

Political platform

for a government formed by the Conservative Party and the Progress Party
Sundvolden, 7 October 2013

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1 – Introduction

In the autumn 2013 general election, the parties Venstre (social liberal party), the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party won a historically strong mandate from the electorate. The four parties have agreed to work together to ensure that this new political majority is reflected in government policy. This has been set out in a cooperation agreement between the four parties, which outlines a common set of values, political priorities and positions, and describes the form the cooperation will take during the coming parliamentary term. The Government will base its policy on the four-party cooperation agreement, hereafter referred to as the Cooperation Agreement.

Common values

The Government will base its policy on the principles of freedom and trust in the individual, in families, entrepreneurs, local communities and the voluntary sector. The Government's values are based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law, and on our Christian and humanist cultural heritage. The Government will create more scope for private, local and voluntary initiatives.

The Government will build its policy on respect for knowledge. Knowledge is the key that unlocks social mobility for individuals and opportunities for all. Greater investment in knowledge and skills will strengthen welfare schemes and enhance job security.

The Government's policy will be underpinned by publicly-funded welfare schemes. Services for the elderly and others in need of care must be further developed to ensure that they are of a high standard and maintain adequate levels of activity. The Government will pursue all viable avenues to ensure that patients have access to a wide range of high-quality health services at the right time, and are given more freedom of choice.

The Government will base its policy on the principle that universal rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of belief, and private property rights, apply to all people regardless of where in the world they live. The Government will work to disseminate knowledge about human rights and combat violence and oppression, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking and sexual abuse of children.

The Government's policy will be built on the principles of social responsibility and international solidarity. The Government will work to lift people out of poverty, both in Norway and in less affluent countries. The Government will give priority to girls' education in poor countries. Children who grow up in poor families in Norway are to have more equal opportunities. The Government will strengthen welfare-to-work schemes in order to increase participation in the labour market.

The Government will base its policy on the principle that wealth must be created before it can be shared. Value creation is to be promoted throughout the country. Infrastructure in Norway must be substantially upgraded; the road and rail network needs to be expanded, and priority must be given to innovation, research and development. The Government will promote a diversified and broad business sector in Norway and improve the framework for private ownership.

The Government will base its policy on the general public's need for security in day-to-day life. Emergency preparedness in Norway must be improved and basic staffing levels in the police must be increased. Priority must be given to improving coordination in the criminal justice system. The Government will intensify efforts to secure the transfer of sentenced persons and the return of foreign criminals.

The Government will base its policy on stewardship and the precautionary principle. We have a responsibility to ensure that the world we leave our children is in at least a good a state as it was when we inherited it from our ancestors. We must step up the development of renewable energy. The Government will pursue a proactive climate policy and will strengthen the agreement on climate policy reached in the Storting.

The Government will seek to ensure the best possible utilisation of our common resources. Society must become less bureaucratic. The Government will seek to make daily life easier for the general population. More power and authority must be given to local communities. The Government will work to combat the squandering of public funds and will give high priority to the effective implementation of policy.

The Government will base its policy on binding international cooperation. Norway will play an active part in the UN, NATO, the Nordic Council and other international organisations. The Government will pursue a proactive High North policy and a more active policy to safeguard Norwegian interests vis-à-vis the EU, for example through the EEA Agreement. The Government will work to promote democracy and human rights and will take a balanced approach to the Middle East conflict.

Important priority areas

The competitiveness of Norwegian companies

The Government will work to enhance the competitiveness of the business sector in mainland Norway, to ensure the creation of more secure jobs and strengthen the basis for financing the welfare state.

Innovation, knowledge and technology are key priority areas in terms of keeping up with the competition in a globalised world. The Government will increase efforts in the field of research and establish more world-leading research centres at higher education institutions. The Government's ambition is that in the long term Norway should become one of the most innovative countries in Europe.

Given the structure of the Norwegian economy, it will be increasingly important to ensure diversification. The Government will therefore seek to ensure good framework conditions for companies throughout the country and will strengthen private ownership.

A simpler day-to-day life for the general population

The Government will give people more freedom to run their own lives without interference from politicians and bureaucrats. The Government will decentralise power by reducing bureaucracy, regulation and taxation. People with creative talent and drive must be given greater room for manoeuvre. The Government will simplify legislation and remove unnecessary and exclusively Norwegian prohibitions and requirements

The Government will promote private and voluntary initiatives and allow for the participation of a wider range of actors, including in the provision of welfare services. This will lead to more innovation, greater freedom of choice and a more varied range of services for many different users. Less bureaucracy will mean, for example, that teachers and nurses have more time for their pupils and patients.

The Government will improve the conditions for voluntary organisations. Financing schemes must be improved, rules simplified and bureaucracy reduced.

The Government will manage taxpayer's money with respect and will seek to prevent the squandering of public funds.

The Government will make use of the significant opportunities offered by modern information and communications technology (ICT) to simplify contact with a public sector that is open 24 hours a day, and to raise the quality of the public services, enhance value creation and improve decision making.

Knowledge as the key to opportunities for all

The Government will give high priority to enhancing knowledge and skills. Knowledge is the key to unlocking opportunities for all people, regardless of their background, and forms the basis for social mobility.

Knowledge is essential for increasing the competitiveness of Norwegian companies and building up the country for future generations. A major investment in research by both the public and the private sector will help to secure future jobs in a globalised world.

Nothing is more important to a child's education than a good teacher. The Government will therefore give priority to improving the quality of teachers. The Government's vision is to make the profession so attractive that the very best candidates choose to pursue teaching as a career. Opportunities for professional development, new career paths and better teacher training will make the teaching profession more challenging and rewarding.

The Government will improve vocational training. In the years to come, there will be a great need for skilled labour in Norway. Training in vocational subjects must be strengthened, and efforts to prevent pupils from dropping out must be intensified.

The Government will build up the country

The Government will ensure the provision of high-quality welfare services and the competitiveness of Norwegian companies. Effective infrastructure of a high standard is essential in this context. The Government will make the investments needed to make major improvements to infrastructure. New approaches will be taken in order to modernise Norway's infrastructure faster and more efficiently.

A rapid expansion of the overall road and rail network is needed in Norway, with particular focus on improving the trunk road network and ensuring efficient connections between different parts of the country. This will make it possible to create more housing and labour market areas and is crucial for future growth. A major effort to improve public transport will enable cities to grow while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Security in day-to-day life and better emergency preparedness

Security is vital to people's fundamental freedom. Individuals should be able to feel safe in and outside their homes. Everyday crime must be tackled. Society must respond effectively to crime and take the threat posed by organised crime seriously. With the aid of a modern and effective police force, the Government will improve emergency preparedness and strengthen operational capacity for combating crime. It is important to ensure a balance in the criminal justice system.

The Government will ensure that the country is equipped to respond effectively to future crises. The Gjørsv Commission's report and the police analysis identified a number of serious shortcomings. The Government will therefore step up efforts to strengthen security and emergency preparedness. Our ability to respond effectively must be restored. This will lay the foundations for a more secure society.

Better care for the elderly and sick

A well-functioning welfare state is fundamental to our society and helps to give people a second chance and new opportunities.

A high rate of employment is one of the cornerstones of Norwegian society. Having a job to go to gives people opportunities for personal development and social contact as well as a stable income. A high rate of employment also provides a stronger and more secure basis for financing the welfare state. Unemployment and non-participation in the labour market is therefore a problem not only for the individuals concerned but also for society as a whole. The Government will work on a broad front to get more people into work.

Ensuring access to good health and care services fosters a sense of security. Many people have to wait for an unnecessarily long time to receive healthcare, or are given inadequate care. As a result, health problems get worse, people have to take sick leave or fall out of working life altogether, and this creates insecurity.

The Government will therefore carry out a major reform of the health service. Patients' rights will be strengthened and individuals will be given the right to choose their healthcare provider. This will ensure that patients will not have to wait in queues when private and non-profit healthcare providers have available capacity.

The Government will improve health services for groups that have not been given the priority they deserve, such as people with substance abuse or mental health problems. Health authorities will be required to give higher priority to these patient groups. Services will be improved across the board, from low-threshold services to aftercare.

The elderly and those in need of care deserve better services. The state must assume greater responsibility for increasing the capacity for care provision. The Government will develop care services that place greater emphasis on quality and the activity levels of those receiving care. The last years of a person's life should be meaningful, also for those who suffer from dementia or other health problems. Higher priority must be given to maintaining people's independence and ability to cope on their own, for example through a greater focus on rehabilitation.

A stronger social safety net

Norway has a well-developed welfare state. Although there is much room for improvement, most of us have access to the services we need. Our welfare schemes have been developed over many years and under different governments. Nevertheless, there are still people who do not receive the help they need, and who face serious difficulties and problems

The Government will seek to fill the holes in the social safety net to prevent vulnerable people from falling through it. This means, for example, ensuring that children who grow up in poor families have more equal opportunities. Adults who lack basic skills must be given access to better tuition in literacy. Services for people with substance abuse or mental health problems must be improved. Children in care or young people receiving treatment for substance abuse must be given high-quality education tailored to their needs.

Vibrant local democracy

The Government will strengthen local democracy and implement local government reform. Larger and more robust municipalities will be able to take on more important tasks and more responsibility than is currently the case. Limits must be placed on the ability of county governors to overrule locally elected bodies.

The Government will conduct a review of the tasks carried out by the county authorities, the county governors and the central government with a view to transferring more power and authority to the municipalities. Greater freedom to find solutions that are adapted to the local situation will enhance the quality of welfare services.

The Government will change the revenue system to allow the municipalities to retain a larger proportion of the wealth created in their regions.

2 – Work and social welfare

The labour market

The Government's aim is to achieve a reliable, flexible labour market that promotes low unemployment levels and a high rate of employment. A well-functioning labour market is essential to enabling each individual to realise his or her dreams and ambitions, and it should pay to work.

Certain groups face greater challenges in finding employment or maintaining a job over time. This is especially the case for persons with disabilities, immigrants and young people who have not completed their education. Mental health problems have emerged as a key causal factor in sickness absence and drop-out from working life. The Government will implement measures to make it easier for individuals to work part-time during periods of mental health difficulties in order to limit permanent disability. A full review of the Norwegian Welfare and Labour Administration (NAV) will be conducted with the aim of reducing bureaucracy for the users and enabling more people to move from welfare to work.

The Government will:

- Maintain permanent employment as the main premise of the Working Environment Act.
- Create a foundation for a more open working life, for example by expanding the right to use temporary employment contracts to bring the rules for the private sector more in line with those of the state.
- Increase focus on wage subsidy programmes and work training in ordinary businesses in cooperation with occupational rehabilitation enterprises that offer labour market programmes.
- Establish clearer quality and performance requirements for suppliers of labour market programmes.
- Discuss the introduction of a time-limited tax credit for individuals transitioning from welfare to work.
- Discuss a system of working in return for national insurance/social security benefits for young people at risk of permanent exclusion from working life.
- Improve the framework for incorporating social entrepreneurs and the voluntary sector into the welfare system.
- Draft an incentive-based system to enable a wider range of actors to get more people into work.
- Implement the reform of the disability benefit system to make it easier for people with disabilities to be able to utilise their remaining earning capacity. Goals will include ensuring that the degree of disability in each case reflects the actual earning capacity, and that a graded scale for disability benefits is more widely applied than is the case today.
- Adjust the old age pension for disabled persons for life expectancy on an equal footing with other pensioners.
- Review current welfare schemes to ensure that it pays to work, including examining the child supplement to disability benefits.
- Consider measures that will limit and bring to a halt the export of social security benefits, but that remain within the framework of Norway's binding international agreements.
- Follow up the recommendations of the Brochmann committee to restructure care benefit schemes from cash benefits to services.
- Reform the schemes for pay and benefits for family caregivers for the parents of children who are chronically ill or disabled as a follow-up of the recommendations of the Kaasa committee.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of policy for assistive aids during the parliamentary term.

People with disabilities

The Government's vision is a society in which everyone can take part. Most people have plans to seek education and work, with the expectation of being able to live free and independent lives. Greater effort is needed to integrate people with disabilities into working and daily life both because they are needed in the labour force and to enable them to take part in the fellowship of the working community. The Government will therefore work to strengthen schemes that promote the participation of people with disabilities in working life.

In 2013 the Storting agreed to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In spite of this, persons with reduced functionality continue to encounter barriers to their inherent right to activity and participation on an equal basis with others. The Government will work to follow up the intention of the convention to ensure full and effective participation and inclusion for all people in society regardless of level of functionality.

The Government will:

- Create a better framework for the inclusion of people with disabilities in working life, for example by strengthening the workplace facilitation guarantee and the functional assistant in working life scheme.
- Establish access to user-controlled personal assistance as a right.
- Continue to work for a society based on the principles of universal design.
- Review the scheme for and implementation of escort services for deaf-blind people in order to provide a genuine opportunity to participate in physical training and recreational activities.
- Review the pilot scheme for use of service dogs with the aim of harmonising it with the scheme for guide dogs for the blind and visually-impaired.

Working life

The Government will work to ensure a well-functioning tripartite cooperation, high productivity and a high level of job satisfaction among employees. This will safeguard the basis for a decent working life for all. At the same time, Norwegian working life is facing a number of challenges. Many employees are seeking greater flexibility to make it easier to combine work and private life. A number of occupational groups are characterised by a large proportion of involuntary part-time workers. We must also lower the threshold for entry into the labour market for people with a low level of education.

Sickness absence is high in many occupational groups and workplaces. The Government will work together with the social partners to reduce sickness absence and enable as many as possible to take part in working life. At the same time there will always be some people who are too ill to work. These individuals must be ensured a decent, reliable income.

Competitiveness and the ability to restructure have become increasingly important in light of growing international competition. In coming decades there will be fewer employees per pensioner and there will be new staffing challenges to deal with, particularly in the nursing and care sector. The Government will therefore lay the foundations for the best possible use of the labour force in the private and public sectors alike.

While Norwegian working life on the whole is well-organised and functions properly, some branches of industry are marked by social dumping and unsatisfactory wage and working conditions. This is not

acceptable either for the employees affected or for competing companies that comply with the law. The Government will therefore continue efforts to fight social dumping.

The Government will:

- Relax certain aspects of the Working Environment Act, for example with regard to the calculation of average normal working hours, alternative systems for rota work and limitations relating to overtime work.
- Appoint a committee on working hours modelled on the shift/rota work committee to examine how the labour force can best be deployed in the coming decades.
- Continue efforts to fight social dumping by strengthening the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, evaluating the measures against unacceptable wage and working conditions currently in place, and assessing the implementation of new measures. The procedures for ensuring the general application of collective wage agreements will be continued.
- Take steps to reduce the incidence of involuntary part-time work and temporary appointments in the public sector, and work to promote a labour market oriented towards full-time positions.
- Promote a working life that encompasses trade union representation and well-functioning tripartite cooperation by continuing the tax deduction for trade union dues at the 2013 level.
- Retain the special allowance for major sickness expenses as a tax deduction at the 2013 level.
- Enable older workers to remain in the labour market for a longer time, by, among other things, reviewing all statutory age limits in working life in consultation with the social partners.
- Restructure the transitional benefit for single parents and introduce clearer requirements for work activity.
- Continue the current sick pay scheme.
- Work to reduce sickness absence, among other things by implementing a new More Inclusive Working Life cooperation agreement, introducing national targets for wider use of graded sick leave and promoting intervention at an earlier stage in the sickness absence period.
- Increase predictability and ensure equal treatment in the provision of certificates for sick leave by introducing recommended, normative periods for medical certificates, with greatest weight still being afforded to the GP's assessment.
- Introduce a requirement that no one can be certified for sick leave for more than six months by his/her own GP.

Pension

The Government seeks to ensure that people enjoy a secure and dignified life in their senior years. The right to an old-age pension accrues over a lifetime of work. It is vital that people's pension rights are safeguarded and that the pension scheme is as simple and comprehensible as possible. It is important to encourage individuals to save privately towards their own pensions. It will be to the benefit of both society and families if individuals contribute to their own financial security for their pensioner years.

In the long term there will be fewer employees per pensioner in Norway. To ensure the economic sustainability of the welfare state, the agreement reached in the Storting on the pension scheme will be upheld.

The Government will:

- Ensure the financing of future pensions through the implementation of responsible economic policy.

- Continue the implementation of the pension reform in both the private and the public sector. This entails working with the social partners to find solutions that reduce differences between private and public sector pension schemes.
- Continue the state's contribution to the contractual pension scheme in the private sector.
- Promote secure, stable frameworks for private pension savings and private employer pension schemes.
- Encourage private pension savings by increasing the annual tax-deductible savings amounts and assessing the introduction of the same rates of taxation on savings and withdrawals.
- Reduce the decrease in pension for married and cohabiting pensioners from 15 to 10 per cent.

Measures to combat poverty

The Government will work to make Norway a country with a low level of income disparity and minimal poverty. The most important measures for combating poverty are a good school system that neutralises social differences and an open working life with a place for everyone. Nevertheless, some people will remain on the outside of important social arenas as a result of limited economic resources or poor living conditions. The Government sees it as an important task for society to ensure that these individuals, too, receive the help they need.

Efforts must be carried out on a broad front to prevent exclusion. The Government will pursue an enhanced integration policy (Chapter 3). An effective policy to help families dealing with substance abuse problems and mental health challenges is also important (Chapter 9). Society must help those who have dropped out to return to working life regardless of the reasons for their withdrawal. Adequate schemes must also be in place for those who end up becoming permanently disabled.

Children are also affected by poverty. The Government will therefore design a measures package targeting children who grow up in poor families, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will make it possible for more children to participate in important social arenas. A fairer system for determining the fees paid by parents for child day-care centres and the after-school care scheme will be introduced. The Government will also strengthen measures that promote social integration, such as recreational activity programmes, for vulnerable children and adolescents.

