

Migration and Integration 2021-2022

Report for Norway to the OECD



Norwegian Ministries

With contributions from the following Norwegian ministries:

Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion
Ministry of Justice and Public Security
Ministry of Education and Research
Ministry of Children and Families
Ministry of Culture and Equality
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Health and Care Services
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

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1 Overview

Increase in net immigration

In 2020, the number of registered new immigrants¹ who entered Norway was 38 100, 27 per cent lower than the previous year. Some 81 per cent of the immigrants were foreign citizens, and of those 57 per cent from EU/EFTA member countries.² The largest number came from Poland (3 700), followed by Sweden (1 800) and Lithuania (1 800). In 2020, 19 800 foreign citizens were registered as having emigrated from Norway. This was a little more than in 2019. Overall, the net immigration of foreign citizens was only 10 900, 16 000 fewer than in 2019, due primarily to the sharp drop in immigration. The highest net immigration was registered for citizens of Syria (1 100) Poland (750) and Eritrea (600).

At the beginning of 2021, 800 100 immigrants and 197 850 persons born in Norway with two immigrant parents resided in Norway, in all representing 18.5 per cent of the resident population. This was 0.3 percentage points more than the previous year. Poland was the country of origin for the largest group of resident immigrants (102 150). The largest number of Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents had parents originating from Pakistan (17 900).

Increase in family immigration

In 2021, family related immigration represented thirty per cent of the non-Nordic immigration to Norway, four percentage points lower than in 2020, although the number immigrating for family reasons increased by 2 600 persons. The total number of new family-permits increased from 9 000 granted in 2020 to 10 200 in 2021. The major third countries of origin in 2021 were Syria, Eritrea and India. In addition, 4 600 non-Nordic citizens of EU/EFTA-member countries declared that family-ties were the basis for immigration when they registered their first move to Norway. This was 600 more than in 2020. Poland and Lithuania were the major non-Nordic EU/EFTA-member countries of origin for those registering family as the reason for immigration.

Increase in labour migration

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp fall in labour migration to Norway in 2020. However, in 2021 the labour migration to Norway picked up, and was back at pre-pandemic levels. The number of registered (non-Nordic) labour immigrants represented nearly 44 per cent of the new non-Nordic immigrants in 2021, and most of them were citizens of EU/EFTA member countries. Even though there has been a decline in labour immigration over the years, net migration of labour to Norway was still positive at the end of 2021. The number of new permits for work granted to citizens of countries outside EU/EFTA also increased in 2021. During the last five years, new permits for skilled workers have varied between 2 500 and 4 500 per year. New permits for seasonal workers have varied between 1 400 and 3 500 per year.

Low number of applications for asylum in 2021, but sharp increase in 2022

¹ According to Statistics Norway, immigrants are defined as persons born abroad of two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents. Cf. <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/innvandrerestatistikk/innvandrer-og-norskfodte-med-innvandrerforeldre> for more definitions.

² Switzerland is a member country of EFTA but not part of the EEA. Therefore, the designation EU/EFTA is used.

In 2021, eleven per cent of the non-Nordic immigration consisted of persons who had some form of refugee background, the same share as in 2020. About 1 700 applications for asylum were filed, 300 more than in 2020 and very low in an historical perspective. The proportion of positive decisions by the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)* on asylum applications was 73 per cent in 2021, an increase from 62 per cent in 2020. Approximately 1 300 applicants were granted refugee or humanitarian status in 2021, by UDI or through the appeals process, while almost 3 500 refugees were resettled in Norway.

Due to the situation in Ukraine, there has been a sharp increase in applications for asylum in the first half of 2022. By the end of 2022, approximately 40 750 applications were filed, 36 200 of these from Ukrainian citizens. Norway has implemented a scheme for temporary collective protection for persons who have fled Ukraine. Approximately 33 300 had been granted temporary collection protection in 2022. There has also been an increase in non-Ukrainian applicants in 2022.

Fewer returns, both forced and assisted

In 2021, the decrease in all types of returns continued, compared to the years before the pandemic. This was primarily a reflection of the reduced immigration during the pandemic, but also of continued low numbers of asylum seekers previous years, combined with high acceptance rates of applications for asylum. Nevertheless, 127 persons without a legal residence returned to their country of origin with government assistance in 2021. In addition, 1 800 foreign citizens were returned by force. In addition, 17 000 persons were dismissed at the border due to COVID-19 entry restrictions.

Immigration and refugee policy

In 2021, most of the policy changes of significance concerning immigration and protection were in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first half of 2022, Norway implemented a scheme with temporary collective protection for persons fleeing Ukraine. Some important new measures are:

- During the fall of 2021, entry restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic were removed and travellers from all countries could enter Norway again. There were, however, strict requirements and rules upon entry. Travellers who did not comply with these rules could be refused entry.
- From October 2021, the *Immigration Regulations* were amended to exclude the *introduction benefit* from counting towards the income requirement in family migration cases.
- Due to a considerable shortage of high-skilled labour in Norway, the Government has increased the annual quota for skilled workers to 6 000 residence permits in 2022 and in 2023.
- From the fall semester of 2023, universities and colleges will charge at least cost-covering tuition fees from new degree students from outside the EEA and Switzerland.
- From March 11, 2022, Norway implemented a scheme with temporary collective protection for persons that have fled Ukraine. The scheme resembles the implementation of EUs directive of temporary protection, which Norway is not bound by.

- The Government established a *Special Initiative for Refugees, Displaced Populations and Host Communities* in the national budget for 2022 and appointed a *Special Envoy* to oversee the further development of the initiative over the coming years. The focus is to reinforce the work for sustainable solutions to challenges both for the displaced and their hosts.

Integration policy

The aim of the integration policy is to provide opportunities for refugees and other immigrants to participate in the Norwegian labour market and community life. This is important for the immigrants themselves and to maintain a robust and sustainable welfare system. Some important new measures are:

- To make it easier for the municipalities to quickly settle refugees from Ukraine granted temporary protection, several temporary changes to different laws have been implemented. Statutory requirements are reduced, such as those in the *Integration Act* that regulate the duration and obligation to participate in the *Introduction Program* and *Norwegian Language Training*.
- There is as a temporary government grant in 2022 to organisations offering activities and meeting places for refugees from Ukraine, especially for children.
- In 2021 and 2022, NOKUT has extended the system of ‘automatic recognition’ to more countries. Automatic recognition is not a formal recognition, but downloadable statements by country on how specific degrees are normally assessed by NOKUT.
- The Government presented its action plan to combat social dumping and work-related crime in October 2022. The plan focuses on, among other things, strengthened cooperation with the social partners, strengthening of labour rights, prevention of exploitation of workers and increased knowledge about work-related crime
- In 2023, the Government will present a White Paper on living conditions in urban areas. Amongst other issues, proposals from of a *Commission of experts* that has investigated living conditions and integration challenges in areas in and around the major cities in Norway will be assessed.
- In 2021, the Government established a dedicated grant scheme against racism, discrimination, and hate speech. The objective of the scheme is to facilitate local, regional, and national involvement and support initiatives and activities that seek to promote diversity and dialogue, and counteract racism, discrimination, and hate speech.
- The Government has started drafting a new action plan against racism and ethnic discrimination. The plan will be launched in 2023. The focus areas for the plan are racism and discrimination in the labour market and in other areas that particularly affect young people.
- Amendments to the *Nationality Act*, which took effect from January 2022, raise the general requirement for length of residence from seven of the last ten years to eight of the last eleven years. This does not apply to those applicants who have already been granted asylum in Norway. Applicants with a specified minimum income level according to the most recent tax-assessment are required to have resided in Norway six out of the last ten years.

- From October 1, 2022, another set of amendments to the *Nationality Act* raised the requirement of necessary Norwegian oral skills from level A2 to B1 to be granted Norwegian citizenship.

2 Migration – general characteristics

2.1 Legislation and policy

The *Immigration Act* of 15 May 2008 regulates the right of foreign citizens to enter, reside and work in Norway. The *Immigration Act* and the corresponding *Immigration Regulation* entered into force on 1 January 2010. According to the regulations, following an individual assessment, citizens of third countries³ may qualify for one of the following main residence permit categories:

- Labour immigrants, i.e., persons who have a concrete job offer
- Persons with close family ties to somebody residing in Norway
- Students, trainees, *au pairs* and participants in an exchange program
- Refugees and persons who qualify for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds

As a rule, students etc. (including *au pairs*) are only granted a temporary residence permit. Students may work part time and may change their status upon having received a job offer following graduation. Depending on the circumstances, persons with a permit that does not qualify the holder for a permanent residence permit may be granted a temporary residence permit that does qualify for permanent residence. The main immigration categories are discussed further in chapters three to six below.

For third-country citizens a residence permit includes the right to work if not otherwise stated. Generally, a first-time residence permit must be granted prior to entry. As a main rule, it will be granted for at least one year, and may be granted for a period of up to three years. The duration of a permit based on a job offer or to provide services, for example consistent with GATS mode 4, shall not exceed the length of the employment contract offered or the duration of the services contract.

A permanent residence permit is normally granted after three or five years of continuous residence, provided the third country national has:

- completed compulsory Norwegian language training and has achieved a minimum level of spoken Norwegian in the final Norwegian language examination
- completed compulsory training in social studies and has passed the final examination in a language he or she understands
- been self-supporting for the past 12 months.

For these foreign nationals the complete immigration process involves several government agencies. Usually, an application for a residence permit must be presented to a diplomatic mission representing Norway, and the case must be considered in Norway by the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)*. For asylum applications where the applicant is present in Norway, the *local Police* receives and makes a preliminary registration of the application. The applicant is then referred to the *Police Immigration Service (PU)* where s/he is registered in the *Register of foreigners (DUF)*, which is used by all the involved agencies in Norway. The registration of an application for protection involves questioning and guiding the applicant, and registration of her/his identity and travel history. The local police will issue a granted residence permit.

³ Countries not covered by the EEA Agreement or the EFTA Convention.

UDI considers, as first instance, applications for asylum, a residence permit and a permanent residence status, as well as expulsion or the recall of a permit or Norwegian citizenship. Decisions made by UDI may be appealed to the *Immigration Appeals Board (UNE)*.

2.2 Migration

Apart from in 1989, Norway has registered a positive *net immigration*⁴ each year since the late 1960s, cf. Table A10. The annual average net immigration increased considerably after the EU enlargement in 2004 and reached a top in 2012, with an average of 40 500 for the period 2011–2015, cf. Table A6. In 2021, net immigration increased considerably after the drop the previous year due to the pandemic. It reached 19 650, still the third lowest level since 2006. Registered immigration was around the same as in 2018–2019, cf. Table A10.

As a percentage of the total population, the 2021 *immigration* rate of 1.01 was 0.30 percentage points higher than in 2020. Meanwhile, the *emigration* rate of 0.64 was 0.14 points higher than in 2020, cf. Table A2, resulting in a *net immigration* rate for 2021 of 0.37, the highest since 2017.

In 2021, the *total immigration* to Norway was 53 900 persons – composed of 46 600 *foreign citizens* (86 per cent) and 7 300 *Norwegian citizens*. Total immigration was considerably higher than in 2020, cf. Table A10 and Table 2.1 below.

The *total immigration of foreign citizens* to Norway, increased by almost 7 800 persons in 2021 compared to 2020. Of the 46 600 foreign immigrants, 53 per cent were women, cf. Tables A7 and A7f.

In 2021, 64 per cent of the *foreign immigrants* came from European countries, cf. Table A7. The share of immigrants from the EU-member countries in Central and Eastern Europe of the total foreign immigration was 34 per cent, an increase from 27.5 per cent the previous year. The largest registered inflow was again from Poland with almost 8 100 immigrants, which was 4 400 more than in 2020. After Poland, the highest inflows of foreign citizens were from Lithuania (3 100), Syria (2 200), Sweden (2 100) and Germany (1 700), cf. Table A7. These numbers indicate a degree of normalisation of labour immigration after the first year of the pandemic with very strict immigration- and border control.

Emigration has mostly been determined by the economic cycles in Norway, as seen in the relatively high numbers during the economic downturn in 1989–1990, or by exceptional events such as the return migration of many Kosovars during 2000–2001, cf. Table A10. The higher registered emigration rates since 2010 mainly reflect a considerable degree of mobility and circular migration among labour migrants from EU-

⁴ ‘Immigration’ is defined to include persons who have legally moved to Norway with the intention of staying 6 months or more, and who have been registered as such in the *Central Population Register*. Asylum seekers are registered as immigrated once settled in a Norwegian municipality with a residence permit. Normally, an asylum seeker whose application has been rejected will not be registered as immigrated, even if the application process has taken a long time and the return to the home country is delayed for a significant period. His/her presence in Norway is registered in the *Foreigner Data Base (UDB)* administered by the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)*, as are asylum seekers who have not yet received a decision on their application.

member countries. The rate of 0.64 per cent in 2021, was close to the average level since 2011, cf. Table A2.

In 2021, there was a registered *total emigration* of 34 800 persons, 26 000 *foreign citizens* and 8 300 *Norwegians*, cf. Table A10 and Table 2.1 below. This was 6 100 more foreign citizens and 1 400 more Norwegians than in 2020. Women represented 43 per cent of the registered emigrants, cf. Table A10 and A5f. In 2021, the largest registered destination countries for emigration⁵ were Sweden (3 100), Denmark (2 800), Poland (1 800) and the UK (1 300), cf. Table A5. Norwegians were the largest group of registered emigrants (8 300), followed by Poles (5 000), Lithuanians (2 700) and Swedes (1 600), cf. Table A8.

The registered *return-immigration of Norwegian citizens* has been quite stable for the last twenty years, hovering between eight and eleven thousand each year. For the last three years it has been somewhat lower. In 2021, the number was 7 300, only slightly higher than in 2020, cf. Table A10. There was a registered *net emigration* of almost one thousand Norwegian citizens. This means that we are back to what has been the normal situation when it comes to migration of Norwegians.

In 2021, the registered *net immigration of foreign citizens* was 20 600, almost twice as many as in 2020, cf. Table A10 and Table 2.1 below. The net registered immigration surplus was most significant for citizens of Poland (3 000), Syria (2 000), Eritrea (1 000), Afghanistan (800) and Germany (800), cf. Table A9. The share of the net immigration of citizens from European countries was 54 per cent in 2021, a reduction from 58 per cent the previous year. Furthermore, the share of net immigration of citizens from all OECD member countries was 50 per cent in 2021, almost the same as in 2020. Cf. Table A9.

Table 2.1 Registered migration by citizenship. 2012–2021

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Immigration | 78 600 | 75 800 | 70 000 | 67 300 | 66 800 | 58 200 | 52 500 | 52 200 | 38 100 | 53 900 |
| - foreign | 70 000 | 66 900 | 61 400 | 59 100 | 58 500 | 49 800 | 44 400 | 44 600 | 30 800 | 46 600 |
| - Norwegian | 8 600 | 8 900 | 8 600 | 8 200 | 8 300 | 8 400 | 8 100 | 7 600 | 7 300 | 7 300 |
| Emigration: | 31 200 | 35 700 | 31 900 | 37 500 | 40 700 | 36 800 | 34 400 | 26 800 | 26 700 | 34 300 |
| - foreign | 21 300 | 25 000 | 23 300 | 27 400 | 30 700 | 26 600 | 24 500 | 17 550 | 19 900 | 26 000 |
| - Norwegian | 9 900 | 10 700 | 8 600 | 10 100 | 10 000 | 10 200 | 9 900 | 9 250 | 6 900 | 8 300 |
| Net migration | 47 350 | 40 100 | 38 150 | 29 800 | 26 100 | 21 350 | 18 100 | 25 300 | 11 400 | 19 700 |
| - foreign | 48 700 | 41 900 | 38 100 | 31 700 | 27 800 | 23 150 | 19 900 | 27 000 | 11 000 | 20 600 |
| - Norwegian | -1 350 | -1 800 | 50 | -1 900 | -1 700 | -1 800 | -1 800 | -1 700 | 400 | -900 |

Source: Statistics Norway

During the first half of 2022, the registered *net immigration* of 26 500 foreign citizens was more than ten times as many as during the first half of 2021. This extraordinarily high number reflects the significant influx of Ukrainians who were registered as new immigrants during the second quarter of the year. There was a registered net emigration of almost 500 Norwegians during the first half of 2022.

⁵ If the country of destination is unknown, the country of citizenship for the emigrant is registered as destination. For movements between Nordic countries, the national population registers exchange information on movements across common borders.

There are significant differences between various immigrant groups as to whether their stay in Norway is *long-term* or *temporary*, cf. Table A11. In 2021, 72 per cent of those who immigrated between 2007 and 2017 were still residing in Norway. The highest *retention rate* after five years was 97 per cent for immigrants from Syria, 94 per cent for Somalia, and 88 per cent for Iraq. It is also worth noticing that the retention rate in 2021 for immigrants from Poland arriving between 2007 and 2017 was 81 per cent, despite significant return migration in sheer numbers. Among immigrants from the main countries of origin, immigrants from USA (37), Canada (39) and Finland (42) had the lowest retention rates.

During 2021, 14 500 persons were granted a *permanent residence permit* in Norway, down 3 500 from 2020. Around 39 per cent of those granted permanent residence, had received their first permit based on family links and only 13 per cent based on a need for protection/asylum.

In 2022, 8 800 foreign citizens had been granted a permanent residence permit by the end of October. This was 2 800 fewer than during the same period in 2021.

2.3 Immigration according to entry categories

The statistics on immigration distinguish between four main categories of entry: *family*, *labour*, *protection* and *education/training/exchange*.⁶ The categories are constructed based on information from the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)* regarding:

- (i) the type of first-time *residence permit* granted to citizens of third countries who are registered as immigrants in the Norwegian population register; and
- (ii) the *self-declared reason for immigration* to Norway registered by non-Nordic⁷ citizens of EU/EFTA-member countries who intend to stay in Norway for three months or more.⁸

Immigrants from the other *Nordic countries* are not covered by these sources, as they do not need any type of residence permit to live and work in Norway and are not subject to the EU/EFTA-registration requirement, and because they are not asked for the reason for moving to Norway when they register with the *Central Population Register*. However, their very high labour market participation rates indicate that immigration of citizens from Nordic countries is mainly for work.

During the period 1990-2021, 972 000 non-Nordic foreign citizens immigrated to Norway, cf. Table A23.

During this period, as many as 346 000 persons or 36 per cent were admitted as *family members* of residents. 338 000 or 35 per cent, came as *labour immigrants*. More than 180 000 or 19 per cent, had been granted *protection or residence on humanitarian grounds*, while 100 000 or 10 per cent, arrived for *education*, including *au pairs*.

⁶ Cf. <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/innvgrunn> for details.

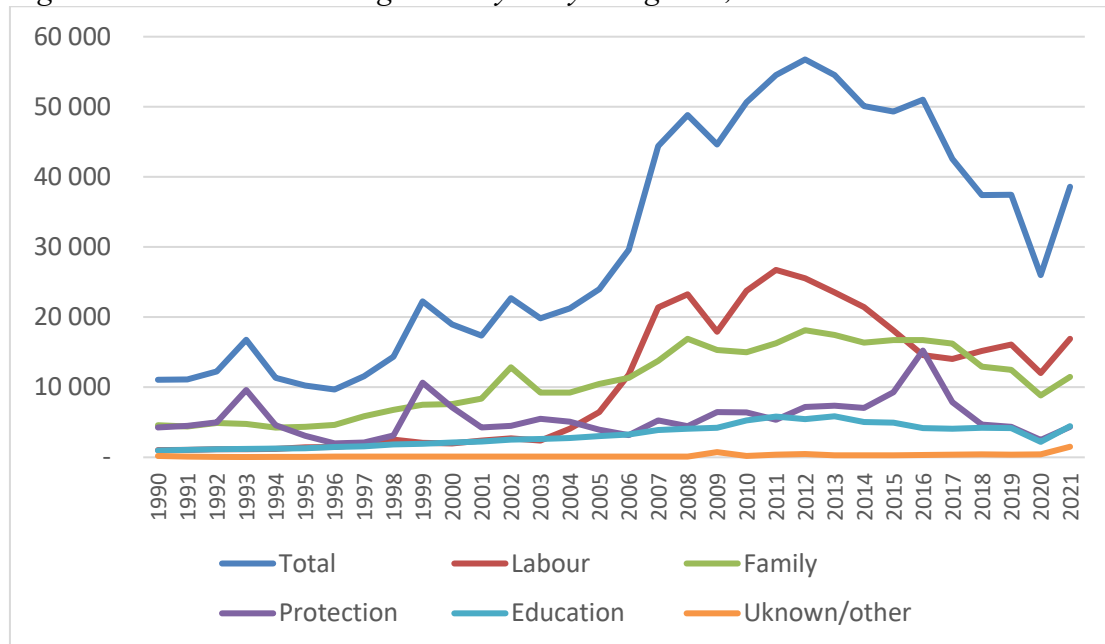
⁷ Nordic countries are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and the autonomous region of Åland.

⁸ Switzerland is a member country of EFTA but not part of the EEA. Therefore, the designation EU/EFTA is used.

Since 2006 labour immigration has been the major immigration category, except in 2016 and 2017, cf. Figure 2.1.⁹ The share of registered immigration based on a need for international protection increased sharply in 2016, but has since declined, cf. Figure 2.1. In 2022, we already know that the numbers granted international protection will be higher than ever before and thus become the most important immigration category.

For the period 1990–2021, the largest number of non-Nordic immigrations were citizens from Poland (145 000), Lithuania (59 400), Germany (41 700), Somalia (34 100), the Philippines (33 600) and Syria (35 000), cf. Table A23-1.

Figure 2.1 Non-Nordic immigration by entry categories, and total. 1990–2021



Source: Statistics Norway

In 2021, almost 38 600 new non-Nordic immigrations were registered, 12 600 more than in 2020 and approximately the same number as in 2018–2019. Labour immigration was the largest entry category (44 per cent), cf. Table A23 and Figure 2.2 below.

In 2021, 60 per cent came from Europe, five percentage points higher than the previous year. Twenty-five per cent of all the non-Nordic immigrants who arrived that year came from countries in Asia, including Turkey. This share was three percentage points lower than in 2020. In addition, 10 per cent came from Africa, 6 per cent from North and South America or Oceania and a 0.25 per cent were stateless. Cf. Table A23-2.

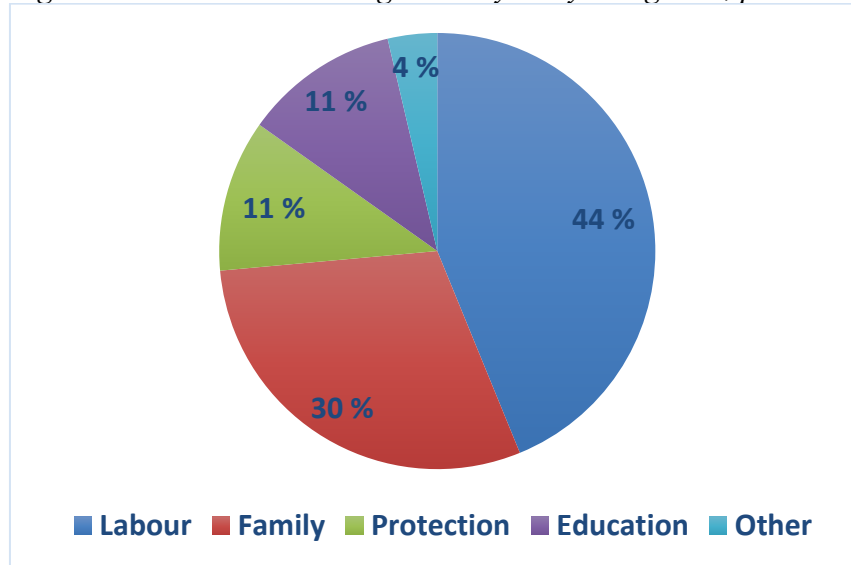
Approximately 11 per cent of those who immigrated in 2021, were in the *protection category*, a slightly higher share than in 2020. Among them, 80 per cent arrived on

⁹ The rise in the category “unknown” in 2009 was a consequence of the removal of the requirement for a work or residence permit for citizens from non-Nordic EU/EFTA-member countries, effective from September that year, while the EU/EFTA registration requirement was established from 2010 only and carries no sanctions for non-compliance. This has recently become an increasing problem, resulting in almost 1200 persons being registered without reason for immigration in 2021, cf. tab. A23.

the annual quota for resettlement of refugees and the rest had been granted a permit following an asylum application. In 2021, 41 per cent of the immigrants in this category were citizens of Syria, cf. Table A23-2.

Labour immigration accounted for 44 per cent of the total non-Nordic immigration in 2021, two percentage points lower than in 2020. Eighty-nine per cent were from European countries. Poland was the largest labour immigration country (34 per cent) followed by Lithuania and Romania, cf. Table A23-2.

Figure 2.2 Non-Nordic immigration by entry categories, per cent. 2021



Source: Statistics Norway

From 2020 to 2021, the number immigrating from non-Nordic countries for *family reasons* increased by 2 600 persons. However, there was a decrease of four percentage points, from 34 to 30 per cent, in their share of total immigration, cf. Table A23. The main countries of origin of family immigrants were Poland, Eritrea and India cf. Table A23.2.

Among the 11 500 non-Nordic family migrants who arrived in 2021, 76 per cent, came through *family reunification*. The largest numbers were from Poland, Eritrea and India. Of the total family immigration in 2021, only 13 per cent were reunited with refugees living in Norway, cf. Table A23.2.

The remaining family migrants (24 per cent) came to *establish a family*, mostly through marriage, cf. Table A23.2. Of these, 38 per cent came to live with a person in Norway who did not have an immigrant background. The largest numbers in this sub-category were from Thailand, the USA and the Philippines. Only 172 immigrants came to establish a family with a Norwegian-born person with two immigrant parents. Fifty-one per cent of this group of immigrants came from Pakistan or Turkey.

For the whole period 1990–2021, 232 800 persons – or 67 per cent of all non-Nordic family immigrants – came for family reunification, while 113 400 came to establish a new family, mostly through marriage, cf. Table A23. Of the latter category, 53 per

cent involved a reference person without an immigrant background, while four per cent involved a Norwegian-born person with two immigrant parents.¹⁰

The share of immigrants arriving for *education, training and cultural exchange*, including *au pairs*, increased from 9 to 11.5 per cent in 2021, cf. Table A23-2.

The share with *other or unknown reason for immigration* increased from one per cent in 2020 to almost 4 per cent in 2021, cf. Table A23-2.¹¹

By the end of 2021, 70 per cent (675 600) of the non-Nordic immigrants who had immigrated since 1990, were still living in Norway. The remaining 296 500 had either emigrated or died during this period.¹² Among refugees and persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds, 85 per cent remained, while this was the situation for 37 per cent of the international students, au pairs and trainees. Since a large share of the recent arrivals in the latter category was still studying, the total or average figure for the whole period may be somewhat misleading as an indicator of the long-term retention rate. For non-Nordic family immigrants, the average retention rate was 77 per cent while it was 64 per cent for labour-related immigrants. Cf. also Table A23.1.

¹⁰ For more information on patterns of family migration to Norway during the period 1990-2020, cf. Molstad, Gulbrandsen & Steinkellner (2022) [Family immigration and marriage patterns 1990-2020](#). Statistics Norway Reports 2022/03 (English abstract)

¹¹ The primary reason is the lack of such registration of immigration category for some nationals of EEA- countries as they are not obliged to state their reason for immigration.

¹² Cf. Statbank of Statistics Norway, Table 06318 <https://www.ssb.no/statistikkbanken/select-Table/hovedtabellHjem.asp?KortNavnWeb=innvgrunn&CMSSubjectArea=befolkning&PLanguage=1&checked=true>

3 Family immigration

3.1 Legislation and policy

The *Immigration Act* stipulates that close family members of Norwegian and Nordic citizens and of foreign citizens who have a residence permit without restrictions, also have the right to residence. The most important categories of close family members defined in the *Immigration Act* are:

- Spouse – both parties must be over the age of 18, and they will have to live together in Norway
- Cohabitant – both parties must be over the age of 18, have lived together for at least two years and intend to continue their cohabitation. If the parties have joint children, the requirement of two years cohabitation does not apply
- Unmarried child under the age of 18
- Parents of an unmarried child below 18 if they satisfy certain conditions.

In general, the family member living in Norway (the reference person) must satisfy a subsistence (income) requirement. As of August 2022, the annual income should be at least NOK 300 988. As of October 2021, the introduction benefit (cf. chapter 9.1) no longer count as income when assessing if the income requirement is met.

The subsistence requirement includes three elements:

- i. The reference person must render it probable that s/he will meet the income requirement for the period for which the application applies (usually for one year)
- ii. The reference person must provide documentation from the latest tax assessment showing that s/he satisfied the income requirement during the previous year
- iii. The reference person cannot have received financial support or qualification benefits from the social services during the last 12 months.

The requirement is general and applies to all reference persons, with some exemptions, for example when the reference person is a child, or when the applicant is a child below the age of 15 without care persons in his/her country of origin. In addition, when certain conditions are met, exemptions are made when the reference person has refugee status.

In addition to the subsistence requirement, the *Immigration Act* stipulates that the reference person in certain cases must satisfy the requirement of having had four years of education or work in Norway. The four-year requirement applies when the reference person has a residence permit based on 1) international protection, 2) humanitarian grounds, or 3) family ties. Furthermore, it only applies in cases of family *establishment* (family formation/intended family life), and not in cases of family *reunification*.¹³

¹³ A Frisch Centre report (Bratsberg and Raaum) from 2021, commissioned by the Directorate of Immigration, studies the (long-term) effects of changes in the regulations concerning family immigration, particularly the income requirement, on integration. <https://www.frisch.uio.no/english/publications/?pubid=1570>

With the purpose of combating forced marriages, both spouses/parties seeking family *establishment* must be at least 24 years of age. Exemptions are possible if the relationship obviously is voluntary for both parties.

Applications for a family immigration permit may be rejected in cases where the sponsor has been granted protection in Norway, but not a permanent residence permit, and the family may exercise their family life in a safe country to which their overall ties are stronger than to Norway.

New policies and measures – family migration

An amendment to the Norwegian Immigration Regulations to exclude social integration benefits from counting towards the income requirement in family migration cases came into force from October 1, 2021. The objective of the amendment is to ensure a higher level of self-sufficiency among individuals who wish to bring their family members to Norway.

3.2 Permits and registrations – family migrants

The total number of new family related permits increased from 9 000 granted in 2020 to 10 200 in 2021. In addition, there were 4 600 EU/EFTA-registrations for first-time immigration based on family-ties, 600 more than in 2020. For the combined category of permits and registrations, there was an increase of 1 800, cf. Table 3.1. Thirty per cent of the permits to citizens of third countries were granted to persons with family ties to residents in Norway with a refugee background.

In 2021, the major third countries of origin for family related permits were Eritrea and India. The main EU-countries of origin were Poland and Lithuania, cf. Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Non-Nordic family immigration – major countries of origin. New permits granted and EU/EFTA-registrations. 2012–2021

| Countries of origin | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total, of which: | 24 333 | 24 136 | 22 238 | 21 962 | 22 761 | 21 227 | 17 021 | 17 327 | 12 956 | 14 779 |
| Poland | 4 556 | 4 687 | 4 291 | 3 655 | 2 775 | 2 387 | 2 040 | 1 757 | 1 180 | 1 719 |
| Eritrea | 728 | 880 | 664 | 916 | 1 534 | 1 506 | 874 | 913 | 855 | 987 |
| India | 641 | 766 | 909 | 875 | 937 | 974 | 975 | 1 436 | 643 | 895 |
| Syria | 33 | 109 | 209 | 647 | 2 059 | 2 810 | 902 | 945 | 872 | 841 |
| Lithuania | 2 411 | 2 228 | 1 780 | 1 294 | 1 118 | 1 267 | 1 205 | 990 | 530 | 623 |
| USA | 584 | 494 | 379 | 470 | 417 | 424 | 467 | 518 | 428 | 541 |
| Philippines | 1 007 | 972 | 992 | 1 157 | 1 171 | 867 | 923 | 884 | 505 | 507 |
| Thailand | 1 227 | 1 027 | 517 | 973 | 1 342 | 931 | 874 | 652 | 514 | 339 |
| Serbia | 247 | 303 | 339 | 384 | 401 | 422 | 378 | 467 | 284 | 241 |
| Somalia | 1 210 | 1 305 | 1 847 | 1 386 | 956 | 618 | 471 | 427 | 289 | 219 |
| Other countries | 11 689 | 11 365 | 10 311 | 10 205 | 10 051 | 9 021 | 7 912 | 8 338 | 6 856 | 7 867 |

Source: UDI

By the end of October 2022, 9 600 new family permits had been granted. This was around 1 200 more than during the same period in 2021. At the same time, there had been about 3 900 new registrations of family members from EU/EFTA-countries. This was 200 more such registrations than during the same period in 2021.

4 Labour migration

4.1 Legislation and policy

Labour immigration from EU/EFTA-countries

The common Nordic labour market, established in 1954, allows free mobility between the member countries and thereby exempts citizens of the Nordic countries from the general rules on residence permits and registration. Citizens from other EU/EFTA member countries do not need a permit to stay or work in Norway, but they should register with the police when their stay in Norway exceeds three months. There are no sanctions for non-registration. Non-Nordic EU/EFTA-citizens acquire the right to permanent residence after five years of legal residence.

Labour immigration from countries outside EU/EFTA

Third country nationals who want to work or operate their own business in Norway must hold a valid residence permit, cf. Chapter 2.1. A general requirement for all work-related residence permits is that wage and working conditions for the job in question should correspond to those for Norwegian workers in similar jobs.

The main categories of work-related permits for immigrants from outside the EU/EFTA member countries are:

- i. *Skilled worker*: Persons who document that they have completed higher education or have education or qualifications corresponding to vocational training at the level of Norwegian upper secondary education. The skills that form the basis for the residence permit must be relevant for the job in question. New permits may be granted without a test of labour market needs, as long as the annual quota is not exceeded. If the quota is reached, further applications from third-country skilled workers will be subject to a labour market test. The annual quota for new permits for skilled third country workers has been fixed at 5 000 since it was introduced in 2002. The number of such permits has never previously reached this ceiling but did so in 2022. Skilled workers may sponsor applications for family reunification and can qualify for permanent residence after three years. The worker can change employer without applying for a new permit if the tasks and duties in the new job correspond with the qualifications that served as a basis for the permit.
- ii. *Skilled service supplier, posted workers or independent contractor*: A *posted worker* is employed in a foreign enterprise and carries out an assignment in Norway of limited duration on behalf of their employer. An *independent contractor* is a person who has established a business abroad and has entered a contract with a Norwegian establishment to provide services of a limited duration. Under certain circumstances, they are entitled to sponsor applications for family reunification, but do not qualify for permanent residence. When formally employed and paid by an employer registered in Norway, such workers are treated as skilled workers, cf. category i.
- iii. *Skilled self-employed person*: Self-employed skilled persons who intend to engage in a permanent business activity are entitled to a residence permit if the presence of the self-employed person in Norway and active participation in running the business is necessary for the establishment or continued operation of the business. Such workers are entitled to sponsor applications for family reunification and can qualify for permanent residence.

