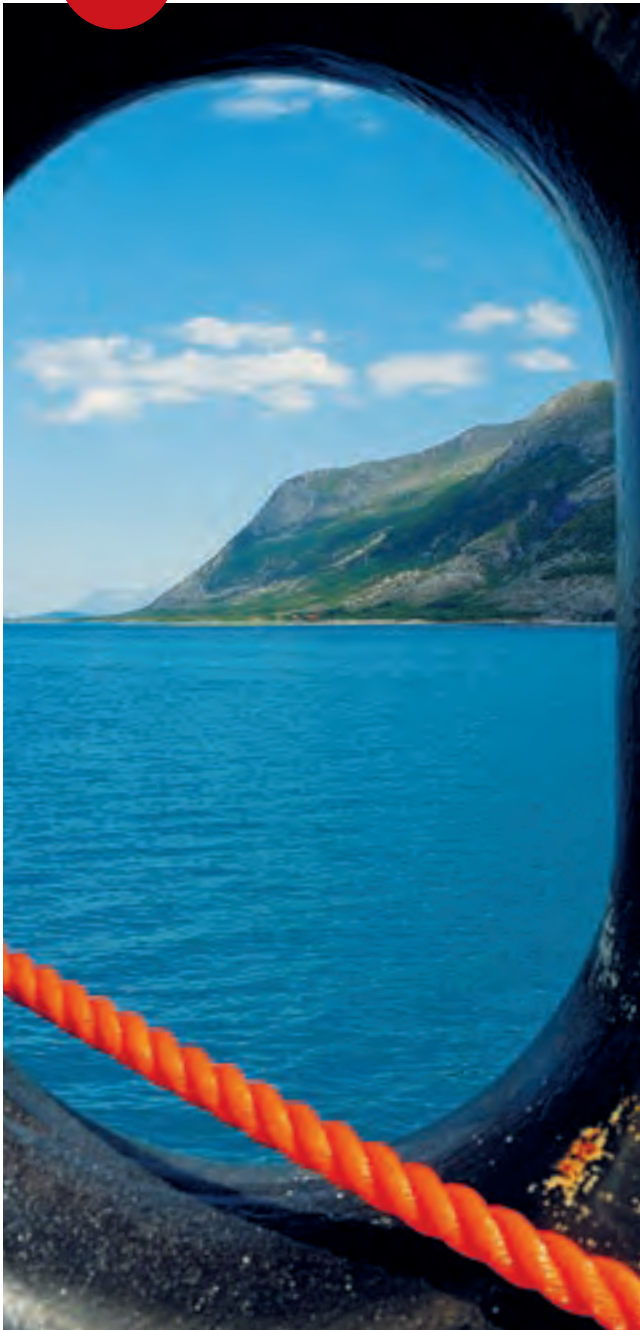




Living and working in Norway



// Contents

Facts about Norway	3
Culture	6
Labour market trends	8
How to find a job in Norway	10
Checklist - moving to Norway	14
Unemployment and social insurance (Folketrygden)	16
Employment terms and conditions	18
Education/accreditation of qualifications	22
Housing in Norway	24
Useful reading about Norway	25
CV/application letter	26





Facts about Norway

// Norway contains large areas of unspoilt countryside which offer abundant opportunities for outdoor pursuits, including sporting challenges.

Geography

Norway extends over 1 750 km between the 58th and 71st degrees north, and as such is characterised by great distances. If you imagine an axis at the southern tip of the country and rotate it through 180 degrees on a map of Europe, the opposite end would reach as far south as central Italy. At its widest, the country covers 420 km from east to west, at its narrowest just 6 km.

With a total area of 387 000 square kilometres, Norway is the seventh largest country in Europe. It borders Sweden, Finland and Russia and its exceptionally long coastline is dotted with

approximately 50 000 islands of which just 2 000 are inhabited.

Norway is a country of many mountains. From the inland mountains and plateaux, the landscape descends sharply towards the coast. The western parts are characterised by steep mountains and deep valleys which soften gradually into wide valleys and rolling hills in the eastern parts. The west features fjords cutting deep into the country; these are in fact sub-sea extensions of the valleys. A quarter of the country is forested, and approximately 4 per cent is cultivated land.

The islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen also belong to the Kingdom of Norway.



Population

Norway has 4.87 million inhabitants. Approximately 460 000 are non-nationals. The largest groups from Europe come from Poland, Sweden, Germany and Denmark. Immigrants from countries beyond Europe are mainly from Pakistan, Iraq, Vietnam and Somalia.