The Government will:

- Ensure that it pays more to work, particularly for people with low incomes, by among other things raising the minimum standard deduction in income taxation.
- Continue the provision of financial assistance (social assistance) as a municipal scheme based on individual assessment.
- Limit the right to include the income of minor-aged children when calculating social assistance.
- Introduce work-related activity requirements for social assistance recipients, focusing in particular on low-threshold measures and work training targeted towards young people to ensure a permanent transition to working life.
- Increase the lump-sum maternity and adoption grants.
- Enable more families to make use of spaces in child day-care centres by introducing differentiated parental fees.
- Offer free places in child day-care centres for children whose parents are participating in the introduction scheme for immigrants.
- Draw up a contract with the municipalities to allow differentiated payment for the after-school care scheme on the basis of income.

- Give more children access to important social arenas regardless of their parents' income, by establishing local schemes for lending equipment and support for payment of membership fees.
- Make use of all viable avenues by strengthening support schemes for voluntary organisations that promote social inclusion in the local communities.
- Work to ensure that children who grow up in poor families have access to holidays sponsored by voluntary organisations.

3 – Children, families and inclusion

The family comprises our strongest social fellowship, and is an important bearer of tradition and culture. The Government wishes to strengthen the position of the family in Norwegian society. The family represents and provides a secure framework around the childhood years, regardless of the form of the individual family. The Government's family policy revolves around intrinsic value and self-respect of the individual.

Families with children

Children and families differ widely and have different needs. Thus, each family must have the flexibility and freedom to choose the solutions that are best suited for it. Well-functioning families provide a sense of security and belonging as well as room to develop. The Government will enhance the freedom of choice of families by offering a greater diversity of solutions for families with children.

Children have a fundamental right to security during their childhood years. The Government will ensure more equal opportunities for children who grow up in poor families. The children themselves are not to blame for their parents' situation. The Government will therefore design a measures package targeting children who grow up in poor families.

Children have the right to both their parents, and it is the responsibility of parents to provide children with security, care and love. It is important that good schemes are in place to safeguard those children who do not experience this in their home life.

The Government will:

- Maintain the cash-for-care benefit, and expand the scheme to include two-year-olds.
- Investigate converting the cash-for-care benefit into a legally-required municipal payment.
- Increase the lump-sum maternity and adoption grants.
- Simplify the rules for parental leave.
- Introduce a self-service online solution for applying for parental leave.
- The paternal quota will be set at ten weeks' leave. Exemption from the reserved quota may be possible based on fulfilment of certain objective criteria. Criteria that qualify for exemption will be based on needs relating to illness, unemployment of the father during the mother's maternity leave, the father working abroad, sole proprietorships/sole shareholders, and the mother's work situation, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

Child and family welfare

Children are vulnerable and have a special need for protection and care. To prevent children from being shuffled between government agencies, the Government will work to establish closer collaboration between child welfare services, child health clinics, child day-care centres, schools, the police and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). The Government will also seek to implement an improved, more binding collaboration between child welfare services and the children and adolescents' psychiatric polyclinic services.

The point of departure for all child welfare measures will be what is in the best interests of the child. It is crucial that the municipal child welfare service, which is the first level of contact for children, has the capacity to identify and assist children who need professional help. As a means of strengthening children's legal protection, the Government will introduce a low-threshold complaints procedure for children in care. The Government will ensure that all municipalities are linked to a 24-hour emergency service for children in crisis. What is best for the child must be weighed more heavily than the parents' wishes when it comes to visitation, permanent care orders, and adoption. The child

welfare services must be given greater latitude to provide necessary assistance, also without consent in cases when this is necessary to prevent the issuance of care orders.

A functional family welfare service must be adapted to the needs of individual families. The Government will build its family welfare policy on the principle of preventive efforts and early intervention to ensure good conditions for children as they grow up.

The Government will:

- Separate the overall administration and development of the sector from the operation of child welfare measures. Bureaucracy in public child welfare services will be reduced.
- Give the municipalities the right to choose child welfare measures after assessment of quality, price and what will be of most help to the individual child, regardless of who is the provider of the measure.
- Allow municipalities with the necessary expertise to assume the overall professional and financial responsibility for the child welfare service. The ability of municipalities to provide satisfactory child welfare services will be an important element of any municipal reform.
- Ensure full transparency with regard to the substance, quality and price of the child welfare programmes and introduce authorisation and monitoring schemes with quality criteria for the institutions.
- Allow a wider range of child welfare agents to recruit foster parents, and strengthen the support network available to foster families.
- Review the balance between the institution-based and foster home programmes and when necessary examine ways to strengthen the foster home framework.
- Provide better adapted schooling for children in care.
- Review the rules on follow-up care to increase the follow-up of those have reached the age of 18.
- Give priority to measures that ensure that children in care will be able to grow up together with their siblings.
- Increase the opportunity to allow children to grow up in foster families with whom they have a biological association.
- Evaluate the county social welfare boards, and consider the implementation of dedicated tribunals for cases concerning children and families.
- Define parents as having equal status as caregivers, with the same rights, but ensure that the child's best interests will weigh most heavily in cases regarding custody and visitation.
- Review maintenance and support schemes associated with child care to develop a simpler and more just set of rules.
- Consider a legislative amendment targeted towards changing parental and visitation rights to children in cases where the father/stepfather or mother/stepmother has been convicted for serious abuse of their own children/stepchildren.
- Strengthen supervisory activities relating to the child welfare service.

Gender equality

The Government emphasises that everyone should have equal opportunities and individual freedom of choice. The Government will strengthen gender equality and promote better protection against discrimination for all. Therefore the Government will put forth a proposal for universal gender equality and anti-discrimination legislation. Violence in close relationships, education, working life and integration are priority areas in a gender equality perspective. There is also a need to give greater focus to women's perspectives in development policy. The Government will strengthen the

competence of the public support services as a whole and improve the coordination of efforts to combat violence and coercion in close relationships.

The Government wishes to implement a competence reform for careers dominated by women, for example in the day-care, nursing and care sectors. Many women wish to start innovative businesses in the nursing and care sector. Greater commercial focus in research within this sector combined with business start-up programmes may facilitate the launch of more of these types of businesses.

The Government will:

- Propose a universal gender equality and anti-discrimination bill.
- Safeguard the rights of LGBT individuals, contribute to openness and actively oppose discrimination.
- Strengthen crisis centres and follow up the evaluation that has been conducted.
- Promote measures that encourage more people to choose non-traditional educational and career paths, to contribute to a less gendered working life.
- Base its gender policy on positive, motivating measures rather than quotas.
- Work to prevent genital mutilation.
- Strengthen language training and other targeted measures to enable more women with minority backgrounds to take part in working life.
- Strengthen voluntary organisations that have targeted their efforts particularly towards promoting the integration of immigrant and refugee women into Norwegian society.
- Strengthen victim support services.
- Strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking, violence in close relationships and sexual violence against women.
- Give greater priority to education, particularly for girls, in development policy.
- Strengthen efforts to combat sexual violence in war and situations of conflict, and in particular follow up UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Integration

Immigrants have contributed to economic growth in Norway and have made us more diverse as a nation. Knowledge, competence and diversity help to increase innovation and industrial development. While immigration adds to our diversity, we see that there are challenges with regard to integration.

It is a challenge that the education and competence which many have brought from their home countries are not adequately recognised and utilised. Furthermore, it is a problem both for the individual and for society at large that the participation of immigrant women in the labour force remains low.

People who have been granted residence in the country should be met with a requirement to contribute to and participate in Norwegian society. Integration policy should seek to ensure that immigrants feel they are part of Norwegian society. All Norwegian citizens are full members of society, with the duties and rights that this entails. Participation in working life and adequate knowledge of the Norwegian language unlock the door to inclusion in Norwegian society. Work provides a place of affiliation, fellowship, a network and the ability to become self-reliant. Job income also provides a basis for entry into the regular housing market.

Good knowledge of the Norwegian language will in most cases be a prerequisite for obtaining employment. Therefore the Government will strengthen language training courses for those with a minority background and will link free core-time care in child day-care centres to requirements to take part in work-related activities or Norwegian language classes. The Government will conduct an assessment of children's language skills and provide language training for those children who need it before they start school. This programme will also encompass children who do not attend day-care. The Government will use homework assistants and summer schools to reach children dealing with particularly challenging language issues.

The Government will:

- Ensure that everyone who is granted Norwegian citizenship has a basic command of spoken Norwegian and has completed a test in Norwegian civics. The test must be passed, but with reasonable provisions for exemption, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Ensure that children are not absent from school without legitimate cause, by requiring school owners to implement routines for follow-up. The register of school students should also be checked against the national population register.
- Provide faster approval schemes, better assessment of non-formal learning and programmes for updating competence to ensure that the education immigrants already possess can be used in Norway.
- Increase the proportion of minority women who participate in working life, by strengthening and enhancing the focus of the "New chance" programme.
- Cooperate with immigrant organisations and cultural and religious communities to prevent the marginalisation of individual groups .
- Amend the Immigration Regulations to give asylum-seekers and others who are not in possession of a residence permit the opportunity to carry out unpaid voluntary work for humanitarian organisations, sports teams, etc.
- Strengthen local integration efforts by giving municipalities and voluntary organisations the resources to carrying out such activities.
- Strengthen receiving schools and improve monitoring of students' knowledge before transfer from receiving school to another primary, lower secondary or upper secondary school.
- Ensure that all students receive adapted teaching as quickly as possible according to the regular Norwegian language syllabus.
- Intensify efforts to settle immigrants in the municipalities and conduct a review of the structure of the grant schemes.
- Give priority to quota refugees with the greatest chance of achieving successful integration.

4 – Justice, public security and immigration

Justice

The Government will base its policy on the general public's need for security in day-to-day life. Emergency preparedness in Norway must be improved and basic staffing levels in the police must be increased. Priority must be given to improving coordination in the criminal justice system. The Government will intensify efforts to secure the transfer of sentenced persons and the return of foreign criminals.

The Government will pursue a judicial policy that fulfils the individual's need for safety and security as well as for security under the law. Efforts to combat crime must be rooted in the fundamental principles of the rule of law. Security comprises a part of the Norwegian welfare state and an essential component of the freedom and quality of life of the individual. The Government will work to ensure balance in the criminal justice system as a means of safeguarding the safety of local communities and reducing everyday crime. The interests of victims and their families will be stressed in all parts of the criminal justice system.

Preventive activities play a crucial role in efforts to combat crime. Such activities will require the involvement of local communities, voluntary organisations, sports associations, schools and municipalities, as well as of the police and correctional services. There is a need to develop models that encourage municipalities and local communities to give greater priority to crime prevention.

The Government will restructure the police to promote an effective, modern organisation that is even better equipped to prevent and combat crime. This will involve the consolidation of police districts into fewer, more robust regional police services. The objective of the new structure is to make the local police more operational, visible and accessible to the public, with greater capacity to investigate and prosecute criminal acts.

This will require an increase in basic staffing levels in the police. The Government aims to have two police officers for every 1 000 inhabitants by 2020. A stronger local police will provide greater security. A guarantee will therefore be introduced to ensure that the number of new and vacant positions in the police force increases in line with the number of students graduating from the Norwegian Police University College until this goal has been achieved. At the same time, the Government will augment the existing police education at the Norwegian Police University College with other programmes. The objective is to provide a brief introduction to police work in order to recruit people in possession of other types of expertise useful to the police.

The Government will evaluate the structure of the judicial system and modernise the courts with a view to increasing capacity and decreasing time-to-trial. The Government will revise the jury system to enhance legal safeguards.

The correctional services will be expanded and further developed to ensure rapid, appropriate and effective execution of sentences. During the execution of sentence and upon release back into society, the convicted person must be provided with a genuine opportunity to lead a life free of crime. Successful reintegration of prisoners into society requires close cooperation between multiple actors, dedicated volunteers and public agencies.

The Government will:

- Ensure that the organisation of the local police leads to improved operational capacity and increased funding for crime prevention.

- Strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking and child abuse, including preventing the spread of images of such abuse.
- Prevent recruitment to criminal networks and violent, extremist groups.
- Increase competence within the police and the judicial system with regard to violence in close relationships and random violence against people belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Reduce the number of objectives and tasks within the police to facilitate focus on core tasks.
- Provide funding for a new police ICT platform.
- Open for general permission for the police to bear firearms in those police districts where the police themselves deem this to be the best solution.
- Provide limited police authority to the Norwegian Customs and Excise agencies.
- Expand the number of accredited suppliers of DNA analyses that may be used.
- Explore the establishment of fast-track courts in specified areas.
- Raise the level of punitive actions against repeat offenders.
- Evaluate the Act relating to the purchase of sexual services, and submit a white paper based on this evaluation. Social policy instruments targeting prostitutes in a difficult situation will be strengthened, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Oppose the use of religious garments and symbols in situations involving exercise of governmental power or authority.
- Repeal the statute of limitations for homicide and sexual abuse of children.
- Assess new compensation schemes for victims of crime.
- Allow municipalities to incorporate provisions prohibiting begging into local police regulations as part of the effort to combat human trafficking and other forms of organised crime.
- Increase prison capacity by expanding the number of prison places.
- Establish more jails adapted to foreign inmates who will not be returned to Norwegian society.
- Work to make it possible for more foreign criminals to serve their sentences in their home countries, and if necessary finance any associated costs.
- Evaluate execution of sentences with electronic surveillance to ensure a more targeted use of this measure.
- Introduce more stringent conditions for release on parole, especially in the case of serious crimes. Review the conditions for release from preventive detention.
- Increase the involvement of voluntary and non-profit organisations in the correctional services, during the serving of sentences as well as after return to society.
- Discuss the establishment of a national resource centre to provide care for crime victims and their families.

Public security

Safeguarding the security of society and its inhabitants is a core task of the central government. Current threats to society include terrorism, serious crime, natural disasters and extreme weather, as well as cyber-attacks against government bodies, private individuals and enterprises. When balancing the need for transparency versus security, we must carefully consider the risks inherent in an open society. Better coordination, more clearly defined roles and the implementation of joint exercises among emergency preparedness actors are needed to equip society to deal optimally with serious incidents. Strengthening preparedness requires the involvement of all levels of the government administration, including the top leadership.

The current four fundamental principles for maintenance of public security will be maintained: Responsibility, proximity, similarity and cooperation. The Government will give particular focus to responsibility and cooperation as the overall, governing principles, particularly in the case of larger-scale crises that extend across multiple sectors.

The Government will accelerate the efforts to establish a national centre for preparedness in the Oslo region and consider the development of a system of such centres for emergency preparedness throughout the country.

Activities related to security, preparedness and intelligence are currently distributed across a number of agencies and supervisory authorities. This applies to the entire chain of activity, from intelligence, analysis, planning, supervisory activities, supervisory follow-up and implementation of preventive efforts, to specific execution of operations, crisis management, evaluation and final follow-up. Insufficient coordination and the lack of a comprehensive overview may mean that society is inadequately equipped to respond to serious incidents.

The Internet and mobile communication offer enormous potential for innovation, freedom of expression and democratisation. However, the expanding opportunities for development also serve to make us more dependent on technology. This leads in turn to increased vulnerability and greater exposure to risk.

The Government will:

- Establish a national preparedness and security function under the Office of the Prime Minister. This function will ensure the overall coordination and follow-up of security and preparedness efforts across the ministries and will serve to highlight and clarify responsibilities. This will give the Prime Minister a more direct link to the broader strategic assessments involving societal security and safety. This will ensure that ambiguities and divergences of opinion between the ministries and agencies concerned can be examined and resolved. The ministries will retain operational responsibility within their own sectors.
- Explore the potential for enhancing coordination by co-locating the various bodies from the justice sector located in the Oslo area.
- Ensure that national preparedness capacity is strengthened through follow-up of the police service analysis.
- Specify and clarify the responsibilities of government agencies with regard to emergency preparedness. Review the responsibilities for supervision and supervisory follow-up within the entire preparedness and public security sphere.
- Increase the involvement in planning and exercises of actors in the preparedness sector, private companies and non-profit organisations.
- Ensure procurement of new rescue helicopters.
- Strengthen the search and rescue services.
- Modernise and expand civilian emergency preparedness within the Norwegian Civil Defence.
- Define the authorities' responsibility for the security of critical, digital infrastructure. This responsibility will be consolidated within a single ministry. Strengthen preparedness against cyber-crime and cyber-attacks.
- Improve procedures for the provision of assistance from the Armed Forces to the police.
- Strengthen Nordic collaboration in the field of crisis management and emergency preparedness.

Nødnett (The Norwegian Public Safety Network)

The emergency communication radio network is a crucial element of Norwegian emergency preparedness. Efforts to establish a robust, common emergency communication network using modern technology play an important part in enhancing public security and preparedness.

The Government will:

- Present a document to the Storting on the development of the emergency communication network, with an assessment of the progress plan, budget and performance.
- Ensure that organisations involved in search and rescue operations will be able to use the new emergency communication network in practice.

Immigration

The Cooperation Agreement between the parties Venstre (social liberal party), the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party regarding immigration is provided below. The Government will follow up this agreement.

Agreement between the parties Venstre (social liberal party), the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party, on immigration

A: Introduction

Immigration is a source of diversity, new inspiration and cultural exchange. Variation promotes new thinking, innovation and creativity. While immigration has contributed to economic growth in Norway and made us more diverse as a nation, we see there are challenges related to immigration and integration. Waves of migration pose difficulties for Norwegian society, regardless of their cause. This is the case not least in terms of the sustainability of the Norwegian welfare state. Therefore it is essential to regulate immigration.

The institution of political asylum is a key tool for providing protection to people who face genuine threat, and it must not be abused in any way. Norway must fulfil its international obligations and provide aid to refugees. Status as a refugee (asylum) will be granted on an individual basis after a thorough review of the application.

