

Political platform for a **majority government**

Issued by
The Labour Party,
The Socialist Left Party
and The Centre Party



Negotiated at Soria Moria from
26 September to 13 October 2005

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Introduction

The Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party won an overall majority of the seats in the Norwegian Storting in the election of 2005. During the period 26 September-13 October, these parties have negotiated this document at Soria Moria as a basis for a majority government.

This document represents the political platform for a governing coalition of these three parties for the next four years.

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Chapter 1: Ethical basis for a new majority

A majority government consisting of the Labour Party, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party will conduct a policy based on justice and fellowship.

The government wants to conduct a policy that is rooted in a vital representative government, a sustainable development, an inclusive, socially critical commitment, our national cultural heritage and humanistic values and ideas.

Norway is a society of opportunity. We have abundant natural resources and undisturbed wilderness. We have long democratic traditions. We have a high level of education and competence. We have considerable social capital and one of the world's best welfare states. Our policy is to strengthen, renew and further develop this welfare state. Our goal is to give all of the people throughout the country an opportunity to develop their abilities and live a good, meaningful life. Our vision is to ensure that we can leave the next generation with something more valuable than what we inherited.

Freedom. The government bases its work on the idea that all people are born free, unique and with certain inviolable rights. We want our policy to help promote freedom for the individual. Strong fellowship is the best foundation on which individuals can develop their own individual lives.

The government wants to oppose all forms of discrimination, oppression, intolerance and racism. We will conduct a policy that promotes equal status between women and men. Personal freedom is best based on respect for others, on tolerance and diversity, on openness and generosity. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of gender, social background, religion, ethnic affiliation, skin colour, functional level or sexual orientation. Everyone shall have an equal opportunity to develop themselves and utilise their abilities, including those who need extra help from the society at large in order to have the same opportunities as others.

The government wants to conduct a policy that strengthens the individual's personal security through strong common welfare schemes and an equitable redistribution of wealth. Secure people are free and creative people. We will insist upon an extensive public responsibility for, and an egalitarian financing of, the fundamental social welfare tasks.

Fellowship. The government wants to solve the major tasks by concentrating on solutions for the good of the community. We want to strengthen the public sector's responsibility and role in the key social welfare tasks such as health, care and education. We will oppose the commercialisation of these areas.

The government wants to improve public schooling. All people are unique and shall be met by a school that understands and attends to their individual needs. We want to invest in people by giving them a chance to develop and providing them with new knowledge in kindergarten and school, in higher education, in continuing education and training and through research. We want to develop quality, affordable day-care places for everyone. We want to expand the care of the elderly with more places and more employees.

The government wants to conduct a policy to lessen the disparities in society. We want to abolish poverty by strengthening the public safety nets and by giving the unemployed an opportunity to return to active work. The struggle against unemployment is a high priority task. Employment for everyone is the most important thing we can do to reduce social disparity. We

want to work for a more inclusive labour market, with room for different kinds of people and with an expectation that we can all work according to our ability.

The government will conduct a modern, future-oriented policy to generate economic growth. We want to put the whole country and its natural resources to good use. We want to develop good communications in order to unleash the great potential for economic growth in the whole country. Economic growth and production are necessary conditions for sharing the wealth. At the same time, an equitable distribution of wealth and good welfare services are necessary conditions for high productivity.

The government wants an open economy with socially aware participants. We want to arrange matters to assist private sector participants through a good regulatory framework, predictability and public participation in innovation. We want to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial activity. We want to encourage an interaction among business and industry, the public sector and research institutions.

The government wants to have stronger political steering of processes and decisions that are important for the nation, the local communities and individuals. We do not want market control and market orientation in areas where the market does not function well. We want to maintain the public ownership of key natural resources and state-owned companies and ensure private ownership rights for the majority of our citizens.

The government thinks that the international and global challenges must also be solved through joint efforts and obligations. Norway shall play an active and constructive international role. Norway shall be at the forefront of the fight against global poverty and of international environmental efforts and shall be a prominent promoter of peace.

The government wants to put particular emphasis on strengthening the UN's role in the global community. We want a global international community based on active states that respect international law and the basic human rights. In word and deed, Norway shall be an international advocate for these values and for less economic disparity between north and south.

Sustainability. The government wants to base its environmental policy on the principle of sustainable development, the precautionary principle, and solidarity with our descendants. Our goal of equitable distribution means both equitable among those who are alive today and equitable among current and future generations. Norway shall be a pioneering country in environmental policy. We want to conduct a policy that manages our resources in a better way, preserves biological diversity and reduces emissions in order to prevent man-made climate change. Solving global environmental challenges calls for binding international cooperation.

The government wants to strengthen the work on prevention in the broadest sense. We want to encourage measures that promote better health and quality of life for the individual. Our policy for prevention will also have goals of improving the environment, reducing exclusion from employment and lowering the crime rate. The fight against crime shall be carried out in a broad arena. Fighting international and organised crime will be given priority.

The government wants to develop a close collaboration with non-governmental and non-profit organisations. Material security is important, but not sufficient to provide a good and meaningful life. Many people live with violence and threats of violence. Many people live in loneliness and isolation. Substance abuse and mental illness claim victims at all levels of society. Time pressure and the stress of everyday life are taxing for many families. The government wants to help meet

some of the new social challenges of our time and to ensure proper care and security for all, through good public welfare services and also through supporting and facilitating voluntary engagement and the development of a vital civil society. Many of the challenges of our time can not be solved by the public sector or the market alone.

The government wants to conduct a policy that helps create places where people can meet. We want to help facilitate an upgrading of the role of art, culture and sport. A proactive cultural policy shall strengthen the significance and presence of culture in the whole society. Everyone shall have access to cultural experiences, regardless of geographical and social differences.

Like most other countries in the world, Norway is a multicultural and multiethnic society. The government wants to strengthen freedom of speech and respect for being different, making different choices and thinking differently than the majority. Our policy shall reflect and respect diversity, at the same time as it shall include the best values and traditions of our Christian cultural heritage.

The government wants to conduct a policy to protect the Saami people's status and rights as indigenous people in Norway. We want to vitalise the Saami language, culture, business and industry and community life. The distinctive character of the Saami must be allowed to evolve in beneficial coexistence with the rest of society.

New majority. The government wants to bolster the influence of individuals over their own lives and the society's development in all aspects of community life. Everyone must have access to information and insight that make it possible to participate in the democratic processes. Non-governmental organisations, groups and associations are important associates in this work. Properly functioning media are a necessary condition for a vital public exchange of opinion.

The government has the political will to accomplish these goals through political steering and partnership with all beneficial and constructive forces. We want to invite everyone to join in the work of giving the nation and its social development a new direction. We regard all inhabitants as resource persons and the whole country as equally important in this work.

Chapter 2: International Policy

Norwegian foreign policy must handle and safeguard Norwegian interests and values in a rapidly changing world. It must also contribute to promoting international collective goods and to building a better organised world.

The Government will increase Norway's initiatives and activities aimed at fighting poverty and creating fairer wealth distribution as well as a more democratic world order, both globally and regionally.

The main lines of Norwegian foreign policy are firmly fixed, including strong support of the UN and international law, Norway's membership of NATO, the EEA Agreement and Norway's non-membership of the EU.

Norway must be a clear peace nation. The Government will strengthen Norway's contributions to preventing, mitigating and settling conflicts and disputes.

The Government fully supports the ambitions in the UN Millennium Development Goals to halve extreme poverty before 2015, and Norway will lead the way in the work to cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

It is in Norway's best interest that we have a UN-led world order. The Government will therefore work to strengthen the UN and international law.

The Government will handle Norwegian interests vis-à-vis the EU in accordance with a more offensive strategy and will pursue an active European policy in a wide field.

The Government will attach importance to the work aimed at modernising the Foreign Service, so that it will be an open, dynamic and future-oriented knowledge organisation. The Government's foreign policy will be based on the following main priorities:

- Establishing a holistic Northern Areas strategy.
- Pursuing a more offensive European policy.
- Strengthening Norway's activities as a peace nation and working actively for global fairness and justice as well as a social and sustainable globalisation.
- Further developing the UN and international law as binding rules for all nations.

An Active Policy for the Northern Areas

The Government regards the Northern Areas as Norway's most important strategic target area in the years to come. The Northern Areas have gone from being a security policy deployment area to being an energy policy power centre and an area that faces great environmental policy challenges. This has changed the focus of other states in this region. The handling of Norwegian economic interests, environmental interests and security policy interests in the North are to be given high priority and are to be seen as being closely linked.

The risk of accidents at sea, the challenges from increased petroleum activities, the consequences of climate changes and the risk of nuclear pollution must be countered offensively through increased own standby emergency arrangements and closer international co-operation on measures aimed at reducing these risks.

The Government will seek international acceptance of Norwegian views on Svalbard, fishing zones, oil and gas extraction and sound environmental management.

The Government will strengthen the people-to-people co-operation between Norway and Russia, commitment, information and democratic participation in civil society, including through the Barents Sea co-operation.

The Government will:

- define the Northern Areas as Norway's strategic principal interest and strengthen the Northern Areas work through organisational changes and policy priorities,
- present an "Action Plan for Administrative and Environmental Co-operation" in the Northern Areas,
- conduct dialogues on the Northern Areas with all the main states that have interests in the Northern Areas,

- strengthen the Norwegian Defence presence and exercise of sovereignty in the North, including the Norwegian Defence contribution to good standby emergency arrangements for environmental crises and the Coastguard Service's resource control and standby emergency arrangements,
- strengthen the co-operation with Russia and continue the work to reach an agreement on the unsettled border issues,
- promote increased co-operation in the areas of trade, petroleum, fisheries, environmental protection, health, education and research, tourism and people-to-people contact,
- strengthen the Barents Sea co-operation and the work in the Arctic Council,
- take initiatives vis-à-vis other coastal states in the North Atlantic Area in order to develop environmental standards for international waters.

A More Offensive European Policy

The Government wishes to develop further close co-operation between Norway and the other European countries. The Government will co-operate with the EU based on the EEA Agreement. We will actively support the work in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe to ensure democracy, fundamental human rights and stability in Europe. Norway must also contribute economically to social development and to the solution of environmental problems in Eastern Europe as well as in the Balkans.

It is generally in Norway's best interest to ensure the development of joint rules and standards for business enterprises in the European market. Where proposals for such rules are directly contrary to Norwegian interests, Norway must use all the possibilities that we have under the existing rules to safeguard Norwegian interests. If other means fail, the Government will consider exercising the right to make reservations that follows from the EEA Agreement if Norwegian interests of special importance are threatened by legislative acts that are planned to be inserted in the EEA Agreement.

The Government will follow up on good environmental initiatives from the EU and will use the best aspects of the EU's environmental protection legislation, including where these are not covered by the EEA Agreement. The Government will stand firm on the exemption that we were granted in the EEA Agreement, in accordance with which Norwegian authorities decide which genetically modified products can be introduced, marketed and sold in Norway.

The Government will establish stronger mechanisms for a holistic co-ordination of the overall Norwegian activities in the EEA that can increase the possibilities of influence. It must be ensured that Norwegian interests can be safeguarded more effectively and at such an early stage that we have an opportunity to influence EU decisions of importance to Norway, be it through the EEA Agreement or in some other way. The Government will ensure an open debate on EEA and EU affairs, including by greater involvement of the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament). Important proposals will be submitted for consultation and hearing before being read in the Storting.

The Government will attach importance to a particularly close dialogue on European co-operation issues with our Nordic neighbours.

The Government will increase the support for special interest organisations that can promote Norwegian interests vis-à-vis EU processes of EEA relevance, build networks in EU Member States and use experience gained from the European work to stimulate increased debate in Norway.

The Government will work to ensure that the EU does not implement a Service Directive that results in social dumping.

The Government will not apply for Norwegian EU membership.

The Government will only contribute military forces to the EU's rapid reaction force when there is a clear, unambiguous UN mandate for this. The Storting will be responsible for adopting a resolution on the provision of Norwegian forces. The Storting must be informed immediately when a request for the provision of forces has been received. The Storting must have access to all relevant information necessary to make an independent decision. There must be applicable rules of engagement, and Norway must be ensured of presence in the command structure.

The Government will:

- review the experience gained from the affiliation to the Schengen Agreement,
- reorganise and systematise the work on matters of relevance to the EEA, so that Norway's position can be strengthened and the work can be made more effective.

Peace, Appeasement, Disarmament and a Strengthened UN

The Government will strengthen Norwegian initiatives aimed at conflict prevention and conflict settlement. Norway can play a more important role in peace building than in other foreign policy areas, and Norway can strengthen this field through a further systematisation of Norwegian initiatives and activities.

This is not only important in terms of promoting development and alleviating suffering in the countries that are currently ravaged by conflicts. It is also important in terms of the prevention of events that may directly hit Norway. A number of conflicts contribute to international terrorism, the spreading of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic hatred, environmental or economic crises and large waves of refugees.

The Government will work to ensure that the NATO countries lead the way in the prevention of the spreading of weapons of mass destruction. The spreading of nuclear weapons constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. NATO must continuously evaluate its nuclear strategy in order to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in international politics. Our objective is the complete scrapping of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the Government will take the consequence of the fact that light hand weapons are today the weapons that kill the largest number of people. The Government will support international measures aimed at limiting the trade in and spreading of hand weapons, including the work on the drafting of a separate international arms trade treaty.

The Government's objective is that Norway will work to have the current plans for a missile defence shield shelved and take an initiative for increased focus on early warning and prevention of conflicts.

It is in the best interest of Norway that we have a UN-led world order and not a situation in which nations take matters into their own hands. The Government will work for a significant strengthening of the UN. As a member country, Norway will actively support the reform process and seek to co-operate with like-minded countries on the work to introduce a modern, more effective world organisation. Norway will be a driving force in the UN's work to implement joint standards in key areas and in the UN's work to develop international law further.

The UN system must be able to meet (using effective collective means) the whole spectrum of challenges ranging right from poverty and epidemics to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. The UN apparatus for supporting peace processes should be strengthened. The UN must become able to undertake strategic management of the important transition from war to lasting peace after a peace agreement has been entered into. Norway will participate with both civilian and military personnel in the UN's peace-keeping and peace-building operations.

The UN has special advantages for supporting the development of a state and its institutions. This work must be prioritised.

The Government will:

- work actively, based on a long-term strategy, to enable the UN to meet the challenges of the 21st Century,
- increase civilian and military participation in UN operations,
- support the work on the drafting of an international arms trade treaty,
- work for the introduction of an international ban on cluster bombs,
- strengthen Norway's possibilities of contributing to conflict prevention, peace broking and peace building,
- strengthen the co-operation with NGO's, research environments and other parties that are engaged in peace work and conflict settlement.

Development Policy and Human Rights

World poverty is an infringement of human worth, a violation of human rights and a threat to global security and

the environment. The fight against poverty and for the right to economic development, democracy, human rights and sustainable development constitutes the greatest challenge for the world community and a principal task for the Government.

The Government's objective is that Norwegian development policy is to have greater focus on Norway's contribution to economic and sustainable development as well as the promotion of human rights. The Government will strengthen poor countries' opportunities for and ability to engage in trade, building of democratic institutions and development of public welfare services such as health and education. The Government will contribute to ensuring that the multilateral development and financial institutions attach increased importance to public welfare creation, the environment, health and education in their strategies.

The Government will take an international initiative to ensure continuous aid evaluation and a performance-linked aid policy and establish an international monitoring mechanism that will evaluate the donor country's promises of aid and debt relief against the policy that has actually been implemented.

The Government will contribute considerable funds to the establishment of a humanitarian emergency fund under the auspices of the UN. Such an emergency fund may be the first step towards establishing fixed income for the UN.

A majority of the world's poorest people are women. Women's right to health and education and the fight against exploitation of women will be given increased importance. The Government will work internationally to ensure women's reproductive health and to decriminalise abortion.

Health is an essential prerequisite for development. The Government will continue (and strengthen) Norway's commitment to ensuring health in poor countries, including through greater involvement in the work against the HIV/AIDS epidemic and in the work to ensure vaccines for all children.

The Government will continue the active co-operation with NGO's.

The environment has been given lower priority in Norwegian and international aid work in recent years. The Government will take an initiative aimed at ensuring that Norway will be a leading country in this field and will present an action plan for environmentally oriented aid in which the main principles will be management, use and preservation of natural resources in co-operation with and to the benefit of the local population and partner country and to contribute to preserving natural assets of global importance to the future.

Norway must adopt an even more offensive position in the international work to reduce the debt burden of poor countries. The UN must establish criteria for what can be characterised as illegitimate debt, and such debt must be cancelled.

In recent years, there have been many examples of civil rights having been set aside in the fight against terrorism. The Government will work to ensure that the international fight against terrorism takes place within the framework of established human rights.

The Government will:

- work to ensure that the appropriations for the development work meet the target of 1 per cent of GNP and that the grants are then gradually increased further during the period,
- provide significant contributions to an humanitarian emergency fund under the auspices of the UN,
- work to ensure that the multilateral aid is increasingly switched from the World Bank to development programmes and emergency aid measures under the auspices of UN agencies. Norwegian aid should not go to programmes that contain requirements for liberalisation and privatisation,
- act as a spearhead for international agreements on new global financing sources that can contribute to a redistribution of global wealth and the strengthening of the UN institutions, such as aircraft tax, carbon dioxide tax, tax on arms trade or duty on currency transactions,
- oppose a further expansion of what can internationally be defined as official development assistance (ODA) in relation to military expenditure and not charge expenses for military forces to the aid budget,
- work for greater openness about Norway's role in the World Bank and the IMF and evaluate changes in the political management and mandate for Norway's role,

- support a democratisation of the World Bank and the IMF. Developing countries must be given much greater influence, among other things by ensuring that the voting right is not solely linked to capital contributions,
- lead the way in the work to ensure the debt cancellation of the poorest countries' outstanding debt in line with the international debt relief initiative. The costs of debt cancellation must not result in a reduction of Norwegian aid, cf. the adopted debt repayment plan. No requirements must be made for privatisation as a condition for the cancellation of debt. The Government will support the work to set up an international debt settlement court that will hear matters concerning illegitimate debt,
- work actively for the abolition of the death penalty in all countries,
- follow up on and further develop the work on human rights dialogues.

Defence and Security

Today's security challenges are less connected with traditional military threats than previously. The risk of terrorist attacks, major environmental and natural disasters or large-scale accidents in various sectors of society has increased. The Government will work for a comprehensive security policy, for improved civil protection and for a good balance between military and civilian standby emergency arrangements.

The Government will attach importance to the work to prevent conflicts. The aim of this work is to strengthen the international legal order and ensure that there are better management instruments for creating peace than those currently available to the global community.

The best way in which to safeguard our security is through good international co-operation and through good concerted action with all our neighbouring countries. The Government will continue Norway's membership of NATO and use the organisation actively to develop a transatlantic dialogue, partnership, promotion of peace keeping, disarmament, arms control and conflict prevention.

The Government will conduct a review of Norway's obligations regarding Norwegian forces in relation to EU and NATO tasks as well as other international operations. We will increase Norwegian civilian and military participation in the UN's peace-keeping work, with special emphasis on Africa.

The Government will attach importance to building on and further strengthening the competence that Norway has built up in peace-keeping operations, the principal objective of which is to ensure stability and security for the civilian population.

The Government will withdraw Norwegian staff officers and training officers from Iraq.

Participation in international operations must be rooted in the UN Charter and have a clear UN mandate. The UN is the only international body that can legitimise the use of force. There must be a high threshold for the use of military force. Norway should not participate in pre-emptive attacks that have not been authorised by the UN.

The Government will ensure that clear guidelines are established for the handling of Norway's international obligations in accordance with international conventions in connection with the conclusion of agreements on making Norwegian forces available for international operations.

The Government will work for greater openness and wide rooting of Norwegian security policy and the work to strengthen civil protection. As part hereof, the Government will reorganise the committee for disarmament and security into a committee that can, to a greater extent, continuously advise the Government on a wide range of issues regarding security policy and civil protection. The committee must have wide areas of expertise and a wide political composition.

The Government will strengthen the economic management of the Defence. The Storting's budgetary framework must be met. Large investments in new equipment must be reviewed in connection with a new long-term plan for the Defence.

The Government will review the experience gained from demanning, privatisation and tendering as well as horizontal co-ordination in the Defence.

