



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 December 2019

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Sixth periodic report submitted by Norway under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2019*


[Date received: 31 October 2019]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.19-20697(E)



* 1 9 2 0 6 9 7 *

Please recycle 



Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues (E/C.12/NOR/QPR/6)

1. A new human rights catalogue was added to the Norwegian Constitution in 2014. The Constitution now contains provisions on freedom of association, including freedom to join unions (Article 101), the state's duty to ensure that children are provided with economic, social and health security (Article 104), the state's duties towards the Sami people (Article 108), the right to education (Article 109), the state's duty to create conditions under which every person capable of work is able to earn a living through their work or enterprise and the right to social security (Article 110), and the right to a natural and healthy environment (Article 112). Article 92 of the Constitution establishes a general duty on state authorities to respect and ensure the human rights prescribed in the Constitution and in the human rights treaties that are binding on Norway. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural is also incorporated into Norwegian law through the Human Rights Act, and thereby has precedence over other Norwegian laws in the event of conflict.
2. During the reporting period, the Covenant has been invoked in two cases before the Supreme Court, HR-2018-456-P (Article 1) and HR-2015-342-A (Article 13), six cases before the courts of appeal, and at least five cases before the district courts. The constitutional provisions mentioned above have also been invoked in several cases.
3. The training of Norwegian judges is based on an initial training module and continuous training by way of newly introduced judge seminars. The initial training module in the first year after appointment includes and emphasises human rights training with special focus on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The standard training of judges in Norway does not include training directly related to the Covenant, but both the national training common to all judges and ad hoc seminars have covered elements of the rights of the Covenant. There is a strong focus on the particular needs reflecting multi-cultural society, as well as training with a focus on children's rights, the Sami dimension in the judiciary etc.
4. The Norwegian Courts Administration organises annual visits to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg.

Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues

5. According to the Instructions for the Preparation of Central Government Measures (2016), all "fundamental questions" raised by a proposed government measure must be considered systematically and comprehensively. According to the guidelines to the instructions, this includes an assessment and description of relevant human rights obligations, including obligations under the Covenant. For instance, where the Covenant is relevant for draft legislation, considerations concerning compatibility with the Covenant are included in the Government's proposition to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament).
6. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (in force from 1 January 2018) and the Accounting Act impose duties relating to equality on large enterprises. These are obliged to report on measures they have implemented in the undertaking aimed at promoting equality and preventing discrimination, in connection with their non-financial statement on corporate social responsibility in the annual management report. This includes information about what the enterprise does to integrate human rights policies in their business activities.
7. Norway has not established and does not envisage establishing a separate unit or mechanism dedicated to following up recommendations from international treaty bodies. The different human rights recommendations that Norway receives are followed up as an integrated part of the Norwegian ministries' daily work. It is Norway's view that human rights should not be treated as an issue separate from the other work of the ministries. The curriculum for the school subject Christianity, Religion, Philosophies of Life and Ethics states that by the end of the fourth school year, pupils should be able to use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to understand children's rights and equality, and be able to find examples in media and online. Teachers of this subject should therefore have knowledge about the Convention. In Norway, we are currently

renewing both the core curriculum and subject curricula. The renewal is scheduled to be completed in 2020. The new overall part of the curriculum states that human rights are an important part of the foundation of the rule of law. They are based on universal values that apply to everyone, no matter who they are, where they come from and where they live. The UNCRC is a cornerstone of human rights and affords children and young people special protection. The provision of education must be in accordance with human rights, while at the same time providing pupils with knowledge of human rights.

Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

8. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination, among other things on grounds of ethnicity. The obligation to make active efforts does not outline specific measures to be taken, but calls upon the employer to design measures that address the discrimination challenges faced by the enterprise. The public authorities have a special responsibility to prevent discrimination. The Norwegian housing laws contain general prohibitions against discrimination, including ethnic and religious discrimination. Since 2018, the enforcement system in discrimination cases has been reorganised in order to provide more effective protection; see the answer to question 13. Alleged breaches of the law can be brought before the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal. Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against can present their case to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman who offers free guidance.

9. The Government has started work on a new action plan against racism and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and religion, scheduled for submission in autumn 2019. When working on the plan, the Ministry will be committed to developing competence relating to racism and discrimination in the public administration.

10. Everyone is entitled to an assessment of their need for a professional interpreter when receiving guidance and advice from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). Good communication and mutual understanding between the user and the adviser is critical to assure user involvement and that the users have access to good and well-adapted services. A budget model implemented on 1 January 2018 ensures that budget is not a hindrance to providing an interpreter.

11. Everyone should be able to use public services regardless of which language they speak. The use of interpreters in the public sector is regulated in different sector legislations. There is a general obligation to supply information and guidance in matters that fall under the Public Administration Act, which provides for the use of interpreters. The Government aims to improve the use and quality of interpreting in the public sector and has recently proposed a new Interpretation Act. To ensure good access to qualified interpreters, funding has been granted for qualifications measures for interpreters.

12. Norwegian courts may appoint an interpreter in order to deal with cases correctly and fairly. This is necessary when one or more of the principals in the case speak a minority language. The costs will be paid at public expense in cases with [free process](#) and in all criminal cases. The interpreter's costs will be paid in other civil cases when the court finds it necessary to use an interpreter because one or more of the parties does not speak Norwegian and that party is a Norwegian citizen or a foreign citizen resident in Norway. If a witness or an expert does not speak Norwegian, or if a party is a foreign national non-resident in Norway, the expenses can be paid if the court deems it reasonable. This will depend on the type of case.

13. According to the Sami Act, a person of Sami origin has an individual right to use his own language in courts whose jurisdiction comprises all or parts of the administrative district for Sami language. The purpose of the Act is to enable the Sami people in Norway to safeguard and develop their language, culture and way of life.

14. The Sami Act Section 3-4 stipulates special rules for court proceedings: the right to submit written pleadings in Sami, the right to make an oral application in Sami, and the right to speak Sami at court hearings. The court is responsible for translation into

Norwegian. The judge may also decide that the language used in the proceedings shall be Sami and that the court records shall be in Sami.

15. Announcements of positions in the police state that the public workforce shall reflect the diversity of society. Therefore, all qualified persons with diverse education, work- and life-experience are encouraged to apply. An action plan for the work on diversity in the police force has been established. The plan encompasses equality concerning gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and persons with physical disabilities. The aim of the action plan is to make the work on promoting diversity as determined and systematic as possible.

16. The Government does not plan to revise Section 21 of the Immigration Act. The police force has zero tolerance for racism and discriminatory behaviour.

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

17. In the period 2011–2018, the Research Council of Norway undertook an evaluation of the pension reform in Norway. The pension reform has been phased in gradually with a number of transitional rules, and will continue to have economic effects in the decades to come.

18. The evaluation shows that since 2011, the reform has been successful in increasing incentives to work and improving labour force participation among the elderly. Labour force participation has particularly improved in the private sector. The incentives to work in the public sector have not changed to any great extent since public occupational pensions and early retirement schemes in the public sector have not been changed substantially after 2011.

19. In 2018, an agreement was reached to reform public sector pensions for persons born in 1963 or later. This means that also public sector workers will experience stronger incentives to work, and mainly those who retire from 2025 onwards.

20. Public pension spending has increased in the short term in Norway due to a high take up of early retirement. However, public pension spending is expected to fall in the long term with the new system due to life expectancy adjustment of pensions and new indexation of pensions in retirement.

21. The reform may lead to somewhat greater inequality in annual income among pensioners, as pensioners with a long work history and late retirement will receive much higher annual pensions than pensioners who retire early. On the other hand, recent increases in the minimum pension have contributed to higher pensions for pensioners with low income.

22. The life expectancy adjustment for disability pensioners in Norway when starting to receive an old age pension is only about half that of the life expectancy adjustment for non-disabled persons. This is justified because disability pensioners are not able to work longer to compensate for the life expectancy adjustment.

23. When determining old age pension rules for disability pensioners, we face a trade-off between different considerations. On the one hand there is the goal that disability pensioners should have an adequate old age pension. On the other hand, the cost and incentive effects of giving disability pensioners a higher old age pension than other old age pensioners who retire early must be considered. The rules that entered into force from 2011 have generally given disability pensioners reasonable old age benefits compared to the non-disabled.

24. In Norway, it has been possible to combine work and pension without an earnings test since 2011, and this has led to a large increase in the number of people combining work and pension. The Labour and Welfare Directorate publishes indicators for both the average age of pension withdrawal (drawing of old age pension, contractual early retirement pension or disability pension) and the effective age of labour market exit. After the 2011 reform, the average age of pension withdrawal has decreased, even though the effective age of labour market exit has seen a significant increase.

25. The analysis of retirement patterns is based on persons in employment at the age of 50.

26. Table 1 shows the average retirement age for this group in Norway. The table shows that the average retirement age (in the sense of when people start to draw a pension) fell somewhat in 2011 due to the high number of people taking out old age pension early. After 2012, the average retirement age has been fairly stable. The calculations in Table 1 include old age pension, disability pension and the early retirement scheme AFP.

Table 1
Average age of retirement for those in employment at 50 years

	<i>Both sexes</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
2010	63.7	63.4	64.0
2011	62.3	62.5	62.3
2012	62.7	62.9	62.5
2013	63.0	63.2	62.8
2014	62.6	62.7	62.6
2015	62.8	62.9	62.7
2016	62.9	63.0	62.8
2017	62.8	62.9	62.8
2018	62.7	62.7	62.8

Source: The Labour and Welfare Directorate.

27. Table 2 shows that the average age of leaving the labour force is higher than the average age of when people start to draw a pension, as many combine working and taking out a pension for a number of years. On average, men leave the labour force somewhat later than women. The average age of leaving the labour force increased somewhat from 2010 to 2011, and has been fairly stable since.

Table 2
Average age of leaving the labour force for those in employment at 50 years

	<i>Both sexes</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
2010	65.1	64.7	65.6
2011	65.5	65.0	66.0
2012	65.6	65.1	66.1
2013	65.7	65.2	66.2
2014	65.8	65.3	66.3
2015	65.7	65.2	66.1
2016	65.6	65.3	66.0
2017	65.6	65.2	66.1
2018	65.7	65.2	66.1

Source: The Labour and Welfare Directorate.

28. Since 2011, it has been possible to draw a pension at the age of 62, which has become popular especially among men. Disability pensioners start receiving an old age pension at the age of 67, which contributes to the fact that a large part of the population still start to receive an old age pension at this age. Drawing a pension early became increasingly popular in Norway for the first cohorts who were given this possibility, but it has more recently levelled out, with some reduction in the tendency.

29. Tables 3 and 4 show the share of women and men, respectively, who have taken out a pension at different ages in the different cohorts. Before 2011, it was not possible to retire

on a public old age pension before the age of 67. It is possible to postpone retirement until after the age of 67, but this option is less used.

Table 3
Percentage of women who have taken out an old age pension at different ages

	62	63-66	67	68-75
1944		2.2	96.2	1.2
1945		5.8	92.6	1.3
1946		8.7	89.7	1.3
1947		11.5	86.9	1.2
1948	2.4	12.8	83.0	1.2
1949	9.0	13.1	75.9	0.9
1950	11.3	12.9	73.5	0.5
1951	13.3	11.7	65.8	
1952	12.3	9.1		
1953	13.5	7.0		
1954	14.5	4.2		
1955	14.3	1.8		
1956	12.0			

Source: The Labour and Welfare Directorate.

Table 4
Percentage of men who have taken out an old age pension at different ages

	62	63-66	67	68-75
1944		8.9	89.2	1.8
1945		20.0	77.7	2.0
1946		27.6	70.4	1.9
1947		33.5	64.3	1.9
1948	13.2	28.4	56.0	1.7
1949	35.0	19.2	43.2	1.0
1950	38.8	16.2	42.1	0.6
1951	41.2	14.1	36.8	
1952	39.2	11.4		
1953	39.4	9.6		
1954	39.6	6.3		
1955	39.6	2.6		
1956	33.1			

Source: The Labour and Welfare Directorate.

30. The most efficient way to improve the economy for families with low income is to give them better access to the labour market. If the level of cash benefits granted to families is too high, this will have a negative effect on the labour market.

31. From 1993 until the present, total public expenditures on benefits for families with children has been more than doubled in real terms. Kindergartens, for instance, are publicly financed, where all parents pay a reduced fee. Additional schemes have been introduced to help families with low income. For children between the age of one and two who do not attend kindergarten, parents can receive a monthly cash-for-care benefit in the sum of NOK 7,500.