Population figures

(Six largest cities, 1st January 2010)

Oslo	574 000
Bergen	257 000
Trondheim	168 000
Stavanger	121 000
Kristiansand	80 000
Tromsø	66 000

Climate

In Norway we have four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.

A combination of humid, westerly winds and the warming Gulf stream produces a much milder climate than would otherwise be expected in a country this far north. There are great climatic variations in Norway; temperatures can drop to minus 20-30 degrees Celsius during the winter and reach plus 30 degrees Celsius in the summer. North of the Arctic Circle the sun is visible at midnight in the summer, while daylight is limited in the winter.

Meteorologisk Institutt

P.O. Box 43, Blindern
Niels Henrik Abels vei 40
N-0313 Oslo
Tel: + 47 22 96 30 00
post@met.no
www.met.no



Language

Norwegian is a North Germanic language closely related to Danish and Swedish. There are two written forms of Norwegian: “Bokmål” and “Nynorsk”. Formally, Bokmål and Nynorsk are treated as equals, but Bokmål is the most widely used. Nynorsk is used by around 10-15% of the population, mostly in Western Norway and in official usage, literature, theatre and broadcasting.

Usually, knowledge of Norwegian or another Scandinavian language is a prerequisite for obtaining a job in Norway. However, in some branches such as the construction industry, farming, the fishing industry and the hotel and restaurant industry, a good command of English may suffice. Some companies, for example in the petroleum sector, use English as their corporate language.

Prospective job seekers are advised to look into the possibilities for learning Norwegian in their home country. Check if the Norwegian embassy can provide an overview of Norwegian courses. In Norway you can obtain information about Norwegian courses from the service office in the municipality you live in. If you are resident in Norway pursuant to the EEA regulations or are a citizen of a Nordic country and want to take a Norwegian course, you will have to pay for it yourself. See www.norway.no for information about Norwegian courses and the rules.

Norwegian universities and private language schools also offer Norwegian courses. Addresses for these institutions are available at www.gulesider.no (search for “språkskoler”). The largest organisation offering language training nationwide in Norway is Folkeuniversitetet, the adult education association; see: www.fu.no.

Culture

// Although a young nation, Norway has a long history and strong heritage. Over the years, our own customs and traditions have merged with impulses and influences from abroad.

However, an enduring feature of Norwegian culture is the nation's appreciation of the unique and unspoilt countryside, with its rich diversity of plant and animal life. Winter sports are particularly popular in Norway, giving rise to the claim that we are born with skis on our feet!

What people associate with Norway's history and culture varies a great deal.

Some people might mention the Vikings or the Sami, while others would point to internationally famous authors, composers, sportsmen and musicians such as Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg, Ole-Gunnar Solskjær and a-ha.

What then are the hallmarks of Norwegian culture? The following are often cited: the expeditions of Thor Heyerdahl, smoked salmon, lutefisk (cured fish), stave churches, bunad (our

national costume), May 17th (Norwegian Constitution Day) reindeer meat, oil rigs, the Midnight Sun, the Aurora Borealis (Northern lights), skiing and cheese made of goat milk (brunost).

Norway is a sparsely populated country where most systems and infrastructures are well organised and efficient. This means that trains, buses and ferry timetables are reliable, that flights depart on time, that shops, museums and attractions are open as advertised, and that public information in general is accurate and up-to-date.

Norwegian business culture is somewhat informal compared to that in other European countries. We tend to have flat organisations and often address our manager by her/his first name. Norwegian employers expect employees to show initiative and assume responsibility for their own work.

// Amusing thoughts about Norway and Norwegians

You know you've been in Norway too long when...

- You start believing that if it weren't for Norway's efforts the world would probably soon go under.
- You buy only your own drink at the bar, even when you are with a group of people.
- You're not surprised if the person in front doesn't hold the door open for you.
- When a stranger on the street smiles at you, you assume that:
 - a. He is a drunk
 - b. He is insane
 - c. He is American
 - d. He is all of the above
- You think there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing.
- You usually eat lunch at 11 am and dinner at 5 pm.
- You can prepare fish in five different ways without cooking it.
- You spend all your spare time in the great outdoors whatever the weather.
- You dress up for social occasions, dress down for work.



Labour market trends

// Unemployment in Norway has been among the lowest levels in Europe for a number of years. In April 2010, NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) recorded unemployment rate of 3.2 per cent.

Norway experienced an economic upturn in 2006 and 2007. However, towards the end of 2008 Norway also fell victim to the global financial crisis and 2009 was characterised by numerous lay-offs and increasing unemployment. The demand for labour varies in different sectors.

