

# HØYRE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION MANIFESTO 2025–2029

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

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# HØYRE'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION MANIFESTO 2025–2029

These are uncertain times in the world. Our safety and fundamental values are under pressure. Norway and Europe must take greater responsibility for our own security and future.

At the same time, we face major long-term challenges that we must solve for Norway to remain a good place to live for our children and grandchildren. Fewer young people will have to support more elderly, and our economy is becoming more constrained.

In facing this, Norway needs a new government with the resolve to make the right choices today while building a stronger nation for tomorrow.

It is time to prioritize what matters most. Høyre chooses solutions over slogans. Solutions that strengthen our defense capabilities, enhance value creation and the economy, provide faster treatment for the sick, and ensure our children learn more in school.

Høyre wants to let people and businesses thrive and address the challenges that stand in the way of success. Because we believe it is the sum of all positive forces in society, and our collective efforts today, that determine what kind of Norway we will have tomorrow.

In a more dangerous world, we must prepare ourselves to withstand threats from authoritarian regimes. That is why Høyre wants a substantial boost for the Armed Forces. We must become stronger, faster, and better prepared to protect ourselves and our allies. We must produce more weapons and ammunition in cooperation with Europe. At the same time, we must combat the increasing crime at home. Høyre will build a modern police force and judicial system that is better at preventing and detecting crime and imposes stricter sentences.

Rebuilding our defense is expensive and will demand a lot from us. To become stronger, we must boost value creation and economic growth. Now is the time to lay the foundation for what Norway will live off in the future. When businesses grow, hire people, and earn profits, they create more value for society. That is why Høyre wants to make Norway one of the best countries in the world to start and run a business. Høyre will lower taxes, simplify bureaucracy, and increase predictability. Taxes will be significantly lower for everyone. We want you to keep more of what you earn. Because it should pay off to work and to make an extra effort.

While building our country stronger for the future, we must also solve the most important and pressing challenges for people here and now. Too many Norwegians are on healthcare waiting lists. Many have their lives put on hold and are away from work for extended periods. Høyre will strengthen public hospitals and utilize more available capacity in the private sector to reduce waiting times. The pathway for cancer treatment has been a success, and we want to extend this to more diseases. We will also introduce free choice of treatment and do more for those struggling with mental health and substance abuse.

A good school prepares our children for both working life and adulthood. It lays the foundation for a good life for the individual and for the welfare society of tomorrow. Today, more than 15,000 young people leave school each year without being able to read properly. Høyre wants schools to see each individual and recognize that children learn differently. Pupils who struggle must be identified early

and receive proper support. Those who are academically strong should be allowed to thrive. We will restore respect for teachers. Teachers must have more time to teach, and discipline must return to the classroom.

It is time to prioritize what matters most. Høyre chooses solutions over slogans.

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## More Cooperation and a Stronger Defense

The world has become a more dangerous place in recent years. Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has severely worsened the security situation in Europe. Tensions are also rising in other parts of the world. Decades of democratic progress are now in retreat. Authoritarian regimes are forming new alliances that threaten the security of Norway and our allies. New digital and hybrid threats pose serious security challenges in the gray zone between war and peace.

Norway is a small country with an open economy. The rules-based international order that has existed since World War II has served us well. Common rules for international trade are crucial to ensure market access for our export products and that we have predictable access to imports we depend on. Binding cooperation forms the basis for a global development where inequality within and between countries is reduced, the migration pressure on Europe is eased, and where joint efforts to combat the threat posed by climate change succeed. International norms, rules, and institutions are under significant strain. Consequently, Norwegian interests are also under pressure.

### Foreign Affairs, Trade and Cooperation

Høyre will strengthen Norway's alliances and promote a rules-based world order. Our defense relies on national capabilities, NATO, and bilateral agreements with our allies. NATO is the cornerstone of Norwegian defense and security policy. Norway must contribute more to its alliances than it does today. Our cooperation with the EU must be deepened, especially in the field of preparedness. Høyre will continue to develop cooperation with Norway's closest allies in the EU and NATO.

