

## *The Government's Plan for Norway (2025–2029)*

### **Security and opportunities**

**In working to instil a sense of security for the future across the country, we open up opportunities for all. This is at the core of the Government's Plan for Norway.**

The Government's Plan for Norway builds on our country's strengths: our high degree of social equality, our high level of trust and our strong sense of fellowship. By putting duty before rights, and by creating greater prosperity and sharing the benefits more equitably, we strengthen both our security and the opportunities available to us – together.

This plan identifies the areas where we will be working to implement reforms and renew our society. The plan builds on the Labour Party's programme, and the election promises we made in 2025. The plan will be revised every year in order to adapt to ongoing developments both in Norway and in the world around us. Our success in implementing the plan will depend on the economic situation and the funds available.

#### **1. Economic security**

The Government will foster economic security – by means of responsible economic management.

Norway has a strong, stable economy: we have a high rate of employment, a business sector that is investing for the future, and government finances that, compared with many other countries, are robust. Nevertheless, over the past few years, the economy has been affected by the repercussions of the pandemic, war in Europe and soaring inflation. Many families have experienced financial strain and increased housing and living costs.

We have reached a turning point in the economy. Purchasing power is increasing, interest rates have gone down, and the number of people finding jobs is on the rise. The Government's most important task now is to work to maintain this positive trend, so that people see an improvement in their financial situation. At the same time, we will have to navigate a future in which labour is in shorter supply, the number of elderly is rising, defence expenditure is substantial, and petroleum revenues are declining. In order to secure our future growth and welfare, we will need to increase the employment rate and reduce the volume of people on benefits, ensure that economic productivity continues to rise, and adapt, reform and improve efficiency in the public sector. While Norway has been more successful than many countries when it comes to integration, there is still great potential to increase labour market participation among immigrants.

The Government will work to foster an inclusive, equitable labour market that promotes decent working conditions and employment for all. Norway is to have a strong social safety

net, and we must support those who are not able to work, due to illness or disability. The pension system must be designed to give people a liveable pension and encourage people to stay in the workforce for longer. The agreement reached in the Storting on pensions is to be followed up.

**The Government will give priority to:**

- **Improving people's financial situation** – The Government will work to increase people's purchasing power by means of responsible economic management based on national budgets that reflect the situation in the Norwegian economy. In 2026, we will, for example, ensure that electricity costs for households are more stable by giving people the opportunity to choose between receiving electricity support and making use of Norway's fixed electricity price scheme. We will keep prices for pre-school day-care at an all-time low for the whole of the current parliamentary period.
- **Getting a further 150 000 people into work** – The Government will strengthen welfare-to-work schemes and work towards achieving an overall employment rate target of 82 % by 2030. The Government will pursue an active labour market policy and will work to ensure that the welfare system helps those who are unemployed to find jobs. There is to be a broader choice of paths into education and more opportunities for people to top up their knowledge and skills throughout their lives. In 2026, tax on labour will be reduced further, efforts to help people to find employment will be intensified and the work allowance pilot scheme under which selected young people will receive a deduction on employment income will be carried out. We will continue to implement a pilot project in the industrial sector as part of the skills reform to promote lifelong learning in the labour market, increase the number of vocational training college places and improve mapping of Norway's future needs for skills and knowledge.
- **Setting demands and providing support in connection with integration** – The Government wants people who come to Norway to settle to be met with clearer demands and expectations as regards learning Norwegian, finding work and being part of Norwegian society. In 2026, we will strengthen incentives to work for newly arrived immigrants and step up efforts to combat negative social control. We will also introduce an integration declaration for newly arrived immigrants and their accompanying family members.
- **Building 130 000 new housing units** – The Government will take steps to facilitate the start-up of construction of 130 000 new housing units by 2030. In 2026, we will digitalise planning and construction case processing, continue to build more housing

for students, and simplify and modernise building rules and regulations to reduce construction costs and speed up construction processes.

- **Revitalising, strengthening and improving the public sector** – The Government will ensure the best possible use of society’s resources, and will promote productivity growth, a stronger welfare system and increased prosperity. We will eliminate unnecessary red tape and ‘time thieves’ in order to achieve better service delivery and staffing levels and a more effective and efficient public administration. The Government will strengthen the trust-based system of management and leadership, by setting fewer and clearer goals, reducing central government control, and increasing freedom of action at local level, both for municipal administrations and for employees. In 2026, the Government will introduce streamlining measures and follow up the municipal sector commission (*Kommunekommisjonen*) and the committee on the state education system (*Fellesskoleutvalget*), which will both be putting forward recommendations for improving management and use of resources in the public sector. By 2026, 80 % of public enterprises are to be making use of artificial intelligence.

