

Elections in Norway

– A short introduction



Norwegian Ministry
of Local Government
and Regional Development



The electoral system – parliamentary elections

- Parliamentary elections are held every four years.
- Proportional representation in 19 multi-member constituencies. Each constituency is allocated a number of seats based on their population and surface area.
- 169 members of parliament (Stortinget) are elected for four-year terms
 - 150 direct seats are elected in the constituencies by proportional representation according to the Sainte-Laguë method, with 1.4 as the first distribution figure.
 - 19 seats at large (one in each constituency) are distributed among the registered political parties which have put up lists in all the constituencies and which have received at least 4% of the approved votes in the entire country.
- Fixed-term elections. The parliament cannot be dissolved early.

The Election Act

- The election will be held under the 2023 Election Act which entered into force in May 2024.
- Some of the important changes introduced by the 2023 Election Act include:
 - Stricter requirements to universal design of polling stations.
 - Removal of the possibility to make changes to the ballot in parliamentary elections.
 - More detailed regulation of counting and stricter requirements to secure openness in the counting process. All ballots are counted where they were cast.
 - A new appeal body – the National Electoral Committee – is introduced, safeguarding an independent judicial review of election appeals.

Right to vote


- Any Norwegian national who have reached the age of 18 or who turn 18 in the year when the election is held, and who at some time has been a resident in Norway, is qualified to vote in both parliamentary elections and local elections.
- In addition, Nordic nationals (Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Finland) are qualified to vote in local elections if they were registered as residents in Norway no later than 30 June in the year of election.
- Other foreign nationals are qualified to vote in local elections if they have been registered as resident in Norway for a continuous period of three years immediately prior to Election Day.

Electoral register

- Norway has a **National Population Registry** that forms the basis for the electoral register.
- Voters residing in Norway are automatically inscribed in the electoral register in the municipality where they were registered as resident on 30 June in the year of election.

Electoral bodies – local level

- The **district electoral committee** is responsible for parliamentary elections in the constituency.
- The **county electoral committee** is responsible for county council elections in the constituency.
- The **electoral committee** is responsible for all elections in the municipality.
- A **chair** and a **deputy chair** are responsible for the voting at each polling station.

 All municipalities are obliged to perform the first count of all votes by hand. More than half of the municipalities, and all counties, use scanners in the second count of votes.

 The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has carried out election observation missions in Norway several times. Read the reports on www.osce.org/odihr/elections/norway.

Electoral bodies – national level

- The **Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development** is the Norwegian electoral management body and has the overall responsibility for elections. The Ministry develops and manages the legal framework and interprets rules and regulations. The Ministry has responsibilities in contingency planning, accredits national and international election observers, appoints a secretariat for the National Electoral Committee and approves and regulates trials in elections.
- The **Norwegian Directorate of Elections** supports the local authorities regarding practical aspects of elections, provides information and training, and operates the electronic election administration system (EVA).
- The **National Electoral Committee** considers election appeals. The National Electoral Committee is appointed by the Storting after each parliamentary election, and shall perform its duties separately and independently of the Storting.

Trials

- The Election Act opens for trials on how elections are carried out. Trials makes it possible to try out new forms of carrying out elections or to test different ways of increasing participation, and they provide valuable knowledge for policy development in the area. Some of the trials the Ministry has approved for former elections are:
 - Internet voting pilots were carried out during the elections in 2011 and 2013. As it was no broad political desire to introduce internet voting, the pilot was discontinued. Read more about the pilots on regjeringen.no/internetvotingpilot.
 - During the 2011 and 2015 local elections, trials with reduced voting age were carried out in selected municipalities. Voter turnout among the trial-voters, aged 16 or 17, was similar to the population as a whole, though rather high compared to other young voters. Read more about the trials on regjeringen.no/votingagetrial.

A person who is on a party list for the current election, cannot serve as an election official in the district's polling stations. This regulation was introduced after a recommendation from the OSCE in their election observation report in 2009.



1

Get information upon arrival



2

Select your ballot paper(s)
inside the polling booth

Two election officials must be present when a vote is registered.

On election day, the municipalities can choose to use an electoral register on paper, or to cross off the voters electronically. More than 90% of the municipalities use computers when crossing off voters..

A ballot paper with no stamp will be rejected in the counting.

3

Go to registration and show your ID.
The ballot is stamped.
Put the ballot paper(s) in the ballot box.

4


Thank you for voting!


Political parties

- Nine parties and one local group are represented in the Storting after the 2021 parliamentary election.
- Both registered parties and other groups can run for election. Registered parties that received 5000 votes in the entire country at the previous parliamentary election can present list proposals without collecting signatures from a given proportion of the electorate.

Funding of political parties

- Norwegian political parties receive government subsidies that count for more than 60% of their total income. All registered parties can apply for subsidies. The size of a party's subsidy is based on achieved votes in the last election.
- Political parties can receive private donations, but are prohibited from receiving anonymous donations, donations from legal entities that are under the control of the state or other public authority, as well as contributions from foreign donors.
- In election years, the parties have a special duty to report donations exceeding NOK 10 000, received in the period 1 January until the Friday before the election day. Donations, including who the donor is (person or organisation), are listed on partifinansiering.no.
- The Political Parties Act Committee (PPAC) is an independent body appointed by the King in Council. The purpose of the PPAC is to contribute to transparency regarding the funding of political parties, and to control that parties act in line with the legislation.

 The elections to the Sámi Parliament (Sametinget) of Norway take place at the same time as the elections to the Storting. The Sámi Parliament is the representative body for people of Sámi heritage in Norway.

 The smallest municipality in Norway is Utsira, with a total of 216 inhabitants. The largest is Oslo, with a total of 725 200 inhabitants.

Participation

2023 local elections	62,4 %
2021 parliamentary election	77,2 %
2019 local elections	64,8 %
2017 parliamentary election	78,2 %
2015 local elections	60,2 %

Source: Statistics Norway (SSB)

Gender balance in elected bodies

- There are no regulations or formal quotas to secure gender balance in elected bodies as municipal councils, county councils or the parliament. Which candidates the parties want to put on the ballot, is up to them to decide. Many of them do nevertheless seek for gender balance among their candidates.
- After the 2021 parliamentary election, 76 out of 169 elected members of parliament are women. After the local elections in 2023, the proportion of women representatives in municipality councils are 40,7 per cent. The proportion of women in county councils are even higher, 45,2 per cent. Among mayors, 37 per cent are women after the 2023 elections, which is an increase from the 2019 elections, when the proportion of women mayors were 35 per cent.

- 💡 Norway gave women the right to vote in 1913, as the second country in Europe. Today, more women than men use their right to vote.
- 💡 The voting period in Norwegian elections is long. It is possible to vote in advance from 10 August up to the last Friday before Election Day. Upon application to the municipality, it is possible to cast an early vote from 1 July.





VALG

Fremgangsmåte



Gå til avlukk



Gå til registr



Legg seddel

When the voter arrives at the polling station, an election official will give instructions about the voting process.

Further reading

- The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development's pages about elections and democracy: regjeringen.no/elections-and-democracy
- The Norwegian Directorate of Elections: valg.no/en
- The Election Act: lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2023-06-16-62



Photo: Tore Fjeld