32. We can also inform the Committee that child benefit was increased from 1 March 2019. For one child, parents will now receive NOK 1,054 each month. Single parents are entitled to an additional NOK 1,054 a month (an extra allowance). Single parents with children under the age of three, who are entitled to an extra allowance and to a full transitional benefit according to the National Insurance Act, are entitled to an additional NOK 660 each month.

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

33. The Norwegian National Human Rights Institution received “A” status accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in June 2017. The institution has a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights in accordance with the Constitution, the Human Rights Act and other legislation, and international treaties and law. This includes economic, social and cultural rights. The institution is not mandated to deal with individual complaints.

34. The institution has a strong legal framework. The 2015 Act relating to the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution, and the Regulations pertaining to the Act, lay down the institution’s mandate and functions, the rules on appointment of a director and a board responsible for the management of the institution, and the duties of the director and the board. The institution is organised under the Storting but is fully independent. The authorities, including the Storting, may not instruct the institution in operational or substantive matters.

35. The Act also establishes that the institution shall facilitate cooperation with relevant public bodies engaged in human rights work, including the ombudsman institutions. The institution’s cooperation with the ombudsman institutions, and with civil society and the authorities, contributes to a systematisation of national human rights efforts, ensuring comprehensive human rights protection. Before examinations of Norway in international treaty bodies, the institution organises meetings, together with the relevant ombudsman, to which civil society organisations are invited to share information about reporting procedures and the state examination. The institution also has an advisory committee with members from the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration, the Ombudsman for Children and civil society.

36. All citizens can contact the Patient and Care Service Ombudsman for guidance and assistance in relation to their healthcare needs. Pursuant to the Patients' and Users' Rights Act, the ombudsman shall have access to all relevant documents and facilities to perform its duties.

Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

37. The purpose of the Norwegian legal aid scheme is to guarantee legal assistance to persons who do not have the financial means to meet a need for legal aid that is of great importance to the individual and their welfare.

38. Under the legal aid scheme, distinctions are drawn between cases that are not subject to means testing, cases that are subject to means testing, and to non-prioritised cases. In some cases of a particularly invasive nature, e.g. some child welfare cases and cases concerning coercive measures in the health sector, legal aid is provided regardless of the person’s income or assets.

39. In cases that are subject to means testing, financial conditions regarding income and assets are imposed. These include cases dealing with marriage, probate, parental disputes, compensation for personal injury, evictions, dismissals, criminal injuries compensation, and national insurance matters.

40. The income threshold that determines whether or not a person is entitled to free legal aid is NOK 246,000 for single persons and NOK 369,000 for married couples and others who co-habit and have joint finances. The assets threshold is NOK 100,000. As a rule,

persons who receive free legal aid that is means tested must pay a share of the expenses. The income threshold was last adjusted in 2009.

41. Under Sections 11 (3) and 16 (3) of the Legal Aid Act, legal aid may exceptionally be provided in other cases than those listed in the act (non-prioritised cases) if the financial conditions pertaining to income and assets thresholds are met, and if a case, seen from an objective point of view, is especially pressing for the applicant. The assessment is based on whether the case has similarities with the cases that are specifically mentioned in the law, consequences for the applicant, the financial value that is at stake, and the applicant's personal resources and possibilities to attend to his/her own interests.

42. Under Sections 11 (4) and 16 (4) of the Legal Aid Act, legal aid may also be granted even if the applicant does not fulfil the financial conditions, provided that the expenses for legal assistance will be substantial relative to the applicant's financial situation. The assessment is based on the applicant's income and assets, whether the applicant has children to support, what the dispute is about, the level of conflict between the parties, the amount of documents, the time perspective, whether the applicant needs more assistance than normal, and how comprehensive the case will be.

43. The Government also financially supports special legal aid services. This support goes to organisations that are specialised in providing free legal aid to persons in vulnerable situations. These organisations spread information about rights, perform outreach work and offer free legal aid.

44. The present legal aid system has been in place for many years, and there are some challenges that should be addressed. In October 2018, the Government therefore appointed a public committee to review the legal aid scheme. Issues to be assessed by the committee include whether it is necessary to expand the scheme to cover more types of cases than at present, whether the income thresholds should be adjusted, and whether there should be special rules for free legal aid in cases relating to equality and discrimination. The Committee will complete its work in May 2020.

Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

45. A National Action Plan (NAP) was launched in 2015 making Norway an "early adaptor". It aims to achieve a more coherent policy response in relation to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). To that end, all affected ministries are involved in an inter-ministerial working group to establish and communicate a set of common expectations for responsible business conduct (RBC) in all sectors. The ministries are encouraged to follow up within their remits. Several initiatives and measures have been implemented and are being reported back to the working group.

46. The Government expects Norwegian companies to comply with the UNGPs and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Conducting risk-based due diligence for responsible business conduct is a priority, particularly in challenging markets. The Foreign Service will actively promote responsible business conduct and the UNGPs underpinning sustainable and inclusive economic growth worldwide.

47. The follow-up of the NAP and UNGP has been given impetus from a recent evaluation report prepared by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation Agency, Norad. The evaluation found strong and clear references to UNGP in high-level Norwegian policy documents. However the attention given to coherent guidance and practical implementation of these principles still has room for improvement. As a response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken several tangible follow-up measures. Given the complexity of the UNGP and human rights issues, the Norwegian embassies need increased capacity and competence to follow up development projects involving the Norwegian private sector, as well as to acquire the skills necessary to assess the nature of relevant human rights risks in their host countries. A more systematic approach to competence building is under development.

48. The Ministry has a close collaboration with Norway's National Contact Point (NCP) for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which provides guidance and

training on RBC for Norwegian companies as well as Norwegian embassies. The NCP has also contributed to introducing some of the state-owned enterprises to the method of due diligence for responsible business conduct. The NCP handles complaints on perceived non-compliance with the OECD guidelines and gives advice on how companies can improve their responsible business conduct.

49. The Government will keep up its work on integrating human rights concerns in public procurement contracts. With regard to the Norwegian Export Credit Guarantee Agency and Export Credit Norway, all applications are assessed for human rights risks, impacts and consequences. Applicants are expected to perform an evaluation of potential human rights risks and impacts related to the project and have adequate policies and systems in place to avoid or mitigate these where possible.

50. Business activities can have an impact on society and sustainability at large that can affect their profitability and ultimately investors' financial return. As a long-term financial investor in more than 9,000 companies in 70 countries, the Government Pension Fund Global (GPFG) is interested in the sustainability of companies. The fund manager, Norges Bank, consequently expects companies to respect human rights and address human rights issues in their business practices. The GPFG has developed a set of expectations towards companies with regards to human rights¹ and children's rights.² Human rights are, furthermore, integrated in Norges Bank's efforts to develop standards, exercise ownership and handle risks and opportunities.

51. The Ministry of Finance has established ethically motivated guidelines for the observation and exclusion of companies from the GPFG.³ Companies may be excluded from the GPFG based on these guidelines if they contribute to or are themselves responsible for serious or systematic human rights violations.

52. The Executive Board of Norges Bank makes the final decision on the exclusion of companies, based on recommendations from the Council on Ethics.⁴

53. Finally, the Government is stepping up its efforts to combat modern slavery. Part of these efforts include a focus on responsible business conduct and measures to strengthen awareness of modern slavery. A member of the Storting and the Government itself has proposed an assessment to be carried out of the need for a law on modern slavery, taking the UK Modern Slavery Act as a model.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

54. Norway aims to fulfil our emission reduction target for 2030 together with the EU. Norway is already a part of the Emission Trading System (ETS), and will through the agreement also implement relevant EU legislation that regulates emissions not covered by the system (non-ETS) in the period 2021-2030. Norway will be obliged to commit to reducing non-ETS emissions by 40 per cent.

55. The Government will propose a plan on how to achieve a 45 per cent emission reduction from the domestic non-ETS sectors after the agreement with the EU has been finalised. According to the political platform, Norway can only purchase emission reductions from other European countries to meet its obligations if strictly necessary.

56. Since 2008, most emissions from Norway's petroleum sector have been subject to the ETS. Emissions under the ETS will be reduced by 43 per cent by 2030 compared to the 2005 level. The petroleum sector is also subject to CO₂ tax and other environmental requirements.

¹ <https://www.nbim.no/contentassets/0ff34e35ba1a44c3b6c2039466ccbec7/human-rights-expectations-document2.pdf>.

² <https://www.nbim.no/contentassets/f5f7addcb20945dfa3560183f6f89d01/childrens-rights-expectations.pdf>.

³ http://etikkradet.no/files/2017/04/Etikkradet_Guidelines-_eng_2017_web.pdf.

⁴ <https://etikkradet.no/en/>.

57. Norway has allocated NOK 1.68 billion to the Green Climate Fund in the period 2015-2018 and will provide NOK 400 million to the GCF in 2019.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

58. The Sami Rights Committee delivered an official report on Sami's rights in December 2007. Among other suggestions, they proposed a new act relating to consultations between the authorities on all government levels and representatives for Sami interests.

59. In September 2018, the Government presented a proposition to the Storting (bill) on amendments to the Sami Act concerning consultations (Prop. 116 L (2017–2018)). This is a follow-up to the Sami Rights Committee's report. The plenary of the Storting decided on 9 May 2019 to return the proposition to the Government for a renewed public hearing, since the last hearing was 10 years ago.

60. If and when the bill is adopted, it will further strengthen and clarify the Sami people's right to be consulted in matters that may affect them directly. Consultations must be meaningful and with the objective of achieving agreement – or consent – to the proposed measures.

61. In 2007, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation issued a survey to ministries, governmental agencies and the Sámediggi (the Sami parliament) to evaluate their experiences with consultation procedures. The results indicated that the procedures have made it easier for the Government to contact the Sámediggi at an early stage. Furthermore, this contact has increased the Government's knowledge about the Sami society and perspectives.

62. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security is now in the process of evaluating the Sami Rights Committee's proposal for rights surveying south of Finnmark County.

63. The Committee on Coastal Fisheries off Finnmark delivered its report on 18 February 2008. The Sámediggi and the Government concluded the consultations on the report in May 2011. The consultation parties had different views on certain aspects regarding Public International Law, but successfully came to agreement on several measures intended to secure access to natural resources, which form the basis of Coastal Sami culture.

64. One of the measures established by law, on certain conditions, is a right to fish for all inhabitants of Finnmark and Northern Troms, and municipalities in the rest of Northern Norway with Coastal Sami areas.

65. The Marine Resources Act was changed in order to include a provision on the importance of emphasising consideration of Sami culture in all regulation and management of fishing.

66. The Participation Act was changed to include a provision stating that the Act is to be applied in accordance with public international law on indigenous people and minorities.

67. The Finnmark Act was changed in order to include a provision stating that a claim for recognition of the right to fishing grounds can be put forward to the Finnmark Commission.

68. The changes were implemented on 1 January 2012.

Reply to paragraph 10 (a) of the list of issues

69. 10. Norway does not have an official poverty line, but the EU definition of poverty is often applied when mapping out the extent of low income. According to the EU At-risk-of-poverty indicator at the 50 per cent threshold, incomes below 50 per cent of median income are considered to fall below the low income line. Likewise, the 60 per cent threshold considers incomes below 60 per cent of median income to fall below the low income line.

70. Although the proportion of the population living in households with a yearly income below the low income line has been increasing for some years, Norway is still a country with little disparity between rich and poor. Welfare services, such as kindergarten, education and health services are free or publicly subsidised, reducing the consequences of low income.

People in households with yearly income after taxes per consumption unit below 50 and 60 pct. of median income in 2007-2017⁵. In pct.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
EU scale 50 per cent	5.1	5.2	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6
EU scale 60 per cent	10	10.2	9.5	9.4	9.6	10.1	10.5	10.8	10.9	11.0	11.2

Source: Statistics Norway.

71. The table below shows the total income (the sum of labour income, capital income, taxable and tax-free transfers in a year) that accrues to the tenth income decile and the poorest 40 pct. of the population, respectively.

Share of total income accruing income decile 1-4 and income decile 10, residents 17 years and above in 2007-2017. In pct.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Decile 1-4	16.45	16.40	16.71	16.55	16.46	16.35	16.19	16.02	15.87	16.14	16.22
Decile 10	28.27	27.80	27.09	27.60	27.72	27.74	27.89	28.24	29.65	28.48	28.47

Source: Statistics Norway.

