

Political platform

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

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1 – Introduction

The collaborating parties, the Liberal Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party, won a historically strong mandate from the electorate in the autumn 2013 general elections. The parties have agreed to administrate this majority jointly. This consensus has been codified in an agreement containing a shared set of values and shared political priorities and viewpoints, as well as a description of the form of their collaboration during the coming parliamentary term. The Government will base its policies on this agreement between the parties, hereafter referred to as the Cooperation Agreement.

Value base

The Government will base its policies on freedom and trust in the individual, the family, the entrepreneur, local society and voluntary bodies. Their fundamental values are grounded on the principles of a state based on the rule of law and of democracy, and on the Christian and humanistic cultural heritage. The collaborating parties will create more room for private, local and voluntary initiatives.

The Government will base its policies on respect for knowledge. Knowledge creates social mobility for the individual and opportunities for everyone. A greater investment in knowledge and competence will strengthen welfare schemes and increase job security.

The Government will base its policies on publicly-funded welfare solutions. Care for the elderly and those in need of nursing must be further developed in order to provide everyone with care options characterized by quality and activity when needed. The collaborating partners will utilize all positive forces to ensure that patients have access to high-quality health services at the right time, more freedom of choice and a greater diversity in the range of care services.

The Government will base its policies on universal rights for everyone, regardless of what part of the world people live in: rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the protection of private ownership. The collaborating partners will strive to disseminate knowledge about human rights and to combat violence and repression – for example genital mutilation, forced marriage, human trafficking and the sexual abuse of children.

The Government will base its policies on social responsibility and international solidarity. They will work to free people from poverty, both in Norway and in less affluent countries. They will prioritize the education of girls in poor countries. Children who grow up in poor families in Norway will be given more equal opportunities. To include more people in the labour market, the collaborating parties will increase the expectations of activity in welfare schemes.

The Government will base its policies on first creating values in order to share them. Economic growth will be stimulated in the whole country. The infrastructure in Norway must be substantially upgraded, more roads and railways must be built and there must be investment in innovation, research and development. The collaborating parties will strengthen a broad and comprehensive business sector and make better provision for private ownership.

The Government will base its policies on the individual's need for security in everyday life. Emergency preparedness in Norway must be reinforced, and basic staffing levels in the police must be increased. Priority must be given to coherence in the criminal justice chain. The collaborating parties will boost efforts to transfer sentenced persons and to return foreign criminals.

The Government will base its policies on its responsibility to safeguard the planet and on the precautionary principle. The Earth we pass on to our children shall be in at least as good a state as it was when we inherited it from our ancestors. The development of renewable energy must be increased. The collaborating parties will pursue a vigorous climate policy and strengthen the climate compromise.

The Government will base its policies on the goal of achieving the most efficient and effective use of our common resources. Society must become less bureaucratic. The collaborating parties will help to promote a simpler everyday life for the majority of people. More authority and power must be delegated to the local community. The collaborating parties will combat the squandering of public funds and will assign high priority to a stronger implementation of policies.

The Government will base its policies on a binding international cooperation. Norway shall be an active contributor to the UN, NATO, the Nordic Council and other international organizations. The collaborating parties will pursue a vigorous policy in the High North and more proactive policies to safeguard Norway's interests vis-à-vis the EU, including through the EEA Agreement. They will work for democracy and human rights and will base this on a more balanced attitude to the Middle East conflict.

Key priority areas

Competitiveness for Norwegian workplaces

The Government will enhance the competitiveness of the business community in mainland Norway, to ensure creation of more secure workplaces and better funding of welfare schemes.

Innovation, knowledge and technology are key priorities for us to face future competition in a globalized world. The Government will increase efforts in the field of research and establish more top-league university institutions, and its long-term ambition is to make Norway one of Europe's most innovative countries.

The dichotomy of the economy highlights the increasing importance of ensuring more diversification of the Norwegian economy. The Government will therefore provide favourable frameworks to industries all over Norway and reinforce private Norwegian ownership.

A simpler everyday life for everyone

The Government will provide individuals with more freedom to govern their own lives, without interference from politicians and bureaucrats. The Government will decentralize power by reducing bureaucracies, regulations and taxes. People with creativity and initiative must be provided with more elbow room. The Government will simplify laws and regulations, and repeal unnecessary and specifically Norwegian restrictions and directives.

The Government will make provisions for private and volunteer initiatives and make room for a wider range of actors, including in the supply of welfare services. This will promote innovation, freedom of choice and a greater variety of options available to a diverse audience of users. For example, less bureaucracy will mean that teachers and nurses will have more time for their students and patients.

The Government will improve the conditions for voluntary organizations. The financial schemes must be reinforced, the regulations must be simplified and bureaucracy must be reduced.

The Government will manage the taxpayers' money with respect, and combat squandering of public funds.

The Government will make use of the great opportunities inherent in modern information and communications technology (ICT) to simplify contact with a public sector that can remain open around the clock, raise the quality of public services, promote value creation and ensure better decision-making.

Knowledge provides opportunities for all

The Government will devote major resources to knowledge. Knowledge provides future opportunities for every individual, irrespective of background, and forms the basis for social mobility.

Knowledge is essential for increasing Norwegian competitiveness and building a country for the future. A major effort in the field of research, funded by the public as well as the private sector, will lay the groundwork for future workplaces in a globalized world.

Nothing is more crucial to students' learning than the teacher. The Government will therefore raise the status of teachers. The vision is to make this profession sufficiently attractive to draw the best candidates. Competence-building, new career pathways and better core training will render the teaching profession more challenging as well as more rewarding.

The Government will raise the status of vocational training. In the years to come, Norway will have a substantial need for skilled labour. The vocational subjects must be strengthened according to their own needs, and the efforts to prevent attrition must be reinforced.

The Government will build a stronger country

The Government will ensure provision of high-quality welfare services and competitiveness in industry. High-quality infrastructure is an essential precondition for this. The Government will undertake the necessary investments to realize a major effort in the field of infrastructure. New measures will be adopted to ensure fast and effective development.

Norway needs a fast and coherent development of its road and rail networks, with particular focus on the main road network and effective linkages between the regions. This will generate new residential and labour-market regions and will be crucial for future growth. Stronger emphasis on public transport will allow the cities to grow and reduce climate gas emissions.

Security in everyday life and better preparedness

Security is essential for the fundamental freedom of people in general. Each individual should be able to feel safe inside and outside their own homes. Society must react firmly to violations of the law, and take the threat from organized crime seriously. With the aid of a modern and dynamic police force, the Government will increase public security and the operational capacity to combat crime. It is important to establish balance within the chain of criminal prosecution.

The Government will ensure that the country is equipped to respond to future crises. The report by the Gjørv Commission and the report on the police force have pointed out serious shortcomings. The Government will therefore increase the efforts to enhance security and emergency preparedness. The ability to enforce the law must be restored. This will form the basis for a more secure society.

Better welfare for the elderly and the ill

High-quality welfare services are fundamental to our society and help provide a second chance and new opportunities to people in need.

A high employment rate is one of the cornerstones of Norwegian society. For each individual, having a job entails personal development, a stable income and participation in a social arena. When many of us have a job, the funding of the welfare schemes is strengthened and safeguarded. Exclusion from

the labour market is therefore a challenge not only to the individual, but to our entire society. The Government will make wide-ranging efforts to include more people in working life.

High-quality health and care services which are available when the need arises create security. Many people have to wait for excessively long periods or are provided with inadequate care options. This exacerbates illness, people go on sick leave and fall out of the labour market, and this generates insecurity.

The Government will therefore undertake a major reform of the health services. The rights of patients shall be reinforced and each individual shall have the opportunity to choose his or her treatment institution. This will ensure that patients will not have to queue when capacity is available in private or non-profit enterprises.

The Government will raise the status of those who occupy the bottom rung in the health services: people with drug addiction and mental disorders. The health enterprises will be instructed to give higher priority to these groups of patients. The service options shall be improved, from low-threshold options to a better follow-up after discharge.

The elderly and those in need of care deserve better options. The Government must assume a greater responsibility for achieving an expansion of capacity in the care sector. The Government will develop a care sector in which quality and activity feature more prominently. The final years of life must have a meaningful content, also for elderly people who are struck down by dementia and other afflictions. The ability to cope with one's own life must be given more emphasis, for example through increased resources devoted to rehabilitation.

A stronger social safety net

Our society has well-developed welfare schemes. Even though there is a lot of room for improvement, most of us have access to the services we need. The welfare schemes have evolved over many years and under changing political majorities. This notwithstanding, there are still people who fail to receive the help they need and undergo serious difficulties and problems.

The Government will close the gaps in the safety net for groups that currently fall through them. This entails, among other things, ensuring more equitable conditions for children who grow up in poor families. More adults who do not possess basic skills must be provided with literacy training. The services for people with drug addiction or mental illness must be reinforced. Children who are under the custody of the child welfare services and adolescents who are undergoing treatment for addiction must be ensured high-quality and individually adapted education.

Vibrant local democracy

The Government will reinforce local democracy and implement a municipal reform. Larger and more robust municipalities can assume larger tasks and take more responsibility than the existing municipalities. The authority of the county governors to overrule locally elected bodies must be curtailed.

The Government will undertake a review of the remit of the county administrations, the county governors and the central government, with a view to transferring more power and authority to more robust municipalities. Greater freedom to find locally adapted solutions will enhance the quality of the welfare services.

The Government will amend the revenue system, to allow the municipalities to retain a larger proportion of locally created value.

2 – Work and social aspects

The labour market

The Government's goal is to put in place a secure and flexible labour market that ensures low unemployment and maximum work opportunities. A well-functioning labour market is decisive in allowing all of us to realize our dreams and ambitions, and in making it worthwhile to work.

For some groups, finding employment or keeping a job over a period of time is challenging. This applies especially to those with disabilities, immigrants and young people who have not completed a course of education. Mental health problems have become a major cause of sickness absence and dropping out of working life. The Government will initiate measures to make it easier to work part-time during periods of mental illness, thus avoiding permanent invalidity. A full review of the Norwegian Welfare and Labour Administration (NAV) will be conducted with the aim of decreasing the level of bureaucracy in the agency vis-à-vis users in order to assist more people to move from social assistance to work.

The Government will:

- Retain permanent employment as the main rule in the Working Environment Act.
- Facilitate a more open working life, including giving greater leeway for using temporary appointments so that private sector rules become more similar to public sector rules.
- Increase investment in wage subsidies and training for work in regular enterprises in cooperation with vocational rehabilitation enterprises that offer labour market initiatives.
- Set clearer quality and outcome requirements to suppliers of labour market initiatives.
- Draft a time-limited tax allowance when transferring from social benefits to work.
- Appraise a system of work in return for national insurance/social security benefits for young people at risk of being permanently excluded from working life.
- Improve conditions for utilizing social entrepreneurs and the voluntary sector in the welfare system.
- Draft an incentive-based system in order to give a greater opportunity to facilitate people's entry into working life.
- Pave the way for people on disability benefit to be able to utilize their work capacity by a reform of the disability benefit system. One of the goals will be to ensure that the degree of disability in each case reflects the actual work capacity, and that graded disability benefit will be applied to a greater extent than is the case today.
- Adjust disability pensions according to life expectancy in line with those of other pensioners.
- Scrutinize current welfare schemes to ensure that it is worthwhile to work, including examining the child supplement to disability pension.
- Assess measures that can limit and stop the payment of benefits to those resident abroad while complying with the international agreements Norway is bound by.
- Follow up the recommendations of the Brochmann committee on a shifting of social assistance from cash allowances to services.
- Reform schemes for care and attendance benefits 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 assistive aids policy during the parliamentary term.

People with disabilities

The Government's vision is a society where everyone can participate. The majority of people have education and work as their goals, and expect to live free and independent lives. Provision must be made to include people with disabilities in working and daily life, both because society needs their work capacity and because disabled people should be able to be part of the working community. Therefore the Government will make efforts to strengthen schemes that facilitate the participation of those with disabilities in working life.

In 2013 the Storting resolved to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Nevertheless, people with disabilities continue to face barriers that hinder their opportunities for activity and participation. The Government will initiate efforts to follow up the purpose of the Convention, which is to ensure a society with room for everyone regardless of functional ability.

The Government will:

- Make better provisions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in working life, including reinforcing the adaptation guarantee and the functionality assistant scheme.
- Secure the right to user-controlled personal assistance.
- Continue to work for a society where universal design is the norm.
- Review the scheme for escort services for deaf-blind people and the practice of this in order to secure a real opportunity for participation in physical training and leisure activities.
- Examine the trial scheme involving the use of service dogs with the aim of matching it with the scheme for guide dogs for blind and visually-impaired people.

Working life

The Government will work to put in place a well-functioning tripartite cooperation with high productivity and increased levels of well-being among employees. This will ensure a satisfactory working life for everyone. At the same time Norwegian working life faces a number of challenges. Many employees want to have more flexibility so that it is easier to combine work and private life. In a number of occupations a large proportion of employees are involuntary part-time workers. We must also lower the threshold for entering the labour market for people with little education.

Many occupational groups and workplaces experience a high level of sickness absence. The Government will work together with the social partners to reduce the level of sickness absence and make it possible for as many as possible to participate in working life. At the same time there will inevitably be a number of people who are too ill to work. These must be ensured an adequate and predictable income.

Strong international competition places greater demands on competitiveness and restructuring. The next decades will see fewer employees per pensioner and we will be faced with staffing challenges, particularly in the nursing and care sector. The Government will therefore facilitate the best possible use of the labour force in both the private and public sector.

Even though Norwegian working life on the whole is characterized by a well-ordered and properly-functioning environment, some industries are characterized by social dumping and unacceptable wage and working conditions. This is unacceptable both for the employees affected and for competing companies that comply with the legislation. The Government will therefore continue efforts to combat social dumping.

The Government will:

- Make the Working Environment Act more flexible, for example regarding the average calculation of working time, alternative rota systems and use of overtime.

- Appoint a committee on working time modelled on the shift/rota work committee to draft how best work capacity can be deployed in the coming decades.
- Continue efforts to counteract social dumping by strengthening the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, by evaluating measures targeting unacceptable wage and working conditions that are currently in effect, and by assessing new measures. The scheme for the general application of collective wage agreements will be continued.
- Take action to reduce the use of involuntary part-time work and temporary appointments in the public sector, and work for the establishment of a policy of full-time work in working life.
- Make provision for a working life with trade union membership and a well-functioning tripartite cooperation by continuing the deductible trade union contribution at the 2013 level.
- Retain the allowance for major sickness expenses at the 2013 level.
- Pave the way for older people to work longer, including reviewing all statutory age limits in working life in conjunction with the social partners.
- Change the transitional benefit for single parents and introduce clearer requirements for working activity.
- Continue the current sick pay scheme.
- Work towards reducing sickness absence, including a new inclusive working life agreement, and bring in national targets for the increased use of graded medical certificates for partial sick leave and earlier intervention in the sickness absence period.
- Ensure greater predictability and more equality in the medical certificate process by introducing recommended, normative medical certificate periods, with the provision that the GP's decision must be given most weight.
- 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 is a strong advocate of a secure and dignified old age. Pension is an earned right that accrues over a working lifetime. Therefore it is vital that people feel that their pension rights are safeguarded and that the pension scheme is as simple and comprehensible as possible. Encouraging private pension savings is important. Both households and society benefit from the contribution of the individual to securing his/her own financial security on becoming a pensioner.

In the long term there will be fewer employees per pensioner in Norway. To secure the economic sustainability of the welfare society the consensus on the pension scheme must remain firm.

The Government will:

- Pursue responsible economic policies that secure the financing of pensions.
- Continue the implementation of the pension reform in both the private and public sector. This entails that we must find solutions together with the social partners that reduce disparities between pension schemes in the private and public sectors.
- Continue the state's contribution to contractual pensions in the private sector.
- Facilitate secure and predictable frameworks for private pension savings and occupational pension schemes.
- Encourage private pension savings by increasing the annual savings amounts and assessing the introduction of the same rates of taxation on savings and withdrawals.
- Reduce the deduction in pension for married and cohabiting pensioners from 15 to 10 per cent.