The EU is expanding cooperation across an increasing number of areas, including health preparedness, defense, and security. These are areas not covered by the EEA Agreement, but it is in Norway's interest to participate here as well. It is in our interest to be involved as early as possible in political processes that affect us. The current wait-and-see approach must be replaced with an effective European policy that delivers stronger results for Norwegian interests. Høyre believes that Norway's welfare, security, and competitiveness will be improved if Norway becomes a full member of the EU.

Høyre's principle is to favor the freest and fairest possible trade and to expand Norway's trade relations. Trade must be structured to minimize dependencies and risks associated with countries with which we do not have security cooperation. Høyre will reduce trade-related vulnerabilities, while at the same time ensuring large and attractive markets for our businesses.

### Høyre will

- maintain Norway's position as an active and credible NATO ally by significantly strengthening our own defense and enhancing our ability to contribute to NATO's collective defense
- work for Norwegian EU membership, pursue an effective European policy, deepen security and defense cooperation with the EU, and defend the EEA Agreement
- work for necessary reforms of the UN and WTO to ensure effectiveness and legitimacy in the most important multilateral organizations
- be a driving force for free trade and the conclusion of trade agreements with third countries, including developing nations
- work to ensure that human rights are respected in all countries, with particular emphasis on vulnerable minorities

- contribute to ensuring that LGBTQ+ rights are safeguarded and included in international human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals
- work for a more unified European security policy, in close collaboration with the United States, where Europe becomes more strategically and politically independent from countries that pose a security risk
- prioritize the foreign service's human and economic resources to best safeguard Norwegian interests
- support countries at risk of becoming victims of Russian aggression and malign influence
- limit the activities which Russia is permitted to carry out in Norwegian waters
- keep Norwegian cooperation with Russia to a minimum and develop a Russia policy adapted to a permanently altered security situation
- avoid becoming unilaterally dependent on key value chains and goods from countries with which we lack security cooperation
- ensure that Norway closely cooperates with the EU on measures to prevent states from using trade and investment to threaten our security interests
- monitor foreign direct investment to prevent actors who may pose a security threat to Norway from using investments to exert political pressure or carry out strategic acquisitions to the detriment of Norwegian security
- ensure that disclosure requirements for foreign ownership are subject to the same strict regulations as in the EU
- ensure that Norway works with the EU to introduce stricter regulations on what companies from countries with which Norway lacks security cooperation may own in Norway and in Europe
- actively counteract malign influence from foreign states, including through strengthening national legislation and cooperation with our allies.
- work for stronger international cooperation for mutual nuclear disarmament and against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
- support a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine as the long-term goal, in line with international law and UN Security Council resolutions

### *Ukraine*

Høyre stands with Ukraine in its struggle for freedom and supports the Norwegian Nansen program to help Ukraine. Europe is not safe until the war is over and a free and independent Ukraine has begun its reconstruction. The need for both aid and private investments will increase significantly. Norway must support Ukraine's reconstruction, both civilian and military.

### **Høyre will:**

- significantly increase economic support for Ukraine
- provide substantial weapons support to Ukraine's struggle for freedom, including support for the production of weapons and ammunition by the Ukrainian defense industry
- support the civil defense effort, for example by strengthening the energy system, critical infrastructure, healthcare services, as well as demining and support for the private sector

- support the reconstruction of Ukraine, including by initiating a recovery fund in which other countries are invited to participate
- support a process toward Ukrainian NATO membership
- increase cooperation with Ukraine where relevant and help facilitate investment by Norwegian businesses
- scale up support for the rehabilitation of injured Ukrainian soldiers

## Defense and Security

Defending Norway is the state's foremost responsibility. Our defense must become stronger, faster, and better prepared. Høyre will prioritize defense and security above other political goals. This is essential to safeguard national security, protect our sovereignty, secure Norway's freedom of action, and maintain stability in an unpredictable world. A strong national defense deters potential adversaries, affirms our position as a credible NATO ally, and provides reassurance to our citizens. In these turbulent times, with conflicts in several parts of the world, Norway is now facing its most serious security challenge since World War II.