- iv. *Seasonal worker*: A residence permit can be granted for up to six months for seasonal work, with no right to sponsor applications for family reunification or to obtain a permanent residence permit. This type of residence permit is linked to a specific job and employer in Norway.
- v. *Jobseeker permit for researchers and recent graduates from a Norwegian university or college*: A work permit may be granted for a limited period (12 months) to search for a relevant job. The immigrant can work in any type of employment during the period of the job-search permit. The immigrant must satisfy a subsistence (income) requirement before a permit is granted.
- vi. *Students with study permit* may have a part-time job for up to 20 hours a week during the study period. S/he may work full time during study breaks.
- vii. *Worker from the Barents region of Russia*: A worker from the Barents region of Russia can be granted a residence permit for work in the northern part of Norway independent of skill level. Workers who live in the Barents region and are to commute across the border for part-time work in northern Norway can also be granted a work permit.¹⁴

There is neither a labour market test nor quota restrictions for skilled workers coming from a *World Trade Organisation (WTO)* member state and who are working in Norway as an *employee of an international company*, for *skilled intra-corporate transferees* or *skilled workers posted as service providers*.¹⁵

New policies and measures – labour migration

Due to a considerable shortage of high-skilled labour in Norway, the Government has increased the annual quota for skilled workers from 5 000 to 6 000 residence permits annually in 2022 and in 2023.

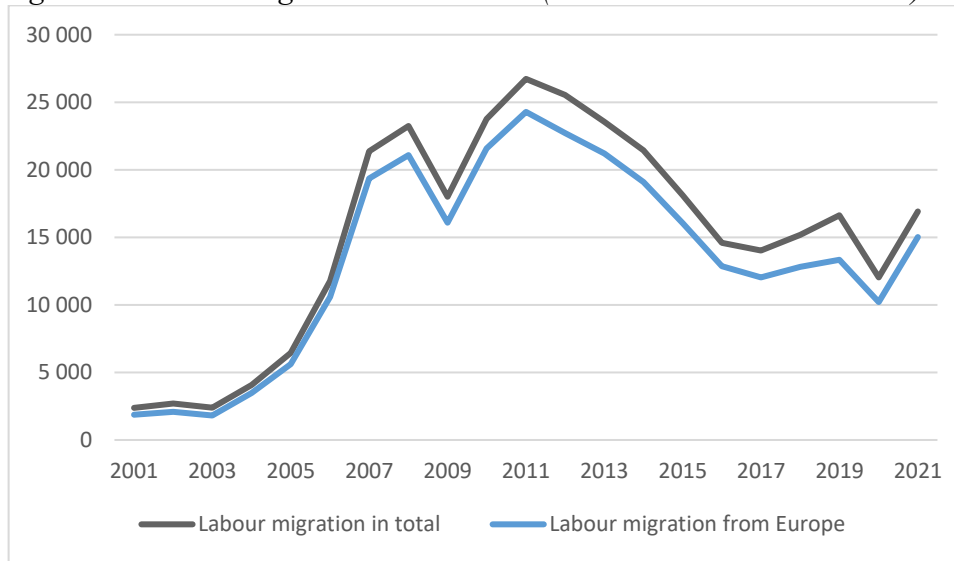
4.2 Permits and registrations – labour immigrants

As Figure 4.1 indicates, the total number of non-Nordic labour immigration reached a top in 2011. In the following years, the labour immigration to Norway declined, primarily due to lower immigration from EU/EFTA member countries, followed by a slight increase again during the economic upswing from 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a sharp fall in labour migration to Norway in 2020. In 2021 the labour migration to Norway picked up and was back at prepandemic levels.

¹⁴ Very few such permits have been granted recently, one in 2021 and one in 2022, before the invasion of Ukraine.

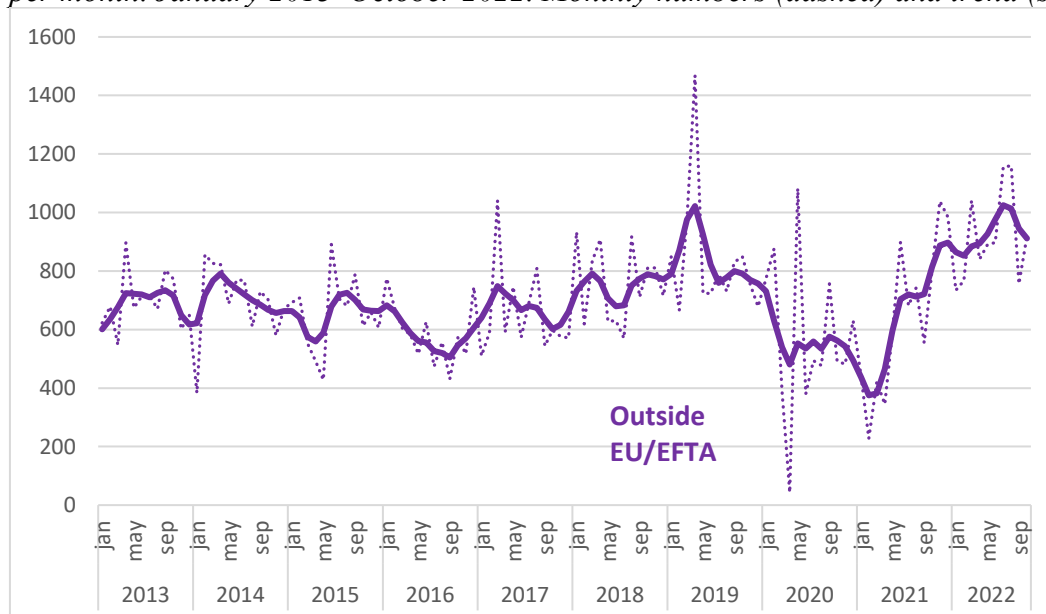
¹⁵ Consistent with Norway's GATS mode 4 commitments.

Figure 4.1 Labour migration 2001–2021. (Nordic citizens not included)



Source: Statistics Norway

Figure 4.2 New work-related permits granted to persons from outside the EU/EFTA per month. January 2013–October 2022. Monthly numbers (dashed) and trend (solid)



Source: UDI and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

As Figure 4.2 indicates, the number of new work-related residence permits for persons from outside EU/EFTA member countries fluctuated between 600 and 800 per month in the period 2013–2017. From 2018 to the first half of 2019 there was a small increase in such labour immigration, followed by a large drop due to the pandemic in 2020 and the first half of 2021. Since then, there has been an increase. The number of granted permits does not fully reflect the number of labour immigrants that come to Norway. For example, during the pandemic, many workers, who had been granted a residence permit, were not allowed to enter due to the closed borders.

Table 4.1 shows both work-related residence permits and EU/EFTA-registrations with work as the stated reason for immigration, per year since 2013. The number of

permits given to third country citizens¹⁶ for seasonal work and for skilled work, increased from 2020 to 2021.

Among the EU/EFTA-registrations for work, the two largest countries of origin continued to be Poland (31 per cent of registrations in 2022, as of October) and Lithuania (12 per cent of registrations). Altogether, EU member countries in Central and Eastern Europe accounted for roughly two thirds of labour-related EU/EFTA-registrations in 2022 (through October).

In 2022 (through October), India was the largest country of origin for new skilled workers from outside of the EU/EFTA area, and they accounted for roughly 18 per cent of the permits given to skilled workers. Vietnam and Ukraine were the two largest source countries for seasonal workers in 2022 (as of October) and accounted for 33 and 13 per cent of seasonal work permits, respectively.

Table 4.1 Work related residence permits granted and EU/EFTA-registrations, by type. 2013–2022

| | New permits | | | Renewals of permits | Total permits issued | EU/EFTA-registrations |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|-------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Skilled work | Seasonal work | Other | | | |
| 2013 | 3 845 | 2 495 | 1 990 | 4 859 | 13 189 | 39 021 |
| 2014 | 3 737 | 2 531 | 2 245 | 4 982 | 13 495 | 34 244 |
| 2015 | 2 875 | 2 290 | 2 553 | 5 117 | 12 835 | 26 593 |
| 2016 | 2 488 | 2 401 | 2 187 | 5 246 | 12 322 | 23 496 |
| 2017 | 2 815 | 2 647 | 2 584 | 5 010 | 13 056 | 22 995 |
| 2018 | 3 771 | 2 905 | 2 428 | 5 331 | 14 435 | 21 195 |
| 2019 | 4 398 | 3 414 | 2 416 | 5 190 | 15 418 | 19 285 |
| 2020 | 2 967 | 2 363 | 1 475 | 5 303 | 12 108 | 12 951 |
| 2021 | 4 145 | 1 402 | 1 801 | 5 051 | 12 399 | 14 429 |
| 2022 (October) | 5 084 | 2 766 | 1 841 | 4 755 | 14 446 | 13 630 |

Source: UDI

Through October 2022, the number of EU/EFTA-registrations for work was 15 per cent higher than during the same period in 2021. The number of first permits to skilled workers from outside EU/EFTA as of October 2022 was 52 per cent higher than during the same period in 2021. First permits to seasonal workers were more than doubled (120 per cent higher) than during the same period in 2021. Many workers were prevented from coming to Norway in 2021 due to the measures designed to limit the COVID-19 pandemic.

Immigration from Nordic countries

Because citizens from the Nordic countries are exempt from the rules on residence permits and registration, no statistics exist on the labour immigration from these countries. However, like immigrants from other EU/EFTA-countries, the vast majority come to work. Net immigration of Nordic citizens averaged over 3 000 persons per year in the period 2006–2014, but then declined dramatically and became negative in 2016. In 2018, the net migration from the Nordic countries changed from negative to barely positive. The net immigration was still slightly positive in 2021.

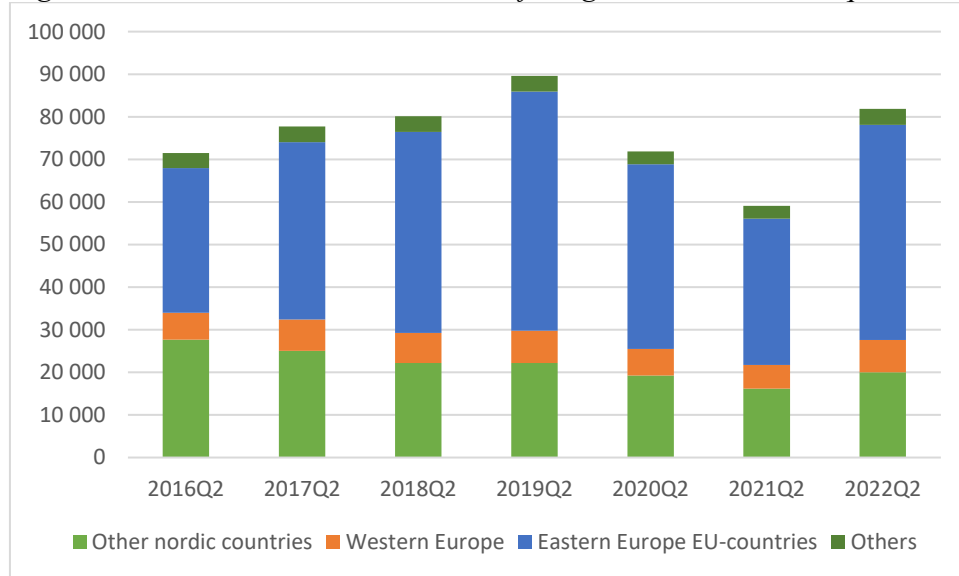
¹⁶ As measured by number of new work-related permits granted.

4.3 Labour migrants and service providers on short-term stay

Persons staying in Norway for a period of less than six months as well as persons commuting across the border for work on a regular (daily or weekly) basis are registered as "non-residents" and are not included in the regular register-based statistics on employment. However, *Statistics Norway* publishes statistics on employment for persons on short-term assignments in Norway from several different sources, including registrations with the *Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration* and the tax authorities.

As Figure 4.3 indicates, the number of foreign citizens in short-term or non-resident employment in Norway increased every year from 2016 to 2019. This trend reversed in 2020, when the number of non-resident workers fell sharply. This is in large part due to the measures taken in Norway and other countries to limit the pandemic. The number of foreign citizens in short-term employment has increased the last year, but the level was still slightly below pre-pandemic levels in the second quarter of 2022.

Figure 4.3 Short term and non-resident foreign workers. Second quarter 2016–2022



Source: Statistics Norway

5 Immigration for education and training

5.1 Legislation and policy

A student from an EU/EFTA member state has a right of residence in Norway for more than three months provided the person in question has been admitted to an accredited educational institution or an upper secondary school. This condition applies when the primary purpose of the stay is education, and the person can support him/herself and any accompanying family members. The student must hold a private medical insurance or a *European Health Insurance Card*. As indicated, the student may bring spouse, cohabitant, or children to Norway.

The student should register with the police in Norway. The registration is only needed when s/he first arrives in Norway regardless of how long s/he plans to live in Norway and whether her/his stay here is interrupted.

A third country citizen who has been admitted to an approved educational institution, for example a university, may be granted a residence permit to study in Norway. To obtain this, the applicant must document that s/he is able to finance the stay in Norway and that s/he will have suitable housing arrangements. A third country international student who has been granted a residence permit for education, has the right to work part-time in Norway.¹⁷ A concrete offer of employment is not required for this right.

After completing the studies, a third country international graduate may apply for a residence permit based on an offer of employment to do skilled work in Norway. S/he may be granted a temporary residence permit for up to one year to seek such employment. Cf. Chapter 4.1.

A third country national, between 18 and 30 years old, may be granted a residence permit as an *au pair* for up to two years provided that the purpose of the stay is cultural exchange and that the contract with the host family satisfies certain requirements. In its political platform, the current Government has declared that they will discontinue the *au pair* scheme, as a measure against social dumping.¹⁸

Third country citizens who are qualified skilled workers, but who need additional education or practical training to obtain the necessary recognition of their qualifications in Norway, may be granted a residence permit for a total period of two years to fulfil the Norwegian language requirements needed for an authorisation to work in a regulated profession.

5.2 Permits and registrations – education

In 2021, 4 400 first time permits for students from outside the EU/EFTA area were granted for education and training purposes. This was 1 300 more than in 2020. Of these, 2 400 of the new permits were granted to students, and an additional 350 permits concerned *au pairs*. In addition, 110 to *post doctorates*. There were 6 000 new

¹⁷ Work is permitted for a maximum of 20 hours a week during study periods, whilst full-time work is allowed during the academic breaks.

¹⁸ [Hurdalsplattformen 2021](#). See the chapter on work and social issues. (Only in Norwegian)

EU/EFTA-registrations for education purposes.¹⁹ Altogether, this indicates that 10 400 new permits were granted to non-Nordic foreign students, au pairs etc. in 2021.

The major source countries for non-Nordic international students in 2021 were still Germany and France. Over 80 per cent of the new *au pair* permits were granted to citizens of the Philippines.

Table 5.1 Permits granted and registrations for education and training – Major student categories. 2012–2021

| Migration category ²⁰ | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| Total, of which: | 11 556 | 11 144 | 11 804 | 11 381 | 11 164 | 11 664 | 11 880 | 11 905 | 5 491 | 9 450 |
| Student (EU/EFTA) | 4 210 | 4 401 | 4 694 | 5 062 | 5 662 | 5 765 | 6 235 | 6 277 | 2 389 | 5 022 |
| Student (not EU/EFTA) | 3 377 | 3 399 | 3 691 | 3 706 | 3 218 | 3 758 | 3 613 | 3 835 | 2 007 | 3 399 |
| Post doctorate | 194 | 159 | 162 | 202 | 218 | 240 | 262 | 279 | 107 | 123 |
| Folk high school or denominational school ²¹ | 78 | 103 | 86 | 664 | 549 | 546 | 500 | 431 | 238 | 298 |
| Norwegian language studies ²² | 1 572 | 854 | 927 | 126 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Au pair | 1 585 | 1 667 | 1 481 | 1 336 | 1 182 | 963 | 888 | 691 | 538 | 345 |
| Trainee | 164 | 180 | 264 | 250 | 275 | 303 | 271 | 221 | 48 | 1 |
| Other | 376 | 381 | 499 | 35 | 58 | 89 | 111 | 171 | 164 | 262 |

Source: UDI

By October 2022, the total number of new permits for education and training was 9 800, an increase of 20 per cent compared 2021. The low number of permits in 2020 and 2021 was related to the outbreak of COVID-19.

Change of status

In 2021, 896 international students etc. (including au pairs) from third countries changed their status.²³ This was 100 more than in 2020, but stable compared to 2018 and 2019, cf. Table 5.2 below. Of these, 55 per cent received a permanent or temporary permit as skilled worker, while 12 per cent were granted a permit based on new family ties. The rest, 33 per cent, were granted a 12-month permit to search for and start in an appropriate, skilled job.

¹⁹ Some of the new EU/EFTA-registrations could be by persons who had an expired permit granted before the registration system was in place at the start of 2010.

²⁰ Citizens of the other Nordic countries are excluded from these statistics, as they do not need any form of permit to study or work in Norway.

²¹ This combined category has been used since 2015. For earlier years, students in denominational schools are included in “Other”.

²² A permit to study the Norwegian language, if the purpose of the stay was to obtain skilled work in Norway, could be granted until May 2014.

²³ The general rule for a permit to be classified as ‘status change’ is that the period between the expiry of the old permit and the validation of the new permit should be less than six months. Both the new and the old permit must be valid for at least three months. Changes to or from the reason stated in an EU/EFTA-registration are not included.

Table 5.2 Status change for non-EU/EFTA international students. 2012–2021

| New status | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Work | 458 | 475 | 410 | 357 | 245 | 301 | 338 | 404 | 341 | 492 |
| Family | 185 | 190 | 162 | 229 | 198 | 187 | 175 | 167 | 129 | 115 |
| Job search | 127 | 161 | 271 | 255 | 308 | 319 | 385 | 312 | 305 | 289 |
| Total | 770 | 826 | 843 | 841 | 751 | 807 | 898 | 883 | 785 | 896 |

Source: UDI

The main third countries of origin for international students etc., who changed their residence status, were Pakistan, the Philippines, Nepal, Iran and China. These five countries constituted slightly above two fifths of all status changes among citizens from 60 third countries in 2021.

5.3 International students in the education system

In this sub-chapter, international students are defined as those who have migrated for the purpose of education, including both international students seeking a degree²⁴ and exchange students²⁵.

In 2021, more than 13 000 international degree seeking students were enrolled in higher education in Norway. As Figure 5.1 illustrates, a large majority of the students come from Asia or Europe. If we look at individual countries, we find that the highest numbers of students come from China (844), followed by Iran (791), Germany (725), Sweden (672) and Denmark (667)²⁶.

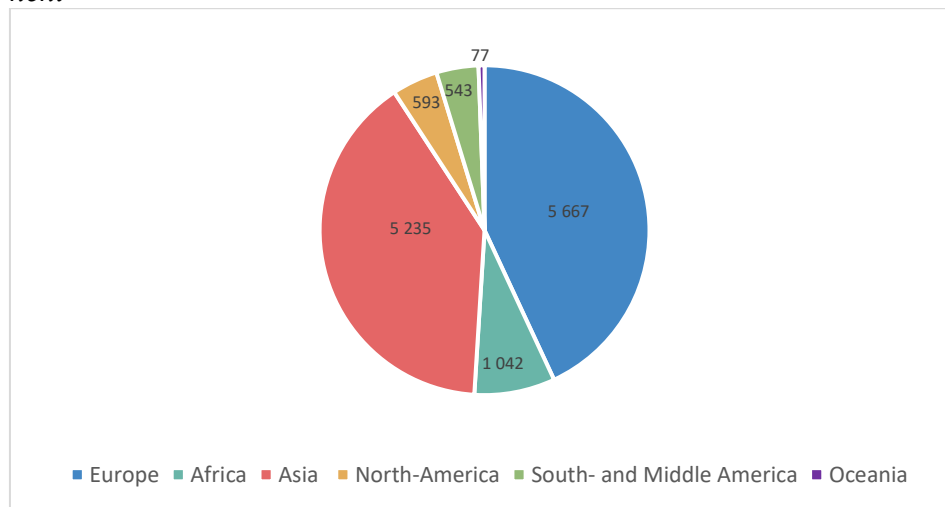
Until 2023, public higher education institutions in Norway have not charged tuition fees for ordinary study programs. In the budget for 2023, the Government proposed that from the autumn semester of 2023, universities and colleges should charge at least cost-covering tuition fees from new degree students from outside the EEA and Switzerland. The proposal for tuition fees was passed by the Storting.

²⁴ *International degree seeking students* are operationalised as "students who have their upper secondary education from abroad and who have moved to Norway less than five years ago" (Statistics Norway). Unfortunately, this definition results in far more international degree students than those who cross the border with the intention of studying in Norway. This will for example apply to people who come to Norway to work and their family members, or refugees and asylum seekers with a residence permit, who are also students.

²⁵ *Exchange students* are "credit-mobile students" that are enrolled in a program in one country and take a limited number of credits in a different country.

²⁶ Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (2022) [Status report for higher education 2022 \(hkdir.no\)](https://hkdir.no)

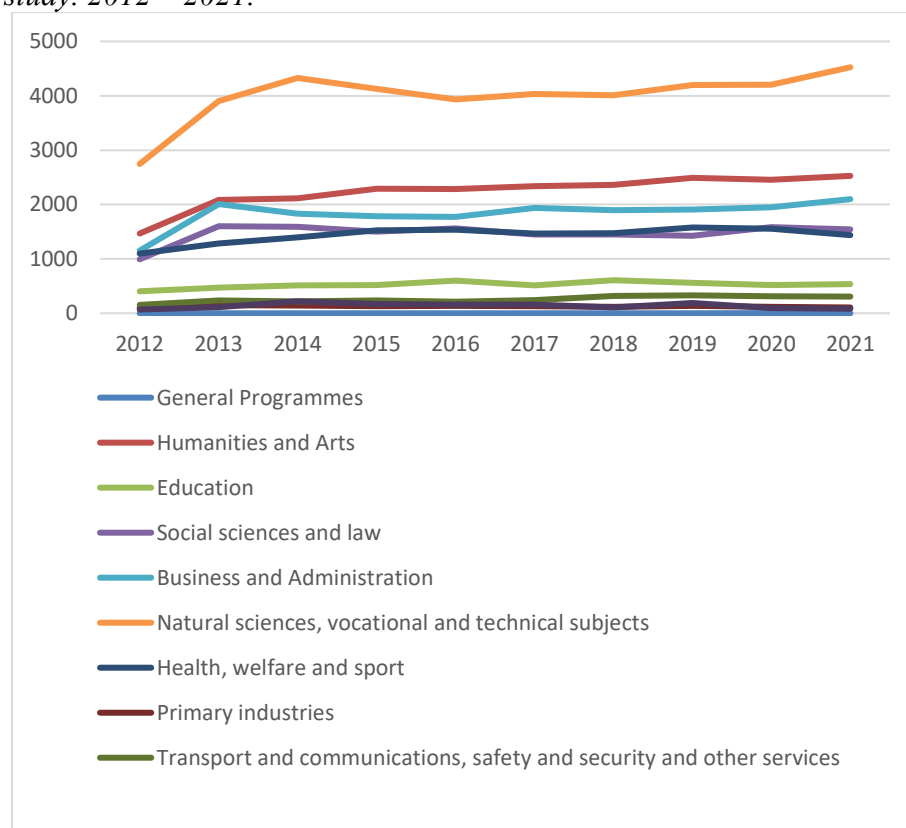
Figure 5.1 Share of international degree seeking students in Norway 2021, by continent



Source: The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education and Statistics Norway

As Figure 5.2 illustrates, natural science is by far the most popular field among the international degree seeking students. About one third of the students are enrolled in such programs, making them overrepresented within this field. Among all students in Norway, about 18 per cent are enrolled in natural sciences.

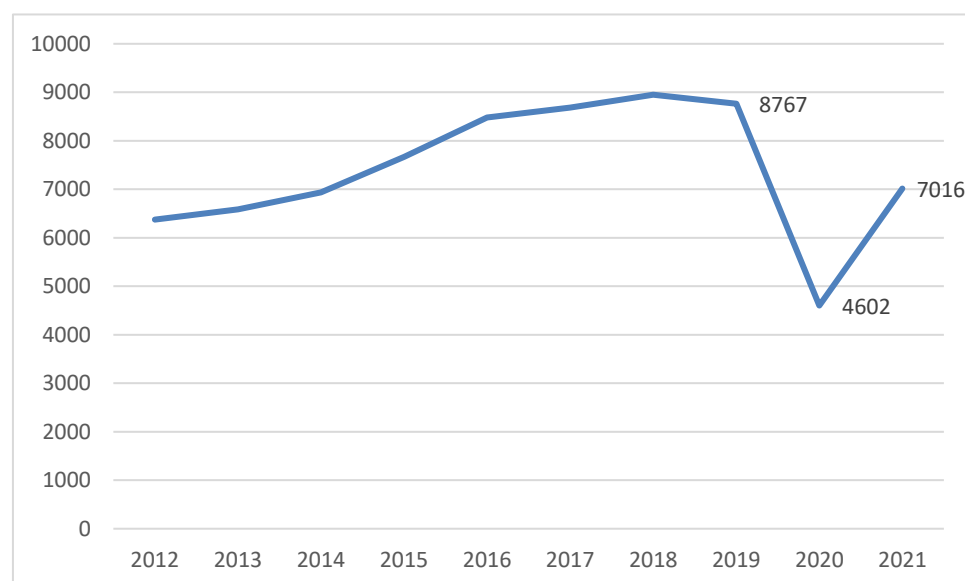
Figure 5.2 Number of international degree-seeking students in Norway by field of study. 2012 – 2021.



Source: The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education and Statistics Norway

Due to the travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic there was a dramatic drop in the number of incoming exchange students in 2020. As shown in Figure 5.3, the number of incoming students was almost 8 800 in 2019, but only 4 600 in 2020. Even though there were still some travel restrictions and a lot of uncertainty regarding the pandemic, there was a considerable increase from 2020 to 2021, with over 7 000 incoming exchange students. A large majority of the incoming exchange students come from Europe. If we look at individual countries, we find that the highest number of exchange students come from Germany and France, followed by Netherlands and Italy.²⁷

Figure 5.3 Number of incoming exchange students in Norway, 2011 – 2020



Source: The Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education

The availability of courses taught in English is an important enabler for both international degree-seeking students and exchange students from outside Scandinavia. Norwegian is still the dominant language of instruction in higher education, but there has been a significant increase in the number of courses taught in English. The share of courses taught in English was 15.3 per cent in 2011 and 26.4 per cent in 2021²⁸. There are, however, great differences between fields of study. In 2021, about half of the courses within natural sciences were conducted in English, compared to just nine per cent of the courses within the field of education. There are also significant variations between educational levels: In 2020, almost 10 per cent of the students for a lower degree were registered for courses where the planned language of instruction was English. For a higher degree, the corresponding figure was 66 per cent.

5.4 Reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees in higher education

Several higher education institutions have implemented measures to welcome and integrate refugees. The measures include language courses (in Norwegian and English) for Ukrainian students, and meeting places and support for Ukrainian researchers and

²⁷ Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (2022) Status report for higher education 2022 (hkdir.no)

²⁸ Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (2022) [Status report for higher education 2022 \(hkdir.no\)](https://hkdir.no/status-report-for-higher-education-2022)

academics. The institutions have also mapped their existing program portfolio to find programs or modules (taught in English) that are suitable for newly arrived refugees. Also, application deadlines have been deferred for this group.

In order to adapt study programs and increase the capacity to host refugee students, the Government allocated additional funds in 2022, corresponding to 1 000 study places. For these additional places, 540 such students were registered.

To make it easier for refugees to start/or continue higher education in Norway, *the Ministry of Education and Research* has also adopted temporary changes in the criteria for admission to higher education. The changes apply in the academic year 2022-2023

A dedicated website²⁹ has been established where refugees can access information about the courses and programs offered, as well as information about the rights and obligations for refugees who intend to apply for higher education in Norway. The page is updated regularly.

²⁹ [Study in Norway for refugees / StudyinNorway / Home - Study in Norway](#)

6 Asylum seekers and refugees

6.1 Legislation and policy

Protection

The *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)* processes asylum applications in accordance with the *Immigration Act* and the *Immigration Regulations*. A refugee within the definition of the act is a foreigner who falls under Article 1A of the *1951 UN Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, or who is entitled to protection pursuant to Norway's other international obligations, such as the *European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)*. An asylum seeker who is deemed not to meet the criteria for being granted asylum, is to be considered for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds.

UNHCR gives recommendations on protection issues. The Norwegian authorities take these into account when making an independent assessment of the situation in the country of origin. If an administrative decision is inconsistent with UNHCR's guidelines or recommendations, the case will normally be referred to a seven-member "Grand Board" at the *Immigration Appeals Board (UNE)*, unless the decision has been made in accordance with general instructions given by the *Ministry of Justice and Public Security*. Norwegian authorities have regular bilateral meetings on protection issues with representatives of the UNHCR.

New policies and measures – temporary collective protection Ukraine

On March 11 this year, Norway implemented a scheme with temporary collective protection for persons that have fled Ukraine. The scheme resembles the implementation of EU's directive for temporary protection, which Norway is not bound by. Those who meet the conditions for temporary collective protection are granted residency for one year. The permit may be renewed or extended for a period not exceeding three years and does not provide the basis for a permanent residence permit. The permit allows for settlement in the municipalities, to work in Norway and reunite with their family here.

The scheme applies to:

- Ukrainian citizens who resided in Ukraine before 24 February 2022,
- Ukrainian citizens with legal residence in Norway before 24 February 2022, or who later have travelled to Norway on the basis of a given residence permit. It is a condition that the previous grounds for residence have lapsed or lapse no later than two months after submitting an application for protection,
- Third-country nationals and stateless people who have been granted international or national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022,
- Third-country nationals who are close family members of the abovementioned groups.

Persons fleeing Ukraine who are not eligible for temporary collective protection, may apply for an ordinary asylum permit. Their application will be subject to an individual asylum assessment.

Reception facilities

Temporary accommodation in a reception centre is offered to all asylum seekers arriving in Norway. UDI finances and supervises these centres. Municipalities, NGOs,

and private companies operate them. Some of the centres are given extra resources to provide suitable living conditions for asylum seekers with special needs. Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, 15 to 18 years old, are accommodated either in special sections of a regular reception centre or in a separate reception centre for such minors. As of July 2022, reception centres for unaccompanied minors are supervised by the County Governor. The child welfare authorities are responsible for accommodating unaccompanied minors younger than 15 years in centres financed by and run under the supervision of the *Ministry of Children and Families*.

Residing in a reception centre is voluntary, but it is a requirement for receiving subsistence support and 'pocket money'. Persons with a positive decision on their application can stay in a reception centre until they are settled in a municipality. Persons with a final, negative decision are offered accommodation in an ordinary reception centre until they leave Norway. There is a strong emphasis on motivating them to apply for assisted return.

The *Arrival Centre for Asylum Seekers* has been established to provide faster case processing during the initial phase. The aim is to accommodate all asylum seekers (possibly except unaccompanied minors) in the same centre after arrival in Norway. The ambition is to decide 70 per cent of the applications there within three weeks of arrival. In 2021, 37 per cent of applications were processed within three weeks. This was an increase by ten percentage points since 2020. Processing of asylum cases was slower than expected due to challenges regarding COVID-19.

In 2022 accommodation capacity was upscaled considerably due to the high influx of displaced persons from Ukraine seeking temporary collective protection in Norway. At most Norway had the capacity to house 24 500 persons, mainly in emergency accommodation facilities. By the end of October, accommodation capacity was downscaled to app. 14 500, and some of the emergency accommodation facilities are in process of being replaced with long-term reception centres.

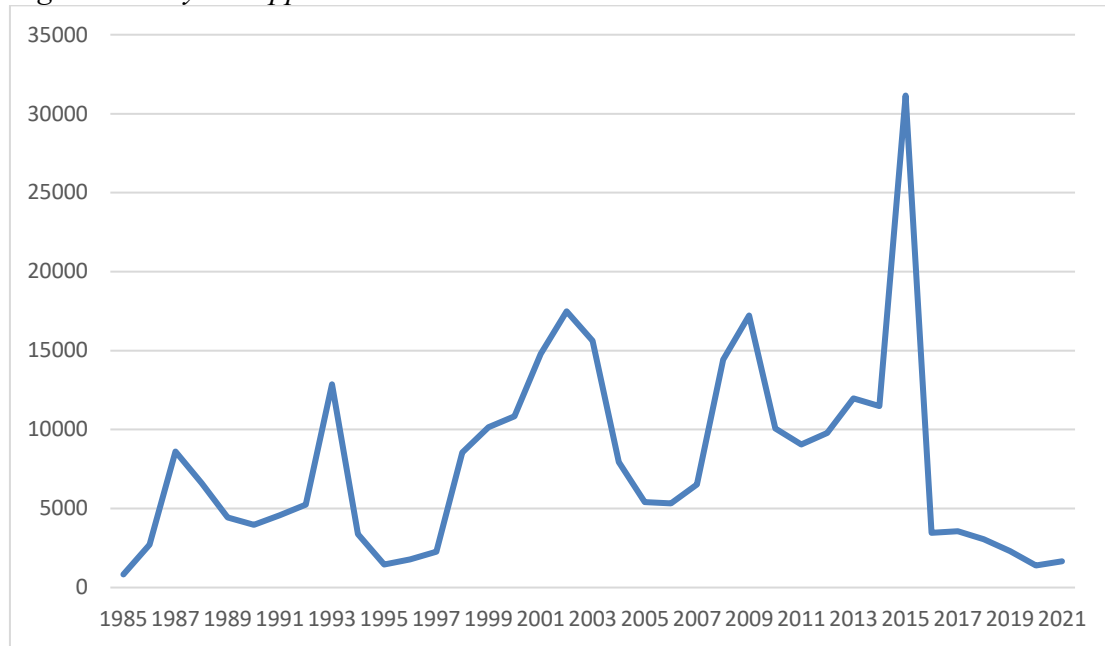
By the end of October 2022, there were approximately 10 000 residents in reception centres.

6.2 Asylum applications

Since 1985, there have been several peaks in the number of applications for *asylum* in Norway, followed by sharp decreases. The major peaks were in 1987 (8 600), 1993 (12 900), 2002 (17 500), 2009 (17 200) and in 2015 (more than 31 100). There was a drop to 1 386 in 2020. For the last couple of years prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the number of applications has been very low and decreasing, cf. Figure 6.1.