Measures to combat poverty

The Government will make efforts to ensure that Norway is a country with a low degree of income inequality and minimal poverty. The most important measures for combating poverty are a good school system that equalizes social differences and an open working life with room for all. Nevertheless, some people will remain outside key social arenas due to poor economy or poor living conditions. Ensuring that these people receive the help they deserve is an important task for society.

Efforts must be concentrated on a broad front to prevent the exclusion of those in this category. The Government will pursue an improved integration policy (Chapter 3). More effective policies to help families affected by substance abuse problems and mental health challenges are also important (Chapter 9). Society must assume responsibility for helping those who have dropped out to return to working life irrespective of the reasons. There must also be satisfactory schemes for those who are permanently disabled.

Children are also affected by poverty. The Government will therefore prepare a raft of measures addressing children who grow up in poor families, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will enable a greater number of children to participate in important social arenas. Consequently an improved social profile for parental fees in kindergartens and day-care facilities before and after school hours will be introduced. The Government will also boost measures to promote social integration for vulnerable children and adolescents, for example leisure activities.

The Government will:

- Make it more worthwhile to work, particularly for people with low incomes, by increasing the personal allowance in income taxation and the like.
- Develop social assistance as a discretionary scheme on a municipal basis.
- Limit the option of including the income of under-age children when calculating social assistance.
- Introduce activity requirements for social welfare recipients with a special focus on low-threshold measures and work training targeting young people in order to secure a permanent transition to working life.
- Increase the lump-sum grant on birth and adoption.
- Make provision to allow a greater number of people to make use of places in kindergarten by means of a differentiation in parental fees.
- Offer free kindergarten places for children whose parents are participating in the introduction scheme for immigrants.
- Enter into a contract with the municipalities that makes it possible to differentiate parental fees for day-care facilities before and after school hours on the basis of income.
- Ensure that more children can participate in key social arenas regardless of the parents' income, by establishing local schemes for lending equipment and for paying membership fees.
- Focus on positive initiatives by strengthening support schemes for voluntary organizations that promote social inclusion in the local communities.
- Help ensure that children who grow up in poor families can have holidays sponsored by voluntary organizations.

3 – Children, families and inclusion

Families are our strongest social units, and are important bearers of our traditions and culture. The Government wishes to strengthen the position of families in Norwegian society. The family creates and ensures a safe framework for children's upbringing, no matter what form each family may take. Human dignity and self-respect are core features of the Government's family policies.

Families with children

Children and families are different and have different needs. Therefore each family must be ensured flexibility and freedom to choose the solutions that best suit them. Well-functioning families provide security and a sense of belonging, and create space for development. The Government will ensure freedom of choice for families by offering a greater diversity of solutions for families with children.

Children's right to a secure upbringing is fundamental. The Government will ensure more equal opportunities for children who grow up in poor families. Children themselves can in no way be blamed for their parents' situation. The Government will therefore formulate a set of initiatives aimed at 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. Nevertheless, it is important that society has good schemes to safeguard children who do not experience this in their homes.

The Government will:

- Maintain the cash-for-care benefit, and extend the scheme to include two-year-olds.
- Investigate converting the cash-for-care benefit into a statutory municipal payment.
- Increase the lump-sum grant on birth or adoption.
- Simplify regulations for parental leave.
- Introduce a self-access online solution for taking out parental leave.
- The paternal leave quota will be set at ten weeks. Allowance will be made for a trust-based exemption scheme according to objective criteria. Criteria that allow for exemptions are in connection with illness, unemployment of the father during the mother's maternity leave, the father working abroad, self-employed/sole shareholders, and mother's work situation, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

Child and family welfare

Children are vulnerable and have a special need for protection and care. The Government will help to establish closer collaboration between the child welfare service, child health centres, kindergartens, schools, police and the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) to avoid children being shuttled between public agencies. The Government will also contribute to an improved and more binding collaboration between the child welfare service and the psychiatric polyclinic service for children and adolescents.

The child's best interests will form the basis of the child welfare measures. It is crucial that the municipal child welfare service, which has the first encounter with children, has the capacity to identify and assist children who need professional help. To strengthen children's legal protection, the Government will introduce a low-threshold complaints procedure for children in the care of the child welfare service. The Government will ensure that all municipalities are linked to a 24-hour emergency service for children in crisis. More weight must be given to the best interests of the child than to the parent's wishes when it comes to visitation, permanent takeover of care, and adoption. The child welfare service must be given greater scope to provide necessary assistance, even without consent when this is necessary to prevent takeover of care.

A good family welfare service must be adapted to the needs of individual families. The Government will build its family welfare policy around the principle of prevention and early intervention to ensure good conditions for upbringing.

The Government will:

- Separate the overall management and development of the sector from the running of the child welfare measures. The scope of public child welfare bureaucracy will be reduced.
- Give the municipalities the right of free choice of child welfare measures, according to an assessment of quality, cost and what will be of most help to the individual child, irrespective of who is the provider of the measure.
- Allow municipalities with the necessary competence to be given complete professional and financial responsibility for the child welfare service. The possibility for municipalities to ensure good child welfare will be an important element of municipal reform.
- Ensure full transparency with regard to content, quality and cost of the child welfare provisions and introduce authorization and monitoring schemes with quality criteria for the institutions.
- Allow a greater number of child welfare agencies to recruit foster parents, and strengthen the support network around foster families.
- Review the balance between the service offered by institutions and foster homes and if necessary examine how foster home care can be strengthened.
- Give children in the care of the child welfare service better adapted schooling.
- Review the rules on aftercare to provide proper follow-up for more people after they have reached the age of 18.
- Prioritize measures that ensure that more children in the care of the child welfare service are able to grow up with their siblings.
- Improve the opportunity for children to grow up in foster families with whom they have a biological connection.
- Evaluate the county social welfare boards, and consider dedicated tribunals for cases concerning children and families.
- Give parents equality as caregivers, with the same rights, but ensure that most weight be given to the child's best interests in cases regarding custody and visitation.
- Review maintenance and support schemes in connection with child-care to develop simpler and fairer regulations.
- Consider a change in the law with the aim of 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 the supervision of the child welfare service.

Equality

The Government's objective is that everyone should have equal opportunities and freedom to make their own choices. The Government will strengthen equality and create better protection against discrimination for all. Therefore the Government will make proposals for a universal equality and anti-discrimination Act. Violence in intimate relationships, education, working life and integration are important areas for attention from an equality perspective. There is also a need to strengthen the female perspective in development policy. The Government will strengthen the competence of the public support network as a whole and improve the coordination of efforts to combat violence and coercion in intimate relationships.

The Government wishes to implement a Competence Promotion Reform for careers dominated by women, for example in the kindergarten, nursing and care sector. Many women wish to start innovative businesses in the nursing and care sector. A stronger business focus on research within the sector, in combination with a start-up programme, can help more of these types of businesses to be set up.

The Government will

- Promote a universal equality and antidiscrimination Act.
- Secure the rights of LGBT people, contribute to openness and actively combat discrimination.
- Strengthen the crisis centres and follow up the evaluation that has been conducted.
- Promote measures that encourage more people to choose non-traditional courses of education and careers, to contribute to a less gendered working life.
- Base its equality policy on positive, motivating measures rather than quotas.
- Combat genital mutilation.
- Strengthen language training and other targeted measures so that more women with minority backgrounds can participate in working life.
- Strengthen voluntary organisations that make a particular contribution to the integration of immigrant and refugee women into Norwegian society.
- Strengthen victim support services.
- Strengthen work against human trafficking, violence in intimate relationships and sexual violence against women.
- Prioritize education, particularly for girls, more highly in development policy.
- Strengthen the work against sexual violence in situations of war and conflict, and in particular follow up Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Integration

Immigrants have contributed to economic growth in Norway and have made us a more diverse nation. Knowledge, competence and diversity contribute to increased innovation and industrial development. Whilst immigration makes us a more diverse nation, we see challenges with regard to integration.

It is a challenge that for many of those who bring education and competence with them from their country of origin, this competence is not adequately recognized and utilized. It is also a problem, both for society and for the individual, that too few immigrant women are economically active.

People who have been granted the legal right to reside in the country should face the expectation that they will contribute to and participate in Norwegian society. Integration policy must have as its goal that immigrants should feel affiliation and connection to Norwegian society. All Norwegian citizens are fully fledged members of society, with the rights and duties that this entails. Participation in working life and good knowledge of Norwegian are the keys to inclusion in Norwegian society. Work provides affiliation, fellowship, a network and the possibility of self-reliance. An income from working also provides an opportunity to enter the regular housing market.

Good knowledge of Norwegian will in most cases be a prerequisite for obtaining employment. Therefore the Government will strengthen language training for all those with a minority background and will link free core-time care in kindergartens to requirements for participation in activities or Norwegian language classes. The Government will assess children's language skills and provide language training for children who need this before they start school. This service will also

encompass children who do not attend kindergarten. The Government will use homework assistants and summer schools to reach out to children with special language challenges.

The Government will:

- Ensure that all those who are granted Norwegian citizenship have a minimum command of spoken Norwegian and take a test in civics. The test must be passed, but with reasonable provisions for exemption, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Ensure that children never stay away from school without legitimate cause, by obliging school owners to have follow-up routines. School registers of students should also be checked against the population register.
- Provide faster approval schemes, better assessment of non-formal learning and options to update 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 targeting the “New chance programme”.
- Cooperate with immigrant organizations and cultural and religious communities to ensure that individual groups are not excluded.
- Change the Immigration Regulations so that asylum seekers and others who have not been granted the legal right to reside in the country are given the opportunity to carry out unpaid voluntary work for humanitarian organizations, sports teams etc.
- Strengthen local integration work by giving municipalities and voluntary organizations resources to carry out such work.
- Strengthen reception schools and improve monitoring of students’ knowledge before they transfer from reception 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.
- Strengthen efforts to settle immigrants in the municipalities and examine the structure of the grant schemes.
- Prioritize quota refugees with the highest possible chance of successful integration.

4 – Justice, public security and immigration

Justice

The Government will base its policies on each individual's needs for security in everyday life. Norwegian public security must be strengthened and the core staffing of the police must be increased. Priority must be given to coherence throughout the chain of criminal prosecution. The Government will reinforce the efforts for transfer of convicted criminals to prisons in their home country and repatriation of foreign nationals who commit crimes.

The Government will pursue judicial policies that ensure each individual's needs for security and due process. Efforts to combat crime must be undertaken within the framework of fundamental principles for the rule of law. Security is part of Norwegian welfare and is essential for individual freedom and quality of life. To ensure safe local communities and to reduce petty crime, the Government will seek to establish balance in the criminal prosecution chain. Concerns for victims and their next of kin shall be given emphasis throughout the criminal prosecution chain.

Active efforts for prevention are essential to combat crime. These efforts must involve local communities, NGOs, sports associations, schools and municipalities, as well as the police and correctional services. Models need to be developed to encourage municipalities and local communities to give priority to prevention of crime.

The Government will restructure the police to establish an efficient and modern organization that will be even better prepared to prevent and combat crime. This will be achieved by merging police districts into fewer and more robust police regions. The objective of the new neighbourhood police is to render the police operational, visible and accessible, with the capacity to investigate and prosecute acts of crime.

This will require increased core staffing in the police. The Government's goal is to have two police officers for each 1000 inhabitants by 2020. A stronger neighbourhood police will ensure better security. A guarantee will therefore be introduced to ensure that the number of new and vacant positions in the police force will increase in pace with the number of students who graduate from the Norwegian Police University College until this goal has been achieved. At the same time, the Government will supplement the existing police training with other courses at the Norwegian Police University College. The objective is to recruit people with other types of competence required by the police, by providing them with a briefer introduction to police work.

The Government will evaluate the structure of the courts of justice and modernize the court system, with a view to more rapid processing of cases and to increase capacity. The Government will improve the provision of due process by amending the jury system. The correctional services will be expanded and refined to ensure rapid, appropriate and effective implementation of criminal sentences. During the serving of the sentence and return to society, the convicted person must be provided with a genuine opportunity to lead a life free of crime. Appropriate return to society depends on a good and close cooperation between several actors, engaged volunteers and public agencies.

The Government will:

- Ensure that the organization of the neighbourhood police leads to improved operational capacity and more funds devoted to prevention.
- Strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking and child abuse, including the spread of pictures of child abuse.
- Prevent recruitment to criminal gangs and violent, extremist groups.

- Increase competence in the police and the criminal prosecution system in the field of violence in intimate relationships and random violence against people belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Reduce the number of goals and remits pursued by the police to concentrate their efforts to their core remits.
- Ensure funding of a new ICT platform for the police.
- Allow for a general arming of the police in those police districts in which the police themselves find this to be the best solution.
- Provide limited police authority to Norwegian Customs and Excise.
- Allow for the use of a larger number of accredited suppliers of DNA analyses.
- Explore the establishment of fast-track courts in specified areas.
- Raise the level of punitive sanctions against repeat offenders.
- Evaluate the Act relating to the purchase of sexual services, and submit a white paper on the basis of this evaluation. Social-policy instruments targeting prostitutes who are in a difficult situation shall be reinforced, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Oppose the use of religious garments and symbols in situations involving exercise of governmental power and authority.
- Repeal the statute of limitations for homicide and sexual abuse of children.
- Assess new compensation schemes for victims of crime.
- Allow municipalities to amend local police regulations to introduce a ban on begging, with a view to combat human trafficking and other forms of organized crime.
- Increase prison capacity by expanding the number of prison places.
- Establish more prisons adapted to foreign convicts who will not be returned to Norwegian society.
- Seek to ensure that a higher number of criminal foreign nationals can serve their sentence in their home country, and finance any associated costs incurred, if necessary.
- Evaluate implementation of sentences with electronic surveillance to ensure a more targeted use of this scheme.
- Tighten the conditions for release on parole, especially in the case of serious crimes. Review the conditions for release from detention.
- Increase the involvement of voluntary and non-profit organizations in the correctional services, during the serving of sentences as well as after return to society.
- Explore establishment of a national competence centre for provision of care to victims and next of kin.

Public security

Ensuring the security of society and its citizens is one of the state's core remits. Terrorism, serious crime, natural disasters and extreme weather, as well as cyber-attacks against government bodies, private individuals and enterprises are some of the threats we are facing today. When balancing openness and security, we need to be aware of the risks that are inherent in having an open society. Better coordination, clarification of roles and joint exercises among those involved in the field of public security are required to optimally prepare society for serious events. To strengthen preparedness we need to involve all levels of public administration, including the top leadership.

Today's four fundamental principles for maintenance of public security will be retained: Responsibility, proximity, equality and cooperation. The Government will reinforce responsibility and

cooperation as the general and governing principles, in particular in the case of crises that require efforts by multiple sectors.

The Government will press forward the efforts to establish a national preparedness centre in the Oslo region and explore a structure of preparedness centres to ensure public security throughout the country.

Activities related to security, preparedness and intelligence is currently dispersed over a number of agencies and inspectorates. This applies to the entire chain, from intelligence, analysis, inspection, supervision and follow-up supervision, and implementation of preventive efforts, to specific implementation of operations, emergency response, evaluation and follow-up. Inadequate coordination and overview may cause society to be insufficiently prepared to respond to serious events.

The Internet and mobile communication provide huge opportunities for innovation, freedom of speech and democratization. While the opportunities for development are growing, we are also becoming more dependent on technology. Increased vulnerability and greater risks therefore follow from this development.