## **2. Labour market security and stability for the business sector**

The Government will promote labour market security and stability for the business sector by safeguarding Norwegian pay and working conditions and providing predictable and competitive framework conditions for companies.

Norwegian companies are at the forefront in a range of areas and are world leaders when it comes to productivity. Over the past few years, the business sector has seen substantial investments, a rise in exports and strong results. One of the main reasons for this is the country’s highly productive, well organised labour market, with strong social partners at both workplace and central level. The shortage of labour and skills and expanding trade barriers could limit the Norwegian business sector’s scope for further growth. At the same time, the climate, energy and technology transition will create both opportunities and challenges in the years to come.

The Government’s ambition is for Norway to be one of the world’s best countries for working, establishing a business and developing new industries. The aim is to provide stable, predictable framework conditions that give the business sector the security to invest. We will defend Norwegian interests in dealing with trade barriers, ensure continued access to the European market through the EEA Agreement, the bedrock of our cooperation with Europe, and work to secure better access to the global market. Norway is to be a reliable and stable supplier of energy to Europe, and activity on the Norwegian continental shelf is to be further developed. Companies across the country are to have good access to electricity, transport infrastructure and highly skilled labour.

Norway is to achieve its climate targets, and we must reduce biodiversity loss and make it more expensive to pollute. Income from climate-related taxes is to be used to benefit people and businesses in the form of tax cuts. We will continue our efforts to enhance food self-sufficiency in Norway and to provide predictability for income-generation opportunities in the agricultural sector.

**The Government will give priority to:**

- **Increasing competitiveness** – The Government will take steps to ensure stable and predictable framework conditions for Norwegian businesses. We will work to build an efficient power system and a grid that provides access to electricity where it is needed. We will maintain existing transport infrastructure, upgrade infrastructure where possible and develop new infrastructure where this is necessary. We will invest in knowledge, research and technological development and work to increase private financing of research. In 2026, we will introduce various measures to strengthen Norway's competitiveness: the regulatory burden is to be scaled down to facilitate faster development of critical infrastructure and reduce administrative costs for the business sector. We will improve the efficiency of relevant public agencies and policy instruments and facilitate close cooperation and constructive dialogue with the business sector. The Government will give priority to creating new student places and promoting research in areas where Norway has particular needs and competitive advantages. We will also appoint a restructuring commission (*Omstillingskommisjonen*) that will be charged with assessing what we can do to strengthen Norwegian competitiveness and the Norwegian economy as oil and gas activities decline.
- **Putting Norway on the path to a low-emission future** – The Government will work to cut emissions and create jobs in a predictable and fair manner. We must protect the environment, reduce Norway's greenhouse gas emissions, fulfil Norway's climate commitments in close cooperation with the EU, and contribute to emission reductions in other countries by purchasing emission allowances and continuing the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative. It will be vital to maintain competitiveness, innovation and secure jobs throughout the country as Norway makes the transition to a low-emission society. In 2026, we will be presenting a plan setting out how Norway is to achieve its new nationally determined contribution (NDC) for 2035 under the Paris Agreement.
- **Reforming the tax system for the future** – The Government is seeking to secure broad cross-party political agreement on the main elements of the tax system. The aim is to ensure stable, predictable framework conditions, increase Norwegian competitiveness, promote equitable distribution of social and economic goods, and

enable more people to participate in the labour market. In 2026, we will appoint a tax commission.

- **Defending the interests of the Norwegian business sector** – The Government is the guarantor of the EEA Agreement. In today's changing world, access to the internal market and cooperation with the EU are crucial. In 2026, we will give priority to rules-based trade and market access, which will include entering into new trade agreements and following up existing ones.
- **Promoting a secure, well-organised labour market** – The Government will strengthen the organised labour market, encourage membership of employee organisations, promote strong, responsible social partners and ensure that more full-time, permanent positions are established. In 2026, we will increase the deduction for trade union fees and strengthen the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, and intensify efforts to combat social dumping and work-related crime. We will work to improve the rights of employees working for digital platforms and modernise the occupational injury legislation and make it fairer.
- **Creating opportunities and a safe framework for the use of artificial intelligence** – The Government will seek to exploit the potential of AI to increase Norwegian competitiveness, boost productivity and safeguard national security. We will strengthen Norway's digital infrastructure and make use of new common digital solutions. In 2026, we will establish KI Norge, an AI hub in Norway, which will be responsible for providing guidance on AI-related matters, accelerating the introduction of AI solutions and promoting closer cooperation between the public sector, the business sector and the academic community. We will promote access to advanced computing and AI tools, work to ensure that Norwegian language models are used and further developed, present an action plan for the use of AI in the public sector, and promote responsible, ethical AI development and deployment at the international level.

