

The Norwegian Ministry
of Labour and Social Inclusion



Labour Social Inclusion Welfare



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



Extensive responsibilities

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The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion is responsible for the introduction of major reforms and important aspects of Norwegian policy. In 2007 and in the years ahead, the following tasks will have a central place in the work of the Ministry:

The NAV Reform

The NAV Reform is currently being implemented. The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV) was formally established on 1 July 2006. At the same time, the National Employment Service, the National Insurance Organisation and NAV-interim were closed down. The first 25 pilot offices opened in autumn 2006. By the end of 2009, there will be joint labour and welfare offices that cover all the municipalities in Norway (NAV Offices).

Labour, welfare and social inclusion

In autumn 2006, the Government presented proposals for new policy instruments in the administration of labour and welfare, the so-called Labour, Welfare and Social Inclusion proposals. Together with the NAV Reform these proposals constitute a comprehensive change of policy in the field of labour and welfare. Among other things, the reform entails a new model for following up people on sick leave, a qualification programme for groups at risk, more work-oriented measures and services, prevention through the implementation of special arrangements in the workplace and the coordinated use of policy instruments through the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation.

The Pension Reform

The Pension Reform will be implemented from 2010, and a considerable amount of work remains before this can happen. The reform will be further developed in the years ahead, among other things by making adjustments in relation to the AFP collective early retirement scheme and disability pensions.

New Immigration Act

A proposal for a new Immigration Act was put to the Storting (the Norwegian parliament) in spring 2007. This is a major and highly demanding task, and the legislative work will be followed by the adaptation of regulations, information work and efforts to secure understanding and support for the new act.

Labour immigration

The Government plans to present a White Paper on labour immigration in spring 2008. The White Paper will contain a discussion of existing policies and lay the foundations for a robust policy for labour immigration that facilitates access to labour in line with short-term and long-term requirements in the employment market.

Sami policy

The Government plans to present a White Paper on Sami policy. The White Paper will raise important issues the underlying principles for which require clarification, including the values on which the Government's Sami policy should be based, further work on the consultation scheme, clarification of the formal position of the Sami Parliament, including its relationship to the new regional level of government and the municipalities, land administration and conservation, the policy for the Northern areas and economic development.



Areas of responsibility

The labour market

The goal of our labour market policy is to promote a well-functioning labour market with a high degree of participation in employment. Norway wishes to have inclusive and well-ordered workplaces that make good use of the available labour. Through pursuing an active labour market policy, we wish to ensure good access to labour, to combat people leaving the workplace to become long-term recipients of benefits and to reduce and prevent unemployment. Through our senior policy, we wish to encourage more people to remain longer in employment, so that the resources of elderly employees can be utilised in the workplace.

The main goal of our income policy and the collaboration with the social partners on income policy is to coordinate wage formation and thus contribute to moderate inflation and wage growth, thereby providing a better basis for permanent high employment and low unemployment.

The working environment

The goal of the Government's policy for the working environment and safety at work is to ensure that workplaces have room for everyone, that employees' safety and protection is ensured and that appropriate adaptations are made to developments in business and industry. The main strategy is to encourage enterprises to prevent accidents and damage to health through engaging in systematic efforts to safeguard health, safety and the working environment. The main policy instruments at the authorities'

disposal in this context are regulations, supervisory authorities, guidance, the development of knowledge and cooperation.

Welfare

The aim of the Government's welfare policy is to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities, rights and obligations to participate in society and make the best use of their resources, irrespective of economic or social background. It is an important welfare policy goal that as many people as possible are able to provide for themselves through employment. It is an overriding long-term goal to eradicate poverty, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion endeavours to improve living conditions and the opportunities available to those members of society who have the lowest income and poorest living conditions.

Our welfare policy aims to ensure income for people who, for health or other reasons, are unable to work. This policy of ensuring people income is an important contribution to reducing differences in income and living conditions in society. The policy of ensuring people income is also intended to stimulate people to work and take education. The Ministry is also responsible for the coordination and follow-up of the Inclusive Workplace Agreement.