The Government will:

- Establish a national preparedness and security agency under the Prime Minister's Office. This function shall ensure general coordination and follow-up of all work related to security and preparedness across the ministries and help highlight and clarify responsibilities. Thus, the Prime Minister is brought more directly into general and strategic assessments related to the security of society and the citizens. This will ensure that unclarities and divergences of opinion between the ministries and agencies concerned can be explored and solved. The ministries will retain operational responsibility within their own sector.
- Explore the opportunities for strengthening coordination through a co-location of the judicial-sector units located in the capital city area.
- Ensure that national preparedness capacity is reinforced through follow-up of the analysis of the police service.
- Specify and clarify the responsibilities of the agencies with regard to public security. Review responsibilities for supervision and responsibilities for follow-up of supervision within the entire area of preparedness and security.
- Ensure greater involvement of the actors in the public-security sector, private enterprises and non-profit organizations in planning and exercises.
- Ensure procurement of new rescue helicopters.
- Reinforce the search and rescue services.
- Modernize and reinforce civilian emergency response preparedness in the Norwegian Civil Defence.
- Define the authorities' responsibility for the security of critical, digital infrastructure. These responsibilities will be concentrated in one ministry. Reinforce preparedness against cyber-crime and cyber-attacks.
- Improve procedures for the provision of assistance to the police by the Armed Forces.
- Strengthen Nordic collaboration in the field of emergency response and preparedness.

Nødnett (The Norwegian Public Safety Network)

The emergency communication radio network is a crucial element of Norwegian emergency preparedness. Efforts to bring into operation a robust, joint emergency communication network based on modern technology represent a key element in enhancing public security and preparedness.

The Government will:

- Submit a bill on the status of the implementation of the emergency communication network, with an assessment of the progress plan, budget and goal achievement.
- Ensure that organizations involved in search and rescue operations will have the ability to use the new emergency communication network in practice.

Immigration

The Cooperation Agreement between the Liberal Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party is reproduced below. The Government will follow up this agreement.

Agreement between the Liberal Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Progress Party and the Conservative Party on the field of immigration

A: Introduction

Immigration is a source of diversity, new inspiration and cultural interchange. Such variation contributes to new thinking, innovation and creativity. While immigration has contributed to economic growth in Norway and made us more multi-faceted as a nation, we see the challenges linked to immigration and integration. Mass movements of people put Norwegian society to the test, regardless of the reason. This applies not least to the sustainability of the Norwegian welfare state. Therefore it is essential to regulate immigration.

The institution of asylum is a key tool in providing protection to those who are genuinely threatened, and it must not be abused in any way. Norway must fulfil its international commitments and help refugees. Asylum status will be granted on the basis of individual processing and a thorough assessment of the application for asylum.

Today immigration to Norway motivated by work and by family reunification/family establishment is many times greater than immigration as the result of mass flight. It is an advantage that labour immigrants want to create a future in Norway. Knowledge, competence and diversity contribute to greater innovation and business development. Labour immigration policies must give the opportunity for residence on the basis of work, including for those from countries outside the EEA. In particular, it must become easier for the business sector to attract highly-qualified labour from other countries.

Everyone shall have the same rights and duties in Norway, irrespective of ethnic background. Setting requirements to immigrants means showing them respect. At the same time more proactive policies to ensure immigrants access to the labour market are important.

B: Permanent scheme that will ensure stronger focus on the situation of the child

The child's affiliation to Norway through several years' residence will be clarified through a change in the regulations that will allow the immigration authorities to place greater weight on considering what benefits the child. The prerequisite is that as a main rule the parents have assisted in clarifying

their identity and have contributed to making their return possible although this return has not proved to be feasible.

C: Individual solutions for children and their families from countries with a return agreement who have lived in Norway for a long period of time

Definition of time: The basis for the calculation of time is when the residence application for the child was submitted for the first time or when the child was born. If there is documentation to show that the child has resided abroad in this period, this period of time will be deducted.

Where does the child/family live: It is a prerequisite that the child lives in an asylum reception centre or can in some way document residence in Norway.

Status: Such individual solutions apply to those who do not have a residence permit because they have received a final rejection, and those whose cases have not been finally processed on a given date.

Individual solutions apply to children and their families (parents and unmarried siblings under the age of 18 who live together with the child) when it is over three years since the asylum application was submitted. The prerequisite is that as a main rule the parents 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 different kinds of reception centres

Initiate efforts to use and apply 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 is not cooperating on clarifying his or her identity in accordance with section 21 or section 83 of the Act, or there are specific grounds for suspecting 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 obliged 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, (c), and the case of the foreign national is being processed and has not been finally decided or the time limit for exit 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 being sentenced to a penalty 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 does not do what is necessary to fulfil his or her obligation to procure a valid travel document, and the purpose is to bring the foreign national to the foreign service mission of the country concerned so that he or she can be issued a travel document, 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 types of reception centres should be developed: integration centres for those who are waiting to be assigned a municipality for residence, and return centres for people and families who have

received a final rejection. Some return centres must receive foreigners who have been remanded in custody pursuant to section 106, first paragraph. The return centres will resemble ordinary asylum centres regarding standard, staffing, level of activity and the mix of inmates. The difference will be a greater and more pervasive focus on return, while the integration perspective ceases to apply. This must be reflected in the competence of the staff.

E: More efficient case processing and an earlier return of persons without legal residence, and criminals

2. Limit the opportunity to submit applications to set aside administrative decisions by implementing the changes proposed in Proposition 180 L (2012-2013) to the Storting which means faster and more efficient processing of unfounded applications to set aside administrative decisions. The protection of law shall be safeguarded and the scheme will be evaluated.
3. Strengthen legal guidance prior to the first application to ensure that the application submitted is correct as far as possible and provides a sound basis for assessment of the case in accordance with Norwegian law.
4. Make efforts to follow up Norwegian Official Report NOU 2010:12 and to assess proposals for a new and improved appeals procedure for immigration cases. This includes assessing whether tasks that are today the responsibility of the Immigration Appeals Board should be transferred to an administrative court. The goal will be to achieve faster case processing and an earlier return for those who have no basis for residence.
5. Reduce the penalty level required for the expulsion of foreigners who have been sentenced or are subject to 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 to put in place 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) so that the application is processed quickly and the applicant is returned to his/her country of origin on rejection.
8. Strengthen return efforts and police work on identification in the initial processing of the asylum application through a national ID centre. Develop Nordic and European cooperation in this area.
9. Make more active use of the diplomatic service in the regions from which the bulk of asylum seekers with unfounded claims originate in order to disseminate information about the lack of opportunities for residence.

F: Family establishment/family reunification

10. Raise the financial support requirement in family establishment cases, but introduce more liberal discretionary assessments 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 regulations that apply to persons who experience abuse.
12. Use DNA testing to a greater degree to clarify identity in connection with family reunification.
13. Introduce a 24 years age limit for family establishment and make a liberal discretionary assessment keeping in mind that the purpose of the change is to combat forced marriage and to ensure that the couple can support themselves.
14. Prepare a scheme for a "partner visa" which does not require an engagement/planned wedding.

G: immigration for work purposes

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 reduce the time spent and the bureaucracy in connection with labour immigration.
16. Put in place simpler rules for labour immigration for highly-qualified skilled workers who are employed, and also draft a model for prior approval in the case of large companies.
17. Work to strengthen the external Schengen borders and to reinforce cooperation with the large 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 so that asylum seekers and others who have not been granted a residence permit are given the opportunity to participate in unpaid voluntary work for humanitarian organizations, sports clubs etc.
19. Insist that all those who apply for Norwegian citizenship have a basic command of spoken Norwegian and must have taken a test in their knowledge of Norwegian society. The test must be passed, but there will be reasonable provisions for exemption.
20. Strengthen language learning for women with a minority background and give more of them the opportunity to participate in working life. Link free core time in kindergartens to requirements for participation in activities or in Norwegian language classes.
21. Chart children's language skills and provide language classes for children with poor Norwegian skills before they start school. This will also apply to children who do not attend kindergarten.
22. Ensure faster approval schemes, better assessment of non-formal learning and options to update competence to ensure that the education immigrants already possess can be used in Norway.
23. Enhance efforts to settle immigrants in the municipalities and review the organization of grant schemes.
24. Prioritize quota refugees with the greatest chance of successful integration.

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

25. Appraise the practising 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, in the event that the inflow of asylum seekers should abate.
- Assess a ban on marriages between cousins, on the basis of professional assessments of health risk. 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 the opportunity to make attendance of Norwegian language courses a requirement for receiving unemployment benefit.

5 – Economy and industry

Economic policy

Norway is a land of great opportunities. We have an open economy and a highly educated population. Nature has bestowed on us a wealth of resources, and our standard of living is in the world's top league. The basis for our shared welfare is the creation of value that takes place in all parts of the country. The Government will base its economic policies on the view that values have to be created before they can be shared, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. For us to enjoy secure welfare and pensions in the future as well, we need economic growth. In its economic policies, the Government will assume an inter-generational perspective.

The Government will pursue responsible economic policies based on the agreed rule for spending of oil revenues. Any increased spending of oil revenues will be shifted towards investments in education and infrastructure, and tax relief that promotes growth. Within the framework defined by the rule for spending of oil revenues, public spending will be adapted to the situation prevailing in the economy. How far the Government will succeed in reaching its political goals will depend on the financial latitude available.

The Government will help create a robust and diverse business community. The Government will therefore pursue economic policies that increase future value creation. The value of our future hard work accounts for a major part of the national wealth. The Government will therefore give priority to strengthening inclusion in the labour market and invest in competence-building.

In the long term, the growth potential in the mainland economy will determine the development of Norwegian welfare. 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 that can elucidate the reasons for the slow growth in productivity and provide specific advice on how to encourage productivity growth.

The Government will:

- Pursue responsible economic policies and keep control of the economy.
- Make the Norwegian economy less sensitive 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 account of how the financial opportunities provided by the Government Pension Fund Global are utilized in the state budget.
- Highlight how the national assets are managed, and thereby also the maintenance overhang, in the national budgets.

A modern system of taxes and duties

Taxes are not a goal, they are a means to an end. The Government will use the system of taxes and duties to finance public goods, ensure social mobility, achieve a better utilization of resources and provide better conditions for Norwegian industry. Private ownership will be strengthened, and working, saving and investing should pay better dividends. The Government will also encourage more environmentally friendly behaviour.

The Government will therefore reduce the total level of taxes and duties. A lower level of taxes and duties will result in a better distribution of power, increased value creation and more freedom for

families and individuals. Public funds shall be managed efficiently to ensure the best possible welfare to the citizens, while showing respect for the taxpayers' money.

The Government will:

- Reduce taxes for wage-earners by raising the basic allowance and raising the starting point for higher rate income tax.
- Gradually reduce wealth tax by raising the minimum deductible amount and reducing the rate.
- Remove the inheritance tax.
- Strengthen the IPS scheme to increase the attractiveness of saving for a pension.
- Strengthen the BSU scheme to enable more young people to buy a home.
- Explore benefits and consequences of the ROT deduction scheme.
- Amend taxation rules to stimulate employee co-ownership.
- Review and improve rules for tax write-off to increase the competitiveness of Norwegian industry.
- Undertake a coherent review of vehicle and fuel duties, with a view to amendments that will encourage the use of new technology, a safer vehicle fleet and more environmentally friendly choices.
- Explore the dynamic effects of tax relief.
- Reinforce the tax relief scheme for donations to voluntary organizations.
- Increase the limit for compulsory wage statements and payroll tax for voluntary organizations.
- Exempt permanently installed, non-integrated machinery from property tax in industrial facilities (will not apply to hydropower stations).
- Appoint a new green tax commission that will submit proposals for green tax amendments, to help achieve the goals stipulated by the climate compromise.
- Increase the duty-free allowance for imports.
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of taxpayers' protection under the law and submit proposals to ensure that taxpayers are better guaranteed due process than today.

Safe management of the Government Pension Fund Global (SPU)

The Government Pension Fund Global (SPU) represents a conversion of values from the Continental shelf into financial assets. The goal for the management of SPU is to achieve the highest possible yield at a moderate risk. The value of the fund may vary greatly from one year to the next, but its yield over time forms the basis for future wealth.

The Government will continue relying on the framework created around the management of the SPU. The Government will emphasize transparency and ethical awareness. As the fund grows and the range of experience widens, it is natural to assess a further development of management practices to ensure that they are optimally appropriate. The Government will return to this issue in the context of the annual white paper on the management of the Government Pension Fund Global.

The Government will establish an investment programme within the SPU, with the same management requirements as for the other investments made by the SPU, but with the goal of investing in sustainable enterprises and projects in poor countries and emerging markets. In addition, the Government will consider establishment of a separate mandate in the field of renewable energy, with the same management requirements as for other investments made by the SPU.

Financial markets

The two main remits of the financial markets are to provide people with opportunities to participate directly in society's total value creation and to channel capital to profitable investments. Secure banks and a competitive finance industry are crucial to ensure value creation in Norway.

Experience from the financial crisis shows that Norwegian regulations and the response from Norwegian authorities passed the test. The Norwegian finance industry made it through the crisis. This notwithstanding, the increased capital requirements that are now being introduced are appropriate and necessary. The Government will follow up the increased capital requirements, but take the initiative for a better Nordic harmonization to ensure more equitable conditions for competition.

Industrial policy

The Government will pursue future-oriented industrial policies that make provisions for value creation and employment in all parts of the Norwegian economy. Increased competitiveness generates secure workplaces for the future. Norwegian industry is characterized by its high adaptability and innovativeness, and its ambitions reach beyond the confines of Norway. The Government will pursue policies that enhance the competitiveness of Norwegian business, and thereby provide opportunities to create more value. The Government will seek to ensure that the business community can enjoy favourable conditions, a predictable taxation system, better infrastructure, opportunities to employ competent people and access to capital.

Manufacturing industry and the mineral industry

The Government will ensure diversity in the business community by reinforcing the competitiveness of Norwegian industry. The wood-processing industry is in a precarious situation, and the Government will prepare a strategy that can strengthen the competitiveness in this value chain. In many parts of Norway, the mineral industry may give rise to increased activity and employment. Large wealth is hidden inside our mountains. The mineral industry will therefore be a key policy area.

The Government will:

- Ensure an appropriate regulatory framework for energy-intensive Norwegian manufacturing industries.
- Make provisions for growth in the mineral industry, including ensuring predictable and knowledge-based planning processes.
- Allow the mineral industry to use submarine tailings disposal sites, but impose stringent requirements and establish environmental monitoring.
- Improve the competitiveness of the forest-product industry, including a simplification of transport regulations and strengthening of the opportunities for product and technology development.
- Seek to introduce new sources of capital for product development and innovation in the forest-products industry, including allowing the Forest Fund to be used for investments in manufacturing.
- Ensure an appropriate CO₂ compensation scheme for the industry.

Innovation

Many of the enterprises of the future have yet to be established. They will be created by people who are willing to take risks, people who devote their skills and resources to the creation of new jobs. The Government's goal will be that Norway should be one of Europe's most innovative countries. The Government will reinforce its commitment to business-oriented research and innovation, to provide a broader base for value creation.

To enable Norway to assert itself in the global competition for capital and skills, the Government will concentrate its efforts on innovation-policy measures that are optimally effective. To reinforce industry's commitment to research and innovation will require government-industry cooperation. The Government will therefore step up efforts related to business-oriented innovation.

The Government will:

- Escalate the grants to business-oriented research, including reinforcement of the SkatteFUNN regulations and the "User-Driven Research-Based Innovation" (BIA) scheme.
- Review the range of policy instruments for innovation and prioritize the instruments that produce the highest innovation impact.
- Upgrade Innovation Norway as an organization. The nationwide schemes administrated by Innovation Norway will be given priority.
- Reinforce the IFU/OFU scheme.
- Use industrial clusters as engines for innovation, with particular attention to the Norwegian Centres of Expertise (the NCE programme), and launch Global Centres of Expertise.
- Improve access to public "pollination" and "seed-corn" capital, and make provisions that the organizations administering these schemes can be located in university cities.
- Establish an innovation exchange that can facilitate linkages between entrepreneurs and private capital, and consider linking this to tax incentives.

