

Political priorities of the Labour Party Government Oslo, 6 February 2025

Translated from Norwegian

In times of turbulence and uncertainty, sound governance is essential. Based on our values – freedom, equality and solidarity – the Labour Party Government will work to increase people’s confidence in tomorrow and restore their hope for the future. The Government will look forward, not back, and will seek broad-based, unifying solutions that will change Norway for the better. Addressing the issues that are most important to people’s everyday lives will be at the top of our policy agenda. The Government’s aim is to ensure that Norway is a country where no one is left behind.

Higher prices for food and electricity, a rise in organised crime, war in Europe, the impacts of climate change and more frequent extreme weather events have undermined our sense of security and led to growing uncertainty and concern in Norway. This is something we take very seriously. It is clear that there is a strong desire for change among the population.

People are finally seeing real wage growth. Unemployment is low and much of the business sector is thriving. Strengthening our national defence and our police will provide increased security for our country and its people. Sound economic governance, more effective welfare-to-work schemes and a better organised labour market have laid the foundation for new growth.

Much has been achieved, but a great deal still remains to be done.

The economic outlook is set to improve in the period leading up to the general election. Starting in the autumn, a new fixed price for electricity consumers in Norway will reduce people’s electricity costs and provide greater predictability.

Health service waiting times will be reduced.

Steps will be taken to improve learning outcomes for children and young people, and enable more pupils to thrive at school. Screen use in schools will be reduced and there will be greater focus on improving reading and concentration skills.

The Government will devote particular attention to addressing the distinct challenges faced by towns and urban areas, such as problems relating to crime, traffic, housing costs and living conditions.

The Government will strengthen welfare-to-work schemes and help to get more people into employment that provides a living wage. We will reduce social and geographical inequalities and combat poverty, discrimination, racism and hate speech. An inclusive society that values all its members is a more resilient society. In societies where there is a high degree of social

equality and there are equal opportunities for all, more people have the freedom to lead good lives.

The Government will modernise and digitalise Norway and step up efforts to revitalise, strengthen and improve the public sector. Public resources are to be used effectively to deliver results.

We will work to provide greater predictability for the business sector and implement a dynamic business policy that promotes value creation, facilitates profitable private investments and supports the development of a more adaptable business sector. Norway will contribute to energy security in Europe by continuing to be a reliable and stable supplier of oil and gas. We will build on the expertise found in our oil and gas industry to develop new technology and new solutions for a sustainable future. Norway will work to achieve its climate and environmental targets in a way that safeguards jobs and promotes welfare for all.

Major trade conflicts around the world will have severe ramifications for the Norwegian economy and the Norwegian business sector. The Government will work even more closely with Norwegian companies and trade unions to minimise the impacts. A proactive approach to international cooperation and close contact with our Nordic and European friends and allies are crucial in this context. This will be essential in order to safeguard Norwegian interests and Norwegian jobs and to provide security for the Norwegian people in a more uncertain and dangerous world. Norway remains a committed member of NATO, and this is vital to our national security. The EEA Agreement is the bedrock of our cooperation with Europe.

The Labour Party Government is a minority government with high ambitions. We will seek to secure broadest possible agreement in the Storting on issues where this is possible and where this provides greatest predictability for the country.

These political priorities, together with the political platform of the previous coalition Government, the budget agreements between the Labour Party, the Centre Party and the Socialist Left Party and other agreements reached in the Storting, form the basis for the Government's work.

Priority focus areas

In order to enhance people's financial security and safeguard the country's economic health, the Government will:

1. Pursue a sound economic policy that promotes sustainable economic growth and high employment.
2. Take steps to reduce inflation and improve people's financial situation, while keeping unemployment low.
3. Ensure effective management of public resources.

4. Start work on the reforms needed to increase competitiveness and productivity, enhance adaptability in the business sector, mobilise profitable investments, ensure more effective use of resources, and further develop the tax system to better promote value creation and equitable distribution of social and economic goods.
5. Simplify, streamline and digitalise public sector processes in order to increase productivity and reduce case processing times and costs for the business sector. By the end of 2025, 80 % of central government agencies are to be making use of artificial intelligence.
6. Safeguard the sickness benefit scheme.
7. Strengthen the tripartite cooperation between government, employer organisations and employee organisations, and encourage membership of employee organisations.
8. Follow up the agreement reached in the Storting on pensions and a new early retirement pension supplement under the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme.

