

COMPENDIUM SHORT PROFILE: NORWAY

(Based on the detailed country profile of Per Mangset with Bård Kleppe:
www.culturalpolicies.net/web/norway.php)

1. Facts and figures

Political system:	Constitutional monarchy
Year of membership to the Council of Europe:	5 May 1949
Year of membership to UNESCO:	4 November 1946
Population:	5 213 985 (2016)
Non-nationals of total population:	16.3% (2015)
Official language(s):	Norwegian and Sami
Share of population using the Internet	96% (2015)
Public cultural expenditures per capita:	533 EUR (2014)
GDP in Billion EUR:	350.0 (2015)

Ratification of Key Cultural Conventions

- *European Cultural Convention* (1955): 24 January 1956
- *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992): 1 March 1998
- *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005): 17 January 2007

2. Historical Perspective of Cultural Policy and recent Changes

Since the 1970s, a substantial decentralisation of the cultural policy system took place in Norway with the aim to bring decision-making closer to the general population. Cultural affairs committees were established in most municipalities and gradually a related administration has developed. A similar system has been introduced at the county level, together with new grant schemes. Closely linked to this reform was a redefinition of culture, similar to developments in other countries. The concept of culture was expanded in order to include the cultural interests of various parts of the population, including a renewed interest for amateur cultural activities.

While the public culture budgets, especially at the municipality level, expanded considerably during the last five decades, budget cuts and efficiency improvements in periods of stagnation of economic development were not unknown in Norway. Today, the overall cultural budgets of Norwegian municipalities are similar to those of the state authorities.

In 2005, the former centre-left government proclaimed an ambition to increase the share of the national budget allocated to culture to 1% until 2014 and that all arts form should benefit from this. Between 2005 and 2013 the governmental spending allocated to culture thus expanded from NOK 5 billion (EUR 625 millions) in 2005 to NOK 9.95 billion (EUR 1.2 billion) in 2013, a spending growth of approximately 46% in real terms.

In 2014, a newly elected government did not pursue this policy ambition any more without, however, making significant budget-cuts. In the Norwegian parliament, there is more or less consensus concerning the main lines of culture policy.

3. Overall description of the system

General context

The Norwegian cultural policy model is not an archetype of any of the classical "models", such as the arms-length, the interventionist, the entrepreneurship or the decentralised model. Instead, it contains elements of most of these concepts, except the entrepreneurship model. In Norway, public authorities always played a considerable role in the culture sector, not least by giving financial support to a range of cultural and artistic activities. The relationship between the public authorities and the culture sector can be characterised by the terms of corporatism on the one hand and the arms-length principle on the other. While artists' organisations have played a crucial role in the administration of some public support schemes for artists, the Arts Council enjoys a relatively autonomous position vis-à-vis both the government and the arts scene. While the corporatist element of the Norwegian cultural policy model seems to have declined over the past two decades, it is still more significant than in many other countries.

The main objectives of the Norwegian cultural policy are to promote:

- artistic quality and innovation;
- the preservation and security of the cultural heritage, including the Norwegian language;
- the dissemination of rich and diverse cultural offers to the entire population, geographically decentralised; and
- the promotion of a civil and voluntary sector.

The objectives of Norwegian cultural policy generally remain stable and there are few controversies about these objectives in public debates.

Division of tasks & main national actors in cultural policy

Similar to the other Nordic countries, the Norwegian cultural policy is both centralised and decentralised: The basis for cultural policy is mostly provided by the state, but considerable responsibilities for its development and implementation are delegated to local and regional authorities. The national and municipal levels are the most important with respect to cultural expenditures, while the regional level plays only a modest role, in that respect.

At the **state level**, the decision-making apparatus is relatively complex. Formally, the main framework of cultural policy is determined by the Storting (parliament), often based on documents prepared by the Ministry of Culture. Among legal, financial, organisational and information means to achieve political goals, the national budget is the most important instrument.