The public sector can play a key role as an engine of innovation. Large-scale procurement power and a considerable ability to take risk mean that the public sector can use its procurement role to actively encourage 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 enterprises, to allow more private service suppliers to help address society's needs.
- Prepare a manual and guidelines for public-private innovation partnership and make sure that public procurement offices make use of them.

The maritime sector

Norway has a proud history as a maritime nation. The maritime industries are one of Norway's global knowledge hubs. The maritime cluster provides the basis for a diversity of enterprises and creates jobs all over Norway. The Government believes that in order to retain maritime competence in Norway, the shipping industry must have regulatory conditions equal to those offered in the EU. Norwegian seafarers are a key element of the industrial cluster, and their practical skills are a precondition for maritime activities in Norway.

The Government will:

- Submit specific proposals for strengthening maritime training.
- Retain the existing taxation schemes for shipping enterprises to ensure predictability.
- Make the net-salary scheme statutory.
- Appoint a commission to assess the trading area restrictions in the Norwegian International Ship Register (NIS) and the thrust of the net-salary scheme. The commission shall include representatives of the employees' organizations and the industry.
- Ensure competitive Norwegian ship registers (NOR and NIS).

- Strengthen Export Credit Norway and GIEK.
- Implement a fees and duties regime that strengthens the coastal shipping industry.
- Help increase the use of more environmentally friendly fuels in the industry.
- Seek international cooperation on maritime issues, including with a view to improving environmental requirements for ships.
- Change fees and duties so as not to provide disincentives for environmentally friendly and safe technologies and designs.

Tourism

Tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing industries. Increased globalization provides new opportunities for growth in the Norwegian tourist industry. It provides workplaces and local development, not least in many rural municipalities. Norway has magnificent natural scenery, a rich diversity of cultural heritage and a cultural life that attracts global attention in a growing number of areas.

The Government will:

- Ensure appropriate and predictable frameworks for the tourist industry.
- Ensure more target marketing by concentrating the resources in large tourist destination enterprises.
- Provide the municipalities with greater opportunities to make provisions for environmentally friendly tourism, including inside protected areas.
- Review and relax the regulations pertaining to tourist fishing.
- Allow product samples and restricted sales of alcohol directly from niche producers, and seek to amend EU legislation in this area if necessary.

Simplification

The Government will base its policies on the goal of achieving an optimally efficient use of society's resources. Society must be made less bureaucratic. More power and authority must be transferred to local communities. The Government will counteract wasting of public funds and give high priority to increasing implementation capacity. Administrative costs and unnecessary bureaucracy drain our industry of competitiveness. Entrepreneurs, enterprise owners and employees should be allowed to spend more time on value creation and less on filling out forms. The Government will undertake targeted efforts to reduce bureaucracy.

The Government will:

- Reduce the business costs incurred by compliance with reporting requirements by 25 per cent, compared to the cost level in 2011.
- Provide annual reports on the progress of efforts related to simplification.
- Develop a simplified set of regulations for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Introduce an independent regulations council modelled on the corresponding body in Sweden.
- Refine Altinn, and apply the principle that industry should only need to report the same information to the authorities once.
- Simplify customs procedures.
- Review the rules for taxation of benefits in kind provided by employers, to adapt these to a modern and flexible work life.
- Make more public services available on the Internet, to allow them to be used independently of opening hours.

- Permit shops to open on Sundays. In consultation with the social partners, the Government will assess how the shops' employees can be encompassed by appropriate legislation pertaining to working hours and co-determination.

Ownership

Private ownership of enterprises is the main rule in Norwegian industry. Through their ownership, small and large investors can participate directly in the value creation that takes place in Norway. Diverse private ownership is a precondition for creating secure jobs. The Government will therefore reinforce private ownership.

In the foreseeable future, Norway will retain a considerable proportion of state ownership. It is essential that this state ownership is managed in a professional and predictable manner. The Government will pursue responsible policies for state ownership that provide room for ownership diversity and value creation. The Government will welcome value-enhancing transactions and strategic alliances. Moreover, foreign investors should regard Norway as an attractive investment location.

A reduction in the volume of state ownership must be introduced gradually. In its decisions, the Government will assess business cycles, market conditions, the financial position of the enterprises and general prospects for the future.

The Government will:

- Reinforce private Norwegian ownership.
- Increase ownership in Norwegian companies by small savers, including by introducing an account for long-term saving in capital-stock investments (KLAS).
- Pursue responsible ownership policies characterized by predictability and consistent principles for the exercise of public ownership.
- Reduce the amount of direct state ownership in Norwegian industry to ensure distribution of power and reinforce private ownership.
- Submit a new white paper on ownership.
- Cooperate with other shareholders in appointment of candidates to key board positions in state enterprises and select candidates on the basis of their qualifications.
- Continue the system for ownership categorization of state enterprises.

Trade

Norway has a small and open economy. By participating in international exchange of goods, we have succeeded in achieving a higher level of welfare than we could have done on our own. Trade is one of the strongest engines of economic growth and helps create jobs and lasting prosperity all over the world. The Government will seek to promote free trade and pursue active trade policies that emphasize Norwegian interests.

The Government will:

- Develop trade-policy cooperation with our closest neighbours, including the EU, and seek to establish new trade agreements through EFTA.
- Promote increased free trade, including between developing and industrialized countries.
- Seek to establish multilateral trade agreements through the WTO to create stable frameworks and equality in competitiveness globally, and to sign more limited agreements where necessary. Until a multilateral framework is available, Norway will enter into bilateral trade agreements.

- Increase the use of bilateral investment agreements where this is appropriate.
- Improve schemes that 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 help ensure that future generations can also make a living from harvesting the considerable seafood resources found along our coast. History has shown that the fisheries and aquaculture industries grow more vigorously when they are provided with wider frameworks for sustainable growth. The Government will improve the framework conditions for the industry. Changes must be predictable and help reinforce Norway's position as a seafood-exporting nation.

Sustainable growth of the fisheries and aquaculture industries will create secure workplaces in all the country's regions. Profitability in all parts of these industries is therefore an important precondition for successful regional policies. The global remit of the seafood industry is to help produce enough nutritious food for the world's growing population. Norway's natural advantages, in combination with our traditional industries, have provided us with the knowledge and competence to play a key role globally.

The seafood industry is one of our most important knowledge clusters. Proximity to the market for fresh seafood, as well as knowledge from land-based processing of fish, provide opportunities for increased value creation at the processing stage. The Government will follow up the vision of a redoubling of value creation in the industry over the next decades, through intensified education and research. Oceanographic research is essential for confirming Norway's position as a fishery and aquaculture nation.

The Government will define total quotas for the various fisheries, so that the resources can be managed in a way that ensures a long-term and sustainable yield. International cooperation and agreements are preconditions for sustainable exploitation of the resources. Increased surveillance of the seas to prevent and expose illegal fishing will therefore be a natural measure.

The Government will maintain the delivery obligations for existing agreements, but link this obligation to specific regions, rather than individual facilities and municipalities.

The Government will facilitate a predictable growth in the aquaculture industry. The potential inherent in this industry must be developed further. The Government will therefore allow for increasing the number of licences and increasing the total biomass volume permitted in existing facilities. Efforts to prevent fish from escaping, the spread of salmon lice and other challenges to the industry in the form of diseases must be addressed through binding agreements with the industry itself. Municipalities that put land at the disposal of the industry should see larger positive ripple effects from the activity. The Government will therefore let major portions of the fees earned on new licences flow back to the municipalities involved.

The Government will cooperate with all parties involved to ensure sustainable management of wild salmon stocks, while making provision for increased value creation.

The Government will:

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

- Pursue policies that can ensure a dispersed private ownership and a differentiated fishing fleet, in which the various fleet groups enjoy equal opportunities.
- Maintain and modernize the Act relating to fish trade associations to ensure flexible, efficient and well-organized markets with adequate control of resource use.
- Consider a relaxation of the Act relating to participation in fisheries, especially with regard to its requirements on place of residence in case of inheritance or inter-generational transfer.
- Improve the scheme for quota transfer for the ocean-going fleet.
- Assume as a principle that structured quotas shall not be time-limited.
- Allow for structuring in the group of closed vessels less than 11 metres in length and boost recruitment to this fleet group.
- Introduce a scheme for joint fishing in the group of open vessel less than 11 metres in length.
- Replace the current licensing scheme for the aquaculture industry with an application process based on objective allocation criteria.
- Practise the principle that “the polluter pays” in the aquaculture industry.
- Exploit the stocks of marine mammals in accordance with holistic and sustainable management principles.
- Introduce unrestricted fishing of king crab outside the commercial zone.

Agriculture and forestry

Norwegian agriculture is strongly committed to values such as the respect for private property, freedom to engage in business and protection of the cultural and natural heritage. The right to property remains fundamental. The Government will reinforce farmers’ right to manage their property as they wish. The Conservative Party and the Progress Party will seek to repeal the Constitution’s provision on allodial rights. The Government will promote viable agriculture by enhancing the opportunities for value creation. The position of farmers and forest owners as independent business operators must be reinforced. The Government will retain the negotiated agricultural policy and give emphasis to predictability and reforms that can increase value creation , cf. the Cooperation Agreement. Norwegian food producers shall have frameworks that ensure competitiveness in establishment and production.

Agriculture is essential for the production of food and plants, settlement and cultural landscapes in Norway. Grazing animals help maintain the cultural landscape. The agricultural sector sustains long-standing food traditions, and its main remit shall be to supply safe food of good quality. Norwegian agricultural production can compete in quality with food produced elsewhere. Protection from imports is important for the profitability of Norwegian agriculture, but concerns for Norwegian consumers and the Norwegian food-processing industry indicate that the customs barriers should be lowered.

The Government wants a clearer distinction between agricultural and regional policies. The main objective of agricultural policy should be to ensure cost-efficient food production. The Government will therefore target the state subsidies in a way that promotes increased production. Efforts should be devoted to encouraging alternative business development that can provide the basis for a more robust and future-oriented agricultural production across the entire country.

The Government will strengthen the agricultural sector through a simplification of laws, regulations and grant schemes. This will give better access to capital, increase turnover and improve recruitment. Limits on quotas and licences that prevent full usage of capacity in individual and cooperative farms must be as far as possible be abolished. As a first measure, the maximum production ceiling must be

raised. These changes must be introduced gradually. In pace with the changes, the level of subsidies will be reduced.

The Government wants stronger competition in the food-processing industry, and will therefore make the role of market regulator more independent of the cooperative organizations.

The Government will:

- Simplify the grant structure.
- Make budgetary support more dependent on production and less dependent on the size of cultivated areas, within the framework of international regulations. This will also benefit full-time farmers.
- Review licensing, quota schemes and differentiation in subsidy rates for agriculture.
- Render agriculture less dependent on state subsidies, reduce the cost level in the agricultural sector and provide the farmer with new and better revenue opportunities.
- Use targeted tax amendments to reinforce the financial position of farmers.
- Seek to ensure the highest possible degree of self-sufficiency in food for reasons of emergency preparedness.
- Seek to ensure predictability for Norwegian food production in the event that new international trade agreements will call for major amendments to agricultural policy.
- Provide individual farmers with greater authority over their own property by repealing the Licensing Act, the duty of residence, the partition ban and price controls.
- Investigate the practical application and effects of the obligation to cultivate held agricultural land and consider a repeal of this.
- Allow limited companies as a form of ownership in agriculture.
- Reduce the tax rate on profit from the sale of agricultural enterprises to the level of ordinary tax on capital.
- Allow a fund scheme for agriculture modelled on the one applied in forestry.
- Preserve high-quality topsoil, but balance concerns for protection of land against the needs of society. The Government will undertake a review of issues related to land lease and agronomy in Norwegian agriculture with a view to improving the yield of existing areas.
- Introduce simplifications and reductions in agricultural bureaucracy.
- Facilitate 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 is important to Norway. Many people have enjoyed a secure workplace in this industry, and there is a large potential for value creation. Norwegian forest owners have long-standing and good traditions for sustainable management of forest resources. The forestry industry has a considerable potential for growth, and should therefore be encouraged to develop new market areas.

The Government will:

- Prepare a coherent strategy for the forestry value chain.
- Make provisions for increased harvesting of forests.
- Reduce the tax rate.

- Reduce the tax rate on profits from the sale of forestry enterprises to the level of ordinary tax on capital.
- Strengthen private forestry by selling areas of land from Statskog equal to the amount purchased by Statskog in recent years.
- Give greater emphasis to climate policy objectives in the management of Norwegian forests.
- Adapt as far as possible the transport regulations for timber in the face of competition from our trading partners.
- Seek to establish new sources of capital for development and profitable production of new forest-based products, for example by allowing the Forest Fund to be used for purposes of investments in industry.

Reindeer farming is an important industry in parts of our country. It ensures food production and provides a livelihood for many people. The industry is a prerequisite for Sámi culture and social life.

The Government will:

- Submit a white paper on sustainability in reindeer farming.
- Amend the Reindeer Farming Act to prioritize sustainability.
- Provide framework conditions that in the long term will reduce the industry's dependency on subsidies.
- Treat farmers and reindeer owners equally with regard to taxes on fixed assets.

7 – Renewal, administration and church affairs

Public administration, bureaucracy and efficiency

The Government will make day-to-day life more straightforward for the general population by simplifying laws and regulations and by removing unnecessary and peculiarly Norwegian restrictions and directives. Society must become less bureaucratic. Individuals should be at liberty to govern their own lives without interference from politicians and bureaucrats. The Government will work to bring an end to the squandering of public resources and give high priority to raising the level of efficiency. Simplifications for the benefit of the business community are dealt with in detail in Chapter 5.

The Government's objective is to use the community's resources as efficiently as possible to safeguard all high-quality welfare services. The public sector should have a stabilizing effect on the labour market and will take on the role of a modern employer. The Government will invest in the development of competence, particularly within core priority areas, in order to increase the quality of welfare services. A well-functioning public sector will increase the competitiveness of the Norwegian economy. The Government will therefore work to further develop the public sector so that it provides attractive employment for a competent workforce.

The Government will:

- Rationalize the public sector and increase the use of private and non-profit resources for the provision of public welfare services.
- Remove unnecessary and peculiarly Norwegian restrictions and directives, such as the ban on Segways, water scooters and professional boxing.
- Allow the Vinmonopolet alcohol monopoly stores to be open for business on the same days that shops are at liberty to sell beer.
- Review government departments and directorates with a view to simplifying their structure and reducing the level of bureaucracy.
- Consider the establishment of an independent rationalization unit for the public sector with a range of powers, for instance to revise cost-benefit analyses in order to ensure high standards and consistent practices.
- Reduce the number of statutory consultative bodies and limit the right to object in cases involving land issues.
- Set clearer boundaries for the public administration's right to make discretionary decisions.

ICT

Investment in modern information and communications technology (ICT) offers considerable potential for trouble-free interaction with a public sector that is open around the clock, a higher standard of services, increased value creation and better decision-making. It is a premise for any increased reliance on ICT that the solutions are made accessible to all. The Government considers universal design to be important in relation to ICT. The Government will ensure access to high-speed broadband across the country, the target speed being 100 Mbps. There is significant potential for rationalization through active use of ICT, in both the private and public sectors. The Government's ICT policy will seriously address the protection of privacy.

The public sector should be in a position to bring about social benefits through planned and coordinated introduction of ICT. The potential is particularly significant within the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the health service and the police service.

Correct investment in technology and successful implementation will significantly strengthen the level of preparedness and efficiency. Collaboration and coordination between central and local

government authorities must also be strengthened. The Government will facilitate improved coordination between different ICT systems in the public sector.

The Government will:

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

Privacy

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

The Government will:

- Pursue an aggressive ICT policy which is serious about protecting people's privacy.
- Raise with Swedish authorities the FRA law associated with the intelligence-gathering activities of the Swedish Defence Authority.
- Protect against unauthorized access to sensitive personal information about income and wealth through 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 personal data hacking.