The structure of employment varies considerably from one Norwegian county to the next. Public services and the fisheries are the dominant sectors in the northern part of Norway, while industry accounts for a large share in the coastal counties in southern Norway. Many people in the cities of Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim work in financial and business services. The regional variation is smaller in other sectors, such as building and construction.

More information about the labour market in Norway is available from:

NAV

(The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration)
www.nav.no

NAV EURES

(European Employment Services)
www.eures.no

These sites also publish factsheets on the following sectors:

- Petroleum
- Fisheries
- Building and construction
- Health
- Maritime
- Tourism
- Transport
- Shipbuilding

The European Job Mobility Portal contains up-to-date information in several languages about the labour market in Norway.

Labour market statistics are available from Statistics Norway: www.ssb.no.

The European Job Mobility Portal
<http://eures.europa.eu>



How to find a job in Norway

// The EEA Agreement (the agreement on the European Economic Area) enables job seekers, students and self-employed persons, as well as their family members, from other EEA member states to take up residence, work and study in Norway.

Applying for jobs from outside of Norway

Some of NAV's services are available from abroad. The employment services in all of the EEA member states exchange information in a European network called EURES (European Employment Services) concerning working and living conditions in the respective countries. EURES has a database of job vacancies within the EEA, the European Job Mobility Portal: see <http://eures.europa.eu>.

Your local employment office in your home country will be able to refer you to the nearest EURES adviser in your region for information about vacancies in Norway.

Internet

The majority of vacancies in Norway are listed on the Internet. NAV's website, www.nav.no, contains the biggest jobs database in Norway. Here you can search for jobs, register your CV and record permanent jobs searches. The service is in Norwegian. You can also search in various languages for jobs in Norway at <http://eures.europa.eu>.

Many Norwegian companies have their own websites, and these sometimes advertise vacancies not featured anywhere else. Use the Norwegian on-line Yellow Pages to find addresses: www.gulesider.no.

You can also look for jobs in Norway on the website of the employment services in your home country.

NAV Service Centre EURES

Job seekers can ring the NAV Service Centre on tel.: +47 800 33 166 (Monday-Friday, 8 am to 6 pm) to enquire about vacancies. It makes things easier if you have thought about what kind of job you are looking for and where in Norway you want to live, before contacting the NAV

Service Centre. The Service Centre can provide information about NAV EURES services, and help in locating EURES advisers. You can contact NAV Service Centre EURES via email: eures@nav.no.

EURES advisers

NAV EURES and the EURES advisers in Norway can provide you with information about the labour market, how to apply for jobs and about working and living conditions. In Norway EURES is part of NAV. If you want more information, you can contact NAV EURES in the region in which you are applying for work. You can find the addresses of the EURES advisers from www.eures.no/english: find EURES adviser or from <http://eures.europa.eu>. You can also contact a EURES adviser via NAV Service Centre EURES.

General job applications

Norway also has an informal market for job vacancies, i.e. vacancies that are not registered with any organisation or otherwise advertised.

To pick up on these vacancies, one way is to send out general job applications to any company of interest. You should also make a follow-up call to the company after you have sent your application. If you want to send a general job application to selected companies, you can search for addresses on the Norwegian on-line Yellow Pages at www.gulesider.no.

In some sectors it is not unusual to turn up in person at companies to ask for a job. Remember to bring your CV, in Norwegian or English, with references and diplomas, etc. Make sure that you talk to the staff in the personnel office.



Media

Many Norwegian newspapers advertise job vacancies. The largest national newspaper for job listings is *Aftenposten*. Most jobs are also listed on www.finn.no/jobb.

All the positions advertised in Norwegian newspapers are also registered at the NAV (+47 800 33 166) and published on the Internet at www.nav.no.

You can find an overview of Norwegian newspapers at www.norske-aviser.com.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions are good sources of information. Unions in your own country may have links with their counterpart organisations in Norway. Membership of a trade union is not obligatory, but is very common. Some unions publish magazines that advertise vacancies in their industry.

LO – the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions is the largest confederation of trade unions.

This organisation can provide an overview of the various trade unions in Norway, depending on the sector you work in.

UNIO is Norway's second largest trade union confederation. UNIO has many members who work in teaching, nursing and the police.

Another trade union confederation is *Akademikerne*, whose members are professionals with higher education.

YS – Yrkesorganisasjonenes Fellesforbund – is another large trade union confederation. YS consists of 23 federations covering different employment sectors.