In 2021, the number of new asylum seekers was 1 656. This was an increase by 19 per cent compared to 2020. The most notable change in asylum applications from 2020 to 2021, was the increase in asylum seekers from Afghanistan

Figure 6.1 Asylum applications. 1985–2021



Source: UDI

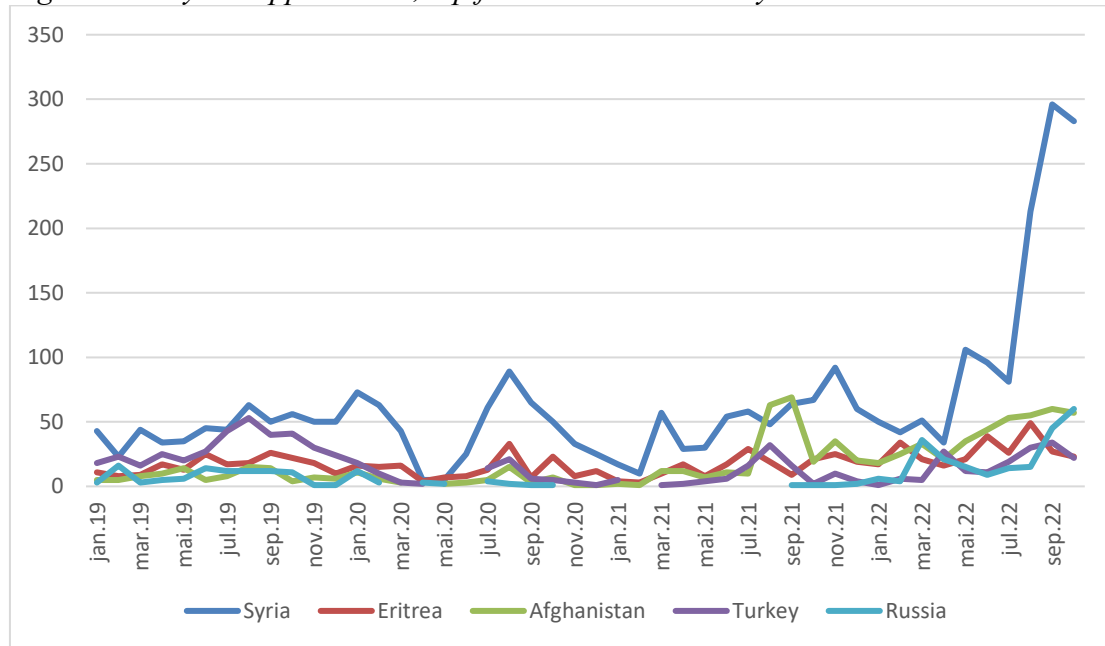
Table 6.1 Asylum applications, by major countries of origin. 2012–2021

| Country of origin | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total, of which: | 9 785 | 11 983 | 11 480 | 31 145 | 3 460 | 3 560 | 2 655 | 2 305 | 1 386 | 1 656 |
| Syria | 327 | 856 | 1 999 | 10 448 | 529 | 1 017 | 419 | 537 | 537 | 586 |
| Eritrea | 1 183 | 3 258 | 2 882 | 2 942 | 586 | 869 | 241 | 194 | 162 | 181 |
| Turkey | 42 | 66 | 52 | 96 | 89 | 164 | 765 | 360 | 83 | 98 |
| Stateless | 263 | 550 | 800 | 1 204 | 158 | 139 | 80 | 129 | 70 | 34 |
| Afghanistan | 986 | 726 | 579 | 7 000 | 373 | 133 | 91 | 101 | 57 | 261 |
| Iran | 441 | 266 | 100 | 1 346 | 132 | 89 | 119 | 78 | 47 | 32 |
| Iraq | 221 | 191 | 186 | 3 001 | 215 | 148 | 104 | 65 | 38 | 35 |
| Russia | 370 | 376 | 227 | 126 | 76 | 58 | 60 | 40 | 29 | 13 |
| Ethiopia | 185 | 291 | 375 | 686 | 158 | 91 | 44 | 96 | 21 | 34 |
| Somalia | 2 181 | 1 694 | 837 | 563 | 154 | 51 | 48 | 35 | 21 | 18 |
| Albania | 169 | 185 | 204 | 431 | 130 | 87 | 65 | 63 | 14 | 14 |
| Other countries | 3 417 | 3 524 | 3 239 | 3 307 | 860 | 714 | 619 | 607 | 307 | 350 |

Source: UDI

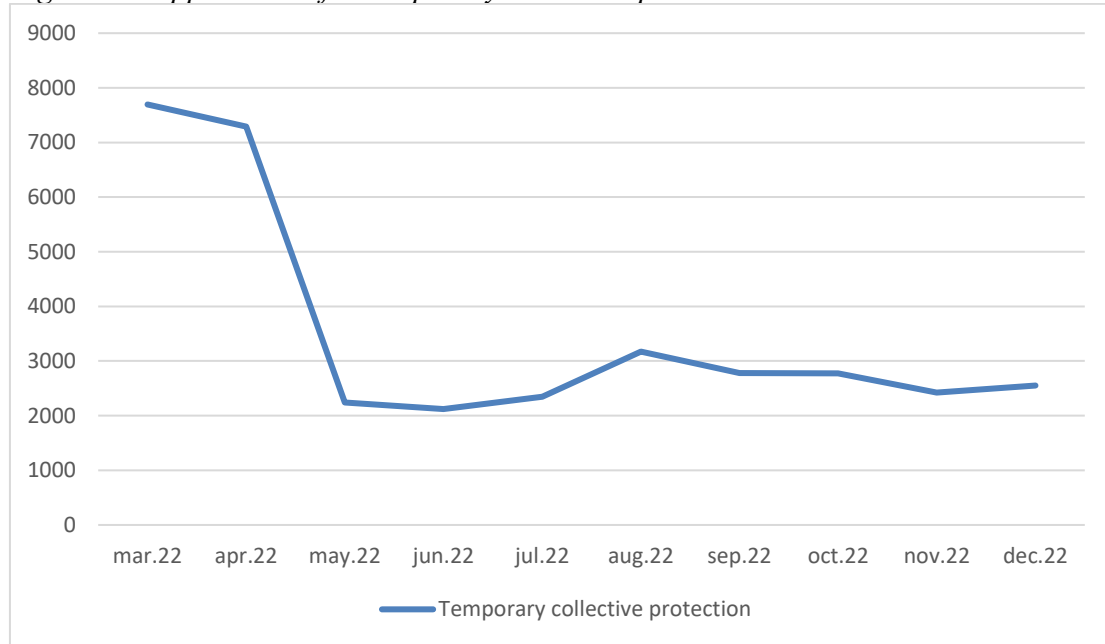
Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Norway has seen a sharp peak in arrivals and asylum applications. By the end of 2022, around 36 250 persons have applied for *temporary collective protection* in Norway. In addition, 4 500 have applied for asylum. In total, 40 750 have applied for temporary collective protection and asylum in 2022. Historically this is the highest number of people seeking protection in Norway within one year.

Figure 6.2 Asylum applications, top five countries. January 2019 – October 2022



Source: UDI

Figure 6.3 Applications for temporary collective protection. March – December 2022



Source: UDI

The number of asylum seekers claiming to be *unaccompanied minors* has varied in recent years, cf. Table 6.2. In 2021, 181 (claimed) unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Norway. This was an increase by 103 per cent from 2020. Most such applicants were from Syria and Afghanistan. Nine per cent of the (claimed) unaccompanied minor asylum seekers were girls in 2021.

Table 6.2 Asylum applications, first time – by (claimed) unaccompanied minors. 2012–2021

| Year | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--------------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Applications | 964 | 1 070 | 1 204 | 5 480 | 320 | 191 | 159 | 135 | 89 | 181 |

Source: UDI

During the first ten months of 2022, 1 000 (claimed) unaccompanied minors applied for asylum or temporary collective protection in Norway. More than half of such applicants were from Ukraine. Afghanistan and Syria were other major countries.

6.3 Asylum decisions

During 2021, 83 per cent of the decisions made by the immigration authorities in the first instance were made on the merits of the case. The majority of these cases concerned citizens of Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan. Nine per cent of the applications were transferred to another country in accordance with the Dublin procedure, while four per cent were closed without a decision on the merits because the applicant disappeared before the basis for judging his/her application had been fully established. During the first ten months of 2022, the share of Dublin decisions was around one per cent. This number must be seen in context of the high number of applications for temporary collective protection and asylum. In the same period, Norway sent almost 600 Dublin-requests abroad and received approx. 380 such requests.

In 2021, 926 applicants were granted convention refugee status in the first instance. In addition, 136 applicants were granted refugee status on other protection grounds, and 43 were granted a permit on humanitarian grounds. Furthermore, following an appeal, the *Immigration Appeals Board* granted 199 permits, more than half of them on humanitarian grounds. Cf. Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Permits to persons granted refugee or humanitarian status by the UDI or UNE. 2012-2021

| In-stance | Status | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| UDI | Convention | 3 667 | 4 523 | 3 588 | 5 411 | 11 560 | 3 833 | 1 333 | 1 647 | 1 011 | 926 |
| | Other refugee | 1 184 | 1 003 | 1 140 | 673 | 399 | 149 | 52 | 47 | 50 | 136 |
| | Humanitarian | 328 | 292 | 180 | 168 | 492 | 404 | 68 | 95 | 79 | 43 |
| UNE (ap-peals) | Convention | 281 | 347 | 240 | 199 | 132 | 145 | 113 | 83 | 49 | 74 |
| | Other refugee | 293 | 175 | 110 | 90 | 61 | 79 | 27 | 25 | 4 | 5 |
| | Humanitarian concerns | 369 | 485 | 620 | 594 | 227 | 275 | 158 | 122 | 131 | 120 |
| Total | All categories | 6 122 | 6 825 | 5 878 | 7 135 | 12 871 | 4 885 | 1 751 | 2 019 | 1 324 | 1 304 |

Source: UDI

From 2003 until the present *Immigration Act* was implemented in 2010, there was a distinction between two categories of humanitarian status, “subsidiary protection status” and “humanitarian concerns” (health problems etc.). Under the present act, however, persons who are eligible for subsidiary protection status under the *EU Qualification Directive* are granted (other) refugee status as well. Therefore, as of 2010, the share of applicants granted a permit on humanitarian grounds does not include the category “subsidiary protection”, cf. Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 Outcome of asylum claims considered by UDI, 2012–2021. Per cent

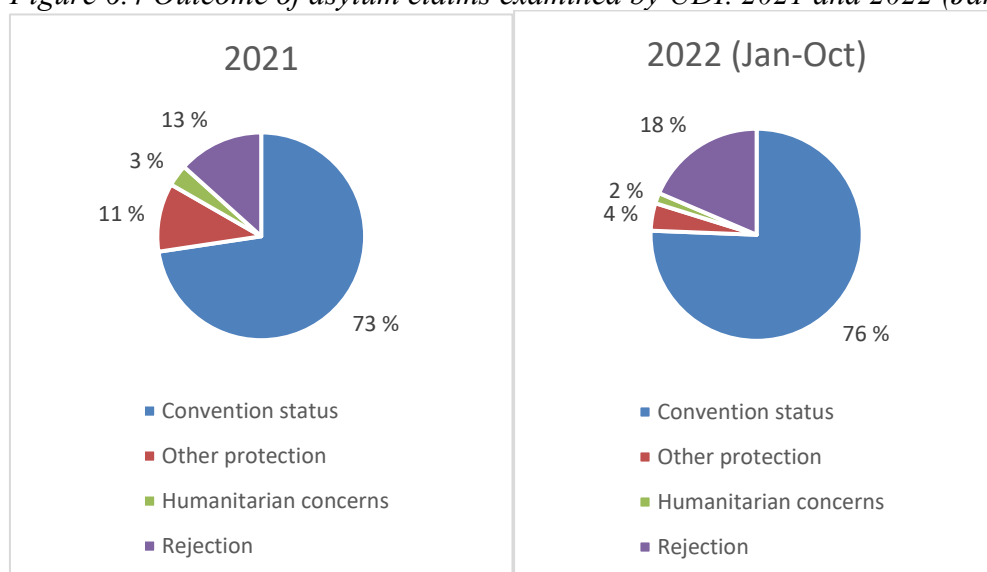
| Result | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Convention | 41 | 51 | 49 | 65 | 62 | 58 | 66 | 69 | 68 | 73 |
| Other refugee | 13 | 11 | 16 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 11 |
| Humanitarian | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Rejections | 42 | 35 | 32 | 25 | 34 | 33 | 28 | 25 | 24 | 13 |

Source: UDI

In 2021, the proportion of first instance decisions by UDI resulting in refugee status was 84 per cent, cf. Table 6.4 and Figure 6.4.

During the first ten months of 2022, almost all applications for temporary collective protection examined on their merits were granted. UDI granted refugee status to 81 per cent of the asylum claims.

In 2021, 21 per cent of the applications that were examined on their merits were rejected in the first instance. By October 2022, this proportion was 0.6 per cent. These numbers mainly reflect the high influx of applications from Ukrainian nationals. Excluding applications from Ukrainian nationals, 19 per cent of applications examined on their merits were rejected in the first instance.

Figure 6.4 Outcome of asylum claims examined by UDI, 2021 and 2022 (Jan–Oct)³⁰

Source: UDI

6.4 Resettlement of refugees

In addition to asylum seekers who are granted residence permits, Norway admits a pre-determined number of refugees as part of an annual resettlement quota. Within a three-year period, unused quota places may be carried over to following years and advance use of places for the following year may be made. In addition, Norway provides funding to the UNHCR for staff and activities to enhance the capacity to identify and refer resettlement cases.

³⁰ Temporary protection permits granted to persons fleeing from Ukraine are not included in this Figure.

Table 6.5 Offers of resettlement and arrivals of resettled refugees. 2012–2021

| Year | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Offers of resettlement | 1 231 | 1 148 | 1 662 | 2 544 | 3 191 | 3 165 | 2 124 | 3 100 | 2401 | 3 468 |
| Arrivals | 1 076 | 992 | 1 286 | 2 383 | 3 292 | 2 814 | 2 481 | 2 803 | 1527 | 3 638 |

Source: UDI

For 2021, the resettlement quota was 3 608 places, including 608 cases transferred from 2020. Of these, approximately 3 500 individuals were offered resettlement and had their cases accepted by the Norwegian authorities. The same year, 3 600 refugees arrived in Norway. Syrian refugees made up the largest group with 1 306 individuals, cf. Table 6.5 and 6.6.

Table 6.6 Resettlement of refugees – major nationalities. 2021

| Countries of origin | Accepted | Arrived |
|------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Syria | 1 136 | 1 306 |
| Afghanistan | 910 | 744 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 752 | 832 |
| Eritrea | 308 | 209 |
| South Sudan | 182 | 276 |

Source: UDI

The difference between the number of acceptances and arrivals in a particular year, cf. Table 6.5 and 6.6, is mainly explained by a waiting period of normally four to six months between the dates of a decision and the actual departure to Norway. The time gap is first of all due to the process of identifying receiving municipalities and time to plan the departure for UNHCR and IOM. In case of delays, these would normally be a result of temporary security problems or administrative problems related to the departure.

The pandemic continued to have consequences for case processing and departures in 2021. Norway evacuated around 900 Afghan citizens after the termination of NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan in August 2021. Most of them were counted against the quota. All quota places were utilized in 2021.

The quota for 2022 is 3 000 places. The main nationality groups are Syrians, Afghans and Congolese, in addition to other African nationalities and Rohingya refugees.

In addition to the quota for resettlement of refugees, Norway is participating in EUs cooperation mechanisms regarding the Ukraine situation following the Russian invasion. As part of *EUs Solidarity Platform*, Norway initially pledged to transfer 2 500 Ukrainian citizens from Moldova to Norway. Experience has shown that many Ukrainians prefer to stay close to their home country, and the transfer rate from Moldova has been low. Due to this, Norway reduced the pledge to 500 persons. This is open for reconsideration upon interest and need. As of December 5, 2022, approximately 120 Ukrainians have been transferred within this scheme.

As part of the *EU's Civil Protection Mechanism*, Norway has pledged to evacuate 550 Ukrainian patients with needs for specialized health care, including civilians and wounded soldiers. As of December 5, 2022, Norway had received 213 persons through this scheme.

6.5 Settlement of refugees in municipalities

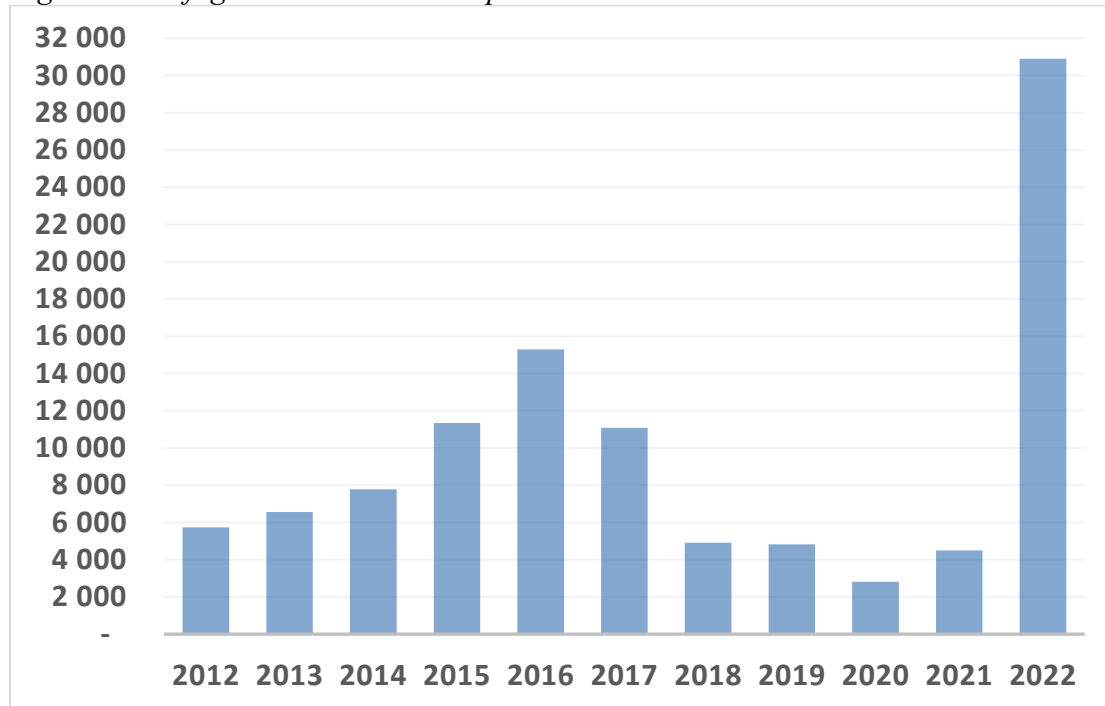
A foreigner who has been granted a residence permit as a refugee or with humanitarian status, enjoys full freedom of movement in Norway. In principle, s/he may choose to settle wherever s/he wants. However, initially the majority will depend on public assistance and the governmental settlement scheme. To gain rights to participation in the *Introduction Program* for refugees and to receive financial support, refugees must settle in a municipality assigned by the *Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi)*. People granted temporary collective protection are covered by the same governmental settlement scheme, with some adjustments.

Central and local governments have joint responsibility for settling refugees in Norwegian municipalities. There is a formal cooperation agreement between *the central government* and the *Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)*, outlining roles and responsibilities. Based on a prognosis on how many refugees there will be a need to settle and a set of selection criteria, *IMDi* asks a given number of municipalities to settle refugees the coming year. In accordance with the *Integration Act*, the county authorities give recommendations to *IMDi* on the number of refugees that could be settled in which municipality. After receiving a request, it is up to the municipality to decide whether, and how many refugees, the municipality wishes to settle.

In 2021, 211 municipalities were originally requested to settle 5 025 refugees, including resettlement refugees accepted on the annual quota, cf. Chapter 6.4. In 2021, 209 municipalities offered to settle 4 971 refugees. By the end of the year, 4 489 refugees had been settled and provided with initial housing and integration support. The settlement number was almost at the same level as the two years prior to the pandemic, due to the evacuation from Afghanistan, cf. Figure 6.5. Of those settled in 2021, 108 were unaccompanied minors, compared to 80 in 2020. Family members, who have been reunited with refugees, are not included in these numbers.

In 2021, 208 municipalities settled refugees, compared to 205 municipalities in 2020. Through a government grant of a fixed sum per refugee over a five-year period, the municipalities are compensated for the extra expenses. In 2022, the total grant for the five-year period was NOK 806 800 for single adults, NOK 761 300 for other adults and for children under 18 years. The grant for unaccompanied minors for the five-year period was NOK 754 200. There are additional grants for unaccompanied minors, elderly and disabled persons. Furthermore, there are grants to municipalities for housing costs for refugees, as there is for other residents in need of such support.

Figure 6.5 Refugees settled in municipalities. 2012–2022



Source: Directorate of Integration and Diversity

Due to the war in Ukraine and increased settlement needs, IMDi sent out an additional request in March 2022. All 356 municipalities in Norway were requested to settle 35 000 refugees, and the same number of municipalities offered to settle a total of near 36 000 refugees. By the end of 2022, almost 31 000 refugees had been settled since the beginning of the year. Persons granted temporary collective protection in Norway, constituted 85 per cent. Resettlement refugees accounted for 11 per cent, and only two per cent were unaccompanied minors.

The average waiting period from a permit was granted until settlement in a municipality took place – was only a month and a half for those with temporary protection. Historically speaking, this is the shortest waiting period ever for any group of refugees who have arrived in Norway and applied for some form of protection.

7 Irregular migration and return

7.1 Legislation and policy

A key priority for Norway is to limit arrivals of asylum seekers who are not in need of protection, and to effectively return rejected asylum seekers and other foreign citizens who do not have legal residence.

A person found guilty of helping a foreigner to illegal entry or stay in Norway may be sentenced to up to three years of imprisonment. A person found guilty of, for the purpose of profit, organising assistance to foreign citizens to enter the country illegally, faces a maximum penalty of six years of imprisonment. Furthermore, it is considered a felony to provide another person with a passport or travel document when s/he knows or ought to understand that a foreigner may use it to enter Norway or another State illegally. The maximum penalty for this offence is two years imprisonment.

In a further bid to prevent irregular migration, Norway supports *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration* (AVRR) programs in transit and destination countries both bilaterally and multilaterally. As one tool to achieve this, Norway established the *Partnership for migration*, a training and capacity-building program where Norwegian immigration authorities participate in training colleagues in partner countries outside of Schengen. So far, training programs have been implemented with the Somali, Iraqi and Ghanaian immigration authorities.

By September 2022, Norway had re-admission agreements or similar agreements on return with 31 countries. Norwegian authorities have also raised the issue of re-admission agreements with several other governments.

Norway's foreign missions currently have 12 positions as *Immigration Liaison Officers (ILOs)* with a mandate focused on return. They are stationed at embassies in relevant countries. This investment in diplomatic and interpersonal relations has high priority for Norwegian authorities. Relationships and networking built through the presence of long-term ILO-positions are particularly important in countries with inadequate administrative traditions and systems.

The *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and the *Ministry of Justice and Public Security* have established common and country specific action plans for return to particularly challenging countries of origin. Return issues are integrated in bilateral relations with some important countries of origin.

There are three main categories of government grants for promoting the return to their countries of origin of individuals found to be illegally present in Norway:

- Return benefits (cash) to persons without a residence permit opting for assisted return, and for persons holding a residence permit choosing repatriation to their country of origin. In addition, there are special assisted return programs for a few countries. Such programs include both in-cash and in-kind benefits.
- Grants for schemes informing and motivating the target group in Norway for return.

- Grants for projects in important countries of transit or origin. Such projects could be linked to readmission agreements, co-operation on return issues, improvement of the capacity for migration management, participation in migration partnerships etc.

The identification of new methods and incentives to increase the number of persons applying for assisted return is an on-going process.

Return of unaccompanied minors is facilitated through a joint procedure between the *Directorate of Immigration* and the *National Police Immigration Service*³¹.

Procedure for assisted return

The main policy objective is that a foreigner without legal residence in Norway should leave the country within a set deadline, either on his/her own initiative or through a program for assisted return and reintegration in the country of origin. Measures that encourage assisted return are therefore important elements in a comprehensive asylum and migration policy. The majority of those who return with assistance are former asylum seekers whose application for protection has been rejected. Another group is vulnerable foreign citizens without a legal stay (victims of trafficking). Digital application for assisted voluntary return programs via an electronic application form at the [UDI website](#) is possible.

The *International Organization for Migration (IOM)* is the main partner for the Norwegian authorities in implementing assisted return. On behalf of the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)*, *IOM* provides information and counselling to potential returnees, assistance to obtain valid travel documents, travel arrangements, post-arrival reception, onward travel to the final destination and some follow-up after arrival.

The numbers of former asylum seekers living in reception centres with an obligation to leave Norway are decreasing steadily, but slowly. The same applies for persons without a legal stay living outside reception centres. The majority of the remaining group is considered difficult to motivate for assisted return, often because of years living in Norway after a negative decision. Norwegian authorities continue to reach out irregular immigrants living outside reception centres, to motivate them for assisted return, with information and counselling.

Foreign citizens, who are without a permit for legal residence, may benefit from reintegration support in the country of origin if they opt for assisted return. The amount of reintegration support offered depends on the timing of the application relative to the deadline set for the obligation to leave Norway.

Comprehensive reintegration packages are available, based on needs. These packages include financial support, temporary shelter following the return, counselling, vocational training and assistance to set up a business.

³¹ Cf. Chapter 7.1 in the report for 2017-2018 for details: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/immigration-and-integration-20172018/id2624233/>

Regularisation of stay

On June 1, 2021, a temporary regulation for regularisation of stay was issued. The application deadline was December 1, 2021. To obtain regularisation of stay in Norway, several conditions had to be met cumulatively:

- the person had applied for protection (asylum) in Norway and had not returned after the asylum refusal
- the person had lived in Norway at least 16 years by October 1, 2021
- the age of the person and the length of residence in Norway totals 65 years or more
- the person was already in Norway on January 1, 2019
- the person must be present in Norway at the time of assessment of the regularisation case
- the person must not have a criminal record.

In 2021, approximately 40 persons were granted a permit on humanitarian grounds based on the temporary regulation, and almost 50 applications were rejected. As of July 2022, 20 persons met the conditions and were given a permit, and 20 applications were rejected.

7.2 Facts and figures

No precise estimates of the extent of irregular immigration or the number of irregular immigrants present in Norway are available. However, the challenges that they represent exist, particularly in the main cities with a relatively large population of immigrants and less social transparency than in towns and smaller communities.

Foreign citizens in Norway without an identity from the country of origin that is convincingly documented or otherwise made credible, pose a challenge that affects all the stages of migration management. When applying for asylum before 2020, around 20 per cent of the applicants had been granted a visa to Norway (either by Norway or other Schengen-countries). This means that they at some point presented a travel document supporting a claimed identity to Norwegian authorities. In 2021, the share fell to four per cent of the applicants. In the first two quarters of 2022, the share was five and six per cent³². It is important to bear in mind that very few visas were issued in 2020 and 2021 due to travel restrictions globally.

Those subject to forced return can be divided into three categories:

- *Asylum – rejected*: persons whose application for asylum in Norway has been rejected on its merits following an appeal.
- *Dublin procedure*: foreign citizens who are to be escorted to another country party to the Dublin-III regulation.
- *Expulsions and rejections*: persons without legal residence and with a duty to leave Norway for other reasons (e.g., over-stayers, convicted criminals).

³² Persons fleeing from Ukraine are not included in these numbers as they have been granted temporary collective protection.

Table 7.1 Return – persons by main categories. 2012–2021

| Year | Forced return | | | | Assisted return (IOM) | Total |
|------|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Asylum applica- tion refused | Dublin procedure | Expulsion/ rejection | Total | | |
| 2012 | 1 397 | 1 114 | 2 390 | 4 901 | 1 753 | 6 654 |
| 2013 | 1 275 | 1 408 | 3 283 | 5 966 | 1 889 | 7 855 |
| 2014 | 1 804 | 1 680 | 3 775 | 7 259 | 1 622 | 8 881 |
| 2015 | 1 559 | 1 144 | 5 122 | 7 825 | 1 167 | 8 992 |
| 2016 | 1 385 | 1 346 | 5 347 | 8 078 | 1 456 | 9 534 |
| 2017 | 918 | 461 | 4 055 | 5 434 | 569 | 6 003 |
| 2018 | 552 | 471 | 4 054 | 5 077 | 240 | 5 317 |
| 2019 | 358 | 343 | 3 456 | 4 157 | 213 | 4 370 |
| 2020 | 112 | 150 | 1 747 | 2 009 | 127 | 2 136 ³³ |
| 2021 | 96 | 177 | 1 505 | 1 778 | 127 | 1 905 ³⁴ |

Source: UDI, the Police Immigration Service (PU)

The police returned about 1 800 foreign citizens without legal residence in 2021. This is a decline compared to 2019 and 2020, cf. Table 7.1. The main reason for this is fewer asylum seekers than earlier years and increasing difficulties in implementing return. Of the total number of forced returns, which also includes persons rejected at the border, 1 663 were convicted offenders. Of those persons that the police returned, including those rejected at the border, 267 were minors. Fifteen per cent of those returned were asylum seekers in the Dublin-procedure or former asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected. There has been a steady decline in this proportion since 2014, when 48 per cent of the total number the police returned were either in the Asylum or Dublin-procedure categories.

In 2021, the number who returned with IOM assistance was 127 persons. This was equal to 2020. Most returned to Russia, Ethiopia, Somalia and Turkey. The gradual reduction was due to fewer potential beneficiaries and significantly fewer asylum seekers.

During the first ten months of 2022, 66 persons had returned with IOM assistance, compared with 108 persons in the same period in 2021. The number of persons with a duty to return in reception centres, had decreased significantly; from 853 in August 2019, to 799 in October 2020, to 572 in October 2021 and to 432 in October 2022.

During the first nine months of 2022, the police returned 1 857 foreign citizens without a legal residence in Norway. Included in this number were 919 persons rejected entry at the border. 104 persons were returned after rejection of an asylum application, while 246 were returned due to the Dublin-regulations, and 588 were returned due to expulsion. The number of both assisted and forced returns in 2022 seem to end up on the same level as in 2021. The numbers are however significantly lower than in the years before 2020. This is mainly due to the aftereffects from the pandemic and the related travel restrictions.

³³ In addition, 6 845 persons rejected entry at the border because of regulations restricting entry into Norway to prevent the spread of COVID-19,

³⁴ In addition, 17 013 persons were refused entry or stay because of regulations restricting entry into Norway to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

8 Foreign citizens, immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents

8.1 Population growth

During 2021, the total population of Norway increased by only 33 900 persons, with a birth surplus of 14 100 and net immigration of 19 650.³⁵ This represented a growth rate of 0.60 per cent, 0.14 percentage points higher than in 2021. By the start of 2022, the total registered resident population in Norway was 5.425 million, cf. Table A1 and A3.

In 2021, the total fertility rate in Norway was 1.55. This was 0.07 points higher than in 2020 and 0.44 points lower than the peak in 2009, cf. Table A19. The difference in the fertility rates of immigrant women and the rest of the female population was only 0.13 points in 2021, 0.11 points lower than in 2020. At its peak in 2000, the difference was 0.76 points. It was 1.67 for immigrant women, 1.46 for Norwegian-born women with immigrant parents and 1.54 for other women. In 2021, the highest rate of 2.15, was estimated for women from African countries, the second highest, 1.80, for women from countries in Europe outside EU/EFTA, and the third highest, 1.66, for women from Asia. The lowest rate for immigrant women was 1.26 for women from South and Central America. Since 2000, the fertility rate for immigrant women with a background from Asian countries has declined by 1.25 points and for women from African countries by 1.23 points.

In 2021, almost 10 600 children born in Norway had two foreign-born parents, while 7 700 had one foreign-born parent, cf. Table A20. The main groups of children born in Norway with two foreign-born parents had parents from Poland, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan or Sweden. Among those with only one parent born abroad, Sweden, the Philippines, Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom were the main countries of origin for the foreign-born parent.

The *2022 National Population Projections* show lower population growth combined with stronger ageing.³⁶ Nevertheless, there will still be population growth in Norway throughout the century, with the main alternative projecting an increase from around 5.4 million today, to 6.1 million in 2060 and 6.2 million in 2100. This is mainly due to positive net migration.

Immigration is expected to increase in the short term due to the arrival of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. In the medium assumption, immigration to Norway is projected to increase to 67 000 in 2022. From this peak, a sharp decline is assumed before the assumptions settle on more stable long-run trajectories. From 2025, the assumption is that immigration to Norway will decline from around 43 000 to around 35 000 in 2100. The projected emigrations depend partly on the immigrations. In the main alternative, net migration is projected to rise to around 37 000 in 2022. From

³⁵ The difference in population growth during the year will as a rule deviate from the total of birth surplus and net migration. The difference in the population accounts is due to late reporting, annulments, corrections etc.

³⁶ The following description of the most recent population projection and immigration is found in a report from *Statistics Norway*: <https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/befolkningsframskrivinger/artikler/norways-2022-national-population-projections>.

2025, the main alternative projects a broadly stable net migration of around 11 000 to 12 000, annually.

8.2 Foreign citizens

By January 1, 2022, the total number of foreign citizens registered as residents in Norway was 586 000, a reduction of 4 500 from January 1, 2021. They constituted 11 per cent of the total registered resident population. For the second year, there was a reduction in the number of foreign citizens in Norway. Approximately 379 500 or 65 per cent were citizens of an OECD member country. This is a reduction of 2 400 from 2021. Cf. Table A15.

Europeans still constituted a majority of the foreign citizens; 412 000 or 70 per cent of all, cf. Table A15. During the last fifteen years or so, there has been an increase in this share, mainly due to labour immigration from EU-member countries. By January 2022, the major countries of citizenship were Poland (112 700), Lithuania (48 800) and Sweden (39 600).

The share of registered resident foreign citizens from *Asian* countries remained at almost 19 per cent (108 700 persons) of the total foreign population by the end of 2021, but there was a reduction in numbers (3 500). This was a lower share than the average of 22 per cent for the peak years 2006-2010. The largest groups of foreign citizens from Asian countries were from Syria (34 000), Thailand (10 600) and the Philippines (10 000). Syria was one of the few countries with a significant increase (1 200).

During 2021, the number of resident citizens of countries in *Africa* decreased by 3 500 persons to 41 100, or a share of seven per cent of all foreign citizens in Norway. The average share during the peak period (2011-2015) was 8.7 per cent. By January 2022, the major countries of citizenship were Eritrea (14 800) and Somalia (7 300). For both countries there was a reduction, reflecting a high number of Somalis and Eritreans becoming Norwegian citizens, cf. Chapter 16.2.

The total number of resident foreign citizens from countries in *North, Central and South America* decreased in 2021, to 20 700 persons. Their share of all foreign citizens was 3.5 per cent, down from an average share during the period 2006-2010 of 6 per cent. The largest group were citizens of the United States (8 900), followed by citizens of Chile (1 700).

There were less than 1 900 citizens from countries in *Oceania*, a little more than the number of *stateless* persons or those with *unknown* citizenship (1 600 in total).

The patterns and changes described above only partly reflect shifts in migration, cf. Chapter 2. The naturalisation rate and differences in the inclination to apply for Norwegian citizenship is also important, cf. Chapter 16.2. Before 2020, when the principle of dual citizenship was included in the *Nationality Act*, immigrants from EU/EFTA member countries and from North America showed little interest in changing citizenship, compared to most other resident foreign citizens. This has changed, cf. Table 16.2, and has contributed to the reduction in foreign citizens in 2021.