72. The proportion of the population (students are excluded) living in households with persistently low income, defined by an average income over a three-year period that is below 60 per cent of the median income according to the EU equivalence scale has slightly augmented over the last ten years:

Period	Proportion of the population (%)
2015-2017	9.6
2014-2016	9.4
2013-2015	9.3
2012-2014	9.0
2011-2013	8.6
2010-2012	7.9
2009-2011	7.7
2008-2010	7.9
2007-2009	8.1
2006-2008	8.2
2005-2007	8.1

Reply to paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues

73. The proportion of public revenue that is financed through taxes:

Nominal NOK Bn.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Avg
Income excl. petroleum	744.9	747.4	768.7	851.3	869.6	913.1	931.7	980.2	1009.9	1031.5	1077.1	

⁵ Student households and children below the age of 18 that live alone are excluded.

Nominal NOK Bn.	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Avg
income												
Non-petroleum taxes	680.4	684.7	713.5	777.5	807.4	849	868.2	892.6	916.8	943.6	986.4	
Non-petroleum taxes as a share of income excl. petroleum income (%)	91	92	93		93	93	93	91	91	91	92	92

Reply to paragraph 10 (c) of the list of issues

74. Tax rates levied on corporate profits and on personal incomes, and value added tax (exclusive of value added tax on luxury items, tobacco, alcohol, sugary drinks and snacks, and petrol and diesel); and the percentage of total revenue from personal income taxes that are collected from the richest decile of the population:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Avg
CIT rate (%)	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	25	24	23	22	
PIT rates (%)														
Social security contribution, wages	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	
Surtax, first bracket	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	9.00	0.44	0.93	1.40	1.90	
Surtax, second bracket	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	1.70	2.41	3.30	4.20	
Surtax, third bracket (from 2016)										10.70	11.52	12.40	13.20	
Surtax, fourth bracket (from 2016)										13.70	14.52	15.40	16.20	
Tax rate on ordinary income (net income)	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	27	27	25	24	23	22	
Max. marginal tax rate, wages	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	47	47	47	47	47	46	
VAT rate (%)														
General rate	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	
Middle rate (food)	14	14	14	14	14	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	
Low rate (transport, culture)	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	12	12	
Total tax revenue all deciles, NOK Bn*	301.9	320.5	333.6	352.2	374.5	396.9	418.3	433.8	466.1	468.8	480.8	-	-	
Share of total revenue levied on 10th decile (%)	38.4	37.9	37.5	38.0	38.5	38.4	38.5	38.6	39.4	38.5	38.8	-	-	38.4

Source: Norwegian Ministry of Finance and Statistics Norway.

* Includes revenue from all direct taxes from personal taxpayers, i.e. employees share of social security contribution, surtax, tax on ordinary income, property tax and wealth tax.

Reply to paragraph 10 (d) of the list of issues

75. Public expenses as a percentage of gross domestic product and, within total public expenses, the proportion of the public budget that is dedicated to social priorities (employment, education, food, health, water and sanitation, social security, housing and culture):

Share of non-oil GDP (pct.)	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
General government expenditures	52.8	56.8	56.1	56.5	55.4	55.8	56.7	58.1	58.4	59.0	59.2

Nominal NOK bn. and real growth

<i>Selected central government expenditures</i>	<i>Nominal value</i>				<i>Real growth</i>		
	2009	2013	2017	2018	2009-2013	2013-2017	2017-2018
Education							
Grants for training and kindergarten	7.7	9.5	14.1	14.3	2.2%	7.4%	-1.1%
Higher education and research	38.4	46.0	56.0	59.3	1.3%	2.4%	3.5%
Culture and religious denominations	8.0	10.6	13.5	13.8	3.5%	3.2%	-1.1%
Labour and social purposes*	25.9	27.0	31.8	31.3	-2.3%	1.2%	-3.5%
Healthcare							
Specialist healthcare services (hospitals and other)	95.6	116.8	142.9	149.6	1.5%	2.6%	2.0%
Other healthcare purposes	8.9	10.7	16.9	17.9	1.7%	9.2%	3.3%
Children, family and equality	23.0	24.7	26.7	27.0	-0.4%	-0.5%	-0.6%
Memo							
National Insurance Scheme**	288.1	365.0	435.3	457.0	2.4%	2.2%	2.2%

* Operating the Labour and Welfare Administration, grants for the Public Service Pension Fund, labour market measures etc.

** Sickness benefit, work assessment allowance, disability benefit, old age pension, single provider, parental allowance, drugs etc., other.

Reply to paragraph 10 (e) of the list of issues

76. Inflation-adjusted absolute levels of social spending.

Share of non-oil central government expenditures and real levels (bn. 2018-NOK)

<i>Selected central government expenditures</i>	<i>Shares</i>				<i>Real levels</i>			
	2009	2013	2017	2018	2009	2013	2017	2018
Education								
Grants for training and kindergarten	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%	10.0	10.9	14.5	14.3
Higher education and research	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%	4.6%	49.4	52.1	57.3	59.3
Culture and religious denominations	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	10.6	12.2	13.8	13.8
Labour and social purposes*	3.1%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	34.0	30.9	32.4	31.3
Healthcare								
Specialist healthcare services (hospitals and more)	11.3%	11.3%	11.4%	11.5%	124.8	132.5	146.7	149.6
Other healthcare purposes	1.1%	1.0%	1.3%	1.4%	11.4	12.2	17.3	17.9
Children, family and equality	2.7%	2.4%	2.1%	2.1%	28.0	27.6	27.1	27.0
Memo								
Non-oil central government expenditures	843.9	1,029.5	1,254.3	1,295.6				

* Operating the Labour and Welfare Administration, grants for the Public Service Pension Fund, labour market measures and more.

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

77. Norway has taken a strategic approach to increasing the effectiveness of its official development assistance, which includes system-related and organisational measures to strengthen transparency and strategic management.

78. A new budget structure is in place to ensure strategic clarity to objectives, including the SDGs. Grant scheme rules have been revised to strengthen focus on results and simplify reporting requirements. The digital grants portal will further significantly improve efficiency for all stakeholders involved.

79. The organisational reform of Norwegian aid administration, which clarifies responsibilities, will increase efficiency in delivering ODA and increase the quality of aid.

80. Predictability in relation to partner countries has been improved through the extension of multi-year agreements with civil society organisations, humanitarian partners and UN agencies, as well as through the launch of multiannual country strategies for Norway's 16 partner countries.

81. Norway has increased donor coordination in line with international commitments, notably the Grand Bargain. Norway is coordinating its engagement with the UN through regular dialogue and helping to elaborate new joint initiatives in priority sectors.

82. Norway's evaluation system is in line with DAC evaluation principles. The Evaluation Department increasingly carries out joint evaluations with other donors, organisations and partner countries. The policy is to not duplicate structures or add to administrative processes.

83. Norway's proportion of in-donor refugee costs in the period 2013-2018 is provided in the table below. Norway has followed up the new clarifications from the OECD DAC on which costs can be included as in-donor refugee costs, and we will report on the basis of this new outline in 2020 for the 2019 budget.

Official development assistance (ODA) to in-donor refugee costs, 2013-2018, Mill. NOK and per cent of total Norwegian ODA

<i>DAC Main sector (code+name)</i>	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
930 – Refugees in donor countries	1 587	1 757	3 733	6 720	1 240	827
Total Norwegian ODA	32 800	32 046	34 486	36 791	34 118	34 632
In-donor refugee costs as per cent of total Norwegian ODA	4.8%	5.5%	10.8%	18.3%	3.6%	2.4%

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues prior to reporting

84. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, leave in connection with childbirth or adoption, care responsibilities, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age or any combination of these factors. "Ethnicity" includes national origin, descent, skin colour and language. The Working Environment Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of political views, membership of a trade union, and age, as well as discrimination of an employee who works part-time or on a temporary basis.

Reply to paragraph 13 (a) of the list of issues

85. The Norwegian enforcement system was reorganised in 2018. Before 2018, the Ombudsman handled both complaints and guidance cases. The changes implied that the handling of complaints was transferred from the Ombudsman to the Tribunal. These changes strengthened the Ombudsman's role as a proactive agent for equal opportunities. The Tribunal was given the authority to award redress in discrimination cases relating to

working life and compensation in simple cases. Neither the Ombudsman nor the Tribunal refer cases to courts.

86. In October 2018, the Government appointed a public committee to review the legal aid scheme. The committee will complete its work in May 2020. One of the questions the committee is assessing is whether there should be special rules for free legal aid in cases relating to equality and discrimination. Today, there are no special rules regarding free legal aid in these cases, and we therefore have no statistical data on the topic. However, the rules for free legal aid will in some situations cover discrimination cases. The Legal Aid Act is formulated to cover certain types of cases, for example care orders in child welfare cases, evictions of tenants and dismissals of employees, all of which can involve claims of discrimination. In addition to the cases specifically mentioned in the Act, free legal aid can be granted if the case, seen from an objective point of view, is especially pressing for the applicant. The Government also financially supports special legal aid services through the funding of organisations that specialise in providing free legal aid to persons in vulnerable situations.

Reply to paragraph 13 (b) of the list of issues

87. The Ombudsman can be reached both by phone and via their internet site, or by visiting the Ombudsman's office in the centre of Oslo. The internet site has information in English. The Ombudsman can also provide interpreting services for those whose mother tongue is not Norwegian.

Reply to paragraph 13 (c) of the list of issues

88. In the period 2014-2017, the Ombudsman handled a total of 778 complaint cases:

<i>Legal ground</i>	<i>Violation of the law</i>	<i>Not violation of the law</i>	<i>Rejections and dismissals</i>	<i>Total</i>
Disability	70	152	56	278
Goods and services	25	58	24	107
Work related	19	37	13	69
Education	11	20	6	37
Public administration	6	14	4	24
Housing	4	12	3	19
Other areas	4	10	4	18
Police and judicial system	1	1	2	4
Gender	84	80	27	191
Work related	76	64	20	160
Public administration	1	5	4	10
Education	3	4	1	8
Goods and services	6	7	8	21
Other areas	-	2	2	4
Police and judicial system	2	1	-	3
Ethnicity	20	66	20	106
Work related	8	36	7	51
Goods and services	6	7	8	21
Public administration	1	10	1	12
Police and judicial System	1	5	3	9
Other areas	2	5	-	7
Education	1	3	1	5
Housing	1	-	-	1

<i>Legal ground</i>	<i>Violation of the law</i>	<i>Not violation of the law</i>	<i>Rejections and dismissals</i>	<i>Total</i>
Age	20	43	5	68
Work related	20	43	4	67
Goods and services	-	-	1	1
Multiple	14	21	7	42
Work related	13	16	3	32
Police and judicial system	-	1	1	2
Other areas	1	-	1	2
Education	-	1	1	2
Goods and services	-	2	-	2
Housing	-	1	-	1
Public administration	-	-	1	1
Other grounds	1	12	12	25
Work related	1	9	5	15
Other areas	-	2	2	4
Goods and services	-	-	2	2
Police and judicial system	-	1	1	2
Education	-	-	1	1
Public administration	-	-	1	1
Language	9	11	4	24
Work related	9	6	3	18
Education	-	2	-	2
Other areas	-	2	-	2
Goods and services	-	1	-	1
Housing	-	-	1	1
Religion	9	6	4	19
Work related	6	2	-	8
Goods and services	1	2	1	4
Other areas	-	-	3	3
Public administration	1	2	-	3
Education	1	-	-	1
Gender identity	4	8	4	16
Goods and services	2	5	-	7
Public administration	1	2	3	6
Work related	-	1	1	2
Education	1	-	-	1
Sexual orientation	1	6	2	9
Public administration	-	3	-	3
Work related	1	-	1	2
Other areas	-	2	-	2
Goods and services	-	1	-	1
Police and judicial system	-	-	1	1
Total	232	405	141	778

89. We do not yet have sufficient statistics on the cases handled by the new Tribunal.

Reply to paragraph 13 (d) of the list of issues

90. The annual budget of the Ombudsman and the Tribunal during the reporting period (NOK):

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Tribunal	4 891 000	5 859 000	5 935 000	6 447 000	18 902 000	19 006 000
Ombudsman	54 035 000	53 981 000	52 856 000	55 107 000	42 821 000	43 843 000

Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues prior to reporting

91. 14. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation is following up Official Norwegian Report (NOU) 2015: 7 Assimilation and Resistance, and input from the public hearing. Representatives for the Romani people/Tater are included through a working group. The report will be followed up in a report to the Storting concerning national minorities, which will be presented in 2020.

92. The Ministry is not aware of any connection between ethnic background and the number of care orders issued. The Norwegian official statistics are based on country background, not on ethnicity, thus no statistics specific to people with Roma background are available.

93. Most children who cannot live with their parents are placed in a foster home. The child welfare service will choose a foster home based on the child's distinctive characteristics and individual needs. Due account is taken to ensure continuity in the child's upbringing and of the child's religious, cultural and linguistic background. The Norwegian child welfare service recognises the importance of family ties, and is obliged to consider whether someone in the child's family or close network can be appointed as a foster parent.

