the oil and gas industry overtook manufacturing as the largest source of emissions. However, even the emissions from oil and gas have not increased since 2007.

Total energy consumption by consumer group

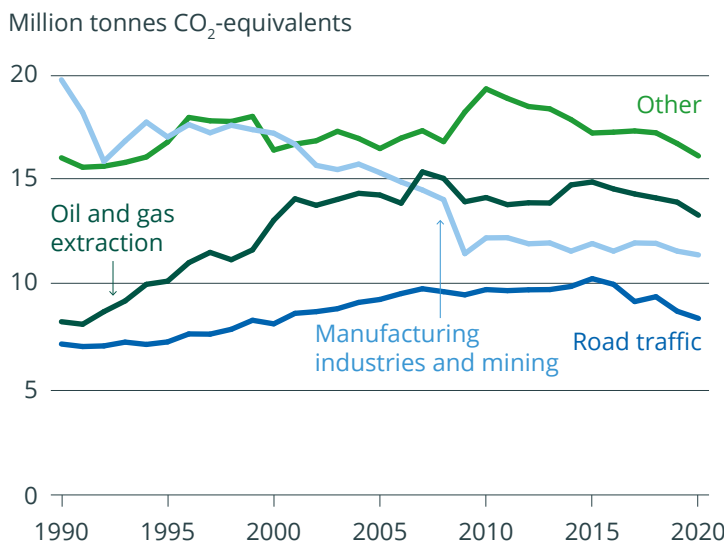


Source: ssb.no/en/energibalanse

Emissions of greenhouse gases¹

¹ Does not include ocean transport and international air transport.

Source: ssb.no/en/klimagassn



More waste

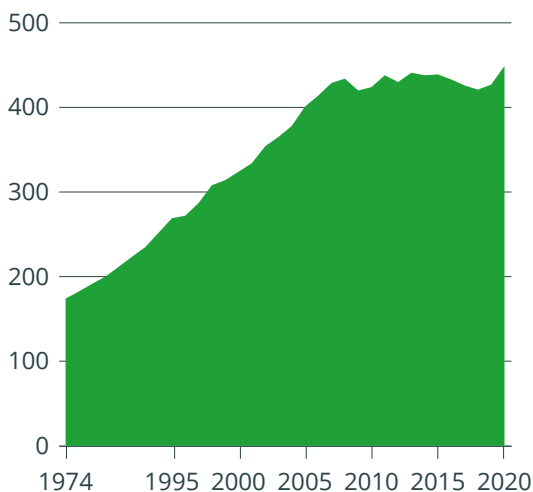
Economic growth and increased prosperity also generate huge amounts of waste. In 2019, we produced a total of 12.2 million tonnes of waste, which is more than 2 tonnes per capita. The increase in the volume of waste in recent years has been greater than the growth in GDP, despite the national target to reduce the growth in waste volume to less than the economic growth.

Since 2014, the biggest producer of waste has been the construction industry. In 2019, 26 per cent of waste stemmed from this industry, followed by private households and service industries, with 20 and 18 per cent respectively. Waste volumes from manufacturing have fallen sharply in recent years and amounted to 15 per cent in 2019. Household waste growth levelled off after 2008, but rose significantly in 2020, when an average of 449 kg of household waste was produced per capita. This was 25 kg more than 2019. More than 40 per cent of the waste was sorted for recycling or biological treatment.

449 kg
household waste
per capita in 2020

Household waste

Kg per capita



Source: ssb.no/en/avfkomm

Statistics Norway is the central authority for the development, production and dissemination of official statistics in Norway. Statistics Norway also conducts extensive research and analysis activities and, through the EEA Agreement, is an integral part of the European Statistical System.

Statistics Norway reports to the Ministry of Finance and is governed by the Statistics Act, but is a professionally independent organisation with a mandate to determine what it publishes, as well as when and how the publishing takes place.

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E-mail: information@ssb.no

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