Høyre will implement a major strengthening of our capability and willingness to armed defense, in the short, medium, and long term. The broad, cross-party agreement on the Long-Term Defense Plan (LTP) will remain the foundation, but the security situation requires that the plan's ambitions be accelerated and expanded.

Høyre will ensure sound management of defense sector investments and make sure that personnel with the right qualifications are recruited to—and choose to remain in—the Armed Forces. Our policy choices must also take into account the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO.

### Høyre will

- strengthen the Armed Forces in line with the agreement on the Long-Term Defense Plan (LTP), including
  - acquiring new frigates, submarines, and other vessels for the Navy
  - strengthening the combat power of the Army and the Home Guard, including more soldiers and tanks, long-range precision fire, air defense systems, drones, and helicopters
  - significantly enhancing air defense capabilities, including long-range air defense, and assessing the need for such systems in more regions of Norway
- expand and accelerate the ambitions in the LTP, including by increasing funding and scaling up exercises and training across the Armed Forces
- accelerate the development of a new drone strategy and ensure that technological and operational lessons from the war in Ukraine are incorporated into the development of the Armed Forces
- implement projects and investments in the LTP that are ready for execution
- strengthen readiness and activity, and increase stockpiles of ammunition and equipment
- improve surveillance, presence, and control in our surrounding areas
- strengthen public willingness to defend, by calling up more conscripts in accordance with the LTP, modernizing the total defense concept, and improving the ability to utilize voluntary contributions to the Armed Forces

- take advantage of the opportunities created by Swedish and Finnish NATO membership to deepen defense cooperation in the Nordic region
- use the guidelines for military activity and presence to maintain our security, national defense, and alliance commitments. The Nordic region is now one continuous area of operations
- strengthen our national defense industry and engage in European collaboration on defense industry initiatives
- increase production capacity for weapons, ammunition, and other strategically important materials in Norway, and ensure the defense industry has access to energy
- strengthen cooperation between Norwegian and Ukrainian defense industries
- upgrade key transportation infrastructure for defense logistics, particularly routes made relevant by Swedish and Finnish NATO membership
- strengthen education about the Armed Forces' societal mission and the Total Defense Concept in upper secondary education
- in time, ensure that all new cohorts of conscripts who do not perform initial military service are required to complete a short introductory course in military resistance
- offer voluntary courses in military resistance for civilians, with emphasis on basic skills and survival
- facilitate more civilian jobs near military installations
- renew personnel policy in the defense sector to recruit and retain the necessary expertise
- strengthen career and development opportunities in the Armed Forces to encourage more personnel to stay longer
- facilitate negotiations that allow a larger share of defense personnel income to count toward pension benefits
- remove the mandatory retirement requirement at the special age limit in the Armed Forces
- enforce zero tolerance for bullying and sexual harassment in the Armed Forces
- facilitate more cooperation between the Armed Forces and the civilian sector and private industry in the implementation of the LTP
- ensure that Norwegian small and medium-sized enterprises have opportunities to participate in offset programs
- support veterans of international operations and ensure that they and their families receive comprehensive and high-quality follow-up care
- strengthen research on veterans' living conditions

## The High North

The High North is Norway's most important region for security policy and strategic responsibility. Security policy shall be based on deterrence and reassurance. The shift in European security dynamics calls for a stronger national military presence in the North, more allied training and exercises in the High North, the buildup of defense capabilities, and closer cooperation with Sweden and Finland. Nordic defense cooperation, based on NATO membership, means closer coordination on logistics with both military and civilian relevance.

Northern Norway is important to Europe's security. The region holds vast resources that can help reduce European industry's dependence on imported strategic raw materials. It is in the interest of Norway, the EU, and NATO for the High North to be a region with a strong population base and thriving business sector. Capital, energy, and expertise will be key areas of investment.

The special policy measures in Nord-Troms and Finnmark (the targeted zone) are no longer achieving sufficient results in maintaining the population. The increasing security significance of Northern Norway, combined with growing investment from defense and infrastructure buildup and the rising need for natural resources, creates major opportunities for future growth. Høyre will prioritize knowledge-based initiatives and measures that strengthen efforts to maintain—and ideally increase—the population in Northern Norway. The targeted measures for individuals and businesses in Nord-Troms and Finnmark will be assessed within the current target zone framework, including whether lower personal income tax could be a more effective tool.