94. A draft legislation for a new child welfare act has been distributed for public consultation. The new act includes amendments to strengthen the child welfare service's consideration of the child's religious, cultural and linguistic background. The draft legislation also proposes amendments to visitation rights that will strengthen the child's right to have contact with its family.

95. A Competence Strategy for the Municipal Child Welfare Services (2018–2024) has been implemented. This includes new educational programmes that aim to promote greater understanding and sensitivity in the follow-up of children and families with minority backgrounds.

96. The Storting has appointed a truth and reconciliation commission to examine the assimilation policy and injustices perpetrated against the Sami and Kven/Norwegian Finns. The preparatory work in the Storting was carried out in close cooperation with the Sámediggi and Kven/Norwegian Finn organisations. The commission is scheduled to submit its report to the Storting by 1 September 2022.

Reply to paragraph 15 (a) of the list of issues

Asylum applicants - total

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	52	89	89	164	765	82
Syria	1 999	10 536	529	1 017	419	145
Eritrea	2 882	2 947	586	869	241	45
Iran	100	1 342	132	89	119	32
Iraq	186	2 991	215	148	104	24
Afghanistan	579	6 987	373	133	91	28

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Stateless	800	1 130	158	139	80	43
Albania	204	431	130	87	65	30
Russia	227	123	76	58	60	27
Somalia	837	561	154	51	48	11
Ethiopia	375	681	158	91	44	16
Other	3 239	3 327	860	714	619	184
Total	11 480	31 145	3 460	3 560	2 655	667

Asylum applicants - male

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	37	57	60	93	445	58
Syria	1 660	7 882	273	553	209	73
Eritrea	2 196	2 138	347	516	125	17
Iran	62	940	74	50	68	20
Iraq	119	2 258	136	88	51	14
Afghanistan	454	5 913	260	80	67	24
Stateless	577	804	76	82	44	26
Albania	125	283	87	50	44	21
Russia	118	71	42	31	36	14
Somalia	510	366	79	24	30	8
Ethiopia	225	487	86	54	24	2
Other	2 540	2 731	623	470	422	113
Total	8 623	23 930	2 143	2 091	1 565	390

Asylum applicants - female

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	15	32	29	71	320	24
Syria	339	2 654	256	464	210	72
Eritrea	686	809	239	353	116	28
Iran	38	402	58	39	51	12
Iraq	67	733	79	60	53	10
Afghanistan	125	1 074	113	53	24	4
Stateless	223	326	82	57	36	17
Albania	79	148	43	37	21	9
Russia	109	52	34	27	24	13
Somalia	327	195	75	27	18	3
Ethiopia	150	194	72	37	20	14
Other	699	596	237	244	197	71
Total	2 857	7 215	1 317	1 469	1 090	277

Granted asylum - total

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	10	13	5	129	70	232
Syria	1 247	1 551	7 414	1 869	577	126

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Eritrea	1 912	2 615	1 636	779	496	56
Iran	47	46	505	218	44	6
Iraq	26	30	249	427	26	8
Afghanistan	301	606	1 494	753	70	20
Stateless	410	442	540	237	57	15
Albania	0	0	2	5	0	0
Russia	15	13	3	9	8	2
Somalia	492	190	103	69	23	5
Ethiopia	155	215	245	73	28	5
Other	314	546	575	186	60	36
Total	4 929	6 267	12 771	4 754	1 459	511

Granted asylum - male

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	5	2	3	72	44	138
Syria	1 004	1 279	5 402	1 315	284	58
Eritrea	1 496	1 948	1 146	465	275	31
Iran	30	29	337	149	23	3
Iraq	18	16	167	284	12	3
Afghanistan	220	548	1 359	678	55	17
Stateless	296	295	342	142	27	10
Albania	0	0	1	1	0	0
Russia	6	6	2	4	4	1
Somalia	277	96	48	39	7	4
Ethiopia	80	138	161	33	10	2
Other	203	430	445	112	27	15
Total	3 635	4 787	9 413	3 294	768	282

Granted asylum - female

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	5	11	2	57	26	94
Syria	243	272	2 012	554	293	68
Eritrea	416	667	490	314	221	25
Iran	17	17	168	69	21	3
Iraq	8	14	82	143	14	5
Afghanistan	81	58	135	75	15	3
Stateless	114	147	198	95	30	5
Albania	0	0	1	4	0	0
Russia	9	7	1	5	4	1
Somalia	215	94	55	30	16	1
Ethiopia	75	77	84	40	18	3
Other	111	116	130	74	33	21
Total	1 294	1 480	3 358	1 460	691	229

Appeals - total

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	29	55	44	32	21	17
Syria	0	249	569	83	73	14
Eritrea	515	260	425	101	78	11
Iran	128	68	533	229	91	33
Iraq	143	116	1192	504	113	25
Afghanistan	340	362	3662	1469	145	49
Stateless	163	112	294	79	29	35
Albania	168	217	99	44	29	13
Russia	237	106	93	43	44	6
Somalia	526	353	446	88	45	20
Ethiopia	123	97	493	165	77	14
Other	2256	1346	1459	485	346	120
Total	4628	3341	9309	3322	1091	357

Appeals - male

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	22	32	34	21	11	11
Syria	0	171	411	54	40	11
Eritrea	347	183	247	54	40	8
Iran	78	43	382	156	55	19
Iraq	81	90	914	334	57	13
Afghanistan	238	274	2793	1285	121	37
Stateless	126	81	219	55	18	18
Albania	99	136	69	23	22	8
Russia	127	54	51	26	23	2
Somalia	370	224	278	58	30	10
Ethiopia	77	69	342	114	48	8
Other	1673	989	1091	341	239	77
Total	3238	2346	6831	2521	704	222

Appeals - female

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Turkey	7	23	10	11	10	6
Syria	0	78	158	29	33	3
Eritrea	168	77	178	47	38	3
Iran	50	25	151	73	36	14
Iraq	62	26	278	170	56	12
Afghanistan	102	88	869	184	24	12
Stateless	37	31	75	24	11	17
Albania	69	81	30	21	7	5
Russia	110	52	42	17	21	4
Somalia	156	129	168	30	15	10
Ethiopia	46	28	151	51	29	6

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Other	583	357	368	144	107	43
Total	1390	995	2478	801	387	135

Reply to paragraph 15 (b) of the list of issues

97. The Child Welfare Act applies to all children in Norway, regardless of their status, nationality or citizenship. Minor asylum seekers are offered health and care services and education in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The responsibility for the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors is shared between the child welfare service and the immigration authorities.

98. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors below the age of 15 are offered accommodation in care centres provided by the Norwegian Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat).⁶ The immigration authorities have the primary responsibility for housing and care services for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors above 15 years of age. The Norwegian authorities are also in the process of regulating the responsibility and care for this group in the Norwegian Immigration Act.

99. The Norwegian Government is not currently considering transferring care responsibility for unaccompanied minors aged 15–18 to the child welfare service. Norway acknowledges that all unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors require a level of care and accommodation designated for their special needs. However, younger children normally require a higher level of care than older children. Norway accordingly has an age-adjusted reception offer. The reception facilities offered to unaccompanied minors aged 15–18 are designed to meet the needs of this group. The Norwegian Government is working systematically to ensure that the care provided for all unaccompanied children is managed in the best possible way.

Reply to paragraph 15 (c) of the list of issues

100. In 2016 and 2017, there was an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors who went missing from reception centres, with a total of 144 and 198 cases in 2016 and 2017, respectively. This was due to a number of factors, including longer processing time and hence a longer stay in reception centres for this group, an increase in the number of unaccompanied minors who received a limited permit that expires when the holder turns 18, relocations between reception centres and fear of forced return. The Norwegian authorities have undertaken several measures to address the situation for this group, including increased funding to enhance both the quality and quantity of staff in reception centres, as well as more quickly settling unaccompanied minors who have a limited resident permit due to doubt about their identity.

101. The immigration authorities and the police have guidelines on how to deal with disappearances of unaccompanied or separated children. The reception centres are obliged to inform the police, the child welfare authorities and the immigration authorities when minors go missing. Police reports indicate that minors who disappear from reception centres mainly leave at their own will, without pressure from traffickers. However, the police must always assess the need to conduct an investigation. We do not currently have statistics showing the number and outcome of investigations.

⁶ These provide care services appropriate to the particular needs of the child. The provision is governed by Chapter 5A of the Child Welfare Act. The rules for approval, quality, residents' rights, and supervision in care centres are identical to those of other child welfare institutions.

Reply to paragraph 15 (d) of the list of issues

102. Most asylum applications will be considered on their merits in Norway, and as a main rule, the asylum seeker will have the right to stay in Norway during the appeal procedure. However, this does not apply to cases that fall under the Dublin Regulation. An asylum application may also be refused consideration on its merits if the applicant has travelled to Norway after having stayed in a safe third country, or has asylum in another state. The main consideration is whether the asylum seeker is considered to be at real risk of treatment contrary to the ECHR Article 3 in the third country or risks being sent onward to such treatment. If this is the case, the case will not be refused examination on its merits. In 2018, 402 out of a total of 2,672 asylum decisions were rejected according to the Dublin procedure, while 126 were referred to a safe third country, and in 2017, 431 of 7,489 asylum decisions were rejected according to the Dublin procedure, while 118 were referred to a safe third country.

Reply to paragraph 15 (e) of the list of issues

103. Norway respects the principle of non-refoulement and underlines the importance of quality in all parts of the asylum process to secure this principle. Asylum seekers are interviewed by specially trained interviewers. Topics that the interviewer has reason to believe may be relevant, such as human trafficking, gender-related persecution, genital mutilation, forced marriage and family violence, must be addressed. The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo) collects and distributes extensive and up-to-date country information to the decision makers. Norwegian immigration authorities recognise the difficult security situation in Kabul, but is of the opinion that Kabul can still be considered as an internal flight alternative. Whether Kabul is considered to be a safe and accessible internal flight alternative is assessed on an individual basis, and is based on all relevant information in the case.

104. All asylum seekers are entitled to free legal aid when appealing a negative decision. The appeal is handled by an independent appeals board. Rejected asylum seekers are given access to court. The person may be given free legal aid in accordance with the general rules on free legal aid that apply to everyone.

105. In some exceptional cases, applicants claim to have experienced persecution or other human rights violations upon their return. If such claims are found credible and indicate that the asylum decision was incorrect, further investigations will be conducted by the Norwegian immigration authorities. Depending on the outcome of the investigations, the former decision may be revoked and the asylum seeker may be allowed to re-enter Norway.

Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

106. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of e.g. sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Pursuant to the Legal Gender Amendment Act, people over the age of 16 have the right to amend their gender recorded in the National Population Register (legal gender) without having to undergo medical treatment.

107. The Government's strategy on sexual health (entitled "Talk about it!") emphasises that health services should be provided without heteronormative or discriminatory issues.

108. LGBTI persons in need of help have the same right as others to be treated professionally, respectfully and in an open, inclusive manner. The LGBTI perspective must be systematically incorporated in the work on strengthening the availability and quality of the health and care services at all levels.

109. The Government supports initiatives from civil society agents and the provision of educational material and programmes targeting health and school professionals aimed at strengthening "pink awareness". i.e. addressing knowledge about and attitudes towards LGBTI persons.

110. A range of measures have also been implemented under the auspices of peer support organisations.

111. The Government is developing national professional guidelines for the treatment and care of gender incongruence. This work started up in 2018 and will, according to schedule, be completed in 2020.

112. The Government has a high level of attention regarding discrimination and bullying, and in 2019, approximately NOK 115 million were earmarked for anti-bullying efforts in the national budget. Pupils' rights have recently been greatly strengthened. Amendments to the Education Act from 1 August 2017 impose a duty on schools to act when a pupil reports bullying, violence, discrimination or harassment. Measures must be continued until the pupil has regained a safe and good learning environment. If the school does not act in compliance with its duty, pupils and parents may address complaints directly to the County Governor.

113. The County Governor has a duty to follow up cases until it has found a solution, and may impose day-by-day fines on the municipality as school owner or the private school owner until a solution has been found.

114. See also information under no. 15 letters d and e. The guidelines on how to handle asylum cases based on sexual orientation (GI-07/2012) are based on a Norwegian Supreme Court ruling and state that it cannot be expected or required that such persons, upon return, will adapt to social, cultural and legal norms, or conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity, in order to avoid persecution. If it is probable that an asylum seeker will conceal his/her sexual orientation upon return, the reason for the secrecy must be assessed. If a significant reason is due to well-founded fear of persecution, the asylum seeker is eligible for refugee status.