At present, labour and family immigration (reunification/establishment) to Norway is many times greater than immigration for reasons of refuge. It is beneficial to society that labour immigrants seek a future in Norway. Knowledge, competence and diversity help to enhance innovation and industrial development. The labour immigration policy must allow residence to be granted on the basis of work, from countries outside the EEA as well. In particular, it must be easier for the business sector to attract highly-qualified labour from other countries.

Everyone in Norway must be privy to the same rights and duties, regardless of ethnic background. Imposing certain requirements on immigrants is a means of showing them respect. At the same time it is important to design a more proactive policy to ensure immigrants access to the labour market.

B: A permanent scheme to ensure greater focus on the situation of children

Children's attachment to Norway from multiple years of residence will be clarified by amending the rules to allow the immigration authorities to place greater weight on

considerations of the child's welfare and best interests. The prerequisite is that the parents, as a general rule, have assisted in clarifying their identity and have sought to make the return possible, but return has not proven to be feasible.

C: One-time measure for long-term resident children and their families from countries with a return agreement

Definition of time: The basis for calculating the time is the date when the application for residence for the child was first submitted or the child's date of birth. If there is documentation indicating that the child has resided abroad during this period, this time is to be deducted.

Where does the child/family live: The child must live in an asylum reception centre or be able to document residence in Norway in some other way.

Status: This one-time measure applies to those children who have not been granted residence because a final rejection has been issued, and those whose cases have not been fully processed and concluded by a given date.

The one-time measure applies to children and their families (parents and unmarried siblings under the age of 18 who live together with the child) for whom more than three years have passed since submission of the asylum application. The prerequisite is that the parents, as a general rule, assist in clarifying their identity. They must come from countries with a return agreement, and the application must have been registered before the return agreement entered into force.

D: Holding centres and differentiated types of reception centres

1. Initiate efforts to use and make applicable the provisions of Section 106, first paragraph, of the Immigration Act. This includes an assessment of whether these cases should be dealt with by a separate fast-track court prior to detention. The Act states that:

“A foreign national may be arrested and remanded in custody if

the foreign national refuses to state his or her identity in accordance with Section 21 or Section 83 of the Act, or there are reasonable grounds for suspicion that the foreign national has given a false identity,

there are specific grounds for suspecting that the foreign national will evade the implementation of an administrative decision entailing that the foreign national is required to leave the realm,

the foreign national fails to comply with the obligation to report or an order to stay in a specific place under Section 105, first paragraph, litra c, and the foreign national has an administrative case under processing that has not been finally decided or the time limit by which he or she must leave the realm has not yet expired,

an administrative decision regarding expulsion has been made and the decision is final, or a deferral of implementation has not been granted in connection with appeal, see Section 90, and measures are adopted in respect of the foreign

national with a view to removal. It is a condition that the foreign national has been expelled on account of sentencing for a crime and that there is a risk, in view of the foreign national's personal circumstances, that the foreign national will commit new criminal offences,

the foreign national fails to do what is necessary to comply with the obligation to obtain a valid travel document, and the intention is to present the foreign national at the foreign service mission of the country concerned in order to have a travel document issued,

the foreign national is in transit in a Norwegian airport, with a view to removal, or

the foreign national poses a threat to fundamental national interests and this has been determined in an administrative decision in the immigration case or in instructions issued by the Ministry, and measures are adopted in respect of the foreign national with a view to removal.”

Two new types of reception centres are to be developed: integration centres for those who are waiting to be assigned to a municipality for residence, and return centres for people and families who have been issued a final rejection. Some return centres must be equipped to receive foreigners who have been remanded in custody pursuant to Section 106, first paragraph. The return centres will resemble ordinary asylum centres with regard to standard, staffing, level of activity and composition of occupants. The difference will be a greater overall focus on return, with no incorporated integration perspective. This must be reflected in the competency of the staff.

E: More effective administrative procedures and an earlier return of persons not entitled to reside in Norway and criminals

2. Restrict the opportunity to apply to rescind administrative decisions by implementing the changes proposed in Proposition 180 L (2012-2013) to the Storting which entails more rapid and efficient processing of unfounded applications for reversal. Security under the law will be ensured and the scheme will be evaluated.
3. Strengthen legal counselling prior to the first application to ensure that the application submitted is correct in so far as possible and provides a sound basis for assessment of the case pursuant to Norwegian law.
4. Take steps to follow up Official Norwegian Reports 2010:12 and assess proposals for a new, improved appeals procedure for immigration cases. This includes considering the transfer of tasks that are currently the responsibility of the Immigration Appeals Board to an administrative court. The goal will be to achieve faster case processing and an earlier return for those who are not entitled to residence.
5. Reduce the penalty level required for the expulsion of foreigners who are subject to penalty or special sanctions in their home country for offences that pursuant to Norwegian law would lead to a prison sentence of five years or more. The current rule applies to a sentence of ten years or more.
6. Work for the establishment of more return agreements and to use Norway's position to secure a greater number of such agreements.
7. Create a “fast lane” for asylum seekers who have been apprehended for criminal activities (for example the possession and sale of narcotic substances) to facilitate

rapid processing of applications and ensure the applicant is returned to his/her country of origin on rejection.

8. Intensify return efforts and the identification activities of the police in the initial processing of asylum applications through a national ID centre. Further develop Nordic and European cooperation in this area.
9. Make more active use of the foreign service missions in the regions from which the bulk of asylum seekers with unfounded claims originate, in order to disseminate information about the limited opportunities for residence.

F: Family establishment/family reunification

10. Raise the financial support requirement in family establishment cases, but introduce more liberal discretionary assessment in relation to the sponsor's or the foreign national's earning potential. The purpose of the change is to combat forced marriage and to ensure that the couple can provide for themselves.
11. Increase the required length of continuous residence for a permanent residence permit from three to five years. Review the rules that apply to persons who have been subjected to abuse.
12. Increase the use of DNA testing to clarify identity in connection with family reunification.
13. Introduce an age limit of 24 years for family establishment, with liberal allowance for discretionary assessment, keeping in mind that the purpose of the change is to combat forced marriage and to ensure that the couple can provide for themselves.
14. Develop a scheme for a "partner visa" which does not require a formal engagement/planned wedding.

G: Labour immigration

15. Establish more public service offices for the police, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and the Norwegian Tax Administration in order to decrease administrative time and reduce bureaucracy in connection with labour immigration.
16. Put in place simpler rules for labour immigration for highly-qualified workers who have an offer of employment, including examining a model for prior approval in the case of large companies.
17. Work to strengthen the external Schengen borders and increase cooperation with the major recipient states to prevent asylum seekers with unfounded claims travelling from country to country within the Schengen area.

H: Integration

18. Amend the Immigration Regulations to give asylum seekers and others who have not been granted a residence permit the opportunity to carry out unpaid voluntary work for humanitarian organisations, sports clubs etc.
19. All individuals who apply for Norwegian citizenship must have a basic command of spoken Norwegian and must take a test in Norwegian civics. The test must be passed, but there will be reasonable provisions for exemption.
20. Strengthen language learning for women with minority backgrounds and enable a larger number to participate in working life. Link free core time in child day-care

centres to requirements to take part in work-related activities or Norwegian language classes.

21. Assess children's language skills and provide language training for children with poor Norwegian skills before they start school. This will also encompass children who do not attend day-care.
22. Implement faster approval schemes, better assessment of prior learning and qualifications and options to update competence to ensure that the education immigrants already possess can be used in Norway.
23. Strengthen efforts to settle immigrants in the municipalities and conduct a review the structure of the grant schemes.
24. Give priority to quota refugees with the greatest chance of achieving successful integration.

I: Persecution based on religion and affiliation with a social group (sexual orientation)

25. Review the implementation of protection based on religion or on affiliation with a social group (sexual orientation) and compare this with UNHCR's guidelines and the EU's directive on minimum standards for determining who qualifies for refugee status or for subsidiary protection status.

The Government will:

- Consider increasing the number of quota refugees, if the flow of asylum seekers shows signs of abating.
- Consider prohibiting marriage between cousins, on the basis of health assessments. Undertake a full review of the provisions in the Immigration Act related to family establishment and reunification, with a view to introducing more stringent regulations.
- Introduce required attendance at Norwegian language courses as a condition for the disbursement of unemployment benefits.

5 – Economy and industry

Economic policy

Norway is a land of great opportunities. We have an open economy and a highly educated population. We have an abundance of natural resources, and our standard of living is among the highest in the world. The basis for our shared welfare is the value creation that takes place in all parts of the country. The Government will base its economic policy on the principle that value has to be created before it can be shared, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. Economic growth is necessary if we are to ensure a secure basis for welfare and pensions in the future as well. The Government will incorporate a generation-based perspective into its economic policy.

The Government will pursue a responsible economic policy based on the fiscal rule for use of oil revenues. The increased use of oil revenues is to be redirected to investments in knowledge and infrastructure, as well as to tax relief to stimulate economic growth. Public spending will be adjusted to the economic situation within the framework of the fiscal rule. The extent to which the Government succeeds in reaching its political goals will depend on economic room for manoeuvre.

The Government will work to create a robust and diverse business sector. The Government will therefore pursue an economic policy that increases future value creation. Most of our national wealth lies in the value of our future work activity. The Government will therefore give priority to strengthening welfare-to-work schemes and invest in competence-building.

In the long term, it is the growth potential of the mainland economy that will determine the development of welfare in Norway. The Government will therefore give priority to measures that promote value creation and enhance the productivity of the Norwegian economy. The Government will appoint a commission to identify the reasons for the slow growth in productivity and provide tangible advice on what to do to increase productivity.

The Government will:

- Pursue a responsible economic policy and ensure a viable economy.
- Promote a Norwegian economy that is less vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices.
- Appoint a productivity commission.
- Appoint a new public commission to assess multi-year budgets in selected areas and a clearer distinction between investments and operations in the budget.
- Keep an account of how the financial opportunities provided by the Government Pension Fund Global are utilised in the national budget.
- Highlight how the national assets are managed, and thereby also the maintenance backlog, in the annual national budgets.

A modern tax and duties system

Taxes are not a goal in themselves, they are a means to an end. The Government will use the tax and duties system to finance public goods, ensure social mobility, achieve more effective utilisation of resources and enhance conditions for Norwegian trade and industry. Private ownership will be strengthened, and it will pay more to work, save and invest. The Government will also promote more environmentally friendly activity.

The Government will therefore reduce the overall level of taxes and duties. A lower level of taxation will lead to broader distribution of power, increase value creation and provide greater freedom for families and individuals. Public funds are to be managed efficiently to provide inhabitants with the best possible welfare, in a manner that reflects respect for the taxpayers' money.

The Government will:

- Reduce taxes for wage-earners by raising the minimum standard deduction and raising the starting point for the top tax on higher incomes (surtax).
- Gradually reduce the tax on wealth by raising the basic tax-free allowance and reducing the rate.
- Remove the inheritance tax.
- Strengthen the IPS scheme (individual pension saving) to make private retirement savings more attractive.
- Strengthen the BSU savings scheme (home savings for young people) to enable more young people to enter the housing market.
- Explore benefits and consequences of the ROT deduction scheme for maintenance in the home.
- Revise taxation rules to stimulate employee co-ownership.
- Review and improve rules for tax-related depreciation and write-offs to increase the competitiveness of Norwegian industry.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of vehicle and fuel duties, with a view to revisions to encourage the use of new technology, a safer vehicle fleet and more environmentally friendly choices.
- Draw up a report on the dynamic effects of tax relief.
- Strengthen the tax deduction scheme for donations to voluntary organisations.
- Raise the limit for mandatory wage statements and employer's contributions for voluntary organisations.
- Exempt permanently installed, non-integrated machinery from property tax in industrial facilities (will not apply to power stations).
- Appoint a new green tax commission that will submit proposals for green tax amendments, to help to achieve the objectives set out in the agreement on climate policy reached in the Storting.
- Increase the duty-free allowance for imports.
- Carry out a comprehensive assessment of taxpayers' protection under the law and submit proposals to ensure that taxpayers have better legal safeguards than is the case today.

Prudent management of the Government Pension Fund Global (GPF)

The Government Pension Fund Global (GPF) represents the conversion of wealth from the continental shelf into financial assets. The goal for managing the GPF is to achieve the highest possible financial return at a moderate risk. The value of the fund may vary widely from one year to the next, but its yield over time forms the basis for Norway's future wealth.

The Government will continue to build on the framework established for the management of the GPF. The Government will emphasise transparency and a focus on ethics. As the fund grows and the experience in administering it increases, it is natural to consider further refining management practices to ensure that they are optimal and appropriate. The Government will revert to this issue in connection with the annual white paper on the management of the Government Pension Fund Global.

The Government will establish an investment programme within the GPF, with management requirements of the same scope as for the other investments made under the GPF, but with the aim of investing in sustainable enterprises and projects in less affluent countries and emerging markets. Furthermore, the Government will consider drawing up a separate mandate in the field of renewable energy, with management requirements of the same scope as for other investments made by the GPF.

Financial market

The two most important tasks of the financial market are to enable people to participate directly in society's overall value creation and to channel capital towards profitable investments. Secure banks and a competitive financial industry are crucial to ensuring value creation in Norway.

Norway's situation during the financial crisis illustrates that Norwegian regulations and the response from the authorities were on target. The Norwegian financial industry made it through the crisis. Nonetheless, the increased capital requirements now being introduced are appropriate and necessary. The Government will follow up the increased capital requirements, but will take the initiative to promote better Nordic harmonisation to ensure a more equitable competitive basis.

Industrial policy

The Government will pursue a future-oriented industrial policy that paves the way for value creation and employment in all segments of the Norwegian economy. Increased competitiveness generates secure workplaces for the future. Norwegian industry is characterised by its ability to restructure, a high level of innovation, and ambitious goals that extend beyond our national borders. The Government will pursue a policy that enhances the competitiveness of Norwegian trade and industry and thus its potential to create greater wealth. The Government will seek to provide companies with good overall framework conditions, a predictable taxation system, better infrastructure, the opportunity to employ competent personnel and access to capital.

Manufacturing industry and the mineral industry

The Government will ensure diversity in the business sector by strengthening the competitiveness of Norwegian industry. The wood processing industry is facing particular challenges, and the Government will draw up a strategy to strengthen competitiveness in this value chain. In many parts of Norway, the mineral industry may give rise to increased activity and employment. There is major wealth to be harvested from our mountains. The mineral industry will therefore be an important area of investment.

The Government will:

- Ensure good framework conditions for energy-intensive Norwegian manufacturing industry.
- Establish a framework for growth in the mineral industry, by among other things ensuring reliable, knowledge-based planning processes.
- Open the door to allowing the mineral industry to use submarine tailings disposal sites, but impose stringent requirements and ensure environmental monitoring.
- Improve the competitiveness of the wood processing industry through simplification of transport rules and establishment of a better foundation for product and technology development.
- Seek to introduce new sources of capital for product development and innovation in the wood processing industry, including allowing the Forest Trust Fund to be used for investments in industrial processes.
- Ensure an appropriate CO₂ compensation scheme for the manufacturing industry.

Innovation

The future will bring many new kinds of enterprises. They will be created by people who are willing to take risks, who are willing to devote their skills and resources to creating new jobs. The Government will seek to make Norway one of Europe's most innovative countries. The Government will strengthen investment in industry-oriented research and innovation, to provide a broader basis for wealth creation.

To enable Norway to succeed in the global competition for capital and knowledge, the Government will target those innovation policy measures that have the greatest impact. Strengthening the research and innovation activities of the business sector will be dependent on cooperation between industry and the state. The Government will therefore expand initiatives related to industry-oriented innovation.

The Government will:

- Significantly increase allocations to industry-oriented research, by expanding the SkatteFUNN Tax Incentive Scheme and the Programme for User-driven Research-based Innovation (BIA) under the Research Council of Norway.
- Review the public funding instruments for innovation and prioritise those leading to the highest innovation impact.
- Further develop Innovation Norway as an organisation. The nationwide schemes administered by Innovation Norway will be given priority.
- Strengthen the IFU/OFU scheme for research and development cooperation.
- Use industrial clusters to promote innovation, in particular by focusing greater attention on activities under the Norwegian Centres of Expertise (NCE) programme and launching Global Centres of Expertise.
- Improve access to public seed and development capital, and facilitate the placement of organisations administering these measures in university cities.
- Establish an innovation exchange to make it easier to create connections between entrepreneurs and private capital, and discuss linking this to tax incentives.

The public sector has a role to play as a driver of innovation. Its major procurement power and considerable ability to tolerate risk enable the public sector to use its procurement role to promote innovation in many industries.

The Government will:

- Simplify the Public Procurement Act to make it easier for small, innovative actors to submit tenders.
- Introduce a neutral value-added tax in the public sector and the health trusts to enable more private service providers to take part in meeting society's needs.
- Develop a manual and guidelines for public-private innovation partnership and ensure that public procurers make use of these.

The maritime sector

Norway has a proud history as a maritime nation. The maritime industries comprise one of the main hubs of Norway's global knowledge. The maritime cluster lays the foundation for a wide array of companies and creates jobs all over Norway. It is the Government's view that framework conditions for the shipping industry must be on a par with those of the EU if we are to retain maritime competence in Norway. Norwegian maritime personnel are a key component of the industrial cluster, and their practical knowledge is essential to maritime activities in Norway.

The Government will:

- Propose concrete measures for strengthening maritime education and training.
- Retain the existing taxation schemes for shipping companies to ensure predictability.
- Incorporate the net-salary scheme into the statutory framework.

- Appoint a committee to review the limitations on trading areas in the Norwegian International Ship Register (NIS) and the structure of the net-salary scheme. The committee will include representatives of the employees' organisations and the industry.
- Promote competitive Norwegian ship registers (NOR and NIS).
- Strengthen Export Credit Norway and GIEK.
- Implement a regime of fees and duties that strengthens the short-sea shipping industry.
- Promote the use of more environment-friendly fuels in the industry.
- Seek international cooperation on maritime issues, in order to improve environmental requirements for vessels, among other things.
- Change the system of fees and duties to prevent economic bias against environment-friendly and safe technology and design.