The Government's objective is to have modern Defence, adapted to meet the new security challenges. New and more complex threats increase the need for flexible Defence that can handle a wide range of different tasks. Standby arrangements along the coast must be given higher priority than today, and the role of the Defence in

relation to environmental monitoring and maritime rescue work is to be strengthened. The Defence must, to a greater extent than today, be geared towards the exercise of sovereignty and towards ensuring stability in our waters, especially in the North.

The Government will maintain the general compulsory military service, adjusted to changing times. This must be based on the needs of the Defence.

The Government will review the routines for procurement of military equipment in order to have a public procurement policy that ensures repurchase agreements and conformity with Norwegian foreign policy objectives.

The Government will:

- implement measures to improve the economic management of the Defence,
- set up a widely composed committee, which is to prepare the basis for a new long-term plan for the Defence from 2009,
- ensure a good balance between military and civilian standby arrangements and attach increased importance to civil protection,
- not provide military forces for international operations that are not rooted in the UN Charter and for which there is not a clear UN mandate,
- withdraw Norwegian staff officers and training officers from Iraq,
- strengthen Norwegian participation in ISAF in Afghanistan. On this basis, we will not renew Norwegian participation in Operation Enduring Freedom when the mandate period for these forces expires,
- set up a new advisory committee on security policy and civil protection,
- maintain the objective that one of the principal tasks of the Defence will be to exercise sovereignty and ensure stability in our near areas,
- ensure that the presence of the Defence will be kept at a high level in Northern Norway. Political resolutions on localisation of detachments must be followed up.

Trade

In its trade policy, Norway has strong interests in and a wish to promote an international trade policy that is based on the greatest possible level of fairness. Norway today has one of the most open economies in the world. The Government will work to promote an international trade regime in which decisive importance must be attached to the environment, vocational and social rights, food security and development in poor countries.

In the ongoing WTO negotiations, the Government will work to promote Norwegian interests, but the Government will also provide support for countries that promote the interests of the poor part of the world's population. Norway must make practical contributions to ensuring that the poor countries can safeguard their interests and that negotiations must be conducted with the greatest possible degree of openness and public access. At the same time, the Government will also favour in its aid policy that the countries in the South can participate in and benefit from the development of international trade.

The Government will ensure improved communication of information to the Norwegian public on the progress of the negotiations and the positions adopted by Norway.

The Government will work to ensure that the WTO rules does not become an obstacle to a differentiated trade policy that allows for separate schemes to be entered into in order to promote trade with selected poor countries.

Rich countries' export subsidies are currently very damaging to poor countries and middle-income countries in terms of both domestic markets and export opportunities. The Government will support the work to ban all export subsidies through the WTO.

The Government's basic position is that the WTO rules must not deprive poor countries of the management right and means that have been important in developing our own society into a welfare society. Regarding trade in services under the framework of the GATS Agreement, the Government will review and reassess the Norwegian

positions. Norway should not make demands of poor countries that may entail a weakening of the possibilities of developing strong public services in health and education. Nor should Norway favour an agreement that may force privatisation of public services in Norway.

Decisive importance must be attached to ensuring access to low-priced medicines against life-threatening diseases (HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis) in poor countries in connection with the international negotiations on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (the TRIPS Agreement).

Liberalisation of trade should only take place within a framework under which fair distribution, fundamental social standards, the environment and national food security are taken into consideration.

The Government will:

- review and reassess all requirements that Norway has made for developing countries regarding liberalisation of the services sector in the GATS negotiations,
- ensure that Norway is to work for countries in the south being given sufficient freedom of action to choose development strategies that take into consideration their special needs and development level in connection with the WTO negotiations on agriculture and on market access for other products than agricultural products,
- work to ensure that a country's right to the production of food for its own population is recognised in the WTO negotiations,
- work to promote Norwegian export of fish and fish products as well as other export interests in the ongoing WTO negotiations,
- work to ensure that Norway supports the developing countries' demands for a renegotiation of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement),
- attach importance to ensuring increased openness about the requests that Norway sends to other countries in the GATS negotiations and provide the public with access to the requests that Norway receives, in so far as this is possible within the WTO rules,
- contribute to ensuring that poor countries have sufficient political freedom of action to protect their own food production,
- increase the import quotas for poor countries, including for non-LDC countries. The Government will target its aid towards enabling LDC countries to exercise their trade preferences,
- work internationally for a review of previous WTO rounds before the negotiations are extended to new areas.

Chapter 3: Economic policy

The goals of our economic policy shall be employment for everyone, a sustainable development, a more equitable distribution of wealth and the improvement of the welfare schemes. The different components of this policy shall work together to achieve these goals.

The Nordic model, which is based on well-developed, universal welfare schemes, close cooperation with and between employer and employee organisations, and a competitive private sector, does well in international comparisons. A high level of welfare, high productivity, good economic growth and relatively low unemployment are a result of an active public sector that, in collaboration with business and industry, organisations and the population-at-large, has developed a good society. We want to further develop these good experiences.

Economic growth and employment must be bolstered in all parts of the country, among other things through increased efforts in research and development and by improving the society's ability to ensure everyone access to key welfare schemes such as kindergartens, education, provision of care and health.

We want to conduct an economic policy that helps promote further economic growth, and that growth must occur within the constraints of a sustainable development so that future generations' possibilities of meeting their needs are not undermined. A sustainable development requires that

Norway and other countries manage environmental and natural resources in a long-term perspective. At the same time, clean air, access to recreational areas and outdoor experiences including those in undisturbed wilderness, are important to people's quality of life and state of health.

We want to improve welfare schemes and the range of services offered in the public sector. The organisation of the public budgets shall help improve the country's overall competitiveness, especially by concentrating on education, research, transport and communications and through a more active industrial policy. Furthermore, competitiveness shall be ensured through specific, targeted measures that increase productivity without causing injury to employees or damage to the environment. The terms and conditions for conducting economic activity shall be stable and predictable. We want to encourage closer cooperation on income policy with employer and employee organisations. If they are to meet the competition, Norwegian companies cannot have any greater growth in costs than those of our trading partners.

Financing the future welfare state is a demanding task. The demographic structure of the population will be altered so that fewer and fewer economically active persons will have to finance the incomes of more and more people receiving a pension and national insurance. We want to ensure a good, extensive welfare state in the long run as well, by facilitating increased economic growth, a responsible economic policy with a long-term management of our petroleum revenues, a sustainable pension system and a strong public sector. We want to constantly improve, renew and restructure public-sector activities in cooperation with the employees, so that the services are adapted to people's needs. Preventive efforts must be strengthened. Many of the welfare state's expenses are related to insufficient damage prevention and the exclusion of many people from employment and society.

In order to maintain and improve our welfare, it is necessary to have a strong non-sheltered sector. The closing of non-sheltered industries has detrimental effects on employment, weakens the rural economy and drains the country of expertise. Competition can help promote the development of technology and knowledge. We want to conduct an active industrial policy that

concentrates on research and development, that strengthens our current business and industry and that encourages the emergence of new business enterprises.

One of the goals of the government is to reduce economic disparities and abolish poverty.

The Budget Committee's report on increased long-term thinking in the central government's budgeting provides the basis for a review of a possible distinction between current operations and long-term investment in the central government's budget policy.

The government wants to work on developing new management tools and models in its national and global economic policy.

The guidelines for our economic policy

We want to conduct a fiscal policy that helps promote stable economic development in both the short term and the long run. We want to base it on the fiscal rule for budget policy. In the long run, the use of petroleum revenues shall correspond to the real return on the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund, so that future generations will also benefit from the petroleum wealth. The fiscal policy shall be used to smooth out the fluctuations in the economy in order to maintain a low rate of unemployment. The degree of discretion in the budget policy shall be used to bolster employment and improve the rate of growth in the economy, and to further develop the welfare schemes. The monetary policy shall work together with the fiscal policy and be continued as incorporated in the regulations concerning monetary policy, where emphasis is given to considerations regarding inflation, the exchange rate of the Norwegian krone and employment.

In this platform, we present our common policy objectives for the next four years. The extent to which we succeed in achieving these goals will depend on the degree of financial discretion. The scope of this discretion will depend on a number of factors with trends that are difficult to predict. Among other things, these include the growth in mandatory expenses in the National Insurance, variable tax revenues and the future price of oil. Maintaining low unemployment and high employment and stable economic and sustainable development are fundamental considerations in the government's economic policy.

Current guidelines for the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund's investments are used as a basis. We want to continue and further develop the ethical guidelines for the Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund. The Fund shall be managed in such a way that the capital yields a good return in the long run as well. This is dependent on achieving a sustainable development in the economic, ecological and social senses. The Norwegian Government Petroleum Fund shall not make investments that entail an unacceptable risk that the Fund will contribute to unethical actions or omissions.

As the Fund gains experience with the current ethical guidelines, we want to assess whether to develop a more active investment profile that also includes ethical considerations, e.g. in exercising the power of ownership.

Tax and duty policy

We want to work for a tax system that provides stable revenues to the society, that helps promote an equitable distribution of wealth, a healthier environment, and employment throughout the country, and that improves the functioning of the economy. To a greater extent than it does at present, the tax system shall contribute to a more equitable distribution of income in the society. A tax on dividends shall be introduced. We want to implement the approved amendments in the tax system.

The fight against tax avoidance shall be intensified. Among other things, that means a review of tougher rules for transfer pricing in groups.

We want to ensure a stable, competitive regulatory framework with regard to taxes for business and industry, and in the coming Storting term we want to maintain the aggregate tax level from 2004. At this level, it is possible to create a better distribution of wealth and to devise measures that can promote growth and employment.

The government wants to review the tax and duty system with the aim of making changes to promote environment-friendly behaviour. This shall be done within a revenue-neutral framework.

The internationalisation of finance and production gives rise to tax competition among countries. This imposes limits on the ways in which we can devise our tax and duty system without weakening the competitiveness of our business and industry. We want to devise forms of taxation that make it difficult to avoid taxation through creative accounting or decamping abroad. Therefore, we want to work for international tax agreements that limit the possibility of tax avoidance.

The government wants to:

- maintain the aggregate tax level that was in effect in 2004.
- even out the disparities in the taxation of earned and investment income respectively, e.g. by introducing a tax on dividends.
- increase the deduction for trade union dues to double the current level.
- reintroduce the excise on disposable packaging.
- conduct a review of the system of special duties in order to change duties that are detrimental to Norwegian manufacturing jobs, e.g. in competition with imports.
- have a revision of the motor vehicle tax in order to encourage safer and more environment-friendly cars.
- bolster the Revenue Service and intensify the efforts against undeclared work and tax evasion.
- ensure that cohabitants who have lived together for two or more years shall have the same right to exemption from the capital transfer tax as spouses and cohabitants with children.
- increase the tax-free allowance for youth.
- maintain the deduction for gifts to non-governmental organisations.
- make the change of generations in family businesses easier by reviewing the capital transfer tax.

Chapter 4: Industrial policy

Our goal is for Norway to develop one of the leading, innovative, dynamic, knowledge-based economies in the world in the areas where we have an advantage. Norway shall be a good country in which to do business.

Business and industry are dependent on the practice of an economic policy that ensures competitiveness. We want to provide stable, predictable, competitive parameters and conduct an active industrial policy in which the central government is involved in a partnership with business and industry and the employees. We want to establish good parameters that promote innovation and creativity. The public funding apparatus shall be strengthened and be a flexible partner, not a bureaucratic hurdle, for business and industry.

In the areas of research and development, localisation and marketing, partnership and facilitation, and access to capital and ownership, the central government shall be involved in a broad range of industrial policies in order to promote innovation and competitive business and industry. Strategic national support shall help promote the goal of creating a sustainable development, make Norway a pioneering country in environmental policy and create jobs throughout the country. The government also wants to focus on the importance of the service sector for economic development.

The government wants to:

- develop national strategies in the industries where Norway has expertise or special advantages, such as the marine sector, the maritime sector, energy, the environment and transport and travel.
- increase support for economic development through Innovation Norway, including investment grants, the Norwegian Corporation for Industrial Estates and Development (SIVA) and the regional development funds, and reintroduce municipal business development funds.
- increase government grants for seed capital. The focus must encompass more of the enterprise's activities than just product development. We want to ensure that the nationwide seed capital scheme associated with the universities also includes the University of Tromsø. The scheme in Tromsø should be coordinated with the regional loan scheme.
- increase the use of government research and development contracts. We want to convert part of the national debt to SIVA to equity.
- develop centres of excellence throughout the country and centres for outstanding research affiliated with the universities.
- do more work to develop regional economic growth nodes.
- help establish local general services offices for business and industry.
- improve Norwegian patent policy so that we can ensure patent rights on a par with competing countries.
- expand the scheme of awarding grants to entrepreneurs under the direction of Innovation Norway and consider the establishment of an entrepreneurial bank.
- ensure good social schemes for entrepreneurs, e.g. by looking at the conditions that would enable self-employed persons to combine a vocational career with child care.
- develop a national plan of action for female entrepreneurs and establish financing schemes that particularly encourage innovation and entrepreneurship among women.
- establish new schemes to ensure better access to capital for Norwegian companies. A separate fund with a sizeable capital base shall be considered.
- strengthen the cooperation between research institutions and business and industry and establish skills programmes for various business sectors where the whole range of

- options from skilled workers to research efforts are included.
- consider a business-oriented design package, which includes education, important industries and industrial communities and Innovation Norway.
 - review the regional transport subsidy scheme and evaluate whether it should be increased and which industries it shall encompass.

Fishery and aquaculture policy

We want to conduct a new, comprehensive coastal policy. The coastal and fisheries policy shall help promote long-term, environmentally justifiable economic growth for the whole society and simultaneously contribute to an equitable distribution of resources. The government is concerned with maintaining a diverse ownership structure. It is important to take care of the locally based companies in the fishery and aquaculture industry. The government wants to maintain the Act relating to the marketing of raw fish and the Participation Act.

We want to ensure long-term national use and control of our marine resources and marine areas. Through the legal framework and regulations, the public authorities' management and control of these resources and the distribution of fish in the sea, marine organisms and farmed species shall be ensured. Unregulated fishing, especially in the Barents Sea, is a serious environment and economic problem, and must be stopped.

Whenever possible, the wealth generated from our national fishery resources shall benefit the coastal communities that are dependent on these fisheries. Coastal fishing and an expanding market for fresh fish are an important part of this strategy.

The government regards it as a strength that the industry has a structure with participants of various sizes. The government wants to arrange matters to facilitate a fishing fleet that helps promote economic activity and employment along the whole coast and that can ensure the industry year-round stable access to raw materials.

The government thinks that structural measures for the fishing fleet must be devised in keeping with the goals of ensuring that the fishery resources remain our common property, ensuring a fishing fleet that helps promote activity along the whole coast and simultaneously ensuring a fleet that is modern, varied and profitable. The government wants to initiate a broad study to evaluate how the structural measures that have been implemented work in relation to these goals. While the study is underway, access to the sale of quotas and rights that are not linked to fishing vessels must be frozen.

A fast-working committee with a broad range of representatives shall be appointed, where the interests of both the local and regional elected authorities along the coast, the trade associations, the academic community and other community interests are represented. This committee shall also review the question of having a time limit on all licences, rights and participation permits.

The schemes governing fishing operations for the coastal fleet will be continued until the government has decided which measures shall be implemented for boats in the coastal fleet under 15 meters.

The government wants to:

- draw up a national strategy for development of the fisheries industry that is based on our advantage in access to fresh, high quality raw materials. Delivery of fresh raw materials must be given priority over delivery of raw materials that are frozen at sea.
- ensure that the fishery resources are managed with a view to achieving the highest possible long-term exploitation of resources within sustainable limits and an exploitation that is as

stable as possible from year to year. We want to ensure that the quota year shall be made more flexible. The resource control must be strengthened, and there must be an obligatory reporting requirement as to when and where catches from large vessels are to be landed and more frequent inspections on board.

- ensure that the fishery resources are not privatised. No one may own a fixed percentage of the quota that has been set at any given time. Regions and municipalities, together with active fishermen, may own vessels with quota rights pursuant to the current Participation Act. The terms of delivery must be enforced strictly so that licences involving serious breaches are revoked.
- ensure that fish processing industry shall be guaranteed a stable access to raw materials. Long-term agreements within the constraints of the Act relating to the marketing of raw fish can only be disregarded in order to ensure delivery from small vessels that can not deliver elsewhere. As a general rule, the fish raw materials shall be processed at onshore plants. The legislation concerning on board production shall be as similar to the legislation for onshore production as possible.
- the red king crab is an alien species among Norwegian fauna. We want to go through the evaluation report relating to the management of the red king crab when it is issued and likewise review the mandate to ensure that the question of free fishing in the Norwegian fishery management zone is evaluated.
- establish recruiting quotas or other schemes that ensure youth a way to find employment in the fisheries industry. The government wants to arrange matters so as to encourage youth to seek occupations in fisheries and aquaculture.
- ensure that the current district quota scheme is enhanced and utilised more actively. National authorities may annually allocate up to 10 per cent of the national quota to landing and processing in especially vulnerable districts in order to protect employment in the industry. Vessels in all parts of the country that want to deliver fish for processing in the relevant region shall be treated equally. Regional authorities are allowed to allocate these landings to the areas and undertakings that have a short or long term need for these special policy instruments.
- ensure a decentralised landing and processing system through continued support for landing and processing plants and increase the allocations to the transport support.
- initiate a programme for the renewal of the coastal fishing fleet.
- furnish investment grants through Innovation Norway for investment in the coastal fleet.
- continue decommissioning schemes.
- make an active effort to convince the authorities in our neighbouring countries and in the international regulating committee in order to prevent overfishing and unregulated fishing, especially in the Barents Sea, in the North Sea and in international waters.
- ensure that the Directorate of Fisheries and the coast guard are ensured increased financial resources in order to stop unregulated fishing.
- establish a system of official quality marking of Norwegian fish products.
- develop a value creation programme for fish, with a special focus on fresh fish, and initiate a national effort to promote capture-based aquaculture and farming of new species. The objective is to develop new and more consumer-friendly products, develop good logistical solutions, increase our knowledge of international marketing opportunities, conduct market-oriented development work and strengthen our domestic and international marketing efforts.
- establish a separate government investment fund for the marine sector, which may enter in with ownership interests in the farming and processing of marine products.
- work to make the fish farming industry sustainable.
- have an increased marine research effort and a strengthening of the marine innovation programme, in order to help promote research, development of new products, and marine technology.
- review the competitive situation in the aquaculture industry. It is assumed that the ceiling for ownership will be significantly lower than it is at present. Any new licences ought to have a goal of strengthening small and medium-sized players.

- allow for instruments of government such as feed quotas, etc., in order to ensure a long-term balance in the production of farmed salmon.
- allow through Innovation Norway for the aquaculture industry to be ensured opportunities for risk alleviation in the start phase of the development and introduction of new farmed species.
- transfer the distribution and redistribution of fish farming licences to the regionally elected level. The government wants to evaluate whether the licence fee shall devolve on municipalities that make areas available for new licences.

Industry

Industry is important to Norway. Industry provides many jobs in all parts of the country, generates large export revenues and creates a demand for sub-contracts and services that generates major ripple effects. We have good conditions for industry, e.g. through natural resources and a high level of expertise. We want to protect and further develop our industry and simultaneously help develop new industrial activities. Norwegian raw materials should be mostly processed in Norway. Through central and local government policy instruments we want to ensure industry good, stable parameters and help facilitate new industrial activities in the coming years.

The government wants to:

- initiate measures aimed at particular companies and sectors to maintain and develop future-oriented industrial activities.
- introduce a new and strengthened Competition Act within the framework of the EEA agreement.
- look into and establish a separate industrial power market. Through objective criteria, a market of this kind should ensure equal competition for the power that is put up for auction in the market. This scheme shall set requirements on energy efficiency and energy recovery when long-term electricity contracts are signed.
- review the rules for the taxation of economic rents in the hydropower sector with the aim of achieving more long-term planning in the power market.
- initiate measures to reduce the negative impact on the power intensive companies that have incurred increased expenses due to an increase in the levy on the grid tariff.
- ensure an effective import protection under current agreements as a necessary condition for an innovative and enterprising food and beverage industry.
- conduct strategically targeted efforts to make Norwegian industry a leader in environmental improvements. This will give our business and industry an advantage and new products for sale, when new international requirements for BAT (best available technology) are made more stringent and when the markets for environment-friendly energy and products grow.
- require more repurchasing and industrial participation in major defence procurements than at present.

