

SOPEMI-report for Norway

International Migration 2007-2008

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Statistical data provided by **Statistics Norway (SSB)** and
the **Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)**

December 2008

Acknowledgement

The very valuable assistance of Statistics Norway and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, and contributions of the Ministry of Education and Research and of several colleagues in the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion are acknowledged with gratitude.

Table of contents:

1 OVERVIEW	5
2 MIGRATION – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	9
2.1 Legislation and policy.....	9
2.2 Migration flows.....	10
2.3 Immigration according to entry categories	12
3 FAMILY-BASED IMMIGRATION.....	15
3.1 Legislation and policy.....	15
3.2 Flows and permits	15
4. LABOUR MIGRATION	17
4.1 Legislation	17
4.2 Policies	17
4.3 Flows and permits	19
4.4 Immigrants on short term stay.....	22
5 MIGRATION FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING	23
5.1 Legislation and policy.....	23
5.2 Flows and permits	23
6 ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES	25
6.1 Legislation and policy.....	25
6.2 Flows and permits	27
6.3 Resettlement of refugees	30
6.4 Settlement in municipalities.....	31
6.5 Voluntary repatriation.....	32
7 IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND RETURN	33
7.1 Legislation and policy.....	33
7.2 Illegal entry and residence	34
7.3 Assisted return	35
8 FOREIGN NATIONALS, IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN	36
8.1 Population growth and fertility rates.....	36
8.2 Foreign nationals	36
8.3 Immigrants and their children	38
8.4 Refugee population	39
9 NATIONALITY AND NATURALIZATION	40
9.1 Legislation	40
9.2 Naturalizations	40
10 INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION	42
10.1 Policy goals and guidelines	42
10.2 Plan of action for integration and social inclusion	42
10.3 Plan of action against forced marriages	43
10.4 Survey on living conditions among immigrants, 2005/2006.....	44
10.5 Survey of living conditions for youth of immigrant origin.....	45
10.6 Young immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents in employment and education	46
10.7 Introduction programme.....	47
11 LANGUAGE TRAINING AND EDUCATION	49
11.1 Pre-school children	49
11.2 Primary and secondary education.....	50
11.3 Adult education.....	52
12 THE LABOUR MARKET	54
12.1 Labour market policy.....	54
12.2 Labour market schemes	55
12.3 The labour market outcome for immigrants	56
13 PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS	62
13.1 Local elections	62
13.2 Representation in municipal councils.....	63
13.3 National elections	63
14 RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION	65
14.1 Legislation	65

14.2 New plan of action against ethnic discrimination	66
14.3 Public debate	66
14.4 Active recruitment.....	67
15 INFORMATION AND RECENT REPORTS	68

Tables:

TABLE 2.1 MIGRATION FLOWS 2000-2007	12
TABLE 3.1 PERMITS FOR FAMILY-IMMIGRATION, MAJOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN. 2001 – 2007	16
TABLE 5.1 PERMITS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING. MAJOR CATEGORIES. 2001-2007	24
TABLE 6.1 ASYLUM APPLICATIONS, MAJOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN. 2000 – 2007.....	28
TABLE 6.2 ASYLUM SEEKERS GRANTED REFUGEE STATUS. 2000 – 2007	29
TABLE 6.3 ASYLUM SEEKERS GRANTED HUMANITARIAN STATUS. 2000 - 2007	29
TABLE 6.4 OF RESULT OF EXAMINED ASYLUM CLAIMS IN 1. INSTANCE, 2003-2007.....	30
TABLE 6.4 RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES, MAJOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, 2007.....	31
TABLE 7.1 REJECTIONS AND EXPULSIONS. 2001 - 2007	35
TABLE 8.1 FOREIGN NATIONALS, MAJOR COUNTRIES. 1.1.2001 – 1.1.2007	37
TABLE 8.2 IMMIGRANTS. REGION OF BIRTH. 1.1.2001-1.1.2008.....	38
TABLE 9.1 NATURALIZATIONS. MAJOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN. 2001-2007	41
TABLE 11.1 KINDERGARTEN ATTENDANCE, RATE ACCORDING TO AGE, ALL CHILDREN AND LANGUAGE MINORITY CHILDREN 2007	50
TABLE 12.1 PARTICIPATION IN LABOUR MARKET SCHEMES - REGION OF ORIGIN. PER CENT OF TOTAL NUMBER AGED 16-74. SECOND QUARTER 2003 – 2008.....	56
TABLE 12.2 EMPLOYMENT RATE, TOTAL POPULATION AND IMMIGRANTS. PER CENT OF TOTAL NUMBER AGED 16-74 IN EACH GROUP. 2003 – 2005 AND AGED 15-74, 4TH QUARTER 2005 – 2007	56
TABLE 12.3 EMPLOYMENT RATE ACCORDING TO REGION OF ORIGIN AND NUMBER OF YEARS OF RESIDENCE IN NORWAY. PER CENT OF PERSONS AGED 15-74. 4TH QUARTER 2007.....	58
TABLE 12.4 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE - REGION OF ORIGIN. PER CENT OF THE LABOUR FORCE. SECOND QUARTER 2003 – 2008	59
TABLE 13.1 PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL ELECTIONS BY COUNTRY BACKGROUND, GENDER AND CITIZENSHIP. PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE. 1999, 2003 AND 2007	63

Diagrams:

DIAGRAM 2.1 IMMIGRATION ACCORDING TO ENTRY CATEGORIES, 1990 - 2007.....	13
DIAGRAM 2.2 IMMIGRATION ACCORDING TO ENTRY CATEGORY 2007	14
DIAGRAM 4.1 VALID WORK-RELATED PERMITS, ALL CATEGORIES. NON-NORDIC COUNTRIES. MONTHLY FIGURES FROM 1.1.2003 TO 1.10.2008.....	20
DIAGRAM 4.2 PERMITS FOR SEASONAL WORK. MONTHLY FIGURES 1.1.2003 – 1.10. 2008	21
DIAGRAM 4.3 PERMITS FOR SKILLED WORK, YEARLY FIGURES 2003 – 2007.....	22
DIAGRAM 6.1 ASYLUM SEEKERS - 1990-2007	27
DIAGRAM 6.2 OUTCOME OF EXAMINED ASYLUM CLAIMS, 1. INSTANCE, JAN.-SEPT. 2008	30
DIAGRAM 6.3 NUMBER OF RESETTLED REFUGEES 2000 - 2007	31
DIAGRAM 8.2 MAJOR GROUPS OF IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN. 1.1.2008.....	39

Annex:

Tables A1-A28 and B7-B19

1 Overview

Record level of immigration

- In 2007 the number of registered non-Nordic immigrants reached the ground breaking figure of 44 300. Work was the major reason for immigration from non-Nordic countries to Norway – for 21 400 persons or almost 50 per cent of the total this was the main basis for the permit. Non-Nordic family-related immigration represented 13 700 or 30 per cent. Furthermore, 42 per cent of the non-Nordic immigrants came from new EU member states, the largest group was labour migrants and their families from Poland.
- In total 328 200 non-Nordic immigrants entered Norway between 1990 until the end of 2007. About 135 000, or 41 per cent of all these immigrants, were admitted as family members of residents. 27 per cent arrived as refugees and asylum-seekers. 21 per cent came as labour migrants, while 11 per cent arrived for education and training 3 out of 4 immigrants who entered during this period were still living in Norway by the end of 2007.
- Residing in Norway at the beginning of 2008 were 381 000 immigrants and 79 000 persons born in Norway with immigrant parents. These figures include Nordic nationals. In combination these two groups represented 9.7 per cent of the total resident population, of whom 8 per cent were immigrants. For the first time the largest group of immigrants in Norway originated from Poland (30 600).
- In 2007 the net immigration of all foreign nationals was 40 200, an increase by more than 15 000 compared to 2006. This is the highest level ever recorded. This strong increase was primarily a result of the high level of labour immigration, especially from Poland. The net emigration of Norwegian nationals was 500 in 2007, which is a reduction of 700 from the previous year.

Considerable labour migration, new policy report

- The EEA-enlargement from May 2004 has significantly influenced labour migration to Norway. The accession of two more members to the EEA-area from 2007, Romania and Bulgaria, has further contributed to the increase work related immigration, although they count for a relatively small share of the total. In 2007, 54 900 new permits were granted in relation to employment. 88 per cent (48 100) of these permits were granted to persons from the EEA-countries and 12 percent (6 800) to persons from outside the EEA-countries. The number of renewals increased significantly in 2007, reaching 43 000. By the first of October 2008 there were 104 000 valid work permits in Norway. 66 per cent of these permits were held by persons from the EEA-countries. This share is unchanged from 2007.
- In 2007 and 2008 there has been a considerable increase in the number of work permits issued to skilled persons from third countries. In 2007, 2 900 permits for skilled work were issued, up from 2 000 in 2006 and merely 1 200 in 2005. During the 9 first months of 2008, 2 500 permits for skilled work were issued. The main country of origin for skilled labour immigrants is India, with more than 470 permits issued in the first 9 months of 2008. For immi-

grants from each of the countries of Russia, USA, the Philippines and China, more than 200 such permits were issued in the same period.

- In April 2008 the Government presented a white paper on Labour Migration which gained support by a broad majority in the Storting. The report launches a number of initiatives which will give a more user-friendly, transparent and predictable policy towards labour migration. The main regulations are foreseen to be implemented through the new immigration act from 2010, but some initiatives are to be implemented earlier.

Increased family-related immigration, stricter rules

- The number of permits issued on the basis of family ties increased and reached about 18 000 in 2007. The most important countries of origin were Poland, Thailand, Germany and the Philippines. The major change for the last few years have been the annual doubling of family-based permits granted to Polish nationals. For 30 per cent of the family immigration permits, the reference person in Norway was a Norwegian national with no immigrant background. Among family immigrants over 18, four fifths of the permits were granted to women. In 2007 the largest groups of children were from Poland, Germany and Somalia.
- The government intends to tighten the rules regarding support requirements in relation to family immigration. The motivation is both to combat forced marriages and to reduce the number of unfounded asylum claims. The new rules are due to come into force in spring 2009.

Sharp increase in asylum claims, new restrictive measures

- In 2007 the number of applicants for asylum increased somewhat, especially in the second half of the year, ending at 6 500. The major countries of origin were Iraq, Russia and Eritrea. During this year about 20 per cent of the permits granted through the asylum procedure, resulted in asylum. An additional 38 per cent of the decisions resulted in a permit granted on humanitarian grounds. 45 per cent of the latter category of permits were granted due to a need for protection other than as a refugee. The overall rejection rate in the first instance dropped only slightly to 42 per cent, and there were significant differences in this rate between countries of origin. In addition more than 1 300 refugees were accepted for resettlement in Norway in 2007.
- Because the sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers continued during the first part of 2008, and it was deemed that a considerable share of these had unfounded claims, the Norwegian government announced some restrictive measures in June. They include stricter subsistence requirements for some categories of family immigrants and a broader application of the Dublin II regulation. In September several additional initiatives were announced to limit the number of asylum seekers that would arrive in Norway without a need for protection. These include measures affecting persons claiming to be unaccompanied minors and more emphasis on harmonising measures with comparable countries.

Integration and social inclusion - focus on the labour market

- As a response to the challenges in the area of labour, welfare and social inclusion linked to some immigrants and immigrant families the Government has outlined its policy and measures in the Plan of action for integration and social inclusion of immigrants and their children, starting in 2007. The total value of the plan, which is connected to the annual State budget, will for the period 2007- 2009 be NOK 825.7 million. The objectives of the plan of action are to prevent lower social participation and poorer living conditions among immigrants compared to the population in general; to ensure that immigrants as quickly as possible take part in the labour market and society; and to provide equal opportunities for immigrants and their children. Labour market schemes, instruction in Norwegian for adult immigrants, targeted assistance, survey of language skills of four year olds, free core time in kindergartens for all 4 and 5 year olds in some urban areas, prevention of forced marriages and to provide better assistance and protection to victims of such marriages are central elements in the plan.
- Reporting on the effects of the measures in the plan of action for integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population indicates the following:
 - An increasing proportion of children with immigrant background attend kindergarten.
 - More adult immigrants with five years of residence complete the final test in Norwegian language and social studies.
 - Employment among immigrants has increased. The register based employment rate among immigrants increased from 60.1 per cent from the 4th quarter of 2006 to 63.3 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007. All immigrant groups had an increased employment rate from the 4th quarter 2006 to the 4th quarter 2007, ranging from an one percentage point increase for immigrants from Nordic countries to a 5.8 percentage point increase for persons from the EEA countries in Central and Eastern Europe and a 3.8 percentage points increase for immigrants from Africa.
 - Unemployment among immigrants has been reduced. The register based unemployment rate among immigrants fell from 5 per cent in May 2007 to 4 per cent in May 2008. The unemployment rate for the total labour force decreased from 1.7 per cent to 1.5 per cent during the same period.
 - The number of immigrant families with low income has been somewhat reduced due to higher labour market participation.
 - Norwegian born youth with immigrant parents under 25 years are just as active in jobs and/or education as other youth. Gender distributions show nearly equal numbers for Norwegian born with immigrant parents and other youth in the same age group.
 - Norwegian born with immigrant parents in the age group 20-24 years had an employment rate of 72.6 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007. This is 10 percentage points higher than the employment rate of the same age group of immigrants and only 3 percentage points under the employment rate of the total population in this age group.
 - Gender distributions in the age group 25-29 years, where employment becomes the dominant activity, show that there is an increasing gap compared to the majority population. Primarily this is due to a lower

rate of employment among Norwegian born women with immigrant parents.

Political participation and representation

- After residing continuously in Norway for more than 3 years, all foreign nationals have the right to vote in local elections. 280 000 persons with immigrant background, constituting 7.7 per cent of the eligible population, had the right to vote in the local election in 2007. Among immigrants, 40 per cent of Norwegians citizens and 36 per cent of foreign citizens participated in the local election. In the population as a whole, 62 per cent of the electorate voted.
- A total of 223 candidates with immigrant background were elected to the municipal councils, of which 140 with background in Asia, Africa and Latin-America. Among these the share of women was higher than the number of women elected among all candidates. When taking into account where immigrants live, six out of ten immigrants live in 50 municipalities (including Oslo) where they are better represented in the municipal council than their share of the electorate.

New anti-discrimination measures

- From 1 January 2009, a new general obligation to promote equality and prevent discrimination enter into force with the new Anti-discrimination act. This general obligation applies in the world of work for public authorities, private and public employers and social partners. The obligation includes a general reporting obligation.
- Moderate affirmative action for immigrants applying for public administration positions will be tested in a two-year pilot project, starting in 2008. This means that if candidates have equal or approximately equal qualifications, a candidate with an immigrant background is to be preferred.

2 Migration – general characteristics

2.1 Legislation and policy

The Immigration Act of 24 June 1988 regulates the entry of foreign nationals into Norway and their right to residence and work. In simplified terms, four categories of immigrants are admitted:

- labour migrants, i.e. persons who have a concrete job offer
- refugees and others in need of protection or who qualify for residence permit on humanitarian grounds
- persons with close family links to persons residing in Norway
- students, trainees and au pairs.

As a general rule, students etc. are only granted temporary residence permits, but they may work part time and change their status after receiving a job offer on the completion of their studies. The other categories may, depending on certain criteria, be granted either a permanent or only a temporary residence permit.

Two kinds of permits may be issued to non-Nordic foreign nationals: residence permits and work permits. Residence permits only confer the right of residence, and the holder may not take up gainful employment. Work permits confer both the right to reside and the right to take up gainful employment. Thus, foreign nationals who have a work permit do not receive a separate residence permit. A settlement permit, conferring permanent rights of residence and work is normally issued after three years of continuous residence, providing certain conditions are met.

In addition to the permits granted to those foreign nationals who meet the general immigration regulatory conditions for a work permit, residence and work permits may also be granted to persons in need of international protection, on humanitarian grounds, and to family members of Norwegians or foreign nationals who are or will be legally residing in Norway to work, as students or on various types of exchange programs. The major legal migration categories are discussed in chapters 3 to 6.

The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) handles as first instance applications for asylum, as well as for residence permit, work permit, settlement permit and the question of expulsion. Applicants, whose applications are rejected, may appeal to the second instance, the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), which is an independent appeal body.

Norway implemented the Schengen agreement on March 25, 2001 and the rules of the Dublin II regulation on September 1, 2003. EU regulations regarding free movement of persons apply to nationals of a country that is party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), with the exception outlined below. This applies to members of the EFTA Convention as well, which in practice means Swiss nationals.

When the EEA was enlarged to include ten new EU member countries on May 1, 2004, the Norwegian government instituted transitional rules in the initial two-year period when national rules might apply for workers from the new member states (with the exception of Cyprus and Malta). The transitional rules stipulate that migrant workers from the relevant states are required to obtain an EEA-permit before they

start working. Such permits are issued for full-time employment at normal rates of pay and under normal working conditions. Cf. chapter 4 for details concerning extension.

A proposal for a new immigration and asylum act was submitted to Norwegian parliament (Stortinget) in June 2007 and adopted in April 2008. According to present plans the new act will enter into force on January 1, 2010, following necessary adjustments to administrative procedures and systems.

The new Immigration Act

The new act modernises the current legislation. In particular it will clarify certain aspects of immigration regulations and the international legal obligations.

While the current act gives the government the power to determine many of the main principles through regulations, the new act includes many of the more detailed provisions currently found in regulations. Because of the strong political focus on immigration issues, it has been deemed reasonable that Stortinget should decide more of the detailed contents of the provisions.

A major change in the new act is that it defines a broader concept of 'refugee'. This group will not only include persons who meet the criteria of article 1A of the 1951 Refugee Convention, but also all other applicants covered by the non-refoulement provisions of any international convention to which Norway is a party. The most important of these is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. In other words:

Those who are eligible for Subsidiary Protection Status under the EU Qualification Directive, will be granted refugee status under the new Norwegian act.

A practical result of this change will be a strengthening of the right to family reunification for those who are included under the new refugee concept: While, today, those who are eligible for subsidiary protection, must be able support their family economically for a family reunification permit to be granted, this will no longer be the case when refugee status is granted.

The act stipulates that where an administrative decisions may be inconsistent with UNHCR's guidelines or recommendations with regard to protection, the case will, as a main rule, be referred to the seven-member "Grand Board" of the Immigration Appeals Board. Even today, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion may request a convening of the Grand Board to assess questions of principle.