Pensions

The goal of the Government's pensions policy is to ensure that people have income in their old age and



to provide for surviving family members. In 2007, a broad compromise was agreed in the Storting on the future pensions system. The new pensions system, which will be introduced from 2010, is based on four main goals. It shall be financially and socially sustainable, provide good motivation for work, have a good redistributive and gender equality profile and it shall be uncomplicated and easy to understand.

The new pension system will mean that annual pension benefits will be more closely linked to earned income throughout one's working life than is the case today. The new pension system will mean that everyone will be able to take out pension benefits from the age of 62.

Immigration

The goal of immigration, asylum and refugee policies is to ensure socially expedient and regulated immigration and to protect refugees. The regulation of immigration shall be in accordance with our international obligations and the need to recruit labour from abroad, and it shall contribute to cultural exchanges and the exchange of knowledge.

Norway endeavours to ensure that refugees are given protection in proximity to areas of conflict. Where this is not possible, Norway contributes by accepting people who cannot be ensured such protection and by giving them a safe future here in Norway. Reception services for asylum seekers shall be differentiated and relatively simple.

Integration and diversity

The Government's policy for integration and diversity is intended to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities, rights and obligations to participate in society and make the best use of their resources.

The integration policy aims to enable new immigrants to participate in society and provide for themselves as far as possible. The policy for diversity and inclusion focuses on society as a whole and aims to remove barriers to participation and provide equal opportunities in all areas of society. Efforts to combat discrimination, prejudice and racism are important if we are to attain the goal of equal opportunities for everyone. On the other hand, it is also essential that everyone who lives here in Norway participates actively in society and endorses the country's laws and fundamental democratic values.

Indigenous people

The basis for Norway's Sami policy is that Norway as a state is established on the territories of two peoples, Norwegians and the Sami people, and that both these peoples have an equal right to develop their culture and their language. Consideration for Sami interests shall be included as an element in the formation of policy in all relevant areas. The Government shall also contribute to the development of international policy on indigenous peoples and cooperate with the other Nordic countries on Sami policy.

National minorities

Groups with a long-standing attachment to the country are defined as national minorities. In Norway, these groups are Kvens (people of Finnish descent in northern Norway), Jews, Forest Finns, Roma/ Gypsies and Romani people/ Travellers. The Government emphasises the goals enshrined in the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The authorities wish to maintain a close dialogue with the organisations that represent the national minorities in order to ensure that their views are heard.