Agriculture

Agriculture plays an important role for settlement and employment in large parts of the country. Agriculture in Norway has several functions: to produce safe food and safeguard the food supply and simultaneously contribute to employment and settlement throughout the country. Agriculture is diverse and encompasses farming, forestry, grazing and reindeer husbandry, and it is also important for industries such as tourism and travel, culture and the food and beverage industry. Norwegian topsoil is a limited resource that it is a national responsibility to preserve for our descendants. The goal is to maintain a vital agriculture throughout the country.

The government wants to:

- ensure the practitioners of agriculture an income trend and social conditions equivalent to those of other groups.

- continue the market regulation schemes. The agricultural cooperative's role as a market regulator shall be ensured.
- ensure that agriculture maintains a varied land use structure throughout the country. The structural profile must be strengthened, the channelling policy shall be maintained and the structural income support system shall be given a clearer regional profile. Policy instruments must be used to encourage increased grazing by farm animals so as to be able to maintain an open cultivated landscape
- give special priority to the welfare schemes through proposals to improve relief worker arrangements and by ensuring a holiday and opportunities for leisure-time.
- give priority to farmers who derive a significant part of their employment and income from the farm and from other primary industrial activities. Conduct a total review of the consequences of the WTO negotiations for Norwegian agricultural policy. In a close dialogue with the industry, we want to lay the basis for devising policy instruments in keeping with the Storting's goals for agricultural policy and international obligations.
- have a strong import protection for domestic agricultural production.
- maintain that there are no grounds for new concessions under article 19 of the EEA agreement as long as the current negotiations in the WTO are underway.
- further develop the value creation programmes for food, timber and reindeer husbandry, and encourage the development of niche products, go in for rural development measures and bioenergy and develop a new policy for mountainous areas.
- help increase the processing of Norwegian wood products, and further develop a national forestry policy in which the central government shares responsibility for planting and the tending of young stands. The financial subsidy schemes for forestry shall be improved.
- give consideration to a favourable loan scheme in connection with getting started in agriculture so that the change of generations and recruiting of new farmers can be better ensured.
- ensure that it shall be a goal that 15 per cent of our food production and food consumption shall be organic by 2015.
- give priority to animal welfare and improve the access to capital in the industry so that new requirements for animal welfare and the renewal of production facilities can be met. Schemes must be devised in such a way that they simultaneously preserve the goal of maintaining diversity and variation in farm size.
- ensure that the Norwegian Food Safety Authority shall be funded to a greater extent by public funds, given that it carries out a public inspection function.
- ensure that the farmers' right to use propagating material from their own crops shall not be weakened.

Shipping

The Norwegian shipping industry has long traditions. Shipping and the maritime industry provide important skilled jobs along the whole coast. Norway must have the ambition of being one of the leading nations in maritime research, competence building and innovation. Through good, stable steering parameters, we want to help ensure jobs and growth in the maritime industries.

The government wants to:

- promote a stronger effort to ensure jobs and growth in the maritime industries.
- continue existing schemes for Norwegian shipping companies and seamen in order to meet the increasingly tough international competition. We want to expand the "net pay" arrangement to apply to all Norwegian seamen on board ships in the Norwegian Ship Register (NOR) that are exposed to competition, including freighters, cargo vessels, wellboats, tugboats and towing and salvage vessels. We want to take international initiatives to ensure equal competitive terms for seamen in Nordic and European countries, among other things in order to prevent tax competition.

- ensure that the "net pay" arrangement for ferry companies in the Norwegian Ship Register that ply international routes shall cover the minimum safe manning in accordance with the ships' alarm instructions.
- review the Norwegian tax regulations for the shipping industry, and follow up the committee that evaluates the Norwegian tax scheme for shipping companies.
- ensure that requirements for positive industrial and commercial development shall be set for all ships under the "net pay" arrangement (e.g. documentable investments exceeding the normal level in HSE work, innovation and industrial development with research institutions, suppliers and other companies in the maritime cluster), plus requirements for a certain number of apprentice training places. The government wants to submit proposals for specific terms and conditions in accordance with the above-mentioned requirements.
- reintroduce the requirement of a work or residence permit for foreign seamen on ships under foreign flags that carry goods or passengers between Norwegian ports
- evaluate schemes that entail a modernisation of the coastal freighter fleet. Among other things, this can be tied to the scheme in Innovation Norway. We want to continue the NO_x-reduction programme.
- replace the current public-road ferries with gas ferries through a collaboration between industry and the authorities, so that development and production are carried out in Norway as research and development projects.
- continue the scheme for a building loan guarantee for Norwegian shipyards and use development contracts actively to help promote innovation in the industry.
- ensure that recruiting to maritime industries shall be bolstered and that competence building is implemented for employees in the industry.

Tourism and travel

Tourism and travel are an important export item for Norway. Tourism and travel are characteristically a regional industry and a female-dominated industry that consists of a number of small and medium-sized companies. We want to further develop Norwegian tourism and travel and concentrate on advertising and image building of Norway as a tourist destination.

Norway has attractive resources from a tourism perspective in the form of our natural scenery and cultural heritage. Protection of this heritage is a necessary condition for a positive development of the travel and tourism industry in the future

The government wants to:

- develop a national tourism strategy based on closeness to nature and Norwegian culture, which preserves the effort to promote ecotourism and the travel and tourism industry as a regional industry.
- strengthen the international marketing of Norway as a tourist destination, e.g. by increasing the funding for information about Norway abroad.
- ensure the quality of the tourism products and the confidence in the market
- introduce a voluntary certification scheme for companies that want to market themselves as a part of the Norwegian brand.
- introduce a special training programme that follows up the strategic effort to promote tourism.

Ownership

A diversity of ownership in Norwegian business and industry helps strengthen the access to capital and expertise. There is a need for a diverse ownership, private and state ownership, and national and foreign ownership. National ownership is important in order to ensure that

the companies have their head office and research activities in Norway. Foreign ownership, on the other hand, helps ensure development and competence building.

The state is a major owner of Norwegian business and industry. State ownership ensures our right to use our common natural resources and ensures revenue to the community. State ownership may be crucial to ensuring a national ownership and national basing of key operations in Norway in the coming years. Public ownership is important in order to ensure that important regional policy, transport policy, cultural policy and health policy goals are met.

We see an increased tendency to sell off Norwegian high-tech companies as soon as they reach an international level. Norway is dependent on good contact with strong international centres of expertise and capital, but in many cases the result of a sale may be that we are not able to build up a long-term high-tech industry and centres of excellence in Norway. We are in danger of undermining the results of long-term research and development, which is in no way reflected in short-term market value. Therefore a better strategy must be developed in order to ensure national ownership of key companies in the information society.

The government wants to:

- ensure a strong public and national ownership in order to achieve important policy goals and guarantee a return and revenue for the society-at-large.
- make sure that public companies shall be ensured professional ownership and a predictable dividend policy. The state ownership ought to be far more active than it is at present. Proactive efforts should be made to support research and development; state-owned companies should lead the way in the efforts to promote equal status; and measures should be initiated to achieve greater openness about and awareness of top managers' salaries in companies where the state is a major owner.
- ensure that our energy resources shall be the property of all the Norwegian people. Therefore, we want to have a strong public ownership of our hydropower resources and our petroleum deposits. The current reversion scheme shall be maintained in such a way that public and national ownership is ensured. We also want to arrange matters so that the publicly owned regional power companies can grow and evolve by providing opportunities for access to increased public equity.
- ensure continued strong state ownership of our petroleum resources through the State's Direct Financial Interest (SDFI). In the future, SDFI must also be able acquire shares on the Norwegian continental shelf and SDFI's total ownership shall be maintained at the current level.
- maintain the government shareholding in important companies such as Telenor, Norsk Hydro and DnBNOR. Telenor shall continue to be a Norwegian company with its head office and most important research and development functions in Norway. Statnett and Statskog shall not be sold or partially privatised, and the current shareholding in Statoil shall be maintained.
- ensure that Statkraft continues to be a wholly-owned public company.
- ensure that the provisions of the Act pertaining to Petroleum Activities concerning requirements that players on the Norwegian continental shelf have an independent management and organisation in Norway shall be consistently put into practice.
- ensure that cooperative societies and savings banks shall have a regulatory framework for cooperative share capital and primary capital certificates respectively that make this a realistic alternative to shares.
- ensure that a new Act relating to cooperatives shall be submitted during this Storting term. This Act shall give the cooperative model increased development possibilities
- ensure that the National Insurance Fund's right to invest in Norwegian business and industry is expanded.

Chapter 5: Transport and communications

The government wants to generate a positive development throughout the country and will therefore increase the support for transport and communications. The main goals of the transport and communications policy shall be increased traffic safety, a more environment-friendly transport, regional development and an efficient and accessible transport system for the whole country. Transport and communications are an important prerequisite for settlement, economic development and resource utilisation. The public authorities are responsible for ensuring that there is a good, modern communications network throughout the country. This calls for a various types of support and a differentiated transport and communications policy in which the various parts of the transport and communications sector are considered comprehensively.

At the same time, we know that many forms of transport give rise to environmental problems. The combustion of oil and gas result in emissions of the greenhouse gas CO₂, and road traffic is the predominant source of local air pollution and noise.

Increased support for transport and communications in urban and suburban areas will mean an improvement of the road network and public transportation, including railways, in order to solve challenges related to creating a good urban environment and a safe traffic system. For the rural areas, this means giving priority to the development and maintenance of the road network, maintaining a good system of public-road ferries and repair of harbours and fairways.

All transport in Norway shall be safe. The government wants to strengthen the efforts to achieve its Vision Zero, which entails that there shall be no accidents resulting in death or lifelong injury in traffic.

The government thinks that extensive competitive tendering in the transport and communications sector is detrimental to important safety and emergency preparedness functions. The government wants to devise a comprehensive transport and communications policy under democratic governing, where rural and regional policy, environmental protection and equitable distribution shall be fundamental premises.

The government wants to:

- increase the support for transport and communications in keeping with the Storting's resolution during the consideration of the National Transport Plan.
- consider project funding for comprehensive development and modernisation of new stretches of road and railway.
- help reduce the disparities in fuel prices throughout the country by reintroducing an equalisation scheme for fuel transport costs.
- conduct an active policy to ensure that people are not exposed to harmful pollution. The national goals for air quality shall remain unaltered.
- prepare a strategic plan of action in order to meet the national noise goal of reducing noise disturbance by 25 per cent relative to the 1999 level by 2010.

Good roads throughout the country

The government thinks well-constructed roads are a necessary parameter in order to be able to maintain the structure of settlement and business and industry. The government wants to increase the allocations for highway purposes. To trigger greater economic growth, there must be more proactive support for the secondary public road network. There is also a need for upgrading the county roads.

The government wants to increase its efforts to improve traffic safety. It is especially important to

safeguard more roads against landslides.

The government wants to increase its support for cycle paths, in order to improve the traffic situation and safety for cyclists. One of our goals is to increase the number of trips to work, especially in urban areas, that are made by bicycle.

The public-road ferries may be regarded as part of the road network, and the expenses for those who make use of them ought to be reduced. The government wants to improve the discount scheme and study whether some stretches can be made free.

The government wants to:

- increase its support for investment, operation and maintenance of roads, in keeping with the resolution of a majority in the Storting in connection with the consideration of the National Transport Plan.
- have a stronger focus on improving the safety of roads with increased resources for traffic safety measures, landslide prevention and walkways and cycle paths.
- work actively to develop and increase the use of environment-friendly vehicles, implement the replacement of public-road ferries with new gas ferries and support the development of hydrogen as an energy carrier in the transport sector.
- introduce policy instruments that make it profitable to choose low-emission cars. Policy instruments that may be relevant include access to bus lanes, toll-free passage through urban toll cordons and reduced initial duties on passenger cars.
- help ensure that road stretches exposed to noise and pollution are enclosed in lids.
- initiate an introductory programme for the use of biofuels in keeping with EU directive 2003/30/EF.

A future-oriented public transportation

A future-oriented transport and communications policy entails increased support for public transportation systems for both passengers and freight. In urban and suburban areas, public transportation must become a serious alternative to the use of private cars and a key component of the transport system. It must become profitable to choose public transportation systems for trips to work and for recreational travel. In order to ease the transitions among the various forms of transportation, more support must be provided for well-developed nodes. Public transportation shall be accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical functionality.

A good public transportation system and the transfer of freight from road to rail and sea are important measures for reducing the environmental problems from the transport sector. In densely populated areas, arrangements must be made for increased use of bicycles and walking. There is a need for efficient measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector.

The government wants to:

- introduce a youth pass for public transportation, which gives a 50 per cent discount to adolescents, pupils and students.
- require accommodations for the disabled on public transportation
- increase the incentive scheme for public transportation to the cities and urban areas that currently use it and expand the scheme to apply to more cities that introduce measures in order to increase the proportion of public transportation and limit motor vehicle traffic.
- work to ensure that priority is given to accessibility to public transportation in connection with investments in transport and communications in the major urban areas.
- develop a user-adapted, cost-efficient public transportation system in rural areas through shuttle service and pre-booked services by taxi combined with bus, boat

and train along the main traffic arteries.

- acquire better knowledge about the effects of competitive tendering of local public transportation and knowledge about how different forms of purchasing and types of contracts can help ensure that broader community interests are also met. The government wants to evaluate entering into a dialogue with the county administrations about postponing further competitive tendering until this knowledge is available. The employees shall be ensured the same rights in the transfer of a tender as in the transfer of an undertaking.

Increased support for railways

Railways shall be an attractive, modern, environmentally correct and good transport system for passengers and freight. To unleash the potential that is inherent in this form of transport, there will have to be considerable backing. This entails that priority will have to be given to upgrading the current track and building double track, especially around the biggest cities.

NSB (formerly the Norwegian State Railways) shall be developed as a public transport company that handles passenger traffic, freight traffic and bus traffic.

The government wants to:

- increase the support for railways in keeping with the majority resolution in the Storting in connection with the consideration of the National Transport Plan. Most of the investments shall be made in the first part of the term.
- remove the infrastructure charge and electricity tax on railways.
- not submit any more railway passenger stretches for tendering.
- stop the privatisation and competitive tendering of operation and maintenance tasks in the Norwegian National Rail Administration.
- work for good train connections among the main cities of Scandinavia.

The seaway - an important part of transport policy

Coastal Norway is important for economic growth in the country. Thus, sea transport and ports are an important part of our transport policy. Arrangements must be made for safe traffic along the coast, with better marking and maintenance of the fairways, modern navigational systems and nautical charts. In order to transfer more freight to boats, the ports must be upgraded so that the transfer to and from boats is also improved. The oil pollution contingency plans must be strengthened, and we must do more to avoid the occurrence of accidents that have catastrophic consequences.

The government wants to:

- increase the allocations to fishing ports
- enhance the maintenance of seaways with harbours, fairways, lighthouses and marking services
- further develop the ports as logistical nodes
- undertake a review and give priority to measures for the repair of fairways and fishing ports. ensure a good tugboat capacity with a rapid response time along the whole coast.
- maintain the coastal express liner as a comprehensive transport service with daily, year-round sailings along the entire distance from Bergen to Kirkenes.
- perform a comprehensive assessment of all fees and duties in sea transport, so that sea transport is given equal competitive terms with land transport.
-

Good air service

The government wants to have a transport and communications policy for the whole country. This also includes air traffic. Both the network of local airports and the main air route system are an important part of our national infrastructure. We want to ensure a network of airports that provides modern air service in all parts of the country. The scheme where the busiest airports pay for the unprofitable airports shall be continued.

The government wants to:

- maintain the current airport structure, unless there is an express local wish to close down an airport. Such closings must only occur after a thorough process in which the views of all affected parties have been heard.
- ensure the best possible safety and regularity by improving the landing equipment at airports.
- ensure good service in the network of local airports with regard to aircraft size, the quality of the aircraft, departures and safety.
- evaluate the organisation of Avinor AS in cooperation with the management and the employees, with a view to the best possible safeguarding of social considerations, especially air safety.

Postal services throughout the country

Postal services are an important part of the infrastructure for maintaining settlement and business and industry throughout the country. The primary objective in the area of postal services is to ensure a nationwide range of equivalent postal services at the same price and at a good level of quality. The uniform tariff shall be continued. Through licensing, the government wants to ensure the maintenance of Norway Post's social obligations.

The government wants to:

- maintain an equivalent range of postal services at the same price throughout the country.
- maintain the uniform tariff.
- ensure that Norway Post AS remains 100 per cent state-owned.

Digital right of access

Norway shall be one of the first countries in the world to make use of and develop electronic communication. The government wants to increase the level of ambition for the development of broadband. The development of broadband for the whole country provides great opportunities for the establishment and development of business and industry, and does away with many of the disadvantages of remoteness that may exist. One of the government's goals is to ensure that all households and private and public enterprises shall have access to a future-oriented high-speed network at the same price throughout the country.

To induce a more rapid rate of development, the government must provide financial support. The public sector shall be at the forefront when it comes to demanding new technological solutions.

The government wants to achieve a more coordinated development of the various digital networks in Norway.

The government wants to:

- ensure that the whole country shall have an opportunity to connect to the high-speed network by the end of 2007.
- ensure that there will not be unreasonable geographic price disparities associated with connection to the broadband network.

- ensure that public funds shall be used to help achieve development in areas where it is unfeasible to do so commercially.
- help facilitate the development of the mobile network in the areas where the coverage is currently not good enough.
- help ensure that Bane Tele AS becomes a publicly controlled company that helps improve the broadband structure throughout Norway.
- encourage industrial and commercial development and public use of open-source software.
- strengthen the monitoring of competition, safety and protection of privacy in telephony and electronic communication.

Chapter 6: Representative government, local communities and regional policy

The government begins with the premise that representative government is a form of government with influence for the many and an equitable distribution of power, capital and property. A vital, decentralised democracy with broad participation is fundamental to meeting social challenges.

It is through popular involvement and democratic governing that we can best solve environmental problems, put more people to work, ensure an equalisation among different groups, regions and countries, ensure national and local right to use our natural resources and ensure Norwegian ownership of business and industry.

Representative government

Representative government is under pressure. Decisions are increasingly handed over to the players in the markets, to wealthy private individuals, to organisations, to bureaucrats and to others who are not accountable to the people in elections. This results in a loss of trust, a sense of powerlessness and less involvement and participation in public affairs by most people.

If important political objectives are to be met, the markets must be corrected with steering from democratic institutions. If important community interests such as environmental considerations and an equitable social and geographical distribution are to be ensured, the development cannot be left to market forces alone. A policy that shall help meet the goals for society supported by the government requires a willingness to govern and social solidarity.

The government wants to:

- help facilitate increased participation in political activities and broad representation in public committees, boards and councils.
- arrange matters so that persons with responsibility for providing care and/or a disability can assume political office.
- improve children and youths' opportunities for participation and influence.
- help promote the voluntary sector in Norway.
- submit matters to the Storting regarding language and power.

Openness, freedom of information, freedom of speech and protection of privacy

Clear limits must be set for how far the public authorities and others can go in the direction of supervision or control of the individual's business. The right to equal treatment in the court system and the government administration and the right of individuals to protection of personal privacy are fundamental principles in a constitutional state. Freedom of speech shall be real in both employment and private life. The right to be informed is crucial to the possibility that people have of participating in the public debate.

The protection of privacy may come into conflict with other objectives. The government wants to focus on the importance of not allowing the protection of privacy to be weakened. Schemes must be established that take into consideration both society's need for oversight and control and the individual's right to the protection of privacy.

It is a challenge to representative government that a number of matters of national importance are decided through international negotiations, where there is little access to information underway and where the elected representatives are only given the possibility after the fact to say yes or no to a negotiated agreement.

The government wants to:

- involve the Storting more strongly in the process during the preparation of important position papers prior to negotiations with other states and international organisations.
- ensure that important principles in connection with these negotiations are discussed in democratic institutions before negotiations are completed.
- strengthen the process of deliberation associated with international treaties before these become internationally binding for Norway.