LO

Youngsgt. 11, N-0181 Oslo
Tel: +47 23 06 10 50
Fax: +47 23 06 17 43
lo@lo.no
www.lo.no

Akademikerne

Fridtjof Nansens plass 6, N-0160 Oslo
Tel: +47 95 3 90 90
Fax: +47 23 10 34 11
akademikerne@akademikerne.no
www.akademikerne.no

YS

Brugata 19, N-0186 Oslo
Tel: +47 21 01 36 00
Fax: +47 21 01 37 20
post@ys.no
www.ys.no

UNIO

Stortingsgata 2, N-0158 Oslo
Tel: +47 22 70 88 50
Fax: +47 22 70 88 60
Post@unio.no
www.unio.no



Job search in Norway

NAV

At the NAV office you can obtain information on, e.g.:

- Job vacancies
- Transferring unemployment benefit to and from Norway
- Education opportunities in Norway
- How to apply for jobs
- How to register as a job seeker
- The labour market situation
- Rights and obligations of unemployed persons in Norway

At most NAV offices you can use the telephone to call potential employers, use a computer to write your CV/job application, search for vacancies on the Internet and photocopy diplomas and references. These services are free of charge.

Private recruitment agencies

Foreign job seekers have the option of signing up with private recruitment agencies.

The recruitment agencies often specialise in particular industries and professions. The agencies are listed in the Yellow Pages on the Internet: www.gulesider.no (search for “rekruttering” or “vikartjenester”).

Networking

Using personal contacts and networking are vital for anyone looking for work. This improves your chances of getting a job because people know you already and know that you are looking for work. This is also a way of picking up on vacancies on the informal market. Many people use social networks to build up a network of business contacts and job opportunities.

Becoming a member of a club, association or voluntary organisation is a good way of building up a network.

Summer jobs

In Norway summer jobs are listed on the Internet. See www.nav.no (use the search word “sommer” or “ferie” in the free text field) and <http://eures.europa.eu>.

Many summer jobs are advertised as early as in February, so don't delay!

Starting your own business

For those wishing to start their own business in Norway, a lot of useful information is available from the Company Information Service, see: www.bedin.no. They also have a telephone information service, called Narvikstelefonene: +47 800 33 840.

You can find information about what you ought to consider before starting your own company and answers to frequently asked questions about registering your own company at: www.spor-oss.no.

You can contact the local office for Commerce and trade (Næringsetaten) in the municipality you will be residing in. They will give you information on how to proceed.

NAV Service Centre EURES

P.O. Box 354
N-8601 Mo i Rana
Tel: +47 800 33 166
E-post: eures@nav.no



Checklist – moving to Norway

// Citizens of EEA member states may travel to Norway to look for work for up to six months.

Here is a checklist of things to consider and necessary preparations before moving to Norway.

Note that different rules may apply if you are regarded as resident in Norway, a commuter, or working under contract to a foreign company. Contact the responsible authority for further information particular to your situation.

- It is important that you bring your passport/valid ID card, diplomas and reference certificates (preferably in Norwegian or English).
- Even if you are in Norway only to look for work, you may be asked to prove that you have adequate financial means both for the duration of your stay and for your return travel.
- Contact EURES advisers in your home country. They have information about the formalities you need to complete before travelling to Norway, and will also be able to obtain information on vacancies in Norway from the European Job Mobility Portal: <http://eures.europa.eu>.
- Find out if special accreditation is required in order to practise your profession or trade in Norway. (For more information see the section on education below).
- Make arrangements with former employers or colleagues in your country who can provide references. Norwegian employers will normally wish to contact them. It is an advantage to cite references who can speak a Scandinavian language or English.
- Norwegian employers often require a reasonable proficiency in the Norwegian language. In some sectors, English will be sufficient. (For more information see the section on language above).
- Contact your local employment, social security and tax office to find out how going to Norway will affect your status as regards taxes and benefits, and be sure to obtain the appropriate forms.

You may also wish to contact the Norwegian embassy in your home country for further advice before leaving for Norway. For addresses see www.norway.info.

Living and working

If you are a citizen of an EEA member state and have a valid ID card or passport, you have the right to live in Norway for 3 months. The same is true for family members who are citizens of an EEA member state. If you want to stay in Norway for more than 3 months you must have a basis for staying and be registered with the police. You must have a valid ID card or passport and otherwise be able to document that you will not be a burden on public welfare schemes. If you are an employee, you must produce proof of employment or an employment contract. You may register online at www.selfservice.udi.no. After this you must appear at your nearest police station or a service centre for foreign workers to submit the necessary documents in order to complete your registration. Once you have registered, you will receive proof of registration. This is issued free of charge.

Separate rules may apply to nationals of Bulgaria and Romania who wish to take up employment in Norway. Please check with the Norwegian embassy/consulate in your home country, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) or a police station in Norway.