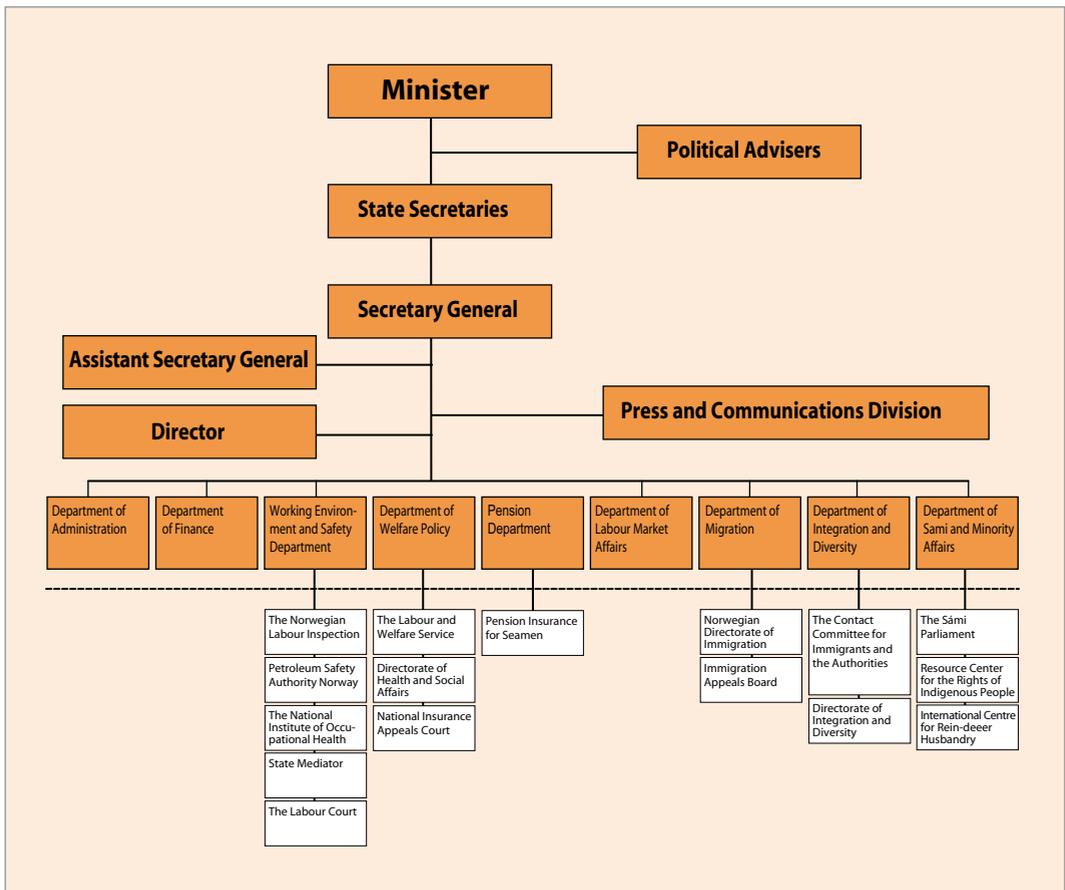
Important laws

The administration of laws and regulations is an important part of the Ministry's responsibilities. This includes assessing whether laws are expedient and drafting proposals for amendments to existing laws and new laws for consideration by the Storting.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion is responsible for administering the following laws, among others:

- The Labour Market Act
- The Working Environment Act
- The National Insurance Act
- The Social Services Act – social security benefits and the qualification programme
- The Nationality Act
- The Immigration Act

Organisational chart



Budget

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has NOK 239 billion at its disposal in the national budget for 2007, NOK 214 billion of which relates to the national insurance scheme. This amounts to 30 per cent of the national budget, excluding allocations to the Government Pension Fund.

Budget 2008

EXPENDITURE ITEMS

National budget, Min. Labour/Soc. Inclusion	26.3
National Insurance	226.5
Total expenditure	252.8

Broken down by area

Ensuring income and single providers	109.0
Pensioners etc.	106.7
Labour market	10.7
Admin., management and development, Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation	10.5
Living conditions	9.0
Integration and diversity	4.5
Protection and immigration	1.4
Working environment and safety	0.7
Sami people and national minorities	0.2

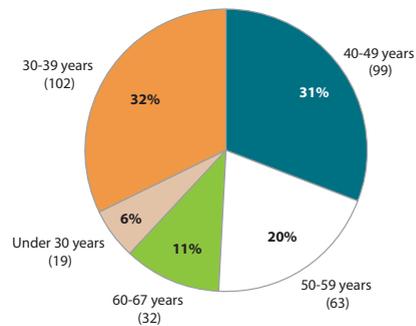
Important individual expenditure items

Old age	101.1
Unemployment benefit	4.8
Occupational rehabilitation	11.5
Sickness benefit	30.4
Disability	54.9
Basic and supplementary benefit, aids etc.	8.3
Loss of provider and single providers	6.5
Medical rehabilitation	8.3

Who works in the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion?

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has approximately 315 employees, 63 per cent of whom are women and 37 per cent men.

The average age of Ministry staff as of 1 January 2007 was 43.9 years. There are most employees in the age groups 30–39 and 40–49.



Most of the Ministry's staff have university or university college degrees. Most staff with higher education have law or social science degrees. Each of these two groups makes up 31 per cent of the staff. Political scientists are the largest group among those with social science degrees, 33 in all. There are 28 economists and 10 business economists.

The category Other Higher Education includes people with Bachelor-level degrees, in addition to degrees in librarianship, journalism and aesthetic and arts subjects. Seventeen per cent of the Ministry's employees belong in this category.

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More information about the Ministry is available at
www.regjeringen.no/aid