Table 8.1 Resident foreign citizens - major countries. 2013–2022 (January 1)

| Citizen-ship | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Total, of which: | 448 765 | 483 177 | 512 154 | 538 223 | 559 227 | 567 783 | 584 243 | 604 525 | 601 574 | 586 010 |
| Poland | 77 095 | 85 591 | 93 615 | 99 626 | 102 017 | 103 799 | 105 192 | 108 565 | 110 301 | 112 718 |
| Lithuania | 30 738 | 35 770 | 39 506 | 41 727 | 42 538 | 43 680 | 45 067 | 46 868 | 47 906 | 48 793 |
| Sweden | 43 075 | 44 233 | 45 100 | 45 104 | 44 393 | 43 964 | 43 965 | 44 239 | 43 560 | 39 624 |
| Syria | 728 | 1 526 | 3 632 | 7 583 | 18 860 | 25 988 | 30 222 | 31 957 | 32 778 | 34 003 |
| Germany | 24 401 | 24 630 | 25 030 | 25 186 | 24 922 | 24 659 | 24 835 | 25 287 | 25 628 | 26 221 |
| Denmark | 21 937 | 22 570 | 23 499 | 23 257 | 23 020 | 22 806 | 22 838 | 22 851 | 22 327 | 20 811 |
| Romania | 7 485 | 9 950 | 12 007 | 13 794 | 14 503 | 14 997 | 15 564 | 16 604 | 17 248 | 17 444 |
| UK | 15 459 | 15 787 | 16 250 | 16 341 | 16 260 | 16 189 | 16 453 | 17 208 | 17 513 | 16 414 |
| Eritrea | 9 997 | 12 666 | 15 201 | 17 734 | 18 983 | 18 586 | 19 107 | 18 868 | 17 099 | 14 815 |
| Thailand | 10 819 | 11 377 | 11 458 | 11 587 | 12 091 | 11 299 | 11 882 | 12 043 | 11 907 | 10 595 |

Source: Statistics Norway

8.3 Immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents

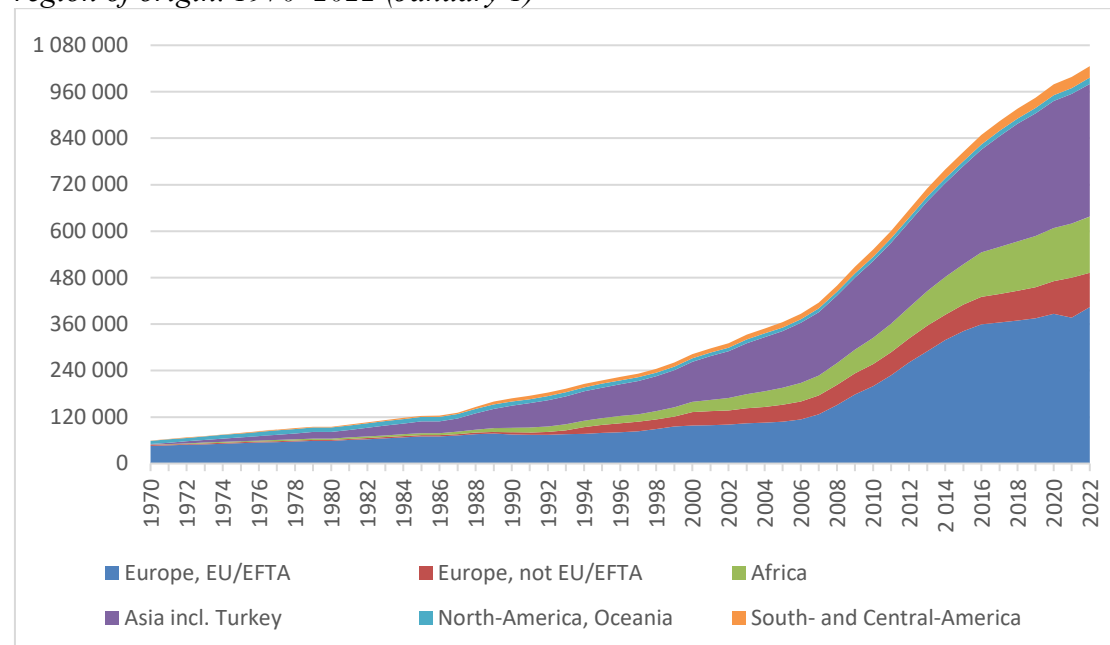
In 2021, 57 per cent of the total population growth was due to the net increase in the number of immigrants. This was a much higher share than in 2020, when net immigration was exceptionally low, cf. Table A3. The net increase of Norwegian-born children with two immigrant parents represented 24 per cent of the total population growth that year, while 22 per cent of the population growth consisted of persons with one foreign-born parent. At the same time, 5 per cent of the total population change was due to a reduction in the number of persons born in Norway with two Norwegian-born parents.

By January 1, 2022, the total number of registered resident immigrants had reached 819 400. They represented 15 per cent of the total population, a small increase from 14.8 per cent at the start of 2021, cf. Table A17.1. The major immigrant groups came from Poland (102 150), Lithuania (41 300), Sweden (35 600), Syria (32 800) and Somalia (28 400), cf. Table A17.1.

At the beginning of 2022, 174 200, or 21 per cent of all immigrants, had resided in Norway for less than five years, cf. tab. A24. This share has been decreasing for several years, reflecting that the high immigration from the new EU member states peaked in 2011–2012, cf. Chapter 2.2. For example, the share of Lithuanian immigrants with less than five years of residence was reduced from 63 per cent by January 2016, to 26 per cent by January 2022. The share of Lithuanians with less than ten years of residence 60 per cent. Among immigrants from Poland, the numbers with less than five and ten years of residence were 22 and 51 per cent respectively in the beginning of 2022. This difference between the two immigrant groups reflects that the strong increase in immigration from Poland following the EU enlargement in 2004 started earlier than the increase in immigration from Lithuania. However, the difference is much less pronounced now than it was a few years ago.

At the start of 2022, 205 800 Norwegian-born to immigrant parents represented 3.8 percent of the total population. Then 26.5 per cent in this group had parents from other OECD-countries. Cf. Table A17.2.

Figure 8.1 Resident immigrants and Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents by region of origin. 1970–2022 (January 1)



Source: Statistics Norway

The country background of immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents³⁷ has changed considerably over the years. In 1970, the share of immigrants originating from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America was six per cent. In 1980, the share increased to 23.5 per cent of all resident immigrants, 45.6 per cent in 1990, 49.7 per cent in 2000 and 55.5 in the peak year of 2006. By the beginning of 2022, the share was around 50 percent. Cf. Table A17.

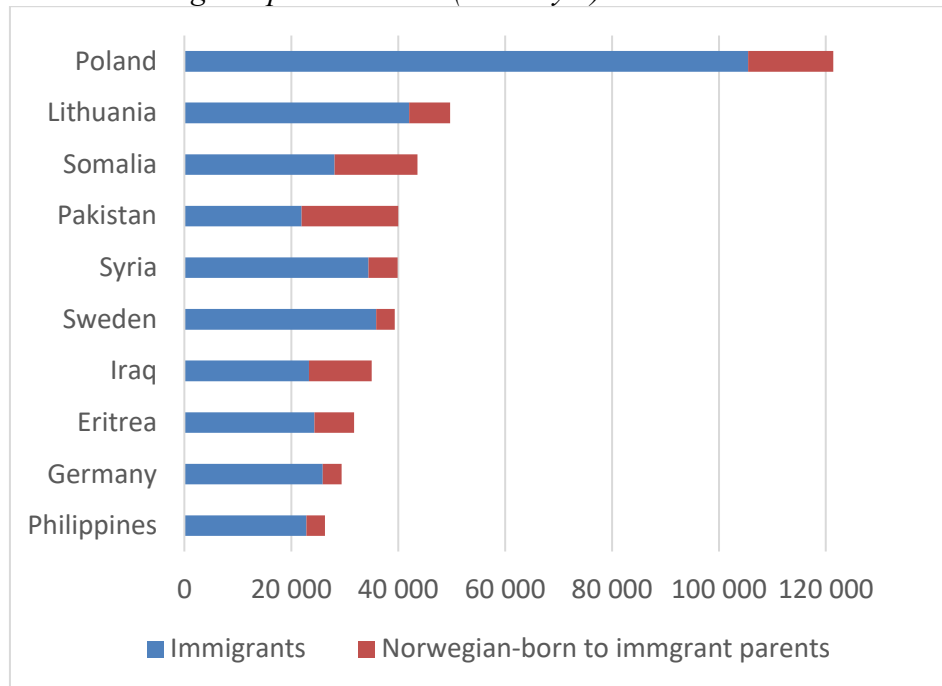
For many years, Pakistan was on the top of the list of countries of origin for the combined category of immigrants and Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents. However, since 2007 Poland has been the main country of origin in this category, reaching 121 400 registered residents at the start of 2022. Lithuania (49 700) and Somalia (43 600) have also passed Pakistan (40 000) as country of origin for residents with an immigrant background³⁸, cf. Table A17.

As many as 45 per cent of those with a Pakistani background were born in Norway (18 100). This was the case for only 15 per cent of those with a Lithuanian background. For those with background from Syria, 14 per cent were born in Norway. After Pakistan, the largest groups of Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents, had parents from Poland (15 900) and from Somalia (15 500). Cf. Figure 8.2 and Tables A17 and A17.2.

³⁷ The combination of these two groups is usually designated “persons with an immigrant background”

³⁸ Immigrants and Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents and four immigrants grand-parents, cf. definition by Statistics Norway.

Figure 8.2 Main background countries for resident immigrants and Norwegian-born with two immigrant parents. 2022 (January 1)



Source: Statistics Norway

8.4 Marriage and divorce

In 2021, most existing *transnational marriages* in Norway consist of couples where both spouses originate from a country in Europe or Asia, or a Norwegian-born married to a person born in another European country, cf. Table A12.1.

Among the 16 050 *marriages* contracted in Norway during 2021, 1 900 involved a Norwegian and a foreigner. During 2021, there were more than 800 marriages between a Norwegian man marrying a woman from another European country and 600 marriages between a Norwegian man and a woman from an Asian country. Cf. Table A13.1.

Almost nine out of ten of the 8 900 *divorces* that took place in Norway in 2021 involved two Norwegian citizens, cf. Table A14.1. Among the transnational marriages ending in a divorce, most happened with:

- Both wife and husband from another European country
- Norwegian husband and the wife from another European country
- Norwegian husband and wife from a country in Asia.

8.5 Regional distribution of immigrants in Norway

Oslo is the municipality with most immigrants in numbers. The proportion of immigrants has increased significantly in many municipalities since 2012, especially in small, remote municipalities. Gamvik and Båtsfjord have surpassed Oslo in terms of the proportion of immigrants and now have 28.1 and 27.0 per cent, compared to 25.4 per cent in Oslo. The number of immigrants in Oslo has had the highest numerical growth, but the proportion has only increased by 2.7 percentage points since 2012. In addition to almost 178 000 immigrants living in Oslo at the start of 2022, more than 58 000 persons born in Norway with two immigrant parents were living there.

Immigrants reside in more central³⁹ (urban) municipalities than the population as a whole. Nevertheless, in the last twenty years the proportion of immigrants who live in the most central municipalities has decreased – from nearly 40 per cent of immigrants in 2000 to 30 per cent in 2021. In the last couple of years, however, this trend may seem to have reversed with a slight increase in the proportion living in more central municipalities.⁴⁰

In the years 2006-2016, which was a period of unprecedented high immigration to Norway, newly arrived immigrants settled less centrally than before, in more rural municipalities and in small and medium sized cities. Labour immigrants from the new EU-member states settled less centrally compared to labour immigrants who came earlier. Towards the end of this period, relatively many refugees arrived, and refugees tend to be settled more decentralised, compared to the residence pattern for other types of immigrants. However, for immigrants who arrived in 2017-2019, the first municipality of residence has been more central again.⁴¹

Immigrants who came as labour migrants in the 1970s, and their descendants, still live mostly in and around Oslo. Labour migrants from EU-countries such as Poland and Lithuania are more scattered throughout the country due to a demand for labour also in rural and coastal areas.⁴² Immigrants from Northern and Eastern Europe, and refugees from Syria reside in less central municipalities, while immigrants from South Asia, particularly from India and Pakistan reside in the most central municipalities.⁴³ Length of residence and reason for immigration contribute to these differences.

Since 2010, immigration has had a major impact on population trends in Norwegian municipalities. Net immigration has led to a population increase in 99 out of 356 municipalities. One-hundred-and-forty-three municipalities have had a population decline despite net immigration.⁴⁴

Immigrants and internal migration in Norway

The high level of immigration over the past years has meant that immigrants are also influencing internal migration. Immigrants constitute around 15 per cent of the Norwegian population, and they account for about 20 per cent of internal migration between Norwegian municipalities.

When immigrants move domestically, they move in a more centralising direction than the rest of the population, and the general frequency of moving – both between municipalities and to other countries – is higher for immigrants than for the rest of the population. This is partly because many immigrants are in younger age groups where moving is more common. Age-specific moving rates show that immigrant children

³⁹ Level of centrality is measured by the Centrality Index which classifies municipalities based on access to service functions and labour markets (Statistics Norway: [Sentralitetsindeksen - SSB](#))

⁴⁰ [Tønnesen, Marianne. Innvandreres bo- og flyttemønstre i Norge, NIBR-rapport 2022/12.](#)

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Østby, L. (2017). Arbeidsinnvandrere – fra hovedstadsfenomen til vanlig syn i hele landet. I Samfunnsspeilet: 3/2017. Statistisk sentralbyrå. <https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/arbeidsinnvandrere-fra-hovedstadsfenomen-til-vanlig-syn-i-hele-landet>

⁴³ [Tønnesen, Marianne. Innvandreres bo- og flyttemønstre i Norge, NIBR-rapport 2022/12.](#)

⁴⁴ [Gulbrandsen et al \(2021\). Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrereforeldres fordeling på kommunenivå. SSB Rapport 2021/8 \(English summary\)](#)

and young people, and from age 30 or older, move somewhat more frequently than their peers who are not immigrants. Among people in their 20s, natives have higher domestic moving rates than immigrants⁴⁵.

New arrival cohorts of immigrants do not move as frequently from their first municipality as did previous arrival cohorts. Five years after arrival, about half of the immigrants still live in their first municipality. Less emigration is the main reason for this lower mobility from the first municipality.

Refugees start out living quite decentralised in Norway, but live more centrally the longer they have lived in the country, whereas labour immigrants do not display clear differences by duration of residence. Around six-seven years after arriving in Norway, migrant workers and refugees live in similarly central locations. Among immigrants with more than seven years in Norway, the refugees live more centrally than the labour immigrants. Immigrants who are children or young people live less centrally than immigrants in other age groups⁴⁶.

Quite frequently, refugees move right after they have been granted residence in Norway, and many of these moves are from or between asylum reception centres. These moves may have a significant impact on the general moving patterns in Norway, particularly in years when many new refugees have been granted asylum.⁴⁷

Previous studies have shown that refugees often move from rural areas to cities. Initially, many have been settled in rural municipalities but often move to larger cities or towns.⁴⁸ However, this secondary migration among refugees has declined over time. The Introduction Scheme for newly arrived immigrants seems to give people with a refugee background a stronger connection to the municipality where they are initially settled.

⁴⁵ [Tønnesen, Marianne \(2022\). *Innvandrerens bo- og flyttmønstre i Norge*. NIBR-rapport 2022/12.](#) (English summary)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ [Stambøl, Lasse Sigbjørn \(2013\). *Bosettings- og flyttmønster blant innvandrere og deres norskfødte barn*. SSB Rapport 2013/46.](#) (English abstract)

9 Integration policy

9.1 Legislation and general policy principles

The integration policy aims to provide incentives and opportunities for immigrants' participation in the labour market and in community life. The current political goals, as expressed in the political platform⁴⁹ of the Government, are higher employment among immigrants, to build strong local communities and well-functioning community arenas, to promote equality, and to combat negative social control.

Integration calls for efforts to be made by many parties. Considerable efforts are expected from each immigrant to contribute and participate in society. At the same time, the Government and local authorities must take steps to ensure possibilities for the individual immigrant to study and to participate in the labour force, and be included in local communities, in sports and cultural life. Public services shall provide equal opportunities for all. The principle of mainstreaming in the public sector requires that national, regional and local authorities take responsibility for adapting their services to the diverse needs of the users.

Civil society, immigrant organisations and other NGOs, as well as local and regional authorities are all essential actors in developing and implementing the integration policy. There is support for various integration initiatives through government grants.

The *Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion* is responsible for coordinating the integration policies for immigrants and their children. The *Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi)* has a central role in coordinating the efforts to ensure that persons with an immigrant background obtain equitable public services.

The *Introduction Act* was implemented in 2003 to strengthen the possibilities for specific groups of newly arrived immigrants to participate in the labour market and in community life and gain economic independence. The act has regulated the *Introduction Program* (from 2003), the scheme *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies* (from 2005), and training for asylum seekers in reception centers in *Norwegian language and in Norwegian culture and values* (from 2018). Even though the *Integration Act* has replaced the *Introduction Act*, the latter still applies to persons granted residence before January 2021.

The target group for the *Introduction Program* is refugees and their family members, in addition to persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds and their family. The rights and obligations of individuals under the *Introduction or Integration Acts* only apply to those between the ages 18 and 55 who are settled by an agreement between *IMDi* and the municipality.

The target group for *Norwegian language training and social studies* is newly arrived adult immigrants between the ages of 18 and 67 with a residence permit that constitutes the basis for permanent residence. This also applies to foreign family members of immigrants in Norway and to family members of Norwegian and Nordic nationals.

⁴⁹ [Hurdalsplattformen 2021](#) (Only in Norwegian)

However, those residing in Norway based on the EEA/EFTA-agreements are not covered by the *Introduction or Integration Acts*, and they are not entitled to free tuition in Norwegian language and social studies, nor are they obliged to participate in such training.

The Integration Act

In January 2021, the *Integration Act* replaced the *Introduction Act*. One of the objectives of the *Integration Act* is that more refugees gain formal education through the *Introduction Program*.

Studies show that the employment rate for refugees increases during the first few years after arriving in Norway, and then decreases five to ten years after arrival.⁵⁰ One important reason for low employment rates is that there is a gap between the competence and skills demanded by the employers and the documented skills of many newly arrived refugees. To enhance employment rates, it is important that the measures to qualify refugees and immigrants for the Norwegian labour market are targeted. Documented formal competence is increasingly important.

The *Integration Act* contains provisions concerning responsibilities of the municipality and the counties, early qualification, the *Introduction Program* and *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies*.

The aim of the *Introduction Program* is to provide each participant with fundamental skills in the Norwegian language and to prepare him/her for employment or further education as well as participation in Norwegian society. The target group for this program under the new act is the same as under the previous *Introduction Act*.

The scope and contents of the *Introduction Program* shall be differentiated, so that the participants are offered a program that is adapted to their background and individual *Program Goals*. The participants must undergo competence mapping and career guidance before starting the program. The *Introduction Program* may last from three months to four years, and the duration of the program will vary depending on the participants' educational background and competence, and the participants' individual *Program Goal*. For participants who have a *Program Goal* of completing upper secondary education, the program can be extended up to four years. The primary *Program Goal* for young people under the age of 25, who have not completed upper secondary education, is completion of upper secondary education. Participants who have already completed upper secondary education will be given a shorter program period. For these, the program may last between three and six months and may be extended up to a year. The minimum requirements for the program are the same as in the *Introduction Act: Norwegian Language Training, Social Studies and work- or education-oriented measures*. In addition, every participant must participate in an *empowerment course*, and parents must participate in a *parental guidance course*.

Participants in the program are entitled to an *Introduction Benefit*. The benefit is taxable. The benefit is the same as it was in the *Introduction Act*, except for participants

⁵⁰ This situation has been documented in several studies, especially by researchers attached to the Frisch Centre for Economic Research. For example, as discussed by Bratsberg, Raaum and Røed in [Immigrant Labor Market Integration Across Admission Classes](#) (2017).

under the age of 25 who are living with one or both parents. They will now receive one third of the benefit. Participants under the age of 25, who are not living with parents, will get two thirds of the benefit. The full benefit is twice the basic amount (G) in the *National Insurance Scheme*. In 2022, 2 G is NOK 18 600 per month or NOK 223 000 per year.

For *Norwegian language training and social studies*, the requirement of having completed a fixed number of hours of training is in the new *Integration Act* replaced with the requirement of a minimum level of Norwegian language proficiency. This level is the participant's *Norwegian Goal*. The indicative minimum level is B1 (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)*)⁵¹ in all language skills (oral, listening, writing and reading).

The target group is the same as in the *Introduction Act*, but the age has been raised to 18 years. The same has been done for the target group for *Norwegian language and social studies for asylum seekers in reception centres*.

Persons teaching Norwegian under the *Integration Act* must have relevant academic and pedagogical competence. Relevant academic competence means 30 credits in Norwegian as a second language.

The Interpretation Act

The *Interpretation Act* was implemented from January 1, 2022. It covers interpretation services in the public sector. The Act implies a duty for public agencies to use qualified interpreters when this is necessary to ensure the rule of law or to provide proper assistance and services.

The *Interpretation Act* applies to all public agencies and to interpreters. It concerns interpreting to and from Norwegian, including interpreting for the hearing impaired. The act also implies other duties for public sector institutions and interpreters, including a requirement for interpreters to present a police certificate of conduct when interpreting for the police, for the immigration services and in courts; a requirement for public sector institutions to have guidelines on the use of interpreters; and rules of processing of personal data. For interpreters, the act also implies a duty of confidentiality and rules of disqualification. Interpreters can be excluded from the national registry of interpreters if they do not act in accordance with the duties and regulations of the law.

Ukraine – Act of temporary legislative changes

In June 2022, the Storting passed the *Act on temporary changes in legislation because of the arrival of displaced persons from Ukraine*.⁵² The act is valid until July 1, 2023, and encompasses temporary changes in many different acts, including the *Integration Act*.⁵³ See chapter 10.1 below for details on the changes of this Act.

⁵¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

⁵² <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2022-06-10-35>

⁵³ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-107-l-20212022/id2910763/>

9.2 Strategies and action plans

Strategy documents and action plans have become increasingly important as tools for formulating and implementing public policies in many fields, including integration and diversity. Often, several ministries are involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of such plans.

Strategy on the Role of Civil Society in Integration

In June 2021, the former government launched a new strategy to strengthen the role of civil society in developing and implementing the integration policy for the period of 2021–2024⁵⁴. The strategy was accompanied by a promise of increased economic support to NGOs working to improve integration. The strategy has 26 defined measures with three main goals: 1. More persons with an immigrant background participating in civil society; 2. Raise and support civil society's effort on integration; and 3. Better cooperation and regulatory conditions. The strategy is in the process of being implemented by the current government.

Action Plan on Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence

Norway has an active policy to combat attitudes and actions that impede on individuals' opportunities to live free and safe lives, taking part in education, employment and civil society. Combatting negative social control, honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation has long been a high priority for Norway. Long-term efforts have yielded results and an increased number of victims and people at risk are being identified and given help.

Negative social control and honour-based violence are, however, persistent challenges. The most recent *Action Plan Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence (2021–2024)*⁵⁵, advances and strengthens efforts through the implementation of 33 specific measures. These efforts involve safe-guarding fundamental rights, ensuring freedom and equality for all, combating violence and abuse, preventing social exclusion and health problems and ensuring equal public services for the entire population. The action plan is part of Norway's implementation of the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (the *Istanbul Convention*). Seven ministries and their subordinate agencies are collaborating on the action plan.

Action Plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Norway's *Action Plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism* highlights comprehensive and preventive early measures. The plan covers all kinds of extremism. It originally contained 30 measures, but the plan is dynamic, in the sense that existing measures and the need for new measures continuously are assessed according to developments and changes in the perceived threats. The plan was revised in 2020 and new measures were added, including measures addressing right-wing extremism.⁵⁶ The *Ministry of Justice and Public Security* coordinates this work.

⁵⁴ [Regjeringen vil satse mer på frivillige organisasjoner i hverdagsintegreringen - regjeringen.no](#) (Only in Norwegian)

⁵⁵ [Freedom from Negative Social Control and Honour Based Violence \(2021-2024\) - regjeringen.no](#)

⁵⁶ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/handlingsplan-mot-radikalisering-og-voldelig-ekstremisme/id2711314/> (The revised plan is only available in Norwegian)

Commission on Extremism

The Government has appointed a commission to investigate how extremism occurs and learn more about what measures work to prevent and counter radicalisation and extremism. The commission will deliver its report by the end of 2023.⁵⁷

9.3 Voluntary organisations and activities

Voluntary organisations and volunteer work are important in Norway. Traditionally, people have come together to pursue common interests and deal with common problems. Immigrants in Norway also participate in such voluntary activities to a relatively high degree, but often in other areas of civil society than do members of the majority population. Generally, immigrants and their children, especially women and girls, are underrepresented as members of the traditional Norwegian organisations for voluntary work and other non-governmental organisations. Young or middle-aged minority men with a high level of education who know the language well are those who have the highest network participation.⁵⁸

Several immigrant organisations are an integral part of the organised voluntary sector in Norway. The *Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion* provides grants to immigrant organisations and other NGOs, both to local and nation-wide organisations. The aim of such grants is to strengthen the participation of immigrants and their children in local activities, and to facilitate access to social networks. These grants are also available for NGOs that provide information and guidance to new immigrants, especially to labour immigrants and other immigrants not covered by the *Introduction/Integration Act*. There are grants also for national resource centres focusing on integration issues, as well as for Norwegian sports clubs and leagues that have activities dedicated to increase the participation and integration of ethnic minorities in sports.

Dialogue and contact between the Government and civil society are important elements of the processes of making and implementing policy. Among the measures to promote such dialogue is an annual *Integration Conference*. The ninth such conference took place in October 2022.

Ukraine and voluntary organisations

When refugees from Ukraine started arriving in Norway in February-March 2022, the voluntary sector was quick to mobilise. Many voluntary organisations have offered aid and activities to include the newly arrived refugees, both at reception centres and in local communities as the settlement started. A significant share of the refugees arriving from Ukraine are children, and organisations provide a variety of leisure activities especially aimed at this group. To ensure financial support for the NGOs in their contribution, there is as a temporary government grant in 2022 to organisations offering activities and meeting places for refugees from Ukraine.

⁵⁷ [Regjeringen oppnevner ekstremismekommisjon - regjeringen.no](https://regjeringen.no/no/tema/ekstremisme/ekstremismekommisjon) (only in Norwegian)

⁵⁸ <https://samfunnsforskning.brage.unit.no/samfunnsforskning-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2557785/Organisasjonsengasjementpercent2bblantpercent2binnvandrarar.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (only in Norwegian)

9.4 The role of cultural policy

A vision for the cultural policy is that everyone has the right to culture and all citizens must have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities and have easy access to cultural heritage. Cultural activities must be available to all, regardless of their social, cultural and financial background, age, gender and functional ability.

In this sense, cultural policy makes an important contribution to guaranteeing equality, combat discrimination and strengthen unity and inclusion in society. Diversity is an important priority for the *Ministry of Culture and Equality*, which is also reflected in the annual *National Budget*.

Goals for the cultural policy is inclusive and diverse art and cultural life of high quality, which reflects our time and reflects who we are today, and a cultural life that builds identity, education and competence, and which opens up for a variety of expressions of opinion and reflection. Cultural institutions play an important role when it comes to diversity and to obtain access, relevance and inclusion for diverse groups in society. The entire sector is encouraged to contribute to long-term and systematic work to achieve a greater diversity of users and participants, of practitioners and of expressions and offers. The sector itself is also encouraged to contribute to the changes that are necessary to achieve a more equal, diverse and representative cultural life.

Gender equality and diversity requires long-term and systematic work. The *Arts Council Norway* is the national coordinator for diversity in art and cultural life and the main governmental agency for the implementation of Norwegian cultural policy.

10 Training and skills

10.1 Basic qualifications

The educational and work-related qualifications that immigrants bring with them to Norway differ in many respects. Some have completed higher education, have substantial relevant work experience and are fluent in many languages. Others have little or no formal education, little or no relevant work experience and some are illiterate in their mother tongue. Some start working from day one after arrival, for others it is difficult to find employment. Programs that may help immigrants acquire basic and relevant qualifications are designed to strengthen their chances of finding a job and participate in society. The main schemes are *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies*, the *Introduction Program* and the *Job Opportunity Program*. The *Introduction Act* has regulated the first two schemes. From 2021, the scheme has been regulated by the *Integration Act*, cf. Chapter 9.1.

Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies

The goal of the scheme for Norwegian language training and social studies is that an adult immigrant, after the first years in Norway, should sufficiently master Norwegian to be able to find employment and participate in greater society. As soon as possible after settling in a municipality, eligible immigrants are expected to enrol in language training. They should complete the training within three years or 18 months depending on the participant's former level of education. The former requirement of having completed a fixed number of hours of training is in the new *Integration Act* replaced with the requirement of a minimum level of Norwegian language proficiency. This level is the participant's *Norwegian Goal*. The indicative minimum level is B1 (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*⁵⁹) in all language skills (oral, listening, writing and reading). See Chapter 9.1 for further details about the *Integration Act*.

Third country labour immigrants, if eligible for permanent residence, are obliged to participate in language training and social studies, but only for 300 hours. They must pay a fee to the provider of the course. Citizens from *EEA/EFTA-countries*, using their right to free mobility, have neither the right nor a duty to participate in such training.

Having completed language training or demonstrated corresponding language skills is a requirement for a permanent residence permit and for Norwegian citizenship, irrespective of country of origin.

Statistics Norway produces statistics on the participation in *Norwegian Language Training and Social Studies*. During 2021, 21 500 persons participated in the training, compared to 26 100 in 2020. Almost 67 per cent of the participants were women, an increase from 65 per cent in 2020.

Annual reviews of the effects of the language training are partly based on the number of candidates sitting for examinations and on the proportion that passed or failed. A digital test measures the Norwegian skills at four different levels, level A1, A2, B1 and B 2. Level A1 is the lowest level and B2 is the highest. Since the testing was

⁵⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

changed in 2014, it is not possible to directly compare the results from before and after this year.

The policy target for the Norwegian language training is that 90 per cent should achieve B1 or higher on the oral test and 70 per cent achieve B1 or higher on the written test. This policy target was not reached in 2021. At the writing test, only 40.5 per cent achieved B1 or B2, at the test in listening 45.2 per cent achieved B1 or B2, and 46.7 per cent achieved B1 or B2 in reading. This is an increase from 2020 at the writing (3.7 percentage point) and reading test (6.3 percentage point), and a small decrease in listening from 2020 (0.4 percentage point) In 2021, 45.4 per cent achieved B1 or B2 on the oral test, an increase of 4.3 percentage point from 2020. There is an expectation that changes implemented through the *Integration Act* will contribute to improved results in the years to come.

From 2014, it has been mandatory for the participants to take a *test in Social Studies* after completing 50 hours of training in a language they understand. The test is available in 27 languages, in addition to two of the official Norwegian written languages. In 2021, 13 250 candidates took the test, compared to 14 000 in 2020. Of these candidates, 10 260 had a right and obligation to take the test. The policy target is that 90 per cent should pass the test in social studies. Of the candidates with a right and obligation, 81 per cent passed in 2021. This is the same level as in 2020.

Asylum seekers residing in a reception centre are offered 175 hours of Norwegian language training by the municipality, free of charge. In 2021, 76 per cent of the asylum seekers residing in reception centres received such training, compared to 51 per cent in 2020.

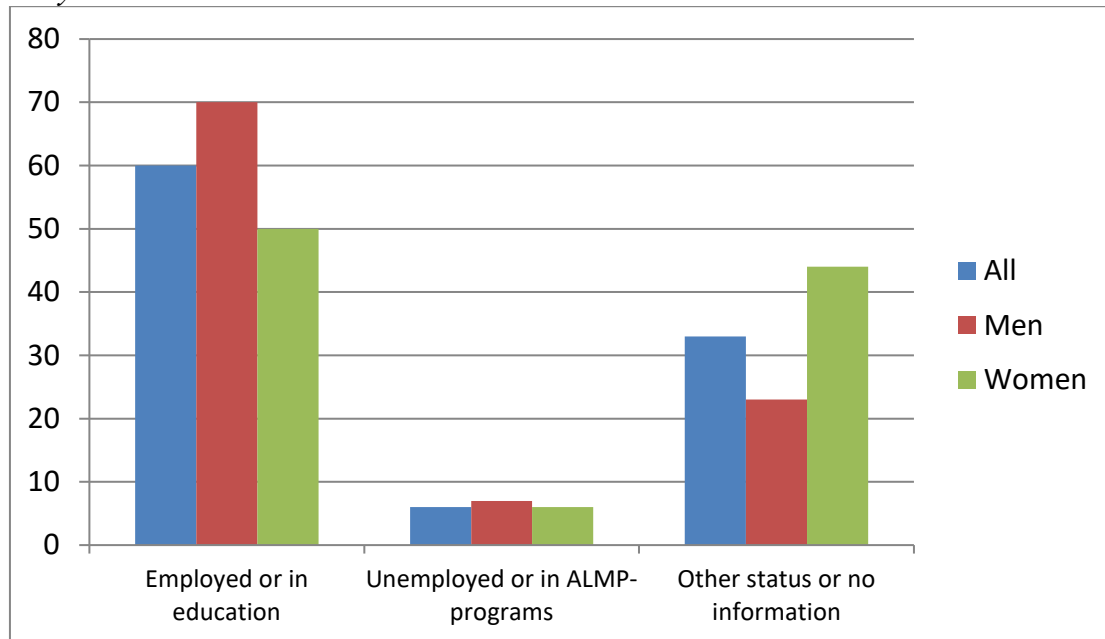
The Introduction Program

The *Introduction Program* is an individually adapted full-time program to acquire basic qualifications. The effects of the program are monitored. During 2021, 10 554 persons participated in the program, compared to 13 900 in 2020. 60 per cent of the participants were women.⁶⁰

Of the participants who finished the program in 2020, 60 per cent were employed or participated in education in November 2021. This was two percentage point lower than for the cohort of the previous year. A larger proportion of men (70 per cent) compared to women (50 per cent) had found work or were attending education, cf. Figure 10.1.

⁶⁰ <http://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/introinnv/aar-deltakere>

Figure 10.1 Persons completing the Introduction Program in 2020 by gender and activity in November 2021. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

As in previous years, the proportion with other status or no information was much higher among women (44 per cent) than among men (23 per cent). Among women in this category, recipients of social assistance, as well as those with ‘unknown status’, constituted 9 and 22 per cent respectively.⁶¹

‘Unknown status’ include those who participate in primary and lower secondary education, unless they have a part-time job, receive cash support, or otherwise are included in any of the above categories. Currently, there are no individual register data on persons participating in primary and lower secondary education after completing the *Introduction program*. Some of those with unknown status may be home with children.

The Job Opportunity Program

The aim of the *Job Opportunity Program* is to increase the employment rate among immigrant women who need to acquire basic skills and who are not covered by other schemes or who need individualised training. The *Directorate of Integration and Diversity* administers the scheme. The main target group of the scheme is: Women outside the labour market who are not receiving supplementary public benefits, nor attending any form of language or labour market training.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the target group in 2021 was as enlarged to cover women receiving supplementary public benefits caused by the pandemic.

Seventy-nine per cent of the participants who completed the scheme in 2021, were employed or participated in education after completing the program, compared to 74 per cent in 2020. The *Job Opportunity Program* has a wide range of tools to address

⁶¹ <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/voksenopplaering/statistikk/introduksjonsordningen-for-nyankomne-innvandrere/artikler/faerre-i-arbeid-etter-endt-introduksjonsprogram>

the different needs of immigrant women in several sectors. In 2021, 60 percent of the women attended language training classes and 70 percent of them participated in on-the-job training.

It is difficult to identify specific causes for the positive results for this program, but more work-oriented activities, on-the-job training, and individual coaching may be some of the factors.

New policies and measures – Basic qualifications

To counteract the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Interim Act on Adaptations to the Introduction Act* that was introduced in the spring of 2020, was further amended in 2021. In total (2020 and 2021), *the Storting* allocated about NOK 800 million to strengthen the basic qualification measures for newly arrived immigrants. Measures to remedy some of the negative consequences of the pandemic were primarily offered to persons already participating in the schemes under the *Introduction Act*, i.e. persons who had their training affected and are facing a more difficult labour market than before. The measures have consisted of an expanded and reinforced Introduction Program and extended Norwegian language training.

In 2021 as in 2020, funding was available for a grant scheme to increase the use of online Norwegian language training, and additional funds were also allocated to strengthen the *Job Opportunity Program*.

Ukraine – some adjustments for persons with temporary protection

In principle, all refugees in Norway have the right and duty to participate in an introduction program. To make it easier for the municipalities to quickly settle refugees from Ukraine granted temporary protection, several temporary changes to different laws were implemented, cf. chapter 9.1. Statutory requirements were reduced, such as those in the *Integration Act* that regulate the duration and obligation to participate in the *Introduction Program* and *Norwegian Language Training*.⁶² These are some important adjustments:

- A right, but not an obligation, to participate in an introduction program for six months, with the possibility of extension for up to six months.
- For those who do not have an education at upper secondary level, the program can last for up to three years, with the possibility of extension for up to one year.
- The program shall consist of work- or education-oriented elements, an offer of Norwegian language training and parental guidance.
- A right to Norwegian language training after settlement applies for one year from the time of start-up of the training, but there is not an obligation to participate for persons with temporary protection.