115. The Directorate has specific guidelines on how to accommodate the special needs of persons seeking asylum on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, including securing safe living conditions for this group in reception centres and the necessary health services (UDI IM 2018-004 and RS 2009-006).

Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

116. CORE – Norwegian Gender Balance Scorecard - maps the gender balance of the executive committees and boards of the largest companies by total revenue in Norway. It also examines the distribution of men and women in staff and line positions and traces patterns over time.

117. In the 200 largest companies, only 22 per cent of top managers are female, and only 26 companies have achieved gender balance in the top management group.

118. There has been a small but positive development since 2014, where the proportion of top managers in the largest companies has increased from 18 per cent to 22 per cent in 2018. Just 10 per cent of chief executives (CEO) are women, which is an increase from 7.5 per cent in 2016.

119. In collaboration with the business community, the Government has created a best practice list [How to achieve gender balance at the top in business](#), containing advice and guidelines on the most important measures for achieving better gender balance at the top. The list has been distributed to the 500 largest Norwegian companies.

120. The Government has allocated NOK 2 million for measures aimed at increasing the share of women in top positions in this year's state budget.

121. The Government will also fund a knowledge report concerning women with immigrant background in the labour market. The Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is funding a research project concerning ethnic diversity in the workplace, specifically in kindergartens, schools and child welfare services.

122. No specific measures have been taken to improve the representation of women with ethnic and minority backgrounds in the government administration, but measures targeting both genders have been implemented.

123. Different measures:

- Guidebook: Guidebook for diversity recruitment to employment in the central authorities;
- Guidelines: Guidelines have been drawn up for employer policy in the central government sector to encourage diversity, including increased recruitment of persons with an immigrant background;
- A new e-learning tool: An e-learning tool on diversity recruitment to employment will be available for all state enterprises;
- Governmental agencies are obliged to invite at least one applicant with immigrant background for an interview, providing the person is qualified for the position in question.

124. The Norwegian Government will launch a pilot scheme with anonymous job applications within the civil service. Our ambition is to identify whether anonymous job applications are a good tool/measure to integrate immigrants in working life. The Government's goal is that the government sector will mirror the population of Norway, and that we must be aware at all times of our own prejudices during the recruitment process. The state as employer should be characterised by us being an inclusive employer that sees the value of each part of the government administration's work.

125. The proportion of female immigrants and Norwegian-born females with immigrant parents in the government administration is 12.1 per cent. (SSB 2018). Only 6.2 per cent of females in Norway with non-Western backgrounds work in the government administration.

126. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act states that all employers shall make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality and prevent discrimination on the basis of, for example gender. Employers in the public sector, and in private undertakings that employ more than 50 persons, are obliged to follow a four-step work method: examine possible risks of discrimination on grounds of, among other things, gender, analyse the causes of such risks, implement measures to tackle them, and evaluate the results of this work. The reporting duty for gender equality applies to undertakings with a statutory duty to prepare an annual report, and to all public undertakings. In May 2019, the Government submitted a bill to the Storting on new legislation relating to active equality efforts. The bill aims to strengthen equality promotion duties.

Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

127. High employment and low unemployment are key policy priorities for the Norwegian Government. Faced with an oil and gas price slump four years ago, the Government has actively used fiscal policy over the last few years to counter unemployment. After a period characterised by low GDP growth, increased unemployment and lower employment rates in the Norwegian economy, most economic indicators have been improving since the beginning of 2017. Economic activity is picking up, unemployment is on the decline, and employment is increasing. The unemployment rate in Norway was 3.8 per cent in 2018 for the population as a whole (15-74 years), and 8.5 per cent among immigrants, according to a labour force survey (LFS). Long-term unemployment (unemployed above one year) remains low at 1.1 per cent.

128. The 2019 state budget continues to give priority to measures promoting job creation, improved welfare and increased security. Active labour market programmes (ALMP) remain an important part of efforts to help unemployed people return to work, and to protect vulnerable groups at the fringe of the labour market. Young people, immigrants from non-EU/EEA countries and long-term unemployed are given priority for such measures. The following measures have recently been introduced:

(a) A nationwide effort to promote inclusion and get more people into work. The "joint volunteering effort for inclusion" (Inkluderingsdugnaden) is a cooperation between the public sector and different actors in the private sector. The goal is to get people outside the labour force into ordinary work. NAV plays a key role in the implementation process, and supports cooperation between participants, employers, programme providers, educational institutions, the health sector etc. at the national, as well as the local level;

(b) An intensified effort to target vulnerable unemployed people and people with reduced work capacity under the age of 30. The strategy represents a systematic strengthening of NAV's follow-up of young people outside work and education, and places greater emphasis on early intervention. The Government and the social partners have agreed on an action plan on reinforced efforts targeting recipients of work assessment allowance under the age of 30. The aim is to increase the participation of young people with disabilities in work, education, wage-subsidies or work-oriented activity in ordinary working life. "The 0-24 collaboration" is a five-year cooperation (2015-2020) between five ministries and associated agencies. The aim is to facilitate proactive, comprehensive, efficient and competent services for vulnerable children and young adults under the age of 24 facing complex challenges, reduce the dropout rate in secondary school and increase the employment rate among youths through increased cooperation between sectors;

(c) To enhance employment, the Government has intensified the follow-up of long-term unemployed. The target group is recipients of unemployment benefits who are approaching the end of the maximum period (two years). The effort was initiated in 2017 and further strengthened in 2018;

(d) In 2014, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs launched a pilot study using the method "Supported employment". The purpose was to assess whether this method could be a good approach to getting more people with reduced work ability to work again. The experiment has been conducted in seven counties over four years. The evaluation conducted by Frischsenteret is expected to be completed in 2020.

129. In the political platform presented in January 2018, the Government underlined the need for a strengthening of integration efforts. The introduction programme will be reformed with clear expectations for better results. New models for introduction benefit will be considered and language courses (Norwegian) will be renewed and improved.

130. The Norwegian Government presented a new integration strategy in 2018 entitled Integration through knowledge. The purpose of the strategy is to increase the participation of immigrants in the labour market and social life. To meet current and future challenges in the labour market, there is a need to strengthen language training and formal education for immigrants. The strategy introduces several measures to meet these challenges.

131. The Letter of Intent regarding a more inclusive working life (the IA Agreement) builds on a tradition of cooperation and trust between the authorities, employees and employers in Norway. The Agreement is based on a shared acknowledgement that activity through work promotes good health and that early implementation of active measures could prevent withdrawal from work.

132. The previous Letter of Intent regarding a more inclusive working life applied for the period 2014-2018. The paramount objectives of the agreement were to improve the working environment, help bring employees back to work, prevent and reduce absence due to illness and prevent expulsion and withdrawal from working life. The agreement had three operative goals: (1) a 20 per cent reduction in sick leave compared with the second quarter of 2001; (2) to prevent withdrawal and increase employment of people with reduced functional ability; (3) active employment after 50 to be extended by twelve months.

133. The level of absence due to illness has been reduced since the first IA Agreement was signed in 2001, but has remained broadly unchanged since 2012. There is increased awareness regarding the employment of people with disabilities. The employment rate among people with reduced functional ability has been stable since 2006 at around 43 per cent. The average period during which people are employed before retiring has increased, and the third operative goal was achieved during the term of the agreement.

134. The Government and the social partners have committed to a new Letter of Intent regarding a more inclusive working life for the years 2019-2022. The agreement aims for high employment rates by preventing and reducing sickness absence and withdrawal from employment.

Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

135. Neither the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal nor the courts of law have rendered decisions involving questions relating to Section 23 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act. Section 24 of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act concerns the public authorities' duty to promote equality, but does not impose any duty on employers. Section 26 concerns employers' duty to make active efforts to promote equality, and Section 26a states that employers in undertakings with a duty to prepare an annual report shall report on the state of affairs as regards equality, and on both implemented and planned equality measures.

136. The new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act specifies in a separate section a strong protection against the discrimination of pregnant women, and parents who make use of their rights to parental leave. Care responsibilities has also been included as a separate discrimination ground.

137. In cases of employment and termination of employment, differential treatment on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and leave of absence at birth or adoption is never permitted. This also applies to the extension of temporary employment. In addition, the Act specifies the rights of workers who are or have been on parental leave. He or she shall be entitled to:

- Return to the same, or a corresponding, position;
- Benefit from improvements in working conditions to which the worker would otherwise have been entitled during the absence; and
- Make pay claims and, in pay negotiations, be assessed in the same way as the other workers in the undertaking.

138. The Act also stipulates a right to individual accommodation for pregnant workers and students.

139. Mothers who breastfeed have a right to time off from work to breastfeed their children. Before the child turns one, the mother has a right to paid leave for one hour per day to breastfeed.

140. The number of weeks of the parental benefits period reserved for the mother and the father has varied over the years. Statistics show that changes in the number of weeks reserved for fathers have had an impact on the number of weeks he receives parental benefits. Fathers tend to use the weeks that are reserved for them, while mothers tend to use the rest of the parental benefits period.

141. From 1 July 2014, the number of weeks of the parental benefits period that were reserved for either the mother or the father were reduced from 14 to 10 weeks in order to give the parents more flexibility. Statistics show that this influenced how the parents allocated the parental benefits period between them: The fathers reduced the number of weeks they received parental benefits to the 10 weeks that were reserved for them, while the mothers used the rest of the parental benefits period.

142. In 2018 and 2019, the parental benefits period was divided into three equal parts after the child's birth to promote shared parenting. This entails an increase in the number of weeks that are reserved for the mother and the father, respectively. If parents choose 46 weeks of parental benefits at the full rate, 15 weeks are reserved for each parent. If parents choose 56 weeks with a reduced rate, 22 weeks are reserved for each parent. In addition, three weeks are reserved for the mother before the birth.

Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues

143. There is no statutory general minimum wage in Norway, but on occasions where foreign workers have been given poorer pay and working conditions than are usual in Norway, it is possible to introduce minimum wages through general application of collective agreements (the General Application Act). With a general application of collective agreements in a sector, pay and working conditions will apply to everyone who works in the specific sector, regardless of whether they are party to the agreement.

144. As of 2019, generally applicable collective agreements apply in the following sectors: construction, the maritime construction industry, agriculture and horticulture, cleaning workers, fish processing enterprises, electricians, freight transport by road, passenger transport by tour bus, and hotel, restaurant and catering.

145. Women earn roughly 11 per cent less than men in terms of raw, "full-time equivalent" (i.e. corrected for part-time work) and 13 per cent less among people actually in full-time employment. This difference narrows by about half (i.e. to 7 per cent (figures from 2014)) if controlled for different labour market characteristics (education, sector, experience etc.). Since 2015, the gender pay gap has been reduced both by age group at most levels of education and in most industries.

146. The difference between women's and men's average wages continues to decrease. Women earned equivalent to 87.1 per cent of men's pay when including full-time and part-time employees in 2018. In 2017, the proportion was 86.7 per cent.

147. In the private sector and public enterprises, women's pay is 85.6 per cent that of men's pay, while in the public sector (central and local government), the gender pay gap is narrower. In central government, women's earnings are 88.4 per cent that of men's, while where the average wage level is lowest in local government, women's pay is 94.1 that of men's pay.

148. As regards the implementation of parliamentary decision 612 (2015-2016), the social partners are responsible for conducting wage negotiations. The authorities act as legislator and facilitator. Agreements on wage increases are established through negotiations between the employee and employer organisations, as well as through local and individual negotiations.

149. The challenges concerning equal pay have been discussed in the framework of tripartite cooperation (both in the Council for Working Life and Pension Policy, and in the working group on equality in working life established under the Council). The social partners' responsibility for the implementation of wage settlements remains firm, and it is important that the social partners help to reduce unjustified wage differences between women and men.

150. The Storting has enacted a legal amendment of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, strengthening the activity and reporting duties of employers and the public authorities. As of 1 January 2020, employers in large companies will, inter alia, be obliged to prepare a gender-based overview of salaries with pertaining reporting obligations. Guidance material and templates are being prepared to ensure effective implementation of the strengthened duties.

151. The Ministry of Culture has conducted a case review to identify equal pay cases. The review includes cases handled by the Tribunal and courts of law in the period January 2014 to 2019. During this period, the Tribunal handled six claims concerning equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value. The Tribunal found no breach of the obligations of the law in these cases. During this period, the courts of law have not handled claims regarding equal pay falling within the scope of the previous Gender Equality Acts No. 45/1978 or 59/2013. Neither the Tribunal nor the Norwegian courts of law have rendered decisions involving matters relating to Section 34 of the new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

152. Norway does not have statistical data on to what extent the measures taken have prevented or reduced exposure to chemicals. However, we can report that the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has carried out a prioritised inspection programme focusing on occupational safety and health among firefighters and chimney sweepers (2016-2017). The scope of the programme was to prevent these workers from exposure to dust, gas and smoke containing chemical substances.