In the act the government furthermore signals that it intends to tighten the rules regarding subsistence requirements in the new Immigration Regulations.

2.2 Migration flows

With the exception of 1989, Norway has had net immigration¹ since the late 1960s, cf. table A10. The annual average almost doubled from 6 300 yearly for the period 1986-1990 to 11800 for the period 1996-2000, and increased further to 13 600 for the period 2001-2005, cf. table A6. From 2006 to 2007 there was an increase of more 16 000 persons in net immigration. The net immigration of 40 000 persons in 2007 was by far the highest ever recorded.

¹ Immigration is defined to include persons who have moved to Norway with the intention of staying 6 months or more, and who are registered as such in the Central Population Register

The level of registered *emigration* has also increased over the years, but at a much slower pace than immigration. It would seem that emigration is mostly determined by the economic cycles in Norway, or exceptional events as the return of many Kosovars during 2000-2001, but the size and composition of the immigration the previous years also has an influence.

In 2007 the *immigration of foreign nationals* to Norway increased by 17 000 compared with 2006, cf. table A7 and A10. Almost 54 500 foreign nationals, 40 % of them women, were registered as immigrants by the Central Population Register. This means that they arrived with the intention to stay for more than 6 months, and had a legal basis for this.²

The large increase in inflow from 2006 to 2007 consisted mainly of immigrants from other industrialized countries, particularly from new EU member countries. The largest group came from Poland with 14 000 immigrants, almost twice as many as in the previous year. After Poland, the highest inflow of foreigners came from Sweden (4 300), Germany (3 600), Lithuania (2 350) and Somalia (1 600).

The *return-migration of Norwegians* from other countries has been quite stable over the years, mostly between eight and ten thousand. In 2007 the number was 8 300, only slightly lower than in 2006, cf. table A10.

The *gross inflow* to Norway in 2007 was approximately 61 800 persons; 53 500 foreigners and 8 300 Norwegians, cf. table A4 and A10. For most nationalities the immigrants were relatively evenly divided between men and women, but from important countries like Poland 78 per cent were men and from Lithuania 69 per cent. From countries like Thailand and the Philippines, a large majority were women (74 and 81 per cent), cf. table A4f and A4m.

2007 saw a *gross outflow* of 22 100 persons, 13 300 foreign nationals and 8 800 Norwegians; cf. table A5 and A10. This is the same level as in 2006. Of the total outflow 10 300 were women and 11 800 were men, cf. A5f and A5m. The largest outflow from Norway in 2007 were to Sweden (4 700) and Denmark (2 800).

The *net immigration of foreign nationals* in 2007 was 40 200, 15 300 more than the year before, cf. table A10. Net immigration surplus was particularly noticeable in relation to Poland (12 900), Germany (3 100), Sweden (2 100) and Lithuania (2 000). There was a net emigration of Norwegian nationals, 500 in 2007, 700 less than in 2006, cf. tab. A10.

There are significant differences between various immigrant groups in whether they stay in Norway permanently, or whether their visit is temporary, cf. table A11. On average 59 per cent of those who immigrated between 1970 and 2002 were still residing in Norway after five years. Persons from countries in Asia had the highest proportion staying on (84 per cent on average), while persons from Oceania had the lowest

² Asylum seekers are normally registered as immigrants only after having settled in a Norwegian municipality following a positive outcome of their application. Normally, an asylum seeker whose application has been rejected will not be registered as an 'immigrant', even if the application process has taken a long time and the return to the home country is delayed for a significant period.

proportion staying (29 per cent). With 95 per cent Vietnam was the single country with the highest proportion of its immigrants to Norway still residing here after 5 years.

Table 2.1 below, which is based on table A10 in the statistical annex, presents an overview of the migration flows of foreigners and nationals for the last seven years.

Table 2.1 Migration flows 2000-2007

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Inflow:	36 500	34 300	40 100	35 900	36 500	40 200	45 800	61 800
- foreigners	27 800	25 400	30 800	26 800	27 900	31 400	37 400	53 500
- nationals	8 800	8 900	9 300	9 200	8 600	8 800	8 400	8 300
Outflow:	26 900	26 300	22 900	24 700	23 300	21 700	22 100	22 100
- foreigners	14 900	15 200	12 300	14 300	13 800	12 600	12 500	13 300
- nationals	11 900	11 100	10 700	10 300	9 400	9 100	9 600	8 800
Net migration:	9 700	8 000	17 200	11 300	13 200	18 400	23 700	39 700
- foreigners	12 900	10 200	18 500	12 400	14 000	18 700	24 900	40 200
- nationals	- 3 200	- 2 200	- 1 300	- 1 200	- 800	- 300	- 1 200	- 500

Source: Statistics Norway

2.3 Immigration according to entry categories

In statistics on immigration according to entry category, published by Statistics Norway³, four such main categories are distinguished – family, labour, protection/ humanitarian and education/training/exchange. These categories are determined from the type of permit granted to non-Nordic nationals who are registered as immigrants in the Norwegian population register. Nordic immigrants are not included in this figure as they do not need any type of work or residence permit.

During the period from 1990 until the end of 2007 328 200 non-Nordic nationals immigrated to Norway, cfr. Table A28. About 135 000, or 41 per cent of all registered immigrants, have been admitted as family members of residents. 27 per cent have arrived as refugees and asylum-seekers. 21 per cent have come as labour migrants, while 11 per cent have arrived for education etc.

During 2007 close to 44 300 new non-Nordic immigrants were registered. Labour immigration was by far the largest category, with 48 per cent of the total. Family-based immigration was 30 per cent this year, cf. diagram 2.1 below. 53 per cent of the labour immigrants were from Poland. Labour migration was more than five times higher than in 2004.

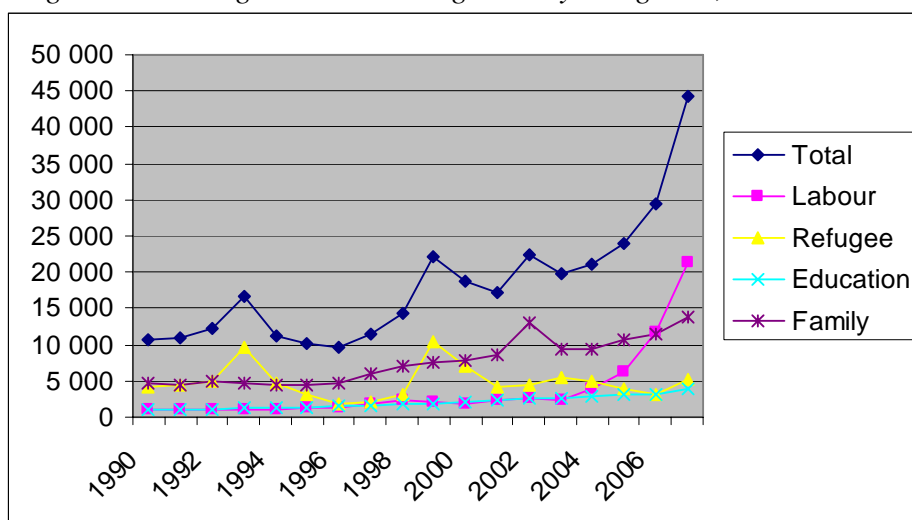
Approximately 12 per cent of the immigrants were granted a permit due to a need for protection or on humanitarian grounds. Of 5 200 such immigrants almost 3 000 were granted a permit due to a need for protection, out of which close to 1 200 were resettled refugees.

Immigration based on education, training and cultural exchange was 9 per cent of the total. In 2007 64 per cent of the immigrants came from Europe, 20 per cent from

³ Based on record linkage to UDI registers

Asia, 9 per cent from Africa and 6 per cent from North-and South America or from Oceania.

Diagram 2.1 Immigration according to entry categories, 1990 - 2007



Source: Statistics Norway

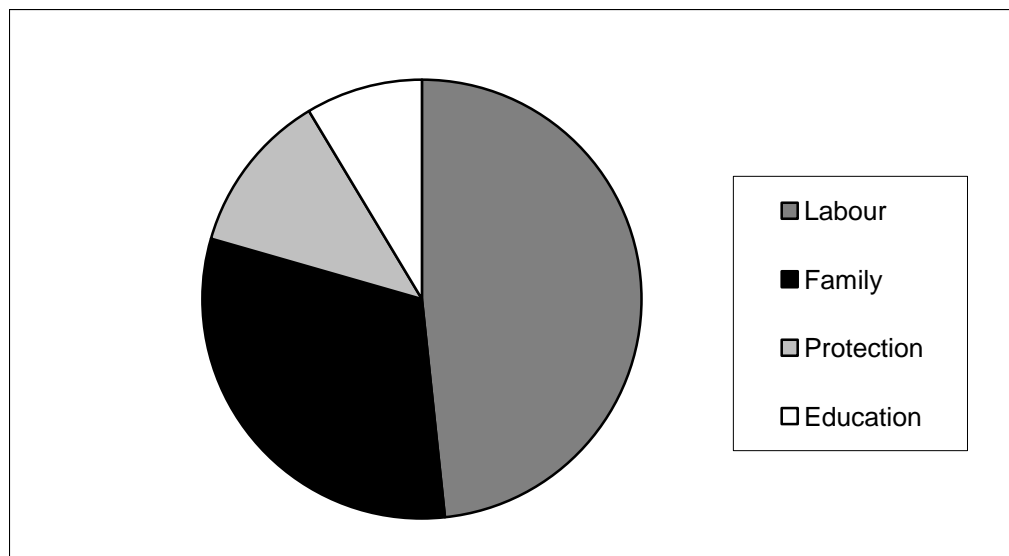
The number of immigrants from eight new EU countries, mainly Poland and Lithuania, has doubled each year since 2004. This was 42 per cent of the total Non-Nordic immigration in 2007. For the period 1990 – 2007 the largest Non-Nordic group came from Poland with 30 500 immigrants followed by Iraq with 19 200, Germany with 17 900, Serbia ⁴ and Somalia with 17 200 each.

Of 13 700 persons who arrived in Norway as family immigrants in 2007, 9 400 came through family reunification. 15 per cent of them came to join a family member in Norway with refugee background. The largest groups were from Poland, Germany, Somalia and Lithuania. 4 300 immigrants came to establish a new family through marriage or partnership. The major groups came from Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan and Russia. 270 were from Pakistan, and 100 of this group came to live with a person born in Norway with both parents born in Pakistan. 2 500, or 59 per cent of the 4 300, came to live with a person in Norway without immigrant background. 650 in this group were from Thailand.

For the whole period 1990 – 2007 76 600 came for family reunification while 58 300 came to establish a new relationship, mostly through marriage. Of the latter 59 per cent involved a person in Norway without any form of immigrant background.

⁴ Nationals of Montenegro are included in the figures.

Diagram 2.2 Immigration according to entry category 2007



Source: Statistics Norway

Almost 3 out of 4 of those who have immigrated since 1990 still live in Norway. Among refugees and persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds the figure is 82 per cent, while it is 39 per cent among students, au pairs and trainees. Since a high share of the recent arrivals in the latter category still are studying, the average figure for the whole period is somewhat misleading. If we look at those who immigrated ten years or longer ago, the percentage remaining in Norway is around 20 per cent for every year of immigration. This is quite high, considering that students initially are granted only temporary permits. This means that a significant number of students later qualify for permanent residence on another basis, mostly family or work.

For labour migrants the residence rate is 71 per cent while it is 81 per cent for family-related migration. Among labour migrants we also see a very high share remaining among those who have arrived in recent years.

3 Family-based immigration

3.1 Legislation and policy

In simplified terms, the Immigration Act stipulates that close family members of Norwegian and Nordic nationals, and of foreign nationals who have been granted an unrestricted permit to reside in Norway, have the *right* to residence. The most important categories of close family members defined in the Immigration Regulations are:

- Spouse - both parties must be over 18. It is a condition that the spouses will be living together. The rules in the Immigration Regulations concerning spouses apply similarly to partners of the same sex when the partnership is registered.
- Cohabitant - both parties must be over the age of 18, have lived together for at least two years and intend to continue their cohabitation.
- Unmarried child under 18 when both parents have or have been granted residence in Norway. Certain other groups of children are also included.
- Specified groups of parents of an unmarried child under 18.

A wider range of family members, for instance parents of adults, may be granted a residence permit on the basis of family ties, but they do not have the right to such a permit, unlike the categories listed above.

In general, the family member(s) living in Norway must meet an income requirement. This requirement is satisfied when a person can maintain himself/herself and the applicant on his/her income alone or with the income of the applicant, or when the applicant is self-sufficient. The reference person must meet this requirement alone when the applicant and/or the reference person is under the age of 23. As a general rule, the subsistence requirement does not apply when the reference person in Norway is a Norwegian citizen (and both reference person and applicant are over 23), a child, a Nordic citizen, has refugee status or has a permanent residence permit.

The Norwegian government intends to tighten the rules regarding income requirements. The new rules are expected to come into force in the spring of 2009. The main motivation for this proposal is to combat forced marriages. Stricter income requirements of the reference person will encourage young people to establish their own basis in life through education and employment. They will thereby become less dependent on their family financially and practically, and will also be better placed to voice their own rights and preference in connection with marriage, and to resist possible pressure from their family. Furthermore, an objective of the proposal is to reduce the number of asylum seekers without a need for protection arriving in Norway.

3.2 Flows and permits

Family ties have for several years been the most important basis for long-term immigration to Norway. The total number of family-related permits granted increased from 14 000 in 2006 to 18 000 in 2007. A further increase is expected in 2008, as more than 15 600 permits had already been granted by the end of September.

Major countries of origin in 2007 were Poland, Thailand, Germany and the Philippines, cf. table 3.1 below. The biggest change was the doubling of family-based per-

mits granted to Polish nationals. This tendency has been further reinforced in 2008. The number of permits may be almost doubled again. More than half of the permits involved husbands, wives or partners, while the rest mainly concerned children to be reunited with parents, entering with (one of) the parents or children born in Norway of non-Norwegian residents. For persons from countries like the Philippines and Thailand, most of the permits were granted to women marrying a Norwegian with no immigrant background. The largest numbers of children were from Poland, Germany and Somalia. Among persons over 18 of age, four fifths of the permits were granted to women. For 30 per cent of the family immigration permits, the reference person living in Norway was a Norwegian national, some of them naturalised immigrants.

Table 3.1 Permits for family-immigration, major countries of origin. 2001 – 2007

Countries of origin	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total, of which:	12 142	14 607	10 469	12 750	13 035	13 981	17 913
Poland	232	289	247	390	748	1 702	3 292
Germany	382	426	401	563	558	768	1 456
Thailand	650	918	780	1 099	1 014	943	1 073
Somalia	645	1 707	652	689	929	913	1 003
Russia	637	905	797	742	653	595	658
Philippines	366	457	396	437	433	412	618
UK	394	420	330	453	420	437	446
Iraq	1 696	1 737	940	909	933	626	436
Pakistan	566	545	518	496	461	392	431
Afghanistan	382	510	387	318	507	471	362
Turkey	490	465	445	418	369	279	246
Other	5 934	6 517	4 823	6 236	6 010	6 443	7 892

Source: UDI

Among the 25 000 *marriages* contracted in 2007, 4 000 involved a Norwegian and a foreign national. Most existing and new trans-national marriages involved Norwegians and someone born in another European country or in North America, but there is also a sizable and growing number of Norwegian men who marry women from Asian countries, cf. table A13 and A14.

4. Labour migration

4.1 Legislation

Non-Nordic nationals who intend to work or who want to run their own business in Norway must as a general rule hold a work permit, cf. chapter 2.1. EEA nationals need a residence permit when their stay in Norway exceeds three months, but this will change in 2009 with the implementation of the EU directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of their Member States. However, they will be required to register with the appropriate authority.

General immigration regulations apply for job-related work permits to third country nationals. Firstly, there must be a concrete offer of employment. Secondly, pay and working conditions must not be less favourable than those of relevant industrial agreements or which are prevalent in the relevant local labour market. Thirdly, as a general rule the employment offered must be of full time.

A work permit for skilled persons may lead to a permit for permanent residence in Norway. Such permits are granted to skilled workers, professionals and others with special qualifications. It is a condition that their competence is deemed necessary for the type of job being offered. Since 2000, new permits for skilled workers can be issued within an annual quota of 5000 without a specific labour market test being conducted.

With the enlargement of the EEA-area from 1 May 2004, transitional rules pertaining to the access of nationals of the new EEA member states in Central and Eastern Europe (EU8) to the Norwegian labour market came into force. Norway decided to prolong the transitional rules without amendments from 1 May 2006, and the same provisions have also been made accountable for workers from Bulgaria and Romania after their accession to the European Union in 2007. The main argument to keep the transitional arrangement have been that the provisions contribute to maintain orderly conditions in the labour market, and that a set of strengthened measures in order to prevent social dumping must be in place before the arrangement is phased out. The transitional rules for the nationals of the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe (EU 8) will be lifted from 1 May 2009 at the latest. The transitional rules pertaining for workers from Bulgaria and Romania are under consideration.

4.2 Policies

In the context of the increased influx of labour migrants over the recent years and the transitional arrangements for workers from the new EEA-countries, the Government adopted in 2006 an action plan against social dumping. The action plan is comprised of a series of measures aimed at preventing social dumping and thus protecting wage levels and work-life standards for foreign workers in Norway. The implementation is based on an increased co-operation and co-ordination between public authorities and between the public authorities and the social partners.

Among the most important measures in the action plan against social dumping are the strengthening of the authority of the labour inspection authorities to carry out inspections on work places to ensure that laws, regulations and applicable collective agreements are adhered to, and to impose sanctions in the event of non-compliance. An obligation to register at the Labour Inspectorate has been introduced for all enter-

prises hiring out workers, and the rules governing the hiring of labour between production companies have been tightened. The principal contractors have an obligation to ensure that legal pay and working conditions are followed also among subcontractors. Identity cards for workers in the building and construction sector have been introduced.

In 2008, a new set of initiatives has been introduced as Action Plan II to combat social dumping, as a follow-up to the positive effects of the first plan. However, some challenges remain. The new action plan has also been influenced by the foreseen lifting of the transitional arrangements for the free movement of workers from the new EEA-countries. The main new initiatives are:

- Increased resources to the Labour Inspectorate.
- A review of the administrative process that is used to decide when to apply collective agreements, in order to increase its effectiveness.
- A review of a possible model of joint liability in relation to the General Application Act, in order to motivate enterprises to choose responsible subcontractors.
- To consider the introduction of ID-cards in the cleaning sector.
- Improved information about the occupational accident insurance schemes.
- Improved information about the rights and responsibilities for enterprises and employees at the work place.
- Increased efforts to combat social dumping in the agricultural sector.