⁶² <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-107-l-20212022/id2910763/> and <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2022-06-10-35>. Cf. chapter 9.1.

10.2 Recognition of the skills of immigrants

The socio-economic gains from immigration depend largely on the degree to which immigrants can use their previously and newly acquired skills. Many immigrants who settle in Norway have skills from education and work experience in their previous countries of residence. Many of them obtain additional education and work experience in Norway. Efforts to recognise and mobilise these skills in the labour market are important, both for the supply of labour needed in Norway and for the integration of the immigrants into Norwegian society.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is a national agency responsible for recognition of foreign education and training, and for providing information and advice relating to the recognition of foreign education, training and vocational qualifications. NOKUT has the authority to make decisions on general recognition of foreign qualifications obtained from higher education and from post-secondary vocational education, as well as on recognition of upper secondary vocational qualifications from abroad.

From 1 January 2023, these responsibilities are transferred to the *Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills* (HKDir). This directorate under the *Ministry of Education and Research* was established on July 1, 2021. It is a result of the merger of the *Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education* (Diku), *Skills Norway*, and *Universell*, as well as parts of *Unit* and the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data* (NSD).

The scheme for general recognition of foreign higher education includes verification and is primarily aimed at occupations for which there are no legal qualification requirements.⁶³ Decisions on general recognition help employers understand and trust the value of foreign higher education qualifications. There is also a fast-track assessment service to help employers and recruitment agencies understand foreign higher education qualifications when they are in the process of recruiting new staff. Such assessments are made free-of-charge and within five working days.

Immigrants with higher education from abroad can also apply for academic recognition of their qualifications from higher education institutions with relevant study programs. Such recognition concerns both parts of, and full, study programs and degrees. Academic recognition is most relevant for immigrants interested in further studies in Norway.

For both general and academic recognition of higher education from abroad, the relevant provisions of the *Norwegian Act on Higher Education* are based on the *Council of Europe and UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention*⁶⁴. Norway has also ratified the *UNESCO Global Convention*⁶⁵, meaning it will apply as soon as it enters into force.

⁶³ See <https://www.nokut.no/en/application-services--foreign-education/> for more information.

⁶⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/165>

⁶⁵ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/higher-education/recognition-qualifications/global-convention>

Regarding the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons, or persons in a refugee-like situation, NOKUT (now HKdir) is responsible for an interview-based recognition procedure for people with insufficient or unverifiable documentation of their higher education (the *UVD-procedure*). This implements Article VII of the *Lisbon Recognition Convention*.

Since 2016, the *European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)* is part of the recognition schemes. The aim is to facilitate the integration of newly arrived refugees and displaced persons in Norwegian society, by giving them the right to have their qualifications assessed, including in cases where documentary evidence is insufficient or missing. The method has proven easily adaptable to non-EU/EFTA countries as well and has been tested on a European scale in projects financed by the EU and the *Council of Europe*. Building on the initiative by Council of Europe, UNESCO has initiated a similar project called the *UNESCO Qualification Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants*. The initiative is supported by Norway.

Currently, the recognition scheme for upper secondary vocational education and training comprises 20 Norwegian craft and journeyman's certificates. Applications for corresponding qualifications from Poland, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are processed. The scheme for recognition of vocational education and training gradually expands to new qualifications and countries. From 2019, NOKUT also became responsible for general recognition of post-secondary and tertiary vocational education (ISCED levels 4 and 5).

For most professions and occupations, no specific official recognition is required before a person can take up work in Norway. However, for around 170 professions, the qualifications required are regulated by law and regulations. This means that the recognition of professional qualifications is required for individuals who want to be able to practice these professions in Norway. Examples of such professions are nurses, teachers and electricians. For such professions, recognition or authorisation must be given by the competent recognition authority. In Norway, there are 17 different recognition authorities for professional qualifications. NOKUT (now HKdir) is the assistance centre for the *EU Professional Qualifications Directive* in Norway, and provides information to professionals about the directive, Norwegian legislation, and regulated professions.

For some professions requiring authorisation, it may be difficult to find appropriate bridging courses. Since 2016, therefore, the Government has financed the development and establishment of bridging courses for nurses and teachers. They started in 2017, at *Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet)*. Later, courses for engineers have also been established at *OsloMet* and the *Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)*. The intention is to enable and certify these professionals to work as teachers and nurses in Norway. Persons with a refugee background are prioritised for admission to the bridging courses.

New policies and measures – recognition of skills

The bridging courses offered by OsloMet were originally one-year courses. Due to the need to improve the teacher candidates' proficiency in Norwegian, the teacher courses have been expanded to two years. The interest in the courses, and the number

of applications, have increased over the years, as the courses have become better known.

In 2021 and 2022, NOKUT extended the system of ‘automatic recognition’ to more countries. This includes citizens from Ukraine. Automatic recognition is not a formal recognition, but downloadable statements by country on how specific degrees are normally assessed.⁶⁶ Experience shows that in many cases, such a document is sufficient for a job application, and for the countries for which automatic recognition has been available for some time, there is a clear reduction in the number of applications for general recognition.

⁶⁶ [Automatic recognition of qualifications | Nokut](#)

11 Education

11.1 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Following a period with strong increase in the number of kindergarten places, introduction of a maximum fee for parents and a legal entitlement for all children to a place in a kindergarten, the focus is on developing the quality and the content of kindergartens. The *Kindergarten Act* and regulations to that act apply to this sector.

Children who reach the age of one by the end of August in the year of the application for a place in a kindergarten, are entitled to a place from that August. Children who reach the age of one in September, October or November in the year of the application, are entitled to a place by the end of the month they reach the age of one. Participation in a kindergarten is voluntary, but 93.4 per cent of children aged 1–5 and 97.8 per cent of all 5-year-olds attended in 2021. The age of compulsory schooling is six years.

The current war in Ukraine has forced many children and youth to flee their country. Of the about 32 100 persons from Ukraine seeking asylum in Norway, about one third of them are children (numbers from November 11, 2022).

There are regulations limiting the kindergarten fee to be paid by parents. Municipalities are to provide discounts for siblings, regardless of the family's income, and free core hours (20 hours per week) for children aged 2–5 from families with the lowest incomes. This is regardless of their mother tongue. There is also a national subsidy scheme for low-income families so that these families will pay a maximum of six per cent of their income for a full-time place in kindergarten, limited upwards by the maximum price.

Locally there are different schemes/programs for free core hours in a kindergarten. Some municipalities have programs in designated geographic areas with many residents with an immigrant background.

Children from asylum seeking families do not have a right to a kindergarten place until their asylum application has been accepted and the family has a permanent address in a municipality. However, children staying in an asylum centre may enter a kindergarten if places are available in the municipality where the centre is located. A government grant finances full time places for all children in asylum centres aged one to five regardless of the status of their asylum application.

For the municipalities to be better able to respond to the current refugee situation due to the war in Ukraine, some temporary legislative changes of the *Kindergarten Act*, making it easier to establish contemporary kindergartens, have been implemented.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens is a regulation to the *Kindergarten Act*.⁶⁷ The plan provides guidelines on the values, contents and tasks of kindergartens and describes their societal role. Kindergarten programs shall build on a holistic educational philosophy, with care, play and learning being at the core of

⁶⁷ <https://www.udir.no/globalassets/filer/barnehage/rammeplan/framework-plan-for-kindergartens2-2017.pdf>

activities. Social and language skills, as well as seven learning areas, are identified as being important to the learning environment provided by the kindergartens. The current *Framework plan* came into force from August 2017. From January 1, 2021, a new Chapter was introduced in the *Kindergarten Act* with requirements for how the kindergarten should ensure that the children have a safe and good psychosocial environment.

Many immigrant children do not have Norwegian as their mother tongue and learn Norwegian as a second language in a kindergarten. Statistics from the *Directorate for Education and Training* show that 19.5 per cent of children in a kindergarten in 2021 were defined as minority language children. It is important that their situation is well understood and that they get an opportunity to express themselves in Norwegian or Sami. According to the *Framework Plan*, the kindergarten must help to ensure that linguistic diversity becomes an enrichment for the entire group of children and encourage multilingual children to use their mother tongue while also actively promoting and developing the children's language skills in Norwegian or Sami.

Early childhood is the fundamental period for the development of language skills. Several Norwegian studies show that measures to increase the participation of minority language children in ECEC have positive effects on the children's later competencies in the Norwegian language. For example, *Statistics Norway* is responsible for a longitudinal study for the *Directorate for Education and Training* on the effects of free core hours in kindergarten on four cohorts of children in Oslo. The latest report, from November 2021, shows that a positive effect of kindergarten is still present in the eighth grade in elementary school, especially for pupils from families where the mother is unemployed and/or from low-income families.⁶⁸ The final report from this study will be published in 2023.

The municipalities receive an earmarked government grant aimed at enhancing the minority language children's language development in kindergarten. The *Ministry of Education and Research* as well as the *Directorate for Education and Training* and the *National Centre for Multicultural Education* have prepared and disseminated support material for kindergarten staff about language and cultural diversity.

The child health clinics in each municipality are to assess the child's language skills at the age of two and four. The assessment is to be based on national guidelines that include the checking of eyesight and hearing capacity in addition to language skills.

The main policy goal regarding children with an immigrant background and kindergartens has been to increase the attendance, especially among the younger children. In 2016, the general public grant for the municipal sector was increased (not earmarked) in order to enable the municipalities to give ECEC information and recruit minority children to kindergarten. From 2018 there has been an earmarked grant for active information and recruitment of minority language children in municipalities with low participation in kindergarten. In addition, *Open kindergartens*, where a parent accompanies the child to pedagogical sessions one or several times per week, provide a good opportunity to show immigrant parents what a Norwegian kindergarten is like.

⁶⁸ Drange, Nina (2021): Statistics Norway Reports 2021/30, [Gratis kjernetid i barnehage i Oslo. Rapport 3: Oppfølging av barna på åttende trinn \(ssb.no\)](https://www.ssb.no/barn-og-ungdom/artikler/Gratis_kjernetid_i_barnehage_i_Oslo_Rapport_3_Oppfolging_av_barna_paa_aittende_trinn_ssb.no)

There is usually either a very low fee or no fee for participation in open kindergartens.

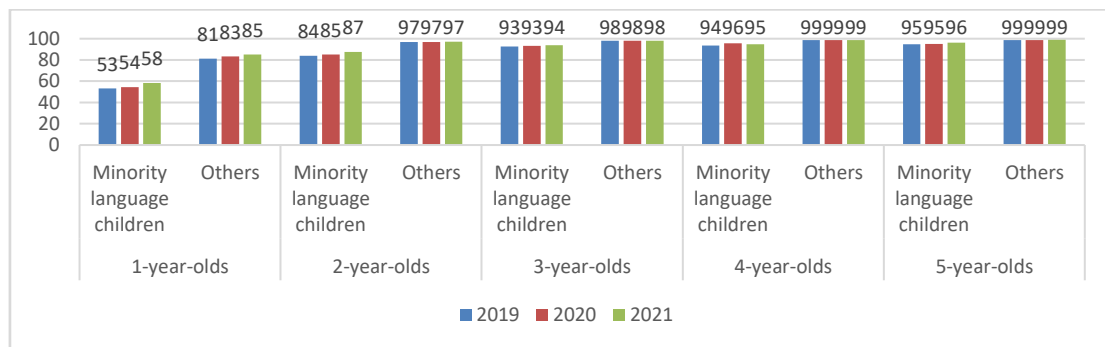
The *Directorate for Education and Training* have translated information material about kindergartens into several minority languages, and the municipalities may use the material free of charge. The difference in the use of kindergartens by minority and majority children aged 1-2 and 3-5 has been reduced yearly, cf. Figure 11.1.

Goals for integration – Kindergarten

The former reporting system *Goals for integration* has for some years been a tool to help ensure that all immigrants receive the services to which they are entitled. The educational attainment indicators should reflect how immigrants and their Norwegian-born children perform in the education system. These indicators are still used in this chapter on education.

Over the last years, an increasing share of all entitled language minority children⁶⁹ attended kindergarten. 87 per cent of minority language children aged 1-5 years attended kindergarten in 2021. For other children in the same age group, the share was 95 per cent. The share of children attending kindergarten increases with age, as can be seen in Figure 11.1. For minority language children the differences in attendance by age are greater than among other children. For 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, the share attending kindergarten is close to the share among other children, while the minority language 1- and 2-year-olds have a significantly lower attendance than other children.

Figure 11.1 Participation rates in kindergarten among language minority children and other children, by age group. 2019-2021. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

New policies and measures – Early Childhood Education and Care

From January 1, 2023, the maximum fee in kindergarten has been reduced to NOK 3 000 per month. Furthermore, participation in kindergarten has become free from the third child for parents with three children or more in kindergarten.

In addition, the grant to facilitate recruitment of more kindergarten teachers in urban areas with major challenges in living conditions, and the grant to strengthen the language development of minority language children have been increased.

⁶⁹ 'Language minority children' is defined as children whose both parents have another mother tongue than Norwegian, Sami, Swedish, Danish or English.

The *Directorate of Education and Research* will develop a set of resources to support the efforts in the ECEC to strengthen the Norwegian (or Sami) skills of multilingual children. An important aim of the resources is to raise the importance of seeing the follow-up as an overall effort, which includes documentation. The resources must be anchored in the framework plan for the kindergarten and be such that there is room for local adaptation.

For new policies and measures related to kindergarten for Ukrainian immigrants, see chapter 11.2 *New policy measures to help children and youth from Ukraine in the Norwegian education system*.

11.2 Primary and secondary education

Policy and legislation

In 2021, about 19 per cent of the students in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools, and 22.1 per cent of the students in upper secondary schools, were immigrants or children of immigrants. Immigrant students, especially those who arrive in Norway as teenagers, face tougher challenges than other students in achieving good results from their education. The current war in Ukraine has forced many children and youth to flee their country. So far, about one third of the refugees from Ukraine seeking temporary protection in Norway are children.

A comprehensive school system that benefits all students is a central aim for the education policy. The objective is to provide good learning opportunities for all students, with special consideration of the needs of specific groups of children, such as those from language minorities or children who need special educational support.

The main legislation for this area is the *Education Act*, the *Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges* and the *Introduction Act*. The *Education Act* covers education for adults in need of primary and secondary education. The statutes have supplementary regulations on many issues that are important for language minorities and migrants' education.

According to the *Education Act* section 2-1, children and young persons are *obliged* to attend primary and lower secondary education and have the *right* to a public primary and lower secondary education. The right to primary and lower secondary education applies when it is probable that the child will reside in Norway for a period of more than three months. The obligation to attend primary and lower secondary education commences as soon as the presence has lasted for three months. These rules apply to every child, including children of asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors seeking asylum and irregular immigrants.

For the municipalities to be better able to respond to the current refugee situation due to the war in Ukraine, the Government suggested some temporary legislative changes, which the Storting approved.⁷⁰ The most important temporary change of the Education Act has been that all children have the right to school as soon as possible and no later than within three months after arrival. Normally the rule is within one month. All children are obliged to go to school when they have been in the country for three

⁷⁰ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/prop.-107-l-20212022/id2910763/>
<https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2022-06-10-35>

months. The temporary legislation means that the municipalities have more time to prepare and provide fulltime education according to the Education Act. However, they have to offer the best possible education as soon as possible.

Youth who have completed lower secondary school in Norway or a comparable education in another country, have the right to upper secondary education. The application deadline for admission to upper secondary school is February 1 or March 1 each year, but the *County Authority* must also take into consideration applications they receive after the deadline. Some counties provided activities for youth from Ukraine shortly after their arrival to Norway during spring 2022, and all of them intend to provide education as applied for in the autumn 2022.

According to the *Education Act* section 2-8, a pupil attending the primary and lower secondary education and who has a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami, has the right to adapted education in Norwegian until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to attend the regular instruction offered. If necessary, such pupils are also entitled to mother tongue instruction, bilingual subject teaching, or both. In 2021–2022, 33 per cent of the pupils in primary and lower secondary schools who were immigrants or born in Norway with immigrant parents, received adapted education in Norwegian.

According to the *Education Act* section 3-1, young persons who have completed primary and lower secondary education or the equivalent, have on application, the right to three years' full-time upper secondary education and training. Persons who are above the age of compulsory schooling – but under 18 – and apply for a residence permit, also have the right to primary, lower secondary or upper secondary education while they are in Norway.

According to the *Education Act* section 4A-1, students who have the right to upper secondary education can be given more primary/ lower secondary education before or in combination with upper secondary education. This will help students who need more preparatory education to benefit from upper secondary education. This is especially relevant for students arriving in Norway late in their schooling and have limited time before they enter upper secondary school. From 2020, the funds for the government scheme (The Job Opportunity Program Part B) to support school owners who organise such education were transferred to the county municipality, cf. Chapter 10.1.

According to the *Education Act* section 3-12, students attending upper secondary education and training, who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami, have the right to adapted education in Norwegian until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to attend the normal instruction offered. If necessary, such students are also entitled to mother tongue instruction, bilingual subject teaching, or both. A student, who has this right, has the right to a maximum of two years' additional upper secondary education and training if this is necessary for reaching the pupil's individual educational objectives. Before the county authority makes the decision to provide such additional education, an assessment shall be made of the needs of the pupil.

The municipality or the county authority⁷¹ should map the skills that the pupils have in Norwegian before deciding to provide adapted language education. Such mapping shall also be conducted during the education period for pupils who receive adapted language education, to assess whether the pupil has become sufficiently skilled in Norwegian to follow the normal education offered.

For pupils who have recently arrived in Norway, the local authority may organise their education in separate groups, classes or schools. This applies to both primary, lower and upper secondary schools. If some or all the education is to take place in such an introductory group, class or school, this must be stipulated in the decision to provide adapted language education for the pupil. This decision may only be made if it is considered in the pupil's best interest. Education in a specially organised facility may last for up to two years. A decision may only be made for one year at a time. For this period, the teaching may deviate from the curriculum defined for the pupil in question to the extent it is required to provide for the needs of the pupil. Due to the temporary legislation, decisions pursuant to this section do not require the consent of the pupil or his/her parents or guardians.

The *Directorate of Education and Training* has updated and will further develop the guide to the use of introductory offers for newly arrived language minority students.

Learners with the right to adapted education in Norwegian are eligible for training based on the *Basic Norwegian for language minorities' subject curriculum*. This curriculum should be used until the learner has the necessary Norwegian skills to attend regular classes. Students in upper secondary school with the right to adapted language education, and with a shorter period of residence than six years by the expected time of graduation, can under certain conditions follow the *Subject curriculum in Norwegian for language minorities with short time of residence in Norway – upper secondary school*, and have their Norwegian exams from this curriculum. It is mandatory for all upper secondary schools to provide this curriculum for their students. Adults and external candidates can also follow this curriculum.

Newly arrived students and the competence of teachers

In recent years, two policy areas concerning language-minority children have been given priority: (i) enhancing multicultural and second language teaching skills among teachers and other staff, and (ii) improving education for newly arrived students.

Multicultural competence and multilingualism are topics included in the national regulations for teacher education. For several years, teaching Norwegian as a second language has been a part of the strategy for further education for teachers. Seven teacher-training institutions provide relevant courses as part of the strategy.

Schools are important arenas for social and cultural inclusion. Teaching resources to counter group-focused enmity are developed for use in the various teacher education programs.

⁷¹ The municipalities are responsible for primary and lower secondary education, the county authorities for upper secondary education.

To support schools and newly arrived children, several digital resources have been developed over several years:

- *Skolekassa.no* (“The School Box”): Gathers teaching material based on the Norwegian curricula in various subjects, in several languages. Its aim is to help teachers teach newly arrived students.
- *LEXIN*: Dictionaries developed particularly for language minority students in primary, secondary and adult education. The on-line version has sound.
- *Bildetema*: A multilingual interactive picture dictionary, with drawings, text, sound and animations.
- *Morsmål.no*: A platform of teaching tools in many languages for mother tongue teachers in kindergartens and schools.

The scheme *Flexible education* offers distance education organised by the *National Centre of Multicultural Education* (NAFO). *Flexible education* offers bilingual subject teaching online within mathematics and science (according to the Norwegian curricula) for these languages: Arabic, Somali and Tigrinya. In addition, it is expanding with beginner training in the subject English with support in the same languages. The distance learning is aimed for municipalities that do not have local bilingual teachers.

There is an informal Nordic network: *Nordic network on newly arrived students in compulsory and upper secondary education*. The network consists of experts on a national, administrative level from relevant ministries and/ or directorates in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

New policies and measures – Primary and secondary education

The Government has recently introduced free part time participation in after-school programs for all first-grade pupils.

In the budget for 2023, there are grants to strengthen the teacher resources in schools and to school libraries in urban areas with major challenges in living conditions.

NAFO is developing web-based mini-courses and resources for teachers and schools teaching newly arrived students.

The *Ministry of Education and Research* has explored the possibility of funding research on systematic testing of educational models for newly arrived students. A recent report from a feasibility study describes educational programs and interventions for newly arrived students and discusses the challenges and opportunities of investigating the effects of such programs.⁷² To follow up on this study, the *Directorate of Education and Training* is looking into how the data on newly arrived students can be improved. The directorate has also called for proposals for in-depth studies of educational models for newly arrived students. Researchers are now working on the in-depth studies, which will be completed by March 2024.

COVID-19 – compensating measures

Despite national efforts to keep schools and kindergartens open, we know that the Covid-19 pandemic had negative consequences for certain groups of vulnerable children. For example, students received fewer lessons of special education and adopted language teaching than they were supposed to. In 2022, to compensate for some of

⁷² <https://nifu.brage.unit.no/nifu-xmlui/handle/11250/2681661> (Only in Norwegian)

these negative effects NOK 291 million have been allocated to targeted measures in schools and kindergartens in the areas that had the strictest COVID-19 measures in place over time.

Education for children and youth from Ukraine

It has been important to provide newly arrived children and youth from Ukraine with high quality education in accordance with the Kindergarten Act and the Education Act. The aim is to offer stability and a sense of normality for the newly arrived children, in a very stressful situation.

For the municipalities to be better able to respond to the current refugee situation due to the war in Ukraine, the Government suggested some temporary legislative changes, which the Storting approved. For more information about this, see chapter 11. 2. Several measures have been initiated to assist the municipalities in their work to provide good quality education for newly arrived children and youth from Ukraine. The *Directorate of Education and Training* has updated all information relevant for education for newly arrived students. The directorate has also updated relevant guidance material, like a guide about introductory offers for newly arrived language minority students, and developed information about the Norwegian school system, for parents and students, in several languages, including Russian and Ukrainian. The directorate is cooperating with professionals to increase support and guidance.

As described previously in this chapter, there are several resources and digital tools to use in kindergartens and for teaching newly arrived students. There is also experience with digital multilingual resources and bilingual subject teaching, online. However, there were no teaching resources in Ukrainian. Therefore, digital resources like *Bildetema*⁷³, *Lexin*⁷⁴, *Morsmål.no*⁷⁵, *skolekassa.no*⁷⁶ are being further developed by NAFO. *Flexible education* (bilingual subject teaching online) is also expanding. NAFO has engaged Ukrainian teachers to develop bilingual subject teaching in Ukrainian, in the subjects Norwegian and Social Science.

Extra funding has also been provided for the translation and development of pedagogical material for kindergarten and school (based upon the Norwegian curricula). A subsidy scheme is managed by the directorate, and a large number of applicants have already received funding to translate and develop new teaching material in Ukrainian and Russian. Much of this teaching material is ready and available.

It is a challenge to recruit enough personnel with the right competences when receiving many new children and youth from Ukraine. During the pandemic, new ways of mobilising personnel for kindergartens and schools were initiated. There were attempts to make it attractive for pensioners and students to work in kindergartens and schools, and funding for compensation for teachers working long hours was provided. These types of arrangements have been extended to handle the new situation. To recruit enough personnel and personnel with language competences, it is also important to mobilise Ukrainians with relevant background in kindergartens and schools. The

⁷³ *Bildetema* will be expanded to include Ukrainian. It already exists in Russian.

⁷⁴ A *Lexin* dictionary in Ukraine– Norwegian will be developed. Such a dictionary already exists in Russian.

⁷⁵ *Morsmål.no* has now been expanded to include Ukrainian. It already exists in Russian.

⁷⁶ *Skolekassa.no* has been expanded to include both Ukrainian and Russian.

legislation opens for exceptions, so it is possible for the municipalities to use refugees as staff in kindergartens and schools.

The *Ministry of Education and Research* has initiated Nordic meetings to discuss education for newly arrived students from Ukraine. The aim has been to share experiences and measures, and to learn from each other.

Good data is necessary to be able to monitor the situation regarding kindergarten and school attendance. So far it has been difficult to get a complete picture of such attendance for newly arrived children and youth from Ukraine. The directorate has attempted to monitor the situation through a questionnaire to the municipalities. However, we still lack data on many children and youth, and new attempts are made to collect and improve the data. Most of the students registered by the municipalities have started school, and the majority of the municipalities report that they are able to give education according to the Education Act within four weeks. Most of the children registered by the municipalities who have the right to a place in kindergarten, have received an offer of a place. In addition, some of the children not yet with the right to a place in kindergarten, have also been offered a place.

Monitoring integration – Primary and secondary education

Admittance to upper secondary education is often based on the achieved points from compulsory education. The points are calculated by first finding the average of overall achievement marks for classwork and exam marks, and then multiplying this average by 10. Points from compulsory education are not calculated for pupils who lack overall achievement marks in more than half of their subjects. Marks are on the scale 1 to 6, where 6 is the highest achievement mark.

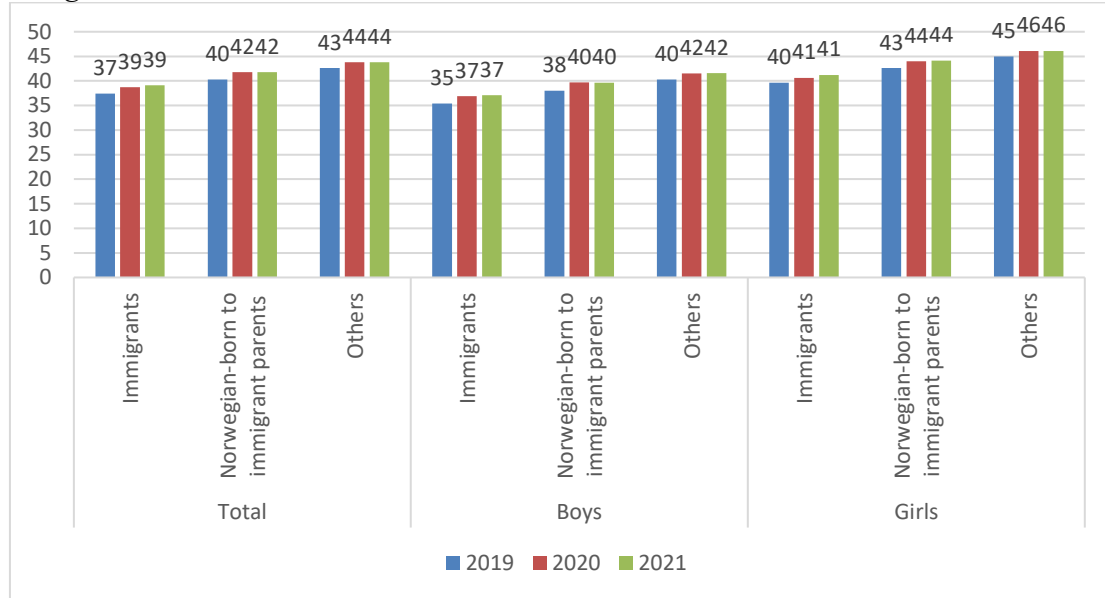
The difference in points between Norwegian-born pupils with immigrant parents and pupils without an immigrant background is small.⁷⁷ The two groups differ by only 2 points in 2021. The difference between immigrant pupils (pupils who have immigrated themselves) and pupils without an immigrant background is somewhat larger, 4.7 points. It is difficult to evaluate the results of immigrant pupils, as many of them cannot be assessed according to the standard curriculum. This is because they need time to learn a new language. Points were not calculated for 13 per cent of immigrant pupils in 2021.

Points achieved at the end of 10th grade are influenced by the pupils length of stay in Norway. In 2021, compulsory education points were not calculated for 39 per cent of the immigrant pupils who had lived two years or less in Norway, while the same applied to 17 per cent of those who had lived in Norway for three-four years and 6 per cent of those who had lived five-six years in Norway. Immigrant pupils who have lived in Norway for ten years or more close in on the level of the Norwegian-born with immigrant parents.

⁷⁷ Immigrants are defined as individuals who have immigrated to Norway themselves, and do not have Norwegian parents or grandparents. Norwegian-born individuals with immigrant parents are defined as individuals who are born in Norway to two immigrant parents. Together, these two groups are referred to as individuals with an immigrant background. The rest of the population is referred to as the “other” group, or as individuals without an immigrant background.

In total, girls achieve 4.4 points more than boys from compulsory education. Norwegian-born girls with immigrant parents achieve more points from compulsory education than boys without an immigrant background.

Figure 11.2 Average lower secondary school grade points, by immigrant background and gender. 2019–2021

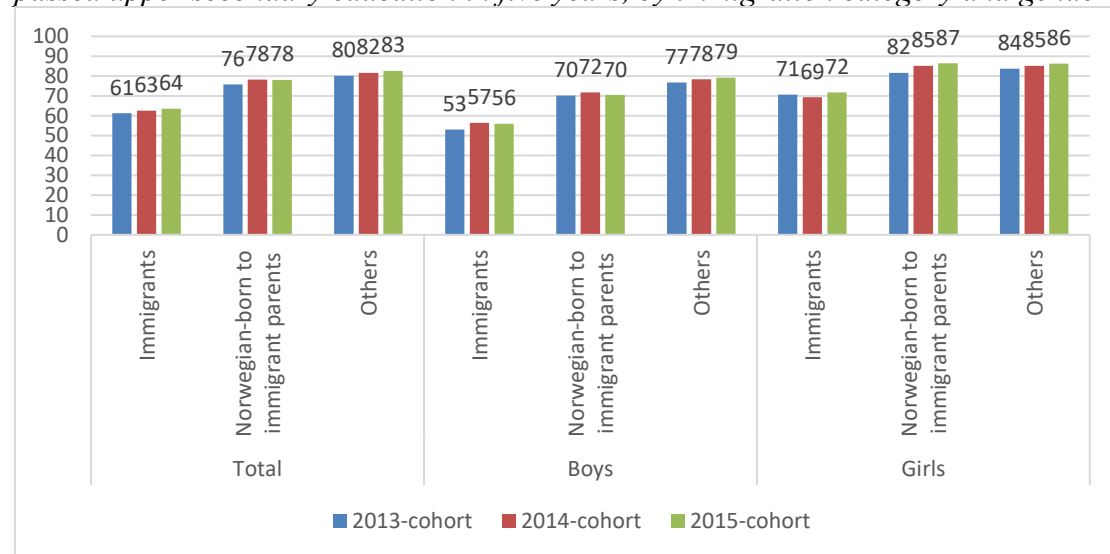


Source: Statistics Norway

Among immigrants who had completed lower secondary education in 2020, 96.2 per cent started in upper secondary education the same year. The proportion for Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and others was 99.8 per cent. The share of students attaining general or vocational qualifications within five/six years after enrolling in an upper secondary school is similar to students without an immigrant background, but lower for immigrant students.

Only 63 per cent of immigrant students who started upper secondary education in 2014–2015 attained full general or vocational qualifications within five/six years, cf. Figure 11.3. This is a small increase of two percentage points from the previous school year. The corresponding numbers for Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and other students were significantly higher. The proportion that attained full qualifications after five/six years was positively correlated with the length of time since immigration.

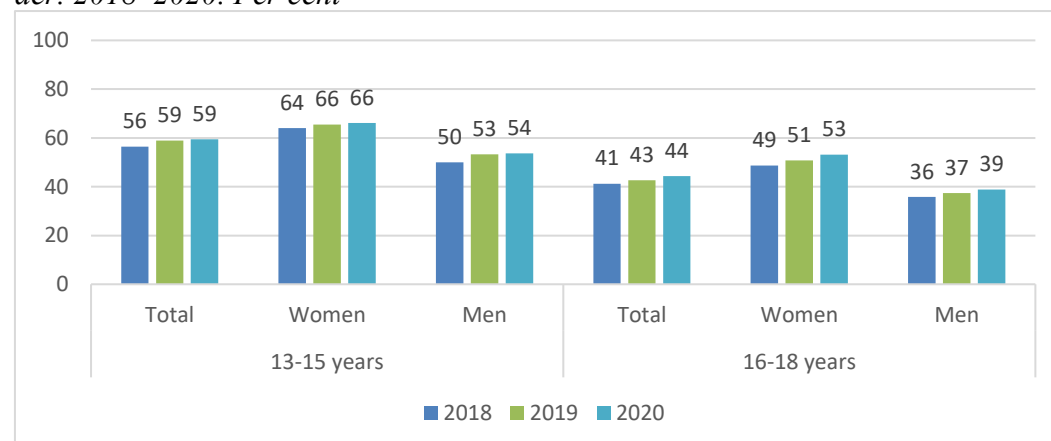
Figure 11.3 Share starting upper secondary education in 2013, 2014, 2015 who has passed upper secondary education in five years, by immigration category and gender



Source: Statistics Norway

Gender and age at arrival has a significant effect on the likelihood of successfully completing upper secondary education. Women have a larger likelihood of completing such education successfully, while the likelihood declines with increasing age at arrival, cf. Figure 11.4.

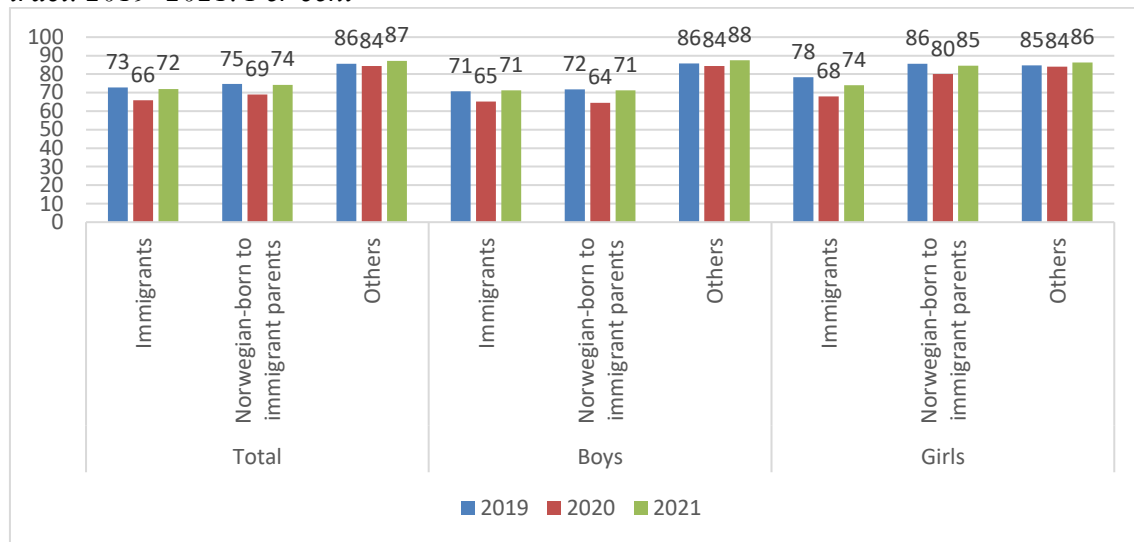
Figure 11.4 Share of immigrants aged 13 to 18 at arrival in Norway who had completed and passed upper secondary school at the age of 25–30, by age group and gender. 2018–2020. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

In 2021, 18 500 applicants had apprenticeship as their first choice for upper secondary education. Among them, 15 400 had received an approved apprenticeship or trainee contract before December 31 that year. The share of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents who had an apprenticeship contract was lower than for other pupils, cf. Figure 11.5. The differences were small between Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and immigrants. There are large differences between boys with an immigrant background and other boys. The difference between immigrants and others was smaller among girls.