Competition

Freedom for the individual and the right to choose will constitute the Government's fundamental values. The Government will base its economic policy on its faith in the power of the individual and the power of the consumer through the market. In order to ensure that the population has access to good services, the Government will draw up a framework for the municipalities to employ when introducing free user choice.

Effective competition helps ensure efficient use of society's resources, keeps the costs down and boosts innovation. Consumers will benefit from this through lower prices, good quality and a varied range of products. Higher prices on goods and services as a consequence of weak competition may result in a failure to produce goods and services that consumers want, and for which they are willing to pay. This is a loss to society.

The Government will as far as possible accommodate a free and independent business community without special treatment or anti-competitive agreements, free flow of goods and services and free access to markets.

The Government will:

- Professionalize and rationalize public procurement processes, including drawing up a guide for public-private innovation partnerships.
- Work to achieve further liberalization of international trade.
- Review and reduce the number of schemes that restrict business formation and competition in service industries, such as restrictions on opening hours, concession and licensing regulations and permits, planning restrictions and location restrictions.

- Strengthen the Norwegian Competition Authority as an independent body and abolish the Government's role as a body of appeal for the Competition Authority by setting up an independent Competition Appeals Board.

The Government takes the general view that the provision of welfare services is not very different from the provision of other services. Competition stimulates value creation, better services and rationalization. It is therefore essential that competition becomes an integral part of all public activity. Statutory rights to welfare services, combined with non-restrictive planning rules and unit-price financing routed direct to the service provider chosen by the consumer, may help secure developments in this direction.

The Government will allow for competition in the rail transport industry, the development, operation and maintenance of airports, and the operation of ferry services.

Faith and belief systems

Freedom of religion and belief is a fundamental human right and a precondition for a free society. The Government's values are anchored in the Christian and humanistic cultural tradition. In the Storting, the parties that back the Government will retain article 2 of the Constitution which affirms these values. The parties will also retain article 16 of the Constitution which affirms the right to free religious worship and equal treatment of all belief-system communities.

Society, the Church and the state are best served with a clear distinction between church and state. The Government asserts that the Church of Norway is of great importance to many Norwegians and will pursue a policy which ensures that the church maintains its status as an inclusive popular church for all.

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 subject contains at least 55 per cent teaching of Christianity in line with the competence goals, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will take a positive attitude to 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 and historically significant churches.

The Government holds the view that churches should not be used to provide church asylum.

The Government will:

- Draw up a comprehensive Act on faith and belief systems.
- Ensure genuine autonomy for all faith and belief-system communities.
- Continue support for religious education in the Church of Norway.
- Base financial contributions to faith and belief-system communities on the principle of equal treatment. The state shall not be able to use financial resources to steer the lawful activities of faith and belief-system communities.
- Abolish the duty of residence for clergy in the Church of Norway.

8 – Security and defence

Norway's security is protected in cooperation with others. NATO cooperation is the bedrock of Norwegian security and defence policy. A main goal for Norway's security and defence policy is to help 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 the global forum for cooperation is important to sustain peaceful development in the world, and in combination with the European and Nordic defence and security-policy cooperation, this sustains long-term stability and peaceful development in Norway's neighbouring regions. The Government will support and reinforce international collaboration on security and stability.

The state has a key mandate in military defence. The Government will develop a strong and modern defence force with the ability to address national needs and contribute effectively to allied and international operations to preserve security and peace. Use of force, or threats to use force, should not be allowed to have a decisive impact on any part of Norwegian policy. The Government will therefore ensure that Norway maintains a genuine threshold defence with robust and flexible operational units that can handle a variety of challenges in light of the threats that may prevail at any given time.

In light of developments in the Northern regions, including increased activity in the form of maritime transport and resource extraction, the Norwegian presence and assertion of sovereignty must be ensured. Norway's interests and special responsibility in the Northern regions also require military capacities. The mandate 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 North.

The Armed Forces shall be enabled to carry out their assigned remit, and a real balance must be struck between budgetary allocations, structures and tasks. There is a remaining need for increased budgetary allocations, modernization 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 occupy a key position in society's total 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 to national crisis management, and collaboration between the Armed Forces, the police and civilian emergency-response authorities must be streamlined to the maximum extent.

There is a need to improve the follow-up care of the Armed Forces' veterans, with an emphasis on health and social follow-up, financial security and support for their next of kin. The Government will enhance the competence and capacity of civilian administration and improve case processing for this group.

The Government will:

- Give priority to trans-Atlantic relations in its security and defence policies. Norwegian engagement in and contributions to NATO shall be reinforced, and provisions made for NATO activities 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 collaboration, especially in terms of practical military strength. This collaboration shall 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 obtain sufficient, stable and predictable funding.
- Base its policies on the Storting's unanimous resolution to procure up to 52 F-35 fighter aircraft. The procurement of fighter aircraft must be provided with predictable funding, of which a considerable part must be taken from sources other than the Armed Forces' regular budgetary framework to avoid an excessive burden on their other activities.
- Define clear preparedness requirements for the Armed Forces, including in the national context. These preparedness requirements shall be reviewed and followed up.
- Expand compulsory military service to apply to all citizens, and modernize and develop the initial service in line with the needs of the Armed Forces. This will also entail a further professionalization of the operational units.
- Evaluate the current practice of having an integrated strategic leadership of the sector, with a view to reform and improvement. The role of the Chief of Defence as an executive director will be reinforced.
- Modernize 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 and the health services. A service-based "war pension" will be explored, and the compensation schemes will be reviewed with a view to simplification. The processing of the veterans' cases will be centralized.
- Reinforce the Armed Forces' cyber-ops capabilities, and link the Cyber Defence to civilian cyber-security where appropriate.
- Rationalize the Armed Forces' total use of resources to the level of 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 Military 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 shall help promote peace in Norway and internationally and be rooted 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

The patients' health service

Ensuring assistance and care for those who need it is a cornerstone of our welfare society. It is a public responsibility to ensure that the entire population has access to good health and care services when the need arises. It is a challenge that some of those who are in great need of help do not receive what they are entitled to.

The patients and their needs must be placed at the centre of development and change in the health services. The Government will ensure a good health service for all by keeping patient charges at a low level. The situation for relatives will be strengthened through an improved offer of respite care, guidance and a review of support schemes for relatives.

Municipal health service

There is a need to strengthen and modernize the health and care services in the municipalities and ensure improved overall coordination of health provisions. The employees are the health services' most important resource and the Government will implement a Competence Promotion Reform to strengthen the quality of the service.

The Coordination Reform must ensure good transfer of competence, strong professional communities and adequate capacity.

The Government will:

- Introduce competency requirements in the Municipal Health Care Act.
- Formulate an action plan on accessibility, quality and competence in the general practitioner service.
- Change the system of refunds in the general practitioner service to make provisions for increased use of other health personnel linked to general practitioners' offices.
- Follow up the agreement between the parties on parliamentary processing of the Coordination Reform, including the reversal of municipal co-financing.
- Strengthen the quality and introduce more stringent requirements for the A&E service (the regulations on acute medical care).
- Strengthen the competence and service within palliative care, also for children. Make provisions for a diversity of services, including hospices.
- Investigate the economic consequences for municipalities where there are a large number of students and cabins, and which for long periods of the year offer health services to inhabitants who are resident in other municipalities; in connection with this, investigate how increased freedom of choice can be ensured across municipal boundaries.
- Extend the municipal health service's midwife service.

Care for the elderly and those in need of nursing care

Care for the elderly and those in need of nursing care must be further expanded to give all those who need it a quality service with access to activities. The Government will utilize all good forces to ensure that patients have access to high-quality health services, more freedom of choice and a greater diversity in the range of services.

The Government wants the state to take a greater economic responsibility for ensuring that the municipalities build adequate capacity and quality in the care of the elderly.

Relatives who care for their loved ones make a crucial contribution and deserve to encounter a public health system that works together with them and eases their burden. The Government will enshrine user-driven personal assistance in the law, to improve everyday life for people who need assistance and for their relatives.

The Government will:

- Introduce quality indicators for the nursing and care sector, partly based on the experience of users and their relatives.
- Assess the statutory right to 24-hour nursing and care with the aim of introducing it in the period of this parliament, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Establish a norm/guidelines for staffing and quality in the nursing and care sector.
- Amend the regulations on VAT refunds for municipalities so they include housing cooperatives and joint ownership organizations that collaborate with local authorities in running health and care services
- Introduce simpler rules for access to state funding schemes for developments run by private and non-profit organizations and housing cooperatives.
- Increase the investment in welfare technology.
- Make provisions for extending day care and activity services.
- Make it an obligation for the municipalities to carry out assessment home visits to adapt assistive measures to the individual.
- Motivate the municipalities for innovation with regard to care through separate experimental legislation which provides the freedom and economic stimulus to try out new organizational forms and measures.
- Initiate a new trial scheme of state funding for care of the elderly, which the municipalities may apply for. The trial scheme will include a limited number of municipalities, have a long timeframe and will be assessed.
- Remove the ban on producing lists of people waiting for places in nursing homes to reveal the real need.
- Strengthen investment in services for people with dementia.
- Introduce a government operating grant to prevent skewed distribution between sheltered housing and nursing homes, and ensure a more rapid increase in nursing home places.
- Establish a plan in conjunction with the Knowledge Centre for the Health Services for the provision of more places in 24-hour nursing and care.
- Establish an interest compensation scheme on top of the Norwegian State Housing Bank's funding for nursing home places and shared lives arrangements for persons with dementia.
- Introduce reduced self-financing for long-term patients who are forced to share a room against their will.

Hospitals

The main work of the specialist health service shall be carried out through the public hospitals. These hospitals have the responsibility for emergency treatment and the main responsibility for research and training, and they carry out the largest proportion of planned treatment.

There is too great a variation in the quality of the service between different hospitals. The Government will therefore introduce requirements for quality certification of Norwegian hospitals and ensure more transparency with respect to the quality of service.

It is a challenge that many patients wait an unnecessarily long time for necessary treatment, also for health services where private healthcare suppliers have spare capacity. In order to reduce waiting times and health queues, the Government will include all good resources in the work of treating patients.

To create transparency and predictability in the sector, the Government will submit a national health and hospital plan to the Storting. The health and hospital plan will also contain a definition of the facilities to be provided at different types of hospital, the structure of the specialist health service, a needs survey, requirements for equipment, and investment plans.

The hospital plan must also cover local hospitals and the important role they play in providing a stand-by medical service to help safeguard the lives and health of people throughout the country.

The Government will:

- Abolish the regional health authorities once a national health and hospital plan is drawn up.
- Stop the shut-down of emergency and maternity services where this is not for reasons of patient safety and quality, before the national health and hospital plan is debated.
- Strengthen the work to improve the quality of hospitals, carry out quality assessments and present an annual white paper on quality and patient safety to the Storting.
- Establish a permanent independent commission of inquiry for adverse events.
- Increase the proportion of activity-based funding and investigate an improved funding model for emergency treatment, research and training in the public health service, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Introduce freedom of choice regarding treatment. The scheme will be introduced first for substance abuse and mental health, and will then be assessed, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Increase the purchasing of private health services to reduce the health queues, cf. the collaborating parties.
- Establish cross-disciplinary diagnostic centres in all health regions, to provide faster diagnosis where cancer or other serious diseases are suspected.
- Strengthen cancer treatment by introducing a rule that diagnosis should be initiated within 48 hours, introducing a standardised pathway and making these pathway times legally binding in the Patients' Rights Act.
- Supplement the national strategy for cancer with a work plan.
- Establish a separate company for construction and operation of healthcare buildings.
- Strengthen medical research, especially in connection with serious illnesses and prevention of lifestyle-related illnesses for which the current treatment options are poor.
- Ensure improved funding of, and increase access to, experimental treatment.
- Strengthen the rights of patients and relatives and introduce a permanent contact doctor in the specialist health service for seriously ill patients.
- Introduce competence requirements in accident and emergency admissions and establish a new medical specialty in emergency medicine.
- Increase the legal provisions for specialists on contract and make increased use of these specialists.
- Reduce the bureaucracy to make available more time and capacity for patient treatment.
- Ensure an ICT system that guarantees that all hospitals can communicate electronically, and establish a separate funding scheme for these investments.

- ☒ Improve access to health information and health services through a patient-friendly internet health portal.

Substance abuse and treatment

Substance abuse patients who are motivated and in need of treatment find that current waiting times are too long. There is both a need to escalate efforts in the field of substance abuse, and to ensure improved transitions between different stages of the treatment.

The Government will:

- Draw up an escalation plan for substance abuse and reintroduce the rule that treatments for substance abuse and mental health problems will have an annual growth in funding by each regional health authority that is higher than for somatic illnesses.
- Open more reception centres for substance abusers in the largest cities.
- Rapidly expand and purchase available places for substance abuse treatment.
- Work towards all substance abusers receiving an individual plan and follow-up by coordinators.
- Prevent the expansion of polyclinics being at the cost of 24-hour treatment where needed.
- Ensure a seamless transition from detoxification to rehabilitation.
- Ensure aftercare from the first day following detoxification and treatment, supplemented by other assistance measures.
- Strengthen the social and health-related rehabilitation service for people with mental health challenges, including ensuring residential accommodation for patients who participate in drug-assisted rehabilitation.
- Maintain the prohibition against possession and use of narcotic drugs.

Mental health

Mental health has long been under-prioritized in the health service. There is a need to strengthen this area, both in terms of prevention and low-threshold measures, and within the specialist health service. Preventive measures, such as strengthening the actions taken in schools and in the workplace to counteract bullying and exclusion, are important for the mental health of the population.

The Government will:

- Develop a low-threshold mental health service in the municipalities. Legislation, planning and funding will be used to achieve this goal.
- Strengthen the range of treatment options within mental healthcare.
- Improve low-threshold preventive initiatives for young people provided by the school health service and public health centres.
- Increase the opportunity for municipalities to provide a sound mental health service through the announced Municipal Reform, and give responsibility for district psychiatric centres to municipalities that have capacity.
- Establish a psychiatric ambulance service.
- Strengthen inter-disciplinary collaboration and follow-up services for substance abusers and people with mental health problems
- Reinforce the work with occupationally-oriented rehabilitation and make it easier for private and non-profit organizations to collaborate with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) on new and improved rehabilitation services.
- Combat taboos and ensure better prevention of self-harming and suicide.

Rehabilitation

The health service saves an increasing number of lives, but it also has a responsibility for enabling people to cope with life and to be active following completion of their treatment. Strengthening of the reablement and rehabilitation service will give more people the opportunity to participate in society and working life.

The Government will:

- Introduce free choice of rehabilitation.
- Establish an escalation plan in the field of rehabilitation and prevent the dismantling of rehabilitation in the specialist health service before corresponding capacity and competence is established in the municipalities.
- Strengthen the service related to travel for treatment and make this available to more patient groups.
- Establish a new funding model for physiotherapists.

Public health

Lifestyle-related illnesses are becoming an ever-greater challenge for the health service and for society. The individual must take greater responsibility for their own health, and society must make it easier to make good health choices. At the same time, measures to improve public health must be weighed up against the freedom of choice of the individual.

The Government will:

- Strengthen preventive health efforts.
- Allow the main features of Norwegian alcohol policy to remain in place, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Cooperate with outdoor recreation boards and voluntary organizations to improve public health through physical activity and outdoor recreation, and present a white paper on strengthening outdoor recreation.
- Make provisions for more physical activity in schools and encourage a healthier diet.
- Include mental health as an equal component of other public health measures.
- Follow up the agreement in the diabetes plan.
- Reinforce the commitment towards those recently infected with HIV and improve the life situation of those infected with HIV.

Gene technology and biotechnology

New technology can provide great opportunities for treating and preventing illness, while at the same time it poses ethical dilemmas. In the health service, new technology will also present a challenge in terms of prioritizing use of the time and competence of personnel.