In order to facilitate increased participation in a well-organised labour market, the Government will:

1. Work to achieve the target of getting a further 150 000 people into work by 2030, and guarantee that all people between the ages of 16 and 30 are offered work experience, follow-up and guidance, or education or training opportunities under our major initiative to improve the lives and prospects of young people.
2. Continue the work to increase the number of permanent, full-time positions, especially in the health and care sectors.
3. Take steps to get more Ukrainians and other immigrants into paid employment.
4. Initiate the skills reform to promote lifelong learning in the labour market, starting with a pilot project in the industrial sector.
5. Introduce the requirement that Norwegian pay and working conditions must be observed on board ships operating in Norwegian waters, and start the process of making it a requirement for wholly state-owned companies to include minimum requirements in contracts in the aviation sector stipulating that Norwegian working environment rules are to apply in Norway.
6. Start the process of incorporating the ILO core conventions into the Human Rights Act.

In order to ensure continued growth in the business sector, the Government will:

1. Implement a dynamic business policy that promotes value creation, facilitates profitable private investments and supports the development of a more adaptable business sector.
2. Promote increased profitability and lucrative export activity by defending the rules-based trading system and working to put more trade agreements in place.
3. Make it easier to set up, run and work in Norwegian companies.
4. Reduce the backlog of legal acts to be incorporated into the EEA Agreement.
5. Present a new white paper on industrial policy as part of the effort to develop Norway as an industrial nation.

6. Present a new mineral resources act designed to make it quicker and easier to implement mineral projects in Norway.
7. Present a strategy for further developing the offshore wind supplier industry.
8. Work to improve the conditions for freight transport by rail.
9. Invest in national digital infrastructure to fully exploit opportunities relating to data sharing and artificial intelligence, and start the process of developing a national administrative system for ensuring innovative, sound use of artificial intelligence.
10. Present a white paper on aquaculture policy setting out measures to develop Norway as the world's leading seafood and aquaculture nation.
11. Strengthen vocational education and training, and present a white paper on higher vocational education and training.
12. Facilitate increased private funding for research activities that strengthen cooperation between academia, the business sector and the public sector, and help to boost the competitiveness of the Norwegian business sector.
13. Strengthen leading, internationally oriented education and research institutions in Norway as part of the effort to address major social challenges such as those relating to climate change, the energy transition and global health.

In order to ensure that everyone receives high-quality health care when they need it, the Government will:

1. Reduce waiting times for treatment in the specialist health services by extending opening hours at the public hospitals, facilitating more effective division of tasks, ensuring more effective use of resources, introducing new technology, and increasing cooperation with private and non-profit health providers as part of the Government's initiative to reduce hospital waiting times.
2. Modernise the general practitioner service and further develop the dedicated general practitioner scheme in order to provide people with rapid, high-quality health care via both face-to-face and digital contact with general practitioners.
3. Improve the quality of care services for the elderly by increasing the number of full-time permanent positions, introducing new working methods and promoting competence development for personnel working in the field.
4. Start work on reforming the national health services to ensure high-quality care and coordinated treatment and follow-up across municipal and specialist health services.
5. Facilitate more widespread use of health and welfare technology and cooperation with the health care industry.
6. Take active steps to achieve Norwegian participation in the European Health Union in order to ensure adequate national preparedness for future health crises.
7. Continue to develop low-threshold services in the area of mental health care.
8. Present an comprehensive reform of Norway's substance abuse policy to ensure that those with substance abuse problems receive appropriate help and health care, not punishment. All dealings involving drugs will still be a criminal offence.

In order to create equal opportunities for all children and young people, the Government will:

1. Continue the efforts to ensure that all pupils develop good reading, writing and numeracy skills at an early age, and promote more practical, diversified activities that encourage concentration.
2. Reduce screen use in schools, provide greater access to printed textbooks and necessary learning materials and motivate pupils to read more.
3. Enhance learning about our shared history, cultural heritage and traditions in order to create and strengthen the role of the school in providing a common reference framework for all children in Norway.
4. Ensure that it is the teacher who is in charge in the classroom, introduce clearly defined rules for orderly conduct and behaviour, strengthen the team around the child network and combat bullying.
5. Raise the minimum age for use of social media, draw up national guidelines for screen use for children and young people, and present a white paper on safe use of the internet.
6. Propose stricter regulation of tech giants to ensure that communications technologies are safer for children and young people to use.
7. Present a reform intended to enhance the management and quality of the child welfare services to ensure that children have access to the help they need when they need it.
8. Continue the effort to ensure adequate staffing and improve the competence of personnel working in child day care services.