The tourism sector

Tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing industries. Increased globalisation provides new opportunities for expansion in the Norwegian tourism and hospitality industry. This leads to more jobs and local development, not least in municipalities in the outlying districts. Norway features spectacular natural surroundings, a wide array of cultural monuments and a cultural life that is attracting international attention in a growing number of areas.

The Government will:

- Ensure satisfactory and stable framework conditions for the tourism and hospitality industry.
- Ensure better targeted marketing by concentrating the resources in large tourist destination companies.
- Give the municipalities greater latitude to organise environment-friendly tourism activities, also within protected areas.
- Review and relax the regulations relating to fishing tourism.
- Allow product samples and restricted sales of alcohol directly from niche producers, and work to amend EU legislation in this area if necessary.

Simplification

The Government will seek to ensure the best possible utilisation of our common resources. Society must become less bureaucratic. More power and authority must be given to local communities. The Government will work to combat the squandering of public funds and give high priority to the effective implementation of policy.

Administrative costs and unnecessary bureaucracy diminish the competitiveness of our industrial sector. Entrepreneurs, company owners and employees need to spend more time on value creation and less on filling in forms. The Government will carry out a targeted effort to reduce bureaucracy.

The Government will:

- Reduce costs to businesses to comply with reporting requirements by 25 per cent in relation to the 2011 cost level.
- Provide annual reports on the progress of the simplification effort.
- Develop a simplified set of regulations for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Introduce an independent better regulations council modelled on the corresponding body in Sweden.

- Further develop Altinn based on the principle that businesses should only have to report the same information to the public authorities once.
- Simplify customs procedures.
- Review the rules for taxation of benefits provided by employers to adapt these to a modern and flexible work life.
- Make more public services available online so they can be used independent of office opening hours.
- Permit shops to open on Sundays. In consultation with the social partners, the Government will assess how to incorporate good provisions for working hours and co-determination for shop employees into the statutory framework.

Ownership

Norwegian industry is founded on private ownership of enterprises. Through their ownership, small and large investors can participate directly in the value creation taking place in Norway. Diversity in private ownership plays an essential role in creating secure jobs. The Government will therefore strengthen private ownership.

Norway will retain considerable state ownership for the foreseeable future. It is crucial that this state ownership is administered in a professional, predictable manner. The Government will pursue a policy for responsible state ownership that encompasses both diversity in ownership and the creation of value. The Government will remain open to value-enhancing transactions and strategic alliances. It must also be attractive for foreign investors to invest in Norway.

A decrease in state ownership must be introduced gradually. In its decisions, the Government will give consideration to economic conditions, market conditions, the companies' financial position and general prospects for the future.

The Government will:

- Strengthen private ownership.
- Increase small savers' ownership in Norwegian companies, by introducing long-term share savings accounts for capital-stock investments (KLAS).
- Pursue a responsible ownership policy based on predictability and established principles for public ownership management.
- Reduce the amount of direct state ownership in the Norwegian economy to ensure distribution of power and strengthen private ownership.
- Submit a new white paper on ownership.
- Cooperate with other shareholders on the appointment of candidates to key board positions in state enterprises and select candidates on the basis of their qualifications.
- Continue the system of categorisation based on the objective of state ownership.

Trade

Norway has a small and open economy. Participation in the international exchange of goods has enabled us to achieve a higher standard of living than we would have obtained on our own. Trade is one of the strongest drivers of economic growth and helps to create jobs and enduring economic prosperity across the world. The Government will work to promote more free trade and pursue an active trade policy that emphasises Norwegian interests.

The Government will:

- Expand trade policy cooperation with Norway's closest neighbours, including the EU, and work to establish new trade agreements through EFTA.
- Promote increased free trade, also between developing and industrial countries.
- Work to achieve multilateral trade agreements through the World Trade Organization to create stable frameworks and equitable competitive conditions globally, and at the same time enter into more limited agreements when this is necessary. Until a multilateral framework is available, Norway will enter into bilateral trade agreements.
- Increase the use of bilateral investment treaties where this is appropriate.
- Improve schemes to provide developing countries with better access to the Norwegian market.

6 – Fisheries and agriculture

Fisheries and aquaculture

Generations of Norwegians have looked to the sea for their livelihood. The Government will work to ensure that future generations, too, can make a living from harvesting the abundant seafood resources found along our coast. History has shown that the fisheries and aquaculture industries grow more vigorously when a looser framework for sustainable growth is in place. The Government will improve the framework conditions for these industries. The changes introduced must ensure predictability and help to strengthen Norway's position as a seafood nation.

Sustainable growth in fisheries and aquaculture will create secure jobs throughout the country. Ensuring profitability in each segment of the industries is therefore an essential part of an effective regional policy.

The global task of the seafood industry is to help to secure an adequate supply of nutritious food for the world's growing population. Norway's natural advantages, combined with its traditional industries, give the country the know-how and expertise needed to play a key international role.

The seafood industry is one of Norway's most important knowledge clusters. Proximity to the market for fresh seafood and knowledge from land-based fish processing provide a basis for enhancing value creation in the processing segment. The Government will follow up the vision of exponentially expanding value creation in the industry over the coming decades by increasing investment in education and research. Marine research is crucial to maintaining Norway's position as a fisheries and aquaculture nation.

The Government will set total quotas for the various fisheries to ensure that resources are managed in a manner that preserves a long-term sustainable yield. Sustainable taxation of resources will require international cooperation and agreements. It will be natural to strengthen monitoring of the oceans in order to prevent and expose illegal fishing activities.

The Government will maintain the deliveries obligations set out in existing agreements, but will link this obligation to various regions rather than to individual facilities and municipalities.

The Government will provide a framework for stable growth in the aquaculture industry. The potential inherent in the industry must be further developed. The Government will therefore open the door to increasing the number of aquaculture licences as well as the maximum allowable biomass per licence. Efforts to prevent escapes and combat sea lice and other diseases must be strengthened via binding agreements within the industry itself. Municipalities that provide aquaculture sites should see more positive ripple effects. The Government will therefore allow a major portion of the fees for new aquaculture licences to be returned to the municipalities in question.

The Government will cooperate with all involved parties to ensure sustainable management of wild salmon stocks, while at the creating a better foundation for increased value creation.

The Government will:

- Invest in research and development in the fisheries and aquaculture industries, with a view to increasing the added value of Norwegian export products in particular.
- Improve access to export markets for fish and fish products, for example through bilateral trade agreements.

- Pursue a policy that promotes widespread private ownership and a differentiated fishing fleet, in which the various fleet groups have equal opportunities.
- Further develop and modernise the Raw Fish Marketing Act to ensure flexible, efficient and well-organised markets with adequate control of resources.
- Consider relaxing the Act relating to the right to participate in fishing and hunting, particularly with regard to the residence requirement in cases of inheritance or succession.
- Improve the scheme for quota transfer for the ocean-going fleet.
- Ensure that structural quotas do not have a predetermined time limit.
- Allow for structuring of the closed group for vessels under 11 metres and promote recruitment to this fleet group.
- Introduce a scheme for joint fishing in the open group for vessels under 11 metres.
- Replace the current aquaculture licensing scheme with an application process based on objective allocation criteria.
- Introduce the polluter pays principle in the aquaculture industry.
- Harvest marine mammal stocks in keeping with integrated, sustainable management principles.
- Introduce unrestricted fishing of king crab outside the commercial zone.

Agriculture and forestry

The Norwegian agricultural sector is deeply rooted in values such as respect for private property rights, freedom to engage in business activities, and preservation of cultural heritage and the natural environment. The Government will strengthen farmers' right to choose how to use their own land. The Conservative Party and the Progress Party will work to repeal the article on allodial right and primogeniture in the Norwegian Constitution. The Government will promote a dynamic agricultural sector by opening up more opportunities for value creation. The status of farmers and forest owners as self-employed will be strengthened. The Government will maintain the annual Agricultural Agreement and attach importance to promoting predictability and reforms that can boost profitability, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. Norwegian food producers will have competitive framework conditions for establishment and production.

Agriculture plays a vital role in food and plant production, settlement patterns and the cultural landscape in Norway. Grazing helps to maintain the cultural landscape. The agricultural sector helps to maintain long-standing food traditions, and has as its main task to supply safe, high-quality food. Norwegian agricultural production can compete with other countries in terms of quality. While import protection is important for ensuring the profitability of Norwegian agriculture, a reduction of tariff barriers would be in the interests of Norwegian consumers and the Norwegian food industry alike.

The Government seeks a clearer distinction between agricultural policy and regional policy. The main objective of agricultural policy must be to promote cost-effective food production. The Government will therefore target state transfers towards increased production. Alternative industrial development should be encouraged to provide a basis for more robust, future-oriented agricultural production throughout the country.

The Government will strengthen the agricultural sector by simplifying legislation, regulations and support schemes. This will in turn improve access to capital, increase turnover and boost recruitment. Quota limits and licensing restrictions that prevent full utilisation of capacity in individual and cooperative farms must be rescinded as far as possible. The maximum production ceiling will be raised as a first step. These changes must be introduced gradually, and the level of transfers will be decreased at the same pace.

The Government seeks greater competition in the food industry, and will therefore make the market regulation scheme more independent of the cooperative organisations.

The Government will:

- Simplify the support structure.
- Tie budgetary support more closely to production than to land-use, within the framework of international regulations. This will also benefit full-time farmers.
- Review licensing, quota schemes and differentiation in support rates for agriculture.
- Reduce the dependency of agriculture on state transfers, cut costs within the sector, and provide farmers with new and improved income opportunities.
- Use targeted changes to the tax system to strengthen the financial position of farmers.
- Work to ensure the highest possible degree of self-sufficiency in food production for purposes of emergency preparedness.
- Seek to maintain predictability in Norwegian food production in the event that new international trade agreements require major restructuring of agricultural policy.
- Strengthen farmers' right of use of their own property by repealing the Concession Act and removing the residence requirement, the prohibition on sub-division, and price controls.
- Study the practice and effects of the obligation to farm and considering removing it.
- Allow limited companies as a form of ownership in agriculture.
- Lower the tax rate on profit from the sale of agricultural operations to the capital taxation rate.
- Allow the establishment of a fund scheme for agriculture modelled on the Forest Trust Fund.
- Preserve high-quality topsoil, but balance soil protection considerations with the needs of society at large. The Government will conduct a review of issues relating to land lease and agronomy in Norwegian agriculture with a view to improving the yield from existing cultivated areas.
- Simplify and reduce bureaucracy in the agricultural sector.
- Promote competence-building measures in agriculture.
- Allow product samples and restricted sales of alcohol directly from niche producers, and seek to amend EU legislation in this area if necessary.

The forestry industry plays a key role in Norway. Many people have enjoyed secure jobs in the industry, and the potential for value creation is great. Norwegian forest owners have a long tradition of effective solutions for sustainable management of forestry resources. The forestry industry has considerable growth potential, and should therefore be encouraged to develop new market areas.

The Government will:

- Draw up an integrated strategy for the forestry value chain.
- Promote increased harvesting of forests.
- Lower the tax rate on profits from the sale of forestry operations to the capital taxation rate.
- Strengthen private forestry by selling forested area from Statskog corresponding to the amount purchased by Statskog in recent years.
- Give greater emphasis to climate policy objectives in the management of Norwegian forests.
- Adapt the transport regulations for timber as far as possible to meet competition from Norway's trading partners.

- Seek to establish new sources of capital for the development and profitable production of new wood-based products, for example by allowing the Forest Trust Fund to be used for investments in industrial processes.

Reindeer husbandry is a vital industry in certain parts of Norway. It provides food and a livelihood for many people. It is the backbone of Sámi culture and society.

The Government will:

- Submit a white paper on sustainability in reindeer husbandry.
- Amend the Reindeer Husbandry Act to prioritise ecological sustainability.
- Establish framework conditions that will reduce the industry's dependency on transfers in the long term.
- Treat farmers and reindeer herders equally with regard to taxation of assets used in production.

7 – Renewal, government administration and church affairs

Public administration, bureaucracy and efficiency

The Government will focus on creating a simpler day-to-day life for the general public by simplifying laws and rules and by removing unnecessary and exclusively Norwegian prohibitions and requirements. Society must become less bureaucratic. People should have more freedom to run their own lives without interference from politicians and bureaucrats. The Government will work to combat the squandering of public funds and will give high priority to the effective implementation of policy. Simplification for the business sector is dealt with in detail in Chapter 5.

The Government's objective is to ensure the most effective possible use of our common resources to ensure the universal provision of high-quality welfare services. The public sector is to have a stabilising effect on the labour market and serve as a modern employer. The Government will invest more in competence-building, particularly within core priority areas, to increase the quality of welfare services. A well-functioning public sector will increase competitiveness in the Norwegian economy. The Government will therefore work to further develop the public sector to make it an attractive workplace for competent personnel.

The Government will:

- Introduce efficiency measures in the public sector and expand the use of private and non-profit resources for the provision of public welfare services.
- Remove unnecessary and exclusively Norwegian prohibitions and requirements. This includes legalising professional boxing, as well as the use of Segways and water scooters.
- Allow the sales outlets of the Vinmonopolet wine and spirits monopoly to be open for business on the same days that the shops are permitted to sell beer.
- Review the government ministries and directorates with a view to simplifying their structure and reducing the level of bureaucracy.
- Consider establishing an independent rationalisation agency for the public sector whose powers of authority will include, among other things, revision of cost-benefit analyses in order to ensure satisfactory quality and consistent practice.
- Reduce the number of legally stipulated consultative bodies and limit the right to lodge objections in cases involving land-use issues.
- Set clearer boundaries for the public administration's right to take decisions based on discretionary assessment.

ICT

Investment in modern information and communications technology (ICT) provides a major opportunity to simplify contact with a public sector that is open 24 hours a day, and to raise the quality of public services, enhance value creation and improve decision-making. Increased use of ICT will rest on the accessibility of the solutions for all. The Government will emphasise the importance of universal design principles in ICT. The Government will ensure access to high-speed broadband throughout the country, with a target speed of 100 Mbps. ICT can be used actively to promote greater efficiency in both the private and the public sectors. The Government will pursue an ICT policy with a clear focus on the protection of privacy.

The public sector must be able to take advantage of how planned and coordinated introduction of ICT can benefit society. The potential is particularly great within the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the health services and the police.

Proper investment in technology and successful implementation will significantly strengthen emergency preparedness and enhance the success of the measures introduced. Collaboration and coordination between central and local government authorities must also be strengthened. The Government will work to achieve better coordination between the various ICT systems in the public sector.

The Government will:

- Work to introduce a universal system for logging on to all public services. This may be linked to current systems for logging into online banking.
- Pave the way for greater use of ICT tools in education.

Protection of privacy

The Government will balance the need for efficiency and information exchange with careful consideration of protection of privacy. The protection of privacy must form an integral part of the development and application of ICT on all levels within the public sector. Each one of us should have the greatest possible control over and ownership of information about ourselves. This will enable individuals to take responsibility for their own privacy.

The Government will:

- Pursue a proactive ICT policy with a clear focus on the protection of privacy.
- Discuss with the Swedish authorities the FRA law associated with the surveillance activities of the Swedish Defence Authority.
- Protect against unauthorised access to sensitive personal information about income and wealth in income tax listings, and ensure that individuals are told who has requested disclosure of such data.
- Introduce traceability in public records to prevent and expose hacking into personal data.

Competition

The freedom of the individual and the freedom to choose will be fundamental values for the Government. The Government will build its economic policy on belief in the individual and the power of the consumer through the market. In order to ensure that the public has access to satisfactory services, the Government will draw up a framework that the municipalities can use when introducing free user choice.

Active competition helps to ensure effective use of society's resources, keeps the costs down and promotes innovation. This will benefit consumers by leading to lower prices, better quality and a varied range of products. Higher prices on goods and services due to inadequate competition may mean that the goods and services that consumers want, and are willing to pay for, are not produced. This represents a loss for society.

The Government will to the greatest possible degree work to promote a business sector that is free and independent, without special treatment or competition-distorting agreements, and will promote the free flow of goods and services and free access to markets.

The Government will:

- Professionalise and introduce efficiency measures into public procurement processes, including drawing up a guide for public-private innovation partnerships.
- Work to achieve further liberalisation of international trade.

- Review and reduce the number of schemes that restrict the establishment of and competition in service industries, such as rules for opening hours, concession and licensing regulations and permits, and restrictions limiting the establishment and location of new businesses.
- Strengthen the Norwegian Competition Authority as an independent body and eliminate the Government's role as the appeal's body for the Competition Authority by setting up an independent appeals board.

It is the Government's general view that the production of welfare services does not differ greatly from other services. Competition encourages value creation and better public services, as well as more effective implementation. It is therefore essential that competition becomes an integral part of all public activity. Statutory rights to welfare services, combined with free right of establishment and unit-price financing directly to the service provider chosen by the consumer, may help to ensure this development.

The Government will open the door to competition in the rail transport industry, the development, operation and maintenance of airports, and the operation of ferry services.

Religion and philosophy of life

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for a free society. The Government's values are based on our Christian and humanist cultural heritage. The parties backing the Government will retain their support of Article 2 of the Constitution, which affirms these values, in the Storting. The parties will also retain Article 16 of the Constitution which affirms the right to free exercise of religion for all inhabitants, and equal treatment of all religious and philosophical communities.

Society, the Church and the state are best served with a clear separation of church and state. The Government emphasises that the Church of Norway holds great significance for many Norwegians, and will pursue a policy which ensures that the church maintains its status as an inclusive church of the people.

The Government will change the name of Religious and Ethical Education (REE) in schools to Christianity, Religious and Ethical Education (CREE), and re-introduce the requirement that the curriculum, in accordance with the competency goals, must contain at least 55 per cent teaching of Christianity, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will take a positive view of school participation in religious ceremonies, such as school church services, in connection with religious holidays. These decisions must be made on a local level and it must be possible to apply for exemption.