Norway has great expertise in gene technology and biotechnology, where great progress is being made. The Government will strengthen research and further development of specialised expert communities in this field.

The Government will:

- Evaluate the Biotechnology Act, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

- Refrain from introducing a state service for early ultrasound examination or NIPD blood testing for all pregnant women, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Provide general practitioners with the opportunity to opt out following discussion with the Norwegian Medical Association, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Retain the current legislation on abortion.

Pharmaceutical drugs

The Government will ensure patients rapid access to new and effective pharmaceutical drugs. The pharmaceutical drugs policy will contribute to increased patient safety, good treatment, low public costs and innovation. The Government will pave the way for strong growth in the Norwegian pharmaceutical industry with a view to providing a better service for patients, increased value creation and a greater number of secure jobs.

The Government will:

- Contribute to a more coherent and patient-friendly pharmaceutical drugs policy through a new white paper on pharmaceutical drugs.
- Review the pharmacy markup.

Dentistry

Children and young people are offered treatment through the public dental health service. The same applies to those receiving residential 24-hour nursing and care. The Government will continue this arrangement, but will also consider extending the service to other patient groups who are experiencing major dental health problems.

The Government will:

- Introduce improved dental schemes to protect people on low incomes with high treatment costs.

10 – Local government

Strong municipalities for the future

The municipalities are the foundation stone of Norwegian democracy. The Government will reinforce local democracy by transferring power and responsibility to the municipalities. This will mean that people in general will have more influence over their own daily lives and local environment. The municipalities are responsible for fundamental welfare services, and should be there most for those who need it most.

Robust, predictable and sufficient financial resources are required for the municipalities to fulfil their remit. A coherent review of the revenue system for counties and municipalities is required. The Government will let each municipality retain a larger proportion of its own tax revenues. Among other measures, a larger proportion of the enterprise taxes will be retained by the municipalities in which the value has been created. The Government will reinforce the economy of municipalities facing large investment needs caused by strong population growth. The Government will introduce these amendments gradually and with due notice.

Local authorities are best acquainted with local challenges. The Government will therefore make provisions for more local adaptation of land-use policy. The County Governor's authority to overrule the discretionary judgement of elected bodies will be reduced, in that the opportunity to overrule municipal decisions will be restricted to monitoring of legality and processing of appeals. The municipalities' views will also be given decisive weight in matters related to national parks and protected areas, and they will have more independence, including in the shoreline zone.

The Government will implement a municipal reform ensuring that necessary decisions are made during this parliamentary period, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. A more robust municipal structure will ensure better competence and greater professionalism in each municipality. This will be an advantage, for example in complicated cases related to child welfare, for resource-intensive services and for a better management and development of the provision of care and educational services. The Government will invite the parties in the Storting to deliberations on this process. The Government will undertake a review of the mandate of the county administrations, the County Governors and the state, with a view to transferring more power and authority to more robust municipalities.

The emergence of inter-municipal enterprises and collaboration shows that the existing mandate exceeds the capabilities of the current municipal structure. Key decisions related to municipal services, such as infrastructure and fundamental welfare services, have been removed from elected bodies and transferred to inter-municipal enterprises. The Government is of the opinion that this has undermined democracy. A comprehensive municipal reform will thus also be a democracy reform.

The Government will:

- Implement a municipal reform, in which it is ensured that necessary resolutions are passed during this parliamentary term.
- Introduce a trial scheme for transfer of tasks from the central government and the county administrations to the municipalities.
- Provide the municipalities with more influence over the establishment of asylum reception centres.
- Undertake a coherent review of the revenue system to ensure that the municipalities retain a larger proportion of locally created value.
- Establish a body for resolution of disputes between central government and municipalities.

- Ensure that municipalities that do not levy property tax are not financially penalized by the central government for this.

Housing

Norway has a strong tradition of home ownership. The Government's goal will be to enable people in general to be homeowners. Many people still encounter high barriers in the housing market. It is therefore a public remit to pursue active social housing policies.

The Norwegian population is growing rapidly, especially in the major cities. There will consequently be a considerable demand for more housing in the years to come. The Government will make the best possible provisions for increased housing construction. Public regulations should not delay housing construction or increase costs unnecessarily. The Government will ensure quicker processing of building applications and simplify the Planning and Building Act.

The Government will make it easier for the municipalities to make provisions for increased housing construction, and make it easier for construction companies to keep pace with demand. The Government will simplify the technical building regulations in cooperation with the construction industry. The ability of central government authorities to submit objections that hinder allocation of land for housing purposes and restrict local freedom of action shall be limited, and the objections shall be better coordinated.

The Government will:

- Strengthen private property rights.
- Simplify the Planning and Building Act and appurtenant regulations.
- Simplify the requirements for rental property.
- Establish a permanent programme for construction costs in cooperation with the industry.
- Build more housing units for students and simplify regulations to facilitate cooperation with private enterprises.
- Repeal the duty of residence.
- Reinforce the housing savings scheme for young people (BSU)
- Ensure appropriate regulatory frameworks for housing construction.
- 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 downpayment in a flexible manner that takes into account the housing purchaser's financial situation.

Regions and districts

Norway is a land of great variety and rich diversity. An important goal for regional policy is to preserve and develop this diversity. The Government will make provisions for growth throughout Norway.

The most important factor for ensuring vibrant regions throughout the country is a business community that can safeguard and create profitable workplaces. The frameworks enjoyed by

Norwegian industry are the most important of all regional-policy instruments. The Government will therefore repeal and reduce regulations that prevent people from making use of the country's opportunities.

Norway is a long and narrow country. A large proportion of the internationally competing industries are located outside the large 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 the resources devoted to 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 decentralize more responsibility and more tasks to the municipalities.
- Strengthen infrastructure to improve accessibility to larger parts of the country.
- Reinforce the existing potentials for regional growth, while ensuring the basis for favourable living conditions in all parts of the country.
- Transfer the responsibility for management of protected areas to local municipalities.
- Allow the municipalities to decide on matters related to the use of motor vehicles on uncultivated land.
- Allow the municipalities to provide development concessions to small-scale, micro- and mini-hydropower plants and to small wind farms.

The major cities

The major cities are crucial for development in the various regions. The Government will therefore pursue active policies for these cities and a new regional policy in which the major cities and the surrounding regions develop in interaction for the common good. The Government will develop solutions in consultation with these cities, through dialogue and partnership. There is a large potential for development on the basis of the high concentration of competence and innovativeness found in the cities.

The major cities are facing a number of major social challenges that are peculiar to them. The high cost level, for example on housing, has a major impact for people on low incomes. The cities have the highest crime rates and greater social challenges and problems of poverty, but they also have better capacity to face 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 latitude, through more freedom from close central government control.

The population of the urban areas is increasing, and is expected to increase strongly in the years to come. This should be reflected in transport policy. The Government will therefore undertake major efforts in terms of infrastructure in and around the largest cities. The Government will make sure 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 social life. Norway is home to minorities such as Kvens, Jews, Forest Finns, Roma and Romani people. It is important and enriching for Norway to preserve the Sámi language, culture and traditions. Norwegian and Sámi enjoy 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 could be developed by all who are involved in this industry. The Government will help to make enjoyment of the natural environment in Northern Norway available to all.

The Government will:

- Preserve the Sámi Parliament and the practice of consultations between the Sámi Parliament, the Storting and the Government.
- Establish cross-border cooperation with regard to Sámi languages.
- Preserve 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 in preference to top-down governance. Decentralizing decisions will strengthen the delegation of powers and general diversity. The Government will help maintain a range of key cultural initiatives that are unable to exist without state support. Norway should have a “professional” cultural life, with artistic expression of an international standard.

Knowledge and experience of our joint cultural heritage strengthen the feeling of identity and of belonging to a community. Knowledge of our own culture gives us security and a solid basis to meet outside influences in a constructive manner. The best strategy for a strong, living Norwegian language is the voluntary daily use of the language. Our ability to participate in society is closely linked to good Norwegian skills. The teaching of Norwegian is therefore also a cultural policy goal.

The Government will ensure that children and young people can have enriching cultural experiences and will invest in areas such as marching bands, choirs and youth festivals of art.

The Government will prepare the libraries for the digital world in a way that does not undermine the business sector’s ability to generate income from culture, and will ensure continued free loaning of literature.

The Government will:

- Reform cultural policy by granting more freedom. This will lead to an increased delegation of powers, higher quality and a broader funding of cultural life. In this context a review of the Arts Council Norway’s work methods and organization will be conducted.
- Pursue a literature policy where 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 books.
- Emphasize culture as an industry to a greater degree and strengthen the opportunities for entrepreneurship in the cultural sector.
- Simplify the regulations for self-employed artists.
- Give both Norwegian language forms status as a primary language. Replace the current right to receive a reply in a person’s own language form with a right for state employees and language-neutral municipalities to use their own language form.
- Strengthen Nordic language cooperation.
- Put in place a stronger protection of intellectual property.
- Prioritize the freelance field and freelance workers.
- Pave the way for young talented people to be given the opportunity for professional development, irrespective of social and economic background, through the culture schools and their work with the voluntary sector and the like.
- Facilitate Norwegian and international film production in Norway.
- Strengthen private cultural funding, for example through donation reinforcement schemes and improved provision for private funds and foundations. This can reduce dependence on public funding in the long term.
- Scrutinize cultural grants to ensure a sensible use of resources and high quality.
- Prepare a plan for the renovation and maintenance of national cultural institutions.

Voluntary work

Voluntary work is an important arena for collaboration and has helped create the society we live in today. The Government wants the voluntary sector to grow from the bottom up, independent of political governance. Voluntary activities must have an independent standing in society.

The content of voluntary engagement has changed from being membership-based to becoming more activity-based. For voluntary work to be able to develop on its own terms in the future, the regulatory framework must be adapted to a new reality. The Government will revise state support for voluntary activities in line with this development. There must be a wider scope for financial independence from the state. The tax deduction scheme for gift aid to voluntary organizations must be strengthened and bureaucracy vis-à-vis such organizations must be reduced.

The Government will:

- Review the financial regulatory framework for voluntary activity, with a view to reducing bureaucracy and politicization.
- Raise the limit for the duty to submit payment records and the duty to pay employer's national insurance contributions for voluntary organizations.
- Increase potential income, including increasing the tax deduction for gift aid to voluntary organizations.
- Allow unclaimed inheritance to accrue to voluntary organizations instead of the state.
- Improve the VAT compensation scheme.
- Enable as many as possible to take part in voluntary activities.

Sport

Our society consists of large and small communities. Sport encompasses many of these. Sport and physical activity have intrinsic value and lead to better physical and mental health. The Government will provide good framework conditions for sport and ensure that everyone who wants to participate in physical activity can do so. Elite and grassroots sport must interact and complement each other to strengthen sport.

Big international championships provide major inspiration and also reinforce the grassroots. The Government will therefore support Norway becoming a host nation for a number of international championships, including championships for those with disabilities.

The Government will:

- Strengthen core financing for sport by increasing the sports portion of the Norsk Tipping lottery surplus. This will ensure more rapid expansion of local facilities.
- Formulate an executive plan for the development of buildings and sites.
- Revise the regulations on 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.
- Abolish the ban on professional boxing.
- Give sports clubs the opportunity to manage publicly-owned sports facilities.
- Make better provision for those with disabilities to participate in sport.
- Ensure secure and stable framework conditions for Special Olympics Norway.
- Permit championship tournaments in poker with clear maximum amounts by means of a statutory exemption.

Gaming

The Government will continue a policy on gaming 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 draft the question of a licensing scheme for foreign gaming companies to establish whether it is possible to combine socio-political considerations and increased revenues in the funding of voluntary activities 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 organizations, provided that they do not pose a challenge to the EU exemption that Norway has received for its state monopoly schemes in the gaming industry. The big humanitarian organizations will be given priority.

Media

The digitalization of the media is resulting in fundamental changes in this industry. The terms for public participation, the design of the products and the way in which editorial work is conducted is changing rapidly. The Government will pave the way for high-quality production of news, and a broad public debate on the digital media society of the future. Media policy must therefore encourage novelty and innovation while safeguarding the traditions and fundamental values of the free press.

The Government will:

- Modernize the set of media policy instruments through greater equality of treatment for the media regardless of the technological platform. Press funding will gradually be reorganized and reduced.
- Tailor the restrictions on media ownership to the wish to ensure media diversity, and allow the Competition Authority to administer the Media Ownership Act.
- Place printed newspapers and online newspapers on an equal footing by establishing a shared 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 leeway to use its robust financial position to weaken the income base of independent institutions.

12 – Knowledge

A good school provides students with knowledge, and makes the greatest contribution to ensuring social mobility. Norway needs competent skilled workers; therefore, the Government will implement a separate Vocational-technical Reform. Higher education founded on quality provides us with competent workers. Quality in research lays the foundation for new innovations that create secure jobs.

Knowledge is becoming an increasingly important tool in a globalized world and in the international competition between countries. The Government will prioritize a major commitment to knowledge as a crucial factor in strengthening Norwegian competitiveness and in developing the country for the future.

Kindergartens

Kindergartens should provide children with safe and proper care and simultaneously encourage play and development on the children's own terms. The Government will reinforce the use of Norwegian and language development in kindergartens in order to prepare the children for school and education. The employees are the kindergarten's most important resource, and its quality is dependent on their being competent. The Government will work to establish a large number of diverse kindergartens with flexible opening hours so as to cater to the needs of the individual child and family.

The Government will:

- Enhance the quality of the kindergartens.
- Strengthen continuing and further education so that more employees acquire competence in early childhood education.
- Train more teachers.
- Implement independent supervision of kindergartens.
- Ensure equal treatment of all children attending kindergartens, simplify funding schemes and revise accounting regulations so as to place public and private kindergartens on equal terms.
- Make the largest possible amount of information about the kindergartens publicly available and develop common national quality indicators.
- Work for increased flexibility in kindergarten admission procedures.
- Implement a staffing norm for kindergartens by 2020.
- Provide needed help to children with weak language skills and stipulate Norwegian language skills among kindergarten staff members.
- Give all kindergartens that fulfil the requirements for accreditation by the municipality a better opportunity to become established.

Commitment to teachers

Teachers are the school's most important resource. The key to promoting knowledge among students is to invest in teachers' competence. The Government wants talented teachers to continue to teach, and it should be possible to rise through the ranks as a teacher and become a specialist compensated with a higher salary and increased status. Additional career paths in the school system are also important to attract more of the most talented students to 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 the offer of continuing and further education for teachers. Renewed professional competence yields up-to-date knowledge of

subject matter and also develops individual teaching competence. In the long term, this will be a teachers' right, which will contribute towards providing students with a staff of teachers with a high degree of subject competence and pedagogical expertise. The measure will enhance students' learning outcomes; therefore, in the long term, teachers will be obligated to meet competence requirements through continuing education. The municipalities have the responsibility for continuing and further education for teachers, but the Government wants the state to assume a greater portion of the funding.

The Government will:

- Gradually escalate continuing and further education and implement in the long term the right and the obligation to take continuing and further education.
- Implement a separate, vigorous effort with regard to mathematics, by offering continuing education within five years to 10 000 teachers in primary and lower secondary education.
- Modify the teacher training programme so as to make it a five-year programme leading to a master's degree.
- Require that applicants for admission to teacher training programmes have a grade of 4 or higher in the subjects Norwegian, mathematics and English.
- Require that all teachers from Year 1 have a specialization in the core subjects that they teach.
- Establish new career paths in the schools by introducing new job categories, such as specialist-teacher.
- Contribute to the freeing up of time by other occupational groups in schools in order for teachers and school management to attend to core tasks.
- Establish a common ICT platform for the school to facilitate access to digital learning resources, information-sharing and a more efficient school day.
- Simplify and reduce the scope of unnecessary bureaucracy and reporting requirements.

