

# Norway



## General Information



### Population

5 519 594 (World Bank 2023)  
5 585 044 (STAT NO 2024)



### Immigration

90 475 (Eurostat 2022)  
86 589 (STAT NO 2023)



### Emigration

191 392 (UN Emigration Stock 2020)  
34 011 (STAT NO 2023)



### Working-age population

3 577 878 (World Bank 2023)  
3 655 441 (STAT NO 2024)



### Unemployment rate

3.6 % (World Bank 2023)  
4 % (STAT NO 2024)



### GDP

485 513 316 503.6 current prices USD (World Bank 2023)  
5 096 862 000 000 NOK (STAT NO 2023)



### Refugees and IDPs

#### Refugees

107 057 (UNHCR 2024)  
130 476 (STAT NO 2024)

#### Asylum Seekers

4 789 (UNHCR 2024)  
116 117 (STAT NO 2024)



### Citizenship

#### By Birth

No (GLOBALCIT 2022)

#### By Descent

Yes (GLOBALCIT 2022)

#### Years of Residency

6-10 (GLOBALCIT 2022)



### Territory

323 802 km<sup>2</sup> (CIA World Factbook)

Data from international sources is updated automatically as it becomes available.

# Migration Authorities

## Responsible Body

Ministry of Justice and Public Security

## Line Ministries

Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Agencies

Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

Directorate of Integration and Diversity

Statistics Norway

Study in Norway

Norwegian Tax Administration

# Key Policy Documents

Norwegian Constitution

Norwegian Immigration Act

Norwegian Integration Act

The Norwegian Government's Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination on the Grounds of Ethnicity and Religion

Action plan to combat discrimination and hatred towards Muslims

Action plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Norway only became a popular destination for immigration in recent decades. The combination of high salaries (**average yearly earnings exceed EUR 57,000**), as well as high rankings on the standard of living and life quality indexes, has made Norway a popular choice among immigrants.

In 2022, Norway hosted **819,356** immigrants constituting 15% of the population. This figure rises to **1,025,175** when Norwegian-born to immigrant parents citizens are considered. **The largest immigrant groups** are from Poland (105,477), Lithuania (42,027), Sweden (35,894), Somalia (28,088) and Germany (25,897). Since 2020, the flow of immigrants has increased more than two-fold reaching **53,947** in 2021. Of them, 34,277 came from the EU and EEA countries (Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark and the UK are among the top origin countries), followed by 10,190 coming from Asia (mainly from India and Pakistan), and 4,001 from Africa (mainly from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia). The reasons for immigration are related to economic opportunities, as well as people fleeing conflict.

Unusually high net immigration, along with a rather stable birth surplus, has contributed to strong population growth in Norway over the last couple of decades. The population of Norway has increased from **4,478,497** in 2000 to **5,435,536** in the first quarter of 2022, and is projected to reach **6,100,000 by 2060**. At the same time, Norway is facing a historically rapid process of population ageing with the number of elderly citizens projected to surpass the number of children and teenagers in the next ten years. Between 2012 and 2022, the share of the population aged **45-66 has already grown by 10.3%**, **67-79 year olds - by 45.6%**, **80-89 years olds - by 6.7%**, and **those 90 or older - by 16.6%**.

Against this background, it will be important to attract and integrate migrants to sustain the country's growth and development. There is a need for immigration to fill jobs in Norway in the traditional sectors of oil, gas and fisheries, as well as new areas as the Norwegian economy diversifies, in addition to professionals in the healthcare, engineering and education fields. The Norwegian government is prioritising the integration of migrants, while actively trying to reduce the number of asylum seekers without valid grounds for protection and speed up the return of persons without legal residence in Norway. The integration efforts are most timely, given that the employment rate among migrants is on average **10% lower** than that of the non-immigrant population in Norway.

The number of international students in Norway is also growing, with many Bachelor's and Master's courses being taught in English. In 2021, this figure stood at **22,540**, while the number of students with foreign citizenship was just 5,000 in 2000. The majority of international students originate from Europe and Asia with China, Sweden and Germany being major sending countries of full degree students. By contrast, Norwegian students studying abroad focus mainly on the UK, Denmark and the USA.