The Government presented a white paper on Labour Migration to the Storting in April 2008. The report presents a number of measures which will give a more user-friendly, transparent and predictable policy towards labour migration. The main regulations are foreseen to be implemented through the new Immigration Act which will be effective from 2010. Some measures are to be implemented earlier.

The labour migration policy shall supplement and complement the general labour market policies in order to reach the main objectives of full employment and low unemployment in Norway. In order to do so, the report presents measures in a number of areas:

- Changes to the immigration act with a simpler and more transparent regulatory framework.
 - Five main categories of labour immigrants are identified:
 - a) *Highly qualified specialists and key personnel* (defined as persons offered a salary above a certain level. These are entitled to family reunion and offered opportunities for permanent residence).
 - b) *Skilled workers* (with education level corresponding at least to vocational training at the level of Norwegian upper secondary education, or corresponding practical educations. These are entitled to family reunion and offered opportunities for permanent residence).
 - c) *Recent graduates* (citizens of third countries will be given work permit for 6 months after graduation whilst applying for relevant work under categories a) or b).
 - d) *Seasonal employees* (permit to work for 6 months, no entitlement for family reunion or permanent residence).
 - e) *Unskilled* (temporary permit for persons from selected regions or countries, e.g. Russians from the Barents region).

- Employers will be given more responsibility for complying with required immigration regulations in the process of recruiting of labour.
 - Employees of international companies may commence work before the permit has been granted.
 - Jobseekers at skilled level corresponding to categories a) and), or higher, will be allowed to apply for work in Norway for 6 months.
 - Measures that will ensure swifter processing of family reunion with labour immigrants will be considered.
 - Adult family members of students will be given the opportunity to engage in full-time work.
- Information, case handling and application procedures.
 - The establishment of more information and processing offices staffed by representatives from the most relevant public bodies.
 - Shorter processing time for work permit applications (maximum 4 weeks).
 - Responsibility for coordinating information to labour migrants will be given to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation.
 - Establishment of an Internet site as a point of entry for all relevant information relating to labour migration and services imports.
 - Better use of the diplomatic services to inform about job opportunities in Norway.
- Integration of labour migrants.
 - The introduction of Norwegian language training will be considered.
 - The introduction of an introductory package with systematic information about rights and obligations will be considered.
 - The efforts to improve arrangements for the approval of foreign higher education will be continued.
 - Continued support for voluntary organisations' work to assist labour immigrants.
- Increased focus on the northern region.
 - A number of initiatives to stimulate mobility between Northern Norway and Northwest Russia are being considered, because all other neighbouring countries to Norway form part of the common Nordic labour market and the common EEA labour market.
- Concern for the needs of the countries of origin.
 - Contribute to the establishment of international standards designed to prevent the active recruitment of workers from developing countries with higher education and qualifications in short supply there.
 - Examine the possibility of granting unskilled employees from developing countries permits for temporary work in Norway, under the auspices of development projects.

4.3 Flows and permits

It is difficult to obtain a complete picture of the total labour migration to Norway, as some work contracts are not well covered by the statistics available. In the 4th quarter of 2007, more than 35 000 persons from the other Nordic countries were registered as residents of Norway and in employment. In addition, a considerable number of Nor-

dic citizens were working in Norway without being registered as residents, as this requires an expected stay of 6 months or more. Some are commuters on a regular basis while some stay for shorter than 6 months. The number of non-resident workers fluctuates over the year, but numbers from the 4th quarter 2007 show that more than 24 000 Nordic nationals were registered as working in Norway without being registered as being a resident. In total, nearly 60 000 persons from Nordic countries, both residents and non-residents, were registered as being employed in Norway in the 4th quarter of 2007.

The EEA-enlargement from 1 May 2004 has had a substantial impact on labour migration to Norway. The accession of two more members to the EEA-area from 2007, Romania and Bulgaria, has further contributed to this increase, although they represent a relatively small share of the total. In 2007, 54 900 new permits for employment were granted, and 88 percent (48 100) of these permits were granted to persons from the EEA-countries and 12 percent (6 800) to persons from other countries. The number of renewals increased significantly in 2007, reaching 43 000. In 2007, a total of 77 700 permits were granted to persons from the 12 new members to the EEA-area, while the number for 2006 was 56 300.

On the first of October 2008 there were 104 000 valid work permits in Norway, and 66 per cent of these were held by persons from the EEA-countries. This share is unchanged from 2007. The increase in the total number of valid work-related permits and the seasonal fluctuations (the number peaks in August every year) are illustrated by diagram 4.1 below.

During the first nine months of 2008, 21 per cent of the work-related permits to citizens of the 12 new EEA-countries were issued to women. The proportion of women being granted EEA-permits has been relatively stable for the same periods in 2007 (20 per cent) and 2006 (22 per cent), and declined from 27 per cent in 2005. The high proportion of men is directly related to the fact that a large proportion of foreign workers are employed in building and construction activities, sectors which recruits a male-dominated work force.

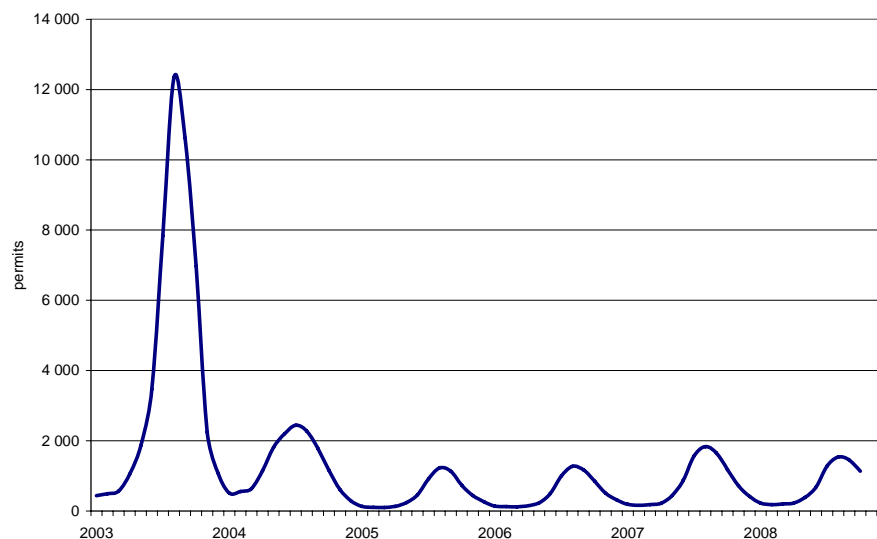
Diagram 4.1 Valid work-related permits, all categories. Non-Nordic countries. Monthly figures from 1.1.2003 to 1.10.2008



Source: UDI

Before 2006, the major category of work permits granted to nationals from countries outside the EEA-area was for engaging in seasonal work. However, after the EEA-enlargement in 2004, work permits for seasonal work dropped significantly as the seasonal workers from the new EEA-countries now could work on the basis of an EEA-permit, cf. diagram 4.2. In both 2006 and 2007 there were more permits granted to skilled workers than for seasonal work undertaken by third country nationals. In 2007, 2 600 work permits were issued for seasonal work, an increase of 700 from the year before.

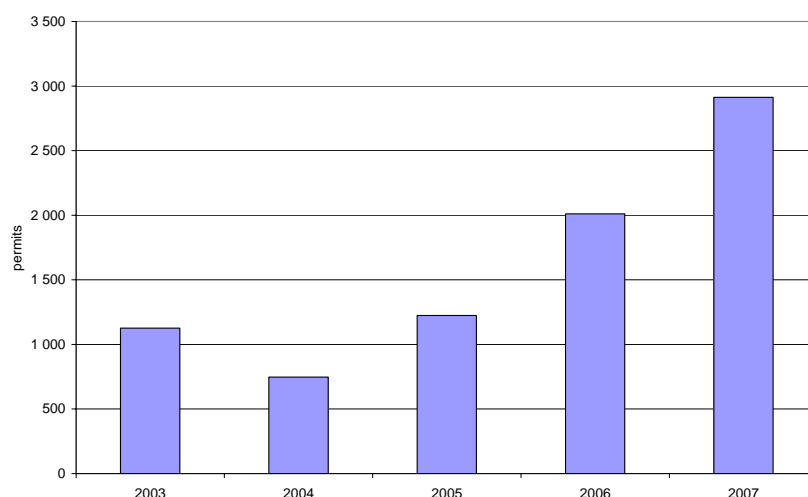
Diagram 4.2 Permits for seasonal work. Monthly figures 1.1.2003 – 1.10. 2008



Source: UDI

In 2007 and 2008 there was a significant increase in the number of permits issued to skilled third country nationals, cf. diagram 4.3. Still, the numbers are much lower than the ceiling of 5 000 permits that may be granted without any labour market needs test. In 2007, 2900 permits for skilled work were issued, up from 2000 in 2006 and 1200 in 2005. During the 9 first months of 2008, 2500 permits for skilled work have been issued. The main country of origin for the skilled workers is India with more than 470 permits issued in the first 9 months of 2008. For immigrants from each of the countries of Russia, USA, the Philippines and China, more than 200 permits were issued to skilled workers in this period.

Diagram 4.3 Permits for skilled work, yearly figures 2003 – 2007



Source: UDI

4.4 Immigrants on short term stay

Persons staying in Norway for a period of less than six months, and persons commuting across the border for work on a regular (daily, weekly) basis, are registered as "non-resident" and are not included in the register based statistics on employed persons, including immigrants. About 64 300 non-resident persons were registered as employees (self-employed persons are not included) in the 4th quarter of 2007, an increase of 16.2 per cent (9000 persons) from the 4th quarter of 2006. The largest group of employees not registered as residents came from the Nordic countries (more than 24 000 persons), while persons from the EEA-countries in Eastern Europe form the second largest group with 15 100 from Poland and 4 800 from Lithuania. Since 2004, the year of enlargement of the EEA-area, the increase of employed immigrants on short term stay has been 18 800 persons. Persons with Norwegian origin (for instance a Norwegian born person residing in Sweden and commuting to Norway) account for 4 400 of the non-resident employees.

5 Migration for education and training

5.1 Legislation and policy

A foreign national who has been admitted to an approved educational institution, generally a university or college, must have a residence permit to study in Norway. To obtain this, the applicant must be able to prove that s/he is in a position to finance his/her studies and must have a place to live.

The general rule is that international students must leave Norway after completing their studies if they do not fulfil the criteria for another type of work or residence permit. The possibility to apply for a work permit as a skilled person after completion of studies was introduced in 2001. Since 2007 international students are granted a general part-time (max. 20 hours per week) work permit together with their first residence permit for education. A concrete offer of employment is no longer required.

Further initiatives to facilitate the transition to work after completing an education in Norway are being considered, as a follow up of the white paper on labour migration, cf. chapter 4 and chapter 15 for the reference to a summary in English of St.meld. nr. 18 (2007-2008). These include the option of a six months' work permit in a transition period while applying for jobs which are relevant according to achieved level of qualification.

Au pairs and trainees may on specific conditions be granted a work permit for one year. The permit may be renewed for another year. More restrictive conditions have been introduced recently to prevent abuse of these arrangements.

5.2 Flows and permits

Table 5.1 below shows that the number of first time permits granted for educational and training purposes in 2007 increased to 7 700. In addition there were 3 500 renewals. More than 5 500 permits were granted for education, 1 800 for au-pairs and close to 400 for trainees.

The major source countries for international students in 2007 were Germany, France, China, Russia, Spain and the USA. For au-pair permits the major countries were the Philippines, Ukraine, Russia and Thailand. Most trainee permits were issued to citizens of Ukraine, Poland and Belarus.

Students etc. from the other Nordic countries are not covered by these statistics as they do not need any form of residence or work permit to study or work in Norway.

Table 5.1 Permits for education and training. Major categories. 2001-2007

Migration category	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total, of which:	4289	4704	5468	5 440	6 108	6 767	7 663
Student (EEA)	936	1186	1328	1 713	2 286	2 634	2 739
Student (non-EEA)	1413	1578	2097	1 828	1 922	2 157	2 455
Post doctorate	32	23	43	48	50	68	52
Folk high school	310	403	345	185	200	198	216
Au pair	666	743	948	1 019	1 208	1 243	1 760
Trainee	726	601	543	496	322	361	377
Other	189	161	164	131	120	106	64

Source: UDI

6 Asylum seekers and refugees

6.1 Legislation and policy

The Directorate of Immigration processes asylum applications in pursuance of the Immigration Act of 1988. A refugee has on application a right to asylum. A refugee within the definition of the act is a foreign national who falls under Article 1A of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. An asylum seeker, who is deemed not to meet the criteria for asylum, or is not protected against return on other basis, may be granted subsidiary protection in the form of a residence permit on humanitarian grounds.

One of the objectives of the present government is to put more emphasis on UNHCRs recommendations in the asylum area. Several of the measures to achieve this objective are reflected in the new immigration act, cf. chapter 2.1. Meanwhile, the dialogue with the UNHCR has been improved. Twice a year Norwegian authorities have bilateral meetings on protection issues with representatives of the UNHCR.

Due to an amendment to the Immigration Regulations as of June 2007, the authorities have to consider whether the fact that a child has been in the country for a long time should count when considering granting a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. A lengthy stay in Norway will not in itself entitle the child to a residence permit. However, one has to consider the child's age, whether the child has attended school or kindergarten, whether the child speaks Norwegian, when deciding on the best interest of the child. If the parents have not cooperated, for instance regarding establishing the identity of the family members, this will be of importance when the case is examined.

In October 2008, the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion circulated new guidelines to the Directorate of Immigration dealing with cases where asylum seekers have claimed gender-related persecution. The guidelines make clear in which cases a person has been exposed to gender-related persecution, and how to deal with such cases. The directive confirms gender-related persecution as a ground for protection in Norwegian law. The main objective of these guidelines is to influence case workers to increase their attention to such cases, especially on gender-related persecution against women. Further, a main objective is to secure homogeneous treatment in practise. Finally, they are designed to ensure that the Norwegian authorities give international protection to an asylum seeker who is persecuted for reason of his and her gender, when all the conditions in the Geneva Convention are fulfilled.

All asylum seekers are offered temporary accommodation in reception centres. By end September 2008 there were 11 500 inhabitants in such centres. Four of the centres are provided with extra resources in order to give asylum seekers with particular needs, such as psychological problems, more suitable living conditions. Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, 15 to 18 years old, are given accommodation either in special sections of a regular reception centre or in a separate reception centre for minors. The responsibility of unaccompanied minors younger than 15 years was in December 2007 transferred to the Child Welfare authorities, and these children are accommodated separately in centres under the supervision of the Ministry of Children and Equality.

Normally, the offer to live in a reception centre is available until the asylum seeker receives a final decision on their application. Persons with a final negative decision are offered to stay in a special centre until they leave Norway. Some persons are exempted from this general rule – e.g. unaccompanied minors, families with children and persons having applied for the return programme by IOM (cf. chapter 7.2) and people with various medical problems. They are allowed accommodation in an ordinary reception centre until they leave Norway.

Due to the sharp increase from the fall of 2007 and during 2008 in the number of asylum seekers, many with unfounded claims, the Norwegian government announced some restrictive measures in June. They included stricter subsistence requirements for some categories of family immigrants and a tighter application than before of some of the provisions of the Dublin II Regulation. In September several additional measures to reduce the number of asylum seekers without a need for protection arriving in Norway were announced. The measures are as follows:

1. To assess the question of humanitarian grounds, each case shall be examined individually, and not undergo a general group assessment based on the particular geographical area.
2. Lack of link to a particular geographical area, shall not be conclusive when it comes to accessing the internal flight alternative, there have to be other strong humanitarian grounds for granting residency.
3. Norwegian asylum and immigration policies are determined by the Norwegian authorities. Norwegian practice shall as a main rule harmonize with practices in other comparable countries, both today and in the future.
4. Norway's assessment of cases under the Dublin II regulations will be harmonized with practices by other member states to the effect that Norway does not make general exceptions from the regulations unless there are particular reasons to do so. An individual assessment shall be carried out concerning applicants who are to be returned to Greece and unaccompanied minors.
5. Persons who have been granted residency on humanitarian grounds must have four years of education or work experience in Norway to be granted family reunification with existing or new family members. The same conditions apply for those who have been granted refugee status, but only related to family establishment. Persons with permits granted on the basis of a job offer in Norway and citizens of the EU/EEA, are exempt from these conditions, and other exemptions can also be made under special circumstances.
6. Based on an individual assessment, temporary residency without the right to renewal can be granted to unaccompanied minors who are 16 years or older and today are given residency simply because Norwegian authorities cannot locate their parents/family.
7. When establishing a practice contrary to UNHCRs recommendations concerning protection, the changes should as a main rule be put forward to the Grand Board of the Immigration Appeals Board, unless the new practice has been put down by instructions from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.
8. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the responsibility for negotiating a readmission agreement with Iraq. To do so shall be given priority. The

conditions for entering into such an agreement and the budgetary consequences will be further investigated.

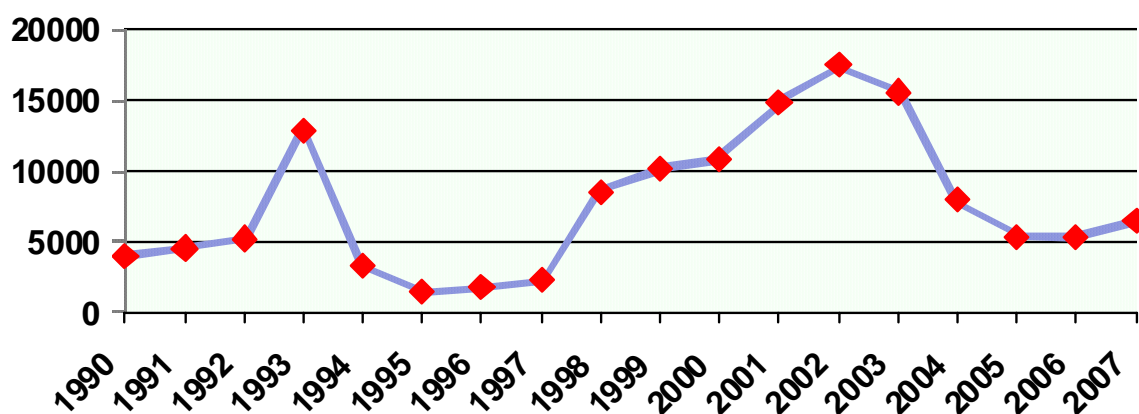
9. The Government will intensify efforts to negotiate readmission agreements with the main countries of origin for persons who are in Norway illegally.
10. Further investigation will be one into the possibilities of faster procedures for asylum applicants who do not contribute to disclose their identity.
11. Fingerprints shall be taken of all applicants who cannot document their identity or are suspected of having a false identity.
12. A proposal for regulations to limit the meetings in the Immigration Appeals Board only to issues that are essential for the result of the cases will be sent on a public hearing.
13. A fast track procedure for particular groups where there are a high percentage of rejections will be established. This is conditional of cooperation between all government bodies involved in the process.