The school

The school must have as its goal to ensure that all students acquire core skills in the areas of reading, arithmetic, oral and written language, and use of digital tools. The primary challenge in Norwegian schools is that too many students do not acquire these skills. This is a major reason why so many students drop out of school or do not successfully complete upper secondary education. The Government will implement measures so that more students will acquire core skills.

The Government will:

- Prioritize students' literacy skills throughout the entire course of their schooling. Early efforts 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 subject curriculum for Norwegian with a view to strengthening it as a language subject, making Norwegian Nynorsk more appealing to students and improving marking criteria.
- Reintroduce public primary and lower secondary schooling for the hearing-impaired.
- Gradually increase the national goal for the percentage of students who successfully complete upper secondary education to 90 per cent.

The schools must qualify students for working life and higher education. It is important that the students be included in the evaluation of the quality of teaching they receive.

The Government will:

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

The school must be a secure arena for learning and mastery. The Government will ensure a proper 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. For children in care institutions and for young people at substance abuse treatment facilities, it is important to ensure proper and individually adapted education.

The Government will:

- Give students with literacy problems access to a free PC with necessary software.
- Strengthen school counselling services in order to support the students in important educational choices and with social issues. Requirements will also be made to take continuing education on a regular basis.
- Enable schools to ensure that students get daily physical activity.
- See to it that the bully is the one to change schools in cases of bullying where transfer to another school is the only solution.
- 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 decide year level at which extra help with homework is to be offered.

The Government will allow more publicly financed free schools, and will reinstate a law relating to independent schools in which the requirement pertaining to purpose is replaced by a content-and-quality requirement. 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 state school provision for students. The Government will consider granting capital subsidies to established free schools to upgrade older buildings. Free schools will be prohibited from paying dividends to the owners.

The Government will broaden cooperation with the business community 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, enterprises and research environments. The schools will more easily be able to call on the competence of the business community as part of their teaching.
- Develop schools specializing in particular subjects in lower and upper secondary education, for example colleges of natural science in collaboration with higher education institutions.
- Strengthen Young Entrepreneurship as an important arena for cooperation with between the school and employers.
- Establish a Technological School bag patterned on the Cultural School bag.
- Make it easier for students needing extra challenges to take subjects at a higher level.

Vocational-technical Reform

Vocational and technical education should train good skilled workers. In the future, both enterprises and the public sector will have a great need for talented employees with vocational and technical 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 learning programmes. On the basis of this, the Government will implement a Vocational-technical Reform.

The Government will:

- Increase the subsidy for apprenticeships.
- Introduce more ambitious target figures for intake of apprentices by public enterprises.
- Permit alternative training pathways, such as, for example, workplace training programmes in enterprises.
- Expand the work placement certificate scheme, with the objective that all counties will offer this.
- Further develop programmes for students who wish to combine their craft certificate with university and college admissions certification, for example the technical foundation course (the Norwegian “TAF” model), with the objective that all counties will offer this.
- Provide for a vocational orientation in obligatory, theory-based courses in vocational education programmes.
- Increase the opportunity for a rotation model in vocational-technical education, where students shift between training in college and on-the-job training in enterprises.
- Strengthen the opportunity of higher education based on vocational and prior experiential learning (the Norwegian “Y” path) and stop the implementation of admissions to specific studies at higher educational level based on the training practice certificate.

Higher education

Norway has a knowledge-based economy that must be able to hold its own in a globalized world in which the movement of capital, knowledge and jobs is rapidly becoming independent of national borders. The basis of future value creation and welfare is dependent on the realization of the knowledge society.

Norway can never be the least expensive, 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 turn knowledge into value creation.

In the years to come, the university and university college sector will play an increasingly important role in educating students with a high level of competence for the business community and the public sector. The Government therefore wishes to develop more world-leading university communities. This demands that the results-based share of funding for higher educational institutions be increased. The criteria for measuring results will be examined to reflect the quality and productivity of research.

University and college education for the professions must meet the labour needs of employers. In a global market, it is very valuable for students to take all or a part of their education abroad, while it is also valuable that foreign students come to study in Norway.

The Government will:

- Increase the core funding to educational institutions.

- Increase the share of funding to the university and university college sector that is result-based. The criteria for results 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 environments with strong academic profiles.
- Invest in the development of outstanding study programmes through the use of scientific expert communities according to the model of the research centres for outstanding research.
- Increase the admissions capacity for engineering and science subjects.
- Raise the income threshold for students and regulate student grants in line with the rise in the retail price index and the rise in the 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 vocational-technical colleges and reintroduce state funding of the vocational-technical colleges.
- Strengthen efforts by NOKUT (The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) to raise the quality of education and the institutions.

Research

Research is basic for acquiring the new knowledge and new technology that make the world advance. New knowledge and innovation will be a central driving force for creating secure jobs. Norwegian investments in research and innovation are below the OECD average, and lag far behind the other Nordic countries. In particular, industry's investment in research and development accounts for the low score; we also score low on the EU's rankings of European countries' capacity for innovation. The Government will use public funds to stimulate increased investments in research and innovation in the business community.

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

The Government will:

- Strengthen its investment in research with the aim to reach the objective that research will account for 3 per cent of the BNP by 2030.
- Promote expert research environments by initiating more Global Centres of Expertise.
- Strengthen the open programmes of the Research Council of Norway which have a decisive emphasis on quality, for example the Centres for Excellence in Research (SFF), the Centres for Research-based Innovation (SFI) and the Research Centre for Environmental Energy (FME).
- Increase free project grants to promote groundbreaking research.
- Work for, and stimulate increased internationalization of research, for example through participation in the EU's framework programmes.
- Strengthen programmes for commercialization of research results among students and researchers.
- Increase funding for the seed-corn capital to develop new businesses and innovations.
- Stimulate more industry-oriented research and encourage a stronger interaction between industry and academia, for example by improving the SkatteFUNN incentive scheme and the gift

enhancement scheme, and by expanding the User-driven Research based Innovation arena (BIA) and business PhDs.

- Simplify the bureaucracy involved in applying for research funding.

Adult education

Working life is rapidly changing and is making increased demands to competence among employees. This requires people of all ages to refresh knowledge during the course of their professional careers. Many who fall outside the workforce as a result of the increased competence demands have literacy disabilities. The Government will implement a national effort including measures targeting adults with poor literacy competence and with insufficient core skills, and will strengthen coordination of adult education.

The Government will:

- Establish a lifelong right to continuing education.
- Gradually increase funding of 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 bodies (BKF) to which voluntary organizations and volunteer bureaus may apply for financial support for training activities for persons lacking literacy competence.

13 – Environment and climate

There are great environmental and climate challenges facing us both nationally and internationally. The Government will base its policy on its responsibility to help safeguard the planet and on the precautionary principle. The Earth we pass on to our children shall be in at least as good a state as it was when we inherited it from our ancestors. The Government will pursue a vigorous climate policy and strengthen the climate compromise, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. There must be an increase in the development of renewable energy (see Chapter 14).

Environment

Norway is fortunate in having a rich, varied and unpolluted natural environment. The Government wishes to create the conditions for preserving the country's strong traditions in hunting, fishing and the outdoor life on the basis of the right of the public to roam freely on uncultivated land. We need to balance this against the need to secure habitats for endangered animal species.

Norway's biological diversity may best be safeguarded through a combination of sustainable use and voluntary protection and conservation. It is important to take care of parks, urban green spaces and "green lungs" in our towns and cities as important recreational areas for the population, and to work to reduce noise pollution by following up national and international commitments. The Nature Diversity Act will remain in force, but its application will be reviewed, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will secure viable populations of large predators pursuant to the "predator policy compromise", and seek to reduce the level of conflict in large predator management.

Local involvement is important in managing our natural resources, and the Government wants to trial land-owner controlled management of conservation areas. The Government will end the use of "intervention-free natural areas" (INON) as a tool in land use policy.

The Government will:

- Strengthen voluntary protection of woodland and forests.
- Ensure better management of current protection areas and conservation areas.
- Prepare a strategy for biogas fuel.
- Manage lakes and rivers so as to protect and conserve freshwater reservoirs and fishing and recreational areas for the enjoyment of future generations.
- Reinforce the effort to clean up toxic sediments in our fjords, rivers, harbours and lakes, and limit the spread of environmental poisons.
- Strengthen the work to combat salmon lice, other disease challenges and the escape of farmed salmon, by means of binding agreements with the fish farming industry.
- Strengthen the work to protect and preserve cultural monuments Norway, among other things by improving the regulatory conditions for private owners of cultural monuments.
- Draft a white paper aimed at strengthening the opportunities for pursuit of outdoor activities and recreation.
- Secure an environmentally safe and satisfactory solution for the German submarine U-864 sunk in 1945 off Fedje in Hordaland.

Climate

The challenge of climate change is a global one and is best resolved globally. Norway must take responsibility for the lives and livelihoods of future generations by contributing to the establishment of internationally binding treaties to cut carbon emissions and by investing in research and development to produce new technology that can help realize the growth of a low-carbon society. We want to make Norway a driving force in the work to fix an international price for CO₂ emissions

trading and to develop effective, functioning international carbon markets. Norway will work to strengthen the EU Emissions Trading System as a means of attaining European climate goals after 2020.

The Government will pursue an ambitious national climate policy based on long-term transition to a low-carbon society by 2050. The Government will strengthen investment in research and environmental technology. An ambitious policy at national level is essential to assist the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions globally. This means taking into account the consequences of the EU Emissions Trading System, the risk of carbon leakage and the competitiveness of industry.

Norway's rain forest initiative (as part of the United Nations REDD programme to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) is important in order to limit greenhouse gas emissions and to preserve biological diversity. The initiative will be continued, aimed at achieving long-term results. The work of ensuring that the funds are used effectively and for the defined purpose in the recipient countries must be strengthened. The Government will concentrate the administration of this scheme in the Ministry of the Environment.

The Government will create the conditions to enable more people to use public transport or to cycle. Schemes aimed at encouraging more environmentally friendly travel behaviour are outlined in Chapter 15. The Government will work to encourage people to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures, more environmentally friendly vehicles and improved infrastructure.

The Government will:

- Increase the return from the environment technology fund, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.
- Invest on a broad basis in developing cost-effective technology for carbon capture and storage (CCS), and aim to realize at least one full-scale carbon capture pilot plant by 2020.
- Ensure that the use of fossil oil (crude oil) to heat public buildings is phased out by 2018 and introduce a ban on the use of fossil oil for heating in all buildings from 2020. Enova's support scheme for conversion and phasing out of oil-fired heating systems will be strengthened.
- Carry out a general review of road tax on vehicles and tax on vehicle fuel aimed at encouraging the use of more modern and environmentally friendly vehicles.
- Continue the advantageous tax arrangements for zero-emission cars until 2017 and the current exemption from road tax for vehicles using alternative fuels until 2020.
- Draft requirements for all new public sector vehicles, and all new taxis, ferries, boats and ships on regular service, and diesel trains, to employ low- or zero-emission technology where the technology is appropriate.
- Make the case for and promote ambitious and quantifiable national goals for energy efficiency, and introduce a tax allowance for energy efficiency measures in the home.
- Create the conditions for ferries and cruise ships to use land-based power in a larger number of ports.
- Study the possibility of introducing a shipbreaking deposit tax scheme for Norwegian-registered ships.
- Ensure that as a customer the public sector contributes to the use and development of new environmentally friendly and climate friendly technologies and solutions.

14 – Oil and energy

A stable energy supply is essential for a modern welfare society, and is a competitive advantage for Norwegian industry. The Government will develop and expand the Norwegian energy industry and ensure a sound, stable regulatory framework. The Government will also create the conditions for improved energy efficiency.

The Government wants Norway to lead the way internationally in environmentally friendly production and use of energy, including hydropower, wind power, bioenergy, and other forms of renewable energy. The Government will create the conditions to enable the energy industry to exploit its competitive advantage by ensuring low barriers between the industry, authorities, research environments, the offshore supply industry and capital environments in order to create a renewable energy cluster that is among the most attractive in the world.

The Government will create the conditions to further develop the Norwegian energy industry in terms of both energy production and technological development. The public interest will be safeguarded through the introduction of new taxation rules and licensing provisions.

The reorganization of the energy supply system in Europe offers major opportunities for value creation in Norway on the basis of our energy resources. We must take advantage of these opportunities, in both energy export and export of products from Norwegian industry.

The Government will:

- Put forward a white paper on a holistic energy policy, in which energy supplies, climate change challenges, and commercial and industrial development are viewed in context.
- Increase production of renewable energy in Norway and consider adaptations to the scheme for “green” electricity certificates.
- Draw up a general strategy to realize the potential for upgrading and expansion of hydropower plants.
- Invest in research into renewable sources of energy.
- Strengthen security of electricity supply and increase the robustness of electric power deliveries in Norway.
- Develop adequate grid capacity for the entire country.
- Create the conditions for structural change in the direction of fewer and more robust power grid companies, aimed at meeting consumers’ needs for effective electricity pricing, good security of supply and quality of services.
- Secure a good balance between the development and expansion of new power production and new cross-border interconnections between Norway and other countries, and amend the Energy Act to enable parties other than Statnett to own and operate these interconnections. The public interest will be protected through the licensing award process.
- Present a plan of action to reduce the overall time taken to deal with applications for hydropower development and electricity transmission grids, and permit municipalities to award development concessions to small-scale, micro- and mini-hydropower plants and to small wind farms.
- Remove the staffing requirements in the regulations governing qualifications applicable to electric power production and power grid companies, and replace them with general quality, safety and security requirements.
- Ensure that industrial owners of hydropower resources are able, within the current consolidation model, to have their needs for a predictable electricity supply met now and in the future.

- Strengthen the renewable energy research centres (environmentally friendly energy research centres) and set up a separate research centre for geothermal energy in line with the cross-party climate political compromise.
- Establish an environmentally friendly energy research centre for thorium.
- Develop NORFUND's investment in global renewable energy.
- Raise the entry point for tax on ground rent payable by small-scale power plants from 5 VAT to 10 VAT.
- Review ENOVA's role in order to better target its work, to enable the company to maintain a strong role in energy efficiency in industry, the public sector and the energy market for heating.
- Change the energy efficiency labelling scheme so that it optimizes energy management in all new buildings and major rebuilding projects based on the requirement as to delivered energy.
- Introduce a tax allowance for investment in energy efficiency measures in the home.

The petroleum industry

The oil and gas industry is a cornerstone of the Norwegian economy and will continue to be so into the foreseeable future. It contributes to jobs and to the development of commercial, industrial, technological and societal development throughout the country. The petroleum cluster is Norway's biggest commercial knowledge base. The offshore supply industry and oil technology businesses are Norway's second biggest export industry in terms of value, after sales of oil and gas. For the Government it will be important to help create opportunities for growth and development for the offshore supply industry in order to maintain and consolidate its leading position in an international market.

There is a need for continuous expertise and technological development if we are to maintain our level of activity on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. It is an important objective for Norway to maintain the petroleum industry at a sustainable level so as to avoid any degradation of the vital technological expertise that future development demands. The Norwegian State is by far the biggest player on the Norwegian Continental Shelf and must take a greater share of responsibility for petroleum-related R&D. The state-owned company Petoro will play a bigger part in technological development and in the effort to increase the degree of oil extraction on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. Stimulus must be provided to promote greater competition and diversity on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.

The extraction of Norwegian oil and gas must be done as environmentally sensitively as possible. The operations of the petroleum industry in new areas must be combined with strict environmental, safety and emergency preparedness requirements, as well as requirements governing co-existence with other industries.

There will be no opening for petroleum activities, or impact assessment programmes pursuant to the Act relating to petroleum activities, in the ocean areas off the Lofoten and Vesterålen Islands and Senja during the period from 2013 to 2017, and no implementation of petroleum activities on Jan Mayen, the fast ice edge, Skagerrak or in the Møre fields, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. An environmental base/oil-spill response base will be established in Lofoten and Vesterålen.