Local democracy

A vital local democracy is the cornerstone of representative government and a necessary condition for trust in and the legitimacy of the national representative government. A good municipal economy with a proper balance between administrative tasks and revenue is an important prerequisite if local democracy is to be experienced as meaningful and not be seen in a bad light.

The government wants to:

- help promote the use of local consultative referendums.
- ensure the inhabitants' welfare and rights through a good municipal sector. In certain selected sectors, it is necessary to protect special rights.
- ensure participation by the municipal sector in consequence analyses that have significant impacts on local self government.
- follow up the local democracy commission's study with a report to the Storting.

Local communities and regional policy

Well-functioning, secure local communities that promote a sense of identity are a crucial necessary condition for a good welfare state. The government wants to strengthen its support of local communities and peripheral regions. Employment, infrastructure and a good, equitable welfare system are a fundamental premise for settlement. An active, targeted rural and regional policy should help protect employment and welfare in the places where people live.

Norway is a long, narrow country with scattered settlement and great variations in local resources, culture, history and identity. At the same time, we share important common values. The combination of diversity and fellowship must be mirrored in our welfare policy and in a clear policy promoting regional development. Good, safe residential communities are created locally. Rapidly growing industrial communities are created regionally. Through targeted support for regional advantages, Norway has good prospects for meeting the increasing global competition in the economy and in business and industry.

Rural and regional policy shall be based on three main strategies:

1. Improve the basis for development in the individual regions by improving skills, helping to promote innovation and industrial and commercial development, reducing the disadvantages of remoteness, developing viable local communities and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Rural and regional policy considerations shall be given greater emphasis in the policy for the individual sectors. The policy shall be better adapted to regional conditions and better coordinated.
2. Concentrate on developing economic activity in areas where the individual regions have special advantages. The government's policy shall help facilitate targeted support for regional advantages.
3. Make a special effort to meet the challenges in the most vulnerable areas. The regional policy instruments shall be strengthened.

Municipalities and regions

With a comprehensive policy for the municipal sector, the government wants to ensure that problems are solved at the lowest possible appropriate administrative level. With a new regional administrative level, many tasks and more responsibility shall be decentralised from the central government and concentrated in new, democratically governed regions.

The municipalities have the overall responsibility for providing welfare services to their inhabitants and shall be ensured resources and freedom of action to solve important social welfare problems. The role of the municipalities as social developers shall be enhanced. The municipalities with their broad social responsibility are most important in people's everyday lives and are therefore most important for developing fundamental legitimacy for political democracy. The municipalities' broad social responsibility begins with their fundamental legitimacy as a political institution.

The government puts considerable emphasis on ensuring a balance between tasks and funding of the municipal sector. A development-oriented municipal sector shall provide high quality services adapted to the needs of the inhabitants and the local community.

The government wants to:

- maintain three directly elected administrative levels.
- ensure that changes in the municipal structure shall be of a voluntary nature.
- arrange matters so as to strengthen the interaction between the municipal sector and the third sector.

Municipal economy

The government regards a strong, healthy municipal economy as a necessary condition for a good provision of welfare services throughout the country. The municipal sector's unrestricted revenues shall be bolstered considerably during this Storting term so that the programme of services offered in schools and in the care of the elderly can be improved. The government wants to increase the collaboration between the central government and the municipal sector. Through a more binding consultation procedure between the central government and the municipal sector, the government wants to ensure that the total financial resources in the public sector are better utilised. It is important that the employees and their organisations be involved in this work. A multi-year plan shall be drawn up for rectifying the economic imbalance in the municipal sector.

The municipal sector shall for the most part be block financed. As a general rule, earmarked grants shall be reserved for important national priority areas in a start phase or the funding of tasks for which few municipalities are responsible.

The revenue distribution system to the municipalities shall ensure that the ratio of revenue to actual costs is in better accordance. The government wants to undertake a comprehensive review of the revenue distribution system of the municipalities. The objective of such a review shall be to ensure the inhabitants a good and equitable range of services throughout the country.

In the future, property tax shall also be a voluntary municipal tax.

The government wants to:

- ensure that in 2006 the growth in the municipalities and county administrations' unrestricted revenue shall be NOK 5.4 billion, including NOK 225 million in increased regional grants.
- rectify the economic imbalance in the municipal sector with a binding multi-year escalation plan.
- make the consultation procedure between central government and municipality more

binding so that the total resources in the public sector can be better utilised.

- reduce the municipal contribution to the funding scheme for especially resource-intensive users and review the legislation related to expenses that are to be covered by the municipal contribution.

New regional level

There shall be three democratically elected administrative levels in Norway. A renewed and strengthened regional administrative level shall be established.

The regional level shall be the key player in regional development. A regional reform requires that it first be clarified which tasks, authority and responsibility shall be transferred from the central government to the regions, and that the regions are ensured a funding that is in accordance with the administrative tasks. The government wants to conduct a study of the tasks that shall be decentralised and of how a simultaneous reorganisation of the County Governor's offices can be carried out. Some of the current county administrations are too small for these tasks, and hence we need larger regions. The division into regions must take into consideration distances and identity and must occur in a process where both the municipalities and the current county administrations are involved. The government intends this work to be completed and submitted to the Storting so that the reform can be initiated no later than 1 January 2010.

Urban and rural

The government wants to conduct a policy that helps promote a balanced development between urban and rural and within urban areas.

We want dynamically growing cities that act as a driving force in national and regional development, and we want to conduct a proactive policy to develop urban advantages, qualities and possibilities, with strong support for social housing policy, public transportation, education and culture.

We must conduct a policy for the reduction of economic and social disparities with strong measures to combat poverty and support for measures to prevent substance abuse. Important elements of this policy will be a well-functioning programme of public welfare services, cultural programmes and meeting places for youth.

Green areas are important for physical development, health and well-being. It is especially important to preserve recreational areas on the outskirts of the cities.

The government wants to implement a major regional policy boost. The goal is to help promote equivalent living conditions throughout the country and preserve the main features of the pattern of settlement. An increased market orientation results in increased centralisation and gives people less freedom to decide where they live.

We want to safeguard regional policy considerations in sector policy and coordinate the central government's comprehensive role to a greater extent. In rural and regional development, the effort shall be targeted and intensified. The components of sector policy that are important for regional development shall be coordinated with the regional policy objectives. A consequence analysis shall be conducted of recommendations that are important for the development in rural areas.

The government shall improve the basis for development in the individual regions by building competence, helping to promote innovation and economic development, reducing the disadvantages of remoteness, developing viable local communities and promoting a sustainable use of natural resources.

We want to arrange matters so that Innovation Norway, the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Corporation for Industrial Estates and Development (SIVA) and other governmental constituents of the policy apparatus shall have locations nearer the companies throughout the country. In that way, regional centres of power can be established, which may in turn give rise to development and innovation. This will have great importance when the goal is to increase economic growth on the basis of regional advantages. Investment grants and seed capital from Innovation Norway and the regional development funds administered by the county administrations shall be increased considerably.

Both the Effect Committee (NOU 2004:2) and the so-called "Freedom of Action Committee" (NOU 2004:15) have pointed out that the Norwegian level of support relative to the narrow regional policy lies far below the ceilings that have been set internationally and that are utilised by countries with which we can be reasonably compared. The ceilings for the narrow regional policy should therefore be increased considerably and rural and regional policy goals must be given an economic follow-up in sector policies. The government wants to make a special effort to meet the challenges in the most vulnerable areas, and in particular help promote an effort aimed at supporting small communities in areas with a marked decline in population and large distances to the nearest urban centres.

The government wants to put particular emphasis on reducing the disadvantages of remoteness for business and industry in rural areas. This shall be done with a broad range of policy instruments. The government wants to work with the EU with the aim of reintroducing the scheme with regionally differentiated employers' national insurance contributions, including areas in Southern Norway with a low population density, to the extent that this is possible.

The government shall make active efforts to counteract further centralisation. The government wants to conduct an evaluation of regional consequences of the central government's activities, with the aim of achieving a better geographic distribution of central government activities. The location of state, regional and municipal jobs ought to be used actively to provide local communities and regions with new development resources in the form of employment, skills and larger professional circles.

The location of new central government activities shall be outside of Oslo, unless there are special grounds for not doing so. In the choice of location, an important consideration shall be that the new activity shall help strengthen already established regional industrial, academic and administrative milieu or help build up new ones.

The government notes that there was broad consensus in a number of fields in the Norwegian Commission for New Regional Policy, and based on this consensus we want to emphasise developing new, targeted regional policy measures. One of the government's main goals is to promote increased migration to the rural regions. The government wants to promote measures with a special focus on youth and women.

The government wants to:

- carry out a significant bolstering of the regional policy instruments, e.g. by taking advantage of the freedom of action in regional policy and working actively internationally to increase the freedom of action in the regional and industrial policy.
- submit a Report to the Storting concerning freedom of action and opportunities in the regional policy.
- reintroduce the scheme with geographically differentiated employers' national insurance contributions.
- evaluate moving central government activities away from the capital and study whether other parts of the existing central government activities can be located outside of Oslo.

- initiate a separate support programme with a focus on development of small communities, including further development of the support for shops in remote regions.
- contribute with central government funded measures to improve integration, counteract increased poverty and oppose substance abuse. A better cooperation among the central government, the municipalities and non-governmental organisations must be given priority in order to accomplish these goals.
- initiate measures for urban areas that are facing special challenges, e.g. Groruddalen in Oslo.
- introduce a special statutory protection of Osloomarka (the forests around Oslo) and other forests and fields on the outskirts of urban areas.
- submit a separate report to the Storting concerning the capital.

Chapter 7: Employment for everyone

The struggle against unemployment and for an inclusive labour market is one of the main goals of our policy. Norway's population is its most important resource. For the individual, work is the most important guarantee of a personal income. In order to accomplish these goals, we must make use of a broad range of policy instruments. In addition to a proactive industrial policy, this also applies, for example, to an active labour market policy, stronger employee rights and measures to counteract social dumping. The annual budgets ought to include an overview of the manpower reserves and measures to ensure that more people may find employment.

Labour market

In order to promote high participation in the labour force, lower unemployment and reduced poverty, it is necessary to conduct an active labour market policy. It is especially important to initiate targeted measures aimed at youth, the long-term unemployed, the elderly and the occupationally handicapped. An active labour market policy is also necessary in order to combat high unemployment among immigrants. In order to prevent those who are unemployed from being permanently excluded from employment, it is necessary to provide a differentiated programme of work experience, wage subsidies, temporary employment schemes and ordinary training measures.

Through the establishment of the new labour and welfare agency, the government wants to help promote an organisation of labour market services that focuses our efforts and concentrates on the individual user. The government wants to review the policy instruments aimed at persons of working age in order to clarify how best to help accomplish the goals of help for self-help, social security and inclusion of persons who have problems in the labour market. This will entail an evaluation of regulations, benefits, measures and services where the goal is to strengthen the efforts to get more people back to work.

There has been a rapid increase in the number of persons who need vocational rehabilitation. The rehabilitation work must be improved through a collaboration among different government departments and organisers of employment measures, and through the strengthening of the rehabilitation companies' ability to provide good rehabilitation services. With assistance from the new labour and welfare administration, the in-house rehabilitation in companies must be strengthened by giving the companies independent responsibility for keeping people employed during periods when they receive sickness benefits.

The government wants to:

- establish more jobs created in labour market schemes.
- improve the unemployment benefits scheme and rectify cuts. A job insertion guarantee shall be introduced for long-term unemployed persons who have been unemployed for two years so that everyone is ensured the right to work, education or labour market measures.
- establish far more trainee places and training jobs in the public sector especially aimed at young, newly educated persons.
- introduce a youth guarantee for everyone under age 25, which ensures individual follow-up of youth and an offer of work, education or training.
- establish more jobs created in labour market schemes in order to integrate persons who would otherwise be excluded from ordinary employment and have good financing schemes in order to establish permanent sheltered employment (*VTA*) and jobs in the organisation *Vekstbedriftene* (vocational rehabilitation companies).
- review regulations and support schemes to strengthen the vocational rehabilitation based on in-house rehabilitation in companies and on the system with separate vocational

- rehabilitation companies, as well as in the use of individual educational programmes.
- make it easier to combine work and national insurance and introduce a scheme with disability benefits as wage subsidies in all counties.

Employee rights

Laws, regulations and agreements between employer and employee organisations are very important for the employee's living conditions and opportunities to work. Norway has a long tradition whereby good cooperation among the employer and employee organisations and the public authorities lays the foundation for well-functioning industrial relations. This is the important thing on which to develop further. Therefore, we want to reverse the weakening of employee protection that was approved in the previous Storting term.

An industrial relations policy must be conducted where equal status and equal pay, opportunities for personal development and access to competence building measures are key elements. It is important to counter exclusion from the labour market and lower the threshold for gaining employment. The government wants to build further on the agreement regarding a more inclusive employment and ensure that all goals in the agreement will be given emphasis in the work.

The government wants to:

- reverse the decision regarding increased access to temporary employment.
- ensure job protection and maintain the right to remain in a job during the consideration of an appeal in a dispute.
- reintroduce the rules for overtime that were in place prior to 2003.
- reverse amendments to the Civil Service Act approved in the spring of 2005, including the reintroduction of the severance pay scheme.
- uphold the employee rights in the sick pay scheme.
- bolster the protection of employees who blow the whistle on blameworthy conditions at the workplace.
- enhance the cooperation and the obligations of the employer and employee organisations to create truly inclusive industrial relations.
- survey the reasons for sick-leave and disability.
- ensure a senior citizens policy that promotes the perception of the elderly as a valuable resource for business and industry.
- devise plans of action with clearly specified targets for the recruiting of the disabled and immigrants to government jobs and for raising the retirement age in the public sector.
- help equalise the status of shift work and comparable rota work in cooperation with employer and employee organisations.
- follow up the right of part-time employees to extend their job during new rounds of hiring.
- establish an equal pay commission.
- help promote attempts to introduce a 6-hour workday and/or working hour reforms in cooperation with employer and employee organisations.
- review regulations concerning the closing down of companies, including employee rights.

Social dumping

Globalisation also affects the labour market. It must be met with clear ground rules and both national and international regulations in order to prevent, social dumping, undeclared work and white-collar crime, among other things.

The government is in favour of the new immigration of manpower that is coming as a result of the EU expansion, and we think that these workers must be offered the same wage terms and working conditions that are offered to Norwegian workers. To ensure that Norwegian wage terms and working conditions are complied with for work in Norway, we want to take the initiative to carry out a broad evaluation of legislation and policy instruments. It is desirable to have a demand-steered and regulated immigration of manpower from countries outside the EEA area. There is a need for measures to prevent social dumping in employment. Competition for jobs must not give rise to exploitation and increased disparities. The undermining of Norwegian wage terms and working conditions as a result of companies bringing along their own employees to projects in Norway is detrimental to both foreign and Norwegian employees.

The government wants to:

- require Norwegian wage terms and working conditions in all public tendering processes.
- introduce a scheme for authorisation and monitoring of companies that practice labour hire.
- ensure that employee representatives have oversight of the wage terms and working conditions that sub-contractors offer their employees.
- ensure that the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has resources to intensify its efforts in this area.

Chapter 8: Social policy

Justice, a fair distribution and equalisation are fundamental values for the government. Equality and freedom for all depends on the willingness to carry out a fair redistribution. There is a need for a targeted policy that concentrates on a number of measures to get people working through a continuation of the workfare programme, a general shift in policy to create less economic disparity and an improvement in financial benefits for people who currently get by on such a low income that it must be regarded as poverty.

The government wants to have a special focus on child policy in its measures. All children and young people shall have the same rights and opportunities for development regardless of their parents' financial situation, ethnicity, education and geographic origin.

A good municipal economy is fully necessary in order to combat poverty and to make it possible to live a life of dignity on a low income. A social housing policy, an active labour market policy, free or affordable collective goods and a guaranteed income on which it is possible to live a life of dignity are important conditions for preventing economic poverty from hurting children and excluding them from social fellowship. There is a clear connection between increased health problems and poverty.

The government wants to submit a comprehensive plan for abolishing poverty. In connection with the government's work on such a plan, a hearing shall be arranged with representatives from the poor people's own organisations and relevant professional circles. Among other things, this plan shall include:

- a targeted policy with measures to ensure that as many people as possible can live off of their income from work.
- the right to welfare contracts. Those who sign a contract with the objective of training, work, treatment, etc. shall receive benefits up to the rates of the National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO).
- an increase in social assistance rates.
- raising the children's supplements in the social assistance and national insurance benefits.
- improvement of housing allowances, especially for families with children.
- a review of user fees with the aim of protecting certain groups.
- better coordination between social assistance and national insurance benefits for people who are unable to find employment for various reasons.
- a review of the connection between different national insurance and social assistance benefits in order to ensure a good aggregate level of benefits.

New employment and welfare administration

The government wants to make efforts to achieve a truly inclusive labour market. Through the establishment of the new employment and welfare administration (NAV), we want to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated programme for people who are unable to find employment for various reasons. Many people are currently involuntary recipients of national insurance benefits instead of being employed. The government regards this as one of the biggest welfare and economic policy challenges that we face. The government wants to ensure that absence due to illness, the inclusion of disabled and occupationally handicapped persons, and the effect of measures to induce more people to remain longer on the job must be registered, cf. the intentions of the Agreement on an Inclusive Working Life.

Steps must be taken to facilitate a more individual and closer follow-up of persons with special

problems in the labour market. The government wants to ensure a qualified manning of the new employment and welfare administration and allocations for specific measures to put unemployed persons more quickly back into activity and work.

The government wants to ensure that the new employment and welfare administration shall be accessible, up-to-date and operative with resources and expertise to promote, explain and customise programmes and presentations. Local knowledge about jobs and employment must also become a key feature of the new employment and welfare administration's programme of services.

Housing policy

The government wants to conduct a social housing policy. The goal is to ensure that everyone may have the use of a good dwelling in a proper residential community. Housing policy will be an important component of the government's broad welfare policy. A social housing policy shall prevent people from getting into social and economic difficulties.

Housing policy shall be bolstered by helping promote a high level of new construction, e.g. through active use of the Norwegian State Housing Bank, support for inexpensive rental housing for youth and the disadvantaged and increased housing allowances to families with children.

The government wants to emphasise the Norwegian State Housing Bank as a housing policy instrument. With its loan and support schemes, this bank has been the most important housing policy instrument in post-war Norway. The government wants to ensure that the borrowing limits and housing subsidies shall be proportionate to the needs that are to be met. The Norwegian State Housing Bank's ordinary loan schemes shall ensure a continuous supply of modest, affordable dwellings. The public authorities must help achieve a stable housing construction at a high enough level. These are the most important measures for preventing major fluctuations in housing prices.

The government wants to further develop the cooperation with developers in order to ensure reliability, high quality and productivity in the construction industry. Homelessness must be abolished. It is especially important that those who are recovering from substance abuse or getting out of prison be given a suitable housing offer and not merely be offered a place in a hostel. Routines and costs with regard to the payment of rent, eviction and compulsory sale shall be reviewed in order to reduce the number of persons who are served writs or are evicted.

The government wants to improve the municipalities' capability of conducting an active social housing policy, through an improved municipal economy, increased subsidies for rental housing, improvement of support schemes for area development and loan schemes for strategic purchasing of sites.

The government wants to make efforts to ensure that as many as possible of those who want to shall be able to purchase their own dwelling, either alone or together with others. In order to accomplish this, the Norwegian State Housing Bank's general and means-tested loan and subsidy schemes must have sufficient scope. The government wants to look into an Act relating to non-commercial dwellings in order to ensure that subsidies are used for this purpose. Those who for various reasons choose to rent, shall have a good, reasonable offer of housing. The Tenancy Acts shall be evaluated and assessed against the government's housing policy objectives. The scheme with the Rent Disputes Tribunal shall be made free-of-charge and be expanded to include all major cities and regions subject to population pressure.

The government wants to reintroduce subsidy schemes to ensure that more of the current dwellings shall be given a universal design so as to be accommodated to the disabled and an increasingly

elderly population.