A considerable amount of authority is also delegated to arm's length institutions and expert bodies. Arts Council Norway is formally administered and financed by the Ministry of Culture and thus the main governmental operator for the implementation of

Norwegian cultural policy, but retains a largely independent position. Each year, the Storting provides an overall allocation to the Cultural Fund, which is administered by Arts Council Norway as one of its principal tasks. In addition, the Arts Council acts as an advisor to the central authorities and organises experimental cultural activities in areas it considers to be of particular interest.

The Norwegian Film Fund is responsible for administering national support for film production in Norway. According to its statutes, the Film Fund shall also advise the Ministry for Cultural on film policy.

Other expert bodies such as The Language Council of Norway, KORO – Public Art Norway and The Norwegian Media Authority hold administrative, advisory, coordinative and development responsibilities in their own fields.

All 19 **counties** established independent cultural boards and administrations during the 1970s, responsible to the county councils. Since the 1990s many counties reorganised their cultural boards and administration, and integrated them into broader units, e.g. for regional development. The responsibilities of regional authorities include self-defined initiatives and subsidies for regional cultural activities and subsidies for regional institutions, which are partly state-funded and regulated by formal agreements on a shared responsibility.

Most **municipalities** also have their own cultural boards and administrations, sometimes combined with other areas of policy such as business, leisure or education. The responsibilities of local authorities include self-defined initiatives and subsidies for local cultural activities, including shared responsibility for cultural institutions. The most important infrastructures of local cultural policy are arts schools, libraries and sports facilities.

Financing of culture

- Public authorities play a crucial role in the financing of culture in Norway, with the state and the municipalities as the most important actors. A 2005 government pledge to increase the amount of the national budget allocated to culture to 1 % until 2014 led to a **considerable increase in public spending on culture over the last ten years.**
- **Public culture expenditure** in Norway per capita in 2014 was NOK 4 455 (EUR 533). It corresponded to 0.72 % of GDP. At state level, the expenditure per capita in 2014 was NOK 2 057 (EUR 246), corresponding to 0.33% of GDP.1.3 %.
- National surveys show a decrease of the share of **total private household spending** allocated to leisure as well as cultural activities and goods to 10% of all expenditures.

Public culture expenditure at all levels of government per capita, in EUR, 2002-2014

	2002	2005	2010	2012	2014
Norway	296	380	446	534	533

Public cultural expenditure: by level of government, in EUR, 2009 and 2014

Level of government	2009	2014*
State* (central, federal)	962 723 645	1 256 973 000
Regional (provincial)	131 587 849	160 299 000
Local (municipal, incl. counties)	1 003 070 150	1 306 456 000
TOTAL	2 097 381 644	2 723 728 000

* Church affairs and sports not included.

Source: Statistics Norway

4. Main cultural policies and priorities

General context

The present government did not make significant changes in the current cultural policy and financing. However, more emphasis is now placed on private partnerships and sponsoring of the arts, including via a donation reinforcement programme: When culture organisations receive private donations, they may apply for additional public support. In addition, a talent development programme has been established in cooperation with private sponsors. These initiatives as well as fewer guidelines in funding agreements and a more diverse composition of advisory boards are also meant to strengthen the autonomy of the arts.

Latest developments:

- In 2014, the construction of a new building for the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo begun. After its completion (in 2020), several museum sites will be relocated into the new museum. Public debates focused on how the ancient National Gallery building should be used, following the relocation.
- All over Norway, cultural houses have been established during the last decade, with a total cost of NOK 11 billion. This prioritization caused much local political debate.
- Organisations of visual artists have recently emphasised the lack of compensation for their work when art is displayed in (public) galleries and art museums funded by the regions and the municipalities as well as private galleries open to the public. A so called “exhibition remuneration” with individual compensations, based on an agreement between the Norwegian state and trade unions, existed since 1978 for exhibitions arranged by state funded institutions and was renegotiated in 2016.
- The latest white paper on archives (2015) focuses particularly on digitalization and accessibility. The white paper highlights the importance of preserving digital content as well as digitizing written and printed documents. The development of the Digital Archives (an internet based open access archive) is part of this strategy.