The Government will contribute to a national commitment to safeguard listed churches and church buildings worthy of preservation.

The Government takes the view that churches should not be used for purposes of asylum.

The Government will:

- Draw up a coherent Act on religious and philosophical communities.
- Ensure genuine autonomy for all religious and philosophical communities.
- Continue support for religious education in the Church of Norway.
- Base financial contributions to religious and philosophical communities on the principle of equal treatment. The state is not able to use financial instruments to steer the lawful activities of religious and philosophical communities.

- Abolish the duty of residence for clergy in the Church of Norway.

8 – Security and defence

Norway's security is built together with others. NATO cooperation is the bedrock of Norwegian security and defence policy. A key objective for Norway's security and defence policy is to help to ensure that NATO remains a strong and credible alliance, and to ensure that Norway remains a relevant ally and partner. At the same time, peace and stability are best secured through the broadest possible security policy cooperation. The UN as a global forum for cooperation plays an important role in sustaining peaceful development in the world, and, together with the European and Nordic defence and security policy cooperation, is enhancing long-term stability and peaceful development in Norway's neighbouring regions. The Government will support and strengthen international cooperation on security and stability.

Military defence is one of the key tasks of the central government. The Government will strengthen and modernise the armed forces to ensure that they are able to fulfil national tasks as well as to make a useful contribution to international cooperation on peace and security. The use of force or the threat of using force on Norway must not be allowed to exert decisive influence on any part of Norwegian policy. The Government will therefore ensure that Norway maintains a genuine threshold defence with dynamic, flexible operational units that can handle a variety of challenges within the threat picture at any given time.

In light of developments in the High North, including increased activity in the form of maritime transport and resource extraction, the Norwegian presence and exercise of sovereignty must be safeguarded. Norway's interests and special responsibility in the High North also require military capacity. The mandate of the Coast Guard and adequate capability for search and rescue operations are of key importance in this respect. The Government will ensure that the Armed Forces have good insight into the prevailing circumstances and high operational capacity in the North.

The Armed Forces will be given the resources to carry out their assigned task, and a real balance must be achieved between budgetary allocations, structures and tasks. There is still a need for increased allocations, modernisation and reform.

The key resource of the Armed Forces is its personnel. The personnel and competence reform that has been initiated will be further developed and implemented.

The Armed Forces play an important role in society's overall emergency preparedness. This applies in the case of terrorist attacks as well as in the context of accidents and natural disasters. The capabilities of the Armed Forces must be available for use in national crisis management, and the best possible cooperation must be established between the Armed Forces, the police and civilian emergency response authorities.

There is a need to improve the follow up of the Armed Forces' veterans, with an emphasis on health and social follow-up, financial security and support for their families. The Government will expand the competence and capacity of civilian administration and implement improved administrative procedures for this group.

The Government will:

- Give priority to trans-Atlantic relations in its security and defence policy. Norwegian commitment to and participation in NATO will be reinforced, and a framework will be laid for NATO activity and presence in Norway.
- Reinforce bilateral and multilateral cooperation with key allies in our adjacent areas and assume a leading role in the development of closer cooperation and integration in the region.

- Participate actively in EU security and defence policy forums wherever appropriate.
- Intensify Nordic defence and security policy cooperation, especially in terms of practical military strength. This collaboration will be developed within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and NORDEFECO, as a supplement to the countries' affiliation to NATO and the EU.
- Ensure that the Armed Forces have an adequate, stable and reliable financial framework.
- Support the Storting's unanimous decision to procure up to 52 F-35 fighter aircraft. The procurement of fighter aircraft must be provided with reliable funding, and a considerable part must be taken from sources other than the Armed Forces' regular budget framework to avoid overburdening other activities.
- Define clear preparedness requirements for the Armed Forces, including in the national context. These preparedness requirements will be reviewed and followed up.
- Expand compulsory military service to apply to all citizens, and modernise and develop the initial service in line with the needs of the Armed Forces. This will also entail a further professionalisation of the operational units.
- Evaluate the current practice of integrated strategic leadership of the sector, with a view to reform and improvement. The role of the Chief of Defence as the leader of the sector will be reinforced.
- Modernise the command system and introduce specialist commanding officers according to the NATO standard.
- Improve the follow-up of the Armed Forces' veterans, in particular in the form of measures through the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and the health services. A service-based "war pension" will be explored, and the compensation schemes will be reviewed with a view to simplification. Administrative processing of veterans' cases will be centralised.
- Strengthen the Armed Forces' cyber-ops capabilities, and link the Cyber Defence to civilian cyber-security where appropriate.
- Introduce efficiency measures in the Armed Forces' overall use of resources vis-à-vis the civilian sector. Review the rules for civilian assistance with a view to increased flexibility and ensure that the resources held by the Armed Forces can be deployed for purposes of national crisis management.
- Consider adding operational tasks to the joint counterterrorism unit consisting of the Norwegian Police Security Service and the Norwegian Intelligence Service.
- Contribute to international military operations through the UN, NATO and the EU, depending on our specific advantages and needs, and in light of what best serves the operation. Norwegian military participation is to help to promote peace and security in Norway and internationally and have its basis in international law.
- Provide additional funding to new overseas operations, if required.
- Contribute to the maintenance and further development of a competitive Norwegian defence industry.

9 – Health and care

Patient-centred health services

The knowledge that help and care will be provided for those that need it is a cornerstone of our welfare society. Ensuring access to good health and care services for all is a public responsibility. It is problematic that some individuals in great need of help do not receive the help to which they are entitled.

Development and change in the health services must revolve around patients and their needs. The Government will ensure good healthcare for all by keeping patient charges low. The situation of family members will be improved through better relief services and guidance and a review of the current support schemes for family members.

Municipal health services

The municipal health and care services need to be strengthened and modernised, with better coordination of healthcare services overall. The most important resource in the healthcare services is its personnel and the Government will implement a competence reform to enhance the quality of these services.

The Coordination Reform must ensure effective competence transfer, strong specialist groups and adequate capacity.

The Government will:

- Introduce competency requirements in the Act relating to municipal health and care services (Health and Care Services Act).
- Draw up an action plan to promote accessibility, quality and expertise in the regular general practitioner scheme.
- Change the reimbursement system for the regular general practitioner scheme to open up for greater use of other health personnel affiliated with general practitioners' offices.
- Follow up the agreement achieved in the Storting on the Coordination Reform, including the reversal of municipal co-financing.
- Enhance the quality of and introduce more stringent requirements for services provided at emergency departments (regulations relating to emergency medical care).
- Strengthen expertise and services in palliative treatment and care, also for children. Provide a framework for diversified services, including hospice.
- Compile a report on the economic ramifications for municipalities which have a large population of students or holiday homes and which thus provide health services for large parts of the year to inhabitants who are residents of other municipalities, and, in this context, investigate ways of ensuring greater freedom of choice across municipal boundaries.
- Expand municipal midwifery services.

Services for the elderly and others in need of care

Services for the elderly and others in need of care must be further developed to ensure that they are of a high standard and maintain adequate levels of activity. The Government will pursue all viable avenues to ensure that patients have access to a wide range of high-quality health services, and are given more freedom of choice.

The Government wants the state to assume greater financial responsibility for ensuring that the municipalities adequately increase care provision capacity and quality in care services for the elderly.

Family members and other volunteer care providers who care for their loved ones do a vital job and deserve access to public services that work with them and provide relief from the caregiving burden. The Government will make it a legal right to obtain user-driven personal assistance as a means of improving the day-to-day lives of people who need assistance and their families.

The Government will:

- Introduce quality indicators for the nursing and care sector, based in part on the experience of users and their family members.
- Evaluate the establishment of a legal right to 24-hour nursing and care, with the aim of introducing it during this parliamentary term, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Establish a norm/guidelines for staffing and quality in the nursing and care sector.
- Incorporate housing cooperatives and co-ownership organisations that collaborate with municipalities on the provision of health and care services into the VAT compensation scheme for the municipalities.
- Simplify the rules for use of state funding schemes for development of facilities under the auspices of private and non-profit organisations and housing cooperatives.
- Increase investment in welfare technology.
- Expand daytime activity programmes and other types of activity measures.
- Require the municipalities to provide home visits in order to tailor assistive measures to the individual.
- Encourage the municipalities to innovate in care provision by introducing experimental legislation that provides the freedom and financial stimulus to try out new organisational forms and measures.
- Establish a pilot scheme for state funding of care services for the elderly for which the municipalities may apply. The pilot scheme will include a limited number of municipalities, have an extended timeframe and be evaluated.
- Remove the prohibition on compiling lists of individuals who are waiting for spaces in nursing homes, in order to determine the actual need.
- Increase investment in services for people with dementia.
- Introduce a scheme for government operating grants to prevent an unequal distribution between assisted living residences and nursing homes, and to ensure a more rapid increase in the number of nursing home spaces.
- Establish a plan in cooperation with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) with annual targets for increasing the number of spaces with 24-hour nursing and care.
- Establish an interest compensation scheme to supplement the Norwegian State Housing Bank's investment grants for the building of nursing homes and residential care homes for people with dementia.
- Reduce the patient charges for long-term care patients who must involuntarily share a room.

Hospitals

The main tasks of the specialist healthcare services are to be carried out at the public hospitals. These hospitals have responsibility for emergency medical care, primary responsibility for research and training, and they perform a major proportion of the planned treatments.

The quality of the services at the various hospitals varies too widely. The Government will therefore introduce requirements for quality certification of Norwegian hospitals and ensure greater transparency regarding the quality of the services.

It is a challenge that many patients have to wait for an unnecessarily long time to receive necessary treatment, also for health services for which private healthcare providers have available capacity. In order to reduce waiting times and healthcare queues, the Government will pursue all viable avenues in the effort to treat patients.

The Government will submit a national health and hospital plan to the Storting to promote transparency and predictability in the sector. The health and hospital plan will among other things define the tasks of the various types of hospitals and the structure of the specialist healthcare services, and will present the needs that have been identified, equipment needs and investment plans.

The hospital plan will also encompass local hospitals and address the vital role they play in preparedness and safeguarding the lives and health of people throughout the country.

The Government will:

- Eliminate the regional health authorities once a national health and hospital plan has been drawn up.
- Stop the closure of emergency and maternity services when not motivated by patient safety and quality grounds until the deliberation of the national health and hospital plan has been completed.
- Enhance quality-promoting activities at the hospitals, implement quality assessments and submit an annual report on quality and patient safety to the Storting.
- Establish a permanent independent commission of inquiry into undesirable incidents.
- Increase the proportion of activity-based funding and look into finding an improved funding model for emergency treatment, and research and training in the public health service, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Introduce free choice of healthcare provider. The scheme will be introduced initially for people with substance abuse and/or mental health problems, and will then be evaluated, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Increase procurement of health services from private healthcare providers to reduce queues, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Establish interdisciplinary diagnostic centres in all of the health regions to provide faster diagnosis of cancer and other serious diseases.
- Improve cancer treatment by introducing mandatory start of the diagnosis process within 48 hours, implementing a standardised patient pathway and incorporating legally binding patient pathway times in the Patients' Rights Act.
- Supplement the national cancer strategy with a work plan.
- Establish a separate company for construction and operation of healthcare buildings.
- Strengthen medical research, particularly on serious illnesses and prevention of lifestyle diseases for which current treatment options are inadequate.
- Ensure better funding for, and better access to, experimental treatment.
- Strengthen the rights of patients and their family members and introduce a scheme for a regular doctor/contact person in the specialist healthcare services for seriously ill patients.

- Introduce competency requirements for personnel in emergency departments and establish a new medical specialisation in emergency medicine.
- Expand the number of positions for specialists on contract with the municipality and make greater use of these specialists.
- Reduce bureaucracy to free up more time and capacity for treating patients.
- Implement an ICT system that enables all hospitals to communicate electronically, and establish a separate funding scheme for necessary investments.
- Improve access to health information and health services via a patient-friendly online health portal.

Substance abuse and treatment

The waiting times are currently too long for people with substance abuse problems who are motivated to undergo treatment. There is a need both to step up the level of activity in the field of substance abuse and to improve the transition between different stages of treatment.

The Government will:

- Establish an escalation plan for the field of substance abuse and reintroduce the rule that the substance abuse and mental health care services, respectively, will have an annual increase in funding in each of the regional health authorities that exceeds the increase for somatic care services.
- Open more reception centres for substance abusers in the largest cities.
- Rapidly increase the number of and purchase available spaces for substance abuse treatment.
- Work to ensure that all people with substance abuse problems receive an individual treatment plan and follow-up by coordinators.
- Ensure that outpatient treatment at polyclinics is not expanded at the expense of inpatient treatment where it is needed.
- Ensure a seamless transition from detoxification to rehabilitation.
- Ensure that aftercare begins on the first day following detoxification and treatment, and is supplemented by other assistive measures.
- Strengthen social and health-related rehabilitation services for people with mental health problems, including ensuring that they have a place to live while undergoing drug-assisted rehabilitation.
- Maintain the prohibitions on drug possession and use.

Mental health

Mental health has been given too little priority in the health services for many years. There is a need to strengthen mental health care in terms of prevention and low-threshold measures and within the specialist healthcare services. Preventive measures, such as stepping up the effort to combat bullying and exclusion in schools and working life, are crucial to safeguarding mental health in the population at large.

The Government will:

- Establish low-threshold mental health services in the municipalities. Measures to achieve this aim will include legislation, planning and funding.
- Expand treatment services within mental health care.
- Improve low-threshold and preventive measures targeting children and young people, such as those provided by school health services and public health centres.

- Use the coming municipal reform to enable the municipalities to provide more comprehensive mental health services, and assign responsibility for the district psychiatric centres to municipalities that have adequate capacity and expertise.
- Establish a psychiatric ambulance service.
- Enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and aftercare across the board in the substance abuse and mental health care services.
- Strengthen work-oriented rehabilitation schemes and make it easier for private and non-profit organisations to cooperate with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) on new and improved occupational rehabilitation services.
- Dispel taboos surrounding, and improve prevention of, self-harming and suicide.

Rehabilitation

The healthcare services are successfully saving more and more lives, but they are also charged with helping people to cope with any aftermath and enabling them to lead active lives once their treatment has been concluded. Expansion of habilitation and rehabilitation services will give more individuals the opportunity to participate in society and working life.

The Government will:

- Introduce free choice of rehabilitation provider.
- Establish an escalation plan in the rehabilitation field and prevent the discontinuation of rehabilitation services under the specialist healthcare services before corresponding capacity and expertise has been established in the municipalities.
- Expand the options for treatment trips and make them available to more patient groups.
- Establish a new funding model for physiotherapists.

Public health

Lifestyle diseases are emerging as a growing challenge to the health services and to society at large. Each individual must take greater responsibility for his or her own health, and society must make it easier to make positive health choices. At the same time, measures to improve public health must be considered in light of the freedom of choice of the individual.

The Government will:

- Strengthen preventive health efforts.
- Maintain the main lines of Norwegian alcohol policy, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Cooperate with outdoor recreation councils and voluntary organisations to improve public health through physical activity and outdoor recreation, and submit a white paper on promoting outdoor recreation.
- Lay the foundations for more physical activity in schools and encourage a healthier diet.
- Incorporate mental health into public health activities on an equal footing with other components of public health.
- Follow up the agreement achieved on the diabetes plan.
- Strengthen initiatives to prevent new HIV infections and improve the lives of people living with HIV.

Gene technology and biotechnology

While new technology can open up new vistas for treatment and prevention of disease, it also presents us with ethical dilemmas. The implementation of new technology in the health services will also pose a challenge in terms of prioritising the use of personnel's time and expertise.

Norway is home to dynamic research groups that are making great strides in gene technology and biotechnology. The Government will strengthen research activities and further develop environments with specialist expertise in this field.

The Government will:

- Evaluate the Biotechnology Act, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Not introduce universal early ultrasound screening and NIPD testing for all pregnant women, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Give regular general practitioners the right to refuse abortion referrals, in dialogue with the Norwegian Medical Association, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Maintain current legislation on abortion.

Pharmaceutical products

The Government will ensure that patients have rapid access to new, effective pharmaceutical products. Norway's medicinal product policy will promote patient safety, effective treatment, lower state costs, and innovation. The Government will provide a framework for growth in the Norwegian pharmaceutical industry with a view to improving patient services, enhancing value creation and creating more secure jobs.

The Government will:

- Submit a white paper on pharmaceutical products to help to develop a more integrated, patient-friendly medicinal product policy.
- Review the pharmacy mark-up.

Dentistry

The public dental health service provides treatment to children and young people. Treatment is also provided to people living in 24-hour residential nursing and care homes. The Government will continue this practice, but will also consider expanding these services to include other patient groups suffering from extensive dental health problems.

The Government will:

- Introduce an improved scheme to defray the costs of dental care for people with low incomes and high treatment costs.

10 – Local government

Strong municipalities for the future

The municipalities are the very foundation of Norwegian democracy. The Government will strengthen local democracy by transferring authority and responsibility to the municipalities. This will give people in general more influence over their own daily lives and local community. The municipalities are responsible for providing the basic welfare services, and should direct their activities to those who need these the most.

A stable, predictable and adequate financial framework is required for the municipalities to carry out their tasks. A comprehensive review of the revenue system for counties and municipalities is needed. The Government will let each municipality retain a larger proportion of its own tax revenues. Among other measures, a larger proportion of the company taxes will be retained by the municipalities in which the wealth has been created. The Government will strengthen the economic situation of municipalities with large-scale investment needs due to strong population growth. The Government will implement these amendments gradually and provide adequate notice.

The local authorities know the most about their local challenges. The Government will therefore lay the foundations for more local adaptation of land-use policy. The authority of the county governors to overrule the discretionary assessments of elected bodies will be reduced by restricting the ability to overrule municipal decisions to legal checks and processing of appeals. The municipalities will also be given more weight to decide in matters related to national parks and protected areas, and be allowed greater autonomy in matters pertaining to the shoreline zone, for instance.