The government wants to:

- launch an extensive programme for the construction of non-commercial rental housing, low-down-payment housing, student housing and small privately owned dwellings, cf. the guidelines from the three parties in the housing report.
- give all young people a real opportunity to be evaluated for a start-up loan, so that it becomes easier for young people to purchase their own dwelling.
- bolster the housing allowance in order to reduce the debt from housing expenses for the economically disadvantaged.
- terminate the use of hostels and give the homeless an offer of a permanent dwelling.
- develop a loan scheme with postponement of interest and instalments to the municipalities so that they can conduct a proactive siting policy and encourage the municipalities to carry out comprehensive area planning and the upgrading of infrastructure through subsidies.
- provide subsidies for the construction of lifts so as to ensure universal design in existing dwellings.
- see that the Norwegian State Housing Bank's loan schemes are used actively to promote new construction.
- review the Tenancy Acts in order to ensure that the housing policy objectives are met.
- submit a report concerning the living conditions of persons living alone.

Rehabilitation and treatment measures for addicts

In the care of substance abusers, there is a need to enhance our capacity for prevention, treatment, follow-up, rehabilitation, care and after-care. There will be a need for a number of new measures, such as low threshold centres, vocational training places, housing with staff support, motivation clinics, and follow-up and outreach positions in the municipalities. Measures in the field must also include treatment and rehabilitation measures in the correctional service and special measures for women.

Good quality treatment of addicts requires faster assistance and interaction among many different levels, including measures that reduce the new recruitment of addicts. It is also completely necessary to strengthen the preventive work.

The government wants to ensure addicts access to faster assistance at all levels of the treatment and rehabilitation chain and ensure that all treatment programmes are quality assured.

The government wants to:

- devise a national binding escalation plan for the field of substance abuse, in order to coordinate and intensify the efforts to deal with addicts.
- implement measures to improve rehabilitation programmes for addicts.
- develop after-care measures – housing, education and/or job, assistance with money management and/or debt forgiveness.
- establish a guarantee of rapid treatment for addicts under age 23.
- reduce the waiting period for inclusion in Opiate Replacement Therapy programmes with methadone and/or buprenorphine (ORT) and ensure that those who are given this treatment also receive social service follow-up.
- ensure funding schemes as soon as possible for training that is affiliated with the private substance abuse treatment institutions.
- strengthen and further develop measures for convicts.
- review the funding schemes for various treatment programmes.
- provide financial support to a resource centre for relatives of substance abusers.

Chapter 9: Health and care

Everyone shall have access to equally good health and care services, regardless of their personal financial situation and place of residence. This is a government responsibility. We want to provide more support to disease prevention efforts. In cooperation with non-governmental organisations, we want to continue the efforts to combat substance abuse and tobacco consumption and to help increase the focus on physical activity and diet.

Health services

When illness strikes, people should feel that they receive an offer of treatment and care after only a short waiting period and as near as possible to the user's place of residence. Our health services shall have sufficient resources and expertise to be able to provide services based on modern, professionally up-to-date methods and technology. The patients' opportunities to choose a hospital and primary physician shall be supported with good information concerning rights and programmes. The users of health services shall feel that the programme is designed in a way that is adapted to each person's individual needs.

The government wants to:

- improve the hospitals' economies so that more patients are treated and the waiting periods are kept short.
- maintain a decentralised hospital system, which among other things ensures nearness to emergency facilities and maternity services. No local hospital shall be closed down. The government wants to continue the efforts to improve the division of labour among hospitals, which promotes enhanced quality in the treatment of patients.
- ensure that the hospital reform shall also be evaluated, with regard to openness, joint consultation and people's possibilities of influencing decisions that concern them.
- ensure that the Storting shall complete its consideration of a national health plan every 4th year. The county administrations shall take part in the preparation of these plans.
- ensure that a majority of the board members in the health enterprises shall be appointed from among the proposed elected representatives from the municipality or county administration respectively.
- ensure that hospitals owned and operated by non-governmental organisations shall be ensured good terms through agreements with the public authorities.
- ensure that the scope of agreements between regional health enterprises and private commercial hospitals shall be limited. Available capacity in the public hospitals shall be utilised. Agreements between health enterprises and private commercial hospitals shall not have a scope that undermines the catchment populations for the small local hospitals.
- to ensure that the hospitals are guaranteed sufficient funds to guarantee the necessary renewal of buildings and equipment and counteract a trend with an increasing backlog in maintenance.
- ensure that the entire investment regime for the health enterprises must be reviewed with the aim of finding good solutions for development and/or modernisation without any detrimental effects on patient services. Depreciation shall be based on the actual value of the building stock and be in keeping with the general provisions of the Accounting Act.
- ensure that the basic grants to the hospitals will be increased and the percentage of activity-based financing (ABF) reduced.
- ensure that inequitable distribution of revenue among the health regions shall be corrected more quickly than planned in Report to the Storting no. 5 (2003-2004).
- provide a high quality, highly skilled ambulance service throughout the country, which has good emergency preparedness and an acceptable response time. The health enterprises shall continue to cooperate with non-governmental organisations on ambulance preparedness.
- ensure that the cooperation between the hospitals and the municipal health service will be enhanced. The municipalities shall be compensated if they are delegated responsibility for any

new patient groups as a result of this cooperation.

- ensure the rehabilitation and training of everyone who needs it.
- make efforts to develop care for patients in the final phase of their lives.
- intensify the efforts to do away with the problem of corridor patients in hospitals.
- ensure that information about quality in the hospitals' treatment of patients shall be improved through the establishment of a nationwide register of patient-identifiable data.
- provide increased resources for research in the health sector. Central and local hospitals shall play a stronger role in health services research in collaboration with the university hospitals.
- strengthen the efforts to increase the number of organ donors.
- reduce user fees in health services and keep them at a low level.

Mental health

It will be a priority policy for the government to strengthen the programme for people with mental illness. Among other things, there is a need to improve the situation in acute psychiatry. In particular, emphasis shall be given to child and adolescent psychiatry, with an improvement of both overnight treatment and outpatient clinic services.

The government wants to:

- implement an escalation plan for mental health
- help see that the waiting period in child and adolescent psychiatry is reduced through the introduction of a special waiting period guarantee for children and adolescents with mental illness.
- improve the treatment programme for highly traumatised patients and victims of torture by establishing clinical skills centres in all health regions.
- follow up the proposed figures for dwellings for people with mental illness in the escalation plan and evaluate further efforts relative to the need at the close of the planning period.

Dental health

Poor dental health affects the general state of health. Many patients with chronic illnesses and a poor financial situation also have poor dental health, with high expenses for treatment. The government thinks it is necessary to conduct a review of the regulations related to the public financing of dental health.

The government wants to:

- begin the work on a public dental health reform.

Biotechnology

Many illnesses can be cured by taking advantage of the medical progress that bio- and gene technology will generate. The government wants to increase the focus on research on so-called adult stem cells (from individuals who have been born). The government wants to revise the Act relating to the application of biotechnology in medicine so that, under certain conditions, research on excess fertilised eggs will be allowed, including stem cell research and limited use of pre-implantation diagnostics.

The government wants to continue the 12-week limit for abortion on demand. A review of the system shall be conducted with committees for processing applications for the termination of pregnancy after the 12th week in order to ensure equal treatment.

The elderly

The government wants to further develop care of the elderly so that an increasing number of the elderly shall have good opportunities for quality of life and personal development. This programme shall be adapted to the individual's needs. Cooperation with next-of-kin and voluntary organisations shall be strengthened, and the elderly shall participate in designing the services.

The government wants to:

- ensure that a national recruiting and education plan shall be drawn up for care of the elderly. We want to concentrate in particular on research on the elderly's living conditions and health problems, in addition to studying the ways in which care can be improved. The government wants to help develop habilitation and technology that enables people to live safely at home as long as possible.
- increase the number of full-time equivalent positions in nursing and care services by 10,000 by the end of 2009 relative to the level in 2004.
- have a national standard for medical services in nursing homes.
- continue a favourable financing scheme for nursing home places for municipalities with a low degree of coverage after 2007 as well.
- amend the Patient's Rights Act so that users of municipal health and care services shall be covered by the patient representative scheme.
- draw up a comprehensive plan for an improved dementia care. Dementia research shall be provided with greater resources.
- draw up a plan of action for improving the services for the elderly in hospitals. Among other things, this shall focus on:
 - o ensuring that the local hospitals shall play a key role in the health services for the elderly and ensuring nearness to necessary hospital services
 - o ensuring that more specialists in geriatrics are educated
 - o making sure that the financing scheme for hospitals will ensure that priority is given to the elderly with complex disorders.

National Insurance and pension

We want to have a socially just reform of the pension system. We want to put particular emphasis on strengthening the National Insurance, ensuring an occupational pension for everyone and women's right to a good pension. The National Insurance retirement pension shall have a good social profile and contribute to a reduction of income disparities.

The retirement pension in the National Insurance shall be based on the principle that it shall be worthwhile to work. There must therefore be a relationship between work effort throughout one's whole life and the pension benefits, and every year must count. We want to have a pension system that the society can finance in the future.

The pension agreement among the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Centre Party and the Liberal Party, which was reached in the Storting in the spring of 2005, shall be implemented as intended and approved.

The legislation must arrange for occupational pension schemes with the lowest possible administrative expenses. The government wants to arrange for non-commercial occupational pension schemes, with the best possible programme for employees and companies.

Chapter 10: Children, education and research

People are a society's most important resource. Therefore, efforts to promote children, education and research are among the most important things that we as a society can do – not only to make the society wealthier, but also to improve people's lives.

One of the government's most important priorities is to support education and knowledge. It is by ensuring everyone's access to education and knowledge that we as a nation and as individuals create our opportunities.

The conditions in the home and the local community are important for the well-being, security and development of children and young people. Through social learning, education and participation, children shall learn to take responsibility, show care and develop their critical faculties and self-confidence.

Children and family

The government wants to put considerable emphasis on creating good, safe conditions for growing up and learning for children, and on strengthening Norway as a knowledge nation. The government wants to ensure that kindergartens are regarded as a voluntary part of the educational pathway. The government wants to ensure and enhance children's rights, and will actively follow up the recommendations from the UN Expert Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors whether the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is followed up. The government shall arrange matters so that children and adolescents are more frequently heard in matters that concern them.

The government wants to work to ensure that children with mentally ill or substance-abusing parents receive follow-up and assistance. The children of the disabled shall be ensured equal rights as the children of persons who are physically fit. The government wants to put special emphasis on giving assistance and support to children who are exposed to physical and mental violence.

Kindergartens and cash benefits

The government's goal is full kindergarten coverage at a high quality and low price. Kindergartens are both a good pedagogical programme and a good care programme for children and a key to participation in the labour force for the parents of small children.

Good, reasonable, available day-care places are important in order to give all children equal opportunities. A place in a kindergarten can improve the Norwegian language proficiency of children of minority language parents and can be helpful to children in families with various types of problems.

The government wants to:

- ensure full kindergarten coverage
- introduce a maximum price of NOK 2,250 per month from 1 January 2006. A maximum price of NOK 1,750 (in 2005 kroner) will be introduced when full kindergarten coverage has been achieved no later than the close of 2007.
- introduce a statutory right to a day-care place when full kindergarten coverage has been achieved.
- ensure sufficient and predictable funding of kindergartens so that developers know what kind of situation they face. Until full coverage has been achieved, government grants shall

still be earmarked. The central government shall completely finance lower maximum prices and the development of new day-care places.

- have an action plan for increasing the number of preschool teachers in the kindergartens. Maintain the requirements for teaching competence among the administration and employees in the kindergartens.
- make sure that children who have a particular need for a day-care place are given one.
- maintain spatial and manpower standards
- work for equivalent pay and working conditions for employees in private and municipal kindergartens.
- see that when full kindergarten coverage has been achieved, in 2008 at the earliest, the cash benefits scheme shall be revised. Throughout that period, we want to retain a limited cash benefits scheme for one and two-year-olds.

Maternity leave

Good leave arrangements are important in order to ensure good contact between children and parents in the child's first year of life. Out of consideration for the father's contact with the child, an extension of the leave ought to be reserved for the father. This will also make young women's and men's connection to employment more equal. We want to expand the father's quota in the paternal leave system from 5 to 10 weeks. That shall be done by extending the parental leave period by 5 weeks.

The government wants to:

- extend the parental leave by 5 weeks, all of which are reserved for the father.
- give the father the right to earn independent rights to a leave of absence. Each of the parents shall be given maternity benefits based on their own earnings.

Child welfare

All children shall be ensured good conditions for growing up. Parents must receive support to become good care providers. We want to strengthen the preventive child welfare system through good cooperation with school, kindergarten and the local community. No child should be a victim of parental neglect, violence or bullying without someone rapidly intervening. The government shall strengthen and further develop the child welfare service so that children receive personal assistance when they need it. Municipal and central government child welfare authorities must have a close collaboration in both their preventive work and in their relief measures.

Further support must be provided to improve the competence in the child welfare service and ensure a diversity of measures, which can meet the individual family's and the individual child's needs for assistance. The cooperation between the child welfare service and child and adolescent psychiatry must be developed so that children and adolescents are given the right services at the right time.

The public authorities assume a great responsibility when they take responsibility for providing care to children. Children and adolescents for whom the child welfare authorities are responsible must be ensured equally good childhood opportunities as those of other children. The transition to adulthood must be made secure through a properly functioning after-care.

The child welfare authorities must more frequently enter into a dialogue with children and youth. Children shall be listened to in child welfare cases in keeping with their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The government wants to:

- take the initiative in attempts and development work to achieve closer cooperation and coordinated measures between the child welfare service and child and adolescent psychiatry.
- undertake a review of the legislation concerning relief measures for children in order to ensure that the services that are provided to children and adolescents are optimal.
- improve the competence in the child welfare service.
- ensure that the child welfare service will develop a greater degree of openness in its cooperation with other institutions, e.g. the school system.

Quality and diversity in the public school

A good school is crucial for a good childhood and for an egalitarian, democratic, productive society. The government wants to work for a diverse public school system. Every person is unique and shall be met with a school that understands and nurtures their individual skills and different points of departure. We want to help develop an even better school and vocational training, where all children and adolescents succeed. Its most important features shall be knowledge and skills, job satisfaction and mastery, independence and fellowship.

13-year basic schooling

The government regards the primary school and secondary education as a comprehensive basic schooling that shall ensure all children and youth the best opportunities for the road ahead in their occupation and education. Everyone shall have the right to complete a 13-year basic schooling that gives them a broad basic competence, so that they are well-equipped for further studies or work.

A completed secondary education shall enable the pupils to meet the general entrance requirements for higher education, regardless of the programme of study.

The role of school as a tool for social equalisation must be enhanced. Therefore we want to make efforts to ensure that all pupils shall be given help with their lessons.

It is important that the pupils go to school in their local community together with pupils from different social backgrounds. We want to review legislation and support schemes associated with private schools. The government wants to oppose the commercialisation of the education sector.

The government wants to give priority to increasing the teacher density. We want to ensure that the pupils at the primary stage are given more class periods and more instruction. An increased number of class periods shall make room for improvement in Norwegian, mathematics and English, help with lessons and physical activity every day. The schools shall be given greater freedom of action through more resources for following up the goals in the curricula and the intentions to follow up the goals for quality, organisation and variation in the training. Measurement of the pupils' skills must be followed up with individually adapted measures. Parents or guardians shall be kept regularly informed of the pupils' academic and social development through parent-teacher discussions.

The teacher is the most important requirement for sound, meaningful training. The teacher and the instructor can make a tremendous difference for many pupils and apprentices. The head teacher is the guarantor of good educational institutions. The government wants to set strict requirements for teachers and head teachers who are responsible for the pupil's learning, but wants to simultaneously ensure that the conditions are better organised. The government wants to intensify its efforts in the continuing education of teachers. Increased teacher density shall make

room for better follow-up of the individual pupil, and no contact teacher shall be responsible for more than 15 pupils.

The government wants to ensure a new upgrading of vocational training. The country needs skilled labour in both the private and public sectors. The quality of the training in schools and companies must be improved. The government wants to take the initiative in schemes with labour and management organisations that both encourage the companies to recruit apprentices and that ensure the apprentices' rights and predictability.

There is a need to further improve scientific instruction and recruitment to the natural sciences throughout the entire educational pathway, but especially in the upper secondary school. We want to increase the effort to recruit pupils to these subjects.

Quality assessment

The government wants to further develop and improve the national system for quality assessment so that it becomes a more precise tool for school, the pupils and their parents or guardians. If the training is to be adapted to the individual pupil, it is necessary for pupil, teacher and parents or guardians to have the necessary knowledge about the challenges faced by the pupil.

The government wants to review the current system for assessing pupils, including examinations and types of tests. We want to continue to use examinations and grades in the lower secondary and upper secondary schools, but in keeping with the development of new forms of instruction, it will also be necessary to evaluate new forms of assessment. Therefore, we want to improve and further develop forms of assessment in the primary school, so that the pupils receive good, relevant, individually adapted feedback. It will be recommended that, after an extensive evaluation, the current system for national quality assessment be amended in a dialogue with school owners, the teachers and the trade unions. The government wants to improve the national tests, but limit their scope and cost. The objective is to ensure a more precise feedback to the school, the parents and the pupils in order to test whether fundamental skills are in accordance with the requirements in the curriculum. In all probability, national tests will not be held between now and the autumn of 2006. The test results are public, but no steps will be taken to encourage a ranking of schools.

Current reading tests for the 2nd grade will be continued and supplemented with an equivalent test of their grasp of numbers.

Knowledge promotion

The government wants to continue and bolster the main features of knowledge promotion. The curriculum will be reviewed and further developed. We shall concentrate on high quality throughout the training, increased special accommodation for each pupil, curricula with clear learning goals, greater freedom in the choice of instruction methods and support for continuing education for teachers, head teachers and instructors.

The government wants to give priority to upgrading the lower secondary level. Greater economic freedom of action in the school is a necessary condition for being able to achieve an actual promotion of knowledge. The introduction of programme subjects at the lower secondary level shall improve the transition from primary school to upper secondary school. The goal is greater variation in forms of learning and arenas for learning, more practical learning and greater freedom of choice in a close collaboration between the school and the local community.

To ensure that more pupils complete their education with good results, the schools must

systematically follow up the pupils' learning, implement quality improvements and improve the dialogue between primary school and secondary education, and with the working world. Steps shall be taken to facilitate more practical and realistic forms of training in the primary school.

The government wants to emphasise the school owners' responsibility for creating stimulating and inclusive learning environments that help induce the pupils to complete their training. The government wants to take the initiative to introduce a special follow-up of this area.

In keeping with Recommendation to the Storting no. 268 (2003-2004), the government wants to give the pupils a broader basic competence and set clearer requirements for fundamental skills. Among other things, this shall consist of:

1. Skills in reading, writing, computational skills and grasp of numbers.
2. Skills in English.
3. Digital skills.
4. Learning strategies and motivation.
5. Social skills.

The government wants to bolster its support of ICT and other teaching aids in the school. The schools must be given enough ICT equipment, and the teachers' competence must be raised.

Good language instruction is a key factor for minority children in order to succeed in education and employment. Research shows that knowledge of and in the mother tongue is important in order to be able to learn other languages. At the same time, there is a need for more knowledge about the content, quality and scope of the mother tongue tuition, and the government wants to synthesise already existing research and initiate new research on the mother tongue tuition so that we can gain greater insight into the effects and significance of this language instruction. In a globalised world, bilingualism is a resource.

The government wants to:

- ensure that adapted reading and writing instruction shall start in the first grade.
- improve the instruction with more teaching hours in the primary school. The length of the school day shall be increased to 28 teaching hours a week at the primary stage.
- introduce a scheme providing fruit and vegetables in the school and help facilitate pilot schemes providing food at school.
- ensure that the pupils shall be able to take part in pupil enterprises, visit arenas for learning outside the school gates and have entrepreneurship included as part of the basic instruction in school.
- strengthen the cooperation between the lower secondary school and the upper secondary school, e.g. in order to prevent pupils from dropping out of upper secondary school.
- ensure that more teachers shall be hired in the schools so as to give the pupils better follow-up. Contact teachers shall not be responsible for more than 15 pupils in primary school.
- continue and bolster the loan scheme for renovation of school buildings.
- ensure that all teachers and pupils shall have access to a PC and the Internet.
- review regulations and support schemes for private schools in order to rein in the spread of private schools that are not a religious or pedagogical alternative to the public schools
- review the Christian objects clause in the Education Act.
- not introduce an obligatory 2nd foreign language in the lower secondary school.
- maintain a decentralised school structure.
- ensure that school camps shall be free. Subsidies to host municipalities for school camps shall be maintained.
- initiate measures to improve the quality and reduce the price of day-care facilities for school

children.