### **3. A sense of security for children and young people**

The Government will work to foster a sense of security for children and young people by giving all children the opportunity to learn, participate and develop.

In Norway, the opportunities available to you are not to be determined by your background or where you live. All children are to meet adults who see them as unique individuals, a school that challenges them and a society that believes in them. This is how we can build a stronger Norway, where children and young people have the power to shape the future.

Over time, school performance has declined, particularly with regard to reading skills, and at the same time, the use of digital devices has increased and motivation among pupils has fallen. Over the past few years, the Government has taken steps to build a stronger state education system, where the teacher is in charge of the classroom and tuition is more practical and varied. The Government will continue to work to improve pupils' basic skills and motivation, and enhance learning about the values that unite Norway as a society. The work of the committee on the state education system (*Fellesskoleutvalget*) will pave the way for better use of resources in schools and equip our schools for the future.

More than 100 000 young people are currently not in employment, education or training, and although the number of young people on disability benefits has stabilised, the number of people receiving benefits remains high. We will help more young people to find employment or start a course of education or training, and ensure that fewer people are left permanently outside the labour market.

The Government will ensure that criminal offences committed by children and young people are met with swift, effective action. At the same time, we are providing more resources for arenas where children and young people are seen, heard and included and that can help to prevent the recruitment of children and young people to crime. Sports, cultural activities, voluntary work and supportive local communities are vital for giving children and young people a sense of belonging and mastery.

**The Government will give priority to:**

- **Increasing and enhancing learning in schools** – The Government is working to reverse the negative trend in school performance, with a particular focus on improving results in reading, writing and numeracy skills. The Government will consider making changes to when primary and secondary school pupils receive tuition in certain subjects and to the scope of each subject. In 2026, we will work together with the municipalities and schools to implement a national reading campaign. We will ensure that there are more books in the classroom, improve tuition in literacy, provide intensive instruction for more pupils, appoint a reading commission (*Lesekommisjonen*) and take steps to ensure that there is greater focus on improving concentration skills and less use of screens in schools. Our aim is for Norwegian pupils to once again be among the best readers in the world. This will require not only a focus on reading in schools, but also an effort to foster a stronger culture of reading in Norway generally. Everyone in Norway is to have access to good reading experiences, through the availability of diverse literary works, effective literature promotion and vibrant public libraries. We will also launch a new strategy to encourage adults to read.
- **Implementing a major initiative to improve the lives and prospects of young people** – In cooperation with the social partners, the Government has set a target to get 30 000 more people under the age of 30 into work by 2030. Under the new Youth

Guarantee, the Government will ensure that all people between the ages of 16 and 30 are offered work experience, follow-up and guidance, or education or training opportunities. In 2026, we are launching a pilot scheme involving providing four-year wage subsidies to young people on disability benefits or who are at risk of being unable to work. We will implement a programme that will give unemployed young people a chance to try working in the health and care services, as well as a work-oriented youth programme that provides participants with financial support without requiring them to have a medical diagnosis to be eligible.

- **Combating child and youth crime** – The Government will work to rapidly reduce crime among children and young people and increase the effectiveness of its efforts to prevent recruitment to crime. In 2026, we are proposing to extend the fast-track scheme for processing criminal cases to more district courts, to tighten the penalties for carrying a weapon in a public place, and to make the use of minors to commit a crime a separate criminal offence. We are increasing the number of places at young offender units, while also extending the scheme to provide one-on-one follow-up to young repeat offenders to more areas of the country. By giving the child welfare services greater authority to lock doors, confiscate mobile phones and restrict visitors at child welfare institutions, we are giving them the tools to safeguard and set boundaries for children and young people who commit crimes or are at risk of doing so.
- **Achieving a healthier screen-time balance** – Children and young people must be able to enjoy a safe digital environment. The Government is working on establishing a minimum age of 15 for social media use and age verification to ensure compliance with this. The Norwegian Directorate of Health has issued advice intended to help children, young people and parents to find the right balance between screen time and other activities. The Directorate of Education has issued recommendations on the use of mobile phones in schools. In 2026, the Government will continue to work to strengthen regulation of the tech giants by means of new legislation relating to digital services, and will work to promote international rules for protecting children online and on social media.
- **Promoting culture for all** – The Government's aim is for everyone in Norway to have access to high-quality cultural experiences. Cultural, sports and voluntary activities help to unite Norway as a society and are an important component of our democratic infrastructure, freedom of expression and civilian resilience. The inherent value of culture is of fundamental importance to the Government. In 2026, the Government will support arts and culture institutions across the country, provide grants for artists and for arts and culture production, start work on a white paper on sports in Norway and ensure full VAT compensation for voluntary organisations.