The Government will implement a municipal reform ensuring that necessary decisions are made during this parliamentary term, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. A more robust municipal structure will enhance competence and professionalism within each municipality. This will be an advantage, for example in complicated child welfare cases, for provision of resource-intensive services and for a better management and development of care and educational services. The Government will invite the parties in the Storting to take part in deliberations on this process. The Government will conduct a review of the tasks carried out by the county authorities, the county governors and the central government with a view to transferring more power and authority to the municipalities.

The emergence of intermunicipal companies and collaboration shows that the tasks already exceed the capabilities of the current municipal structure. Key decisions related to municipal tasks, such as infrastructure and basic welfare services, have been shifted from elected bodies to intermunicipal companies. In the view of the Government, this has undermined democracy. A comprehensive municipal reform will thus also be a democracy reform.

The Government will:

- Implement a municipal reform, ensuring that necessary decisions are taken during this parliamentary term.
- Introduce a pilot scheme for transfer of tasks from the central government and the county authorities to the municipalities.
- Give the municipalities greater influence over the establishment of asylum reception centres.
- Carry out an integrated review of the revenue system to allow the municipalities to retain a larger proportion of the wealth created locally.
- Establish a body to resolve disputes between central and local government.
- Ensure that municipalities that do not levy property tax are not subject to financial penalty by the central government for this.

Housing

Norway has a strong tradition of home ownership. It will be the Government's objective to enable most people to own their own homes. There are still many who encounter barriers to the housing market. It is therefore a public task to pursue a proactive social housing policy.

The Norwegian population is growing rapidly, especially in the major cities. Thus, there will be a considerable demand for more housing in the years to come. The Government will create the best possible framework for building more housing. Public regulation should not unnecessarily delay or increase the cost of building housing. The Government will ensure more rapid processing of building applications and simplify the Planning and Building Act.

The Government will make it easier for municipalities to allow more housing construction, and make it easier for developers to keep pace with demand. The Government will simplify the technical building regulations in cooperation with the building industry. The ability of central government authorities to lodge objections that inhibit zoning for housing and local freedom of action will be restricted, and there will be better coordination of such objections.

The Government will:

- Strengthen ownership rights.
- Simplify the Planning and Building Act and appurtenant regulations.
- Simplify the requirements for rental property.
- Establish a permanent building costs programme in cooperation with the industry.
- Build more housing units for students and simplify regulations to facilitate cooperation with private actors.
- Remove the residence requirement.
- Reinforce the home savings scheme for young people (BSU).
- Ensure satisfactory framework conditions for building housing.
- Encourage housing development near centrally located public-transport hubs in cities and towns, and in centrally located areas where the development will give rise to fewer land-use conflicts.
- Review the effect of building regulations with regard to prices and construction activities for the smallest housing units.
- Ensure an appropriate and flexible housing allowance scheme.
- Practise the requirements for home purchaser equity in a flexible manner that takes into account the purchaser's financial situation.

Regions and districts

Norway is a land of great variety and diversity. An important objective of regional policy is to preserve and further develop this diversity. The Government will create a foundation for growth throughout Norway as a whole.

The most important factor for ensuring dynamic regions throughout the country is a business sector that can safeguard and create profitable workplaces. The framework conditions for Norwegian industry comprise the most important regional policy instrument. The Government will therefore eliminate and reduce regulations that prevent people from making use of what the country has to offer.

Norway extends far to the north. Much of our internationally competing industry is located outside the major cities. The Government will reduce the disadvantages imposed by location, including transport costs, through large-scale upgrading of the main roads. The Government will also increase investment in other forms of infrastructure.

The Government will:

- Give priority to instruments that can promote innovation and business start-ups in all parts of the county, with an emphasis on entrepreneurship.
- Delegate and decentralise more responsibility and more tasks to the municipalities.
- Strengthen infrastructure to make larger parts of the country more accessible.
- Strengthen existing growth potential where it is found and at the same time safeguard the basis for good living conditions in all parts of the country.
- Transfer the responsibility for management of protected areas to the municipalities.
- Allow the municipalities to decide on matters related to the use of motor vehicles on uncultivated land.
- Allow the municipalities to issue development licenses to small-scale, micro- and mini-hydropower plants and to small-scale wind farms.

The major cities

The major cities are crucial for the development of the various regions. The Government will therefore pursue an active urban centre policy for these cities and a new regional policy in which the major cities and the surrounding regions establish collaborative efforts to their mutual benefit. The Government will design solutions in consultation with these cities, through dialogue and partnership. There is great potential for development based on the cities' high concentration of competence and innovative power.

The major cities are facing a number of major social challenges that are specific to them. The high cost level, for example of housing, has a major impact on people on low incomes. The cities have the highest crime rates. They must deal with greater social challenges and poverty problems, but they are also better equipped to deal with these challenges. The Government will provide the cities with better opportunities to combat these problems on their own, in cooperation with the central government. The cities must be provided with significantly more room for manoeuvre through greater freedom from close central government control.

The population of the urban areas is rising, and is expected to increase sharply in the years to come. This should be reflected in transport policy. The Government will therefore undertake major investment in infrastructure in and around the largest cities. The Government will ensure that the existing Reward Scheme for public transport in the largest cities is based on objective criteria and documentable results.

The Sámi and national minorities

The Government's goal is that indigenous peoples and minorities should be allowed to develop their language, their culture and their communities. Norway's national minorities include people of Kven, Jewish, Forest Finn, Roma and Romani descent.

It is important and enriching for Norway to preserve the Sámi language, culture and traditions. Norwegian and Sámi have equal standing as languages. At the same time, it is essential to have a shared linguistic platform. The Government will develop Sámi business, including tourism, linked to Sámi culture and traditional Sámi industries.

Arctic agriculture has a large potential for niche production that all actors in this industry should be able to develop. The Government will help to make enjoyment of the natural surroundings in North Norway available to all.

The Government will:

- Maintain the Sámi Parliament and the practice of consultations between the Sámi Parliament, the Storting and the Government.
- Establish cross-border cooperation with regard to the Sámi languages.
- Preserve and protect the culture of national minorities.

11 – Culture

Cultural policy must give people the opportunity to participate in and experience a diverse cultural life. The Government will therefore promote growth from the bottom up as opposed to employing top-down principles. Decentralising decision-making will strengthen the spread of authority and general diversity. The Government will help to maintain certain key cultural initiatives that are unable to manage without public support. Norway needs to have a professional cultural life, with forms of expression of high international calibre.

Knowledge and experience of our shared cultural heritage help to strengthen the individual's sense of identity and belonging to a community. Knowledge of our own culture provides security and a solid basis for meeting outside influences in a constructive manner. The best strategy for ensuring a viable, dynamic Norwegian language lies in its daily, voluntary use. The ability to participate in society is closely linked to good Norwegian skills. The teaching of Norwegian is therefore also a cultural policy objective.

The Government will provide children and young people with enriching cultural experiences and will invest in areas such as marching bands, choirs and youth art and culture festivals.

The Government will prepare the libraries for the digital world in a way that does not undermine the ability of those whose livelihood comes from the culture industry to generate their income from their activities. The Government will ensure continued free lending of literature.

The Government will:

- Reform cultural policy to encompass greater freedom. This will lead to greater spread of authority, higher quality and broader financing of cultural life. The work methods and organisation of Arts Council Norway will also be subject to review in this context.
- Pursue a policy for literature in which the key objectives are to safeguard Norwegian language and literature by promoting satisfactory growth in authorship as well as accessibility for the reader.
- Repeal the Act relating to fixed pricing of books.
- Emphasise culture as an industry to a greater degree and strengthen the foundation for entrepreneurship in the cultural sector.
- Simplify the regulations for self-employed artists.
- Support the status of both Norwegian language forms as a primary language. Replace the current right to receive a reply in a person's own language form with a right for employees in the state and language-neutral municipalities to use their own language form.
- Strengthen Nordic language cooperation.
- Put in place a stronger protection of intellectual property.
- Prioritise the freelance field and freelance workers.
- Create a framework for talented young people to pursue their professional development, independent of social and economic background, through the music and culture schools and their collaboration with voluntary actors and others.
- Facilitate Norwegian and international film production in Norway.
- Strengthen private funding for cultural activities, for example through donation matching schemes and a better framework for private funds and foundations. In the long term, this may help to reduce dependence on public funding.
- Review allocations to cultural activities to ensure prudent use of resources as well as high quality.

- Draw up a plan for the renovation and maintenance of national cultural institutions.

Voluntary sector

The voluntary sector is an important arena for collaboration and has helped to create the society we live in today. The Government wishes to promote growth in the voluntary sector from the bottom up, with less political control. The voluntary sector must have an independent status in society.

The substance of voluntary activity has shifted from being membership-based to becoming more activity-based. For the voluntary sector to be able to develop on its own terms in the future, the framework conditions must be adapted to a new reality. The Government will revise the state support schemes for the voluntary sector in keeping with this. The sector must be given a greater opportunity to gain financial independence from the state. The scheme for tax deductions for gifts to voluntary organisations must be strengthened and bureaucracy vis-à-vis such organisations must be reduced.

The Government will:

- Review the financial framework conditions for voluntary activity, with a view to decreasing bureaucracy and politicisation.
- Raise the limit for required submission of salary payment records and payment of employer's contributions for voluntary organisations.
- Increase revenue potential, for instance by increasing the tax deduction for gifts to voluntary organisations.
- Allow unclaimed inheritance to accrue to voluntary organisations instead of the state.
- Improve the VAT compensation scheme.
- Enable as many as possible to take part in voluntary activities.

Sports

Our society consists of many large and small communities. The sports community extends across these. Sports and physical activity have great intrinsic value and lead to better physical and mental health. The Government will provide good framework conditions for sports activities and ensure that everyone who wants to participate in physical activity can do so. Elite and grassroots sports are to co-exist and complement each other in a manner that strengthens the sports community overall.

Major international championships provide inspiration and also reinforce the grassroots. The Government will work to enable Norway to become a host nation for selected international championships, including championships for those with disabilities.

The Government will:

- Strengthen core financing for sports by increasing proportion of the surplus from Norsk Tipping. This will facilitate more rapid expansion of local sports facilities, among other things.
- Draw up an overall plan for the development of sports facilities.
- Review the regulations on lottery winnings and VAT refunds with a view to simplification.
- Enable athletes to combine sports and education, and strengthen elite coaching competence in different sports at upper secondary schools and university colleges.
- Eliminate the ban on professional boxing.
- Give sports clubs the opportunity to manage publicly-owned sports facilities.
- Create a better framework for enabling individuals with disabilities to participate in sports activities.

- Ensure secure and stable framework conditions for Special Olympics Norway.
- Introduce a statutory exemption to permit poker championship tournaments with clearly defined limits for the maximum betting amount.

Gaming

The Government will continue to pursue a gaming policy that safeguards the interests of gaming addicts and ensures that income from all types of gaming in Norway is used for charitable purposes.

The Government will examine the question of a licensing scheme for foreign gaming companies to establish whether it is possible to combine socio-political considerations and increased revenues to the voluntary sector within the framework of the EEA Agreement.

Decisions on new gaming concepts must be taken by the Norwegian Gaming Authority. The Government will distinguish between addictive gambling and non-addictive lottery concepts. The Government will support the establishment of a greater number of non-addictive lottery concepts that can strengthen voluntary organisations, provided that they still comply with the EU exemption that Norway has been granted for its state monopoly on gaming. Priority is to be given to the major humanitarian organisations .

Media

Digitalisation is leading to fundamental changes to the media industry. The basis for public participation, the design of the products and the methods for editorial activity are changing rapidly. The Government will lay the foundations for high-quality production of news, and a broad public debate on the digital media society of the future. Media policy must therefore encourage creative thinking and innovation while safeguarding the traditions and fundamental values of the free press.

The Government will:

- Modernise media policy instruments and agencies by ensuring equal treatment of the media regardless of the technological platform. Press funding will gradually be reorganised and reduced.
- Adapt the restrictions on media ownership to the need to ensure media diversity, and allow the Competition Authority to administer the Media Ownership Act.
- Place printed and online newspapers on an equal footing by establishing a common low rate of VAT.
- Submit a white paper on the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's licence and alternative payment schemes.
- Increase the number of external productions in the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation.
- Limit the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's ability to use its secure financial position to weaken the activity base of independent institutions.

12 – Knowledge

Good schooling provides students with knowledge, and forms the basis for social mobility in society. Norway is in need of skilled labour; therefore, the Government will implement efforts to improve vocational training. Higher education founded on quality provides us with competent workers. Quality in research lays the foundation for new innovation that generates secure jobs.

In a globalised world, knowledge is emerging as an increasingly important tool in the international competition between countries. The Government will give high priority to enhancing knowledge and skills as essential for increasing the competitiveness of Norwegian companies and building the country for the future.

Child day-care centres

Child day-care should provide children with safe and proper care and at the same time promote play and development on the children's own terms. The Government will strengthen the use of Norwegian and language development in day-care centres to better prepare the children for school and education. The most important resource in the child day-care centre is its personnel, and the quality of the care is dependent on this personnel's competency. The Government will work to establish a wide range of child day-care centres with flexible opening hours to cater to the needs of the individual child and family.

The Government will:

- Enhance the quality of the child day-care centres.
- Strengthen continuing and further education so that more employees gain competence in early childhood education.
- Train more educators.
- Implement independent supervision of child day-care centres.
- Ensure equal treatment of all children attending day-care, simplify funding schemes and revise accounting regulations to place public and private kindergartens on an equal footing.
- Make information about the day-care centres publicly available to the greatest extent possible and develop common national quality indicators.
- Work for increased flexibility in day-care admission procedures.
- Implement a staffing norm for day-care centres by 2020.
- Provide the necessary help to children with inadequate language skills and set requirements relating to Norwegian language skills among day-care centre staff.
- Give day-care centres that fulfil the municipal requirements for accreditation a better basis for establishing activities.

Commitment to teachers

Teachers are the school's most important resource. The key to enhancing knowledge among pupils is to invest in the competence of their teachers. The Government wants talented teachers to continue to teach, and seeks to make it possible for teachers to rise through the ranks and become specialists with higher salary and status. More career paths for teachers are also important to inspire a greater number of the best pupils to seek teacher training programmes in the future. The state will contribute towards the financing of new career paths in the schools.

The Government will enhance the quality of teacher training and expand continuing and further education programmes for teachers. Such programmes will yield up-to-date knowledge of the

subject field and develop teaching competency. In the long term, this will be established as a right for teachers, providing pupils with a teaching staff that is highly qualified in terms of both subject matter and pedagogical skill. The measure will enhance learning outcomes; therefore, in the long term, it will become mandatory for teachers to fulfil competency requirements through further and continuing education. The municipalities are responsible for continuing and further education for teachers, but the Government would like the central government to assume a greater portion of the funding.

The Government will:

- Gradually expand continuing and further education programmes and in the long term introduce the right and obligation to take part in continuing and further education.
- Implement a separate concentrated measure in mathematics, offering a continuing education programme to 10 000 teachers in primary and lower secondary education over the course of five years.
- Convert teacher training education into a five-year master's degree programme.
- Require that applicants to teacher training education have a grade of 4 or higher in Norwegian, mathematics and English to be admitted.
- Require that all teachers from Year 1 have a specialisation in the core subjects they will be teaching.
- Establish new career paths for teachers by introducing new job categories, such as specialist-teacher.
- Help to ensure that other occupational groups in schools contribute to freeing up time for teachers and school management to attend to core tasks.
- Establish a common ICT platform for schools to facilitate access to digital learning resources, information-sharing and a more efficient school day.
- Simplify and reduce the extent of unnecessary bureaucracy and reporting requirements.

The school system

The objective of the schools is to ensure that all pupils acquire basic skills in reading, mathematics, oral and written language, and use of digital tools. The primary challenge in Norwegian schools is that too many children do not acquire these skills. This is a major cause of drop out or failure in upper secondary education. The Government will implement measures to ensure that more pupils acquire basic skills.

The Government will:

- Give priority to the reading and writing skills of pupils throughout the entire course of their schooling. Efforts at an early stage are the key to mastery and an improved learning outcome.
- Map learning outcomes throughout school education and ensure full transparency with respect to results.
- Consider introducing more written school-leaving examinations for students in Year 10.
- Appoint a committee to assess the curriculum for Norwegian with a view to strengthening it as a language subject, making Norwegian Nynorsk more appealing to students and improving grading criteria.
- Reintroduce public primary and lower secondary schooling for the hearing-impaired.
- Gradually increase the national target for proportion of students who successfully complete upper secondary education to 90 per cent.

It is the task of schools to qualify pupils for working life and higher education. It is important that pupils are included in the evaluation of the quality of teaching they receive.

The Government will:

- Allow students in upper secondary school to evaluate teaching.
- Give upper secondary school students the right to free choice of school across county boundaries.

Schools are to provide a safe arena for learning and mastery. The Government will ensure a constructive learning environment for all students by continually working to prevent and combat bullying. It is also important that order and discipline are maintained in the classroom. It is essential to ensure that children in care institutions and young people at substance abuse treatment facilities have access to suitable and individually-tailored programmes.

The Government will:

- Give pupils with reading and writing difficulties access to a free PC with necessary software.
- Strengthen school counselling services to provide support for pupils in connection with important educational choices and social issues. Requirements relating to mandatory, regular continuing education will be established.
- Create a basis for schools to ensure that pupils have daily physical activity.
- Ensure that in bullying cases where transfer to another school is the only solution, it is the bully who changes schools.
- Permit the individual school to set rules governing the use of religious garments and symbols in situations where the school deems this necessary.
- Give the municipalities the freedom to decide whether they wish to have a school fruit scheme and to determine the class level for which extra help with homework is to be offered.