153. The Labour Inspection Authority held 317 inspections and found reason to take measures in 225 of those cases. The most common findings were 1) failure to implement applicable means to reduce the risks of being exposed to dust, gas and smoke – especially failure to use personal protective equipment in "non-emergency" situations, such as cleaning of used equipment and other maintenance, 2) lack of knowledge on how to apply a systematic scheme in order to detect and prevent occupational risks, and 3) inadequate information and training regarding safety routines and the use of equipment.

154. On conclusion of the inspection programme, the Labour Inspection Authority held a survey among the fire brigades that had been monitored during the inspection programme. A large majority of the respondents were of the impression that the inspections had led to better understanding and knowledge on how to detect risks of being exposed to dust, gas and smoke, and which means are applicable to prevent and reduce such risks. As a result of the findings, several municipalities have made adjustments or planned to make adjustments in existing or future workplaces to secure better working conditions for their fire fighters and chimney sweepers.

155. A preliminary study on work-related accidents and work-related illness was initiated at the end of 2015, with participation from organisations including the Labour and Welfare Administration, the National Institute of Occupational Health, the Labour Inspection Authority and Statistics Norway. The report mapped duties to report and assessed reporting solutions that are suitable for future projects. The report requires long-term follow-up, and the authorities are addressing different aspects of the work on implementing the recommendations.

156. Different measures have been implemented in this field. One example worth mentioning is an amendment to the Working Environment Act in 2014, which gave the Labour Inspection Authority the means to lay down administrative fines to employers who do not fulfil their legal obligations set out in the Act. Such administrative fines have since been used as a punitive action to severe infringement of the Working Environment Act, especially in the construction industry, where negligence of the health and safety regulations will in most cases constitute a severe infringement.

157. The Labour Inspection Authority sees positive changes in the construction industry. In 2018, the Authority sharpened the use of reactions by increasing the use of infringement fees and the shutdown of operations of businesses that did not adequately secure their employees' safety. Experience shows that the use of infringement fees has a preventive and positive effect. The Authority reported in 2018 that they see a historically low number of work injury deaths as a result of fall accidents.

158. The Labour Inspection Authority has figures on deaths in connection with land-based working life. Below is an overview of statistics on work injury deaths in land-based working life for the period 2011–23 May 2019.

159. The Labour Inspection Authority has registered a total of 304 work-related deaths during this period, where 236 employees were Norwegian and 68 foreign. The statistics provide an overview of citizenship and industry affiliation for the deceased.

160. Occupational deaths within land-based activity 2011–23 May 2019.

161. The Labour Inspection Authority collects and produces statistical data over occupational deaths that have occurred within land-based activity in Norway. Occupational deaths that occur offshore, at sea or as part of aviation activities are not, however, included

in these statistics. Occupational deaths that occur in connection with military activities are included, with the exception of deaths in combat.

162. During the period 2011–23 May 2019,⁷ the Labour Inspection Authority registered 304 cases of occupational deaths in connection with land-based activity. In 236 of the cases, the deceased was a Norwegian citizen, while in the remaining 68 cases, the deceased was a foreign worker. The table shows the number of occupational deaths, organised by nationality and main activity area.

<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Main activity area</i>	<i>Number of occupational deaths</i>
Bulgaria	G Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1
	F Construction	1
	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1
	C Manufacturing	1
Myanmar	S Other service activities	1
Denmark	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1
	H Transportation and storage	1
	C Manufacturing	1
Greece	C Manufacturing	1
Croatia	F Construction	2
	D Electricity, gas and steam	1
Latvia	F Construction	2
	H Transportation and storage	1
Lithuania	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4
	F Construction	3
	N Administrative and support service activities	1
	E Water supply, sewerage and waste	1
	S Other service activities	1
	C Manufacturing	1
	H Transportation and storage	1
Norway	F Construction	45
	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	38
	H Transportation and storage	37
	C Manufacturing	27
	O Public administration and defence	18
	B Mining and quarrying	15
	G Wholesale and retail trade: repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	11
	N Administrative and support service activities	10
	Q Human health and social work activities	9
	E Water supply, sewerage and waste	6
	M Professional, scientific and technical activities	5
	I Accommodation and food service activities	5
	J Information and communication	3
	R Arts, entertainment and recreation	2
	S Other service activities	2

⁷ Statistical data for 2010 is not available.

<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Main activity area</i>	<i>Number of occupational deaths</i>
	D Electricity, gas and steam	1
	P Education	1
	00.000 Unknown	1
Poland	F Construction	8
	N Administrative and support service activities	5
	H Transportation and storage	5
	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3
	L Real estate activities	1
Portugal	F Construction	1
Romania	R Arts, entertainment and recreation	1
	A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1
Russia	B Mining and quarrying	1
Slovakia	R Arts, entertainment and recreation	1
	H Transportation and storage	1
	C Manufacturing	1
	F Construction	1
Sweden	H Transportation and storage	3
	F Construction	2
	L Real estate activities	1
	O Public administration and defence	1
	I Accommodation and food service activities	1
Germany	B Mining and quarrying	1
Ukraine	B Mining and quarrying	1
Hungary	N Administrative and support service activities	1
Total		304

Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

163. The Norwegian National Insurance Scheme covers all the traditional branches of social security, as set out in ILO Convention No. 102 (with the exception of family benefit, which is covered by a separate scheme). As a general rule, all persons who legally reside in Norway, as well as persons who reside abroad but work in Norway, are mandatorily insured. This means that migrant workers are treated in the same way as Norwegian nationals as regards occupational accident compensation.

164. The Ministry is not familiar with any collective agreements in Norway that specifically cover rights relating to working conditions for migrant workers.

165. However, if an enterprise is bound by a collective agreement, it is also bound to give all its employees rights pursuant to the agreement if they fall under its scope. Hence, the terms of the agreements must be exercised both to members and non-members of trade unions.

166. There is no general minimum wage in Norway. Minimum wages are agreed upon in collective wage agreements. Collective agreements are usually entered into sector by sector (trade agreements). Minimum wages have nonetheless been introduced in certain sectors through regulations concerning the general application of collective agreements.

167. General application of collective agreements is an important instrument in preventing foreign workers from being given poorer pay and working conditions than are usual in Norway.

168. Generally applicable collective agreements are agreements concerning pay and working conditions that are made applicable to everyone who works in the specific sector, regardless of whether they are party to the agreement, or whether they are working in an enterprise bound by a collective agreement. The following sectors currently have generally applicable collective agreements: construction, maritime construction industry, agriculture and horticulture, cleaning, fish processing industry, electricians, freight transport by road, passenger transport by tour busses, and the hotel, restaurant and catering sector.

169. The majority of Norwegian labour legislation applies to all workers in Norway, including non-citizens. The main laws are the Working Environment Act and the Act relating to Holidays. Additionally, there are several regulations issued under the Working Environment Act.

170. When non-citizens are employed in Norwegian enterprises, all of the labour legislation applies. When non-citizens who are employed in foreign enterprises work for a limited period of time in Norway, within the framework of the provision of services, the main parts of the legislation, i.e. provisions regarding health and safety, non-discrimination, working time, minimum pay and conditions for temporary agency workers, apply.

171. A specific regulation applies to employment in a private employer's home. The regulation applies to working conditions where the employee performs housework, supervision or care in the private employer's home or household. It provides provisions concerning the written employment contract, leave, employers' and employees' obligations, working hours and leisure time, payment, holidays, resignation etc.

172. The Labour Inspection Authority conducts supervision pursuant to the Working Environment Act, the Act relating to the general application of collective agreements and certain provisions in the Immigration Act. The Authority has particular focus on immigrants' working conditions, health and safety standards, and work-related crime.

173. There are five service centres for foreign workers, mainly situated in the largest cities in Norway. The Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) is a centre where the Labour Inspection Authority, the police, the Norwegian Tax Administration and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration work together to provide an efficient application process and guidance for foreigners who come to Norway to work.

174. In 2015, the Norwegian Government introduced a strategy to combat work-related crime. The strategy was revised in 2017. Earlier this year, a third revision of this strategy was introduced, focusing on both preventing and combating criminal activities and other wrongdoings related to working life.

175. The Labour Inspection Authority uses both guidance and applicable use of authority to influence employers to fulfil their legal obligations and ensure a fully satisfactory working environment for their workers. The most common use of authority is reasoned decisions requiring the employer to bring an unsatisfactory situation to end, either by remedying the situation or ending an unwanted activity. We refer to the answer above regarding the impact of the measures.

176. In recent years, the Labour Inspection Authority has had a focus on the issue of hazardous work at height. In order to raise awareness of the importance of preventing fall accidents, it has initiated and conducted action periods with dangerous work at height as a supervisory theme.

177. On 1 January 2016, major amendments of the Regulations concerning the Performance of Work entered into force. The amendments mainly concern the requirements regarding risk assessment, training, and the anchoring and securing of scaffolding.

Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues

178. The vast majority of measures offered by the child welfare service are voluntary assistive measures within the home. Placing a child in alternative care without the consent of the parents is always a measure of last resort. The legal threshold for issuing a care order is that a child must suffer neglect, violence or abuse.

179. Research shows that children in families with low socio-economic status are over-represented in child protection statistics. There are also indications of a higher prevalence of certain risk factors among families in contact with the child welfare services, such as unemployment, drug abuse and health-related issues.⁸ There is little difference in judicially mandated care intervention measures ("omsorgstiltak") between children with an immigrant background and the rest of the population.⁹

180. Recent amendments to the Child Welfare Act strengthen the participation and involvement of children and parents in child welfare cases and improve the legal protection of children and their parents.¹⁰ Children have a right to measures from the child welfare services and a right to be heard in child welfare cases. Amendments have also been made to facilitate the finding of foster homes from within the child's family and close network, and to improve the follow-up of both children and parents who are subject to child welfare measures. A competence strategy for the municipal child welfare services (2018–2024) has also been implemented. The purpose is to offer children earlier and better assistance, and to strengthen the employees' knowledge of how to safeguard and facilitate the participation of children and parents.

181. The municipal child welfare services are responsible for the supervision of foster homes. To enhance the quality of supervision, amendments to the Child Welfare Act came into force in 2014. The County Governor is responsible for the supervision of child welfare institutions. The supervision of institutions is carried out either two or four times a year, depending on the institution's regulations. Half of the inspections must be unannounced. The objective of the supervision is to ensure that the institution is properly run and that the children residing there receive proper care and treatment.

182. The Government has taken measures to promote amicable solutions between conflicting parents to ensure the child's best interests and to ensure contact with both parents, whom we regard as equal. Mediation is mandatory for parents who move apart, and more children are now being heard. Mediation is also mandatory for parents who wish to go to court, and the judge handling a parental dispute has the authority to refer the case to the Family Counselling Service for further mediation.

Reply to paragraph 24 (a) of the list of issues

183. The definition of sexual assault in the Norwegian Penal Code is intended to apply to sexual activity without consent. The purpose is to ensure that the sexual autonomy of the individual is respected. While the definition of rape does not include the wording 'without consent', the provision describes circumstances that imply a lack of consent, such as violence or threatening conduct or the victim being unconscious or for other reasons incapable of resisting the act.

184. In this way, the provision on rape already comprises all practical situations in which the sexual autonomy of others have been violated. In Norway's view, the current regulation is in accordance with our international obligations. The issue of rape and consent has been considered by the Government several times. In 2013, a proposal to amend the definition of rape to expressly include lack of consent was sent for consultation. Several consultative bodies, such as the Director of Public Prosecutions, argued that there was no practical need for such a change. The Government decided not to propose such a change, as the proposal raised complicated questions that the Government wished to revisit at a later date. In March 2018, the Storting voted on a proposal from MPs asking the Government to propose an amendment of the legal definition of rape. This proposal did not pass. The Government's Action Plan against Rape (2019-2022) states that the Ministry of Justice will consider

⁸ Klasseblikk på et barnevern i vekst, NTNU 2011; Minst hjelp til dem som trenger det mest. Sluttrapport fra forsknings- og utviklingsprosjektet "Det nye barnevernet", Nordlandsforskning 2015.

⁹ Myter og realiteter. Innvandreres møte med barnevernet, NTNU Samfunnsforskning 2017.

¹⁰ In 2017, after a review of the Child Welfare Act by an independent law committee, the Government presented proposals for amendments to the Child Welfare Act to the Storting (Prop. 169 L (2016–2017)). The amendments came into force on 1 July 2018.

whether to revise the chapter on sexual offences in the Norwegian Penal Code. In connection with such an overall review, it would be relevant to consider the wording of the penal provision on rape. However, an issue of vital importance is to ensure that the definition of rape is sufficiently clear and unambiguous. Thus, the introduction of unnecessarily vague and complex concepts, should be avoided.