- especially strengthen the natural sciences throughout the whole educational pathway and increase the efforts to recruit pupils to these subjects.
- ensure that all pupils who have completed 13 years of schooling shall achieve the general entrance requirements for higher education
- introduce free teaching aids for pupils in upper secondary education.
- work for more apprentice training places in the public and private sector and increase the apprentice grant
- increase the percentage of pupils who complete upper secondary education, e.g. by offering more apprenticeship contracts where the whole training takes place in the business enterprise.
- further develop the apprentice scheme.
- review regulations and routines with the intention of strengthening pupil participation in instruction and school administration.
- strengthen the guidance counselling service.
- try out new forms of evaluation and examination.
- ensure stable and long-term government funding for *landslinjene* (specialised programmes only held in certain schools that are available to all students nationwide)
- give the pupils access to textbooks in both forms of written Norwegian, at the same time and price.
- increase the grant for students living away from home

Continuing education and training

In a time of rapid technological development and extensive globalisation, knowledge and expertise will play an increasingly important role. Stable access to skilled labour will be crucial to the ability of both individuals and businesses to survive and continue to develop.

Continuing education and training are one of the most important tools that we have for qualifying people for a working life that is constantly changing, both in structure and in methods of working. The government wants to increase the support for competence-building measures.

The government wants to work together with employer and employee organisations in order to lay the economic foundation for enabling employees to take an education. There is a need for a system providing sufficient funding of sustenance during educational leave, so that the right to continuing education and training becomes a realistic option.

The government wants to:

- develop leave arrangements and help promote better opportunities for training on the job.
- make efforts to promote a funding scheme for continuing education and training, with funding from employers, employees and the authorities.
- consider abolishing the age limit for the right to an upper secondary education.
- make efforts to ensure that adults with the right to renewed primary school education have this right fulfilled.
- improve the information activities, so that more people become aware of their opportunities for continuing education and training.
- strengthen the right to have one's own non-formal learning tested.
- increase the government support for adult education.

Higher education

Universities and colleges are important in the development of the information society and must be long-term and subject-independent administrators of knowledge. The government wants to ensure free and independent universities and colleges that can give the students a research-based education, adapted to a modern information society. The universities and colleges shall still be public administrative bodies and be owned by the public sector, with private institutions acting as a supplement. A well-developed regional university and college system and international cooperation schemes shall give Norwegian students the best educational programme, both within and beyond the country's borders.

The government wants to conduct a thorough and extensive evaluation of the quality reform and monitor the goals with closer follow-up and evaluation of the students underway throughout the whole curriculum.

Everyone shall have an equal right to an education regardless of their economic and social situation. Every single student must be given an opportunity to study full-time. This requires that study financing is good and that there is a sufficient amount of available student housing.

The government wants to increase the allocations to universities and colleges.

The government wants to:

- ensure that the universities and colleges have an administrative structure and financing that facilitate good, independent instruction and research.
- strengthen the regional university and college system and international collaborative schemes.
- evaluate the level of the allocations to the regional research institutes.
- develop a better financing system to promote decentralised higher education.
- achieve the goals of the quality reform. The students shall be more strongly supported throughout their studies, both academically and financially. The quality reform shall be evaluated.
- ensure that all students who take graduate or undergraduate degrees in Norway will be given an offer of taking part of their instruction abroad.
- ensure a study financing that makes it possible to study full-time. We want to review the experiences with the *konverteringsordning* (a scheme where part of a student loan is converted to a scholarship when a programme of study is successfully completed). Student loans and scholarships must be adjusted in step with inflation.
- increase the access to student housing

Research

Research policy mirrors the society's willingness to develop and make use of new knowledge. Research and research-based knowledge characterise the development and will become increasingly important in the coming years. Both business and industry and the public sector have a need for greater knowledge. Therefore, we must have ambitious goals for Norwegian research efforts in the coming years. International research collaboration has always been a necessary condition for the development of national knowledge and technology. Norwegian researchers must take part in international collaborative projects and research projects that are conducted across national borders.

Increased research efforts require more researchers. In order to ensure recruitment, the number of new research fellow posts must be increased relative to the current level. In addition, more research posts must be established for those who have completed their doctorate.

The government wants to increase research efforts to three per cent of GDP by 2010. The government-funded research shall be strengthened through increased allocations to universities, colleges and research institutes. An important policy instrument will be to increase the allocations

to the Research Fund.

In order to ensure future economic growth, business and industry in particular must invest more in research. The contact between business and industry and research institutions must be increased. The government wants to continue the tax incentive scheme and to evaluate it.

The government wants to:

- increase the allocations to basic research.
- increase the research effort in Norway to three per cent of GDP.
- increase the recruiting of researchers and facilitate an increased exchange of researchers with other countries
- make a conscious effort to support research in industries where Norway has advantages and great potential for economic growth.
- go in for company-oriented research and ensure good dissemination and utilisation of research results.

Chapter 11: Renewal and development of the public sector

The government wants a strong, effective public sector that provides the inhabitants with good services, freedom of choice and co-determination. The public sector shall be capable of taking care of considerations of quality, accessibility, justice and economic efficiency. The inhabitants are entitled to good services, freedom of choice and co-determination. Renewal and development of the public sector affects many policy areas, and many individual measures and reforms will therefore be discussed in other parts of this document.

The needs of individuals shall be given top priority with regard to both the content in, and the organisation of, the welfare services. Those services shall be adapted to the needs of the individual as much as possible. Through a frequent, active dialogue with the individual, the public authorities shall make sure that the services that are provided are in accordance with the needs of the recipient.

Freedom of choice for the individual shall not be detrimental to others. All forms of freedom of choice require sufficient resources and a good programme. If no such programme exists, or if the programme is not a good one, the freedom of choice will be absent or greatly diminished regardless.

Our goals in the renewal of the public sector are to achieve more welfare and less administration, more local freedom and less micromanaging. Efforts will have to be made to promote quality goals that take into consideration professional quality, people's satisfaction, a healthy working environment, cost control and continuous competence building. Good systems must be developed for feedback and the modification of rules and routines that do not function appropriately.

Renewal and development are necessary in order to avoid privatisation and commercialisation of the welfare services. Greater local freedom means that the municipalities themselves can adapt the welfare services even better to local conditions, needs and wishes. Commercialisation of the welfare services will result in less freedom of choice. We will oppose a system where the individual's financial situation determines the quality and content of the welfare services. Through the public sector, everyone shall have access to suitable welfare services of proper quality.

Non-governmental organisations, foundations, cooperative organisations and others participate in many areas as important contributors and provide a supplement to public services. We want to arrange matters so that the voluntary sector shall still have good conditions for providing non-commercial services.

New technology and the Internet provide a good basis for better service, new services and less red tape. In addition, matters shall be arranged to facilitate extended opening hours at public offices.

The employees are our most important resource for making the public sector even better. Hence, we want to get them involved in the development and renewal work. Through schooling, trust and inclusive operating constraints, we want to invite all public-sector employees to join us in this work. Changes shall be made in contact and cooperation with the employees and their organisations. Job security and the right to training and/or further education are a necessary condition for a successful further development of the range of services and renewal of the public sector. Restructuring processes in the public sector shall not contribute to increased absence due to illness and increased exclusion from employment.

The government wants to:

- renew and develop the public sector through increased user participation, better coordination, service declarations, extended opening hours and better services on the Internet.
- continue the efforts to provide online government with access to electronic information and services from the public authorities based on the users' premises.
- increase the support for new universally designed technology and implement a proactive ICT policy in the public sector.
- encourage labour exchange activities and active retraining for any workers who are made redundant
- continue the efforts to reduce the number of forms, shorten the processing time and simplify processing routines in order to ensure a simpler Norway.
- encourage change and development work in the municipal sector in cooperation with the employees.
- arrange matters so that the voluntary sector can further develop its function in solving social problems
- oppose competitive tendering and privatisation in important welfare areas such as education, health and care.
- make efforts to ensure that the employee's wage terms, working conditions and pension terms are not weakened as a result of competitive tendering of public services.
- increase the threshold for competitive tendering in public procurement up to the EU level.

Chapter 12: Norway as an environmental nation

Norway shall be a pioneering country in environmental policy. In order for future generations to have access to a good, unpolluted, natural environment, environmental considerations must permeate everything we do. Norway shall base its environmental policy on the principle of sustainable development, which includes a demand for national and international solidarity with future generations. This entails protection of vital environmental resources and a justifiable management of natural resources.

Norway shall be a driving force in the international environmental work. We want to develop the UN environmental programme into a World Environmental Organisation with the authority to impose sanctions. We want to increase Norway's efforts on behalf of access to pure water and clean energy.

Environmental protection involves understanding that the earth's resources are limited. The main challenge is that the wealthiest of the earth's population have such a powerful impact on the environment and resources that there will be no room for other people to increase their welfare, without exceeding the earth's carrying capacity. In many areas, these limits have already been exceeded. In addition, environmental degradation hurts those who have the least possibility of adapting to major changes.

Environmental policy in Norway shall be based on the precautionary principle, which states that nature shall have the benefit of the doubt, and on the principles that the polluter must pay and that the best available technology shall be used.

If we are to meet the environmental challenges, we must:

- Maintain biological diversity and the cultivated landscape.
- Limit the emission of non-degradable environmental toxins and greenhouse gases, and limit air pollution in especially vulnerable areas.
- Limit the use of non-renewable resources and avoid the over-consumption of renewable resources.

These environmental challenges require changes in the patterns of both production and consumption.

Nature shall be preserved for the future because we as human beings are dependent on it, but also because it has its own inherent value. The general public's access to outdoor experiences in Norway is the point of departure for many people's enjoyment of nature and commitment to environmental protection, and it shall be ensured.

A healthy environment is a necessary condition for good health. Air pollution in our major cities must be reduced through strong support for public transportation, bicycling and walking. Consideration of environmental impacts shall pervade the planning in all sectors.

Norway shall be regenerated as a pioneering country in environmental policy through a far more active national and international environmental policy. In addition to international cooperation, the environmental challenges also require that we are capable of thinking globally and acting locally.

Climate

Dangerous climate change is one of the greatest environmental challenges faced by mankind. If the

emission of greenhouse gases is not reduced, we will create irreparable environmental problems.

Meeting the climate challenge will require international cooperation. The Kyoto agreement is a first step toward further reducing the total greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, Norway shall work for a more extensive and ambitious international climate agreement that shall follow the Kyoto agreement.

Norway's commitments to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions shall be fulfilled and we want to submit proposals for how Norway shall meet its commitments to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases to one per cent above the 1990 level by the expiration of the Kyoto period in 2012. This must be accomplished by means of a broad set of policy instruments.

The government wants to:

- work for a more extensive and ambitious climate agreement that shall follow the Kyoto agreement. International shipping and aviation must be covered by the agreement and it must have a separate appendix on the climate challenges in the Arctic.
- approve an objective for the reduction within one generation of Norwegian greenhouse emissions in connection with the consideration of the report of the Committee on Low Emissions.
- ensure that much of Norway's climate commitments from the Kyoto agreement are carried out nationally.
- ensure that in the event of any expansion of the quota system, sectors on which a Carbon tax is currently imposed may still have this tax instead of quotas.
- increase the climate research, especially the research on the regional effects of the climate changes in the Arctic and establish a national plan of action for climate research.
- implement climate plans of action by sector, where specific goals shall be set for how much each sector shall contribute to meeting Norway's climate commitments from Kyoto.
- ensure that the whole Norwegian society must be prepared to a greater extent to live with climate change. Increased danger of landslides and avalanches as a result of increased precipitation and climate change must be surveyed and consideration for reducing the consequences of climate change must underlie central and municipal government planning.

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Watercourses

Our natural watercourses are unique. Norway has an international responsibility to protect and manage this natural heritage. Consideration for the outdoor experiences of future generations warrants a restrictive attitude to further hydropower development, so that we leave most of the remaining watercourses undisturbed. The existing hydropower structures must be better utilised, and the use of small, mini and micro power plants must be increased without coming into conflict with nature conservation interests. These power plants in protected watercourses shall for the most part be considered for licensing.

Norwegian water resource management shall become more holistic and ecosystem-based. There are considerable problems with the dispersal of alien species in fresh water. The efforts to improve the water quality and prevent biological pollution in fresh water shall be strengthened.

The government wants to:

- protect the Vefsna watercourse from hydropower development by including it in the Protection Plan for Watercourses. A local enterprise funding scheme will be established in the affected region.
- go through the watercourses in the Master Plan in order to determine which of them shall be in the Protection Plan in connection with the implementation of the EU framework directive for water in 2006.
- introduce stricter rules for construction in the 100-metre zone around lakes and watercourses.

- ensure that the county administrations, in cooperation with affected agencies, shall draw up county plans for the construction of small power plants, which ensure that biological diversity, outdoor recreation or major scenic assets are not lost.
- ensure that the efforts to prevent the acidification of watercourses by liming shall be at a high level, so that all watercourses in the danger zone will be limed and so that voluntary efforts in the form of funding and work and collective voluntary efforts will be followed up by the central government.
- work to achieve the national goal of reduced nitrogen discharges to water, and facilitate inter-municipal projects to improve the water quality in polluted watercourses in Norway, e.g. for the cleanup of over-fertilised watercourses such as the Vansjø-Hobøl watercourse, the Mjøsa watercourse and the Jæren watercourse.
- complete the establishment of national salmon fjords and watercourses.
- strengthen the measures to protect wild salmon and prevent biological pollution.
- draw up a plan of action to protect rivers and green spaces in our urban areas, e.g. by opening up and restoring watercourses in cooperation with the relevant municipalities.

Outdoor recreation and biological diversity

There must be a basic principle that our own generation has a responsibility to give future generations equally good access to outdoor experiences as we ourselves have had. Fewer and fewer areas in Norway are undisturbed by technical encroachment, and we must give greater protection to areas and natural assets that our descendants are also entitled to experience.

Outdoor recreation is a source of quality of life, recreation and better public health. Outdoor recreation helps promote a better understanding of ecologically sustainable development and is an important resource in an economic sense for many districts.

The right of access is the most important factor ensuring that everyone may be able to live an active outdoor life. Hence, it is important that this right not be weakened and that efforts are continually made to ensure that the right of access remains strong in both the legal and the public conception of justice.

Our goal is to put a halt to the elimination of species in Norway and in the rest of the world. Each year, rain forest equivalent to half of the area of Norway is destroyed.

The government wants to:

- ensure that more funds shall be allocated to purchase attractive recreational areas and shoreline areas for public use.
- ensure that public right of use, outdoor recreation and cultural monuments are taken into consideration when the Norwegian Armed Forces and the Norwegian National Coastal Administration shall dispose of properties with attractive shoreline areas and that the most important of these remain in public ownership.
- stop the development of the shoreline. Plans shall be drawn up for a stronger geographical differentiation in the guidelines, where protection is made stricter in areas where there is strong competition for the shoreline.
- the scheme involving legal assistance to municipalities that have a need for it in the efforts to protect the shoreline shall be reintroduced.
- stop the loss of Norwegian biological diversity by 2010 and submit a proposal for a new Act on the protection of the natural environment, landscape and biological diversity.
- introduce a "living planet index" for Norway, in order to get a picture of development trends in the natural world, including the cultivated landscape.
- increase marine research.

- introduce rules for handling ballast water.
- develop the Norwegian Institute of Gene Ecology (GenØk) into a national resource centre for safe use of gene technology (bio-safety).
- consider a ban on the import of tropical lumber and timber, until a credible certification system for lumber can guarantee that the timber comes from ecological and socially acceptable logging operations.
- increase the conservation of coniferous forest so that the biological diversity is preserved. Conservation shall be based as far as possible on the scheme for voluntary conservation. In the case of government-mandated conservation, the exchange of property between private forest and state property shall be used actively.
- submit a plan of action for sustainable use and management of national parks and other protected areas. The work that has commenced on developing the national parks as a resource for local communities and for local economic growth shall continue.
- renew the municipalities' professional competence in nature conservation and environmental protection.
- conduct a restrictive policy with regard to motorised traffic on uncultivated land, with measures to reduce the extent of off-road driving. The trial scheme with local management of motorised traffic on uncultivated land will be evaluated before any amendments are made in the legislation.
- make sure that cultivated landscape does not become overgrown and deteriorate. Support for sustainable use is important for landscape preservation and biological diversity.
- ensure that local and regional democratic institutions shall be delegated increased authority in the management of natural resources. Management plans shall be completely prepared as quickly as possible after conservation resolutions have been passed, so as to clarify the purpose of the conservation and the terms and conditions that shall apply. This applies in particular to national parks.
- ensure that implemented conservation shall be evaluated with regard to the objectives for the conservation and in order to evaluate the effects on settlement and economic development.
- ensure that the trial schemes with local and regional management of protected areas are further developed.
- ensure that the work to improve the compensation schemes is expedited.
- ensure that a local enterprise funding scheme can be established in municipalities that are covered by conservation resolutions.
- ensure that the agreement in the Storting relating to the wild predator policy in 2004 is implemented and followed up at all levels. Norway shall have viable stocks of wolves, bears, lynxes, wolverines and golden eagles, and active efforts shall be made to promote measures to reduce conflict. It shall be possible to evaluate predator population data on the basis of the effect on grazing, grazing animals and the quality of life for people in areas exposed to predators.
- ensure that the efforts to promote preventive measures against damage caused by wild predators are increased considerably, including financial measures. This is important in order to maintain environment-friendly grazing on uncultivated land throughout the country.
- establish a support scheme for measures to prevent conflicts in municipalities with stocks of wild predators, where the municipalities themselves shall be free to choose the wild-predator-related measures to which they will allocate funds.
- strengthen the cooperation across national borders, so that there is greater understanding for the management, primarily with our Nordic neighbouring countries.
- put emphasis on obtaining more reliable information about the size of the wild predator stocks at any given time. Local knowledge ought to be used here to a greater extent.
- ensure that the self-defence clause in the Wildlife Act shall be specified more precisely in order to clarify the animal owner's right to protect farm animals and dogs against attack.

- ensure that there shall be an efficient removal of pests and implement the slaying of predators that develop threatening behaviour after repeated visits to households.
- maintain the current compensation scheme for the loss of farm animals on pasture land caused by protected wild predators. Incentives for preventive measures must be developed.

Environmental protection in everyday life

The government wants to promote a closer relationship between consumer and environmental matters and to make it easier for people to be environment-friendly in everyday life.

It is a government responsibility to make sure that the food we buy is safe and that all precautions are taken when it comes to preventing hazardous additives and chemicals from getting into products with which we come into frequent contact. The government wants to conduct an active policy toward the EU in order to ensure that directives that concern health and the environment shall meet the highest standards and that the precautionary principle shall be practiced when there is uncertainty and risk.

Norway lies behind other countries when it comes to accessibility of organic goods to consumers. The government wants to improve this area.

The public authorities must take the lead as a responsible consumer and demand environment-friendly products and products that are manufactured according to high ethical and social standards.

Refuse constitutes an environmental problem related to contamination, hazardous waste, effluents from waste disposal sites and incomplete combustion. At the same time, steadily increasing quantities of waste are an indicator of an increasing consumption and a waste of resources that have a negative impact on the environment.

The government wants to:

- establish a separate state-owned enterprise for waste avoidance and recycling under the Ministry of the Environment
- improve the dissemination of environmental information, including the efforts to make environmental labels better known to the public.
- strengthen the voluntary environmental protection work.
- work for high standards associated with health, safety and the environment in the EEA.

Environmental toxins and nuclear waste

Environmental toxins are still used in many products. At the same time, we are a long way from having cleaned up the pollution from earlier times. The government shall make efforts to ensure that people shall be poison-free in their everyday lives and to ensure that children are not exposed to environmental toxins in their home environment. Our fjords shall be sources of food and outdoor recreation and not disposal sites for hazardous environmental toxins. Therefore, we want to carry out a large-scale cleanup of old industrial pollution in our fjords and in polluted ground.

Nuclear waste from Northwest Russia and the nuclear power plant on the Kola Peninsula are an environmental threat to people and the natural environment in Russia and Norway. Hence, Norway must increase its efforts to persuade Russia to stop the nuclear power plant in Kola and get seriously involved in the cleanup of radioactive waste. Support for alternative sources of energy to nuclear power and a cleanup of environmental toxins must be a high-priority policy in cooperation with Russia.