The Government will open the door to more publicly financed private schools, and will reinstate a law relating to independent schools in which the requirement pertaining to purpose is replaced by a requirement regarding content and quality. Schools that meet the conditions will have the right to be accredited, unless an overall assessment indicates that accreditation will result in negative consequences for the public school programme. The Government will consider granting capital grants to established private schools to upgrade older buildings. Private schools will be prohibited from paying dividends to the owners.

The Government will broaden cooperation with trade and industry to increase the students' interest and enhance learning outcomes. The Government will make it easier for students needing extra challenges to take subjects at a higher level.

The Government will:

- Encourage closer cooperation between schools, companies and research groups. It will be easier for schools to incorporate competence from the business sector into their teaching.
- Develop schools specialising in particular subjects at the lower and upper secondary level, for example a school of natural science, in cooperation with higher education institutions.
- Strengthen Young Entrepreneurship as an important arena for cooperation with working life.
- Establish a national programme for technology modelled on the Cultural Rucksack programme.
- Make it easier for pupils needing extra challenges to take subjects at a higher level.

Improve vocational training

Vocational training is intended to produce skilled labourers. In future, the business and public sectors alike will have a great need for qualified employees with vocational training. It is therefore necessary to raise the status of the vocational subjects and reverse the unacceptably high drop-out rate. More apprenticeships are needed and more adapted educational programmes. On the basis of this, the Government will take steps to improve vocational training.

The Government will:

- Increase support for apprenticeships.
- Introduce more ambitious targets for use of apprentices by public enterprises.
- Permit alternative training pathways, such as, for example, practice-oriented training programmes in companies.
- Expand the work placement certificate scheme, with the aim of making this available in all counties.
- Further develop programmes for students who wish to combine their training practice certificate with university and college admissions qualification, for example the technical foundation course (the Norwegian “TAF” model), with the aim of making this available in all counties .
- Provide for a vocational orientation in compulsory, theory-based courses in vocational training programmes.
- Increase the opportunity for a rotation model in vocational training, where students shift between training in college and on-the-job training in companies.
- Strengthen admissions to higher education based on vocational qualifications and work experience (the Norwegian “Y” path) and stop the implementation of admissions to certain higher education programmes based on the training practice certificate.

Higher education

Norway has a knowledge-based economy that is seeking success in a globalised world in which there is increasingly rapid movement of capital, knowledge and jobs across national borders. The foundation for our future value creation and welfare is dependent on our ability to realise the knowledge society.

Norway can never be the cheapest country, but we can be the best. This makes knowledge a criterion for success if we are to hold our own in international competition. The Government will meet this challenge by investing in education and competence so that we are able to transform knowledge into value creation.

In the years to come, the university and university college sector will play an increasingly important role in producing candidates with a high level of competence for the business and the public sectors. The Government therefore wishes to develop more world-leading university communities. Achieving this will require an enlargement of the performance-based share of funding for higher educational institutions. The criteria for measuring performance will be defined to reflect the quality and productivity of research.

University and university college programmes for the professions must meet the needs for expertise in working life. In a global labour market, it is very valuable for students to pursue all or a part of their education abroad, and for foreign students to come study at Norwegian educational institutions.

The Government will:

- Increase basic funding to educational institutions.
- Enlarge the share of funding to the university and university college sector that is performance-based. The criteria for performance will be reviewed.
- Freeze the structure in higher education until the effect of new university accreditation has been evaluated, and ensure that we have a structure that results in educational environments with strong academic profiles.
- Invest in the development of excellence-based study programmes through the use of scientific expertise, modelled on the scheme for centres of excellence in research.
- Increase the admissions capacity for engineering and natural science subjects.
- Raise the income threshold for students and regulate student grants on a basis exceeding the rise in the consumer price index and cost of living.
- Introduce student grants for the first year of Bachelor programmes in non-Western countries and for the freshman year of studies in the USA.
- Build more student accommodation and simplify the regulations so that it will be easier to collaborate with private partners.
- Strengthen the technical vocational colleges and reintroduce state funding of vocational colleges.
- Strengthen the efforts of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) to raise the quality of education and the institutions.

Research

Research is essential to acquiring the new knowledge and technology that move the world forward. New knowledge and innovation will play a central role in creating secure jobs. Norwegian investments in research and innovation are below the OECD average, and lag far behind the other Nordic countries. The low score is largely due to low investment from the industrial segment in research and development, and Norway also scores low on the EU's rankings of European countries' innovation capacity. The Government will use public funds to stimulate increased investments in research and innovation in trade and industry.

The Government has high ambitions for Norway as a knowledge nation. Public investment in research must be raised to a higher level and keep pace with developments in other countries. It must become more attractive to invest risk capital in commercialisation of research and innovation.

The Government will:

- Strengthen its investment in research to reach the objective that research will account for 3 per cent of the GDP by 2030.
- Promote outstanding research environments by launching Global Centres of Expertise.
- Strengthen the open competitive arenas under the Research Council of Norway that use scientific merit as their main criterion, for example the Centres of Excellence (SFF), the Centres for Research-based Innovation (SFI) and the Centres for Environment-friendly Energy Research (FME).
- Increase grants to independent researcher-driven projects to promote ground-breaking research.
- Work for and promote increased internationalisation of research, for example through participation in the EU's framework programmes.
- Strengthen programmes for commercialisation of research results among students and researchers.
- Increase allocations to seed capital funds to develop new businesses and innovations.

- Encourage more research within industry and closer cooperation between industry and academia, for example by enhancing the SkatteFUNN Tax Incentive Scheme and the donation matching scheme, and by expanding the Programme for User-driven Research-based Innovation arena (BIA) and the Industrial Ph.D. scheme.
- Simplify the bureaucracy involved in applying for research funding.

Adult education

Working life is changing rapidly, and increasing competency requirements are being imposed on the labour force. As a result, people of all ages need to refresh their knowledge during the course of their careers. Many of those who remain outside the workforce as a result of the increased competency requirements have literacy needs. The Government will implement a national initiative targeting adults with literacy needs and insufficient basic skills, and will strengthen coordination of adult education.

The Government will:

- Establish a lifelong right to continuing education.
- Gradually increase allocations to the Programme for Basic Competence in Working Life (BKA).
- Ensure that all unemployed persons who are receiving help from public agencies are automatically offered the opportunity to have their basic skills assessed.
- Introduce a general right for adults to have their basic skills assessed.
- Establish a programme for basic competence in voluntary organisations (BKF), to which voluntary organisations and volunteer centres may apply for support for teaching activities for persons with literacy needs.

13 – The environment and climate

The world is facing major environmental and climate challenges at the national and international level. The Government will base its policy on stewardship and the precautionary principle. We have a responsibility to ensure that the world we leave our children is in at least a good a state as it was when we inherited it from our forefathers. The Government will pursue a proactive climate policy and will strengthen the agreement on climate policy reached in the Storting, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. We must step up the development of renewable energy (Chapter 14).

The environment

Norway is fortunate in having a rich, varied and clean natural environment. The Government will seek to preserve the country's strong traditions in hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation based on the right of access to and passage through uncultivated land and the right to spend time there. These considerations will be balanced with the need to protect the habitats of endangered species.

Norway's biological diversity may best be safeguarded through a combination of sustainable use and voluntary conservation. It is vital to maintain urban forests and green areas as important recreational areas for urban inhabitants and to reduce noise pollution by following up national and international commitments. The Nature Diversity Act will remain in force, but its implementation will be reviewed, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will promote viable populations of the large carnivores in keeping with the agreement on large carnivore policy reached in the Storting, and will seek to reduce the level of conflict in this area.

Local participation is crucial to the management of natural resources, and the Government will introduce a pilot scheme for landowner management of protected areas. The Government will discontinue the use of designated areas without major infrastructure development (INON) as a tool in land-use policy.

The Government will:

- Strengthen voluntary conservation of woodland and forests.
- Ensure better management of current protected areas.
- Draw up a biogas strategy.
- Manage lakes and river systems in a manner that preserves freshwater reservoirs and fishing and recreational areas for future generations.
- Strengthen efforts to clean up toxic sediments in fjords, rivers, harbours and lakes and limit the spread of environmentally hazardous substances.
- Strengthen efforts to combat sea lice, other diseases and escapes of farmed fish through binding agreements with the aquaculture industry.
- Enhance activities to preserve cultural heritage in Norway, by improving the framework conditions for private owners of cultural monuments, among other measures.
- Prepare a white paper on promoting outdoor recreation.
- Find an environmentally sound, acceptable solution for dealing with the German submarine U-864 sunk in 1945 off Fedje island in Hordaland county.

Climate

Challenges arising from climate change are global in nature and are thus best solved globally. Norway must take responsibility for safeguarding the planet for coming generations by contributing to the development of internationally binding agreements on emission reductions, and by investing in research into and development of new technology that can help us to realise a low-emission society.

Norway will take a leading role in setting an international price for CO₂ emissions and establishing effective, well-functioning international carbon markets. Norway will work to strengthen the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) as an instrument for achieving European climate targets after 2020.

The Government will pursue an ambitious national climate policy based on long-term transition to a low-emission society by 2050. The Government will increase investment in research and environmental technology. An ambitious national policy is essential in helping to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. This will involve giving consideration to the ramifications of the EU ETS, the risk of carbon leakage and industrial competitiveness.

Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (part of the international effort to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD)) has an important role to play both in limiting greenhouse gas emissions and in protecting biological diversity. The initiative will be continued with the aim of achieving long-term results. Activities to ensure that funds are used effectively and for the defined purpose in the recipient countries must be strengthened. The Government will consolidate the administration of the initiative under the Ministry of Climate and the Environment.

The Government will promote greater use of public transport and cycling. Schemes aimed at encouraging environmentally sound travel behaviour are outlined in Chapter 15. The Government will work to enable individuals to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures, more environment-friendly vehicles and improved infrastructure.

The Government will:

- Increase the yield from the environment technology fund, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Invest on a broad front to develop cost-effective technology for carbon capture and storage (CCS) and seek to construct at least one full-scale carbon capture demonstration plant by 2020.
- Ensure that the use of fossil heating oil in public buildings is phased out by 2018 and prohibit the use of fossil heating oil in all buildings from 2020. Enova's support scheme for conversion and phasing out of oil-fired heating systems will be strengthened.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of vehicle and fuel taxes to promote the use of more modern, environment-friendly vehicles.
- Extend the tax and fee incentives for zero-emission vehicles until 2017 and the current exemption from road tax for vehicles using alternative fuels until 2020.
- Draw up requirements for all new public sector vehicles and all new taxis, ferries, passenger boats on regular service and diesel trains to employ low- or zero-emission technology where appropriate.
- Draw up and present ambitious, quantifiable national targets for raising energy efficiency and introduce a tax deduction for investment in measures to raise energy efficiency in private homes.
- Create infrastructure to enable more ferries and cruise ships to use electricity from land in more ports.
- Investigate a shipbreaking deposit scheme for Norwegian-registered vessels.
- Ensure that the public sector as a customer promotes the use and development of new, environmentally sound and climate-friendly technologies and solutions.

14 – Oil and energy

A stable energy supply is fundamental to a modern welfare society and a competitive advantage for Norwegian industry. The Government will further develop the Norwegian energy sector and provide sound, stable framework conditions. The Government will also promote efforts to raise energy efficiency.

The Government wants Norway to be a leading nation in environment-friendly consumption and production of energy, including hydropower, wind power, bioenergy and other forms of renewable energy. The Government will provide a framework within which the energy sector can make use of its competitive advantages, with low barriers between the industry, the authorities, the research community, the supplier industry and the investor pool, to develop one of the world's most attractive energy clusters.

The Government will promote the further development of the Norwegian energy sector through energy production and technology development. Taxation rules and licensing regulations will be applied as a means of safeguarding public interests.

The restructuring of the energy system in Europe will open up major opportunities for value creation in Norway based on our energy resources. We must make the most of these opportunities, both with regard to energy exports and industrial exports from Norway.

The Government will:

- Submit a white paper on an integrated policy that views energy supply, climate challenges and industrial development in a unified context.
- Increase production of renewable energy in Norway and consider adapting the green electricity certificate system.
- Develop an integrated strategy for realising the potential of upgrade and expansion of hydropower plants.
- Invest in research on renewable energy sources.
- Strengthen the security of supply and enhance the robustness of electric power deliveries in Norway.
- Develop adequate grid capacity for the entire country.
- Promote structural changes in the form of fewer, more robust power grid companies to satisfy consumer needs for effective pricing, high security of supply and high-quality services.
- Ensure an adequate balance between the development of new power production and new international cable connections, and amend the Energy Act to allow actors other than Statnett to own and operate these connections. The public interest will be safeguarded through a licensing scheme.
- Submit an action plan with measures to reduce the overall time for handling licence applications for hydropower development and electricity transmission grids and allow the municipalities to award development permits/licences to small-scale, micro and mini hydropower plants and small-scale wind farms.
- Remove the staffing requirements in the competency regulations for electric power production and grid companies and replace them with general quality and safety requirements.
- Ensure that industrial owners of hydropower resources are able to have their current and future needs for a reliable electricity supply met within the framework of today's consolidation model.

- Strengthen the Centres for Environment-friendly Energy Research scheme (FME) and establish a dedicated FME centre for geothermal energy, in keeping with the agreement on climate policy reached in the Storting.
- Establish an FME centre focusing on thorium.
- Expand Norfund's investments in renewable energy worldwide.
- Raise the level of capacity at which small-scale power plants become liable to resource rent taxation from 5 MVA to 10 MVA
- Evaluate the role of Enova in order to better target its activities and enable the enterprise to continue to play a strong role in promoting energy efficiency in industry, the public sector and the district heating market.
- Change the energy consumption labelling scheme to optimise energy management in all new buildings and major retrofittings based on deliverable energy requirements.
- Introduce a tax deduction for investment in measures to raise energy efficiency in private homes.

The petroleum industry

The oil and gas industry is a cornerstone of the Norwegian economy and will continue in this role for the foreseeable future. It provides jobs and promotes technological and societal development throughout the country. The petroleum cluster is Norway's largest commercial knowledge base. The supplier industry and petroleum technology companies comprise Norway's second largest export industry in terms of measured value, after sales of oil and gas. The Government will attach importance to creating opportunities for growth and further development in the supplier industry to enable the industry to maintain its leading position in the international market.

Ongoing competence and technology development are essential to maintaining the level of activity on the Norwegian continental shelf. It is also vital for Norway to maintain petroleum activities at a sustainable level to ensure that the technological expertise required for future development is not lost. The state is by far the largest actor on the Norwegian continental shelf and must take greater responsibility for funding petroleum-related R&D. Petoro will play a greater role in technology development and enhancing recovery on the Norwegian continental shelf. Competition and diversification must be encouraged.

Norwegian oil and gas must be recovered in the most environmentally sound manner possible. Petroleum activities in new areas must be subject to stringent environmental, safety and emergency preparedness requirements and as well as requirements for co-existence with other industries.

There will be no opening up for petroleum activities, or impact assessments pursuant to the Act relating to petroleum activities, in the sea areas off the Lofoten and Vesterålen Islands and Senja during the period from 2013 to 2017. Petroleum activities will not be started up on Jan Mayen, the fast ice edge, or in Skagerrak and the Møre fields, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. An environmental/oil-spill response base will be established in Lofoten and Vesterålen.

The Government will:

- Maintain a reliable, high pace in awarding licences for petroleum activity in new areas, with regard to licensing rounds and awards in predefined areas (APA).
- Continue the APA scheme.
- Strengthen petroleum-related research.
- Promote increased use of gas in Norwegian industry.

- Strengthen Petoro by funding it directly out of the cash flow from the State's Direct Financial Interest in production licences (SDFI).
- Ensure that the industry has predictable, long-term rules for taxation and fees.
- Consider making changes to the petroleum taxation system in order to improve resource management and enhance recovery from existing fields and nearby marginal fields.
- Make the capacity and willingness to enhance recovery a criterion for awarding tasks and responsibilities on the Norwegian continental shelf.
- Work to reduce the cost level on the Norwegian continental shelf, by following up the reports of the Åm Commission and the Reiten Commission, among other measures.
- Promote greater diversification and competition on the Norwegian continental shelf by awarding new licences and operatorships.
- Strengthen oil-spill preparedness and response and update the white paper on maritime safety and preparedness and response to acute pollution. A committee will be appointed to assess ways to promote technology and product development, industry-building and expertise within oil-spill preparedness and response.

15 – Transport and communications

This Government will build the nation

High-quality infrastructure is one of the pillars of a modern society and the Government seeks to make this a competitive advantage for the nation. The business sector needs to be able to deliver its goods and services to the markets quickly, simply and at competitive costs.

The Government wants Norway to have a state-of-the-art transport and communications network on a par with comparable countries. The Government therefore intends to make it possible to use a larger portion of the yield from the Government Pension Fund Global for investment in roads, railways and other transport infrastructure. The Government will work to improve traffic safety and introduce shorter, more reliable travel times for the private sector and residents alike. Efforts must be made to build integrated solutions rather than fragmented, individual projects. Objections lodged by public bodies must be better coordinated. In future, the national plans approved by the Storting should incorporate targets, frameworks, measures and funding arrangements, enabling governmental specialist agencies to assume responsibility for details and overall implementation.

The Government will establish an independent development company which will focus on several road projects and carry out construction more efficiently, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The company will be financed by equity capital but may also take out loans backed by government guarantee. The company may take over responsibility for the development, operation and funding of major transport projects. Existing projects may also be transferred to the company. The company's financial framework will be set out in connection with the national budget.

Investment to expand road networks and public transport will be increased beyond the level approved in the National Transport Plan 2014-2023, and the proportion of road toll revenues used in new projects will be reduced.