- In 2015, the Minister of Culture presented a paper outlining the strategies for Norwegian Library policy for the next four years (2015-2018). This strategy focused particularly on a common national infrastructure for libraries (libraries are a municipal task), the development of digital content, including e-books, and the importance of libraries as cultural venues and social arenas.
- In 2015 the government financed the establishment of a center for creative industries (Kunnskapsverket). The center shall contribute to the development of a comprehensive knowledge base for cultural industries in Norway.
- In a white paper on Norwegian film policy (2015), the government outlines its goals to encourage the development of a professional and profitable film industry and ensure: a large and diverse film production of high quality, the distribution of films to all citizens, larger audiences for Norwegian film and TV series both domestic and abroad.
- In 2016, the Norwegian Film Institute introduced a new incentive scheme aiming to increase the number of international films and series produced in Norway.

5. International cooperation

General context and main actors

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture share the responsibility for international cultural cooperation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the presentation of Norwegian arts and culture abroad, including exchange projects with developing countries, in cooperation with several cultural institutions (that receive their funding from Ministry of Culture).

The Norwegian foreign services missions (administrated by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs) play a key role in establishing and administering cultural cooperation with other countries.

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), which is a directorate under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is also involved in international cultural projects and provides assistance for culture, media and information activities.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for multilateral cultural cooperation, Nordic cultural cooperation as well as the domestic part of cultural exchange.

State-funded institutions and professional organisations particularly aim at stimulating artistic exchange and promoting Norwegian artists and works of art, not least through the administration of specific grant schemes. The following organisations administer support programmes on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: *The Norwegian Film Institute (NFI)* works to preserve, support and distribute Norwegian and foreign films so that film as an expression of art and culture becomes more visible; *NORLA – Norwegian Literature Abroad, Fiction and Non-fiction (NORLA)* provides information on Norwegian literature and authors of fiction and non-fiction and facilitates contact between authors and publishers, translators, universities and others interested in Norwegian literature abroad; *the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA)* develops collaborations in contemporary art between Norway and the international art scene; *Music Norway* acts as political adviser and serves as a facilitator and enabler for the entire Norwegian

professional music scene; *Performing Arts Hub Norway (PAHN)* works to facilitate independent theatre and dance activity in Norway; *Norwegian Crafts* is the national professional organisation that administers the grant scheme for activities of crafts artists abroad.

European cooperation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (including the Norwegian foreign service missions), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Ministry of Culture are responsible for cultural cooperation with other countries.

Multilateral cooperation in the cultural field includes Norwegian participation in the activities of international organisations such as the Nordic Council (a forum for Nordic parliamentary cooperation) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (a forum for Nordic governmental cooperation). Culture is defined as one of the major areas for cooperation.

In order to give the culture and media sector in the Nordic region more opportunities to work together, the Ministries of Culture have set up several programmes and support schemes such as the *Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture* which aims to enhance cultural and artistic collaboration in the Nordic and Baltic countries by funding travel, networking and residential visits; the *Culture and Art Programme* whose aim is to promote new ideas and initiatives, help establish Nordic partnerships and encourage the arts and culture in the Nordic countries and beyond; the *Nordic Computer Game Programme (2006-2015)* aimed to stimulate the Nordic computer game industry to produce a higher quality and wider offering of computer games produced in the Nordic countries for children and young people.

The Nordic Culture Fund (Nordisk Kulturfond) is a Nordic body of cooperation whose task is to support cultural cooperation in a broad sense among the Nordic countries. In 2015 The Nordic Culture Fund awarded DKK 29 million to cultural projects in the Nordic Region or to Nordic projects outside of the Region. Supported projects reflect a wide spectrum of cultural life and include visual art, theatre, music and dance, literature and new media.

Although not a member of the EU, Norway is closely associated with the European Union through the Agreement on the European Economic Area, which also encompasses cultural cooperation. Norway takes part in relevant EU programmes such as Creative Europe (2014-2020) which enables Norwegian cultural workers within TV, film, art and culture opportunities to collaborate internationally and to reach out to a wider European audience. Arts Council Norway is responsible for culture within Creative Europe in Norway while the Norwegian Film Institute is responsible for media.