The government wants to:

- establish a chemical database where consumers can check ingredients, e.g. in cosmetics and health care products.
- improve the information about and the labelling of products that contain hazardous chemicals.
- implement a plan of action to give children a non-toxic environment, through a cleanup of kindergartens, playgrounds and schools.
- work for a quick and efficient collection of products still in use that contain the environmental toxin PCB. Achieve energy-saving potential by replacing fluorescent lighting fixtures that use PCB capacitors, and strengthen the collection scheme for insulating glass units containing PCBs.
- consider a ban on the use of copper in the impregnation of timber and work actively to make environment-friendly alternatives profitable.
- come up with a plan of action in order to ensure an escalation of the efforts to clean up polluted sediments in fjords and harbours, which will be jointly funded by the polluter and the central government.
- make efforts to ensure that more types of environmental toxins, such as the brominated flame retardants PFOS and PFAS are phased out, and make efforts to establish an international legal framework for the enhancement of producer responsibility.
- amend the chemical regulations and shift the burden of proof so that instead of the authorities having to prove that a substance is hazardous, the industry will be responsible for proving that it is not.
- survey waste disposal sites for industrial low-level radioactive waste and make them more secure
- increase the research effort into matters related to living and residing in the vicinity of high-voltage power lines.

Cultural monuments

Cultural monuments and cultural environments are important parts of the society's collective memory, and the cultural heritage can furnish knowledge, narratives and experiences that can help nourish a sense of belonging, self-awareness, self-development and well-being for individuals and groups. A strong cultural heritage fund and a predictable policy for the preservation of our cultural heritage will help ensure cultural historical values and take care of our international responsibility for preserving the Norwegian world heritage sites.

The government wants to:

- increase the assets in the Norwegian cultural heritage fund.
- ensure a justifiable level of maintenance for churches that warrant protection.
- increase state subsidies, so that the central government covers more of the expenses for the excavation of automatically protected cultural monuments that will be unreasonably burdensome for the developer in connection with minor measures undertaken by private individuals.
- increase state subsidies for the protection of vessels to a stable and predictable level and draw up a national protection plan for vessels that specifies how we can preserve a representative sample of vessels.

Chapter 13: Energy policy

Norway is an energy producing country. We have considerable hydropower generation. We have an abundant supply of oil and natural gas. We have many companies and jobs associated with the

production and processing of Norwegian energy resources. We have great opportunities to develop new, profitable companies based on the exploitation of Norwegian energy resources. The government's vision is that Norway shall be an environment-friendly energy producing country and be a world leader in the development of environment-friendly energy.

Energy supplies

Sufficient access to energy is important both for most people in everyday life and for economic growth and jobs. At the same time, we know that many forms of energy generation give rise to environmental problems.

The government's energy policy is based on the premise that our environmental goals will determine our production possibilities and that it is necessary to conduct an active policy to limit the growth in energy consumption.

- The time for major new hydropower construction is past. Therefore, increased energy demand in the future must be covered to a greater extent in other ways. We shall have a safer and better energy supply and the government wants to work for strong public ownership in the energy sector. The generation and distribution of energy shall be governed politically and be publicly owned to the greatest possible extent. As a result of the deregulation of the energy market and the consequences thereof, there is a need for a comprehensive review of the Energy Act.

The government wants to:

- ensure a better electric power balance by both increasing the supply of electrical power and reducing the growth in consumption through energy saving measures. We want to increase the supply of energy by supporting new environment-friendly forms of energy, upgrading hydropower and making environment-friendly use of natural gas.
- ensure that Norway shall help promote a greater amount of international cooperation on the development of environment-friendly technology and energy systems and support for new renewable sources of energy.
- conduct an evaluation of the Energy Act, where among other things, the Act's importance for the electric power balance, the electricity prices and the structure of the electricity industry shall be reviewed, with the aim of making amendments that can ensure a better utilisation and use of existing generation, plus new power generation.
- ensure an efficient and secure transmission system for electric power in order to reduce leakage of current and make efforts to develop a main grid for the transmission of electrical power with sufficient capacity throughout the country.
review the grid structure for electricity and the regulations concerning transmission tariffs in order to better facilitate power saving and security of supply. The transmission tariffs for electric power shall be equalised throughout the country. This may be achieved either by a separate equalisation scheme or by increasing the state subsidies that are already in existence. A review of the legislation concerning transmission tariffs shall be conducted, including the ratio of fixed to variable rates.

New renewable sources of energy

Our knowledge and expertise in the energy sector must be used to develop technology and find solutions that reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. Norway has a great potential for new renewable sources of energy such as wind, bioenergy, solar, wave and tidal power. By supporting energy efficiency and new renewable sources of energy, Norway can achieve a diversified, environment-friendly energy system.

The government wants to:

- increase ENOVA SF's total goal for energy conservation and new renewable sources of energy.
- make fuller use of the potential that is inherent in the upgrading of existing hydropower stations and in the construction of small, mini and micro power plants.
- introduce a compulsory green certificate market for new renewable sources of energy and mini and micro power plants. If a green certificate market cannot be implemented as intended, other policy instruments shall be evaluated.
- ensure that ENOVA SF, in cooperation with Innovation Norway and the Research Council of Norway, shall develop support for the introduction of environment-friendly technology and equipment for technologies that are not mature.
- increase the development of environment-friendly wind power and ensure a good regional and national coordination of wind power development through the licensing system.
- increase the state support for the development and commercialisation of hydrogen as an energy carrier.
- ensure that new renewable sources of energy are not driven out of the market due to competition with gas-fired power plants with CO₂-removal.
- introduce a salvage payment for oil boilers that are traded in for boilers based on renewable heat.

Hydronic heating and energy economising

Norway has large heat resources. In order to utilise these resources, the heating industry must be given better operating constraints. Using other forms of energy for heating contributes to reduced use of electric power and less demand to increase the production capacity. One of the government's goals is to ensure that people shall not be unilaterally dependent on electric heating in the future. The most formidable barrier to increased use of hydronic heating is a lack of infrastructure for the distribution of anything other than electric heating in and outside of buildings. It is therefore of crucial importance to establish a network of district heating pipes and hydronic heating systems in buildings.

The government wants to:

- help facilitate increased use of hydronic heating and establish good financing schemes for district heating and bioenergy.
- introduce requirements for flexible energy systems in all new public buildings and in the renovation of public buildings with a floor space exceeding 500 m².
- introduce a long-term subsidy scheme for households in order to encourage a restructuring to heating based on renewable heating and more energy-efficient alternatives for equipment in dwellings. The subsidy scheme shall be administered by ENOVA SF.
- greatly increase ENOVA SF's allocation for the construction of infrastructure for district heating during this Storting term.
- implement the EU Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings during 2006. New building regulations shall be drawn up, which make low-energy housing the standard. Energy requirements for existing buildings and the renovation of buildings shall also be introduced.

Domestic use of natural gas

Under our international climate commitments, a greater percentage of the natural gas that is extracted on the Norwegian continental shelf must be used for domestic industrial, energy and transport purposes. The government's goal is to ensure that Norway shall become a world leader in the environment-friendly use of natural gas.

The generation of gas-fired power must stay within the obligations of the Kyoto agreement and be included in the international quota system, which ensures that the total emissions do not increase.

Naturkraft AS has started construction on the gas-fired power plant at Kårstø. The government wants to ensure that the efforts get underway to establish a full-scale installation for CO₂-removal at Kårstø and provide financial support for its construction. The goal is that the removal of CO₂ shall occur by 2009 so that it will be possible to use it as pressure support for fields in the North Sea. If a decision should be made to make use of the licences granted for gas-fired power plants at Skogn and Kollsnes, the government also wants to provide support for CO₂-removal at these plants.

Through financial policy instruments and support for new technology, we want to ensure that new licences for gas-fired power shall be based on CO₂-removal. The Norwegian continental shelf can become a depot for large quantities of CO₂, and CO₂ can be used to help extract more oil and natural gas from the continental shelf.

The government wants to:

- ensure that the central government participates through a public company, along with commercial players, in the financing of infrastructure for the transport of natural gas and that arrangements are thereby made for CO₂-removal and transport.
- ensure that a public company is given responsibility for creating a value chain for the transport and injection of CO₂. The central government shall provide financial support to achieve this goal.
- ensure that the licences that are granted for gas-fired power shall remain in force. The government wants to cooperate with the developers of gas-fired power on an installation for CO₂-capture and provide financial support to ensure that this can be completed as soon as possible.
- ensure that the research on environment-friendly gas-fired power is stepped up and that the innovation company Gassnova is provided with sufficient funds for this purpose. This company must also be given responsibility for developing petrochemicals and industrial exploitation of natural gas.
- increase the capacity for LNG terminals. Contribute through Enova SF to a conversion from heavier fuel to natural gas in industry, shipping and transport.
- review the CO₂ tax system in order to ensure that the use of natural gas for energy purposes does not outcompete more environment-friendly alternatives.

Oil and natural gas operations

We want to maintain economic growth, employment and competence in the petroleum industry at a high level. It must be profitable to increase the recovery factor in existing fields. One priority in the petroleum operations shall be to extract as much petroleum as possible from each field.

The basis for the petroleum operations must be that oil and natural gas are non-renewable resources that must be managed in a long-term perspective.

We want to maintain the exploration activity in search of oil and natural gas, and the oil industry must be given access to interesting areas for exploration. Petroleum operations in the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea shall be the world's most advanced with regard to oil pollution contingency plans and environmental monitoring. Norway must take part in the development of petroleum operations in the far north in cooperation with Russia.

A proactive High North strategy will give Norway a better basis for involving Russia, the USA and the EU in greater cooperation on maritime safety and oil pollution contingency plans, among other things.

The government wants to:

- ensure stable activity in Norwegian oil and natural gas operations. We shall be a global leader in technology and the environment. An abundance of state and private players both small and large is necessary in order to achieve this goal.
- ensure that the recovery factor in the fields must be increased through increased research and also through the use of CO₂-injection.
- step up the efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions from the Norwegian continental shelf, e.g. through increased energy efficiency, electrification and CO₂ depositing.
- help promote continued internationalisation of oil companies and the supplier industry.
- through strict national environmental requirements and a proactive High North strategy, arrange matters so that Norwegian companies play a role in future petroleum production on the Russian side of the border as well.
- ensure that the approved pattern for operating and base structure in the oil sector shall remain fixed and be used actively in connection with new developments on the continental shelf.
- ensure that health, safety and environment in the oil industry shall be at the global forefront.
- ensure that the operations in the Barents Sea shall be based on a goal of zero emissions to the sea.
- ensure that the environmental impact assessments that are made in connection with the licensing rounds are made available to the general public within the regulatory constraints of the Environmental Information Act. This also applies to the assessment of the individual blocks that shall be awarded.
- complete the 19th licensing round as intended.
- ensure that petroleum operations shall not be initiated in the Nordland VI area during this Storting term. When the comprehensive management plan is ready, it shall be determined for the remaining marine area West of Lofoten and farther north, including the Barents Sea, which areas shall be opened, and in which areas there shall not be any petroleum operations. This shall be determined by the Storting.
- evaluate whether an application shall be submitted to IMO in connection with the management plan as to whether the Barents Sea is to be given PSSA status.
- have a separate study made that considers the impact of global warming on the environment and the natural resources in the Barents Sea.

Chapter 14: Cultural policy

Art, culture, sport and volunteer efforts make society richer in experiences. Through targeted measures and a general strengthening of art, culture and volunteer efforts in the fiscal budget, the government wants to promote culture and the voluntary sector. The basis for this support of culture was laid through the cultural promotion goal of allocating 1 per cent of the fiscal budget to cultural purposes by 2014.

Art and cultural policy

The most important task of cultural policy is to help promote a diversity of different cultural programmes and forms of artistic expression. A top priority goal of cultural policy is to ensure that everyone is given access to art and cultural experiences and to see that the possibility of self-expression through art and culture shall not be dependent on geography or social disparities.

The government wants to provide good working conditions for artists and cultural workers. Artistic freedom and diversity must be ensured. It is important to protect originators' and performers' rights in the field of culture.

The national and regional cultural institutions are important promoters of culture. It is important that these institutions are developed and renewed in order to attract the public. Independent groups in the field of dramatic art must be ensured of more predictable operating conditions.

The creation and further development of regional centres of expertise in the field of culture will increase the diversity and cross-genre innovation in Norway. Simultaneously, the regional centres will create new job opportunities for artists in rural areas.

Through the government's strengthening of the economy in the municipal sector, there will be room for giving a higher priority to culture and local volunteer efforts. Cultural policy must actively facilitate culture-based economic development. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs' allocations for cultural purposes will often be the stable basis on which the cultural industries can be further developed.

The public authorities have a special responsibility for taking care of cultural areas that have values that transcend purely commercial appeal. The market alone is not sufficient to ensure quality, innovation and diversity in the cultural sector.

It is crucial that the freedom of action in cultural policy, and hence the possibility to provide support for our own language and cultural expression, is not limited by international trade agreements.

Our cultural heritage is an irreplaceable source of insight, identity and experience. We administer our cultural heritage on behalf of future generations, and therefore it is our responsibility to see that it is not devalued.

The government wants to:

- achieve cultural promotion through an increase in the support of culture to 1 per cent of the fiscal budget by 2014.
- introduce a simple, general Act relating to culture that specifies the public authorities' responsibility in the field of culture.
- follow up the approved escalation plan for archives, libraries and museums and begin work on a plan for protecting and preserving the museum collections.
- further develop the Cultural Rucksack for children and youth. Expand the latitude for children's own activity and for local and regional participation.

- ensure that all children shall have an offer of a place in a municipal arts centre at a reasonable price.
- improve the Saami Assembly's opportunities to conduct an active cultural policy.
- call attention to the multi-cultural perspective in all fields in the cultural sector and help create better places where majority and minority cultures may meet.
- study the possibility of a culture card that can give youth and students free admission or a discount price at cultural events.
- submit a report on professional artists, which also covers artists' living conditions.
- study the possibilities of establishing a culture boat that sails along the whole coast.
- improve regulations and support schemes for the repair and construction of local cultural buildings.
- provide extensive support for Norwegian music.
- strengthen dance, e.g. through a separate subsidy scheme for dance.
- provide more support for the embellishment of public buildings.
- complete the work on new, stricter legislation against gambling.
- limit the commercialisation of public rooms.
- complete the efforts to ban the black-market sale of tickets to sporting and cultural events.

Language, literature and media

Norway is a small linguistic area, and the Norwegian language is under constant pressure. There is a need for a proactive language policy so that Norwegian remains the language of preference throughout Norwegian society. The written culture is the mainstay of Norwegian social and cultural life. The government wants to call attention to the valuable diversity inherent in having two Norwegian written cultures. *Nynorsk* (New Norwegian) and *bokmål* (Dano-Norwegian) have equivalent formal status, but in actuality *nynorsk* still faces more difficult prospects. Therefore, it is especially important to ensure that *nynorsk* has good opportunities for development.

It is necessary to have a goal-oriented development of literature policy, which ensures innovation, diversity and geographic distribution in both non-fiction and fiction.

Freedom of the press and properly functioning media are a necessary condition for freedom of speech, due process protection and a vital democracy. Therefore, we want to oppose conformity and encourage diversity, quality and Norwegian ownership. It is important to keep public broadcasters in radio and television with clear programming obligations to broad and narrow groups.

The government wants to conduct an active policy to improve the public libraries throughout the country.

The government wants to:

- maintain the purchasing scheme for fiction and make the purchasing scheme for non-fiction permanent.
- evaluate all sides of the new agreement between the Norwegian Booksellers Association and the Norwegian Publishers Association regulating the competitive factors relating to the sale of books in Norway, among other things in order to ensure the diversity and availability of books.
- preserve the principle that libraries shall provide their services free-of-charge and make efforts to ensure that all inhabitants shall have access to good, future-oriented library services.

- conduct a proactive film and cinema policy, e.g. through increased support for Norwegian film.
- help maintain the diversity of newspapers, with regard to core values, geography and content. Press subsidies shall be increased.
- conduct a policy to counteract a concentration of ownership and power in the media that is too strong. The Act relating to media ownership will be amended in keeping with this aim.
- encourage increased use of *nynorsk* in the media, and contribute to the financing of an Internet-based *nynorsk* encyclopaedia. Public web-sites shall comply with the Language Act.
- keep the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (*NRK*) a licence-financed, advertising-free public broadcaster and continue *NRK's* role as a promoter of culture, language and national identity. *NRK's* regional office shall be given good development opportunities.
- ensure that all technological development in media and ICT must be based on universal design.

A new, comprehensive volunteer policy

Through volunteer work, people are activated to perform meaningful, socially beneficial activity. Non-governmental organisations make considerable economic contributions to the society through the provision of services and extensive unpaid efforts. Signs of the times indicate that volunteer activities are in a time of change. General modernisation processes and a general individualisation of the society are putting the voluntary sector under pressure. In order to ensure the recruiting of active members and representatives, it is necessary to reduce the administrative work in the organisations and free up more time for activity.

The government wants to:

- formally give volunteer activities the status of a separate sector through the establishment of a register of volunteers. This will allow for a simpler body of regulations relating to taxation, value added tax and employers' national insurance contributions.
- study the possibility of a permanent VAT compensation scheme for non-governmental organisations.
- respect the organisations' distinctive character by reducing the use of project funds. A greater percentage of state subsidies shall be allocated in the form of unrestricted funds.
- encourage increased activity by increasing the basic support for children and youth organisations and evaluate the criteria for subsidies.
- adapt the regulations and subsidy schemes to the current organisational structure in order to include new organisations, organisational forms and ad hoc involvement.
- further develop the volunteer centres.
- undertake a review of the allocation of funds from the *Frifond* state grant programme (that provides annual grants to activities involving children and young people) and ensure that the non-governmental organisations receive their fair share of the increased gambling or lottery proceeds. An increase in the profits from the Norwegian National Lottery shall benefit the cultural and voluntary sector as an actual increase in their funding.
- increase the funds allocated for adult education, which is of great importance to the work in non-governmental organisations.

Sport and outdoor recreation

Sport represents important values and is Norway's largest national movement. One of the main challenges of the government sport policy at present is to encourage increased activity, in both elite and mass sport. Free access to natural settings and better organisation to promote physical activity are important in order to give people an opportunity for recreation and to take care of

their own health.

The government wants to:

- improve access to sports facilities in the local community, which encourages personal activity, e.g. multi-use ball games areas, multipurpose halls and facilities.
- increase the relative percentage of gaming funds that go to activities, through both sport organisations and through local activity funding that is allocated directly to the athletic clubs.
- intensify anti-doping efforts, also outside of organised sport.
- further develop the urban project in sport.

Chapter 15: Equal status

The government will oppose all discrimination. Everyone shall be entitled to the same opportunities to develop, utilise their abilities and live their life, regardless of gender, social background, religion, sexual orientation, disability or ethnic affiliation.

Indigenous people and national minorities

The basis for the Saami policy is the fact that the Norwegian nation was originally established on the territory of two peoples, Saami and Norwegian, and that both peoples have the same rights and the same entitlement to be able to develop their culture and their language.

We want to conduct a Saami policy that shall serve the Saami population so that the Saami language, culture and community life shall have a secure future in Norway. Cultural life is an important force for strengthening identity, while helping to promote vital local communities.

The Saami Assembly must have real influence on areas that are important to Saami society. We want to improve the possibility for all age groups to receive training in the Saami language.

Jews, Kvens (persons of Finnish stock), the Roma (gypsies), the Romany (wandering gypsies) and Forest Finns have the status of national minorities. We want to ensure the minorities' basis for their own culture.

The government wants to:

- ensure that the Saami Assembly shall have real influence on the formulation of agricultural, reindeer husbandry and fisheries policy and on the management of crucial resources for Saami community life.
- initiate a programme promoting economic growth for business combinations in Saami regions.
- prepare a separate Report to the Storting on Saami culture, improve external constraints for Saami artists and cultural performers and contribute to the international advertising of Saami culture.
- support the development of Saami tourism and travel, which shall ensure and strengthen business and industry in Saami areas.
- ensure that bilingual municipalities have their extra expenses covered.
- work to ensure that the Saami College is developed into a Nordic Saami scientific college.
- help see that children and adolescents in the national minority, the Roma, are given a real opportunity for an education.