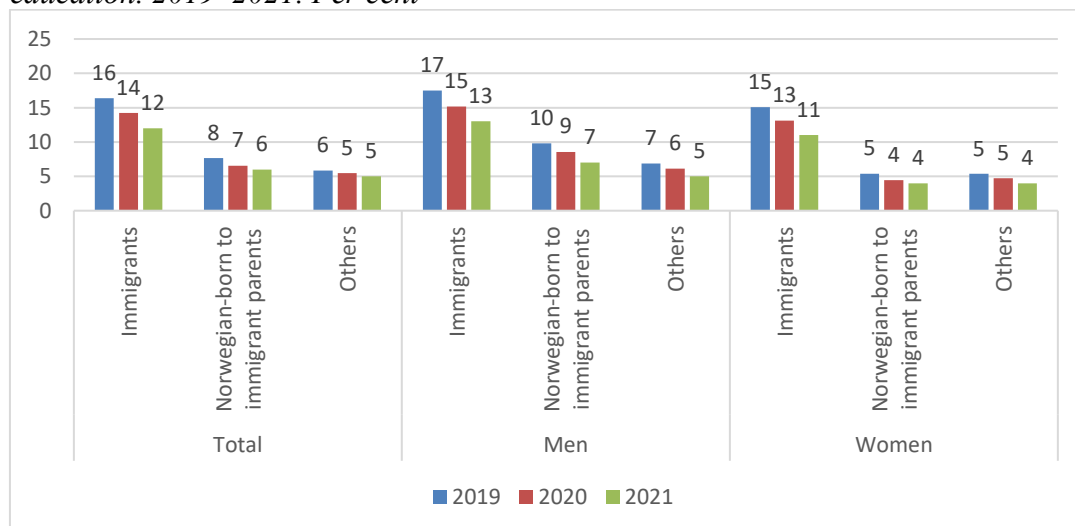
Figure 11.5 Share of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents with apprenticeship as their first choice, who had attained an approved apprenticeship contract. 2019–2021. Per cent⁷⁸



Source: Statistics Norway

In 2021, 12 per cent of immigrants aged 16 to 25, were neither employed, in education, nor had successfully completed upper secondary education (NEET)⁷⁹, cf. Figure 11.6. Six per cent of Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and five per cent of others were in this situation. Males with immigrant background had the highest proportion of NEET, but declined two percentage point since 2019.

Figure 11.6 Share of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, aged 16 to 25, not employed, in education nor having successfully completed upper secondary education. 2019–2021. Per cent



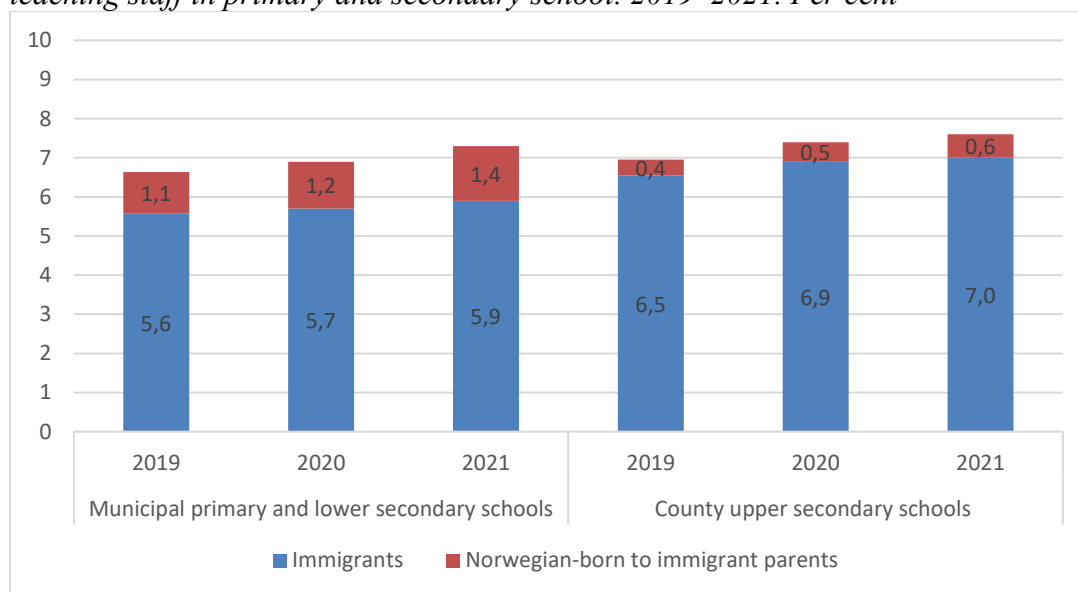
Source: Statistics Norway

⁷⁸ Figures from 2019 are not comparable to those for earlier years. This is because of changes in the calculation of both applicant figures and contract figures. Applicants who have withdrawn their application or who did not respond to repeated requests from the counties are not included in the applicant figure. Previously all applicants with an apprenticeship place as their first priority were included.

⁷⁹ Not in education, employment, or training

The share of employees with an immigrant background is slightly higher for the county upper secondary schools than the municipal primary and lower secondary schools, cf. Figure 11.7. Norwegian-born with immigrant parents constitute a very small part. In the municipal primary and lower secondary schools, the share with an immigrant background is slightly higher among the male employees than among the female employees. In the county upper secondary schools, the situation is opposite, and the share with an immigrant background is higher among the female employees than among the males. There has been a small increase in the share of employees with an immigrant background, both in municipal primary and lower secondary schools and in county upper secondary schools.

Figure 11.7 Share of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents among teaching staff in primary and secondary school. 2019–2021. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

11.3 Adult education

Pursuant to Section 4A-1 of the *Education Act*, persons above compulsory schooling age who require primary and lower secondary education have the right to such education unless they have the right to upper secondary education and training pursuant to section 3-1. Students with a right to upper secondary school can be given more primary/lower secondary education if needed, see Chapter 11.2. Legal residence in Norway is a prerequisite for the right for *adults* to primary, lower and upper secondary education and training in Norway.

The right to education normally includes the subjects required for the certificate of completed primary and lower secondary education for adults. The teaching shall be adapted to individual needs.

Ongoing pilot schemes are testing flexible primary and secondary education possibilities for adults. By splitting the education into modules, the students may more easily combine primary and secondary education, and secondary vocational training, with work or other activities. Modules also increases the possibilities of being able to start and complete primary and secondary education for adults.

Pursuant to Section 4A-3 of the *Education Act*, adults above 24 years of age, who have completed primary and lower secondary school, but not upper secondary education and training or the equivalent, have the right to free upper secondary education and training. Persons with completed upper secondary education from abroad which is not recognised in Norway, have the right to a free upper secondary education, adapted to individual needs. Adults who have the right to upper secondary education and training have the right to an assessment of their formal, informal and non-formal competences and to a certificate showing the level of competence.

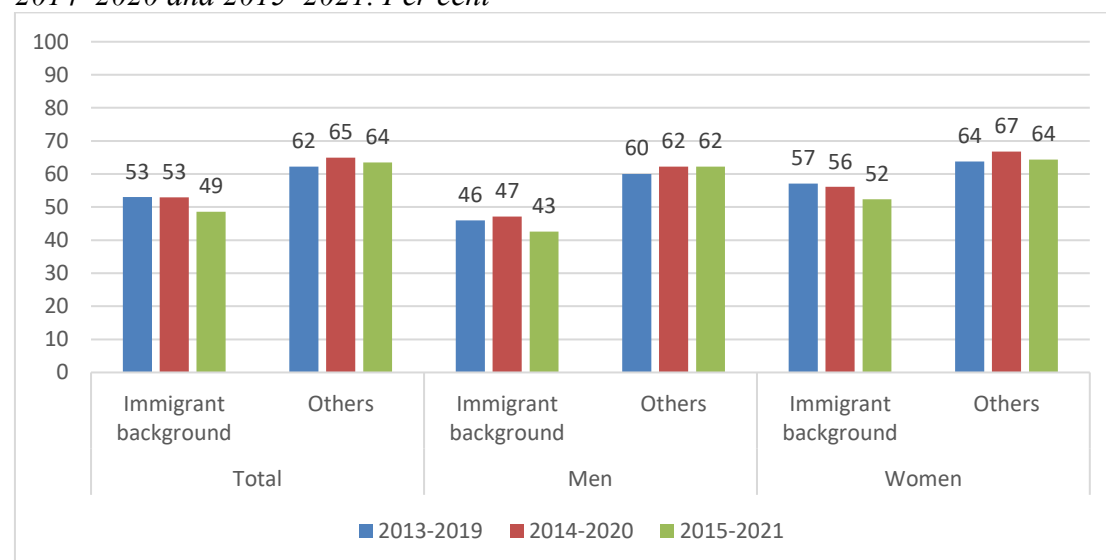
New policies and measures – Adult education

From 2024, modular training will be enforced as the main model for education for adults.

Monitoring integration – Adult education

In 2015-2016, approximately 9 000 adults aged 25 and older, enrolled in upper secondary education. Of these, only 58 per cent had graduated successfully within five/six years. Compared to other adults, a significantly lower proportion of the adults with an immigrant background successfully graduated from upper secondary education, cf. Figure 11.8. The share of women who complete upper secondary education within five years, was higher than that of men.

Figure 11.8 Share of adults with an immigrant background, aged 25 and older who completed upper secondary education within five/six years of enrolling. 2013–2019, 2014–2020 and 2015–2021. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

11.4 Higher education

The participation of immigrants and their Norwegian born descendants in higher education is generally seen as one of several indicators of integration in society.⁸⁰ In this sub-chapter we separate between two different groups of students, both of which are defined as having an immigrant background – immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents.

⁸⁰ See OECD (2016): *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015. Settling in*. OECD Publishing.

In 2021, 37 035 students with an immigrant background were enrolled in Norwegian higher education.⁸¹ Of these, 25 961 were immigrants and 11 074 were Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. Immigrants make up 11.6 per cent of the total student population, while Norwegian-born to immigrant parents make up 4.9 per cent.

As Table 11.1 shows, immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents are unevenly represented among disciplines and fields of study in higher education. Both groups are for example underrepresented in teacher education, but highly overrepresented within both pharmacy and odontology.

Table 11.1 Students in selected education programs/fields in higher education in Norway, by immigrant category, 2021.

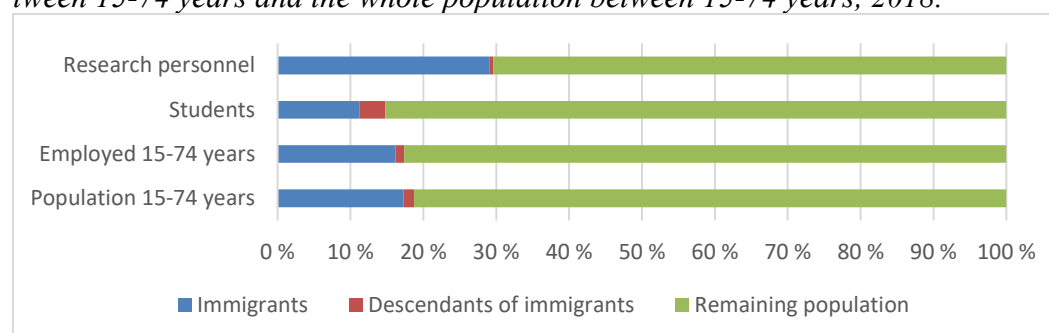
| Program/Field | Immigrant | Norwegian-born to immigrant parents | No immigrant background |
|--|-----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3-year bachelor programs | | | |
| Engineering, foundation program | 16,1 | 6,5 | 77,5 |
| Humanities and Arts | 15,1 | 3,9 | 81,0 |
| Pre-school-/kindergarten teacher training | 14,8 | 4,9 | 80,3 |
| Nursing, foundation program | 14,6 | 3,3 | 82,1 |
| Natural Sciences/Vocational and Technical subjects | 12,6 | 8,2 | 79,1 |
| Business and Administration subjects | 11,2 | 6,2 | 82,6 |
| Social Sciences and Law Studies | 11,0 | 5,8 | 83,2 |
| 5/6-year master programs and professional studies | | | |
| Pharmacy | 38,0 | 21,7 | 40,3 |
| Odontology | 22,8 | 14,7 | 62,5 |
| Medicine | 9,5 | 7,6 | 82,8 |
| Psychology | 5,9 | 3,6 | 90,6 |
| Law | 4,6 | 5,5 | 90,0 |
| Primary and lower secondary teacher education, year 1-7 | 4,2 | 3,4 | 92,4 |
| Primary and lower secondary teacher education, year 5-10 | 3,2 | 3,6 | 93,2 |

Source: Statistics Norway

Figure 11.9 shows the share of both immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents compared to the population with no immigrant background. The figure is based on statistics from 2018, but it is likely that the same patterns are still prominent in 2021/2022. As the figure illustrates, Norwegian-born to immigrant parents are overrepresented in higher education, while immigrants are underrepresented.

⁸¹ Statistics Norway (2022) [Students in higher education](#)

Figure 11.9 Share of immigrants, Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and the remaining population among research personnel, students, the employed population between 15-74 years and the whole population between 15-74 years, 2018.



Source: Nordic Institute for studies in Innovation, Research and Education⁸², Statistics Norway

Among the research personnel, including PhD positions, immigrants are overrepresented, while Norwegian-born to immigrant parents are underrepresented. There are no exact numbers available on how many Norwegian-born to immigrant parents who are holding a PhD position, and this is mainly because the number of this category is too low to be presented as a separate group. However, we know that the total number of Norwegian-born to immigrant parents holding a recruitment position (here defined as PhD, postdoctoral fellow and researcher) was as low as 150 in 2018.⁸³ The total number of PhD positions was 6 453 in 2018, demonstrating that Norwegian-born to immigrant parents probably held far less than two per cent of the PhD positions.

In 2021, 1 600 doctorates were awarded at Norwegian universities and colleges.⁸⁴ Almost 700 of these doctorates were awarded foreign citizens, equaling 44 per cent. The proportion of foreign citizens among them has more than doubled in the last 20 years and has never been higher than in 2021. Among the 700, nearly half came from Europe while over 200 came from Asia. There are large variations between different fields of study. Foreign citizens made up over 60 per cent of the doctorates in mathematics and natural sciences, technology, agricultural subjects and veterinary medicine. Within the humanities and arts, medicine and health and social sciences the proportion was between 29 and 36 per cent.

Statistics showing the share of international students with a PhD from a Norwegian university who choose to settle and work in Norway after graduation are not available. However, we know that the rate of emigration is much higher for former international students and highly skilled labour migrants than for other categories of immigrants.

⁸² Gunnes, H., Steine, F. S. (2020) *Mangfoldstatistikk: Stor vekst i antall forskere med innvandrerbakgrunn i norsk akademisk*. NIFU Innsikt (17/2020). [NIFU Open Access Archive: Mangfoldstatistikk: Stor vekst i antall forskere med innvandrerbakgrunn i norsk akademisk \(unit.no\)](#) (Only in Norwegian)

⁸³ Gunnes, H., Steine, F. S. (2020) *Mangfoldstatistikk: Stor vekst i antall forskere med innvandrerbakgrunn i norsk akademisk*. NIFU Innsikt (17/2020). [NIFU Open Access Archive: Mangfoldstatistikk: Stor vekst i antall forskere med innvandrerbakgrunn i norsk akademisk \(unit.no\)](#) (Only in Norwegian)

⁸⁴ Sarpebakken, B. & Steine, F. (2022) *Rekordmange utenlandske statsborgere blant de nye doktorene i 2021*. Statistics Norway. [Record number of foreign nationals among the new doctors in 2021 \(ssb.no\)](#)

12 The labour market

12.1 Labour market and social policies

The viability of the Norwegian welfare state depends on high rates of employment for both men and women. Participating in the labour market is important for the individual immigrant as well as for the Norwegian economy and society as a whole. This is reflected in Norwegian labour market policies, and in social policies.

The responsibility for labour market and social policies rests with the *Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion*. The *Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration* (NAV) is the agency mainly responsible for the implementation of these policies. The NAV-office in each municipality provides most of the main social security benefits and services available to residents in Norway, including not only unemployment-related benefits and job-search services, but also social assistance, disability insurance, various forms of health-related benefits, as well as public old-age pensions and benefits for families. As a general rule, all persons who are either resident or working as employees in Norway, are insured under the National Insurance Scheme. The ambition of NAV is to strengthen employment-oriented activities and follow-up, tailored to individual needs.

NAV-offices provide social services, and each municipality is responsible for assessing the need for social assistance, including financial assistance. Such assistance is intended to secure a person's income to cover his or her basic subsistence costs temporarily. The aim is to help individuals become financially independent as soon as possible. Many non-labour immigrants with poor Norwegian language skills face great difficulties finding a job. Compared to the rest of the population, there is a higher proportion of immigrants who receive some form of social assistance, especially among those with a refugee background.

To enable immigrants to achieve a higher level of Norwegian language skills, the *Social Services Act* sets language training as a condition for receiving financial assistance.

NAV offers labour market support as part of its mainstream services for ordinary job seekers and vocationally disabled and may also provide targeted assistance to immigrants in coordination with the municipalities. Immigrants from non-EU/EFTA member countries are given priority for access to *active labour market programs* (ALMPs), like those given to members of other potentially disadvantaged groups. Labour market measures are important tools for reducing unemployment and increasing employment.

New policies and measures – Labour market and social policy

Over the last years the opportunity for adults to complete upper secondary school has been strengthened. Many of those registered at NAV lack qualifications and need adapted education and training to qualify for work. The possibility to combine training and education with unemployment benefits has been eased. As of October 2021, persons who are fully unemployed or fully laid off are eligible for education while receiving unemployment benefits. There are certain conditions they must comply, related to having acquired a certain age and having absolved a prior mandatory job seeking period.

12.2 Working-life and wages

There is no statutory minimum wage in Norway, but collective wage agreements normally include a minimum pay rate. Collective agreements cover approximately 70 per cent of all employees, with around 50 per cent coverage in the private sector and 100 per cent in the public sector. Many companies that are not party to an agreement will to a certain extent follow the negotiated wages for their sector. In addition, general application of parts of the wage agreements in certain sectors, primarily the minimum wage levels, affects all employees who work within the scope of the relevant agreement. It has been estimated that about ten per cent of employees in the private sector work in companies without a collective agreement that are covered by the decision on general application of collective agreements.⁸⁵

Regulations that require the general application of a collective agreement for an entire occupation or industry is one instrument used to combat social dumping in Norway. This entails that at least some minimum wages, benefits or working conditions in the relevant collective agreement are made legally binding for all employers and their employees in the industry and/or for the occupations covered, without regard to whether they are members of an employers' organisation or a trade union. The regulations may be applied in the entire country or in defined regions. The regulations also apply to foreign workers sent to work in Norway by a foreign employer.

The legislation on the general application of collective agreements is meant to guarantee that foreign workers receive wages and working conditions equivalent to those of Norwegian workers and to prevent competition based on foreign workers being given wages or working conditions that are unacceptable in the Norwegian labour market.

The decision to invoke these regulations requires documentation that foreign workers are, or can be, subjected to wages or working conditions that are inferior to those stipulated in relevant national wage agreements or which otherwise prevail in a given region for the relevant occupations or industry.

General application of the relevant parts of collective agreements has been introduced in the following industries: construction, shipbuilding, agriculture, cleaning, hotel and restaurant, seafood processing industries, electrical work, trucking and passenger transport by tour bus.⁸⁶

New policies and measures – Working life and wages

The Government presented its action plan to combat social dumping and work-related crime in October 2022. The action plan was developed through dialogue with the main employer and employee federations. The action plan focuses on, among other things, strengthening cooperation with the social partners, strengthening labour rights, the prevention of worker exploitation and increased knowledge about work-related crime.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Alsos, K., Nergaard, K. & Svarstad, E. (2021). Arbeidsgiverorganisering og tariffavtaler. Fafo-rapport 2021: 7. [English summary \(faf.no\)](https://www.faf.no/rapporter/2021/7)

⁸⁶ About the *General application of collective agreements* see more from the website of *The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority*: <https://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/en/working-conditions/pay-and-minimum-rates-of-pay/minimum-wage/>

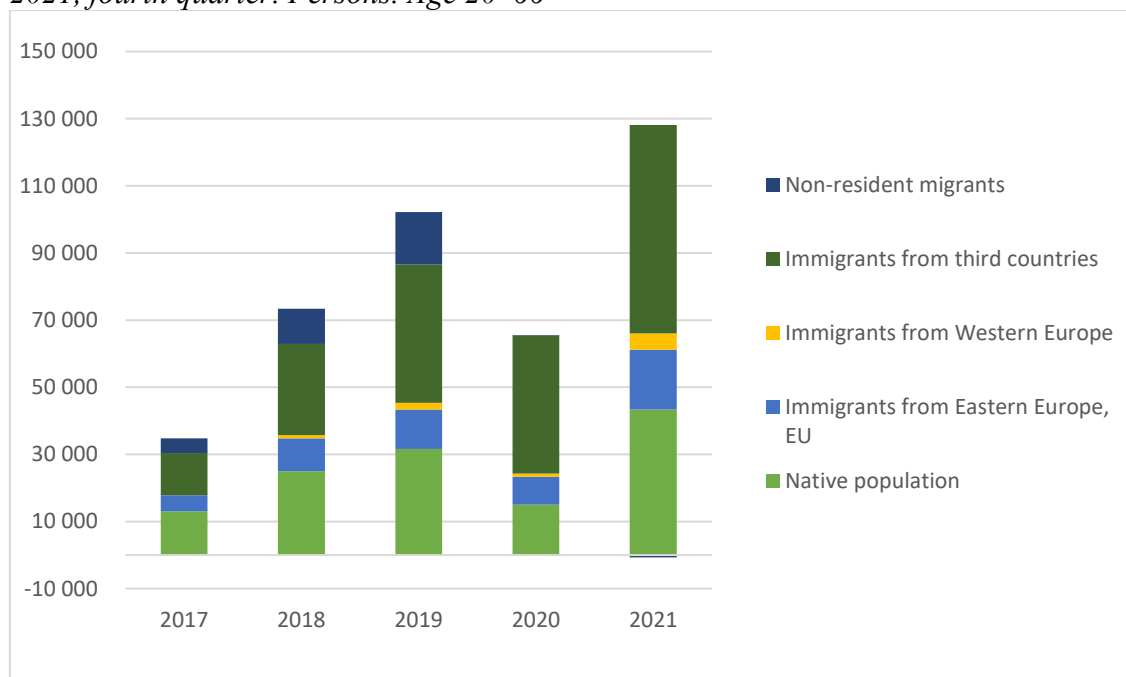
⁸⁷ [Handlingsplan mot sosial dumping og arbeidslivskriminalitet](#). (only in Norwegian)

12.3 Employment

Labour migration has had a significant impact on the Norwegian labour market during the past 15–20 years, mainly due to the enlargement of the EU followed by a long period of strong demand for labour in Norway. The economic slowdown in 2008/2009 and in 2014 led to lower labour migration to Norway and to lower employment among immigrants than in the years before and after. Similarly, labour immigration and employment fell during the pandemic. The development in 2021 was characterised by a strong recovery.

Figure 12.1 shows the importance of immigrants for employment growth during the economic upturn from late 2016 until 2019. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the employment declined both among natives and among immigrants, especially non-resident workers. Since then, there has been a sharp increase in employment, especially among third-country nationals who accounted for one third of the employment growth last year.

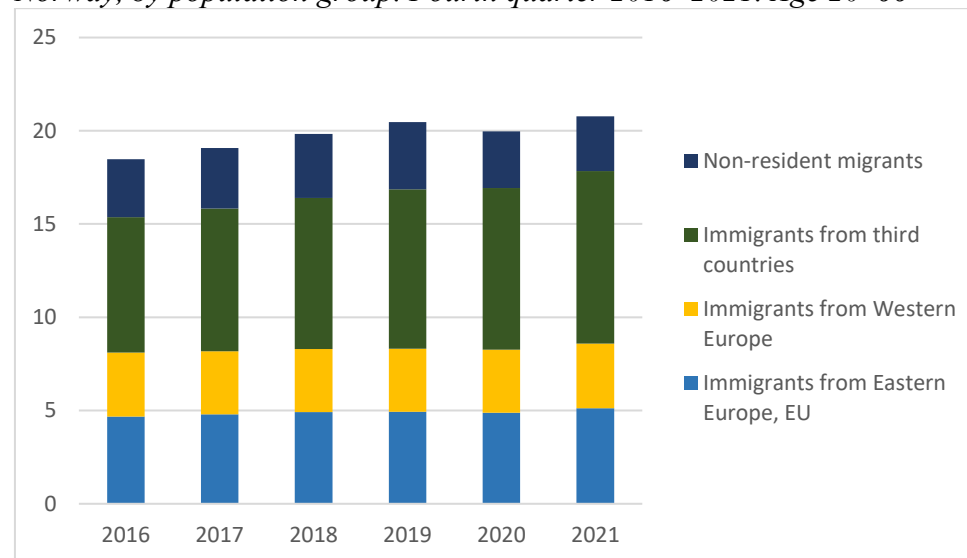
Figure 12.1 Accumulated employment growth from 2016 by population group, 2017–2021, fourth quarter. Persons. Age 20–66



Source: Statistics Norway

Immigrants' and non-resident migrants' share of the total employment has increased from 18.5 per cent in 2016 to 20.8 per cent in 2021. The growth in immigrants' share of the total employment is mainly due to the increased share of persons from outside the EU in the Norwegian labour force (cf. Figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2 Share of immigrants and non-resident migrants among those employed in Norway, by population group. Fourth quarter 2016–2021. Age 20–66



Source: Statistics Norway

Table 12.1 shows that the employment rate for immigrants (68.9 per cent) in 2021 was much lower than for the non-immigrant population (79.2 per cent), with important differences between immigrants from different parts of the world. Except immigrants from the Nordic countries, all the categories of immigrants listed in Table 12.1 by region had a lower employment rate in 2021 than the native population. Especially immigrants from Africa and Asia had a lower employment rate, partly because there are few labour migrants among them. The difference between immigrants and the native population, measured in percentage points, is also larger for women than men, especially for women from Africa. Table 12.1 shows only the employment rates for some broad population groups and the numbers have not been adjusted for important factors such as different rates by country of birth, time since arrival, educational attainment, age and language skills in Norwegian.

Table 12.1 Rates of registered employment, in groups defined by gender and region of birth, age 20–66. 2021 (fourth quarter)

| Region of origin | Total | Men | Women |
|------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Total population | 77,1 | 79,2 | 74,9 |
| Population excluding immigrants | 79,2 | 81,0 | 77,3 |
| Immigrants, total | 68,9 | 72,2 | 65,4 |
| Immigrants by region: | | | |
| Nordic countries | 80,0 | 80,8 | 79,1 |
| Rest of Western Europe | 74,9 | 77,5 | 71,4 |
| EU member states in Eastern Europe | 74,8 | 75,2 | 74,1 |
| Eastern Europe outside the EU | 71,2 | 73,7 | 69,3 |
| North America, Oceania | 69,6 | 73,5 | 65,3 |
| Asia | 62,5 | 66,8 | 58,8 |
| Africa | 58,5 | 64,9 | 50,9 |
| South and Central America | 70,8 | 75,0 | 67,9 |

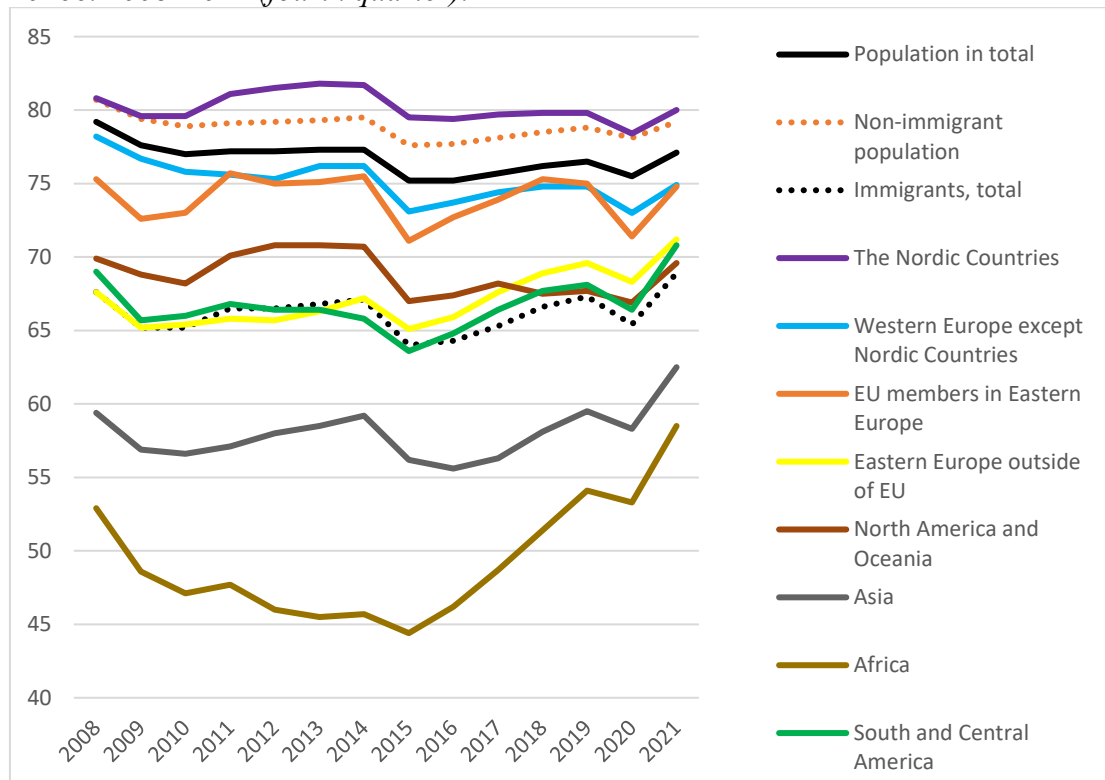
Source: Statistics Norway

The employment rate was relatively high for all groups in 2008. In the following years the employment rate dropped, mostly due to business cycle developments in the Norwegian economy. The economic upswing from late 2016 led to a growth in the

employment rate, both among immigrants and among natives. The employment rate among immigrants from Africa showed a particularly strong increase. In 2021, the share of employed immigrants increased sharply, which partly was a recovery from the previous year. Immigrants are overrepresented in industries that were strongly affected by restrictions during the pandemic, and therefore particularly exposed to loss of work in 2020.

Immigrants from countries in Europe and America are largely labour migrants, some with families, while immigrants and their families from countries in Africa and Asia mainly have a refugee background and participate in the *Introduction Program* during their first years in the country, cf. Chapter 10.1. Educational attainment, relevant language skills and age composition also differ between groups defined by region of origin. These differences, which are not adjusted for in Table 12.1 and Figure 12.3, explain some of the differences in employment rates among the groups.

Figure 12.3 Rates of registered employment, in groups defined by region of birth, age 20–66. 2008–2021 (fourth quarter).



Source: Statistics Norway

Norwegian-born to immigrant parents

The population of persons born in Norway with two immigrant parents is still relatively small and young. Most of them have not yet completed post-secondary or higher education.

In total, and divided in different age groups, the employment rate for persons born in Norway with immigrant parents is higher than for the immigrants, but still lower than for the native population in the same age group. The employment rate for Norwegian born children of immigrant parents was 73.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Studies show that Norwegian-born children of immigrants use more time to complete post-secondary education and that the share who participate in education is higher than among natives, cf. Chapter 11. Both factors reduce their employment rate level.⁸⁸

Table 12.2 Employment rates for all adults 20–66 years, for natives, for Norwegian-born to immigrant parents and for immigrants. By age group and region of origin (for immigrants). Fourth quarter 2021. Per cent

| | 20-66 years | 20-24 years | 25-29 years | 30-39 years | 40-66 years |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Population in total | 77,1 | 67,1 | 79,0 | 82,1 | 76,5 |
| No immigrant background | 79,3 | 68,5 | 82,3 | 86,2 | 78,3 |
| Norwegian-born to immigrant parents | 73,4 | 65,6 | 76,7 | 78,9 | 76,2 |
| Immigrants, total | 68,9 | 58,8 | 66,0 | 72,5 | 68,6 |
| Immigrants by region or origin | | | | | |
| The Nordic countries | 80,0 | 58,0 | 72,5 | 83,1 | 81,0 |
| Western Europe else | 74,9 | 39,1 | 64,1 | 80,7 | 79,5 |
| EU member countries in Central and Eastern Europe | 74,8 | 65,0 | 70,1 | 75,5 | 76,2 |
| Eastern Europe else | 71,2 | 64,4 | 74,4 | 78,4 | 66,9 |
| North America and Oceania | 58,5 | 59,8 | 60,1 | 60,4 | 56,1 |
| Asia | 62,5 | 61,1 | 63,0 | 68,0 | 59,3 |
| Africa | 69,6 | 35,7 | 61,1 | 73,4 | 71,9 |
| South- and Central America | 70,8 | 57,8 | 66,1 | 75,6 | 70,0 |

Source: Statistics Norway

12.4 Unemployment

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the following restrictions, led to a dramatic increase in the registered unemployment rate, both among resident immigrants and among the native population. Much of the increased unemployment was caused by temporary layoffs. The increase in percentage points from 2019 to 2020, was larger among immigrants, but the relative change was somewhat larger among natives. Over the past year, the unemployment rate has dropped for all population groups. The registered unemployment rate among immigrants was 3.9 per cent at the end of October 2022, a decrease of around 1.6 percentage points or 29 per cent from the same period in 2021. Among the rest of the population, unemployment also fell by around 30 per cent in the same period. The unemployment rate was approximately four times higher for immigrants than for the native population at the end of October 2022, cf. Table 12.3.

⁸⁸ Statistics Norway. [Completion rates of pupils in upper secondary education. Statbank Norway \(ssb.no\)](https://statbank.norway) and Olsen (2018), *Young people with immigrant background in employment and education 2016*, cf. Chapter 19.