In order to reduce emissions, protect the environment, expand the energy system and ensure low, stable electricity prices, the Government will:

1. Present a white paper on climate policy setting out more ambitious climate targets.
2. Take steps to reduce emissions from land-based industry and the waste management sector.
3. Provide cities with new tools to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote good air quality in urban areas, and ensure better protection of the environment.
4. Introduce measures to improve the health of the Oslo Fjord.
5. Take steps to ensure that Norway maintains control over national energy resources.
6. Create a better framework for speeding up development of renewable energy in the form of hydropower, wind power and solar power.
7. Introduce a state-financed electricity pricing scheme with the option of a fixed price that will apply to both primary and holiday homes.
8. Reduce VAT on grid tariffs from 25 % to 15 %.
9. Given the great instability in the European energy markets, not introduce any new electricity interconnectors or adopt EU market rules.
10. Take the initiative to establish Nordic cooperation to help reduce extreme fluctuations in electricity prices and safeguard the Nordic power supply system.

In order to reduce inequalities and create more opportunities in urban and rural areas, the Government will:

1. Set a new target to build 130 000 new housing units by 2030.
2. Encourage the major cities to take part in a concerted effort to build housing, by among other things streamlining case processing routines, reducing red tape, and establishing good framework conditions for building housing for students and the elderly in urban areas.
3. Strengthen the capacity of the Norwegian State Housing Bank so that more people can own their own homes.
4. Start the process of following up the recommendations in the report of the commission appointed to review the Tenancy Act.
5. Expand and strengthen urban development initiatives in the cities, including efforts to increase participation in sports activities.
6. Promote entrepreneurship and business development in low-income areas and consider solutions for moving public sector jobs that need to be based in Oslo out of the centre of the city to Groruddalen, Søndre Nordstrand and other districts of Oslo.
7. Present a white paper setting out measures to reduce social and economic inequalities, increase mobility and combat poverty.
8. Continue the targeted initiative to develop urban land-use and transport agreements in 14 urban areas in Norway, and other schemes to enhance public transport systems and transport infrastructure in and around the cities.
9. Work to enhance the punctuality and capacity of the railways, and develop the road network by supporting activities relating to road operation and maintenance, renewal and new investment.
10. Implement measures to increase public access to the shore.
11. Promote increased settlement and business activity and better access to services and expertise in the outlying districts by establishing decentralised educational programmes, debt relief schemes and local centres providing consolidated public and municipal services.
12. Continue the effort to close the income gap in the agricultural sector.
13. Promote a robust and diversified voluntary sector that can help to address the problem of loneliness and enhance public health throughout Norway.

In order to combat crime and ensure a swift response to criminal offences, the Government will:

1. Continue the effort to increase the number of police officers and strengthen investigation capacity in the major cities, and facilitate long-term, effective management of the national police.
2. Work to reduce case processing times in the court system for cases involving young offenders.

3. Launch a programme to provide one-on-one follow-up of young repeat offenders.
4. Circulate for review draft legal provisions that would make the use of minors to commit a crime a separate criminal offence.
5. Improve the quality and increase the number of personnel in the correctional services.
6. Adopt more stringent legislation in order to prevent children from being forced to stay abroad against their will.
7. Present an action plan to combat negative social control and honour-related violence, and follow up the action plan on combatting domestic violence.
8. Present a proposal for a consent law.
9. Maintain effective border controls in order to stop drug smuggling and other types of transnational crime.

In order to protect Norway and promote a better organised world, the Government will:

1. Strengthen all branches of the Norwegian Armed Forces in line with the Long-term Defence Plan and established cooperation with Norway's Allies in NATO.
2. Maintain its broad support for Ukraine's fight for freedom, based on the Nansen Support Programme for Ukraine and the agreement reached in the Storting.
3. Present a national security strategy and a revised national defence industrial strategy.
4. Work to achieve broad political agreement on total preparedness and start the process of implementing the white paper on total preparedness.
5. Defend international law and promote international cooperation and respect for human rights.
6. Safeguard Norwegian interests through collaboration under the EEA Agreement and active participation in European cooperation.
7. Present a strategy for the Arctic.
8. Present a security plan for electronic communications and new measures for safeguarding digital infrastructure.
9. Pursue a knowledge-based development policy based on the principle of solidarity.
10. Pursue an immigration policy that is just and sustainable, and promotes controlled immigration.

In order to strengthen equality, democracy and diversity in Norway, the Government will:

1. Draw up a proposal to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the Human Rights Act.
2. Present a strategy to promote freedom of expression and a strategy to counter disinformation.
3. Propose amendments to the relevant legislation to enhance the transparency of the funding of political parties.
4. Guarantee the status of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation as a broad-based, public broadcasting channel and promote editor-controlled media.

5. Initiate efforts to follow up the decisions taken by the Storting in response to the conclusions in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
6. Present a white paper on preventing and combating extremism.