The listed measures are at different stages of being implemented. As part of this attempt to reduce the number of unwarranted asylum seekers to Norway, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion with immediate effect on November 1 2008 instructed the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration to change the practice concerning asylum applications from Iraqi citizens. The Norwegian practice has been changed to be more in line with the practice in Sweden and Denmark, cf. measure 3 listed above. This will end the practice of granting an asylum seeker protection because he or she originates from a certain area in Iraq. All asylum cases concerning Iraqis will be considered on individual grounds/merits, cf. measure 1.

6.2 Flows and permits

Asylum seekers granted residence and resettled refugees constitute an important category of immigrants. Except for the last few years shifts in the number of asylum seekers have probably accounted for more of the fluctuations in net migration than shifts in job opportunities. During the five-year period 1998-2002 the number of asylum seekers to Norway increased considerably, with 2002 being the peak year with 17 500 arrivals from a variety of countries, cf. diagram 6.1. Historically, this is the highest number ever, cf. table A12.

Diagram 6.1 Asylum seekers - 1990-2007



Source: UDI

In 2007 the number of applicants increased somewhat, ending at 6 500. The largest groups came from Iraq, Russia and Eritrea, cf. table 6.1 below. In total there were applicants claiming to be from 106 countries.

The significant increase in the number of asylum seekers during the second half of 2007 continued and was reinforced during 2008. It is predicted that the total number of applicants in 2008 may be as high as 15 000, even when taking into consideration the effects of the announcement of the mentioned restrictive measures. Approximately 10 000 persons applied during the first nine months of 2008, more than twice as many as during the same period in 2007. During these nine months more than 50 per cent of the applicants were from Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan and Somalia. There is a particularly sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Somalia.

Table 6.1 Asylum applications, major countries of origin. 2000 – 2007

Country of origin	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total,	10 842	14 872	17 480	15 613	7 950	5 402	5 320	6 528
Of which:								
Iraq	766	1 056	1 624	938	413	671	1 002	1 227
Russia	471	1 318	1 718	1 893	938	545	548	863
Eritrea	51	132	269	198	110	177	316	789
Serbia *	4 188	928	2 460	2 180	860	468	369	585
Stateless	120	194	391	366	298	209	237	515
Ethiopia	96	173	325	287	148	100	143	241
Sri Lanka	165	164	87	64	58	58	106	238
Afghanistan	326	603	786	2 032	1 059	466	224	234
Iran	327	412	450	608	393	279	218	222
Somalia	910	1 080	1 534	1 601	957	667	632	187
Other	3 315	8 069	7 123	4 853	2 655	1 768	1 525	1 427

* Until 2007 Montenegro is included.

Source: UDI

In 2007 there were 400 asylum seekers who claimed to be unaccompanied minors. During the first nine months of 2008 more than 900 such applications were filed, a considerable increase. The most important source countries in 2008 are Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Only 78 per cent of the decisions made by the immigration authorities in 2007, considered the merits of the applications, as 13 per cent were transferred to another country for consideration in accordance with the Dublin procedure, and 9 per cent were withdrawn. During the first nine months of 2008, the share of Dublin cases had increased to 17 per cent, mostly because Dublin-decisions are made faster than decisions after considering the merits of an application.

Among the applications processed to a final decision in Norway the number of applicants granted asylum doubled in 2007 cf. table 6.2. The proportion granted asylum in the first instance by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI), was 20 per cent, an increase from 16 per cent the previous year, cf. table 6.4. During the first nine months of 2008 the proportion granted asylum by UDI has decreased to 14 per cent.

These changes must be seen in relation to the composition of claims examined each year. The rate of rejection is much higher for some nationalities than for others. There may also be changes in practice due to shifts in the situation in the country of origin, cf. chapter. 6.1.

Table 6.2 Asylum seekers granted refugee status. 2000 – 2007

Instance	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
UDI	97	292	332	588	457	567	461	1 013
Appeal Board	4	4	10	21	75	62	60	38
Total	101	296	342	609	532	629	521	1 051

Source: UDI

The relatively low acceptance rate for asylum does not give the full picture of the number of asylum seekers who are given leave to remain in Norway. In 2007 1 900 asylum seekers were granted a resident permit on humanitarian grounds by the UDI in the first instance, up from 1 200 in 2006, cf. table 6.3. This reflects that the total number of processed applications rose from 3 000 to 5 000. The proportion granted a permit on humanitarian grounds was somewhat lower than in 2006 (38 vs. 41 per cent), cf. table 6.4.

Table 6.3 Asylum seekers granted humanitarian status. 2000 - 2007

Instance	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
UDI	2 856	4 036	2 958	2 961	3 023	1 913	1 221	1 922
Appeal Board	343	265	326	219	613	513	464	1 523
Total	3 199	4 301	3 284	3 180	3 636	2 426	1 685	3 445

Source: UDI

Furthermore, since 2003 it has been possible to distinguish between two categories of humanitarian status:

- a) Need for protection, without satisfying the criteria for convention refugee status
- b) Strong humanitarian concerns (health problems etc.)

In 2006 49 per cent belonged to category a) and 51 per cent to category b). During 2007, the figures changed to 45 and 55 per cent. During the first nine months of 2008 the ratio changed considerably to 56 and 44 per cent respectively. Since a much lower proportion was granted asylum the number given a permit due to a need for protection therefore dropped to 28 per cent, compared to 37 per cent for the whole of 2007.

The general picture of the changing outcome of the examination of asylum claims by UDI since 2003 is reflected in table 6.4 and diagram 6.2 below. The total number granted asylum or other protection has been stable since 2005 while there was a gradual reduction in rejections until 2007.

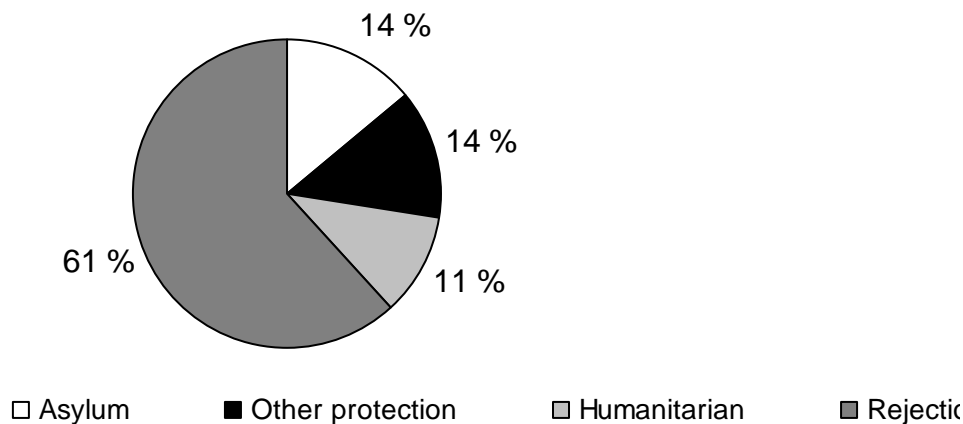
Table 6.4 of Result of examined asylum claims in 1. instance, 2003-2007

Result – percentage	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Asylum	5	5	10	16	20
Other protection	18	15	16	20	17
Humanitarian concerns	6	20	19	21	21
Rejections	71	60	56	43	42

Source: UDI

In 2007 42 per cent of the applications that had been examined on their merits were rejected in the first instance, approximately the same figure as in 2006. During the first nine months of 2008, the proportion of rejections increased significantly reaching 61 per cent, cf. diagram 6.2 below. The increase mainly reflects that relatively fewer permits were granted on humanitarian grounds. This tendency is interpreted mainly as a consequence of changes in the assessment of the situation for citizens of Russia, Serbia and Kosovo resulting in more asylum seekers being judged to have unfounded claims, cf. also the new restrictive measures described in chapter 6.1.

Diagram 6.2 Outcome of examined asylum claims, 1. instance, Jan.-Sept. 2008



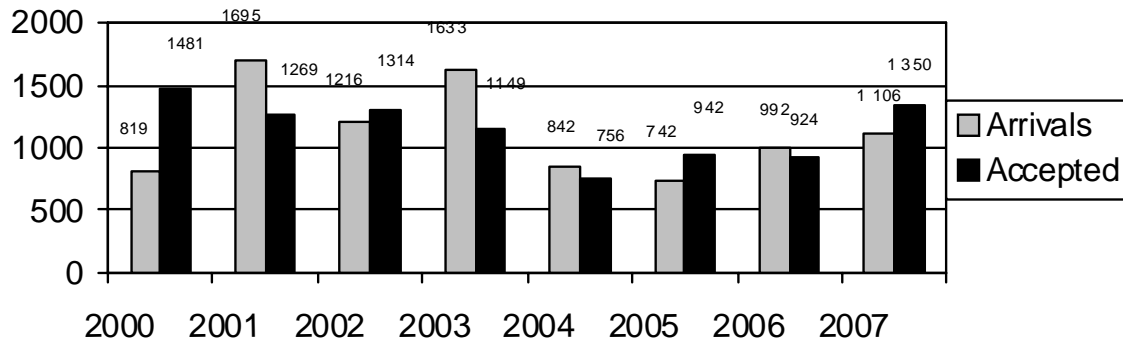
Source: UDI

6.3 Resettlement of refugees

In addition to asylum seekers, Norway admits a pre-determined number of refugees as part of an annual resettlement quota. A three-year perspective is applied for this quota, meaning that the actual number of refugees resettled in Norway in any year may differ from this quota within this period, as unused quota places may be carried over to following years and advance use may be made of following year's places. The Storting has set the quota for 2008 to 1 200 places, the same as 2007. The government has in the fiscal budget for 2009 proposed the same number.

In 2007 1 350 refugees were accepted for resettlement, and more than 1 100 arrived that year, cf. diagram 6.2. Some of those arriving had been accepted the previous year.

Diagram 6.3 Number of resettled refugees 2000 - 2007



Source: UDI

As Norway made advanced use of quota places for 2008 in 2007, fewer places are available in 2008.

In 2007 two groups were particularly targeted by the Norwegian resettlement programme: refugees from Myanmar/Burma and the Democratic Republic of Congo

Table 6.4 Resettlement of refugees, major countries of origin, 2007

Countries of origin	Resettled refugees
Myanmar/Burma	710
Dem. Rep. of Congo	318
Iraq	73
Sri Lanka	37
Vietnam /Philippines	32
Burundi	24
Other	156

Source: UDI

The 2008 resettlement quota has been pre-allocated to 250 Burmese refugees. 200 Eritreans, 150 Bhutanese and 150 Iraqis. Special missions have selected Burmese refugees now staying in Thailand, Bhutanese from Nepal, Iraqi from Syria and Eritrean refugees from Sudan. The remaining places have not been pre-allocated to particular refugee groups. Priority is given to refugee women and girls. 55 % of total number of resettled refugees should be female and 15 % of the refugees should fall in the category "women-at-risk". Norway has a fast track procedure for refugees in urgent need of resettlement (80 places in 2008).

6.4 Settlement in municipalities

Foreign nationals with refugee or humanitarian status enjoy full freedom of movement. They may in principle choose to settle wherever they want. However, most depend on public assistance to find suitable housing. Those who depend on assistance, have to settle in an assigned municipality. The Norwegian municipalities are

sovereign when it comes to deciding on the number of refugees to accept. They are compensated financially by the central government for expenses they may incur through the grant of a fixed sum per refugee over a five year period. From the 1st of July 2008 this sum has been NOK 515 000 for adults and NOK 495 000 for children under 18 for the whole period. In addition there are additional grants for settlement of unaccompanied minors, elderly and handicapped persons.

3 800 foreign nationals with asylum or humanitarian status were provided housing and integration measures by the municipalities in 2007. Due to the large increase in the numbers of asylum seekers to Norway in 2008 the number persons that have to be settled is expected to rise to 5000 in 2008 and 8000 in 2009.

6.5 Voluntary repatriation

Voluntary repatriation is seen as the best sustainable solution to a refugee problem, when conditions in the country of origin are safe. A government programme for voluntary repatriation of refugees has been in place since 1992. The programme consists of two main elements: individual benefits and grants for return motivating projects. The individual pre-departure assistance is set at NOK 15 000 plus travel expenses.

In addition, return-related projects are funded, including projects aiming at:

- improving the information about conditions in the home country
- vocational training
- activities for reconciliation and building democracy
- activities for reception and reintegration in the country of origin
- guidance on the establishment of income generating activity in the country of origin

Only to a very limited extent have refugees chosen to repatriate from Norway through this programme. In 2007 only 27 persons repatriated, down from 48 in 2006. Every year some persons who have received the individual grant re-enter Norway. The support must then be repaid. In 2007 there were 20 such re-entrants.

7 Irregular migration and return

7.1 Legislation and policy

The maximum penalty for a person who, for the purpose of profit, conducts organised activity to assist foreign nationals to enter the country illegally is 6 years of imprisonment. Furthermore, it is considered a criminal act to provide to another person a passport or travel document when the person concerned knows or ought to understand that a foreign national may use it to enter Norway or another state. The maximum penalty is two years imprisonment.

A person, whose application has been rejected, some times may remain in Norway if the country of origin refuses to receive them. As long as they do not hinder the implementation of their return, such persons have the opportunity to apply for a temporary work permit. The permit expires as soon as it is possible to return the foreigner to his or her country of origin.

A person whose application for asylum has been rejected, may be granted a residence permit if the return decision has not been implemented within three years following the application for asylum, and if the obstacles to return are deemed to be enduring. The identity of the applicant must have been sufficiently established, and the applicant must have assisted in the efforts to implement the return decision.

By September 2008 Norway has readmission agreements or similar agreements on return with 20 countries, hoping to conclude three new agreements before the end of the year. During 2008 the Norwegian authorities have approached some additional 18 countries in order to negotiate readmission agreements.

The “Plan of action against human trafficking (2006-2009)” covers measures against all kinds of trafficking, including for prostitution, organized begging, forced labour and illegal donation of organs. In the plan, the so called reflection period (a temporary residence permit) for victims of trafficking is extended to six months. It includes the provision of access to health care and social assistance for the victims, and it places more focus on children as victims of trafficking. During 2007 30 victims of trafficking have been given a temporary permit and reflection period, while the number was 11 during the first half of 2008. The victims are accommodated in safe houses. Information campaigns have been conducted to limit the demand for and purchase of sexual services. In cooperation with NGOs the outreach activities among foreign prostitutes, who may have been victims of trafficking, have been strengthened. Furthermore there are measures in the plan concerning witness protection for victims of all kinds of human trafficking, as well as and increased penalties for traffickers.

In November 2008 the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion instructed the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) with a view to ensure that people who testify in criminal cases relating to human trafficking are given residence permits that form the basis for a settlement permit. The purpose is both to ensure that victims of human trafficking can testify without fear of retaliation in their country of origin, and to make sure that we catch more ringleaders.

7.2 Illegal entry and residence

Facts and estimates on the extent of irregular migration in Norway, both entry and presence, are limited. However, we know that the problem exists, particularly in the major cities with a fairly large population of immigrants and less social transparency than in smaller communities.

Two reports on the number and circumstances of irregular migrants were published in 2008, cf. references in chapter 15. One was an exploratory project on how to estimate the number of irregular migrants, based on data available in various administrative registrations by the immigration authorities and the police. The report recommends a method implying that there could have been 18 000 irregular migrants (0.4 per cent of the population) in Norway at the beginning of 2006. However, the uncertainty of this estimate is considerable. It was estimated that in 2006 the actual figure could range from 10 500 to 32 000, with a large proportion of these being former asylum-seekers. Work will continue to develop the method and the data used to provide better and updated estimates.

The other project, mainly based on a small number of interviews, has studied both motives for irregular migration and which problems such migrants face in Norway. The project discusses ethical and methodological problems when doing research on a group of people who generally are in a vulnerable position.

In 2007 only approximately 5 per cent of the asylum seekers in Norway presented legal travel documents when initially registering. However, some documentation of identity will be provided during the processing of the application for a significantly larger proportion of the applicants, depending on their country of origin. That approximately 90% of the applicants are registered at a police station inside the country and not at the border, may be mostly due to the procedures followed by the border police and customs officers.

Each year a significant number of asylum seekers, many of them having their application rejected, leave the reception centres without providing a forwarding address. Some may have returned to their home country, some may have moved to a third country and some may have stayed in Norway illegally to make a living through work, criminal activities or through support by friends or relatives.

The police have apprehended a number of migrants working illegally during co-ordinated controls of various businesses, especially on construction sites and in shops and restaurants. Some of these illegal workers are former asylum seekers, while others have come directly to work, neither applying for asylum nor for a work permit. Those apprehended are expelled if there are no legal obstacles.

620 persons were rejected at the border or after entry in 2007, somewhat fewer than the previous year. There were almost 1 400 expulsions, as in 2006, cf. table 7.1 below. Expulsions also include convicted criminals.

Table 7.1 Rejections and expulsions. 2001 - 2007

Sanction	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Rejections – at entry	1 619	1 907	1 712	1 041	637	651	552
Rejections – later	219	102	137	108	70	38	72
Expulsions	(unav.)	(unav.)	1 141	1 260	1 274	1 379	1 398

Source: UDI

In 2007 altogether 2 200 foreigners were returned involuntarily from Norway by the police, slightly fewer than in 2006. 51 per cent of them were asylum seekers, who were handled according to the Dublin procedure or former asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected. In the remaining group criminals and other categories of foreigners without legal residence are included. During the first nine months of 2008 the total number of rejections and expulsions was 1 800.