Table 12.3 Registered unemployment, by region of origin. October 2022 and change from October 2021

| | Unemployment Oct. 2022 | Unemploy- ment rate Oct. 2022 | Change in unemployment rate Oct.2021-Oct.2022 | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|----------|
| | Number of persons | Per cent of work force | Percentage points | Per cent |
| Total | 45 406 | 1.6 | -0.6 | -27.3 |
| Non-immigrant population | 25 108 | 1.0 | -0.5 | -33.3 |
| All immigrants | 20 298 | 3.9 | -1.6 | -29.1 |
| Europe | 9 597 | 3.2 | -1.4 | -30.4 |
| North- and South America and Oceania | 713 | 2.7 | -1.5 | -35.7 |
| Asia | 6 101 | 4.3 | -1.8 | -29.5 |
| Africa | 3 887 | 6.6 | -2.7 | -29.0 |

Source: NAV

13 Housing

13.1 The impact of housing conditions on integration

Housing plays a fundamental role in a person's wellbeing. Research shows that housing conditions affect many areas of importance for integration. Safe and stable housing contributes to better health, higher levels of education and work participation. Being disadvantaged in the housing market can have a negative impact on a person's health and socioeconomic status. Cramped living conditions, rental housing and exposure to noise have a negative effect on school results, especially for older children, and there are correlations between cramped living conditions and employment.⁸⁹ The physical qualities of housing may impact a person's health.⁹⁰ Growing up in vulnerable neighbourhoods often has a negative effect on education and social mobility.⁹¹ A high proportion of people with low socioeconomic status in a neighbourhood can have a negative effect on a child's life chances.⁹² Still, controlling for socioeconomic factors, one study found that a high proportion of persons with an immigrant background from Asia, Africa etc. in a neighbourhood can have a positive effect on the school results.⁹³

Although many immigrants in Norway do well in the housing market, immigrants are overrepresented among the disadvantaged in this market. While more than 80 percent of Norwegians owned their home in 2021, 58 per cent of immigrants from countries in Asia, Africa etc. were homeowners.⁹⁴ Homeownership is often considered the best way to ensure good housing, as it is likely to involve better physical housing qualities, economic advantages, and more predictable housing conditions. Around a third of immigrants from countries in Asia, Africa etc. lived in cramped living conditions. The situation has remained relatively stable for several years, although there has been a slight improvement. It is important to note that time spent in Norway has an impact on housing conditions. For many immigrants the conditions improve over time. After 25 years of residence, many immigrant groups have the same level of home ownership as the rest of the population.

Among other things, lower average income levels and larger households are important factors explaining why a higher share of immigrants are disadvantaged in the housing market. It is also more common for immigrants to live in cities, where housing prices are higher and housing conditions in general are more cramped.

13.2 Discrimination of immigrants in the housing market

Some studies have found discrimination of immigrants in the rental market. A study from 2021, shows that 45 percent of immigrants from non-European countries have experienced discrimination that they consider to be a result of their ethnicity. Forty-

⁸⁹ Umblijs, Janis, Kristine von Simson & Ferdinand Mohn. *The significance of housing on other welfare. A knowledge review on national and international research*. Institute for Social Research. Report 2019:1 (summary in English) [Rapport 2:19 \(unit.no\)](#)

⁹⁰ Von Simson, Kristine & Janis Umblijs. *Housing conditions and welfare*. Institute for Social Research. Report 2019:2 (English summary) [Rapport 1:19 \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

⁹¹ [Oppvekststedets betydning for barn og unge.pdf \(bufdir.no\)](#) (only in Norwegian)

⁹² Cf. Umblijs et al., op.cit.

⁹³ Cf. Von Simson et al., op.cit.

⁹⁴ [Boforhold, registerbasert. Statistikkbanken \(ssb.no\)](#)

four percent have experienced numerous refusals when looking for rental housing⁹⁵. Immigrants often pay higher rent than others⁹⁶, and more often they experience arbitrary evictions⁹⁷. Still, not many complaints of discrimination in the housing market are registered at *The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud*, and it is considered difficult to measure the actual level and form of discrimination in the housing market.

13.3 Area-based urban initiatives

The Government has cooperation agreements with cities in Norway that have areas with major challenges in living conditions. The Government currently has agreements with Oslo, Drammen, Stavanger, Bergen, and a new agreement with the city of Trondheim is due to be signed.

The area initiatives are adapted to the challenges in the different urban areas. The initiatives are similar in that they should contribute to a lasting improvement of services and physical and social community qualities where the needs are the greatest. This also makes room for learning, sharing and improved ownership to problem solving.

The area initiatives include working for:

- better quality of the physical environment, meeting places and cultural activities
- better integration of immigrants
- better results in primary and lower-secondary school
- reducing dropout rates in upper-secondary school
- increased employment
- reduced crime
- strengthened public health

The area initiatives are a shared responsibility between different ministries and the municipalities. The ministries earmark funds for the area initiatives in the annual allocations through the central government budget. In 2022, around NOK 230 million was allocated altogether. *The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development* coordinates the governmental initiatives.

New policies and measures - housing

The Government will present a White Paper in 2024 on the housing policy and housing market in broad. Social housing will be one of the central issues in the white paper. In Norway, there are measures taken to enable more immigrants to buy a home, and to improve the conditions for immigrants, among others, in the rental market.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will also ensure more research on discrimination in the housing market. The Government intends to enforce social housing policies to better assist people who are disadvantaged in the housing market. The goal is to reduce social inequality in the housing market and to enable more people to buy a home, secure safe conditions in the rental market and contribute

⁹⁵ Forbrukerrådet, 2021: Å leie bolig - Norske leietakeres erfaringer og ønsker for boligmarkedet

⁹⁶ <https://docplayer.me/6191465-Prisdannelsen-i-det-norske-leiemarkedet-en-teoretisk-og-empirisk-analyse-av-hovedmekanismer-generelt-og-utsatte-grupper-spesielt.html> (only in Norwegian)

⁹⁷ https://evalueringsportalen.no/evaluering/etniske-minoriteter-og-forskjellsbehandling-i-leiemarkedet/etniske_minoriteter.pdf/@@inline (English summary)

to good neighbourhoods. The aim is also to facilitate the production of new dwellings and ensure social sustainability in housing policies.

In 2023 the Government will present a white paper on living conditions in urban areas. The white paper will amongst others assess proposals from of a *Commission of experts*⁹⁸ that has investigated living conditions and integration challenges in areas in and around the major cities in Norway.

Housing of refugees from Ukraine

After a residence permit has been granted, the refugees are settled in municipalities all around the country, cf. chapter 6.5. The housing needs must be solved within the existing housing stock and markets in the municipality. The municipalities have so far provided most of the homes in the private market. Refugees are mainly settled in privately owned dwellings that are not in use, or parts of dwellings that can be used as independent housing. The municipalities also use vacant municipal dwellings in the settlement process. In 2022, The Norwegian State Housing Bank has provided grants for close to 200 municipal rental homes, and loans for around 170 new rental homes.

⁹⁸ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2020-16/id2798280/> (only in Norwegian)

14 Political participation – elections

14.1 Legislation and policy

Norwegian citizenship is a precondition for voting in *national* elections. To be eligible to vote in *local* elections a foreign citizen must have lived in Norway continuously for at least three years. This right for foreign citizens was introduced in 1983. Citizens from the Nordic countries need only to have been registered as a resident in Norway since June 30 in the year of the election, which always takes place in September every fourth year.

High electoral turnout is important in a representative democracy. Traditionally, the turnout among persons with an immigrant background has been significantly lower than for others, particularly in local elections among immigrant voters without Norwegian citizenship. The electoral turnout has been somewhat higher for naturalised Norwegians with an immigrant background. Over the years, there have been several publicly funded campaigns to increase the turnout.

In June 2022, the Government introduced a requirement for three years of residence in a Norwegian municipality for foreign citizens to have voting rights and be eligible for the local council in *Longyearbyen, Svalbard*. When local government in Longyearbyen was introduced, most of the population had connections to the rest of Norway. In recent years, however, there has been a significant influx directly from abroad since Norwegian immigration legislation does not apply to Svalbard. The Government has stated that a connection to the mainland helps to ensure that those who manage local affairs in Longyearbyen always have good knowledge and understanding of the special position and framework that applies to Svalbard.⁹⁹

14.2 Local elections

As Figure 14.1 shows, the participation rates among different immigrant groups have changed over time. For immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and from countries in Eastern Europe outside the EU, there have been an increase in the participation rates since 2003. For naturalised citizens and for foreign citizens from EU/EFTA-member countries and North America, the participation rates declined sharply from 2007. The main reason is probably the very low participation rates among labour immigrants from the new EU member states.

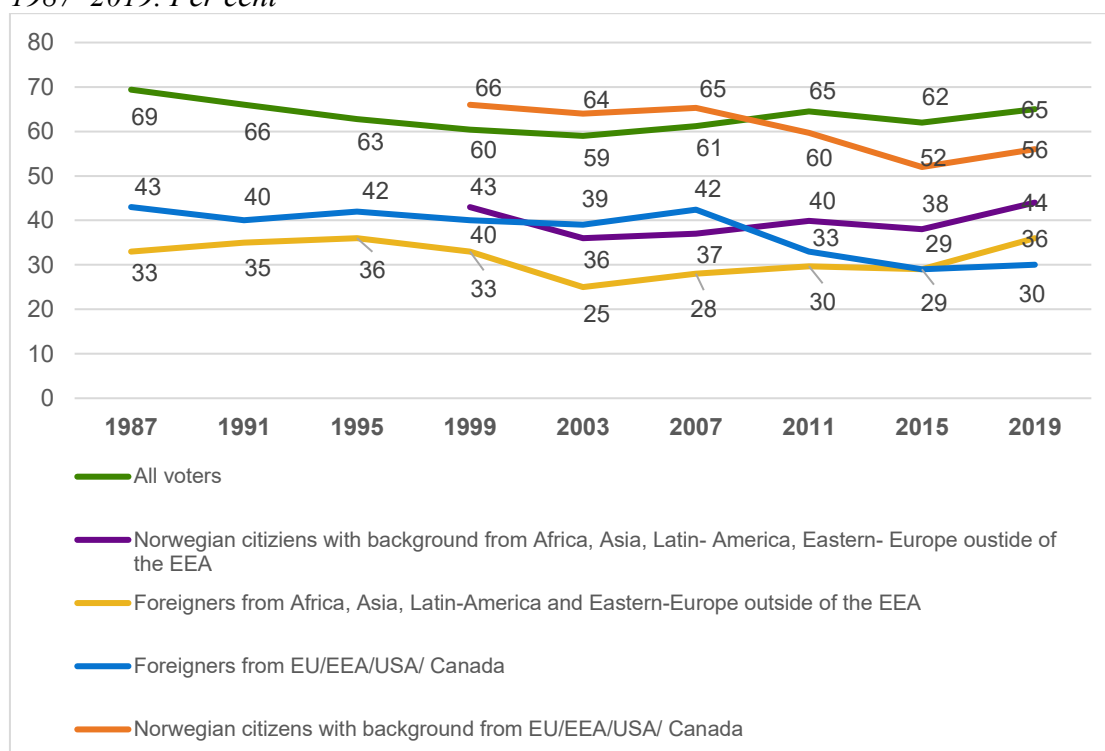
Only around seven per cent of male citizens of EU member countries in Central and Eastern Europe with voting rights used this right in 2019, which was two percentage points higher than four years earlier.¹⁰⁰ Nine percent of those who were entitled to vote in the last election were foreign citizens, while one percent of the municipal council representatives are foreign citizens.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/enderer-reglene-for-valg-til-longyearbyen-lokalstyre/id2919502/>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/langt-flere-unge-stemte-i-arets-lokalvalg> (Only in Norwegian)

¹⁰¹ <https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/ny-kvinnerekord-blant-ordforerne>

Figure 14.1 Participation in local elections by citizenship and country background. – 1987–2019. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

During the local elections in 2019, 65 per cent of all with voting rights voted, which was five percentage points higher than in the previous local elections.¹⁰² The participation rate for naturalised immigrants was 45 per cent and it was only 31 per cent for all foreign citizens with the right to vote. As Figure 14.1 shows, there was a significant increase from the previous election for all categories of Norwegian citizens with an immigrant background and for foreign citizens with voting rights, except for foreigners from EU-countries or from North America.

In connection with the local elections in 2019, the *Directorate of Integration and Diversity* was commissioned to promote increased voter turnout among persons with an immigrant background. This task was undertaken in cooperation with the *Norwegian Directorate of Elections*, which has the operational responsibility for the election operations and information about elections to the public.

In the 2019 local elections, there were altogether 620 700 immigrants (375 600 of them foreign citizens) and 51 400 Norwegian-born with immigrant parents, who were eligible voters.¹⁰³ This is a significant increase since the local elections in 2015. Then, there were altogether 517 000 immigrants (313 000 of them foreign citizens) and 33 800 Norwegian-born with immigrant parents who were eligible to vote.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgatferd og representasjon \(ssb.no\)](https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/305795?ts=160ff0dd5e8) Cf. tab. 3.1

¹⁰³ [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgatferd og representasjon \(ssb.no\)](https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/305795?ts=160ff0dd5e8) Cf. tab. 2.1

¹⁰⁴ https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/_attachment/305795?ts=160ff0dd5e8. Cf. tab.3.1.1

The two largest groups of eligible voters, Norwegian citizens and Norwegian born with immigrant parents, came from Asia including Turkey, followed by voters from African countries and European countries outside of EU/EEA. The two largest groups of eligible voters of *foreign nationals* came from EU-countries in Central and Eastern Europe, followed by voters from the Nordic countries.¹⁰⁵

Five per cent of the *candidates* for the local elections were immigrants. Compared to the local elections in 2015, this is an increase of less than one percentage points. The number of Norwegian-born with immigrant parents among the candidates increased from 133 candidates in 2015 to 203 in 2019, an increase of 53 per cent. The candidates with an immigrant background come from many different countries, mostly in Europe, Africa or Asia. The largest number came from Sweden, Pakistan and Iran.¹⁰⁶

Altogether, 9 342 persons were elected to the municipal councils nationwide. Of this group, only 281 (three per cent) had an immigrant background (either immigrants or Norwegian born with immigrant parents). In addition, nearly three per cent of the representatives were born in Norway and had either a foreign-born mother or father.¹⁰⁷

After the elections in 2019, 30 per cent of the municipal council representatives with an immigrant background have a background from Asia. It is roughly the same as the election in 2015. Seventeen per cent of the representatives are from the Nordic countries and the same share from African countries, while 15 per cent are from other countries in Western Europe. This is also similar shares as in the previous local election. Only six per cent of the representatives are from EU countries in Eastern Europe. This is an increase of two percentage points compared to the election in 2015.¹⁰⁸ In municipalities where there is a relatively high share of the population with an immigrant background, the proportion of representatives with an immigrant background in the municipal council is higher, especially in Oslo.¹⁰⁹

All the national parties nominated candidates with an immigrant background on their lists in some municipalities. The *Labour Party*, *Socialist Left Party* and the *Green Party* are the parties that nominated the highest number of candidates with an immigrant background.

Thirty-eight per cent of all the elected representatives with an immigrant background represent the *Labour Party*. This is a decrease from the election in 2015. The *Socialist Left Party* is the second largest with 14 per cent. Compared with the local election in 2015 there are more who represent the *Socialist Left Party*, the *Red Party*, and the *Green Party*. The share of immigrant representatives from the *Conservative Party* has been reduced from 19 per cent in 2015, when it had the second largest group of representatives, to 12 per cent in 2019. The *Progress Party*, The *Liberal Party*, and the

¹⁰⁵ See <https://www.ssb.no/en/valg/statistikker/stemmerettkomm> for details on eligible voters with an immigrant background in the 2019-elections

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/4-av-10-kandidater-til-kommunevalget-er-kvinner>

¹⁰⁷ [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgfærd og representasjon \(ssb.no\)](#) See tab. 6.2

¹⁰⁸ [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgfærd og representasjon \(ssb.no\)](#) See tab.6.5.

¹⁰⁹ [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgfærd og representasjon \(ssb.no\)](#). See tab. 6.4.

Christian Democratic Party had the lowest share of representatives with an immigrant background.¹¹⁰

14.3 National elections

Norwegian citizenship is one of the requirements for voting in the Norwegian national elections. This means that foreign citizens do not have the right to vote in national elections even if they reside in Norway. However, from January 2020, dual citizenship is allowed upon application. This means that foreign residents can apply for Norwegian citizenship without having to waive their other citizenship(s), cf. Chapter 17.

This has already had an impact on the number of eligible voters in Norway, as more immigrants have become Norwegian citizens with national voting rights.¹¹¹ The most recent national election was held in September 2021. In this election, 345 000 of the eligible voters had an immigrant background, 70 000 more than in the previous national election.¹¹²

In 2021, the participation among naturalised immigrants was only 50 per cent, five percentage points lower than in 2017. In comparison, the participation rate was approximately 80 per cent among Norwegians without an immigrant background both in 2017 and in 2021.

Among naturalised immigrants from Europe, participation decreased from 56 percent in 2017 to 54 percent in 2021. Among those from African countries of origin, participation decreased from 56 in 2017 to 47 percent in 2021, and among those from Asia, it decreased from 54 to 49 percent. Cf. Figure 14.2.

Among naturalised immigrants from South and Central America, and from North America and Oceania, participation increased from 57 to 58 per cent, and from 70 to 73 per cent, respectively.

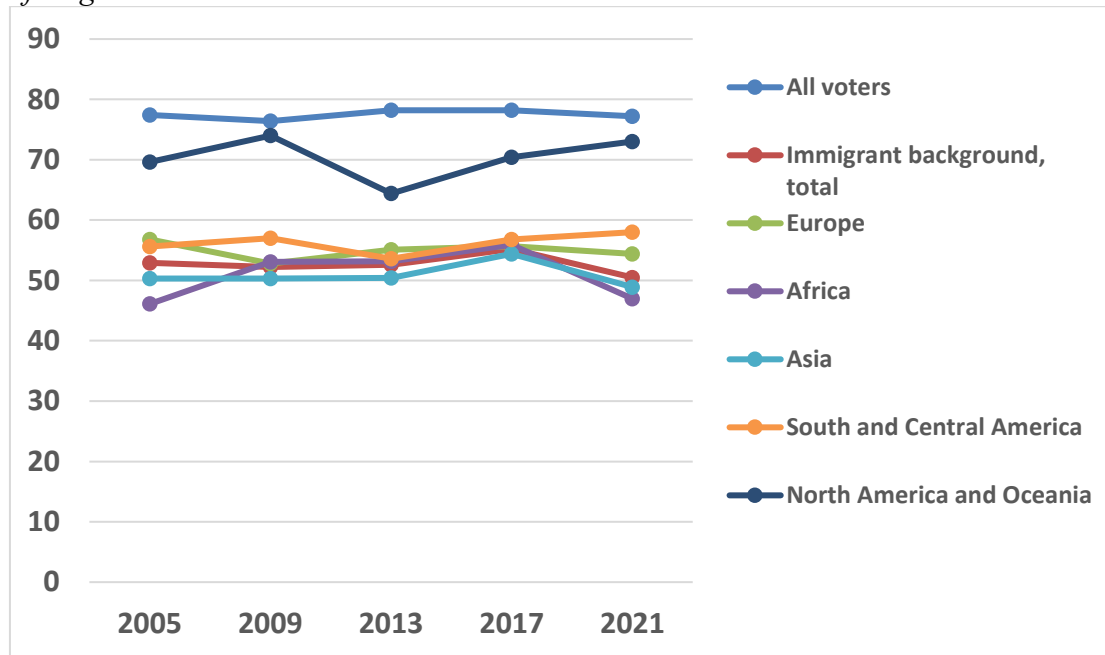
Among major individual countries of origin, participation decreased by ten percentage points for voters from Pakistan and by 15 and 11 percentage points for those from Afghanistan and Iraq.

¹¹⁰ [Innvandrere og kommunestyrevalget 2019. Stemmeberettigede, valgafordragsrepresentasjon \(ssb.no\)](https://www.ssb.no/valg/kommunestyrevalg/2019/stemmeberettigede_valgafordragsrepresentasjon). See tab. 6.7

¹¹¹ <https://www.ssb.no/valg/artikler-og-publikasjoner/111-000-flere-med-stemmerett-enn-ved-forrige-stortingsvalg>

¹¹² <https://www.ssb.no/valg/stortingsvalg/statistikk/personer-med-stemmerett>

Figure 14.2 Participation in national elections, all voters and immigrants by region of origin. 2005–2021. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

After the election in 2021, there are ten permanent members of *the Storting* with an immigrant background¹¹³. They themselves, or the parents, are originally from Pakistan, Iran, Syria, Sri Lanka, India, Turkey or Somalia. The latter is the first permanent member with a background from an African country. As in earlier periods, there are also some deputy members with an immigrant background, mainly from Asia or Africa.

The *Labour party* has four members with an immigrant background while the *Conservative Party* has two. The *Red Party*, the *Progress Party*, the *Socialist Left Party* and the *Liberal Party* have one member each.

In 2021, the *Storting* for the first time elected as its *President* a representative with an immigrant background. He came to Norway from Iran as a young child with his parents.

¹¹³ Persons who themselves are immigrants or Norwegian-born with two foreign-born parents.

15 Child welfare

15.1 Child welfare services

Legislation and policy

The primary purpose of the *Norwegian Child Welfare Act* is to ensure help, care and protection to children who are living in conditions that may be harmful to their health and development, and to ensure that they are raised in a safe and secure environment.

Norway ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1991. In 2003, the convention was incorporated into Norwegian law. The convention underlines that the State has a duty to protect all children within its jurisdiction, without discrimination. The best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children.

All children in Norway, regardless of their background, resident status or citizenship, are entitled to the necessary help and protection in accordance with the *Child Welfare Act*. The best interest of the child is the primary concern when considering and applying child welfare measures.

The child welfare system emphasises family ties and continuity in the child's upbringing. The underlying assumption is that children should grow up with their parents. Most measures offered by the child welfare services are voluntary assistive measures within the home. Often assistance is provided in the form of advice and guidance to parents on parental practices, counselling, economic aid, kindergarten etc.

Placing a child in alternative care without the consent of the parents is always a measure of last resort. However, in cases when adequate care for a child cannot be guaranteed at the child's home, it may be necessary to place a child in foster care or in an institution. It is only a *County Social Welfare Board* or a court that can issue a care order, not the local child welfare service. These boards are impartial and independent decision-making authorities. Decisions by a *County Social Welfare Board* can be appealed to the courts.

The legal threshold for issuing a care order is that a child must suffer serious neglect, maltreatment, abuse, or other serious deficiencies in the everyday care. Before issuing a care order, the child welfare services must conduct a comprehensive assessment of all the relevant aspects of a case, and voluntary steps by the parents or other responsible adults must be deemed insufficient. Furthermore, a care order must be necessary and in the best interest of the child.

Most children who cannot live with their parents are placed in a foster home. The child welfare services will choose a foster home based on the child's distinctive characteristics and individual needs. Due account shall be taken to ensure continuity in the child's upbringing and of the child's religious, cultural and linguistic background. The Norwegian child welfare services recognise the importance of family ties and are obliged to consider whether someone in the child's family or close network can be a foster parent.

Since 2016, Norway is part of the *Hague Convention 1996 on Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children*. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is designated as Norway's central authority and assists the municipal child welfare services in their dialogue with foreign authorities. A *Competence Strategy for the Municipal Child Welfare Services (2018–2024)* is in the process of being implemented. A key purpose is to strengthen the employees' knowledge of how to safeguard and facilitate the participation of children and parents. The strategy includes educational programs that aim to promote greater understanding and sensitivity in the follow-up of children and families with immigrant and other minority background.

The *European Court of Human Rights* has taken 43 Norwegian child welfare cases into consideration, assessing the right to family life in Article 8 of the *European Convention of Human Rights*. So far, the Court has found violation in several cases. However, the Court has found non-violation in some and dismissed some cases as manifestly ill-founded. About 20 cases remain for the Court to consider. The violations emphasised by the Court do not indicate a conflict between the Convention and the *Norwegian Child Welfare Act* as such. In the view of Government, the violations found by the Court indicate that some adjustments are called for in Norwegian child welfare practice. Following the Court's judgments, the Government has drawn up and initiated several general measures that have been or will be implemented to strengthen the Norwegian child welfare services.

New policies and measures – Child welfare services

The Storting adopted a new *Child Welfare Act* in June 2021. The Act enters into force from January 1, 2023. The Act increases the emphasis on prevention and early intervention, and to strengthen the legal safeguards for both children and parents. The Act reflects the development in the European Court of Human Rights case law. The Act contains some more clarifications, and the Bill provides comprehensive reviews of our human rights obligations. The Act is better adapted to the situation today. The child welfare service is primarily an auxiliary service, but the Act also regulates very invasive enforcement measures. This places great demands on the child welfare service's work and for ensuring that the rule of law for children and parents is safeguarded in a good way.

The goal of the new Act is to put children's needs at the centre and contribute to increased prevention and early intervention. The child welfare service shall build on the resources that exist around the child and facilitate the involvement of the child's family and networks. Child welfare measures shall not be more invasive than necessary.

The child's best interests are the basic consideration for child welfare service, and the new Act highlights this consideration in a new overarching provision. At the same time, other basic rights and principles such as children's right to care and protection, the right to family life, and the principle of least intervention, are explicitly regulated at the beginning of the Act. Furthermore, the new Act contains an overarching provision that emphasises the responsibility of the child welfare services to give due regard to the child's ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious background. It also states that the specific rights of children belonging to the Sami minority shall be safeguarded.

Moreover, competence requirements are essential to improve the quality of the work of the child welfare services. Thus, requirements for a master's degree in child welfare or other relevant education have been introduced in the Act. This applies to employees in the child welfare service who will carry out core tasks, the manager and the deputy leader.

Facts and figures

During 2020, almost 53 000 children received some support from the child welfare services in Norway. Eighty-two per cent of these children received assistance measures, while 18 per cent received care measures.¹¹⁴

By the end of 2020, children and young adults (aged 0-22 years) with an immigrant background (immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents) constituted 19 per cent of the total population in this age group.¹¹⁵ Twenty-eight per cent of the children and young adults (aged 0-22 years), who received help from the child welfare services at this time, had an immigrant background.¹¹⁶

15.2 Immigrants and childhood poverty

According to OECD's income inequality index (using the Gini coefficient), Norway placed fifth on the list of countries with lowest income inequality in 2019. Yet, the wealth inequality in Norway has increased over time. Additionally, the share and number of children growing up in persistently low-income families have increased since the early 2000s.

Children of immigrant parents, parents with low labour market participation, and children in single-parent families are particularly at risk. The increase in the number of children growing up in persistently low-income households has been particularly high among families with an immigrant background, where many have come to Norway as refugees. Many of these parents encounter various barriers to the labour market, for example through lacking formal qualifications or necessary language skills.

A lack of regular employment for parents is the most important cause of poverty amongst immigrant families. Measures to increase parents' participation in the labour market are therefore considered the most effective way of combating child poverty, both in the short and long term.

For children under the age of 18, parents receive a tax-exempt, non-means-tested monthly child benefit. The child benefit is a universal benefit but is especially important for supporting children and families living in persistently low-income households. Single parents are entitled to extended child benefit and infant supplement.

Other important measures that have been taken to reduce poverty amongst families with children are price reduction schemes for childcare and after-school programs. Families with more than one child attending kindergarten get a discount. Efforts have also been directed to combat social inequalities in both physical and mental health by

¹¹⁴ <https://www.ssb.no/en/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/statistikker/barneverng>

¹¹⁵ [13055: Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by sex, age and country background \(world region\) 1970 - 2021. Statbank Norway \(ssb.no\)](#)

¹¹⁶ [11298: Children with measures from the Child Welfare Services, during the year and per 31 December, by unit variable, immigration category, contents and year. Statbank Norway \(ssb.no\)](#)

making health care services more accessible, and to ensure good and safe housing conditions for children. The national grant scheme for including children and youth in leisure and holiday activities, and part-time and summer jobs, and to improve secondary-school attendance, has been strengthened. Children of immigrant parents are one of the target groups.

The previous Government launched two strategies on child poverty: a *national strategy on children living in poverty (2015-2017)*¹¹⁷ and a *national strategy for children growing up in low-income families (2020-2023)*¹¹⁸. The two strategies included several measures within areas such as the family, housing, health, education, leisure activities and employment. The objective of the most recent, still ongoing strategy is to improve living conditions of children growing up in low-income households and prevent poverty from being passed on from generation to generation.

New policies and measures – Childhood poverty

The current Government has appointed an expert group that will recommend which types of measures that should be prioritised to give children who grow up in poverty better living conditions and prevent poverty from being inherited. The group consists of eight experts with different competences and will deliver its recommendations in 2023.

¹¹⁷ www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/ff601d1ab03d4f2dad1e86e706dc4fd3/children-living-in-poverty_q-1230-e.pdf

¹¹⁸ www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/bb45eed3479549719fb14c78eba35bd4/strategi-mot-barnefattigdom_web.pdf

16 Equality and discrimination

16.1 Policy principles and legislation

Discrimination violates human rights, harming not only individuals but also the whole society. Everyone should be treated equally, regardless of e.g., gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity or religion. Moreover, everyone should be given the same opportunity to participate in important decisions concerning their own lives. Legal and political measures should contribute to an equal society and the absence of discrimination.

Different forms of discrimination occur in different segments of society, most often in relation to employment, access to goods and services, and to services from public administrations. In a survey from 2020, 39 per cent of immigrants and 47 per cent of Norwegian-born with immigrant parents reported having experienced discrimination in the last 12 months. Generally, younger people report higher numbers of discrimination than older people.¹¹⁹

The *Norwegian Constitution* article 98 states that "All people are equal under the law. No human being must be subject to unfair or disproportionate differential treatment."

The *Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act*¹²⁰ prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief. National origin, descent, skin colour and language are all aspects of ethnicity, according to the Act. Furthermore, participation in discrimination based on ethnicity is prohibited by law. This covers harassment. It is prohibited to instruct any person to discriminate, harass or retaliate. Retaliating against a person who files or intends to file a complaint about discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, is prohibited. The Act explicitly prohibits discrimination by association. This applies if a person is discriminated against based on his/her connection with another person, and this discrimination is based on the other person's ethnicity or other personal characteristics.

Furthermore, the *Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act* states that *all employers* have a duty to make active efforts to promote equality and to prevent discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief. This includes a duty to seek to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The equality efforts shall encompass the areas of recruitment, pay and working conditions, promotion, development opportunities, accommodation and the opportunity to combine work with family life. All employers, regardless of size and sector, are obliged to document their equality and anti-discrimination work. Public enterprises regardless of size, and private enterprises with more than 50 employees, shall apply a specified and systematic work method with four steps, when working proactively for equal opportunities in the enterprise. This duty also covers private enterprises with 20 to 50 employees, if requested by the employees or employee representatives. Thus, medium-sized private enterprises shall, to a greater extent than before, systematically investigate and analyse risks and causes of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. Enterprises with

¹¹⁹ Cf. https://bufdir.no/Statistikk_og_analyse/Etnisitet/Diskriminering/#heading74327 (only in Norwegian)

¹²⁰ [Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination \(Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act\) - Lovdata](#)

obligations to follow the four-step method, are obliged to report on their equality work. This report shall be given in the annual report or another document available to the general public.

Labour unions and employer associations are also obliged to promote equality and prevent discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion and belief.

Public authorities have a special responsibility to promote equality and prevent discrimination. According to the *Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act*, public authorities shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality and prevent discrimination on (among others) the grounds of ethnicity in all their activities. The duty also includes an obligation for to preclude harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, and to counter stereotyping. Public authorities also have an obligation to issue a statement on what they are doing to integrate considerations relating to gender and non-discrimination into their work. Public authorities shall describe what they are doing to convert equality and non-discrimination principles, procedures and standards into action. Public authorities shall provide an assessment as to what has been achieved as a result of these efforts, and outline expectations with regards to future efforts in this area. The statement shall be provided in the annual report, another report issued annually or another document available to the public.

16.2 Agencies promoting equality and non-discrimination

Since 2014, the *Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs*¹²¹ has been given responsibilities related to equality and non-discrimination in connection with ethnicity, religion, and belief. The directorate coordinates the *Forum on Ethnic Discrimination*, a meeting place for central government actors that is intended to help ensure that ethnic minorities do not suffer discrimination in public services. The directorate also organises dialogue meetings with immigrant organisations and representatives of national minorities and the Sami population. The directorate are responsible for implementing several of the Government initiatives against racism and discrimination. The directorate has developed an online resource that gathers figures, statistics and research that address aspects of living conditions and equality of ethnic and religious minority groups.¹²²

The *Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud* (LDO)¹²³ acts as a proactive agent for equal opportunities. LDO has a consultative and advisory service for individuals as well as private and public employers. This service is free of charge. Disseminating good examples and methods, and improving the understanding of the issues in question, are important aspects of LDOs work. LDO also monitors that Norwegian law and administrative practice are in accordance with Norway's obligations under the conventions *UNCERD*, *UNCEDAW* and *UNCRPD*. LDO has the mandate to supervise the activity duty of public authorities and employers, as well as their new duties to issue a statement on their equality work according to the *Equality and Anti-discrimination Act*. LDO is entitled to make follow-up visits to enterprises and may require access to the enterprises' documentation relating to the employers' equality and anti-discrimination work.

¹²¹ [Diskriminering og holdninger til etnisk og religiøs mangfold i utdanning \(bufdir.no\)](https://www.bufdir.no/)

¹²² [Samer, nasjonale minoriteter og personer med innvandrerbakgrunn \(bufdir.no\)](https://www.bufdir.no/) (only in Norwegian)

¹²³ [LDO - LDO-English page](https://www.ldo.no/)

Ethnicity is the fourth largest category of cases addressed to LDO. In 2021, the Ombud received 257 inquiries concerning ethnic discrimination. Most of these cases concern discrimination in work life. *The Anti-Discrimination Tribunal*¹²⁴ handles individual complaints about discrimination, and complaints about incomplete/lack of statement of equality work by employers. The enforcement system consists of only one body. Appeals for the Tribunal's decisions shall be referred to the court system. The Tribunal can award compensation in discrimination cases.

16.3 Action plans and strategies

Racism and discrimination based on ethnicity and religion affect many different groups in Norwegian society. While the challenges they face differ, they also have some common features. In recent years, measures against racism and discrimination have been strengthened through two action plans:

The *Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination on the Grounds of Ethnicity and Religion* for 2020 – 2023¹²⁵ is a comprehensive action plan and contains a total of 50 measures in many different areas, including work life, housing and health, research and knowledge, education, public debate, and public service.

The aim of *The Action Plan to combat Discrimination and Hatred towards Muslims (2020 – 2023)*¹²⁶ is to prevent and deter racism and discrimination against Muslims and persons believed to be Muslims. The action plan contains 18 measures within the following four priority areas: 1. Dialogue and meeting places; 2. Safety and security; 3. Knowledge of and competence on discrimination and hatred towards Muslims; 4. Efforts against discrimination and hatred outside Norway.

New policies and measures – Equality and discrimination

In 2021, the Government established a dedicated grant scheme against racism, discrimination, and hate speech.¹²⁷ The objective of the scheme is to facilitate local, regional, and national involvement and support initiatives and activities that seek to promote diversity and dialogue, and counteract racism, discrimination, and hate speech.

The Government will increase the efforts against online harassment and continue to put these issues high on the political agenda.

The *Freedom of Speech Commission*¹²⁸ has examined the extent and conditions for freedom of speech on a broad basis.¹²⁹ The commission finds that the current situation for freedom of expression in Norway is very good. There is a wide range of voices and perspectives in public discourse, also from minority groups. However, there appears to be a clear and worrisome trend where vulnerable minorities in society are subjected to considerable harassment when expressing themselves in public. At the

¹²⁴ [Diskrimineringsnemnda](#)

¹²⁵ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/the-norwegian-governments-action-plan-against-racism-and-discrimination-on-the-grounds-of-ethnicity-and-religion-2020-2023-extracted-version/id2681929/>

¹²⁶ [Action plan to combat discrimination and hatred towards Muslims \(2020-2023\) - regjeringen.no](#)

¹²⁷ [Tilskudd til tiltak mot rasisme, diskriminering og hatefulle ytringer | Bufdir](#)

¹²⁸ [Ytringsfrihetskommisjonen \(ykom.no\)](#)

¹²⁹ The mandate is available in English [here](#). English summary of the report from page 328 and onwards here: [NOU 2022: 9 \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

same time, the Commission warns against an overly negative portrayal of the public sphere. The Government will consider the Commission's recommendations after a broad public hearing.