The Government will:

- Maintain a predictable and high pace of awards for petroleum activity in new areas, both as regards licensing rounds and Awards in Pre-defined Areas (APA).
- Continue the APA scheme.
- Strengthen petroleum-related research.
- Create the conditions for 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).
- Secure for the industry predictable and long-term rules governing taxation and levies.
- Consider making changes to the petroleum taxation system aimed at improving the resource management and increasing the degree of extraction in working fields and neighbouring marginal fields.
- Make capability and willingness to increase the degree of extraction one of the criteria for awarding tasks and responsibilities on the Norwegian Continental Shelf.
- Work to reduce the level of costs on the Norwegian Continental Shelf, among other things through follow-up of the Åm committee and the Reiten committee.
- Create the conditions for greater diversity and competition offshore by awarding new licences and operatorships.
- Strengthen oil-spill preparedness and response and put forward an updating of the white paper on marine safety and preparedness and response to acute pollution. A committee will be appointed to consider how best to strengthen technology, product development, industrial expansion and expertise within oil-spill preparedness and response.

15 – Transport and communications

This Government will build the nation

A high-quality infrastructure is one of the main pillars of a modern society and the Government intends to make this a competitive advantage for the nation. The business community needs their goods and services to be delivered to the markets by fast, simple and inexpensive means at a low cost.

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 accommodate plans for a larger portion of the revenues from the *Government Pension Fund – Global* to be invested in roads, railways and other transport infrastructure. The Government will improve traffic safety and introduce shorter, more predictable journey times for the business community and the residential population. Construction projects should entail holistic solutions rather than patchwork efforts. Public objections must be better co-ordinated. In future, national plans submitted to the Storting for approval should incorporate targets, frameworks, actions and funding arrangements, thus enabling the government's specialist agencies to take responsibility for the details and the overall implementation.

The Government will set up a dedicated development company which will be tasked with a number of road projects and with undertaking construction works more efficiently, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The company will be financed by shareholders' capital but may also take out loans backed by government guarantee. The company may take on responsibility for the development, operation and funding of major transport projects. Existing projects may also be transferred to the company. The company's corporate framework will be set out in connection with the Budget.

Investment in road building and public transport projects will be increased in excess of the level approved in the National Transport Plan 2014-2023, and the proportion of road toll revenues 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 revenues will be earmarked for road, railway and public transport purposes in the Budget, together with broadband and ICT infrastructure, with the overall objective being access to predictable and long-term funding for infrastructure investments.
- Ensure access to a good compensation scheme for people whose properties are made subject to compulsory purchase orders for infrastructure purposes.
- Start dealing with the infrastructure maintenance backlog.
- Propose and discuss an amalgamation of the various road toll companies into a single company or a small number of companies tasked with the administration of toll collection, should a potential for rationalization be identified.
- Help ensure the improvement of analytical tools associated with socioeconomic benefit. Planning processes must be based on realistic traffic prognoses, to ensure that infrastructure is designed in line with a genuine demand.
- Make a case which presents different solutions to how the Storting in future should approve national plans, incorporating targets, frameworks, actions and funding arrangements, and how the government's specialist agencies may take over responsibility for the details and the overall implementation.

- Build roads and railways to a faster schedule by shortening the planning period. The aim will be to halve the period required. Objections forthcoming during the planning process will be better coordinated.
- Organize major road and railway developments in dedicated projects in which public-private partnerships (PPPs) are used as an implementation strategy.
- Increase the use of state regulation for projects of national significance.
- Invest a larger proportion of the returns from the Government Pension Fund – Global in roads, railways and other transport infrastructure.

Road and traffic safety

Effective, safe and environmentally friendly roads are essential for meeting the needs of the population and for strengthening the business community's competitive edge. A major expansion of the Norwegian national road network is a good investment in Norway's future competitiveness. 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 Norway together, and in roads that expand our residential and commercial areas. The government will increase the speed limit on our safest motorway sections to 110 km/h based on specialist advice.

The Government will increase the level of safety on Norwegian roads by building central barriers and safe roads to motorway standard, as well as introducing other initiatives. These are highly effective measures designed to reduce the number of fatal accidents on Norwegian roads. The Government will take a zero tolerance attitude to fatalities and serious injuries caused by traffic accidents.

The Government will:

- Reduce the proportion of road toll revenues in new projects. In general, this reduction will not apply for sets of initiatives for specific towns and cities, or for ferry replacement projects.
- Ensure that as a rule, minor road projects not included in existing sets of road initiatives, and whose collection costs are unreasonably high, will not be funded by road toll revenues.
- Allow an extension of the downpayment period in road toll projects.
- Make the trial scheme for modular vehicle combinations oversized articulated lorries a permanent arrangement.
- Continue the interest compensation arrangement for county roads.
- Not lower the ambition for investment in roads or railways following a reduction in the revenues collected through road toll schemes.
- Set up an independent road traffic authority and consider the potential for rationalization associated with tighter integration of the various government agencies in the transport sector.
- Employ public-private partnerships to develop a greater number of 24-hour service areas, and particularly incorporate such facilities in connection with the building of new roads.
- Seek to ensure that new, safe, fully operating Norwegian motorways are designed for a maximum speed limit of 130 km/h.
- Change the road design standards by lowering the threshold for building central barriers and multi-lane carriageways.
- Strengthen proactive traffic safety initiatives, focusing on voluntary organizations.
- 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 further areas until the scheme has been assessed.
- Make it more attractive for major international contractors to tender 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 tax for the benefit of the new road company.

Propose a dedicated 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 escalate on-track competition. The Government will plan for full development of the InterCity sections in Eastern Norway and a new railway tunnel under Oslo. The government will prioritize 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 commercial form of organization and clear targets.
- Help ensure that freight trains and long-distance trains can take 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

The growth of our largest towns and cities has necessitated 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 developments.

The Government will boost its investment in public transport in the cities, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The taxi policy will be seen as part of the public transport policy; the industry is considered to fulfil an important social mission.

The Government will:

- Safeguard funding of important public transport solutions in the largest cities, preferably by providing state investment subsidies covering 50 per cent of costs.
- Assist in securing binding agreements between central and local authorities concerning the building of housing and infrastructure solutions as part and parcel of the set of initiatives 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 largest cities are based on objective criteria and verifiable outcomes.
- Study the potential to improve facilities and co-ordination levels for express coach services in every transport corridor.
- Encourage the building of car parks for park-and-ride schemes.
- Allow taxi firms and other businesses in the taxi industry to organize their venture 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 franchise conditions for Moss Airport Rygge to ensure that the ceiling on the number of flight movements is raised and the opening hours extended.
- Accommodate participation by municipalities and private individuals in developments at and around airports.
- Ensure that air traffic control and security services are subject to competition.
- Assist the introduction of simplified transfers, at Oslo Airport in the first instance.

Coastline and harbours

The Government will make provisions for the transfer of more freight haulage from road to sea. 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 particulars of the Norwegian Coastal Administration, the Norwegian Maritime Authority and other agencies in order to consider their potential for rationalization.
- Review the fee-paying regimes, legislation and distribution of responsibility with respect to short sea shipping and propose a series of reductions and simplifications.
- Accommodate an increase in the use of pilot exemption certificates.
- Accommodate improved safety levels and larger ships by introducing deeper and wider shipping lanes combined with upgraded marking.
- Modernize 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 drop the Norwegian reservation against EU's third Postal Directive. The Government will continue nationwide postage rates.

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

The Government will:

- Allow Posten further scope to adjust to increased 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 policy and development aid

Foreign policy

The Government will pursue a realistic foreign policy based on clear priorities, founded on liberal values and with the main purpose of safeguarding our main national interests. Foreign policy must achieve tangible results for the Norwegian people and contribute to international détente, security and stability, lasting peace, the highest possible degree of free trade, economic development and respect for fundamental human rights. Norway should be an active contributor to efforts to preserve and strengthen a predictable international legal order.

Norway's development, security and welfare are strongly influenced by processes and actors beyond Norway's borders, and there is a relationship of mutual dependency between neighbouring countries, allies and trading partners. Norway's efforts as an active and predictable cooperation partner and ally shall be irreproachable.

The main features of Norwegian foreign policy remain unaltered. The Government will base its policies on commitment to international cooperation. Norway shall be an active contributor to the UN, NATO and other international organizations.

Norway's primary community of interests and values will remain in the Atlantic, European and Nordic realms. The Government will actively pursue cooperation with new partners and seek global involvement. At the same time, changes in the balance of political, economic and military of power require a reinforced attachment to the Western community of neighbours, allies and trading partners in terms of values and political orientation.

The Government will promote a modernized, strong and more efficient United Nations. Norwegian efforts and financial engagement shall be shifted to those parts of the organization that deliver good results and operate in line with Norwegian priorities. The Government will be a reform-oriented and constructively demanding contributor and partner to the UN.

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

To a greater extent than today, the Norwegian foreign service will serve as an instrument to promote the interests of Norwegian industry abroad. It is essential for Norwegian industry to have the appropriate conditions for participating in global trade with emerging economies, such as the BRICS countries. The foreign representation must be proportionate to Norwegian interests in each particular country, and assist Norwegian industry and citizens. The Government will bring energy issues more to the fore in Norwegian foreign policy.

The policies for peace and reconciliation will be maintained, and their scope and thrust will be reviewed to prioritize processes and countries for which Norway possesses the resources and competencies required to achieve results. Norwegian efforts should be undertaken in cooperation with close allies and key multilateral actors. Disarmament and non-proliferation will be important areas for the Government's international engagement.

The Government will assume a balanced position with regard to the conflict in the Middle East, and actively support the goal of achieving a negotiated solution, entailing that Israel and Palestine, as two states, can exist in peace within secure borders that enjoy international recognition.

Europe

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

The Government will pursue more active policies to safeguard Norwegian interests in relation to the EU, including through the EEA Agreement, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will regard the EEA Agreement and the other agreements with the EU as the framework for its European policies. The agreed framework ensures market access and predictability for Norwegian industry, and is of fundamental economic importance. The daily follow-up of the agreed framework is largely of a domestic-policy nature.

Nordic collaboration is of especially great importance. The Government will help strengthen parliamentary cooperation through the Nordic Council and assume an active role in The Nordic Council of Ministers, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The Government will:

- Pursue proactive policies to safeguard Norwegian interests by engaging in processes and policy design in the EU at an earlier stage.
- Seek to deepen bilateral relations with key European countries.
- Strengthen coordination of the overall handling of European matters in government administration to ensure efficient casework and improved Norwegian participation.
- Give priority to participation in those informal and formal European forums to which the EEA Agreement grants us access.
- Involve the Storting in the clarification of key EEA processes at an early stage.
- Seek to clarify the position of welfare schemes in the EEA Agreement and help increase the sustainability of the principle of free movement.

Development

The goal of development policy is to promote democratization, realization of human rights and the ability of people to work their way out of poverty permanently. The Government will continue supporting democratic, economic and social development. Support will be provided to processes that are optimally effective and produce permanent change, and that reinforce the ability of individuals to care for themselves, their families and their communities.

The Government will base its policies on the view that all people have universal rights irrespective of where in the world they may live, such as freedom of speech, freedom of belief and protection of private property, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. The Government will seek to disseminate knowledge about human rights and prevent violence and oppression, including female genital mutilation, forced marriages, human trafficking and sexual abuse of children. The Government will devote particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as women, children, religious minorities, disabled people and sexual minorities.

The Government will base its policies on social responsibility and international solidarity, cf. the Cooperation Agreement.

The Government will work to raise people out of poverty, in Norway as well as in poor countries. The Government will give priority to girls' education in poor countries.

The Government will maintain Norwegian development aid at a high level. Active efforts by national governments and political ownership of national development are preconditions for Norwegian aid.

Robust societal institutions, financial and political transparency, protection of private property, distribution of power and 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. Wherever possible, Norwegian development aid shall be limited to a timeframe to prevent aid dependency and a weakening of national responsibility. Norwegian development aid shall be evaluated in an independent, thorough and critical manner, and the conclusions shall have an impact on future efforts.

The Government will explore and introduce stricter requirements for efficiency and control of Norwegian development 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 enhance efficiency and improve 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 coherent development policies, in which the measures in the various sectors as far as possible point in the same direction.
- Introduce performance-oriented development policies, undertake systematic evaluations that will have an impact on budget decisions, and facilitate full transparency regarding the scope, implementation and effects of Norwegian development policy.
- Practise zero tolerance of corruption and irregularities.
- Increase trade with poor countries, including opening for imports and trade facilitation.
- Assume the role of global leader in the efforts to ensure education for all.
- Continue and refine efforts in the field 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, and 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 declaration of development policy to the Storting, to help broaden the debate on the ends and means of development policy, if the Storting should so wish.
- Emphasize industrial development, investment and economic growth in the recipient countries through a modern and diversified combination of instruments.
- Give priority to capacity-building, competence transfer and technical assistance to recipient countries to enable the countries to manage their own resources.
- Help achieve debt cancellation for poor countries through international and bilateral agreements.

Norwegians abroad

An increasing number of Norwegians choose to live abroad for short or long periods of time. This applies to many retirees in particular, including disability as well as old-age pensioners. The globalization of 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. Inequality of treatment and insufficient information from tax assessment offices and vital registries have left many people in a difficult situation.

The Government will:

- Consider establishing a service office for Norwegians living abroad, in collaboration with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and the Norwegian Tax Administration.
- Take into account that many Norwegians live abroad when international agreements are signed and laws and regulations are being prepared.
- Make provisions for international schools and IB (International Baccalaureate) in Norway to ease the situation for families who live abroad periodically.
- Undertake a review of the withholding tax.
- Ensure favourable conditions for the Norwegian Seamen's Church.

17 – The Northern regions

The Government will pursue an aggressive policy for the Northern regions, cf. the Cooperation Agreement. This policy shall promote industrial development, safeguard Norwegian interests and reinforce our cooperation with Russia and the Arctic states, as well as enhance the basis for activity and settlement in the North. The Government will ensure a clear national presence, sustainable management of the natural resources, improved emergency preparedness for protection of the environment, search and rescue operations, and expansion of infrastructure.

The Government's goal is to develop Northern Norway into one of Norway's most innovative and sustainable regions. The Northern regions have a large potential for value creation, and the Government will help the business community in this part of the country to reap this potential. The Government will provide conditions that can help the region exploit its natural advantages and reinforce its educational and research institutions.

Challenges related to the environment and climate are especially visible in the North. The melting Arctic ice cap paves the way for 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 pertinent. The Government will therefore establish an environmental protection base/oil spill preparedness base in Lofoten and Vesterålen.

The Northern regions are also Norway's primary area of foreign-policy interest. In the course of a couple of decades, the Arctic, the Arctic Ocean and the adjacent coastal areas have been transformed from an area of security-policy tension into a powerhouse for energy and industrial policy. These areas are of utmost importance to Norway, in terms of security policy as well as economics.

In light of the development in the Northern regions, including increased activity in the form of maritime transport and resource extraction, the Norwegian presence and assertion of sovereignty must be ensured. Norway's interests and special responsibility in the Northern regions also require military capacities. The mandate 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 North.

The Government will:

- Ensure a strong Norwegian presence and assertion of sovereignty in the Northern regions, including Svalbard.
- Continue developing constructive relationships 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 educational and research institutions in the Northern counties.
- Prepare a coherent management and development plan for sustainable exploitation of natural resources in the Northern regions.
- Facilitate a fisheries and aquaculture industry in Northern Norway, with profitability at all stages.
- Ensure recruitment to the region's fisheries and aquaculture industry.

- Provide opportunities for growth in the tourism industry.
- Help increase national and international research competence with regard to climate and the environment in the Northern regions.
- Promote private ownership in Northern Norway's industry.
- Intensify the exploration of mineral deposits in the Northern counties.
- Expand the opening hours of the Norwegian Food Safety Authority for issuance of documents required for export of fish outside ordinary working hours.
- Expand the opening hours and capacity at the Storskog border station.