This Government will:

- Set up a NOK 100 billion infrastructure fund, to be built up over a maximum period of five years. The yield will be earmarked in the national budget for road, railway and public transport purposes, as well as for broadband and ICT infrastructure, with stable and long-term funding of infrastructure investments as the overall objective.
- Ensure the development of a good compensation scheme for people whose property is reserved for infrastructure purposes.
- Start dealing with the infrastructure maintenance backlog.
- Submit a proposition that discusses consolidation of the various road toll companies into a single company or a small number of companies tasked with the administration of toll collection, based on the assumption that this will enhance efficiency.
- Help to ensure the improvement of analyses of socio-economic benefit. Planning processes must be based on realistic traffic prognoses, to ensure that infrastructure is designed in keeping with genuine demand.
- Present a document to the Storting outlining various solutions for how the Storting in future can approve national plans that incorporate targets, frameworks, actions and funding arrangements, and how governmental specialist agencies may take over responsibility for details and overall implementation.
- Build roads and railways more rapidly by reducing the duration of the planning period. The aim will be to cut the period required by half. Objections lodged during the planning process will be better coordinated.

- Organise major road and railway developments in dedicated projects in which public-private partnerships (PPPs) are employed as an implementation strategy.
- Increase the use of state regulation for projects of national importance.
- Invest a larger proportion of the yield from the Government Pension Fund Global in roads, railways and other transport and communications infrastructure.

Road and traffic safety

Effective, safe and environmentally friendly roads are essential for meeting the needs of the population and for strengthening the competitive capacity of the business sector. A major expansion of the Norwegian national road network is a good investment in Norway's future competitiveness. In the long term, Norway cannot afford not to invest for the future.

The Government will invest in the Norwegian road network, particularly in the most profitable trunk road projects that link together Norway, and in roads that expand housing and labour market areas. The Government will increase the speed limit on the safest motorway sections to 110 km/h based on consultation with experts.

The Government will increase safety on Norwegian roads, among other things by building median barriers and safe roads of motorway standard. These are highly effective measures designed to reduce the number of fatalities from traffic accidents on Norwegian roads. The Government will maintain the Norwegian Vision Zero, i.e. strive for zero traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

The Government will:

- Reduce the proportion of road toll revenues used in new projects. In general, this reduction will not apply for specific urban area packages or for ferry replacement projects.
- Ensure that as a rule, minor road projects that are not included in existing road packages, and whose collection costs are unreasonably high, will not be funded by road toll revenues.
- Allow an extension of the repayment period in road toll projects.
- Make the scheme for modular combination vehicles a permanent one.
- Extend the framework for the interest compensation scheme for county roads.
- Not lower ambitions regarding investment in roads or railways as a result of reduction in the revenues collected through road toll schemes.
- Establish an independent road traffic authority and consider whether closer integration of the various government agencies in the transport sector has the potential to enhance efficiency .
- Employ public-private partnerships to build a greater number of 24-hour service areas, and in particular incorporate such facilities when building new roads.
- Seek to ensure that new, safe, fully operational Norwegian motorways are designed for a maximum speed limit of 130 km/h.
- Change the road design standards by lowering the threshold for building median barriers and multi-lane carriageways.
- Strengthen preventive traffic safety efforts with special focus on voluntary organisations.
- Set up a reward scheme for bicycle initiatives and local traffic safety initiatives near schools and on other roads.
- Limit the use of sectional ATC, i.e. camera cabinets that photograph all motorists and measure their average speed, and refrain from introducing such measures in additional areas until the scheme has been assessed.

- Make it more attractive for major international contractors to submit tenders for Norwegian transport projects.
- Draw up and implement specific targets for the quality of national and county roads in the form of minimum standards.
- Draw up a national motorway plan.
- Ensure that the rate of user satisfaction with the national and county road network is regularly measured.
- Allow the use of Segways.
- Extend the ferry replacement scheme on national trunk routes.
- Earmark parts of the revenue from the annual motor vehicle fee for use by the new road company.

Propose a scheme for the registration of converted and amateur-built vehicles and motorcycles, modelled on a similar scheme in Sweden.

Railways

Railways must be a competitive alternative for passengers as well as freight haulage. The quality, accessibility and punctuality of train services must be improved. The Government will increase investment in railways and expand competition for use of tracks. The Government will plan for full development of InterCity routes in Eastern Norway and a new railway tunnel under Oslo. The government will give priority to crossing loops on important freight routes as well as passenger rail transport in and around the cities.

The Government will:

- Implement a major reform of the railway sector, involving a reorganisation of the Norwegian National Rail Administration and the Norwegian State Railways, with the intention of introducing an appropriate control structure, a business organisation and clear targets.
- Help to ensure that freight trains and long-distance trains can be given priority in the railway network between the hours of 18:00 and 05:00.
- Review track charges with a view to identifying an optimal model for achieving an infrastructure which is competitively neutral.
- Present a long-term plan for converting all signalling systems to the European ERTMS standard.
- Assist in the introduction of efficient multi-modal transport hubs.
- Ensure a competitively neutral ownership and operational structure for all railway terminals.

Public transport

Growth in Norway's largest urban centres requires the building of residential and commercial properties and infrastructure on a large scale. The Government will therefore work to achieve good and productive partnership solutions involving local and central government authorities and developers to ensure high-quality rural and urban development.

The Government will boost its investment in public transport in the cities, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The taxi policy will be viewed as part of the public transport policy, as the industry fulfils an important social mission.

The Government will:

- Ensure binding funding of important public transport solutions in the major cities, preferably by providing state investment support covering 50 per cent of costs.

- Allow binding agreements between central and local authorities concerning the building of housing and infrastructure solutions as part of measures packages for towns and cities.
- Consider transferring the responsibility for public transport from regional to local authorities in connection with a municipal reform.
- Ensure that current public transport incentive schemes in the major cities are based on objective criteria and verifiable outcomes.
- Investigate the potential to improve facilities and coordination levels for express coach services in each transport corridor.
- Encourage the building of car parks for park-and-ride schemes.
- Allow taxi firms and other businesses in the taxi industry to organise their ventures in the same way as other companies.

Air transport

The Government will implement a competitive air transport policy based on a recognition of air transport as a key part of the Norwegian transport network. Where appropriate, the Government will encourage fewer, larger and more competitive airports.

The Government will:

- Change the licensing terms for Moss Airport Rygge to ensure that the ceiling on the number of flight movements is raised and the opening hours extended.
- Establish a framework for municipalities and private individuals to participate in development activities at and in the proximity of airports.
- Ensure that air traffic control and security services are subject to competition.
- Lay the foundations for simplified transfers, at Oslo Airport in the first instance.

Coastline and harbours

The Government will lay the foundations for the transfer of more freight haulage from road to sea transport. This will bring traffic safety benefits as well as environmental benefits in that a considerably lower number of heavy goods vehicles will be driving on Norwegian roads.

The Government will:

- Review the tasks of the Norwegian Coastal Administration, the Norwegian Maritime Authority and other agencies in order to consider the potential for efficiency measures.
- Review the fee-paying regimes, legislation and distribution of responsibility with respect to short-sea shipping and propose a series of reductions and simplifications.
- Allow an increase in the use of pilot exemption certificates.
- Lay the foundations for improved safety levels and larger ships by introducing deeper and wider shipping lanes combined with upgraded marking.
- Modernise and revise the Harbour Act with a view to allowing harbour authorities to become limited companies.
- Draw up a national harbour strategy.
- Improve safety at sea and the level of emergency preparedness with respect to emissions and accidents at sea by strengthening Norwegian Sea Rescue.

Post and telecommunications

The Government will introduce free competition for post and parcel delivery services, and will therefore retract the Norwegian reservation against EU's third Postal Directive. The Government will continue nationwide postage rates.

Increased investment in ICT and broadband is essential to Norway's future welfare and growth. The state must take overall responsibility for broadband accessibility.

The Government will:

- Allow Norway Post further scope to adapt to wider competition and altered user demands.
- Ensure a nationwide postal service of a universally high standard.
- Ensure access to high-speed broadband throughout the country, the target speed being 100 Mbps.
- Introduce a national underground services regulation for broadband.

16 – Foreign and development policy

Foreign policy

The Government will pursue a realistic foreign policy based on clear priorities, founded on liberal values and with the primary purpose of safeguarding key national interests. Foreign policy must achieve tangible results for the Norwegian people and contribute to international détente, security and stability, lasting peace, a high degree of free global trade, economic development and respect for fundamental human rights. Norway will play an active part in efforts to preserve and strengthen a stable international legal order.

Norway's development, security and welfare are to a large extent influenced by processes and actors beyond Norway's borders, and there is mutual dependency between neighbouring countries, allies and trading partners. Norway's activities as an active and predictable cooperation partner and ally must be beyond reproach.

The main lines of Norwegian foreign policy are firmly fixed. The Government will base its policy on binding international cooperation. Norway will play an active part in the UN, NATO and other international organisations.

In terms of shared interests and values, Norway will continue to be closest to the Atlantic, European and Nordic communities. The Government will actively seek to cooperate with new partners and take part in global activities. At the same time, changes in the political, economic and military balance of power make it essential to maintain an even stronger basis in the values and political orientation of our Western community of neighbours, allies and trading partners.

The Government will work for a modernised, strong and more efficient United Nations. Norwegian activities and financial commitments are to be targeted towards those parts of the organisation that deliver good results and operate in line with Norwegian priorities. The Government will be a reform-oriented, constructively challenging contributor and partner to the UN.

The Government will promote democracy, human rights, the rule of law and freedom of expression through Norwegian foreign policy, and devote more attention to civil and political rights, including in countries close to us, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The Norwegian foreign service will be an instrument for promoting the interests of Norwegian industry abroad more than is the case at present. It is essential for Norwegian industry to have good conditions for participating in global trade with emerging economies, such as the BRICS countries. The foreign service representation must be proportionate to Norwegian interests in each particular country, and assist Norwegian industry and citizens. The Government will give energy issues a more prominent place in Norwegian foreign policy.

The policy for peace and reconciliation will be maintained, and its scope and direction will be reviewed to give priority to those processes and countries for which Norway has the resources and competencies required to achieve results. Norwegian activities will be carried out in cooperation with close allies and key multilateral actors.

Disarmament and non-proliferation will be important areas for the Government's international efforts.

The Government will take a balanced approach to the Middle East conflict, and will actively support the target of a negotiated solution that entails that Israel and Palestine, as two states, can exist in peace within secure, internationally recognised borders.

Europe

The European countries are Norway's close neighbours, friends and most important trading partners. Thus, Norwegian foreign policy must start in Europe.

The Government will pursue a more active policy to safeguard Norwegian interests vis-à-vis the EU, for example through the EEA Agreement, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The EEA Agreement and Norway's other agreements with the EU will form the framework for our European policy. The agreements secure market access and predictability for Norwegian trade and industry, and are of critical economic importance. The daily follow-up of the system of agreements is largely a domestic policy task.

Nordic collaboration is of particular importance. The Government will help to strengthen parliamentary cooperation in the Nordic Council and will play an active role in the Nordic Council of Ministers, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The Government will:

- Pursue a proactive policy to safeguard Norwegian interests by taking part at an earlier stage in processes and policy design in the EU.
- Seek to expand bilateral relations with key European countries.
- Strengthen coordination of the government administration's overall handling of matters pertaining to Europe to ensure effective procedures and improved Norwegian participation.
- Give priority to participation in the informal and formal European forums to which we have access via the EEA Agreement.
- Involve the Storting at an early stage in the clarification of key EEA processes.
- Seek to clarify the position of welfare schemes in EEA directives and work to make the principle of free movement more sustainable.

Development

The objective of development policy is to promote democratisation, the realisation of human rights and enable people to work their way out of poverty on a lasting basis. The Government will continue supporting democratic, economic and social development. Support will be provided to processes that are optimally effective, lead to permanent change, and strengthen the capacity of individuals to care for themselves, their families and their communities.

The Government will base its policy on the principle that universal rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of belief and private property rights, apply to all people regardless of where in the world they live, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will work to disseminate knowledge about human rights and combat violence and oppression, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking and sexual abuse of children. The Government will direct particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as women, children, religious minorities, persons with disabilities and sexual minorities.

The Government's policy will be built on the principles of social responsibility and international solidarity, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The Government will work to lift people out of poverty, both in Norway and in less affluent countries. The Government will give priority to girls' education in poor countries.

The Government will maintain a high level of Norwegian development aid. Active efforts by national governments and political ownership of national development will form the foundation for Norwegian aid. Stable social institutions, financial and political transparency, protection of private ownership, distribution of power and a well-functioning rule of law are the keys to economic progress.

The Government will increase the proportion of development aid provided as co-funding with the recipient country. Norwegian development aid is to be time-limited to the greatest possible extent to prevent aid dependency and a diminishment of national responsibility. Norwegian development aid will be evaluated in an independent, thorough and critical manner, and the conclusions will form the basis for future efforts.

The Government will explore and introduce stricter requirements for efficiency and monitoring of Norwegian development aid funding. As part of this effort, the Government will review existing aid and cooperation agreements with a view to reducing the number of recipient countries. Thematic and geographical concentration will help to increase efficiency and enhance competence in the follow-up and administration of a narrower portfolio.

Enhanced freedom of trade and investment across national borders is essential for growth and development.

The Government will:

- Pursue an integrated development policy, in which measures within the various sectors point in the same direction to the greatest possible degree.
- Orient development policy towards performance, carry out systematic evaluations that will directly affect budget decisions, and facilitate full transparency regarding the scope, implementation and impacts of Norwegian development policy.
- Practise zero tolerance for corruption and irregularities.
- Increase trade with poor countries, by means of opening for imports and trade facilitation.
- Take a leading role globally in the efforts to ensure education for all.
- Continue and refine efforts in the sphere of global health, especially women's and children's health.
- Give priority to areas such as human rights, poverty alleviation, development of civil society and good governance, as well as humanitarian assistance.
- Impose more stringent requirements on the recipients of Norwegian aid in the areas of democracy, rule of law and human rights.
- Provide an annual statement on development policy to the Storting, to help to broaden the debate on the ends and means of development policy, if the Storting so requests.
- Emphasise industrial development, investment and economic growth in recipient countries through a modern and diversified set of public agencies and instruments.
- Give priority to capacity-building, transfer of know-how and technical assistance to recipient countries to enable the countries to manage their own resources.
- Help to achieve debt cancellation for poor countries through international and bilateral agreements.

Norwegians abroad

An increasing number of Norwegians choose to live abroad for shorter or longer periods of time. This applies to many types of pensioners, in particular, including those on disability pensions as well as retirees. The globalisation of trade and industry also entails that many people live and work, partly or fully, in other countries. This gives rise to some challenges related to social security benefits, provision of care, rehabilitation and taxation. Discriminatory treatment and insufficient information from local tax offices and the population registry have placed many people in a difficult situation.

The Government will:

- Consider establishing a service office for Norwegians living abroad, in collaboration between the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and the Norwegian Tax Administration.
- Take into account that many Norwegians live abroad in connection with international agreements and the drafting of laws and regulations.
- Lay the foundations for international schools and IB (International Baccalaureate) programmes in Norway to make it easier for families to spend periods of time living abroad.
- Conduct a review of the tax withheld at source.
- Ensure favourable conditions for the Norwegian Seamen's Church.

17 – The High North

The Government will pursue a proactive High North policy, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. This policy will promote industrial development, safeguard Norwegian interests and strengthen our cooperation with Russia and the Arctic states, as well as enhance the basis for activity and settlement in the North. The Government will provide a clear national presence, ensure sustainable management of the natural resources, improve preparedness for environmental disasters, and expand search and rescue operations as well as infrastructure.

The Government seeks to develop North Norway into one of Norway's most innovative and sustainable regions. The High North has vast potential for value creation, and the Government will help the business community in this part of the country to realise this. The Government will create a basis for enabling the region to exploit its natural advantages and strengthen its educational and research institutions.

Environmental and climate challenges are especially visible in the High North. The melting of the polar ice cap opens the way to a northern sea route between Europe and Asia. Increased shipping, as well as petroleum activities, make the need for a search-and-rescue service and environmental emergency preparedness more critical. The Government will therefore establish an environmental protection base/oil spill preparedness base in Lofoten and Vesterålen, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The High North is also Norway's most important area in terms of foreign policy interests. In the course of a few of decades, the Arctic, the Arctic Ocean and the adjacent coastal areas have been transformed from an area of security policy tension into a hub for energy and industrial policy. These areas are vital to Norway in terms of security policy as well as economics.

In light of the development in the High North, including increased activity in the form of maritime transport and resource extraction, the Norwegian presence and exercise of sovereignty must be safeguarded. Norway's interests and special responsibility in the High North also require military capacity. The mission of the Coast Guard and ample capacity for search and rescue operations are of key importance in this respect. The Government will ensure that the Armed Forces are well briefed on the situation and have high operational capacity in the High North.

The Government will:

- Ensure a strong Norwegian presence and exercise of sovereignty in the High North, including Svalbard.
- Continue developing constructive relations with the Arctic states in matters of mutual interest.
- Pursue closer industrial cooperation and people-to-people cooperation with neighbouring countries in the North, the Faroe islands, Iceland and Greenland.
- Ensure appropriate framework conditions for development of industry clusters on the mainland in the north, for example in the context of oil and gas extraction in the northern areas of the Norwegian and Barents Seas. This must be achieved in cooperation with the existing knowledge and research institutions in this region.
- Prepare an integrated management and development plan for sustainable exploitation of natural resources in the High North.
- Lay the foundations for a fisheries and aquaculture industry in North Norway, with profitability in all links of the value chain.
- Ensure recruitment to the region's fisheries and aquaculture industry.

- Provide opportunities for growth in the tourism industry.
- Help to increase national and international research competence with regard to climate and the environment in the High North.
- Promote private ownership in North Norway's business sector.
- Intensify the exploration of mineral deposits in the northern counties.
- Increase the opening hours of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority for issuance of documents required for export of fish to extend beyond ordinary working hours.
- Extend the opening hours and expand capacity at the Storskog border station.