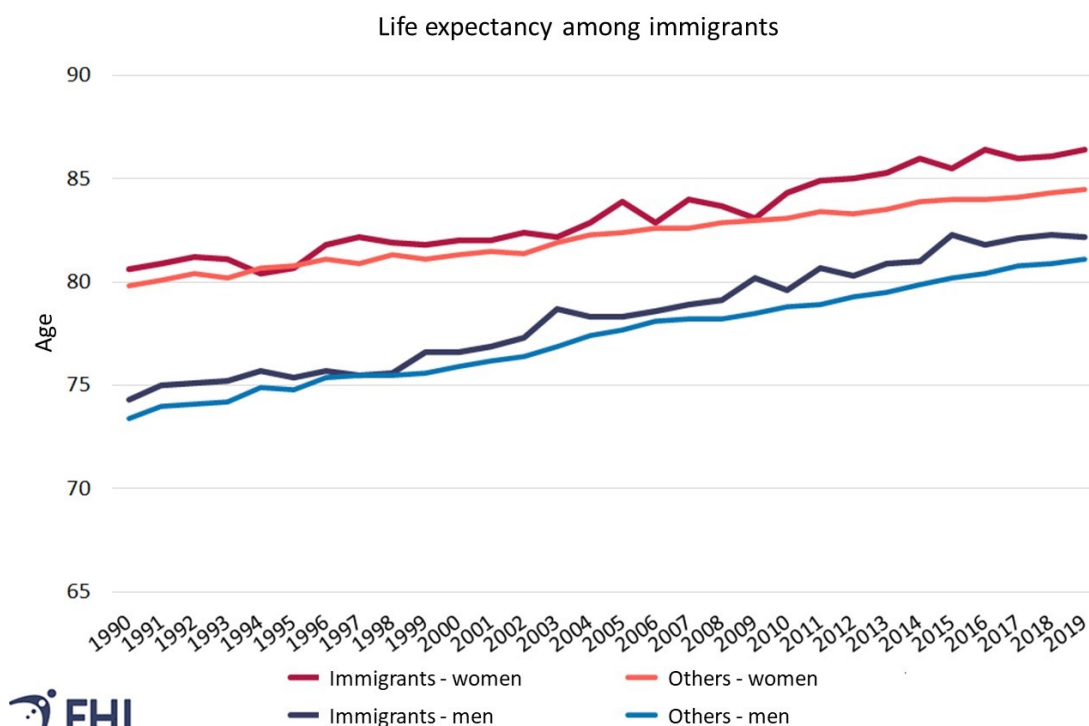
The Government has started drafting a new action plan against racism and ethnic discrimination. The plan will be launched in 2023. The focus areas in the plan are racism and discrimination in the labour market and in other areas that particularly affect young people. Public meetings where NGOs and others can present their propositions and give direct feedback to government representatives are an important part of the drafting process.

17 Health

17.1 Health among immigrants in Norway¹³⁰

Immigrants in Norway generally have a lower mortality rate and a higher life expectancy than the rest of the population. This has been shown in several studies¹³¹, and applies to both men and women and in different age groups. This is also shown in Figure 17.1, which illustrates the development in life expectancy at birth among immigrants and the rest of the population in Norway over time.

Figure 17.1 Life Expectancy among immigrants. 1990-2019



Source: National Institute of Public Health

In 2019, immigrant women had almost two years higher life expectancy at birth than Norwegian-born women, while the corresponding figure for men was just over one year. The relative differences also persist if we look at life expectancy at age 25, 50 and 75.¹³² However, there is some uncertainty related to the calculation of life expectancy for immigrants. Both because there are currently few older immigrants in Norway, and because there may be deficiencies in the registration of emigration among immigrants, which means that life expectancy may be artificially high. This is because no deaths will be registered in Norway among immigrants who have emigrated but are still registered as residents in our registers.

¹³⁰ This paragraph relies on Folkehelseinstituttet. "Helse blant personer med innvandrerbakgrunn." In [Folkehelse rapporten](#) [Published 22.02.2017; updated 26.08.2022] 3

¹³¹ Wallace, M., Thomas, M. J., Aburto, J. M., Jørring Pallesen, A. V., Mortensen, L. H., Syse, A., & Drefahl, S. (2022). [Immigration, mortality, and national life expectancy in the Nordic region, 1990–2019](#). *SSM - Population Health*, 101177

¹³² Ibid.

The proportion of immigrants who have at least one chronic disease is roughly the same as in the general population, 35 versus 34 per cent, according to the survey on living conditions among immigrants in 2016. The survey showed that variations between the groups are greater than between the general population and immigrants as a whole. Like the rest of the population, the proportion reporting a chronic illness was higher among women than among men and increased with age.¹³³

Immigrants are equally, or almost equally, satisfied with life as the majority population¹³⁴. Statistics Norway's Wellbeing survey from 2020/2021 shows, however, that immigrants from the Middle East, Central and South Asia are, on average, slightly less satisfied with life.¹³⁵ Among immigrants from EU countries, North America and Oceania and from South and Central America, only 18 per cent report low satisfaction compared to around 25 per cent among immigrants in total and in the rest of the population. In a study of health and quality of life among Syrian quota refugees in transit and after settlement in Norway, the respondents reported their quality of life after one year in Norway as good as that of the majority population¹³⁶. Factors such as low income, poorer living conditions, unemployment and being single are associated with a lower quality of life.

Findings from the last Norwegian living conditions survey among immigrants show that mental health problems increase with age among immigrants, in contrast to the general population. Mental health problems are more common among women than among men and immigrants with lower education and lower income are more exposed to mental health problems than those with higher education and income. However, there are large differences between the various country groups that are included in the survey when it comes to the proportion reporting mental health problems.¹³⁷

Several Norwegian studies show that people with an immigrant background can experience barriers in accessing health services. Information about how the health and care services are organized is rarely available in languages other than Norwegian and English. This leads to a lack of knowledge about the services and rights. Such knowledge is an important prerequisite for being able to make use of the offers that

¹³³ Dalgard, A.B. (ed). *Levekår blant innvandrere i Norge 2016*. [Statistics Norway Reports 2018/20](#)

¹³⁴ Barstad A. (2018): Livskvalitet blant innvandrere. En analyse basert på Levekårsundersøkelsen blant personer med innvandrerbakgrunn 2016. [Statistics Norway Reports 2018/31](#)

¹³⁵ Dalen, H. B. & Larsson, M. R. (March 1, 2022). *Store forskjeller i innvanderes livskvalitet* [online publication]. Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå. <https://www.ssb.no/sosiale-forhold-og-kriminalitet/levekår/artikler/store-forskjeller-i-innvanderes-livskvalitet>

¹³⁶ Haj-Younes, J., Strømme, E.M., Igland, J., Kumar, B.N., Abildsnes, E., Hasha, W. & Diaz, E. (2020). [Changes in self-rated health and quality of life among Syrian refugees migrating to Norway: a prospective longitudinal study](#). *Int J Equity Health* 19, 188 (2020)

¹³⁷ Kjøllestad, M., Straiton, M.L., Øien-Ødegaard, C., Aambø, A., Holmboe, O., Johansen, R., Grewal, N.K. & Indseth, T. (2019). [Helse blant innvandrere i Norge. Levekårsundersøkelsen blant innvandrere 2016](#). Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet

exist.¹³⁸ In addition, health literacy and different perceptions about health, signs of illness and when one should see a doctor can have an impact on diagnosis and treatment.¹³⁹

17.2 COVID-19 in the immigrant population

Last year's report included an extensive text on various aspects of COVID-19 in the immigrant population in Norway.¹⁴⁰ We will therefore only give a brief and updated summary here, mainly based on a summary report from The Norwegian Institute of Public Health.¹⁴¹ Most publications cited here include a summary in English.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, there was concern that certain immigrant groups were overrepresented among the infected and seriously ill in Norway. In the early stages of the pandemic, however, good registers were lacking and figures uncertain. Through a gradual improvement of register data and a growing number of cases, it was possible to see from early autumn 2020 that the overrepresentation was real and clear. This became even more marked during the winter of 2021.¹⁴²

The same pattern was seen in the other Nordic countries. In Norway, people born abroad accounted for around 40 per cent of all hospital admissions from March 2020 to February 2021 but made up around 15 per cent of the population.¹⁴³ In Sweden also, where 20 per cent of the population were foreign-born, around 40 per cent of all admitted to intensive care from March 13, 2020, to February 15, 2021, were born abroad.¹⁴⁴ In Denmark, twice as many so called non-Western immigrants and their descendants were admitted to hospital compared to ethnic Danes in the period March to July 2020 (5).¹⁴⁵

There differences between immigrant groups were considerable. There was a higher proportion of hospitalizations among people born in Pakistan, Morocco, Somalia, Iraq

¹³⁸ Straiton, M. L. & Myhre, S. (2017b). "Learning to navigate the healthcare system in a new country: a qualitative study." *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care*, 35(4), 352-359. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02813432.2017.1397320>

¹³⁹ Harris, S. M., Binder, P.-E. & Sandal, G. M. (2020). [General Practitioners' Experiences of Clinical Consultations with Refugees Suffering from Mental Health Problems](#). *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 412-412.

¹⁴⁰ [Migration and Integration 2020–2021 - regjeringen.no](#)

¹⁴¹ Folkehelseinstituttet. *Folkehelse rapportens temautgave 2021. Folkehelsen etter covid-19. Pandemiens konsekvenser for ulike grupper i befolkningen*. Rapport 2021. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet, 2021 <https://www.fhi.no/contentassets/b669d0bbb94943efae9793b33526d415/folkehelse rapportens-temautgave-2021---folkehelsen-etter-covid-19.pdf>

¹⁴² Indseth T, Calero JC, Diaz E, Løland KK, Godøy A. *Covid-19 i Bergen etter fødeland: Personer testet, bekreftet smittet og relaterte innleggelser*. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet; 2021. Rapport 2021. <https://www.fhi.no/globalassets/dokumenterfiler/rapporter/2021/covid-19-i-bergen-etter-fodeland-personer-testet-bekreftet-smittet-og-relaterte-innleggelser-rapport-2021-v2.pdf>

¹⁴³ Indseth T, Godøy A, Kjøllesdal M, Arnesen T, Carelo CJ, Vinjerui KH, et al. *Covid-19 etter fødeland fra mars 2020 til februar 2021*. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet 2021. Rapport 2021. <https://www.fhi.no/globalassets/dokumenterfiler/rapporter/2021/covid-19-etter-fodeland-fra-mars-2020-til-februar-2021-rapport-2021.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Folkhälsomyndigheten. *Utrikesfödda och covid-19. Konstaterade fall, IVA-vård och avlidna bland utrikesfödda i Sverige 13 mars 2020 –15 februari 2021*. Solna: Folkhälsomyndigheten; 2021. <https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/contentassets/2dddee08a4ec4c25a0a59aac7aca14f0/utrikes-fodda-och-covid-19.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ Møllerup SA. *Hvem bliver indlagt med Covid-19?* [online publication]. København: Danmarks Statistik <https://www.dst.dk/da/TilSalg/perspektiv/2021/2021-03-16-hvem-bliver-indlagt-med-covid-19>

and Turkey.¹⁴⁶ People with a background from countries in Africa and Asia stand out with an increased risk of death and ventilator use. For ventilator use, this also applies after the analyses have been adjusted for age, which is the most important risk factor for serious illness and death from COVID-19.¹⁴⁷

There are several uncertainties in the statistics on deaths and ventilator use. For example, the numbers are so low that it is more difficult to analyze differences between immigrants by individual country of birth. The figures nevertheless give cause for concern. Taken as a whole, the immigrant population in Norway is young, and there are very few people in the upper age groups compared to the rest of the population.¹⁴⁸

There were also considerable variations in vaccination coverage for various immigrant groups. By the end of 2021, among people aged 18 and over, the proportion vaccinated with two doses were highest among those born in Norway (91 per cent) and people born in Vietnam (90 per cent), Thailand (90 per cent), Philippines (87 per cent), Denmark (86 per cent), Great Britain (86 per cent) and Sweden (86 per cent); and lowest among people born in Lithuania (43 per cent), Poland (40 per cent), Romania (40 per cent) and Latvia (40 per cent).¹⁴⁹

Last year's Migration and Integration report for Norway to the OECD enumerated several other possible causes for the overrepresentation of several immigrant groups among people infected and/or hospitalized by COVID-19. Cf. also the recent research report on causes of over-representation of COVID-19 cases among immigrant groups which compares immigrant groups in three urban areas in Norway.¹⁵⁰

In 2021, The *Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB)* and *IMDi* delivered a report regarding communication with the immigrant population in connection with national crisis.¹⁵¹ The report describes challenges and proposes measures, and it is an important contribution to further emergency preparedness as regards persons with immigrant background. The follow up of the report is being done by the ministries in charge of the proposed measures. Some of the proposals must be followed up at local level. IMDi has gathered available up-to-date and quality-assured [web resources](#) from public authorities and national knowledge centres in various languages.

¹⁴⁶ Indseth T, Elgersma I, Strand BH, Telle K, Hernæs K, Arnesen T. *Covid-19: Påvist smitte, testing, innleggelser, død, etterlevelse av råd og reiseaktivitet blant innvandrere i Norge, perioden fra februar 2020 til mai 2021*. In: Indseth T, red. [Covid-19 blant innvandrere i Norge, vurdering av tiltak og erfaringer fra felt](#), delrapport 1. Rapport 2021. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet; 2021. s. 9-23

¹⁴⁷ Telle KE, Grosland M, Helgeland J, Haberg SE. "Factors associated with hospitalization, invasive mechanical ventilation treatment and death among all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Norway: Prospective cohort study." *Scand J Public Health* 2021;49(1):41-7

¹⁴⁸ Indseth T, Godøy A, Kjøllesdal M, Arnesen T, Jacobsen C, Grøslund M, et al. *Covid-19 etter fødeland: Personer testet, bekreftet smittet og relaterte innleggelser og dødsfall*. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet; 2020. Rapport 2020. Tilgjengelig fra: <https://www.fhi.no/globalassets/dokumenterfiler/rapporter/2020/covid-19-etter-fodeland-personer-testet-bekreftet-smittet-og-relaterte-innleggelser-og-dodsfall-rapport-2020-v2.pdf>

¹⁴⁹ Folkehelseinstituttet: Covid-19. Ukerapport – uke 48 – torsdag 9. desember 2021. <https://www.fhi.no/contentassets/8a971e7b0a3c4a06bdf381ab52e6157/vedlegg/alle-ukerapporter-2021/ukerapport-uke-48-29.11--05.12.21.pdf>

¹⁵⁰ Brekke, J-P, Lidén, H., Tallis A.M. (2022) Årsaker til mye covid-19-smitte i enkelte innvandergrupper. En sammenligning av grupper i tre byområder i Norge. [ISF Rapport 2022:11](#) (English summary)

¹⁵¹ [Mer mangfoldig krisekommunikasjon | IMDi](#)

The *Corona Commission* published its first report in April 2021 and its second report in April 2022.¹⁵² The core conclusion related to immigrants is that although the authorities have succeeded in communicating about the pandemic, the authorities have failed to reach some immigrants. According to the Commission, the authorities must, to a greater extent consider that some have weak Norwegian skills, weak digital skills, less knowledge of Norwegian information channels or they use alternative channels. The Commission suggested that the authorities should have a plan to reach specific groups in a crisis.

The second report emphasises the importance of prioritising the provision of vaccines to geographical areas with high infection rates at an early stage, i.e., in areas with a large proportion of inhabitants with immigrant background. The authorities were insufficiently prepared to deal with the economic, practical and social barriers to testing, isolation and vaccination that were present among many people with immigrant backgrounds. It took a long time to introduce measures targeting this portion of the population. The Commission also underlines that information disseminated by the authorities reached the immigrant population with varying degrees of effectiveness.¹⁵³

A recent report commissioned by the *Nordic Council of Ministers* and carried out by *Rambøll Denmark*, studies the outreach and dissemination of public information to immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Nordic countries.¹⁵⁴ The pandemic demonstrated the need for public authorities to be prepared for situations where there is a need for communicating to immigrant communities. The report presents several policy recommendations in this respect.

17.3 Health among refugees from Ukraine

In early March 2022, the Norwegian government implemented a scheme which means that people displaced from Ukraine were granted temporary collective protection for one year, cf. Chapter 6.1. Since all asylum seekers to Norway have the same right to healthcare as the rest of the population, this meant that refugees from Ukraine were granted full rights to health services once they registered.

So far, we do not have figures on how many refugees seek various health services. But during the pandemic and a bit into the Ukraine war, the municipalities reported weekly via the *County Governors* on the capacity of various services. So far, the municipalities have not reported any dramatic strain on capacity in most health services. However, general practitioner services are among the services where capacity in the municipalities is strained. A recent report from the *National Institute of Public Health*, calculating various scenarios for health service needs because of refugees from Ukraine, show that general practitioner services may be in short supply. The reason for this is, among other factors, that the age and gender of the refugees (children and women) indicate a relatively large need for health services.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² [Rapport – Koronakommisjonen](#)

¹⁵³ [Summary in English part 1, summary in English part 2: 01.pdf \(regjeringen.no\)](#)

¹⁵⁴ [Outreach and dissemination of public information to immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

Nordic Council of Ministers. Nord 2022: 031

¹⁵⁵ Gjefsen HM, Gjesvik J, Skyrud K, Indseth T. *Scenarier for helsetjenestebruk for flyktninger fra Ukraina*. Oslo: Folkehelseinstituttet, 2022. [Scenarier for helsetjenestebehov for flyktninger fra Ukraina \(fhi.no\)](#)

18 Citizenship and naturalisation

18.1 Policy and legislation

Nationality (citizenship) provides legal and social bonds between the state and the individual. A person's acquisition of citizenship provides her/him with equal rights and duties to those who already are citizens and is a prerequisite for full participation in society.

One legal consequence of being a Norwegian citizen is the unconditional right to legal residence in Norway. Citizens also have the right to vote in all political elections, as well as the right to hold a position in our three branches of government as, respectively, a member of the Norwegian *Storting*, a cabinet minister or a *Supreme Court* judge. Being a citizen also is a requirement for holding some other positions. Compulsory military service is the most prominent of the legal obligations for Norwegian citizens.

The current *Nationality Act* entered into force in 2006. The Act is based on the principle of *Ius sanguinis*, which means that citizenship is not determined by place of birth, but by having at least one parent who is a citizen of Norway.

Other ways of becoming a Norwegian citizen are by application or notification. According to the Act, an applicant has the right to acquire Norwegian citizenship if all the conditions listed in the *Nationality Act* are satisfied. The main requirements imply that the applicant must:

- provide documentary evidence of his/her identity or otherwise clearly establish it.
- have reached the age of 12, if s/he is to be granted Norwegian citizenship irrespective of the citizenship of the parents.
- reside in the realm and intend to remain so.
- fulfil the conditions for a permanent residence permit laid down in the *Immigration Act*.
- have lived in Norway for a total of eight years during the last eleven years¹⁵⁶. have passed an oral test in Norwegian at level B1 at the minimum and a test in social studies.
- not have been sentenced to prison or special criminal sanctions. A sentenced applicant must wait for a deferred period, depending on the length of the sentence before citizenship can be granted.

Since January 1, 2020, Norway allows dual citizenship.

According to the current legislation, Norwegian nationality may be repealed in the event of prolonged absence from the realm, upon application, and by revocation in case of it having been obtained by fraud. Dual citizens who have been convicted of an offence seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the Norwegian state, can be deprived of their Norwegian citizenship. This decision is made by the court as part of the criminal case. In the case of fundamental national interests, dual citizen who have shown conduct that may indicate that he or she will severely damage such interest,

¹⁵⁶ Applicants with a specified minimum income level according to the most recent tax-assessment are required to have resided in Norway six out of the last ten years.

can be deprived of their Norwegian citizenship. The decision is made by the Ministry responsible for the *Nationality Act*. If legal action is taken concerning the validity of the decision, the state will carry all costs of the case.

New policies and measures – Citizenship

Amendments to the Nationality Act, which took effect from 1 October 2022, raise the requirement of necessary Norwegian oral skills from level A2 to B1 to be granted Norwegian citizenship. Stateless persons, those who are over 55 years of age and came to Norway based on an application for protection or as a resettled refugee, and those who are over 55 years of age and receive disability benefits, must have passed an oral test in Norwegian at level A2 at the minimum. Applicants may be granted an exemption from the oral test in Norwegian and the test in social studies if health-related issues or other personal considerations are preventing them from passing the tests.

18.2 Naturalisations

In 2021, 41 100 persons were naturalised. This was the highest number ever recorded and an increase of almost 21 400 naturalisations the previous year, cf. Table 18.1. The increase is connected to the amendment to the Nationality Act in January 2020, that allows Norwegian citizens to have one or more citizenships in addition to Norwegian citizenship.

Table 18.1 Naturalisations – Total. Annually. 2012–2021

| Year | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total | 12 384 | 13 223 | 15 336 | 12 432 | 13 712 | 21 648 | 10 241 | 13 201 | 19 698 | 41 100 |

Source: Statistics Norway

By the end of October 2022, 32 200 persons had been granted Norwegian citizenship by UDI. During the same period in 2021, the number was 31 900.

Among the naturalisations in 2021, the largest groups had Sweden, Eritrea, and Russia as countries of origin, cf. Table 18.2.

Table 18.2 Naturalisation by original citizenship. Major countries of origin. 2021

| Country of origin | 2021 |
|-------------------|--------|
| Total, of which: | 41 100 |
| Sweden | 4 590 |
| Eritrea | 3 559 |
| Russia | 3 216 |
| Philippines | 1 955 |
| Somalia | 1 831 |
| Poland | 1 727 |
| Great Britain | 1 578 |
| Denmark | 1 576 |
| Thailand | 1 560 |
| Syria | 1 361 |

Source: Statistics Norway

The share of naturalised Norwegian citizens among immigrants in Norway varies considerably with country of origin. Since Norway allows dual citizenship from 2020, the composition of the persons who obtain citizenship has changed. In previous years, citizens of European countries have made up a modest proportion of people who have been granted Norwegian citizenship. About one in three of all citizenships were granted to people from countries in and around the Horn of Africa. However, in 2021, 50 per cent of those who were granted citizenship were from European countries.

Due to several emergency preparedness situations in recent years, the waiting time has increased for several types of cases. Therefore, it may take some time before applicants receive an answer to their application.

18.3 Naturalisation ceremonies

Since 2006, every person granted Norwegian citizenship has been invited to take part in a ceremony that includes giving an oath of loyalty to Norway. The *County Governor* has the responsibility to invite all new citizens over the age of 12 to take part in a citizenship ceremony.

The aim of these ceremonies is to ensure a solemn and dignified transition to Norwegian citizenship. Participation in the ceremony also marks that the new citizen endorses the fundamental values on which the Norwegian society is based, including the principle of equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all Norwegians. Participation in this ceremony is voluntary. Participants over the age of 18 take an oath of loyalty to Norway and receive the book *Welcome as a new citizen*¹⁵⁷.

Due to the pandemic, the *County Governors* cancelled naturalisation ceremonies that required attendance in 2021. After the reopening of society, the County Governors have continued organising naturalisation ceremonies.

¹⁵⁷ [Velkommen som ny statsborger \(regjeringen.no\)](https://www.regjeringen.no)

19 Migration and development

Norwegian migration policy is consistent and responsible. It is a main priority of the development policy to strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and long-term development aid. This is done both at the overall level and in relation to thematic and geographic areas.

During COVID-19 the positive trend of declining poverty was broken and in 2020 extreme poverty rose for the first time since 1997. War and conflict, climate change, degradation of the environment and pandemics have consequences that extend far beyond national and regional borders and influence global migration patterns. In 2022, Russia's illegal war in Ukraine has further aggravated the situation.

The relationship between migration and development is complex. For example, there is evidence that food insecurity may increase the desire to migrate internationally, but also decrease the means and ability to do so. About three-quarters of international migrants come from developing countries, but migration from developing to developed countries accounts for a minor fraction of human movement. With war in Europe, the direct effect of migration from Ukraine may somewhat change the picture. However, the effects of the more pessimistic outlook for the world economy on migration from the poorest countries may not be very significant.

Remittances from migrant workers remain a critical lifeline for many poor households and a significant financial contribution to developing economies. Remittance-flows remained remarkably resilient during COVID-19, with only a minor decline. The war in Ukraine has had direct consequences on remittances from affected countries, but broader effects through reduced growth of the world economy remains to be seen.

The geopolitical scene is shifting, with increased global tension and eroding trust. Conflict and fragility are on the rise. Authoritarian tendencies are gaining ground. All of this may in turn trigger irregular migration or force people to flee their homes. Development and peace efforts continue to address the root causes of poverty, fragility and conflict, maintaining a long-term perspective also in times of crisis.

In line with *Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)10*, there is an ongoing process internationally of looking to reduce remittance costs. Technological developments may contribute positively but increased geopolitical tensions may have the opposite effect.

New policies and measures – Migration and development

The Government established a *Special Initiative for Refugees, Displaced Populations and Host Communities* in the national budget for 2022 and appointed a *Special Envoy* to oversee the further development of the initiative over the coming years. The focus is to reinforce the work for sustainable solutions to challenges both for the displaced and their hosts. Budget lines from humanitarian assistance, development- and stabilisation funds are seen in connection with one another, in line with the nexus principle.

20 Public debate and opinion

20.1 Public debate

There are no regular statistics or analyses available on the extent and nature of the current public debate on issues concerning immigration and integration. Therefore, considerations on the public debate are primarily based on selective observations and recent reports and studies, if any.

The rapid influx of persons fleeing from Ukraine after the Russian invasion on February 24, sparked some public debate regarding many aspects of public policy, for example the registration capacity, the organisation of the reception system, the placement of emergency accommodation facilities, the level of benefits, and the reception of people with special needs. The public debate has diminished over time as registration and reception capacity were upscaled, and as Ukrainians with temporary collective protection have been settled in municipalities all over Norway. The settlement process has been carried out more rapidly than ever before, cf. chapter 6.5.

The crime rate in Norway, for example for serious crimes like homicide, is very low in a comparative perspective¹⁵⁸. Nevertheless, crime among persons with an immigrant background continues to be a matter of public concern¹⁵⁹. An important issue is how to prevent criminal acts that are committed by a disproportionate number of young males with an immigrant background. Many of them live in parts of Oslo where a high share of the population has an immigrant background, where living conditions in general are more difficult than in other parts, and where a higher share of young males neither are in education nor working. The fear of a deteriorating situation, similar to what has been seen in some urban areas in Sweden, is often mentioned. One contested question in the debate is whether the situation mainly is rooted in culture, religion and failed integration policies or should be analysed as rooted in poverty and other socio-economic explanatory factors.

Racism and discrimination, as well as a few instances of hate-crime, are often debated in media. Various examples have been highlighted, for example discrimination in the labour market and concerning access to rental housing. There are also examples of racist and discriminatory attitudes towards persons with an immigrant or other minority background that are expressed in public, sometimes even by well-known persons from the majority population. Some of these cases have been handled by the police and courts and the cases have been extensively covered by the media¹⁶⁰.

20.2 Public opinion

The annual survey by Statistics Norway

For many years, Statistics Norway has published an annual survey on attitudes to different issues concerning immigration and immigrants. During the last years, attitudes to immigration and immigrants have become increasingly positive/liberal. The results

¹⁵⁸ Cf. for example: [Norge har blant de laveste forekomstene av drap i verden – hvorfor? \(psykologisk.no\)](https://www.gisk.no/)

¹⁵⁹ Cf. for example: [Etter ny skyteepisode på Mortensrud: – Områder med lav inntekt, trangboddhet og høy andel innvandrere ble glemt i Hurdalserklæringen \(vartosl.no\)](https://www.vartosl.no/)

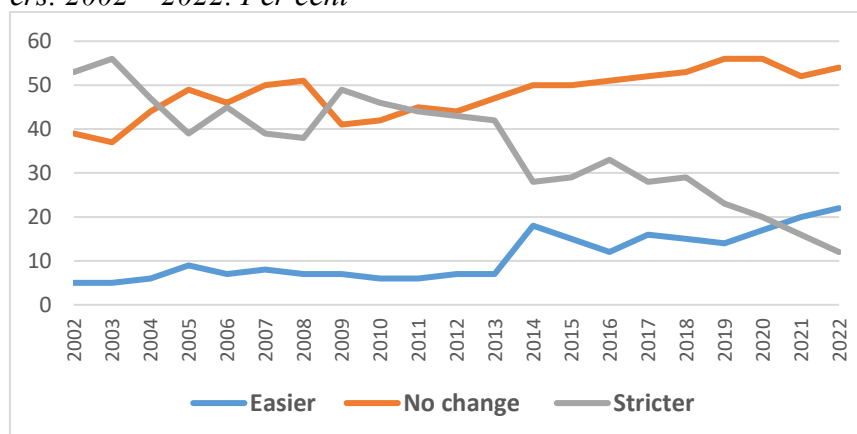
¹⁶⁰ Cf. for example: [Tidligere VGTV-profil Bernt Hulsker dømt for rasisme \(tv2.no\)](https://www.tv2.no/) and [Atle Antonsen anmeldt for rasisme – risikerer det samme som Bernt Hulsker – NRK Nordland](https://www.nrk.no/)

from the most recent survey, conducted in the summer of 2022.¹⁶¹, show that this trend continues.

We see this in several questions asked in the survey. For example, relatively few believe that most immigrants abuse social welfare schemes and a majority state that most immigrants contribute to enriching the cultural life in Norway. At the same time as attitudes have become more positive over time, more and more people report that they have contact with immigrants living in Norway.

Since 2002, more respondents have expressed the opinion that it should be harder rather than easier for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain residence in Norway. However, the share that thinks it should be easier has increased, while the share that thinks it should be harder has decreased over the years. Since the survey in 2021, there are more respondents expressing that it should be easier than harder. Most respondents (54 percent) think that the chances for obtaining residence should remain as it is today.

Figure 20.1 Attitudes to access to residence in Norway for refugees and asylum seekers. 2002 – 2022. Per cent



Source: Statistics Norway

The last time there was a significant influx of asylum seekers to Norway was in 2015 as a result of war in Syria. At that time, the responses to many of the questions in the survey on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration were clearly less positive. Several responded that it should be more difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit than the year before, presumably in response to the situation with a sudden increase in asylum applications. Despite the fact that there was an even higher influx of refugees in 2022, as a result of the war in Ukraine, attitudes towards immigrants and immigration have not become more negative/restrictive according to the latest survey.

¹⁶¹ Cf. [Stabilt positive holdninger til innvandrere etter flyktningstrøm fra Ukraina \(ssb.no\)](https://ssb.no) (only in Norwegian)

The Integration Barometer 2022

This survey, commissioned *The Directorate of Integration and Diversity*, provides an updated overview of the attitudes of the Norwegian population to immigration, integration, and diversity.¹⁶² The survey has been conducted ten times over the past fifteen years. This makes it possible to follow developments in attitudes in this highly relevant policy area.

The survey was conducted in November and December 2021. At the time, Norway was into the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. To check for the effects on immigration attitudes of the arrival of a large number of refugees from Ukraine after February 24, 2022, a set of core questions were repeated in late March 2022. The results of this mini survey are included in the report.

The study shows that the population of Norway is moderately positive toward immigration in general, but that respondents distinguish between different categories of immigrants. While the respondents are positive about welcoming more refugees in need of protection, they are neutral to labour immigrants and more skeptical to asylum seekers and family members. At the same time, the respondents realise that labor immigrants contribute to the Norwegian economy.

Only a small number (one in five) believe that integration of immigrants is going well. The respondents link this to the need of increased labor participation and language skills. The study shows that if a person can tick off on all the integration requirements, i.e. language, work etc., then the population sees that person as integrated, no matter which country she/he comes from.

There is also great awareness among the people that discrimination of immigrants exists, e.g., in gaining access to the labor market and in the housing market. In the latest Integration Barometer, a list of current topics were added in addition to the recurring themes, such as attitudes toward different categories of immigration, toward integration and efforts to improve integration, and toward diversity. The new topics include the effects of the pandemic on attitudes toward immigrant groups, in-depth questions about adaptation to religious practices, and a survey experiment on the effects of skin tone on trust in professionals (medical doctors and kindergarten teachers).

Considering the development in attitudes towards immigration since the barometer was first conducted in 2005, there are small differences in attitudes from year to year. It takes time to change attitudes towards immigrants and integration. Significant changes in attitudes can take place as a result of sudden events in society, but this effect is often relatively brief before attitudes stabilise again.

The refugee situation in connection with the war in Ukraine is one such example. At the end of 2021, 40 per cent of the respondents in the integration barometer answered that they would like to receive more refugees. About a month after the outbreak of the war, this share increased to 60 percent. The survey also finds an increase in the proportion who think immigration is good for Norway (from 44 per cent to 53 per cent)

¹⁶² The following text is based on the English summary in: [Brekke, J. P. & A. Fladmoe \(2022\). Attitudes toward immigration, integration and diversity in Norway – Norwegian Integration Barometer 2022](#). Institute for Social Research, Report 2022: 6.

and in the proportion who believe integration is generally going well (22 per cent to 27 per cent).

The survey also takes a closer look at whether there are changes in attitudes towards immigrants after the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that the pandemic has not had any such effect on attitudes. Furthermore, the survey covers what people consider to be possible reasons why some immigrant groups had higher infection rates. Here the population was divided: Those who were most negative towards immigration (those who agreed most with the statements "We should not let more immigrants into Norway" and "Immigration is a threat to our national uniqueness") placed greater emphasis on compliance with infection advice. Those who are positive to immigration, place greater emphasis on structural factors such as cramped living conditions and exposure in connection with work.

21 Information and publications

21.1 Background information

Recent statistics and publications by *Statistics Norway* on migration related issues with many sub-topics:

<http://ssb.no/en/innvandring-og-innvandrere>

The reports usually have a summary in English, and there is an English version of most statistics.

Statistics and information on applications, permits, rules and regulations from the *Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)* are available in English:

<http://www.udi.no/Norwegian-Directorate-of-Immigration/>

Recent studies commissioned by UDI and the *Ministry of Justice and Public Security*:

<http://www.udi.no/en/statistics-and-analysis/research-and-development-reports/>

Some of the reports contain a summary or abstract in English.

Facts concerning integration policy in English published by the *Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi)*:

<http://www.imdi.no/en/>

Recent studies commissioned by IMDi:

<https://www.imdi.no/om-imdi/rapporter/>

Some of the reports contain a summary or abstract in English.

IMDi has published a much relevant report on integration indicators which will be an annual publication:

[indikatorer-for-integrering-2022.pdf \(imdi.no\)](#)

Overview of studies, ad-hoc queries and occasional papers on issues concerning migration from the *European Migration Network (EMN) Norway*:

<http://www.udi.no/en/statistics-and-analysis/european-migration-network---norway/>

21.2 Websites for relevant publications

Annually, there are many relevant reports, scientific articles, chapters in books and papers published in Norway or internationally by researchers based here. Much of this material can be found by checking the websites of the institutions listed below. However, this is not an exhaustive list of sites for finding relevant publications.

<https://www.prio.org/research/topics/migration>

<https://www.samfunnsforskning.no/english/our-research/migration-and-integration/>

<https://www.oslomet.no/en/research/research-groups/international-studies-migration>

<https://www.fafu.no/en/research-areas/migration-and-integration>

<https://samforsk.no/Sider/Avdelinger/Mangfold-og-inkludering.aspx>

<https://www.uib.no/en/imer>

<https://www.frisch.uio.no/english/research-themes/education-sosial-security-labour/index.html>