#### **4. A robust and reliable public health system**

The Government will work to build a reliable, robust national health service for the future, and to reduce waiting times for treatment, decrease sick leave and prevent withdrawal from working life.

Good health is essential to providing freedom and security – both for individuals and for society as a whole – and promotes high labour market participation. When we fall ill or grow old, we must be secure in the knowledge that society will support us – that we will be given the help we need. Our national health service is to be the first choice both for patients and for health care employees.

For years, there was a GP crisis and hospital waiting times steadily increased. The GP crisis is now being resolved, and as a result of the initiative to reduce hospital waiting times, waiting times are now back to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, we know that the number of elderly people in need of care will increase rapidly in the years to come and that there is a shortage of labour in this sector.

The Government will work to improve the health of the population, reduce social health inequalities, and prevent and reduce sick leave and withdrawal from working life. We will make better use of our personnel resources to maximise health outcomes. Each patient is to experience a well-coordinated health service – in all phases of their lives. We will continue our efforts to modernise the GP service, reduce waiting times and make use of new technology and artificial intelligence. We will give priority to health-related education and training and work to improve the division of tasks and responsibilities among health personnel.

#### **The Government will give priority to:**

- **Improving public health** – The Government will work with the social partners to reduce social health disparities, reduce sick leave and ensure that fewer people fall outside the labour market. In 2026, we will work to enable the GP service to reduce the number of medical certificates for sick leave issued, provide faster assistance, issue more partial sick leave certificates and provide close, interdisciplinary follow-up to patients. We will continue to implement the Escalation Plan for Mental Health.
- **Ensuring faster health care delivery** – The Government's goal is to reduce waiting times each year of the parliamentary period, and we will establish a dedicated target for waiting times for further medical investigation and treatment. We will continue to modernise the GP service. In 2026, we will implement a pilot municipal online doctor service to provide people with faster health care by enabling them to book a video appointment with the municipal online doctor if their GP has no appointments available. We will further refine the free hospital choice system and explore opportunities for entering into national framework agreements with private sector

actors in order to make best possible use of available capacity. In 2026, we will invest in five new hospital development projects.

- **Improving services and support for the elderly** – Steps will be taken to make it easier for the elderly to live at home for longer, while also ensuring that elderly people can be confident that a nursing home place will be available to them when they need it. The Government will support the municipalities in dealing with the challenges posed by an aging population. In 2026, we will introduce a grants scheme to provide support to elderly people who wish to make adaptations to their homes in order to be able to continue living at home, and we will start work on realising the hearing aid guarantee.
- **Reforming the national health service to meet future health needs** – The Government will implement a reform of the health system to ensure that Norway has world-class health services in the future as well. We have appointed a committee on health reform (*Helsereformutvalget*), are already working on a gradual expansion of the public dental health service, and have signed agreements with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) on various pilot projects under which the municipal and specialist health services are cooperating more closely and in new ways to provide health services to the population ('Project X'). In 2026, we will draw up a human resources for health plan for 2040, which will include measures for recruiting and retaining specialist personnel, increasing productivity, and improving the use of resources in the health and care services. The Government will facilitate a rapid increase in investments in artificial intelligence, technology and medical equipment in hospitals.

## **5. Security for the country**

The Government will safeguard the country's security by defending democracy and the rule of law and further developing and adapting our national defence, civil preparedness and police force to meet the demands of a new era.

Norway is contending with the most serious security situation it has faced since the Second World War. In response to the new security landscape, the Government and the Storting have united behind a new Long-term Defence Plan, the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine and the white paper on total preparedness (Meld. St. 9 2024–2025). More funding has been allocated to the Norwegian Police and the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST). In line with the National Security Strategy, the Government will continue to strengthen the Norwegian Armed Forces, enhance the resilience of Norwegian society and strengthen our economic security.