Reply to paragraph 24 (b) of the list of issues

185. The Government's Action plan against rape (2019-2022) was launched in March 2019. The action plan contains specific measures for victim support and assistance for victims who need to report rape and other sexual violence to the police. A separate section of the action plan is dedicated to specific measures aimed at ensuring good quality of investigation and prosecution in rape and sexual violence cases reported to the police.

Reply to paragraph 24 (c) of the list of issues

186. After revealing and identifying a large number of cases of sexual abuse and other violations of children and young people in Tysfjord, the police has taken a heavy involvement in an extensive preventive programme called "Project Jasska". The project is an interdisciplinary programme aimed at both young people and adults, as well as the public support and health services in the municipality. The police has contributed personnel in meetings and training seminars for the health sector, schools and child welfare services. The purpose has been to ensure that the police's preventive strategy reaches not only potential victims but also those who could encounter these through their work. The Government has decided to develop a new plan of action to combat violence in close relationships. A new action plan will present concrete measures in the fields of prevention, protection and prosecution and will also include specific measures on preventing and combating violence in Sami communities.

187. In addition, the police has established contact with the Sami community through the organisation "Arran". Here, the police contributes as counsellor and discussion partner in matters related to violence and sexual abuse against children in the Sami community. Furthermore, the police has sought to establish a similar form of contact with the Laestadian religious congregation, which was identified in the investigation of a large number of cases as having a central role in the community. Establishing this contact proved to be demanding due to the fact that this religious community to begin with was not particularly interested in any formal cooperation with the police. This has changed over the past six months, however, and the police has now established cooperation with the congregation. This will improve the possibility of reaching more people and groups in the municipality, and will play a key role in the police's preventive work aimed at bringing security to the population of Tysfjord.

Reply to paragraph 24 (d) of the list of issues

188. Persons who have been granted a residence permit as the spouse or cohabitant of a resident in Norway must as a rule return to their country of residence if their cohabitation expires before the foreign national has obtained a permanent residence permit in Norway. However, family migrants (male or female) who have experienced violence in their relationship are entitled to continued residence after a marriage ends. In 2018, the provision was extended to also include abuse by persons other than the applicant's partner, including family in law. The provision ensures that holders of a dependent residence permit are not forced to choose between leaving Norway and staying in a violent family relationship. The abuse may be of a physical or psychological nature (e.g. threats of violence), and is subject to an overall assessment. The evidence requirement for maltreatment is low. The applicant's explanation is key to the immigration authorities' decision. Therefore, the police are required to ensure that a qualified interpreter assists in the applicant's interview.

Reply to paragraph 24 (e) of the list of issues

189. The prevention of negative social control, forced marriage and female genital mutilation is a political priority for Norway. Successive action plans the last 20 years have resulted in a system of measures to prevent, protect and provide support and healthcare for victims of these practices. The current action plan (2017-2020) has five priority areas of action: strengthening legal protection for vulnerable persons, strengthening assistance to people who break contact with their family and network, changing attitudes and practices in the relevant communities, enhancing knowledge in the support services, and strengthening research and increasing knowledge sharing. The prevention of negative social control is also a main priority in the Government's integration strategy (2019-2022).

Reply to paragraph 25 of the list of issues

190. The implementation of the Government's strategy on children living in poverty (2015-2017) has to a great extent addressed the Committee's previous recommendations.

191. The strategy has implemented 64 measures within 6 key areas: family, health, education, leisure and participation, employment, research and data. These measures come in addition to already established universal welfare services such as universal health care, free education, parental benefit and subsidised childcare services. Considerable effort has been directed to combat the social gradient in both physical and mental health for low-income children and families. By improving price reduction schemes and free core time for children from low-income families, we have made child care more affordable. As a way to prevent poverty among families, the support apparatus for parents and families has been strengthened. Moreover, we have implemented new measures to help people with various challenges to get into ordinary employment. The National Grant Scheme to Combat Child Poverty has also been substantially reinforced. The grant funds activities and projects run by municipalities and the voluntary sector aimed at including children in relevant activities in their communities.

192. The strategy was developed and implemented in close cooperation between the ministries. Children and young people provided important input on the basis of their own experiences, and effective cooperation between the public and voluntary sectors has been a key instrument in implementing the strategy. The National Grant Scheme to Combat Child Poverty was reviewed in 2018 and showed effectiveness in ensuring the inclusion of children in key social areas. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs' review of the strategy demonstrates that a great deal good work is being undertaken across the sectors. Working across the ministries puts the issue of child poverty on the agenda. Research collected by Oslo Metropolitan University in 2018 pinpoints areas that should be given increased attention and where future measures ought to be directed. The Government is currently working on a new collaborative strategy for children growing up in low-income families.

Percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in a family with an income below 60 per cent of the median income over a three-year period, 2007-2017

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
%	7.30	7.60	7.70	7.70	7.60	8.00	8.60	9.40	10.00	10.30	10.70

Source: Statistics Norway.

Reply to paragraph 26 of the list of issues

193. As regards discrimination in the housing market, see the answer to question number 3.

194. Few cases concerning discrimination in the housing market have been reported. Between 2007 and 2015, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman received a total of 15,027 enquiries, where 403 of these concerned discrimination in the housing market (2.7 per cent).

195. To reduce prejudice in relation to renting out dwellings to persons with immigrant background or others who are disadvantaged in the housing market, the Norwegian Tenants Association offers advice, courses and information material to all municipalities to assist them with housing. In 2016, a new municipal guarantee document was launched in connection with tenancy agreements. This guarantee document better secures landlords' financial interests and reduces the risk for landlords who rent out dwellings to disadvantaged people in the housing market.

196. The Government confirms in its political platform that it will take action to combat discrimination in the housing market. This will be a part of the new action plan against racism and discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and religion, which the Government is set to submit in autumn 2019.

Reply to paragraph 27 (a) of the list of issues

197. Anyone who is staying or living in Norway (regardless of citizenship, permanent residence or illegal stay) is entitled to emergency aid and healthcare that cannot be postponed without the risk of imminent death, permanent severe disability or injury, or severe pain. Everyone is also entitled to assessment from the specialised healthcare service as to whether healthcare is necessary. Persons without permanent residence must as a main rule pay for healthcare. However, payment in advance cannot be required in cases concerning emergency aid and specialised healthcare that cannot be postponed.

Reply to paragraph 27 (b) of the list of issues

198. Postnatal information, including guidelines, is publicly available for municipalities, healthcare personnel, patients and users. Municipalities and healthcare personnel are required by law to keep up-to-date on new information from the Government, so that they are able to provide necessary and high quality health and care services to the public. The Norwegian Board of Health Supervision is responsible for supervising the services and for making sure that the municipalities are providing services according to law.

Reply to paragraph 27 (c) of the list of issues

199. Following the Chernobyl disaster, based on studies of Sami reindeer herders in Arctic Norway from the 1960s onwards, Norwegian authorities quickly realised that the reindeer herding Sami population would be particularly affected. Knowing that the radioactive contamination could potentially ruin the Sami reindeer business, with pertaining economic consequences for the reindeer herders and social consequences for the Sami culture, the authorities established special countermeasures, regulation and control programmes that helped sustain reindeer herding. At the same time, the health authorities established monitoring programmes of individual reindeer herders to survey the radiation doses the herders themselves are exposed to. In addition, these programmes helped the herders themselves to control the effect of the measures they took to reduce their radiation doses. The programmes (which are still ongoing) have proven the effect of the various measures taken, and that radiation doses were not large enough to cause any observable radiation-related health effects among the herders. However, the Chernobyl fallout was no doubt a serious challenge to the herders, and an important reason why the monitoring activities are maintained is that they also serve as an arena for communication with individual herders about the contamination and the challenges it has caused.

Reply to paragraph 27 (d) of the list of issues

200. As part of the National Action Plan, allocations to the municipalities have been increased by NOK 1.8 billion. A plan for strengthening the integrated service has been set out by launching state grants. Results show a significant increase, with close to 2,000 more employees dedicated to improving the health and social services. All municipalities are

recommended to have a psychologist by 2020. A number of measures are covered by the initiative Early In (Tidlig Inn), which provides funding to more than 150 municipalities for building and coordinating competence in handling minors and adults with illicit drug use. The initiative is a tripartite with the Action Plan against Violence and a national strategy for parenthood support. However, statistics show a slight increase in the use of cannabis among lower and upper secondary school students and an increase in the use of stimulants among young adolescents (16-34), but no significant changes in the use of NPS.

201. In 2018, the number of overdose deaths fell from 280 to 243.

202. A selection of municipalities have established distribution of harm reduction measures such as clean syringes and naloxone nose spray. Further prevention measures of a similar nature have also been established, including:

- A renewed strategy for drug induced deaths 2019-2022;
- Revised legislation for safe injection rooms;
- A new strategy for fighting hepatitis within 2025.

Reply to paragraph 28 (a) of the list of issues

203. Non-consensual measures in mental health care are subject to strict and detailed regulations. In 2017, a number of legislative amendments were made to strengthen patients' autonomy and legal protection. The most important alteration entails that patients with capacity to consent have the right to say no to admission (hospitalisation) and treatment, unless they represent a danger to themselves or to the health or life of others. On 18 June 2019, the Government received a report from a legislative commission that has reviewed the legislation on coercion in the health and care sector, with particular focus on Norway's international human rights obligations. The report has been distributed to various bodies and institutions for consultation and will be followed up by the Ministry of Health and Care Services.

Reply to paragraph 28 (b) of the list of issues

204. Please see our reply to item 28(a).

Reply to paragraph 28 (c) of the list of issues

205. For several years, the health authorities have allocated annual grants for the establishment of assertive community treatment teams by which the municipal and specialised health services collaborate on reaching out to persons where they live. The teams have proven successful in providing rapid comprehensive assistance in order to avoid crises and forced admissions to mental health care.

Reply to paragraph 28 (d) of the list of issues

206. The Ministry has an ongoing focus on reports on the issue of coercion, and refers to them in the follow-up dialogue with the regional health authorities. The local health trusts have direct contact with the national preventive mechanism as regards follow-up of the specific recommendations in the reports.

Reply to paragraph 28 (e) of the list of issues

207. Statistical data is kept on the administration of forced medication to both inpatients and outpatients, including the number of patients and the duration of medication, as well as the use of electroshock treatment, restraints and solitary confinement. The Ministry is in dialogue with the Directorate of Health in relation to the establishment of a national data

indicator on long-term forced medication. Data on coercive admissions to mental health care are available at <https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/statistikk/statistikk/kvalitetsindikatorer/psykisk-helse-for-voksne/tvangsinnleggelser-i-psykisk-helsevern-for-voksne>. Data on Coercive means in mental health care are available at <https://www.helsedirektoratet.no/statistikk/statistikk/kvalitetsindikatorer/psykisk-helse-for-voksne/tvangsmiddelbruk-i-psykisk-helsevern-for-voksne>.

Reply to paragraph 29 of the list of issues

208. The Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service and the Norwegian Directorate of Health have cooperated on preparing a report on the follow-up of prisoners with mental health disorders and/or substance abuse problems and proposed further measures to strengthen the services provided to prisoners in need of mental health care and cross-disciplinary specialist treatment for substance abuse issues from the specialist healthcare services. Measures were also proposed to enhance cooperation between agencies and measures taken in the Norwegian Correctional Services, such as increased activation of prisoners and measures for vulnerable groups in prison. The Ministry has commissioned the National Competence Network on Security, Prison and Forensic Psychiatry to prepare a report on how the provision of healthcare can be strengthened and organised. The Ministry will follow up both reports.

209. There are currently 17 prisons with drug treatment units for inmates with substance abuse problems. There are also separate mental health care outpatient clinics at the largest prisons. Inmates' access to mental health care will be improved over the coming years by developing new and more comprehensive services for prisoners with serious mental health illness. Furthermore, the national guidelines on health care for prisoners will be reviewed.

210. All children have the right to necessary healthcare services in Norway, regardless of residency status. This includes access to mental health services when needed. However, children who do not have authorised residence do not have the right to a GP.

211. The Southern Norway Regional Centre for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention, provides trauma-informed care training to all employees working with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in asylum reception centres.

Reply to paragraph 30 (a) of the list of issues

212. The Government has initiated work on a new White Paper on early efforts and inclusive communities in kindergartens and schools.