7.3 Assisted return

Return measures are important elements in a comprehensive asylum and migration policy. The aim is to facilitate return and provide motivation, so that persons who have had their asylum claim rejected, may return in dignity to the country of origin.

Since 2002 the Norwegian government is cooperating with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on a programme for “Assisted Voluntary Return”. It aims at facilitating the voluntary and dignified return of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants residing or stranded in Norway. The services offered by the programme include: information and counselling to potential returnees, assistance in getting travel documents, travel arrangements, post-arrival reception, onward travel to the local destination and limited follow-up. In 2007 approximately 440 persons returned with IOM, slightly more than in 2006. During the first nine months of 2008 the number was 380, which indicates a small increase compared to 2007.

For refugees and refused asylum seekers from countries in a reconstruction phase the Norwegian government may consider adding reintegration components to the general voluntary repatriation and assisted voluntary return programmes. Such reintegration components are at present offered to refugees and unsuccessful asylum seekers from Afghanistan. They are offered temporary shelter, counselling, vocational training and assistance to set up their own business upon arriving in Afghanistan. The programme is operated by IOM. A similar reintegration programme may be considered for refugees and unsuccessful asylum-seekers from Northern Iraq.

8 Foreign nationals, immigrants and their children

8.1 Population growth and fertility rates

The total population of Norway grew by 56 000 persons during 2007. This is a growth rate of 1.2 per cent, 0.3 points higher than in 2006. This rate is among the highest in Europe, due to a birth surplus of 16 500 as well as net immigration of 39 700. By January 1st 2008 the total population was 4.74 million. Cf. table A1 and A3.

The fertility rate for the population in Norway was 1.89 in 2006-2007, the highest level for a long period. The rate varies between women with Norwegian background and immigrants. In 2006-2007 it was 1.82 for the former and 2.26 for the latter. As there was an increase in the fertility-rate for women without immigrant background, the difference between the two categories declined compared to the previous year. The highest rate in 2006-2007 was 2.45, among women from Asia, Africa and Latin America. This was a decline from 2.47 the previous years and from 2.93 in 1994-95. Cf. table A20.

As in the previous year the largest number of children born in Norway with two foreign-born parents in 2007 were those who had parents from Somalia, Iraq and Pakistan, with Poland on fourth place. Among those with only one parent born abroad Sweden, Denmark, Thailand and UK were the major countries of origin of that parent, cf. table A21. This reflects clear differences in inter-marriage patterns. However, there was also an increasing number of children with one parent born in Pakistan. This reflects that so far among young Norwegians with Pakistani-born parents the majority have found their spouse in Pakistan. However, in 2007 only 99 Pakistanis were registered as immigrants due to family-formation with a Norwegian citizen with both parents originally from Pakistan. Considering the growing number of persons of Pakistani background in the relevant age group, it is worth noticing that this figure is slightly lower than in 2006 when it was 111. The figures in the years to come will show whether marriage patterns in this group are changing.

8.2 Foreign nationals

By the end of 2007 the total number of foreign nationals was registered as residing in Norway 266 300, an increase of 28 000 (11.2 per cent) from the previous year, cf. table A1. This is 5.6 per cent of the total population, cf. table A16.

European nationals still constitute the majority of foreign nationals: 139 000 or approximately 62 per cent of all foreigners, cf. table A16. This share has been gradually reduced over the years, down from 65 per cent in 2000, but for the last couple of years there has been an increase. Around 12 500, or 78 per cent of the increase of foreigners in 2006, came from European countries. This was mainly due to an increase of nationals from Poland (up 13 000), Germany and Sweden.

From several countries there was a reduction in the number of resident nationals, mostly due to high rates of naturalization. Among these countries were Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

The number of resident nationals from Asian countries has increased gradually since 2000. By January 2008 they accounted for 22 per cent of the total foreign population, up from 19 per cent in January 2000, but lower than in January 2007. The largest

group of foreign nationals from Asia were from Iraq, numbering 10 700 persons. There was a significant increase in the number of nationals from the Philippines and Thailand in 2007.

Resident nationals from African countries increased by 760 persons during 2007 and reached 25 400 or 9.5 per cent of all foreign nationals in Norway. This percentage was 6.5 per cent in 2000. Somali nationals constitute the largest group of foreign nationals from countries in Africa, numbering 10 600 persons.

The total number of resident nationals from countries in North, Central and South America increased slightly from 15 400 in 2006 to 16 100 in 2007). Their share of all foreigners decreased from 6.5 to 6.1 per cent). One half of this group are U.S. citizens, and the second largest group is from Chile (2 000).

These patterns and changes only partly reflect shifts in migration flows (cf. chapter 2). More important for this development are the significant differences in the inclination to apply for Norwegian citizenship (cf. chapter 9.2). Immigrants from countries in Western Europe and North America show little interest in changing nationality, compared to most other groups of foreign nationals. For example, the number of nationals from Bosnia-Herzegovina is less than half of what it was in 2001, a decrease from almost 12 000 to 4 300, cf. table 8.1. This change is mostly due to naturalizations, and not to return-migration. The number of Vietnamese nationals, 1 600, is strikingly low. There are 12 600 immigrants from Vietnam in Norway, eight times the number of nationals. Cf. Table A16 and A17.

Table 8.1 Foreign nationals, major countries. 1.1.2001 – 1.1.2007

Nationality	1.1.2001	1.1.2002	1.1.2003	1.1.2004	1.1.2005	1.1.2006	1.1.2007	1.1.2008
Total, of which	184 337	185 863	197 668	204 731	213 303	222 277	238 305	266 260
Sweden	25 170	25 140	25 241	25 432	25 773	26 640	27 867	29 886
Poland	2 023	2 205	2 619	2 741	3 936	6 773	13 630	26 801
Denmark	19 405	19 653	20 008	20 006	20 060	20 192	20 252	20 461
Germany	7 055	7 538	8 233	8 839	9 587	10 623	12 214	15 313
UK	11 074	10 966	11 188	11 018	11 202	11 204	11 562	12 024
Iraq	9 891	10 778	13 038	13 373	13 677	13 136	12 139	10 682
Somalia	6 152	6 588	8 377	9 861	10 541	10 623	10 845	10 589
Russia	3 288	3 882	4 829	6 565	7 383	8 185	8 750	9 710
USA	8 037	7 915	7 976	7 703	7 614	7 597	7 732	7 916
Thailand	2 725	2 992	3 636	4 248	4 975	5 698	6 355	6 938
Afghanistan	953	1 816	2 950	4 346	5 085	5 933	6 470	6 502
Netherlands	3 587	3 718	3 837	3 950	4 165	4 604	5 104	5 811
Pakistan	6 731	6 867	6 676	6 572	6 378	6 095	5 863	5 755
Bosnia - Herzegovina	11 611	8 826	7 850	5 952	5 203	4 584	4 192	4 304
Serbia*	8 849	6 497	6 004	5 565	5 802	5 436	4 735	3 416

* Ex-Yugoslavia until 2003. Including Montenegro until 2007.

Source: Statistics Norway

8.3 Immigrants and their children

Almost 70 per cent of the population growth in 2007 (56 200) was due to the growth in the number of immigrants (38 900), cf. table A3. In addition the children with two immigrant parents represented 6 000 of the birth surplus. Only 7 per cent of the population increase was due to growth in the number of persons with no form of immigrant background. The total number of registered resident immigrants reached 380 600 by the end of 2007. This was 8 per cent of the population, an increase from 7.3 per cent the previous year. The number of children with immigrant parents was 79 000. Their share of the total population was 1.7 per cent, an increase from 1.6 one year earlier. Cf. table A18-1 and A18-2.

The composition of the combined category of immigrants and their children in Norway has changed considerably over the years. In 1970 the share of the immigrant population originating from Asia, Africa and South America among all immigrants was 6 per cent, in 1980 they represented 23.5 per cent, increasing to 45.6 per cent in 1990, 49.7 per cent in 2000 and 53.6 per cent at the beginning of 2008. There has been a small decrease in this share for the last couple of years, due to a sharp increase in immigration from some of the new EU-member states. If we only look at resident immigrants, 48 per cent come from Asia, Africa and South America by 2008, cf. table 8.2 below and table A17.

Table 8.2 Immigrants, region of birth. 1.1.2001-1.1.2008

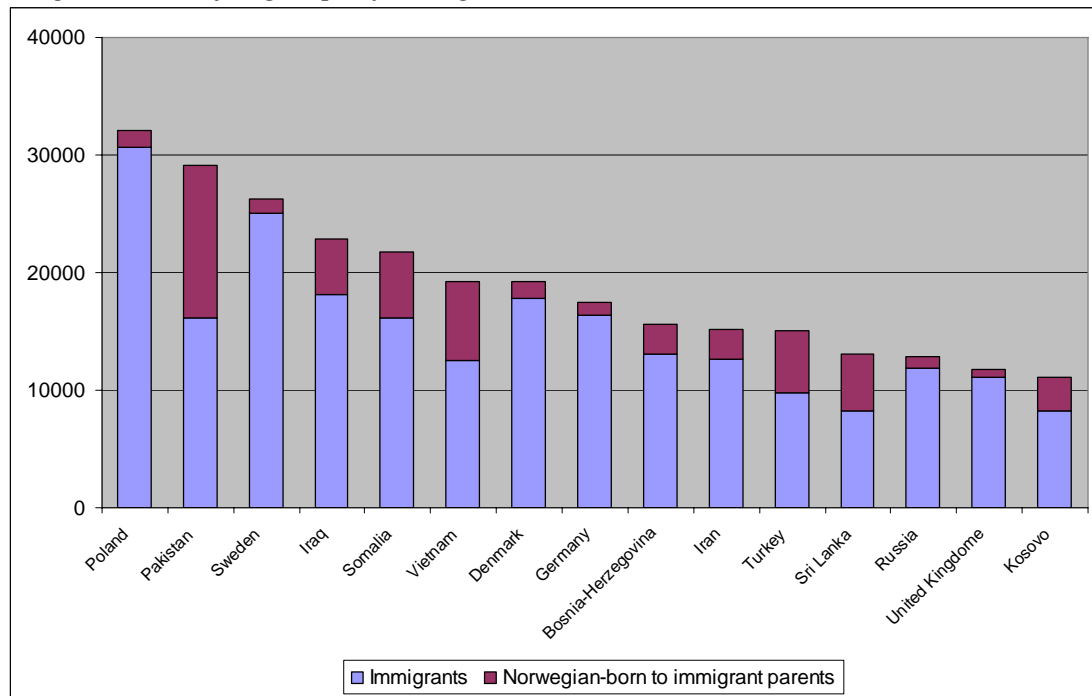
Region	1.1.2001	1.1.2002	1.1.2003	1.1.2004	1.1.2005	1.1.2006	1.1.2007	1.1.2008
Total, of which:	249 904	259 221	277 262	289 104	301 045	318 514	341 830	380 644
Nordic countries	50 526	50 470	51 135	50 701	49 937	50 287	51 066	52 972
Rest of Europe	73 857	75 375	79 528	82 552	87 817	95 479	108 489	132 545
North and Central America, Oceania	9 715	9 682	10 076	9 116	8 862	8 907	11 732	12 382
Asia (incl. Turkey) Africa, South America	114 939	122 795	136 523	146 735	154 429	163 841	170 543	182 745

Source: Statistics Norway

Since 2001 Pakistan has been on the top of the list when both immigrants and their children are combined into one category. However, during 2007 Poland became the largest group with 32 000 in the combined category, almost all of them immigrants. If Norwegian-born children are not included, there are also more immigrants from Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Somalia than from Pakistan. As much as 45 per cent of the combined category with Pakistani background were born in Norway, while less than 5 per cent of those with Swedish background were born here, cf. diagram 8.2 and table A17.

25 per cent of the residents of Oslo are immigrants or Norwegian-born with immigrant parents. Out of this section of the Norwegian population one third live in Oslo.

Diagram 8.2 Major groups of immigrants and their children. 1.1.2008



Source: Statistics Norway

8.4 Refugee population

In this presentation the term "refugee population" refers to persons residing in Norway, who have entered as asylum seekers or been transferred from refugee situation abroad as part of an annual quota, as well as their family members. They have been granted a permit to stay because a need for protection or on humanitarian grounds, cf. the description of entry categories in chapter 2.2. Children born in Norway of parents belonging to this group are not included.

By January 1 2008, the refugee population in Norway was 132 400 persons, or 2.8 per cent of the total population. This represented an increase of 7 200 in one year. Almost 100 000, or 75 per cent of the refugee population, were registered as principals while 32 500 had arrived in Norway as dependants. 62 per cent of the principals were initially registered as asylum seekers, 21 per cent as resettled refugees and 10 per cent as refugees granted collective protection. For 7 per cent the basis has not been registered. Persons from Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iran and Vietnam make up the largest groups of refugees.

Five years ago refugees from Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vietnam were the largest groups among the refugee population in Norway. Since then there has been an increase of almost 39 000 persons with refugee background. The largest increase during this period was among the refugee population from Somalia (5 600) and Iraq (4 400).

Members of the refugee population from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan and Russia have the shortest period of stay in Norway. Among the largest groups arriving after 1970 refugees from Vietnam have resided here longest, as 45 per cent of the Vietnamese refugees have been residents in Norway for more than 20 years.

9 Nationality and naturalization

9.1 Legislation

A new Nationality Act came into force in September 2006. The act contains an exhaustive list of conditions for Norwegian nationality (citizenship). According to the act an applicant has the right to acquire Norwegian nationality if all the conditions listed in the act are fulfilled.

Some important elements in the act are:

- The applicant has to give up his or her present nationality to be able to acquire Norwegian nationality. If a person does not give up his or her former nationality, the Norwegian nationality will be withdrawn.
- The applicant has to have lived in Norway for seven years to be able to acquire Norwegian nationality, but it is acceptable that these seven years are within a period of ten years.
- Documentation of language skills in Norwegian, or Sami is a condition to obtain Norwegian nationality.
- At birth a child is automatically given the nationality of both parents.
- At the age of 12 a child can apply for and be granted a Norwegian nationality irrespective of the consent of the parents.
- When applying for Norwegian nationality children, who cannot renounce their other nationality before a certain age, can nevertheless acquire Norwegian nationality.

9.2 Naturalizations

During the first half of the 1990s the number of naturalizations reached an average of 7 300 per year, while it was considerable higher during the second half of the decade (10 200). Since 2000 the average has been 10 000 per year, cf. table A22. In 2007 close to 15 000 persons were naturalized.

In 2006 22 per cent of the naturalized Norwegians originated in Europe, down from 32 per cent in 2005. 48 per cent originated in Asia (including Turkey), up from 45 per cent the previous year. More than 23 per cent originated in Africa, an increase from 18 per cent. Iraqis were the largest group of naturalized persons in 2007, almost 2 600 persons. Somalis were the second largest group with 2 200 naturalizations, cf. table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Naturalizations. Major countries of origin. 2001-2007

Country of origin	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total,	10 838	9 041	7 867	8 154	12 655	11 955	14877
of which:							
Iraq	331	497	403	619	2141	2 142	2577
Somalia	676	546	392	526	1 251	1 281	2196
Serbia*	1 199	614	310	303	852	1 107	1135
Iran	361	324	228	508	834	535	740
Pakistan	409	829	497	568	694	590	544
Turkey	356	412	398	393	385	355	445
Russia	192	308	280	365	548	458	436
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2 999	1 229	1 965	827	707	519	355
Sweden	249	216	211	221	276	376	241

* Ex-Yugoslavia until 2003. Incl. Montenegro until 2003

Source: Statistics Norway

The percentage of the eligible foreign nationals who prefer to change nationality, varies between different groups, cf. table A23. In 2007 very few of the nationals from countries in Western Europe and North America who were eligible for Norwegian nationality, applied. This has been the usual pattern for many years.

On the other hand, for countries like Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia, Iran, China, Serbia and Montenegro, Ukraine and the Philippines the percentage was very high. For Iraq, Somalia, Ethiopia, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine there were more naturalized persons than the number of persons having stayed in the country for more than 7 years. The reason is that there were many minor children and persons marrying Norwegians in these groups. An exception from the required length of residence in Norway applies to these categories.

10 Integration and social inclusion

10.1 Policy goals and guidelines

The clearly stated goal of the Norwegian government is that Norway should be an inclusive society in the sense that all inhabitants, regardless of their background, should have an equal opportunity to contribute and participate actively in the Norwegian society. Immigrants and their children should be able to achieve the same living conditions as those enjoyed by the rest of the population.

To achieve this goal government policies and measures are formulated with the aim that immigrants and refugees can contribute and use their resources in the labour market and in society at large. The evolution of a divided society where immigrants and their children generally have poorer living conditions and participate less in the social and political arenas than the rest of the population should be prevented. In particular participation in the labour market is regarded as the most important tool to fight poverty and exclusion.

Mainstreaming is an important principle for government policies. The needs of immigrants, refugees and their children are included in broad general programmes and policies at the various administrative levels (state, regional, and local). Public administrations must recognise and respect the diversity of the population by ensuring that the different needs of different individuals are reflected in the design of public services and general social systems. Ensuring equal access to public services requires the practical recognition of the diversity in the Norwegian society. Dialogue and contact with the civil society are important elements of the policy-making and implementing processes.

Some special measures for newly arrived immigrants are deemed to be necessary to ensure equal opportunities, for example the Introduction Programme, cf. 10.6. Strengthened language and job training are of utmost importance in this respect. In the policymaking and programmes a distinction is made between immigrants and their children. An important objective is to secure that Norwegian-born children with immigrant parents will have had the same opportunities as others when they reach adulthood, first and foremost in their education and participation in the labour market.

A coherent policy is sought by giving the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion responsibility for co-ordinating the policies on social inclusion and integration of immigrants, refugees and their children, as well as the policies concerning the indigenous population and national minorities.

10.2 Plan of action for integration and social inclusion

In order to achieve the goal that everyone who lives in Norway should have equal opportunities to contribute to and participate in the community, comprehensive policy measures are needed over a period of several years. As a response to the challenges in the area of labour, welfare and social inclusion linked to some immigrant families⁵,

⁵ For the full text see http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/aid/doc/rapporter_planer/planer/2006/Action-Plan-for-Integration-and-Social-I.html?id=271538

the Government – represented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion – has, in 2008, for the third consecutive year presented a plan of action for integration and social inclusion.