Emigration from Norway in 2021 stood at **34,297** - compared with **26,854** in 2000 - of whom 8,288 were Norwegian citizens. The next largest groups were Poles (5,023), Lithuanians (2,669) and Swedes (1,565). The most popular destination countries were Sweden, Denmark, Poland and the UK. The emigration figures comprise nationals returning home to their country of origin as well as Norwegians seeking employment and personal development opportunities abroad. The largest Norwegian diaspora populations can be found in the US, Canada, UK, Sweden and Australia.

In terms of international protection, Norway hosted **240,239 persons of concern in 2021**. Of these, 115,084 were asylum seekers and 41,807 were resettlement refugees, while 47,749 came to Norway on family reunification grounds. The main origin regions of asylum seekers and refugees are **Asia and Africa** with the main origin countries being Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, China and Turkey. **At the end of May 2022**, Norway received 19,045 asylum applications. This compares with **9,785** for the whole of 2012 and **1,386** in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual quota for resettlement refugees in Norway is set **by the Parliament** and this has stood at 3,000. According to UNHCR, in 2021, Norway was home to 46,042 recognised refugees, half of whom came from Syria and Eritrea.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 and until the end of July, Ukrainians have been filing **over 500 asylum applications** every week making them the largest nationality looking for asylum in Norway. The total number of applicants from Ukraine neared **20,000** by the end of July 2022. Laws and Acts are being amended in Norway to allow refugees from Ukraine to enter Norway and as quickly as possible integrate them into **the labour market and education system**. The Norwegian Government also enacted a scheme to offer temporary collective protection for one year to people **displaced from Ukraine in March 2022**. Furthermore, in April 2022 a proposal was made for temporary amendments to the Child Welfare Act to handle the increase in refugees from Ukraine to Norway. Norway plans to welcome 60,000 refugees from Ukraine in 2022.

Although there are no accurate figures on the number of irregular migrants living in Norway, in 2020 the police returned **2,136 people** without legal residence. The figure was 6,654 in 2012 and the drop can be put down to the overall lower number of asylum seekers during the pandemic. In 2020, the number who returned with assistance was 127 persons. This was significantly fewer than in 2019, with most returned to Russia, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq and Somalia. Notably, the overall return rate from 2012 until 2020 did not exceed 25%. The number of persons found to be illegally present reached **1,430** persons in 2021, the lowest figures on record since 2012.

Norway's immigration laws are based on the **Immigration Act of 2008**. The Directorate of Immigration, founded in 1988, is the central agency in the Norwegian immigration administration - centralising the role and function that was previously spread across several bodies and agencies - which implements and helps to develop the government's immigration and refugee policy.

Although not an EU member, Norway is a member of the **European Return and Reintegration Network**, which aims to strengthen, facilitate and streamline the return process in the EU through common initiatives. The aim is also to promote durable and efficient reintegration to countries outside the EU. At the end of 2021, Norway had signed re-admission agreements on return with **31 countries**.

Norway is implementing a [new Integration Act](#) which came into force in January 2021. Key changes allow for more differentiation regarding the length of the Introduction Programme for refugees and their families - to last between six months to four years - and also the provision of better access to formal education. Furthermore, in December 2020, the required period of residence to achieve a permanent residence permit was extended from three to five years for refugees. In addition, the Immigration Regulations were amended in October 2021 to exclude the Norwegian introduction benefit from counting towards the income requirement in family migration cases. The objective of the amendment was to ensure a higher level of self-sufficiency among individuals who wish to bring their family members to Norway. This entails a postponement of family reunion for a period, varying between one, two or three years.

The Norwegian government introduced a new Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination on the Grounds of Ethnicity and Religion (to cover 2020-23), an Action plan to combat discrimination and hatred towards Muslims (2020-23), and updated the Action plan against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

*latest update: 30 August 2022*

# Relevant Publications

[UN Migration Profile](#)

[International Migration Outlook 2021: Norway](#)

[Nordic co-operation](#)

[Migration Policy Institute: Norway](#)