

## Factsheet: Norwegian Youth Party Organisations

The seven different political parties currently representing in the Norwegian Parliament are popular movements with strong historical bonds, a membership-based internal democracy, and local chapters all over the country. All these have their own youth organisations referred to as 'youth parties'. More than 21 000 young people are members of a political youth party (numbers from 2008).

The most numerous of these in terms of members is the The Labour Party Youth (AUF) with approx 9500 members in 2008. Established in 1903, it is also the oldest.

The main activities of the youth parties include: recruitment of members and voters for the main party, engaging members in political work and election campaigns, and importantly also offering political education and an important social arena for youth that wishes political involvement. Youth parties often perceive themselves as an important corrective – both ideologically and politically – to their respective main parties. They arrange events and gatherings such as trainings, conferences, debates and also summer camps for their members and sympathisers.

Every election year, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training arranges trial elections (also known as 'school elections') a few weeks prior to national and regional elections. All high school students (aged 16 to 19) are invited to vote in these trial elections. In correlation with the school elections, panel debates are arranged in high schools where all the youth parties are represented. This holds a function of political education both for those active in the youth parties as well as the students that attend the debates. Subsequently the students vote in the school elections, and for those aged 18 and over, also in the real elections some weeks later.

The eight largest youth parties in Norway comprise:

- Arbeidaranes Ungdomsfylking (AUF) (Labour Party Youth), established 1903
- Noregs Unge Venstre (Norway's Young Liberals), 1909
- Unge Høgre (Young Conservatives), 1922
- Kristeleg Folkepartis Ungdom (Christian People's Party Youth), 1946
- Senterungdomen (The Centre Youth), 1949
- Sosialistisk Ungdom (Socialist Youth), 1975
- Framstegspartiets Ungdom (Progress Party Youth), 1978
- Raud Ungdom (Red Youth), 1963<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the youth party organisations there are also several political youth organisations in Norway, who are not attached to a political party but engages in specific political issues and offer many of the same types of activities as the youth party organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> *The main party of Red Youth, Rødt is not represented in Parliament in the current parliamentary period.*