The plan emphasises the importance of participation in working life, knowledge of the Norwegian language and culture, equality of opportunities for immigrants and their children, participation in society at large, as well as gender equality. The plan covers four areas: Employment, Childhood, Education and Language; Gender Equality and Participation. Efforts in these areas are crucial if work on social inclusion is to succeed. The plan covers the areas of responsibility of seven different ministries.

The plan of action will be continued and strengthened in 2009. In addition to continue the measures in the 2008 action plan, the Government has proposed to strengthen the integration subsidy to local authorities with NOK 125 millions. The Government wants to see refugees and their families settled in a local community as quickly as possible, to ensure that they can contribute to working life and social life without undue delay. The integration subsidy to local authorities is the most important measure to achieve rapid and good settlement of refugees. The Government also proposes to strengthen the funding of the Norwegian language training and social studies in the local communities.

The plan of action for integration and social inclusion was presented for the first time in 2006, in connection with the fiscal budget for 2007, and was renewed and strengthened in the budget for 2008. With the strengthening proposed for 2009, the Government has increased its efforts to promote integration and social inclusion with NOK 825,7 millions during the four year period.

10.3 Plan of action against forced marriages

In June 2007, the Government presented a new action plan against forced marriage⁶ for the period 2008 - 2011. The plan contains 40 measures involving eight ministries. The Ministry of Children and Equality coordinates the plan that have been allocated about NOK 70 million in the 2008 fiscal budget. This allocation has been continued in the budget proposal for 2009.

The principal aims are to prevent that young people become subject to forced marriage, and to provide better assistance and protection to young people who have been victims of such abuse. The Government recognises that combating forced marriages necessitates a broad-based approach, as good results are particularly contingent on the success of the policies for equality and social inclusion. Measures therefore include the establishment of 30 minority advisers in upper secondary schools (age 16 – 19) that have a high percentage of students with minority background, and the establishment of 6 integration advisers who will assist relevant Norwegian embassies. The minority- and integration advisers started their work in schools and embassies in June 2008. More resources than before are also allocated to non-governmental organisations working to prevent forced marriages. Furthermore, the availability of accommo-

⁶ <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/bld/Documents/Reports-and-plans/Plans/2007/Action-Plan-against-Forced-Marriage.html?id=474779>

dations for young people at risk will be improved, as well as the competence and collaboration within the public support services.

10.4 Survey on living conditions among immigrants, 2005/2006

A report based on household interviews describes the living conditions of a random sample of 3053 immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia-Montenegro, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Somalia and Chile who had more than two years of residency in Norway. More than 50 per cent of the persons interviewed were refugees. The topics covered by the survey range from housing and working conditions to level of education, relations with family and friends, media habits and perceptions of discrimination.

Results:

- One in four had studied in Norway: Among the immigrants who came to Norway at the age of 18 or over, almost two out of ten had not completed any education, while one out of four had higher education. The education level is highest among immigrants from Iran, Chile and Bosnia-Herzegovina and lowest among Turkish and Somali immigrants.
- More likely to experience problems at work: The proportion of employed persons was 57 per cent among immigrants, compared with 75 per cent in the population as a whole. Furthermore, 23 per cent of the immigrants were temporarily employed, compared with 11 per cent in the population as a whole. Immigrants are over-represented in jobs with little or no educational requirements and under-represented in managerial positions and in jobs that require higher education. Immigrants have had more problems with their ergonomic work environment than others, and more immigrants perceive their job as mentally taxing.
- Lower household income: Immigrants' average net household income is markedly lower than the average income for the population as a whole. Immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sri Lanka have the highest average incomes, while immigrants from Somalia and Iraq have the lowest. In addition, immigrant households are generally larger than others, which means that more people share the household income than in the average Norwegian household.
- Remittances to family members back home: More than half of the immigrants interviewed said that they help financially family members in their country of origin. One in ten own land in their country of origin, while a slightly larger proportion own a dwelling there. One in four think that they will return to their home country, but not until they reach old age.
- More immigrants own their dwelling: The housing standards among immigrants have improved since 1996. The share of immigrants who live in detached houses and the share who live in an owned dwelling has increased. Fewer than ten years ago live in rented accommodations and it is less common to live in cramped conditions. However, the average immigrant family still has poorer housing standards than the average household in the whole population.
- Religiously active: Immigrants are generally more religiously active than the average Norwegian. They tend to attend more religious gatherings and prayers, and religion is more important. Two out of three immigrants were

brought up as Muslims. Many Chilean and Iranian immigrants say they no longer belong to the faith in which they were brought up.

- Poor Norwegian skills among female immigrants: Among immigrants who came to Norway at the age of six or older, more than twice as many women as men consider their Norwegian skills as poor. The gender difference is particularly pronounced among immigrants from Pakistan, Iraq and Serbia and Montenegro. The correlation between Norwegian language skills and employment is strong and positive.
- Less violence and theft: On the average immigrants do not encounter more problems with theft, harm, violence or threats than the average Norwegian. Only 9 per cent of all immigrants have been the victim of theft and/or harm, compared to 17 per cent in the population as a whole.
- The majority would like to obtain Norwegian citizenship: Two out of three among the immigrants included in the survey are Norwegian citizens. If we include those who had applied or were planning to apply for Norwegian citizenship at the time of the survey, the share increases to 94 per cent. Around half of the remaining respondents would apply for Norwegian citizenship if they could keep their original citizenship. The main reason for applying for Norwegian citizenship is to obtain the corresponding full rights and obligations.
- Men experience more discrimination: Half of the immigrants in the sample said that they have experienced discrimination in one or more areas. Immigrants from Somalia and Iran are those who mostly are subject to discrimination. Men had experienced more discrimination than women, probably because they participate in more areas of society.

10.5 Survey of living conditions for youth of immigrant origin

A report based on interviews with 870 young people aged 16-25 who were either born in Norway or immigrated to Norway before the age of six, and had two parents born in Pakistan, Turkey or Vietnam identifies differences in living conditions with those of other youth in Norway and older immigrants. Cfr. Løwe 2008, listed in chapter 15.

Results:

- Youth of immigrant origin live with their parents to a greater degree than other young people. Youth of Pakistani origin have the biggest households, but they also live in the largest dwellings. Crowded housing – although prevalent – is seldom perceived as a problem since only one out of ten thinks his or her home is too small. Only a minority would like to have many people of the same national origin as themselves in their neighbourhood, and three out of ten think that “a few people” would be ideal.
- The percentage of married couples are higher – and the percentage of cohabitants is significantly lower – than among other youth. Almost one out of four youth of Turkish origin are married, compared with barely one out of eight of Pakistani origin and just one out of one hundred of Vietnamese origin. Two out of three of those who were married had a great deal of influence on their decision to marry. One out of five married youth has a spouse living abroad.
- Youth of immigrant origin are just as active in jobs and/or education as other youth. Close to two out of three attend school or are students, women slightly outnumbering men, as is the case among other youth. The percentage of im-

migrant origin youth who work is just as high as the percentage of other youth. The percentage who work is particularly high among other youth of Turkish origin. There is a considerable gender disparity among working youth of Pakistani origin.

- Youth of immigrant origin have fewer problems with household finances than other youth.
- Youth of immigrant origin have just slightly poorer self-assessed health than other youth, but are more bothered by nervousness and melancholy. Older youth of immigrant origin are more likely to smoke than other young people, while the youngest are less likely to smoke.
- Three out of ten have no good friends of Norwegian origin, and the percentage is lower among younger than older youth of immigrant origin. Fewer youth of immigrant origin lack friends of Norwegian origin than older immigrants. Loneliness is also less prevalent among young people of immigrant origin than among the parental generation. Youth of immigrant origin are neither more nor less lonely than other youth.
- Almost half say that religion is “extremely important in life”. Among youth of Pakistani and Turkish origin, religion is at least as important for young people as it is for older immigrants. Young men of Pakistani origin are even more religiously active than older male Pakistani immigrants.
- Two out of three young people of immigrant origin think they speak very good Norwegian. Most of them have a good command of their parent`s mother tongue and some have better command of the mother tongue than of Norwegian. Those who have spent long periods of time in the parental home country have poorer Norwegian language skills than others.
- Almost half of the respondents have felt that they were treated badly on account of their foreign origin in one area of society or another. On the whole, fewer youth of Vietnamese origin feel that they have been treated badly than youth of Pakistani or Turkish origin. Fewer women feel that they have been badly treated than men. More youth of Turkish origin feel discriminated against in the housing market than youth of Pakistani or Vietnamese origin. One out of four was of the opinion that discriminatory attitudes were one of the reasons for their not having a job. This is exactly the same percentage as among the rest of the immigrant population. Fewer youth of immigrant origin say that they have experienced differential treatment in the housing market than older immigrants.
- A clear majority of youth of immigrant origin express a considerable sense of belonging to Norway as a country. However, their sense of belonging to Norway is not stronger than their parents` generation, and it is no stronger among older youth than among younger girls and boys. More than half of all young people of Pakistani origin have attended school in Pakistan, and one out of five has had at least one year of schooling there. One out of three is considering moving to the country of origin of the parents in the long term. The percentage is considerably lower than among older immigrants.

10.6 Young immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents in employment and education

A report looking at how the share of young people aged 16-34 years in employment and education varies with immigration background compared the three following

groups: (i) Those who arrived in Norway as immigrants from Eastern Europe (EU member countries were excluded); Asia; Africa and South and Central- America, (ii) Norwegian born with immigrant parents from the countries just mentioned (13 137 persons), and (iii) persons of non-immigrant background (i.e. the majority population). The report is based on registry statistics from the 4th quarter 2006.

The survey shows that Norwegian born with immigrant parents under 25 years are much more similar to the majority population than young immigrants when it comes to the share employed or undertaking education. In the age group 25-29 year, where employment becomes the dominant activity, there is a larger difference to the majority population. Gender distributions show nearly equal numbers for Norwegian born with immigrant parents under 25 years and the majority population in the same age group. In the older age groups (25-29 years) the level of female participation drops, while it remains about the same for males. It is primarily a lower rate of employment among females which contributes to the lower share of actives among Norwegian born with immigrant parents above 24 years compared to the majority population.

For young immigrants, the age at the time of immigration is important for the share of active participants. If they had undertaken all their schooling in Norway, the share was approximately the same as for Norwegian born with immigrant parents. Thus it is young immigrants with short periods of residence in Norway who contribute to the low share of participation for immigrant youths. To a greater extent than for young Norwegian born with immigrant parents, a lower share of women in employment or education is the main contributing factor. In other words, it is among female immigrants we see the greatest gap to the majority population, and much of this difference are related to their marital status and family situation. Women in this group tend to marry at a younger age than other women of the same age, and it is less common among them to work when they marry and have children than for majority women. This is especially the case for women with a short period of residence, as many are family immigrants. However, also among those who have lived in Norway for a longer period of time, there is a lower activity rate among those over 25 years of age. Norwegian-born females with immigrant parents have activity rates that are much closer to those of women in the majority population, but also for this group there is a lower activity rate among those older than 25 years of age than among the majority population in the corresponding groups. Cf. Olsen 2008, listed in chapter 15.

10.7 Introduction programme

The introduction programme (established by the Introductory Act) for newly arrived immigrants applies to refugees and family members reunited with them, in addition to persons granted residence on humanitarian grounds and family members reunited with them. The individual's rights and obligations under the act only apply to immigrants between the ages 18 and 55 who need to acquire basic qualifications. Women participate on an equal footing with men. The scheme combines an introduction programme with an economic benefit that are paid to the participants.

The aim of the programme, which is to be adapted to the individual's needs and abilities, is to provide basic skills in the Norwegian language, as well as a basic understanding of the Norwegian society, and to prepare for participation in working life and/or further education. The duration of the programme is to be tailored to the individual's circumstances, and it may run for up to two years with additional periods to

compensate for approved leaves of absence. The municipalities shall provide programmes for newly arrived persons as soon as possible and no later than within three months after a person has settled in the municipality, cf. chapter 6.4. Participation in the programme is both a right and an obligation for persons in the target groups.

An effective transition to working life is dependent on close cooperation between the relevant municipal services and the local Labour and Welfare Service (LWS), cf. chapter 12.1. A special circular has been issued which describes the minimum elements that such cooperation should involve. Effects of the Introduction Programme are monitored. So far there are indications of positive effects. A report from 2007 shows that approximately 8 800 persons, about 4 600 men and 4 200 women, participated in the programme in 2006, and that 6 per cent of the participants had left the programme to work. Most participants were between the 26 and 35 years old. The share of women was lower in the older age groups than in the younger.

An evaluation of the Introduction Programme carried out in 2007 documents that the main elements in the Introductory Act to a large extent have been implemented in the municipalities. However, the formal implementation of key elements of the programme does not necessarily mean that the quality of implementation is high, nor the absence of future challenges. Most participants started their training within 3 months after settling in a municipality, as stipulated by the act. A significant number, however, experienced temporary disruptions to their participation in the programme, mostly due to childbirth, illness, lack of labour market measures or lack of appropriate childcare. Most municipalities offer their participants a full-time programme, but not all participants in all parts of the country have access to good and appropriate training yet. A number of municipalities still lack a sufficient range of training opportunities to be able to offer real adaptation to the individual needs of participants.

In all 73 per cent of the participants who were registered as having left the introductory programme during the first two years it was compulsory, had completed the programme, in the sense that they had left because of receiving an offer of work or ordinary education, or because they had finished the time allocated to programme participation. The other participants had quit either because they had moved to a different municipality (10 per cent), because of illness or other authorized leave of absence (9 per cent), or because of unauthorised absence (5 per cent).

There were important differences between those who completed and those who left the programme before it was completed. Women and men used the allocated time in the programme to the same extent, but men left more often than women in response to a job offer. In other words, women quit the programme more often than men, and 32 per cent of former female participants are registered as having quitted, compared to 19 per cent of the male ex-participants. The most common reason for women quitting the programme was illness or leave of absence. It is reasonable to assume, however, that a part of these women will return to the programme when their leave of absence is finished. As a follow-up to the evaluation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion is now examining several possible changes to the introduction programme, and changes to the guidelines to the municipalities. The plan is to send for wide consultations a draft document on such changes by the end of 2008.

11 Language training and education

11.1 Pre-school children

All children should be able to speak the Norwegian language before they start school. In order to contribute to this goal being realized a programme has been established to survey the language skills of four year olds at child health clinics. Some municipalities with many immigrants settled can apply for financial support to carry through the programme. In 2008 NOK 10 million was allocated for the programme and the same amount is proposed in the State budget for 2009.

Parents are guided on how to develop their children's language. Instruction is also given to the nurses working with this programme, to ensure good guidance and inter-sectional collaboration to follow up the children when necessary. The challenges are to survey children's mother tongue and the use of interpreters, multicultural competence in meeting the parents of language minority children⁷, as well as establish good routines for collaboration between child health clinics, kindergarten and other relevant partners.

Preliminary results from an ongoing evaluation of the programme find that 28 per cent of the language minority children need follow-up compared to 12 per cent of the Norwegian speaking children. The need for follow-up among these children is first and foremost related to learning the Norwegian language, not developing their language competence in general. Hence, measures such as open kindergartens and read-and- play- groups have been implemented.

Furthermore, the Government has established a programme for free core time (4 hours per day) in kindergarten for all four and five-year olds, in some city districts of Oslo with a high proportion of language minority children and the municipality of Drammen. The aim is, by increased participation in kindergarten, to improve the language and social skills of children prior to starting school. The programme includes increasing the awareness and comprehension of the parents regarding the importance of learning the Norwegian language as well as participating in social activities.

Goal in Action Plan for integration and social inclusion:

To facilitate optimal language development for preschool children the number of language minority children in kindergartens should be increased.

Indicator:

- The proportion of language minority children in kindergartens compared to the proportion of children in kindergartens in total.

Status:

An increased share of language minority children attend kindergarten. In 2007 about 18 668 language minority children attended, compared to 15 700 in 2006 and about 9000 in 2000. By the end of 2007 about 63 per cent of all 1-5 year old minority language children attended kindergarten, compared to 84 per cent for all children. In

⁷ Language minority children are in this regard children with parents who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian, Sami, Swedish, Danish and English.

2006 the numbers were 57 per cent vs. 80 per cent, and in 2000 44 per cent vs. 62 per cent.

Table 11.1 Kindergarten attendance, rate according age, all children and language minority children 2007

Age (year)	Children in general	Language minority children
1	59,5	25,4
2	79,3	43,0
3	92,3	72,1
4	95,3	85,8
5	95,9	90,0
1- 5	84,3	62,8

Source: Statistics Norway

11.2 Primary and secondary education

According to the Norwegian Education Act every pupil has the right to receive teaching adapted to individual abilities and aptitudes. With regard to language minority children, including children seeking asylum and refugees, they have the right and the obligation to undergo primary and lower secondary education “when it is probable that a child will reside in Norway for a period of more than three months”. Children start school in the calendar year of their 6th birthday and finish their compulsory education normally in the calendar year of their 16th birthday.

The Education Act and the Private Schools Act give pupils from language minorities the right to special instruction in Norwegian until their skills are adequate to follow the regular teaching in school. Pupils arriving in Norway without Norwegian language skills, and other pupils whose language skills in Norwegian are too poor to attend the teaching when given in Norwegian, are also entitled to instruction in their native language, bilingual instruction in subjects, or both, during a transition period.

According to government policies the schools with a high proportion of language minority pupils shall provide high-quality teaching and be attractive to all pupil groups. Funds have been allocated to development projects at schools with more than 25 per cent minority-language pupils. The aim is to stimulate such schools to find adequate ways of dealing with the special challenges they face and to improve the learning profits and results of the pupils.

Young persons above the age of 16 (the typical age for starting in upper secondary education) with short residence time in Norway and without (registered) completed lower secondary education, are strongly underrepresented in Norwegian upper secondary education. Such results indicate that there exist great challenges in order to integrate these young persons in upper secondary education. Thus, one of the measures in the Norwegian Government’s strategic plan: “Equal Education in Practice! Strategy for better learning and greater participation of linguistic minorities in kindergartens, schools and education” reads: *“Measure to develop more goal-oriented teaching for students with insufficient education and with brief residence in Norway”*

(Measure 20.) Among other things, a pilot project has been implemented involving primary and lower secondary teaching within upper secondary education for language minority youth with limited education. This project is being evaluated by The National Centre for Multicultural Education (NAFO).