Equal status between the genders

We want to conduct a policy that gives women and men equal opportunities and real equal status. Although Norwegian women and men formally have the same rights, we still have a long way to go before we have established real equal opportunities. We want to provide differential treatment by gender when this is necessary in order to create full equal status. We want to work for equal status through amendments of laws and in the way we organise employment and community life, but also through debate, information and public awareness campaigns.

The efforts to promote equal status must occur both on the job and at home. On the job, we want to ensure equal pay for work of equal value and make efforts to ensure that both women and men are hired in all types of occupations. At home, one of the goals is to help promote a more uniform division of responsibility and labour.

The government wants to:

- work to ensure that more women are given management positions in both government and business and industry.
- ensure that there shall be at least 40 per cent of both genders on the boards of directors of publicly listed companies and major companies and in public governing boards and committees.
- strengthen job protection for pregnant employees.
- ensure that a nationwide programme is launched for research on women's health.
- see that the women's and gender research programme is continued beyond 2007.
- incorporate the UN Women's Convention (CEDAW) into the Human Rights Act.

Persons with impaired functionality

The government wants to base its work on the principle of social equal status and universal design. This must be ensured through national legislation and services, an Act against discrimination of the disabled and a binding schedule for achieving accessibility. People who live with disability and chronic illness must be ensured a quality of life on a par with the rest of the population. The government wants to implement user participation as a principle.

The government wants to:

- introduce an Anti-Discrimination Act for the disabled that ensures people with disabilities and chronic illness equal status and protection against discrimination.
- prepare a plan of action for access to transport, buildings, information and other important areas of society.
- make improvements in the scheme involving user-controlled personal assistance.
- help facilitate the implementation of universal design in public purchasing and development contracts.
- work to ensure that people with impaired functionality are given real access to kindergartens, schools and institutions of higher education.
- work to ensure that children with disabilities and chronic illness are given a good, interdisciplinary habilitation programme.
- review the approved plan of action for families with children with disabilities and ensure necessary relief and assistance to families with children with severe disabilities.
- ensure that the access to sports facilities and activities accommodated to the disabled shall increase.
- devise specific, targeted measures to follow up the criticism from the UN Children's Committee when it comes to services for children with impaired functionality.
- review and improve the scheme for the provision of transport for the disabled (the TT scheme).
- achieve the goal of moving young disabled persons out of institutions for the elderly.
- strengthen the cash-benefit-for-care scheme.

Gay rights

We want to ensure the rights of gays and lesbians, help them live their lives openly, and actively oppose discrimination.

The government wants to:

- ensure that organisations that work for gay rights have financial operating conditions that enable them to do a good job.
- actively follow up Report to the Storting no. 25 (2000-2001) on living conditions and quality

- of life for gays and lesbians in Norway.
- support amendments to the Marriage Act that allow for marriages between two persons of the same sex, with the same rights as marriages between two persons of the opposite sex. The Centre Party's representatives in the government and the Storting are free to vote according to their conscience on this matter.

Chapter 16: Crime policy

The government wants active, comprehensive crime-fighting. Ensuring security in the society is a welfare matter and a major government responsibility. The goal is to improve crime prevention, solve more cases, react faster and rehabilitate better, so we must have a targeted, balanced support for the police, the courts and the correctional service. We want to conduct a review of the education and staffing situation in the whole justice sector.

Prevention

With good welfare services for everyone, crime can be prevented and many of the initial incentives for a life of crime can be removed. Given that over 60 per cent of the violent crime is committed under the influence of alcohol, it is important to adhere to a restrictive drug and alcohol policy. Good psychiatric, health and care services and an active labour market policy are important for comprehensive crime fighting. It is important that preventive welfare measures, good local communities and recreational and activity programmes for youth are also preserved as a part of the crime-fighting work.

The government wants to:

- ensure that the police shall be effective, professional and service-minded in their relationship to the public and shall have time and resources for preventive work. Crime preventive work in the police must gain increased status.
- further develop the cooperation between different government departments on crime prevention measures (coordination of local measures) and evaluate the introduction of police boards in the municipalities.
- amend the Planning and Building Act so that the municipalities are obligated to take crime prevention into consideration in their planning.
- ensure good routines for notification of the child welfare service and evaluate how the scheme with child welfare consultants can be spread to more police stations.
- maintain a restrictive drug and alcohol policy.
- promote training measures aimed at conflict resolution and non-violent behaviour that can help prevent crime.

The police

We want to have a strong police force that is nearby with sheriff's offices throughout the country. We want to make the police department more visible and effective, e.g. by reviewing the possibility of co-location with public services offices when this is appropriate. We want to increase the manning of civilian employees and personnel with police training.

The government wants to:

- increase the manpower in the Norwegian police force so that the intentions of the police reform are achieved.
- improve the cooperation among police duty stations so that the response time to the public is reduced.
- ensure that investments are made in equipment and vehicles.
- continue to have an unarmed police force with the possibility of effective "quick response" deployment of weapons.
- ensure that the police shall be given the possibility of increased use of DNA as evidence when this is appropriate. We want central government funding of DNA analysis and want to expand the DNA register. This must be followed up with an ongoing debate on police methods, competence building and equipment. It is important to maintain key principles of due process and protection of privacy considerations.

- evaluate introducing deadlines for processing criminal cases, including filing of charges.
- intensify the efforts to combat white-collar crime and strengthen the investigative and administrative work in order to expose the underground economy, including money laundering. Competence building of local police authorities and cooperation with tax authorities, the National Insurance Administration and social welfare authorities shall be given priority. The capability of the National Authority for the Investigation and Prosecution of Economic and Environmental Crime in Norway (*Økokrim*) to expose and prosecute parties who have the financial resources to hide their crime shall be improved.
- oppose the privatisation of the authorities' most essential law enforcement functions and will not outsource the police and prison services. We want to further develop the scheme with *arrestforvarere* (guards of persons under arrest when they are taken outside of prison) and review the scheme for the transport of prisoners in order to free up resources for the police. We want to terminate the pilot scheme with the private transport of prisoners.
- review the legislation with the aim of devising a clearer regulation of private security companies.

The courts

Despite increased activity, a large number of cases remain untried in the courts at any given time. The government wants to arrange matters so that cases are tried faster. Witnesses give better and more correct information a short time after the crime. Quick penal sanctions against lawbreakers are crucial for the public perception that justice has been served and in order to prevent lawbreakers from committing new crimes. A quick, targeted, effective reaction is especially important when dealing with young lawbreakers.

The government wants to:

- have quicker processing of criminal cases in the courts in order to achieve a balance in the criminal justice chain. To achieve quicker processing of criminal cases, better organisation among the main actors in the criminal justice system, a more active use of exclusion rules for the presentation of evidence, a greater amount of documentation and requirements to the parties involved in criminal cases to appear in court are important.
- have increased use of conflict resolution boards for young lawbreakers.
- raise the income limits for free legal aid. The legal aid scheme shall be reviewed and improved.
- in dialogue with the interest organisations look into a scheme where the courts set a maximum hourly rate or pre-set fee for certain types of civil litigation such as custody of children and consumer cases.
- make efforts to protect people with debt problems from high fees for compulsory debt collection and execution proceedings.

Correctional service

Strengthening the correctional service is the biggest challenge in the penal system. Insufficient remand and prison capacity and scarce resources for content in the serving of sentences amplify the problem with recidivists. The waiting lists to serve a sentence weaken the preventive effect of the penalty. When new crimes are committed by convicted persons or defendants awaiting a sentence and the serving of that sentence, it weakens the trust in our penal system and crime policy. We want to have a correctional service that can take care of those who are convicted at any given time.

The government wants to:

- draw up a specific plan for phasing out the waiting lists to serve a sentence, build more prisons and expand the prison capacity in many existing prisons.

- ensure that binding cooperative structures are established between the correctional service and municipal and central government departments when prisoners are discharged in order to reduce the problems with recidivism. We want to introduce a reintegration guarantee of close follow-up by various government departments upon discharge with a strong focus on getting people employed or in further education with strict requirements for rehabilitation and behavioural change.
- expand the use of community punishment, especially for younger lawbreakers. We want to strengthen the substance abuse treatment programme in and outside the prisons, strengthen the after-care and review the situation for new convicts under age 18.
- improve the prison training programmes and the prison libraries.
- do more research on causes and contexts in crime policy, and the effect of measures must be evaluated.

Violence and assault

Victims of serious crime, and especially violent crime, shall be ensured better follow-up than at present. The government wants to help provide better coordination of assistance agencies so that people that are affected by serious crime can more easily receive the help they need. We want to strengthen the efforts to prevent family violence and violence against women and children. There is a need to enhance our knowledge about violence and assault so that children can obtain help as early as possible. Knowledge about violence and assault must be a part of the curriculum for relevant occupational groups. The efforts to protect children shall be given high priority, and this will also be the case when children are witnesses to violence and assault.

The government wants to:

- improve the coordination of the assistance agencies for victims of crime and further develop the scheme offering advisory centres for victims of crime.
- improve the compensation schemes for victims of violence and crime, including their relatives. Both legal and medical assistance must be ensured.
- codify the women's aid refuge programme, strengthen the programme for incest victims and intensify the efforts to prevent violence against women and children. A nationwide assistance and treatment programme shall be established for perpetrators of violence. Alternatives to violence are essential to this kind of programme.
- strengthen the due process protection of victims of violence, give sexually assaulted women the right to a counsel for the victim regardless of whether the case is reported, help provide accessible treatment centres for victims of violence and sexual assault throughout the country, and ensure that casualty clinics and/or emergency treatment centres have the competence and equipment to secure evidence. We want to appoint a broadly composed government panel to study the situation of women who have been subject to rape and other sexual violence.
- intensify the efforts to prevent assaults against children. We want to make further efforts to prevent Internet-related assaults against children by requiring that Internet providers offer filters and evaluating the introduction of a "grooming clause".
- work to make the penalties more severe for sexual assault, murder, serious violence and sexual offences.
- consider a pilot project with a special transmitter worn by the offender, which sets off an alarm carried by the victim if the offender violates an interim exclusion order and comes within a specific proximity of the victim.
- strengthen the police's efforts to suppress so-called human trafficking and make it easier for women and children who are subject to human trafficking to gain temporary residence in Norway.
- ensure a better, comprehensive, coordinated programme for children who have been subject to assault, e.g. by evaluating the establishment of a "Children's Advocacy Centre".

Civil protection

Open, modern, technological, democratic societies are vulnerable. The society is vulnerable, among other things, because the lapse of a few key installations may result in major, undesirable disruptions in our daily lives. At the same time, various actors and challenges can threaten our collective security.

Civil protection involves protecting the population's security and protecting the society's key functions. This includes handling and following up unintended and intentional events that threaten social structures and the individual citizen. Unintended events may include landslides, floods and other natural disasters, but also major accidents, fires, or other crises. Intentional events may include planned actions against Norwegian social structures or citizens, e.g. terrorist acts, sabotage, espionage, and international crime on a large scale.

In this context, our most important task is prevention. If events and crises nonetheless occur, the objective is to handle them rapidly and effectively through the use of the society's national resources, clear structures and clearly delegated responsibility, clear lines of command between civilian and military players and sufficient expertise at all levels.

The government wants to:

- conduct a review of Act no. 7 of 15 December 1950 relating to special measures in time of war, threat of war and similar circumstances in order to clarify and survey "grey areas" related to emergency preparedness.
- improve the civilian-military cooperation with regard to civil protection, including emergency preparedness with regard to natural and environmental disasters.
- increase the use of drills at all levels of government administration.
- strengthen the emergency preparedness against acts of terrorism and sabotage. Areas of responsibility in justice, defence and security policy shall be clarified. The anti-terror strategy during peacetime shall be based on justice policy principles, and policy instruments will derive from it.
- follow up the work on a new national digital emergency network for the preparedness agencies.

Ground lease Act

The current legislation pertaining to a ground lease, with appurtenant regulations, is the basis for the following amendments:

- The government wants to instruct state-controlled funds and state properties to allow the right of redemption every other year for up to 30 times the consumer-price-adjusted original rent. Those who do not want redemption will be offered continued rental adjusted according to the consumer price index.
- The government wants to take the initiative to amend the Ground Lease Act so that housing leaseholders will be given the right of redemption every other year, in contrast to the current practice of every tenth year.
- The right of redemption will not be granted for cabins on state-owned common land.
- The right of redemption will not be granted for cabins associated with agriculture, where lease income amounts to more than five per cent of the farm's net income.

Chapter 17: Immigration and integration

The government wants to conduct a comprehensive immigration and refugee policy based on Norway's international obligations.

The government wants to conduct a human, egalitarian refugee and asylum policy that adheres to the rule of law. Norway has a clear moral obligation to take its share of responsibility for people who need protection. The government wants to base its refugee and asylum policy on principles of international law expressed in the conventions on human rights and refugees.

The government wants to conduct a refugee policy that gives greater consideration to the recommendations from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The government wants to submit a proposal for a new Immigration Act. The government thinks there is a need for a better statutory and regulatory framework in the field of immigration, and, among other things, this will include evaluating the regulatory framework for family reunification and the practices relating to strong humane considerations.

The processing of applications for asylum

A just asylum policy requires clear rules and international cooperation. It is important to have effective administrative procedures, based on sufficient guarantees of due process.

The government wants to maintain the current administrative conditions in and organisation of the field of immigration.

A quick return of each foreigner whose application for asylum is rejected is of great importance for the legitimacy of the institution of asylum. The government wants to continue the scheme with a 48-hour procedure for “assumed groundless” asylum seekers.

The government wants to strengthen the efforts to evict foreigners who are residing illegally in Norway and intensify the effort to draw up return agreements with more countries. At the same time, the government wants to review the conditions relating to foreigners who are residing in Norway without a legal residence permit. Humane arrangements must be established for those who have received a final rejection, but have not yet returned.

Consideration for minor asylum seekers

Children who come to Norway as asylum seekers, either unaccompanied or with adults, are a particularly vulnerable group. The government wants to have a special focus on their rights and the circumstances of their lives.

The government wants to enter into a dialogue with the municipalities in order to ensure that families with children that are granted a residence permit in Norway receive a permanent dwelling more quickly. Hundreds of children currently live much too long under extremely difficult circumstances. Reducing the time that children spend living in asylum centres to a minimum is a high priority task.

The government wants to:

- increase the aid to internally displaced refugees.
- increase the resources and review the regulations in order to ensure better monitoring and

follow-up of foreigners who are residing illegally in Norway.

- participate in international cooperation on joint measures related to visas, border control and asylum and refugee policy in Europe and review Norwegian practices regarding the processing of visa applications.
- conduct an evaluation of the scheme with an Immigration Appeals Board in order to ensure greater openness in the processing of appeals.
- ensure accordance between the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Norwegian Immigration Administration.
- increase the quota for resettlement refugees from the UN to 1500 to begin with.
- lower the threshold for a request for a petition for a reversal of a decision so that a residence permit will again be granted when there are "strong humane considerations".
- improve the conditions for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers who come to Norway and transfer the responsibility for providing care for these minors to the child welfare service.
- reintroduce Norwegian language instruction for asylum seekers who are waiting to have their applications processed.
- establish waiting centres for those who have received a final rejection but have not yet been repatriated, with a sensible arrangement that ensures food, housing and access to necessary medical assistance.
- keep the maintenance requirement for family reunification, but will evaluate differentiating the scope and content of the obligation, e.g. related to those who are receiving an education and who have a residence permit on humanitarian grounds.
- prevent foreign women from being subjected to violence in their marriage with a resident of Norway and provide support measures for the victims.

Inclusion and participation

The government wants to work for a tolerant, multi-cultural society and combat racism. Everyone shall have the same rights, duties and opportunities regardless of ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Diversity makes Norway a richer society. Equal worth, solidarity, justice and a good allocation policy are the fundamental values for creating such a society. An inclusive society requires equal status between the genders.

The government will oppose discrimination, prejudices and racism in order to give everyone the best basis for participating in the society. At the same time, we shall make it clear that it is expected that all inhabitants have an obligation to participate actively and to support the society's laws and fundamental democratic values.

The government wants to conduct an active integration policy for all immigrants in order to ensure that they can contribute their resources as quickly as possible to Norwegian employment and the Norwegian society at large. The government will oppose a society riven by class differences based on ethnicity and will conduct an active inclusion policy that ensures immigrants and their descendants the same equal opportunities as others.

The government wants to:

- conduct a broad review of language instruction for minority language children.
- provide more resources to primary schools and upper secondary schools with more than 25 per cent minority language pupils.
- intensify the effort against the removal of children from Norwegian schools without the approval of the school authorities.
- establish an offer of free core time in kindergartens for all 4 and 5-year-olds in areas with a high percentage of minority language children.

- make it easier and faster to get the approval of an education taken in other countries.
- expand the scheme where qualified applicants with an immigrant background are called in to an interview in the public administration so that it applies to all undertakings that are owned by the central government, and develop policy instruments to increase the percentage of employees with an immigrant background in the central government and in state-owned enterprises.
- intensify the cooperation with labour and management organisations and develop policy instruments for opposing discrimination and recruit more immigrants for jobs in the private and public sectors.
- target and expand the integration efforts to the majority of newly arrived immigrants who are not able to take part in an introductory programme.
- expand the obligatory Norwegian and social studies course for persons who come to Norway through family reunification and review the financing scheme.
- ensure participants in the introductory programme a sequence of measures extending the programme.
- emphasise that forced marriage and sexual mutilation are illegal in Norway. Survey the extent of forced marriage and sexual mutilation and initiate new, long-term, targeted measures in cooperation with affected parties and specialist environments.
- implement new, targeted measures that ensure that women with a minority background are treated as independent persons with their own rights to information, language instruction, education and employment.
- evaluate amendments to the arrangement in the integration grant that is meant to encourage active integration measures in the municipalities.
- increase the grant to non-governmental organisations that work to promote inclusion.

Chapter 18: Church, religious, and ethical policy

Freedom of belief and religion are fundamental values that the society and legal framework must strengthen and protect. All churches and religious groups must be able to freely practice their activities on the basis of their own values and self-awareness.

The scheme with a state church makes special demands on the protection of minorities of faith. All inhabitants shall feel protected and respected for their philosophy of life and have good opportunities to practice their religion or maintain a non-religious outlook on life.

The government wants to facilitate and provide financial support for practicing a diversity of religions and faiths in Norway. Religious diversity enriches the society and confronts us with new challenges. Open discussion, cooperation and interaction among the communities of religion and faith both locally and nationally promote mutual understanding and contribute to respect for both differences and the common values on which the society shall be based. Arrangements must be made for good, practical solutions that attend to the inhabitants' different needs in a religiously diverse society in the school, on the job, and in the observance of family events, phases of life and celebrations.

We want to ensure that the Church of Norway can continue to be an open, inclusive national church with room for different religious needs and different theological movements. The church shall encourage people's faith and fellowship and be a role model that helps strengthen local communities, human dignity and international solidarity. Together with other communities of religion and faith, the church shall be able to encounter people at life's various milestones and be a unifying factor when joy and sorrow shall be observed at the national and local levels.

Many of our church buildings are local gathering points and also important arenas for the presentation of art and culture. They constitute an important part of our cultural heritage. Many church buildings are in disrepair, and we want to make efforts to have them upgraded.

The government wants to:

- emphasise that the Norwegian society shall be open and tolerant of all philosophies of life.
- preserve the Church of Norway as an open, broad, inclusive national church.
- prepare for a broad debate regarding the state and church on the basis of the State-Church Committee's report.
- continue and evaluate the religious education reform.
- make financial arrangements for improved maintenance of church buildings.
- study the future of the Church Property Endowment Fund.
- see that the central government provides more support for the maintenance of medieval churches.
- further develop Trondheim and Nidaros as an ecclesiastical focal point in cooperation with the church.
- support the preventive and community-promoting work for children and youth that communities of religion and faith operate locally.
- arrange matters so that the social and diaconal work of communities of religion and faith can be strengthened.
- carry out reforms in the church that strengthen democracy and promote a better coordinated administration in interaction with key ecclesiastical bodies.
- look into the lapse of exclusionary provisions in the Gender Equality Act and the Working Environment Act.
- help promote the establishment of more religiously and philosophically neutral ceremonial facilities.