Viable local communities that promote activity and settlement throughout the country are vital to our national preparedness. Norway has Europe's longest coastline, and responsible management of ocean resources is crucial for Norway, our trading partners and our Allies. The

High North is the Government's most important strategic priority, and we will facilitate increased settlement in the north and be a leading and responsible polar nation. In light of the changed security situation, we need infrastructure that ensures military mobility and better enables us to receive and move Allied reinforcements.

The most effective way to ensure our security is through cooperation with others. We will take greater responsibility for our own and Allied security within the framework of NATO, and we will further develop our security and defence cooperation with the EU and our European Allies. The Government stands together with Ukraine in the effort to achieve a lasting and just peace.

The threat from organised crime in Europe has never been greater. The Government has intensified the fight against criminal networks to enable the police to prevent serious violent incidents, confiscate more criminal assets and improve control of criminal gangs.

Immigration has made Norway a more diverse society. At the same time, Norway cannot take in more immigrants than it can successfully integrate. Norway's immigration policy is to be just and sustainable and is to promote controlled immigration.

#### **The Government will give priority to:**

- **Rapidly strengthening Norway's defence capability** – The Government will strengthen the Norwegian Armed Forces, enhance Norway's total defence and preparedness for crisis or war, and continue to work towards fulfilling the commitment made by NATO Allies to allocate at least 5 % of GDP to defence and security-related expenditures by 2035. In 2026, we will take concrete steps towards meeting this target by means of investments in personnel, equipment and preparedness, in line with our obligations as a NATO member and Norway's Long-term Defence Plan. The Long-term Defence Plan is to be further developed in close consultation with the Storting.
- **Building a more resilient Norway** – The Government will take steps to strengthen Norway's preparedness to deal with serious incidents that pose a threat to our security. In cooperation with the municipalities and the business and voluntary sectors, we will develop and secure critical infrastructure, carry out more cross-sectoral exercises and build robust local communities that are better equipped to withstand crises. We will step up our efforts to counter complex threats and work to promote an open and enlightened public discourse that safeguards freedom of expression and academic freedom. In 2026, the Government will draw up a long-term plan for civil preparedness, implement measures set out in the national plan for securing Norway's digital infrastructure and continue its work to secure critical subsea infrastructure in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

- **Strengthening Norway's economic security** – A strong economy and an adaptable business sector are crucial to Norwegian security. The Government will strengthen cooperation with Norway's most important trading partners, in particular the EU, while also ensuring better control of investments from countries with which Norway has no established security cooperation. Norway needs to increase investment in the development and application of technologies, such as quantum technology, defence technology and underwater technology, while also strengthening the export control system in order to prevent sensitive security technology and information from being shared with actors that do not share our security interests. We will ensure predictable management of the Government Pension Fund Global in an uncertain world. In 2026, the Government will circulate a new act relating to investment control for review, and will work to align Norway's efforts more closely with the EU's economic security agenda.
- **Defending Norway's interests in a more dangerous, more unpredictable world** – With war in Europe and in a world where binding international cooperation is being undermined, the Government will stand up for international law and human rights and emphasise the need for a strong UN. Norway remains committed to providing long-term political, financial and military support to Ukraine. Our efforts towards a two-state solution that can bring lasting peace and security to Palestinians and Israelis alike will continue. In 2026, the Government is maintaining its extraordinary support to Ukraine under the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine in consultation with the Storting. We will maintain a high level of international aid.
- **Combating criminal networks** – The Government will continue to take steps to enable the police to prevent, detect and investigate crime more effectively and to prosecute those who commit crimes. In 2026, we will step up our efforts to strengthen control of our borders and build a more robust police service, and propose new legal provisions that can provide a basis for strengthening the ability of the police to combat criminal networks and arrest the network leaders, and propose stronger measures for confiscating criminal assets. The Government will review the rules for deportation and expulsion to ensure that foreign nationals who commit crimes in Norway are sent out of the country.
- **Pursuing an immigration policy that is just and sustainable and promotes controlled immigration** – The Government will work to address the challenges posed by irregular migration and misuse of the institute of asylum. In 2026, we will give priority to enhancing the effectiveness of the immigration system, tightening the criteria for family immigration, improving the return process and seeking closer international cooperation on identifying new solutions and measures in this area. Norway will play

an active role in European cooperation on migration issues with a view to ensuring a more sustainable level of immigration to Europe.