213. The Government is now carrying out a significant competence and recruitment boost in teacher education and schools to ensure that pupils have qualified teachers and to make the profession more attractive:

214. Teacher education has been raised to master's degree level and candidates face stricter admission requirements.

215. Parts of student loans for teachers taking jobs at school are written off. This applies to students who complete the education within the nominal time, those who train to teach years 1–7, and those who take jobs in Northern Norway. In addition, there are separate arrangements for those who take Sami and Kven. Education and recruitment grants have also been introduced for people with work experience who want to become teachers.

216. In 2019, NOK 1.6 billion will be used for the further education of teachers. Academic refill and competence development can help more teachers to stay employed in schools and more teachers to become better qualified. In 2019, over 6,800 teachers will be offered continuing education.

217. In 2019, NOK 60 million will be allocated to guidance for newly qualified employees in primary and lower secondary school.

218. The Government allocated NOK 8 million to universities and university colleges to strengthen their work on recruitment up to the deadline in 2019. Another NOK 2 million have gone to research and national measures in the field. The recruitment of men to teacher training for primary and lower secondary education (years 1-7), and people with immigrant background, are priorities.

Reply to paragraph 30 (b) of the list of issues

219. Norway has implemented a number of measures to counteract a gender-segregated labour market and facilitate the selection of more gender-neutral education courses and careers. An example is the introduction of gender points in certain study programmes. Women have long been awarded gender points for several male-dominated education courses, but in 2018, gender points for men were also introduced on selected educational programmes at institutions that so requested. The new Gender Equality and Discrimination Act,¹¹ introduced on 1 January 2018, provides for the special treatment of men on the same conditions as women (admission regulations Section 7-9 on supplementary points for the underrepresented gender).¹²

220. There are also various projects aimed at attracting and inspiring young people to non-traditional education and professions. Examples are Girls and Technology ("Jenter og teknologi")¹³ and Men in Healthcare ("Menn i helse").¹⁴ In the past, we have seen that fields of higher education that were previously male-dominated, such as law and medicine, now have a predominance of female students. However, there is not the same tendency for men to choose female-dominated subjects in higher education.

221. There is nonetheless some development in vocational education. This is supported by statistics from Statistics Norway,¹⁵ which shows that the proportion of men who choose traditionally female-dominated subjects increased markedly from 2010 to 2018. This applies in particular to the education programme health and childhood education, where the proportion of men, albeit from a very low level, has increased by more than 7 percentage points to almost 20 per cent in 2018.

222. In 2019, a public committee will deliver the report #Ungidag. The committee has, among other things, looked at gender-traditional education choices. This report will be important in the future work on gender-neutral education choices.

Reply to paragraph 30 (c) of the list of issues

223. Many of those who immigrate late during their course of education have poor qualifications for admittance to upper secondary school, and boys in particular have a worryingly high dropout rate. Among those who immigrate while of lower secondary school age, only half have completed and passed upper secondary education by the end of their twenties. These young people have had little time to learn Norwegian, and too little time in lower secondary school to acquire sufficient elementary school competencies. They may also have other types of challenges, for example as a result of experiences from war and flight. Although this group of pupils has a right to adapted education, not everyone gets the adaptation they are entitled to.

224. Objectives: To give children and young people with an immigrant background good knowledge of Norwegian, basic skills and professional competence through equal education courses from kindergarten to upper secondary education.

¹¹ <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2017-06-16-51>.

¹² The Ministry of Education and Research has the authority to decide whether to grant up to two additional points to the underrepresented gender on application from the educational institutions.

¹³ <https://www.nho.no/samarbeid/jenter-og-teknologi/in-english/>.

¹⁴ <https://mennihelse.no/kontakt/>.

¹⁵ <https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/flere-menn-i-kvinnedominerte-utdanningsprogram>.

225. Main action 1: Strengthen early efforts for knowledge development in Norwegian, basic skills and professional competence.

226. Main action 2: Increase competence among kindergarten and primary and secondary education staff to enable them to follow up minority-language children and young people throughout their education in the best possible way.

Reply to paragraph 30 (d) of the list of issues

227. According to the Education Act,¹⁶ education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, and when necessary, the pupil is also entitled to special education. These rights, and the pupils' right to attend a school close to where they live, are particularly important elements of ensuring inclusive learning environments.

228. Children and pupils with sign language as their first language, or who, following an expert assessment, have a need for instruction in sign language, are entitled to such instruction. A similar right exists to necessary instruction in braille and in the use of necessary technical aids for severely visually impaired and blind children and pupils. Children and adolescents who partly or wholly lack functional speech and have a need for alternative and supplementary communication have the right to appropriate forms of communication and necessary means of communication in their learning.

229. All pupils have a right by law to an educational facility that is adapted to their needs. Schools must be built and fitted out so as to take account of pupils with disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 30 (e) of the list of issues

230. In the Pupil Survey from autumn 2018, 6.1 per cent of the pupils responded that they were bullied at school 2-3 times a month or more often. This was a decrease of 0.5 per cent compared with the previous year. We do not have data that distinguishes between different ethnic groups.

231. In 2017, the Norwegian Centre against Racism¹⁷ published a report on racism experienced by young people. The report shows that many young people have had experiences with racism at school. Of 247 respondents where one or both parents were born in a country other than Norway, 24 per cent state that they have experienced racism, discrimination or unfair treatment regularly (2-3 times a month or more often) while attending primary school, while 25.6 per cent experienced the same at secondary school.

232. The Government has launched new measures to combat bullying in kindergartens and schools. The measures include legislative changes, competence enhancement, and support and guidance for children and young people who are exposed to bullying and other offenses, and for their families. The main effort to strengthen adults' competence to prevent, uncover and deal with bullying in both kindergartens and schools is a competence package that is now used by more than 800 schools and kindergartens across the country.

233. Dembra¹⁸ is a professional development programme for teachers, school leaders and other school staff. Based on the school's own circumstances, Dembra helps strengthen the school's work on participation and critical thinking. Dembra is suitable for schools whose leaders and teachers wish to take a more systematic approach to critical thinking, democratic development and inclusion, and/or find that their school has or may come to experience particular challenges relating to group-based hostility.

¹⁶ https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61/KAPITTEL_11#KAPITTEL_11.

¹⁷ Antirasistisk senter (2017).

¹⁸ <https://dembra.no/en/om-dembra/>.

Reply to paragraph 30 (f) of the list of issues

234. All children of primary school age, including Roma children, have both a right and duty to education. Local authorities are responsible for school attendance, and are obliged by law to seek out children who do not attend school. Travelling does not provide an exemption to the duty to education. The dialogue between the authorities and the Roma has improved and there seems to be an understanding among the Roma that their children must attend school, even though travelling is traditionally a central part of their culture.

235. The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation funds the municipality of Oslo's programme "School guidance for Roma pupils" (Skolelos for romelever). The aim of the programme is to strengthen learning outcomes, reduce absence and increase Roma pupils' chances of completing primary and lower secondary education. The programme was further strengthened in 2019.

Reply to paragraph 30 (g) of the list of issues

236. From 2014, people aged 16-18 who are applying for a residence permit are also entitled to upper secondary education, or primary and lower secondary education for adults, if it is likely that they will stay in Norway for more than three months.

237. Unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers with time-limited residence permits are also entitled to upper secondary education.

238. From June 2016, those who are entitled to an upper secondary education can, if necessary, receive additional primary and lower secondary education before, or in combination with, upper secondary.

239. The right to education for people aged 16-18 ceases in the event of a final rejection of their application for a residence permit.

240. Unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers with time-limited residence permits or rejections are entitled to apply for funds for skills development so that they are better equipped for employment in their homeland.

241. The right to upper secondary education does not apply to young people without legal residence in Norway. In implementing this right, emphasis was placed on finding a balance between the consideration of individual needs for education and other important social considerations, such as immigration regulatory considerations.

Reply to paragraph 30 (h) of the list of issues

242. Children in asylum centres do not have a legal right to a place in kindergarten, but the possibilities of receiving a place have dramatically changed for the better in the last few years.

243. For several years, four and five year olds have been offered a publicly funded full-time place in kindergarten if the local kindergarten where the asylum centre is situated has vacant places. Numbers from the Directorate of Immigration show that, in most cases, these children are offered a place.

244. In 2016, public financing of these places was extended to include free core-time in kindergarten for two and three year olds if the families had been given permanent residence in Norway, but were still living in an asylum centre while waiting for a permanent address in another municipality.

245. In 2018, the public financing was further extended to include free core-time places in kindergarten for all two and three year olds in asylum centres, independent of the status of the family's asylum application.

246. The government decided in the revised national budget for 2019 to spend NOK 3, 2 million to extend the free core-time places in kindergarten to include all one year olds in asylum centres. The draft budget for 2020 proposes to continue this scheme.

247. The right to a kindergarten place follows from Section 12a of the Kindergarten Act. Children with a minority language background have the same right to kindergarten as other children. Minority-language children as a group are not given a statutory right to priority admission to kindergarten. Several municipal and private kindergartens nevertheless choose to prioritise minority-language children for admission.

Reply to paragraph 31 of the list of issues

248. The Norwegian Government works to promote and preserve the identity, language and culture of national minorities and the Sami people.

249. Sami, Kven, Romani and Romanes are recognised as minority languages. A committee appointed to review the position of the Sami languages issued its report in 2016. This proposed legislative amendments, new schemes and measures concerning child daycare, and primary, secondary and tertiary education, health and care services, the justice sector, and local administration. The relevant ministries are following up the report in close dialogue with the Sámediggi.

250. In January 2018, the Government presented a targeted plan for revitalising the Kven language for the period leading up to 2021.

251. The Government allocates funds to the Sámediggi for cultural purposes (NOK 85.7 million in 2019). The national cultural policy nevertheless includes an independent responsibility towards Sami art and culture, and allocates funds directly to Sami institutions.

252. In recent years, the Government has made significant investments in and contributed to cultural arenas for Sami people and national minorities. Arts Council Norway has provided funding for translation of Sami literature into Norwegian since 2019.

253. The Government has proposed to increase allocations for the International Sami Film Institute by NOK 2.5 million in 2020, in order to strengthen the work on Sami audio-visual productions.

254. All Sami pupils have the right to learn Sami wherever in Norway they live. If more than ten non-Sami children in a municipality would like to learn Sami and receive instruction in Sami, they are entitled to do so.

255. Pupils with a Kven/Norwegian Finn background who live in Finnmark or Troms county are entitled to instruction in Finnish or Kven, according to the Education Act.

Reply to paragraph 32 of the list of issues

256. A new Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act entered into force on 1 January 2018. The Act is mostly a continuation of the previous discrimination legislation of 2013, but strengthens protection against discrimination by providing a more coherent and accessible regulation, and by imposing more concrete duties on certain employers to employ active equality efforts.

257. The Norwegian enforcement system in discrimination cases was also reorganised in 2018. These changes strengthened the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman's role as a proactive agent for equal opportunities, and the Tribunal was given the authority to award redress in discrimination cases within working life and compensation in simple cases. These remedies are available to persons who claim protection of their rights under the Convention.

258. The Storting has also enacted an extension of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal's authority, so that it can consider sexual harassment cases. The amendment will enter into force on 1 January 2020.

259. The Ministry of Culture aims to safeguard equal access to culture, public debate and participation in society e.g. access to books and other media for marginalised groups. The National library administrates funds in order to develop library services in prison and

services for the deaf/visually impaired. Sign language users may classify as a marginalised or disadvantaged group. The Norwegian Association for the Deaf receives grants from the Ministry of Culture.

260. In collaboration with the business community, the Government has created a best practice list entitled “How to achieve gender balance at the top in business”, with advice and guidelines on the most important measures for better gender balance at the top. The list is a result of several roundtable discussions that the former Ministry of Children and Equality and the Minister of Trade and Industry hosted with business leaders and other relevant representatives from the business sector. The list has been distributed to the 500 largest Norwegian companies.

261. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs is committed to strengthening competence in the area of racism and discrimination, and is currently developing indicators of discrimination and gender equality for ethnic and religious minorities in Norway. The Directorate also leads a forum on Ethnic Discrimination.

262. NAV works continually and systematically to offer good services tailored to the users' needs and circumstances. NAV is currently undergoing extensive modernisation of the ICT systems used in the administration of benefits, which will result in automatic case processing. Simultaneously, a digital transformation is underway that will improve and simplify communication between NAV and the general public. These measures will reduce administration resources and increase the availability of resources for follow-up activities.

263. In 2018, the Government launched an integration strategy that shows the direction of the Government’s integration policy and how we will reach our goal of increasing immigrants’ participation in working life and society in general.

264. As mentioned under question 6 above, the Government has appointed a public committee to review the legal aid scheme. The committee will complete its work in May 2020.