Goal in Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion:

Language minority children shall master the Norwegian language as early as possible in their schooling to ensure that they benefit from education.

Indicators:

- The proportion of children and young people receiving special language instruction
- Results from national tests in reading and mathematics in fourth grade for language minority children compared to all pupils

Status:

- Of a total of 619 000 pupils in primary and lower secondary in the school year 2007-2008, 40 017 pupils received special instruction in Norwegian, that is 6.5 per cent of all pupils or 71 per cent of language minority pupils.

Goal in Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion:

The proportion of children with immigrant parents completing upper secondary education shall correspond to the proportion of the total population.

Indicators:

- The proportion of children with immigrant parents going directly from lower to upper secondary education compared with the total number of pupils that year as a whole.
- The proportion of pupils with immigrant parents attaining general or vocational competence within five years after completing lower secondary school compared to the total number of pupils that year as a whole.

Status:

- In 2007, 96.8 per cent of pupils with immigrant parents made a direct transition from lower to upper secondary education, the same number as in 2006, and compared to 96.1 per cent of the population as a whole.
- A total of 65,2 per cent of pupils with immigrant parents who finished lower secondary school in 2001, attained full general or vocational competence within five years after completing lower secondary school. The proportion for all pupils in total was 68,4 per cent.

Goal in Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion:

The proportion of immigrants, arriving in Norway while they are in the age group for lower or upper secondary education, completing upper secondary education shall be increased.

Indicator:

The proportion of immigrants aged 13 to 16 when arriving in Norway who complete and pass upper secondary education before the age of 30.

Status:

- Of immigrants aged 13 when they arrived in Norway and who currently are between 20 and 30 years of age, 47,4 per cent have completed and passed upper secondary education, compared to 39,3 per cent in 2006. Looking closer at the age cohorts we see that only 24,4 per cent of those who are 20 years have completed and passed upper secondary education in normal time. In contrast 60,6 per cent of those who are 28 years have completed and passed upper secondary education. There is also a significant gender difference. 55,5 per cent of all immigrant women between 20 and 30 years have completed and passed upper secondary education but only 40 per cent of immigrant men. In 2006 the numbers were 53,4 and 38,9 per cent.
- Of immigrants aged 16 when they arrived in Norway and who currently are between 20 and 30 years of age, 31,7 per cent have completed and passed upper secondary education. Of those who are 20 years only 7 per cent have completed and passed upper secondary education compared to 55,7 per cent of those who are 28 years. Of all immigrants in this group, 40,3 per cent of the women and 25,3 per cent of the men have completed and passed upper secondary education, compared to 39,6 and 25,7 in 2006.

11.3 Adult education

Knowledge of the Norwegian language is an important precondition for active participation in the society. From September 2005 it is compulsory for newly arrived adult refugees and immigrants to participate in 300 lessons in Norwegian language training and social studies. Beyond the compulsory part, those who have a need for further training will have the opportunity to take more lessons (up to 3 000, depending on the needs of the individual).

The right and obligation to participate in training free of charge applies with some exceptions to those between 16 and 55 years who have been granted asylum, residence permit on humanitarian grounds, collective protection or a family immigration permit linked to any of these groups. The rights and obligations only apply to persons who have received their residence permit after September 2005.

Completion of the 300 hours language training is from the same date a condition for receiving a settlement permit and Norwegian citizenship. The training must be completed within the first three years in Norway.

Immigrants between 55 and 67 have a right, but no obligation to participate. Labour migrants from countries which are not part of the EEA/EFTA have an obligation, but no right to free courses. Persons from within the EEA/EFTA have neither the obligation nor the right to take part in language courses.

Those who have been granted a residence permit before September 2005 will still be offered non-mandatory classes free of charge in a transitional period of five years. They will be offered a Norwegian language course up to 850 lessons if they have

completed primary education and up to a total of 3 000 lessons if they are illiterate or have not completed primary education. The government compensates the municipalities financially for arranging such classes.

The right and obligation to Norwegian language training and social studies for adult immigrants was evaluated in 2006/2007 as to how the municipalities handle this right and obligation and how the new subsidy arrangement influences the municipalities' ability to run such training. Some main findings were:

- most municipalities offered participants training within three months of claim/application,
- there was a large degree of variation in how persons in the target group were made aware of their right and obligation,
- a conversation with a translator present was the most common assessment of the participant in the municipalities,
- the large municipalities often had more systematic assessment routines than smaller municipalities,
- about 80 per cent of the municipalities had given participants an individual plan,
- it appeared to be little user-influence on the plans due to participants' limited knowledge of Norwegian upon arrival,
- the majority of teachers had formal pedagogical training
- ordinary classroom teaching was most common,
- the new financing system did not give all municipalities the opportunity to fulfil the obligations dictated to them by the Introduction Act.

The smaller municipalities have difficulty fulfilling their obligations within the framework given by the subsidization arrangement. The large municipalities can to a higher degree create a reasonable economy for the training program, given their large-scale operating advantage. A positive aspect of the new arrangement is that subsidies are distributed based on more objective criteria. The new funding arrangement has however potential for improvement in order to achieve both increased efficiency, better results and better quality of the teaching.

Approximately 23 000 persons were registered as participants in the language training in October 2007, of which 60 per cent were persons with the right and obligation. Measuring of the results and effects of education is based on the number passed/failed examinations. The number of persons that meet for examinations has risen since the introduction of the right and obligation. Around 90 per cent pass the oral part of the exam, and this number has been fairly stable over the years. The percentage that passes the written exam lies at around 50 per cent which is considered unsatisfactory.

As a follow-up of the evaluation, work is under way to elucidate several questions regarding changes in the framework conditions for the introduction programme, and changes in the guidelines to the municipalities. The plan is to send out a draft document to a wide hearing around the turn of the year.

From 2003 language training in asylum reception centres was limited to persons with a residence permit, waiting for placement in a municipality. The present government reintroduced training in Norwegian for asylum seekers. From the autumn of 2007 asylum seekers receive 250 lessons of language training.

12 The labour market

12.1 Labour market policy

The responsibility for labour market policies rests with the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. Since mid-2006 the responsibilities of the Public Employment Service in implementing these policies have rested with the new Labour and Welfare Service (LWS). The new organisation was created by merging the Public Employment Service and the National Insurance Service. This was an important step towards bringing welfare recipients closer to the labour market and enabling more people to be included in gainful employment rather than having benefits as their main source of income. The new organisation works closely with the municipal social assistance services, and there will be ‘one stop shop’ services in each municipality to provide for coordinated services to the public.

The success of this new organisation requires an active approach towards the users, focusing on job-oriented activities and a follow-up system tailored to the individual needs. The LWS-offices are being set up during the period 2006 - 2009 to cover every municipality. The municipalities will continue to have the responsibility for the social assistance services. The LWS will have a regional office in each county as well as specialised service centres.

The labour market policy aims to achieve greater inclusion of immigrants in the labour market. Efforts to mobilise immigrant labour are important for the utilisation of resources in the Norwegian economy. Ensuring high employment is also the most important step in order to reduce social differences and poverty. Moreover, diversity can raise competence levels and stimulate the development of enterprises. In principle the LWS applies methods and measures that are part of the service vis-à-vis ordinary jobseekers and the vocationally disabled. The special unit “Intro Service” provides extended assistance to jobseekers with an immigrant background in some larger towns. It also assists other local offices in spreading competence.

A white paper that was submitted from the Government to the Storting in November 2006 presented initiatives that placed greater emphasis on user-orientation and measures suited to the individual job seeker⁸. This is significant in order to meet the particular needs of immigrants.

The Government presented in 2007 an Action plan for integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population, cf. chapter 10.2 where, amongst others, the following measures have been maintained or strengthened in 2008:

- A pilot project with moderate affirmative action for persons with immigrant background to state administration positions, cf. chapter 14.4.
- Active recruitment of persons with immigrant background to public sector institutions and the public health services, cf. chapter 14.4.
- Continued focus on entrepreneurship among immigrants.
- Increased focus on the use of labour market measures as part of the integration programme in the municipalities, cf. chapter 10.1.
- Strengthened programme for training at work-places.
- Measures directed at youth with an immigrant background.

⁸ Stortingsmelding nr. 9 (2006-2007): Arbeid, velferd og inkludering (White paper on work, welfare and inclusion).

- Free core time in day-care centres in certain areas, cf. chapter 11.1.

The Government aims to eradicate poverty and reduce social and economic differences, and presented in 2008 an action plan to combat poverty. One of the main measures is the implementation of a qualification programme with support for capacity enhancing activities for people with significantly impaired work and earnings capacities who have no or only very limited entitlements to subsistence benefits from the National Insurance scheme. The aim of the programme is to boost the opportunities for participation in working life. Many immigrants can benefit from this programme.

12.2 Labour market schemes

The emphasis of the LWS is primarily on job-seeking and self-activation in the early period of unemployment. In this phase LWS offers information, advice and close follow-up for those who need it. If this is not sufficient to get job-seekers into employment, consideration is given to offer participation in labour market schemes. In such schemes job practice and language tuition go hand in hand, and they are often seen as particularly useful for immigrants. This same may also be said for wage subsidies.

In 2008, immigrants, along with other vulnerable groups such as vocationally disabled, youths and long-term unemployed persons, are considered as special target groups for the labour market policies, and are given priority when it comes to participation in labour market measures. Almost 40 per cent of those participating in ordinary labour market measures are immigrants, most of them from countries outside the EEA-area. At the same time immigrants constitute 25 per cent of those registered unemployed.

The labour market schemes of the LWS can be divided into several categories: recruitment/ job-placement measures, job training and labour market training measures. For those immigrants who are in need of special assistance to enter or re-enter the labour market, training aimed at raising the skills of the unemployed and job-training measures are most commonly used, separately or in combination. The LWS has also developed courses and training activities which are designed for immigrants, consisting of qualification courses with practice positions. They involve labour market training and vocational training in combination with language training. The core principle for the LWS is that all assistance given is to be tailored to the individual's needs, taking the local labour market situation into consideration

Table 12.1 Participation in labour market schemes - region of origin. Per cent of total number aged 16-74. Second quarter 2003 – 2008

Region of origin	May 2003	May 2004	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008
Total population	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
Immigrants, total	2.0	2.3	1.8	1.3	1.4	1.5
Nordic countries	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Rest of Western Europe	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
EEA–countries in East-ern Europe				0.4	0.3	0.4
Rest of Eastern Europe*	2.4	2.8	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.9
North America, Oceania	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3
South and Central Amer-ica	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.3	1.5	1.6
Asia	2.8	3.1	2.4	1.7	1.9	2.0
Africa	3.9	4.1	3.5	2.5	3.2	3.6

* Excluding EEA –countries in Central and Eastern Europe

Source: SSB

Despite the falling unemployment rate, there was a slight increase in the number of immigrants on ordinary labour market schemes from 4 500 in May 2007 to 5 200 in May 2008. In total, 13 000 people participated in labour market schemes. Also among participants in the majority population, there was a slight increase of 375 participants. Immigrants from Africa had the highest participation rate in labour market schemes at 3.6 per cent in the second quarter 2008. Certain groups of newly arrived immigrants are covered by the introduction programme, cf. chapter 10.7

The Government continues its efforts on labour market schemes and targeted assistance for immigrants through the action plan on integration and social inclusion of the immigrant population, cf. chapter 10.2. Additional efforts will be made to integrate the new immigrants in the labour market and to give special assistance to the immigrants who have resided in Norway for a long period but still face difficulties finding stable employment. In 2008 there is also a special focus on groups of immigrant women with low employment rate.

12.3 The labour market outcome for immigrants

Employment

The register based employment rate⁹ among immigrants (i.e. people born abroad by foreign-born parents registered as settled in Norway for at least six months) increased from 60.1 per cent from the 4th quarter of 2006 to 63.3 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007.

⁹ The employment rates up until 2001 included only the number of registered employees. However, from 2002, also short term hired employment and self-employment was taken into consideration. The rates from 2002 are therefore much higher than those reported previously. Cf. table A24 and A25 for more details.

From 2005 the registered employees also count those aged 15, so that the age group now used are 15-74 whereas before it was 16-74.

The employment rate of immigrants increased by more than 3 percentage points in this period whereas in the total population the increase was 1.6 percentage points. Over the past two years (4th quarter 2005 – 4th quarter 2007), the employment rate of immigrants has increased by 6.2 percentage points. The corresponding figure for the entire population is 3.1 percentage points. Male immigrants had an employment rate at 69.2 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007, while the employment rate was 57.3 per cent for female immigrants. In the population as a whole the rates were 74.8 and 68.4 per cent respectively. The increase in employment from 2006 to 2007 was 3.5 percentage points for male immigrants and 2.8 percentage points for females.

Table 12.2 Employment rate, total population and immigrants. Per cent of total number aged 16-74 in each group. 2003 – 2005 and aged 15-74. 4th quarter 2005 – 2007

	2003*	2004*	2005*	2005	2006	2007
Population	69.4	69.3	69.4	68.5	70.0	71.6
Immigrants	56.6	56.6	57.5	57.1	60.1	63.3

Source: SSB

There are significant differences in the employment rates among immigrants from different regions of origin. Whereas immigrants from Nordic countries had an employment rate of 74.5 per cent in 2006, the rate among immigrants from African countries was 49 per cent, from Asia 56.3 per cent, from Eastern Europe (non-EEA-members) 61.9 per cent and from Latin America 65.3 per cent. The employment rate for immigrants from the new EU countries was higher than for immigrants from Western Europe, with 75.9 per cent compared to 72 per cent. All immigrant groups experienced an increased employment rate from 4th quarter 2006 to 4th quarter 2007, ranging from a 1 percentage point increase for immigrants from Nordic countries to a 5.8 percentage points increase for immigrants from the new EEA member countries and a 3.8 percentage points increase for immigrants from Africa.

Even though all immigrant groups over the past year have had a strong increase in the employment rate, there are still large variations in the employment rate according to country or region of origin. An important explanation is that work is the reason for immigration for many immigrants from the EEA-area, in particular from the new member countries. For immigrants from Africa, in particular, there are a relative high number of refugees with a fairly short term of residence in Norway. These have a low employment rate. From some countries in Africa and Asia, the employment rate for women is low, something which lowers the overall employment rate for those coming from these countries. Differences in the age structure and educational background are other explanatory factors. When taking the differences in age structure between the total population and most immigrant groups into account, the “underemployment” of immigrants is even more pronounced, as there is a higher proportion of immigrants in working age than among the total population.

Employment rates increases with the length of residence, first and foremost among immigrants from outside the EEA-area. All immigrant groups had an increased employment rate from 4th quarter 2006 to 4th quarter 2007. Among immigrants who had lived in Norway four years or less, the employment rate was 61.2 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007. This is a significant increase of nearly 8 percentage points from the 4th quarter of 2006 (53.4 per cent). Those with four to six years of residence had in the 4th quarter of 2007 an employment rate nearly 3 percentage points higher than

those with a residence period of less than four years. In the 4th quarter of 2006, the difference between these two groups with different length of residence in Norway was nearly 7 percentage points. The levelling of employment rates between groups of immigrants with different length of residence may indicate a more favourable labour market. This gives immigrants easier access to employment, even for those with only a short period of residence. Among immigrants with seven years of residence or more, the employment rate was in the 4th quarter 2007 only 0.3 percentage points higher than the group with a shorter length of residence, compared to a difference of 2.5 percentage points in 4th quarter of 2006. Among immigrants from outside the EEA-area there was a somewhat stronger increase in the employment rate for those with long period of residence in Norway. Among immigrants from the EEA-area with seven years of residence or more the employment rate decreased due to the relative higher portions of elderly in this population.

Table 12.3 Employment rate according to region of origin and number of years of residence in Norway. Per cent of persons aged 15-74. 4th quarter 2007

	- 4 years	4-6 years	7+ years
Immigrants, total	61.2	64.0	64.3
Nordic countries	78.2	80.9	72.6
Rest of Western Europe	72.0	78.7	70.9
EEA–countries in Eastern Europe	77.7	79.4	69.3
Rest of Eastern Europe	50.0	66.1	64.5
North America, Oceania	56.0	67.8	67.8
Latin America	53.3	68.9	68.7
Asia	42.4	58.4	60.1
Africa	40.9	50.5	52.6

Source: SSB

Immigrants from Somalia and Iraq had the lowest employment rates with 35.5 per cent and 45.6 per cent respectively. These low rates must be seen in relation to the relative high shares of refugees with short time of residence in Norway within these two groups. However, the employment rate of some immigrant groups with a longer tradition of residence in Norway, such as immigrants from Morocco and Pakistan, were also less than 50 per cent (48.2 and 48.0 per cent respectively). The low overall employment rate of immigrants from these two countries can partly be accounted for by the low female employment rates of 39.1 per cent for immigrants from Morocco and 31.4 per cent for immigrants from Pakistan. The corresponding male employment rate was 54.8 per cent for immigrants from Morocco and 63.5 per cent for immigrants from Pakistan. The female employment rate is also very low for immigrants from Iraq (32.0 per cent), Afghanistan (30.8 per cent) and Somalia (23.9 per cent).

On the other hand, immigrants from some Asian countries had relatively high employment rates. For instance, immigrants from India, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka, all had an employment rate above 60 per cent, which place them close to immigrants from many European countries. These groups have relatively large groups of long time residents in Norway, or they have a relatively large share of recent labour immigrants. The female employment rate of all these countries were also above 60 per cent.

Unemployment among immigrants

Although the difference in unemployment rates between many groups of immigrants residing in Norway and native Norwegians has narrowed over the past years, in general immigrants have more problems in finding and keeping jobs than native Norwegians. The register based unemployment rate among immigrants fell from 5.0 per cent in May 2007 to 4.0 per cent in May 2008. The unemployment for the total labour force decreased from 1.7 per cent to 1.5 per cent during the same period.

Over the past years, the unemployment rate for immigrants has dropped significantly. In the 2nd quarter of 2008, the registered unemployment rate for immigrants stood at 4.0 per cent compared to 9.0 per cent in the 2nd quarter of 2005. In the population as a whole, the registered unemployment rate decreased from 3.3 per cent to 1.5 per cent in the same period. Although the unemployment rate for immigrants has had a very favourable development over the past years, the unemployment rate is still nearly 3 times higher than for the population as a whole. The inflow of new migrants is an explanatory factor to this difference. Inadequate knowledge of the Norwegian language, insufficient or unrecognised education, lack of work experience from - and knowledge about - Norwegian working life, and last but not least discrimination in the labour market are all factors with large impact on this situation.

Table 12.4 Unemployment rate - region of origin. Per cent of the labour force. Second quarter 2003 – 2008

	May 2003	May 2004	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008
Population, total	3.7	3.7	3.3	2.5	1.7	1.5
Immigrants, total	9.6	9.8	9.0	7.3	5.0	4.0
Nordic countries	4.4	4.1	3.6	2.8	1.9	1.6
Rest of Western Europe	4.4	4.4	3.9	2.5	1.8	1.6
EEA-countries in Eastern Europe			4.6	3.4	2.1	2.1
Rest of Eastern Europe*	10.5	10.3	10.6	8.9	5.8	4.8
North America, Oceania	5.7	5.3	4.5	3.6	2.2	1.8
South and Central America	11.2	10.8	10.1	8.0	5.0	3.9
Asia	13.0	13.1	12.3	10.0	7.1	5.6
Africa	17.8	18.2	17.5	14.9	11.2	9.5

* EEA –countries in Central and Eastern Europe not included

Source: SSB

There are significant differences in the unemployment rates of immigrants from different regions. Whereas the rate for immigrants from Nordic countries and Western Europe is at about the same level as Norwegian nationals, unemployment rates among immigrants from Asian and African countries are considerably higher. Immigrants from Africa had the highest unemployment rate at 9.5 per cent in May 2007, followed by 5.6 per cent for immigrants from Asia. The high rate among Africans, with Somalia as a major country of origin, is to some extent possible to explain with reference to the composition of the group. Compared to other groups there are many refugees with short time of residence in this group.

The unemployment rate among immigrants from South and Central America and Eastern Europe (non-EEA-members) was 3.9 and 4.8 per cent respectively. Immi-

grants from Western Europe had together with immigrants from other Nordic countries the lowest unemployment rate at 1.6 per cent. Unemployment among immigrants from North America and Oceania was 1.8 per cent. However, this is the smallest immigrant group, with only 90 registered unemployed. Immigrants from Africa had a decline in unemployment rate of 1.7 percentage points from May 2007 to May 2008, although from a comparably high level. In the same period the unemployment rate fell with 1 percentage points for immigrants as a total.

The unemployment among immigrants from the new EEA-countries was 2.1 per cent at the end of May 2007. This is much lower than the rate among immigrants from Eastern European countries.

The registered unemployment rate among both men and women was respectively 1.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent for all persons in the labour force by the second quarter of 2008. The corresponding rates for immigrants were 3.9 per cent for men and 4.2 per cent for women. For women, the registered unemployment rate decreased by 0.4 percentage points in the entire population and by 0.9 percentage points in the immigrant population from the second quarter of 2007 to the second quarter of 2008. Registered unemployment fell by 0.8 percentage points among immigrant men, whereas the in fell and by 0.2 percentage points for men in the population as a whole in the same period.

The register based unemployment rate only reflects the number of persons who are actively seeking employment through the employment services; that is, the number of persons who are registered as such with the labour and welfare service.

Employment among Norwegian born persons with immigrant parents

Norwegian born with immigrant parents (children of immigrants) represent a young section of the population, and 44 per cent within the age bracket 15-74 years are under 20 years of age. Many of these are therefore in education and do not take part in the labour market. Norwegians born with immigrant parents in the age group 20-24 years had an employment rate of 72.6 per cent in the 4th quarter of 2007. This is 10 percentage points higher than the employment rate of the same age group of immigrants and only 3 percentage points under the employment rate of the total population in this age group. The difference in employment rate between these groups of the population is similar for the age group 25-29 years. Norwegian born with immigrant parents is not a large group in the labour market, accounting only for 0.5 per cent of the total employed population in the 4th quarter of 2007 (12 440 persons employed).

Immigrant women and employment

About half of all immigrants in Norway are women. Between 1986 and 2006, female immigrants constituted 51 per cent of the total net migration of foreign citizens. Family immigration are the most common reason for female immigrants to come to Norway. Many reunite with an immigrant spouse. Since the 1990s there has been an increasing trend that men without an immigrant background marry women from non-Nordic countries. During the period 1990 to 2006, four out of ten refugees were women. More women than men come to Norway to study, but few women immigrate due to labour. Still many immigrant women enter the labour market in Norway.

In the population as a whole, employment among both men and women is high, and the difference between male and female employment is small. Among immigrants, the number of employed women is much lower than the number of employed men.

But 82 700 immigrant women were employed in the fourth quarter of 2006. Women constituted 46 per cent of all employed immigrants. A total of 55 per cent of all immigrant women (15-74 years) were employed in the fourth quarter of 2006. This is low compared to all women in Norway and compared to immigrant men. The gender gap is also larger among immigrants than in the total population.

Women from Asia and Africa deviate most clearly from the total population concerning employment and participation in the labour force. Some are in education and some of the newly-arrived immigrants may attend the introduction programme, cf. 10.7. But it is likely that the majority is at home. They may choose not to work or to stay at home with small children because they cannot find work, or because they do not register as unemployed. The same pattern are found among well- established groups like Pakistani, Turkish or Moroccan women. Cf. Daugstad and Sandnes, 2008, listed in chapter 15.

13 Participation in elections

13.1 Local elections

After residing continuously in Norway for more than 3 years, all foreign nationals have the right to vote in Municipal and County Council elections (local elections). From 1999 onwards nationals from the Nordic countries have had such voting rights if they have moved to Norway by March 31 in the year of the election.

The number of potential voters with immigrant background has increased markedly over the last years, mostly as a consequence of past high immigration, but also because of a younger age distribution among immigrants. In total, 280 000 persons with immigrant background had the right to vote in the local election in 2007, constituting 7.7 per cent of the eligible population. Compared to the election in 2003, this is an increase of more than 50 000 persons.

This growth has been largest among immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin-America: The number of such immigrants entitled to vote increased by 45 per cent from 1999 to 2003, and by another 45 per cent from 2003 to 2007. Close to a 100 000 of the immigrants entitled to vote had their background from Asia, 60 000 from Western Europe, and 40 000 from Eastern Europe. Of single countries, we find the largest groups from Sweden and Denmark, followed by Pakistan, Vietnam and Bosnia-Herzegovina. A majority of the electorate with background from Pakistan, Vietnam and Bosnia are Norwegian citizens, whereas most of the Swedish and Danish voters have maintained their original citizenship.

The electoral turnout in local elections in Norway has stabilized on a level around 60 percent in the last elections. In 2007, 61 per cent of the total population voted in the local elections. The electoral turnout among the immigrant population has traditionally been significantly lower, particularly among foreign citizens, whom since 1983 (when the right to vote for foreign citizens with 3 years of residence was established) have had an electoral turnout around 30 percent. The electoral turnout has been somewhat higher amongst naturalized Norwegian citizens: In 2007, 40 per cent in this group voted. Among foreign citizens, the differences in electoral turnout between the different regions of origin are small. On the contrary, Norwegian citizens with a western immigrant background have had a substantially higher turnout (64 per cent in 2007) than Norwegian citizens originally from countries in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and South America (37 per cent).

It is important to emphasize that there are vast differences in turnout also among immigrants from different countries. Among Norwegian citizens with background from Sri Lanka, 51 percent voted, whereas among immigrants with background from Serbia only 16 per cent participated. Rates of participation in the three latest local elections are presented in table 13.1 below. The low turnout in the immigrant population makes their potential influence on the final election outcome less powerful than it might have been. In Oslo for instance, immigrants from Asia, Africa etc. constituted 15 percent of the electorate, but their share of the final vote was only 9 percent.

Table 13.1 Participation in local elections by country background, gender and citizenship. Per cent of the electorate. 1999, 2003 and 2007

Categories	1999	2003	2007
Total population	62	59	61
Foreign qualified voters	38	34	36
- A/B*	40/33	39/25	42/28
- women/men	41/34	35/33	39/34
Naturalized voters	50	43	40
- A/B*	66/43	64/36	64/37
- women/men	52/49	41/41	42/39

Source: Statistics Norway, Election Statistics

* A: Western Europe, North America and Oceania

B: Asia, Africa, Central- and South America and Eastern Europe.

13.2 Representation in municipal councils

Out of the 62 500 candidates to be elected for the Norwegian municipal councils, close to 1800 had immigrant background, constituting 2.8 percent of the total. 1026 of these candidates had their origin in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe or Latin America. Nearly half of them were women, a higher share of women than we find among the candidates in general. Close to half of the candidates had Asian background, a quarter from Eastern Europe, a share closely resembling the composition of immigrants in Norway. Of single countries, most had background from Iran, followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina and Pakistan.

A total of 223 candidates with immigrant background were elected to the municipal councils. This included 140 with their background in Asia, Africa etc.. This was an increase of 48 representatives compared to the 2003-election. The share of women was high (46 percent), higher than the number of women elected among all candidates (37 percent). The highest numbers of elected representatives were from Iran, Pakistan and India, and 14 percent of all candidates from these countries were elected. Among Indian and Pakistani candidates one out three candidates got elected, while only 6 percent of the candidates from Bosnia-Herzegovina got elected.

At first glance, immigrants from Asia, Africa etc. seem to be *underrepresented*, considering that they constituted 5 percent of the eligible voting population, but only got 1.3 percent of the elected representatives. However, such a comparison must also take into account the underlying regional distribution of the immigrant population. Norway consists of 430 municipalities and municipal councils. In 200 of these municipalities the share of immigrants from these parts of the world is below 1 per cent; only 21 municipalities had a share of such immigrants higher than the national average of 5 per cent. Hence, an analysis of representation must also take into account where immigrants actually live. We will then find not only that immigrants are overrepresented in 50 of the municipalities, but also that as many as 60 per cent of the immigrants from Asia, Africa etc. live in a municipality where they are *overrepresented* in their local municipal council.

13.3 National elections

Norwegian nationality is a precondition for voting in national elections for representatives to the national assembly, Stortinget. The next election will be in September

2009. During the fall of 2008 the nomination of candidates by the parties has been taking place. There is a lively debate on whether candidates with immigrant background will be nominated to places on the party-lists with a high probability of being elected.

At the national election in 2005, 123 700 Norwegian nationals with immigrant background were entitled to vote. This was an increase of 24 000 since the election in 2001, cf. table A26. In Oslo, approximately 12 per cent of the electors were Norwegian nationals with immigrant background compared to 3.6 for the country as a whole. There was a decrease in the number of immigrants from western countries entitled to vote. The largest groups entitled to vote originated in Pakistan (12 700), Vietnam (11 000) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (7 900). There was an increase of 6 600 persons from Bosnia-Herzegovina who were entitled to vote in the national election in 2005 compared to the election in 2001, due to a high rate of naturalization, cf. chapter 9.2.

In the election in 2005, the participation of Norwegian nationals with immigrant background was 53 per cent compared to 52 per cent in 2001 and 63 per cent in 1997. Compared to the population as a whole, their participation in 2005 was 24 percentage points lower than for the rest of the electors. A reduction of electors from western countries, a predominance of young electors and a shorter period of residence in Norway are some explanations of the reduction in election turnout among Norwegians with immigrant background.

55 per cent of the women and 51 per cent of the men with immigrant background used their right to vote in 2005. Nordic women had the highest participation rate (78 per cent) whereas women with background from Central- and Eastern Europe had the lowest (51 per cent). Considering other parts of the world, women of Sri Lankan origin had a participation rate of almost 70 per cent, more than women from many European countries. Only 42 per cent of the men with background from Central- and Eastern Europe used their right to vote.

The participation rate for the youngest voters (18-21) was in general lower than for other age groups, with an interesting exception for the youngest voters with Somali parents. Their participation rate was higher, almost at the same level as among young people with no immigrant background.

In the present Storting (2005-2009) there has been only one permanent member who belongs to a visible minority and has two immigrant parents. In addition there is one member who is an immigrant himself who has been meeting as a permanent member since 2007 due to another member becoming state secretary for the government.

14 Racism and discrimination

14.1 Legislation

The Act on prohibition against discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, etc. (the Anti Discrimination Act), in force as of 1.1.2006, applies to all areas of society, except for family life and personal relationships. It prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent, color, language, religion or belief. The act protects against both direct and indirect discrimination. It covers harassment on the same grounds and instructions to discriminate or harass. The act has a ban on reprisals against a person who files or intends to file a complaint about violation of the act. This protection also covers witnesses. Furthermore it is forbidden to participate in discrimination.

From 1 January 2009, a new general duty to promote equality and prevent discrimination enter into force in the Anti-discrimination act. The general duty applies to public authorities, private and public employers and social partners in working life. The duty is followed by general reporting obligation.

From January 2006 an Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud has both proactive and supervisory functions in relation to the Anti-Discrimination Act, and other civil legislation in the fields of anti-discrimination, such as the Gender Equality Act, the antidiscrimination regulations in the Working Environment Act and in housing legislation.

The Ombud and an Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal make decisions on individual complaints concerning discrimination. The Ombud also has the task of monitoring the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The role of the Ombud is to investigate incidents where alleged breaches of the laws have taken place. Following investigations of complaints, the Ombud may then make a recommendation. In the field of employment the Ombud encourages employers to avoid ethnic discrimination and promote ethnic equality in their enterprises. The Ombud has a consultancy and advisory service that is offered free of charge to individual employers in both private and public enterprises. An important function is to disseminate good examples and methods and help to improve knowledge in this field. Out of a total of 152 cases in 2007, the Ombud received 49 complaints on discrimination based on ethnicity, language and religion. Most of these cases were related to employment. Furthermore, the Ombud received a total number of 1007 cases concerning guidance. 210 of these cases were based on ethnicity, language and religion.

A Commission to propose a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation was appointed by the Government 1. June 2007 and shall submit its recommendations within 1. July 2009. A partial recommendation on the exceptions for religious communities was submitted by 1. January 2008.

Different Acts prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, national origin, descent, color, language, religion, ethical and cultural orientation, political views, membership of a trade union, sexual orientation, disability or age, as well as discrimination of employees who work part time or on a temporary basis. The protection against discrimination varies depending on the basis of the discrimination.

The Commission shall submit a proposal for a compiled and more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. According to the mandate, the Commission shall consider the following questions:

- A compiled act against discrimination, including the question if new groups should be protected by the anti-discrimination legislation.
- Abolition of the special exceptions for religious communities from the prohibition on discrimination on the basis of gender or homosexual cohabitation in the Gender Equality Act and the Working Environment Act.
- Ratification and implementation of The European Human Rights Convention Protocol 12 on discrimination.
- Anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution, unless a commission appointed by the Parliament is mandated to consider this question.

14.2 New plan of action against ethnic discrimination

Combating racism and discrimination must be based on long-term, continuous, focused attention. The Government therefore intends to present a new national action plan against ethnic discrimination in April (tentative) 2009. It will run for four years.

The measures in the plan will be targeted on combating racism and discrimination, both direct discrimination and indirect discrimination. The purpose of the measures are to promote equality, ensure equal opportunities and rights and prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, religion etc.

The plan will particularly apply to the immigrant population, national minorities and the Sami population. A gender perspective will be integrated.

The new plan of action will focus on the following areas:

- Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Public sector, both state sector and local authorities
- Discrimination at nightclubs, restaurants, discotheques etc.

Measures to combat discrimination will be focused on those who are responsible for discrimination - in other words primarily the majority population. The plan will particularly focus on initiatives and actions taken by Norwegian authorities. But we would also like to encourage greater local involvement in the work to combat racism and discrimination by cooperating with local authorities, non-governmental organizations working against racism and discrimination and social partners in the labour market.

14.3 Public debate

The expression of anti-immigrant views in political and public debate has become more common in Norway in recent years. There has for instance been a debate about the local resistance in municipalities related to establishing reception centers for asylum seekers. There has also been a rise in generalizations and stereotypes concerning persons of Muslim background.

Furthermore there has been a broad public debate in Norway the last year about ethnic discrimination exercised by some public sector authorities. The public debate has in particular focused on the use of the term racism.

14.4 Active recruitment

One measure in the Action plan for integration and social inclusion is active recruitment of immigrants to public administration and health authorities. Through their allotment letters all agencies within the public administration and the health authorities are instructed to draw up plans aimed at increasing the recruitment of immigrants.

As mentioned above, public agencies are from 1st of January 2009 obliged to report on this matter. In the public administration, employers are obliged to call in at least one qualified immigrant applicant for interviews when hiring personnel. Managers of all state-owned enterprises are urged to introduce the same scheme and the Government has also called on the privately-owned companies to follow this practice.

Moderate affirmative action for immigrants applying for public administration positions will be tested in a 2-year pilot project, starting in 2008. This means that if candidates have equal or approximately equal qualifications, a candidate with an immigrant background is to be preferred.

The rate of immigrant employees is increasing. As of October 2007, the percentage of employees from Asia, Africa and South America in the state administration was 3.2. In 2004, the share was 2.3 per cent

As of April 2008, more than 8 per cent of the employees in fully state-owned enterprises were immigrants. The percentage of employees from Asia, Africa and South America has also increased slightly (5.3 per cent in 2007). Almost 50 per cent of the enterprises have immigrants employed in executive positions. The same share of enterprises has implemented a practice on calling in qualified immigrants for interview. 3 out of 4 have made adaptations for diversity at the place of work.

15 Information and recent reports

Updated statistics on immigration and immigrants from Statistics Norway are available in English at:

http://www.ssb.no/innvandring_en/

Updated statistics and information on applications, permits, rules and regulations etc. are available from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration at:

<http://www.udi.no/default.aspx?id=2112>

In addition the directorate publishes annually (in March) an Annual Report and Facts and Figures. The most recent editions are found here:

<http://www.udi.no/templates/OversiktssideType1.aspx?id=4643>

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Brochmann, Grete and Kjeldstadli, Knut, 2008
A history of immigration - The case of Norway 900 – 2000
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Daugstad, Gunnlaug and Sandnes, Toril, 2008
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http://www.regjeringen.no/Rpub/STM/20062007/016EN/PDFS/STM200620070016000EN_PDFS.pdf

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Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2006
Plan of Action for Integration and Social Inclusion 2007-2009
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/aid/doc/rapporter_planer/planer/2006/Action-Plan-for-Integration-and-Social-I.html?id=271538

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