### **Høyre will**

- develop infrastructure in Northern Norway that supports increased defense efforts and facilitates business development
- strengthen intelligence and surveillance capacities in the High North, including measures to counter information operations that may undermine national security
- promote increased investments in the High North by Norwegian, European, and American entities
- review the design of the special policy measures in Nord-Troms and Finnmark (the targeted zone) to achieve better results in attracting new residents and boosting value creation
- facilitate industries with natural advantages in the High North, such as space technology, energy, aquaculture and fisheries, tourism, process industries, and minerals
- support job creation related to energy and industry in Northern Norway, based on experiences from Northern Sweden, where cooperation between local and central government and industry has contributed to population growth
- increase research on climate and environmental changes in Arctic regions
- enhance border control with Russia and assess whether parts of the border need improved physical security
- strengthen preparedness and surveillance in the Barents Sea and safeguard Norwegian interests related to activity along the Northern Sea Route
- reinforce Norway's presence on Svalbard by supporting a strong, attractive family community in Longyearbyen, and uphold Norwegian sovereignty through clear exercise of authority and public responsibility for critical infrastructure.

### **Development Policy**

Høyre wants Norwegian development aid to achieve the greatest possible impact and contribute to systemic change in the countries we cooperate with. The number of recipient countries should be limited, and aid should be as geographically and thematically focused as possible. Digitalization and new technology can help make aid and humanitarian assistance more cost-effective and reach more people with greater effect.

Norway has an international responsibility—and a clear self-interest—in helping the world's poorest countries achieve more sustainable development. Poverty, hunger, climate change, weak governance, and lack of access to jobs, energy, education, and healthcare are key drivers of war,

conflict, and migration. A more peaceful world with less poverty and stronger cooperation results in less global tension and unrest. It is in Norway's interest to reduce inequality both within and between countries.

Crises around the world are becoming deeper, more brutal, and longer lasting. Humanitarian aid must therefore increase and be more clearly linked to long-term development efforts. Høyre will emphasize long-term support that enables individuals, families, and countries to become self-reliant in the long term. We want to help build democratic societies where tolerance and freedom are core values. We will continue to invest in education and capacity building in the public sector in developing countries, particularly in areas such as taxation and trade. Developing countries must gain access to private capital to make the investments necessary to lift themselves out of poverty.

Aid alone will never be sufficient for a country to achieve sustainable development. Aid projects that help mobilize private capital and domestic resources in recipient countries must therefore be prioritized. Risk-reduction measures for private investment, including through guarantee schemes and Norfund, must be given greater priority. Høyre supports multilateral cooperation and wants Norway to play an active role in the international organizations and development banks we participate in.

### **Høyre will**

- conduct a critical review of Norwegian development aid to ensure more cost-effective and measurable results, and to reduce the risk of corruption
- strengthen the focus on knowledge within aid administration and increase transparency about the use and outcomes of aid
- concentrate aid on comprehensive efforts in priority countries and invest more in global public goods such as climate, pandemic preparedness, and security
- make Norway a driving force for gender equality and women's rights internationally, including sexual and reproductive health and rights
- maintain a long-term perspective in Norwegian aid and prioritize education, global health, business development, capacity building, and multilateral cooperation
- ensure that Norwegian aid contributes to domestic resource mobilization and stronger political will for reform in recipient countries
- promote increased trade between Norway and the world's poorest countries, as well as trade between poor countries
- facilitate a significant increase in private investment in developing countries, including through guarantee schemes and increased capital for Norfund

## A Safer Everyday Life

Our safety is threatened both by crime within Norway and by foreign criminal networks. The state's foremost responsibility is to provide safety for its citizens. Cross-border organized crime is one of the major threats to our country. A visible police and security service, customs officers at the borders, stronger border control, a legal system that ensures due process, and a correctional service that reduces reoffending are all crucial to public safety. A safe upbringing and active efforts to prevent social exclusion are essential to preventing crime.

### Police and Prosecution Authority

The police must be present where needed—throughout the country and online. They must be accessible and deliver good and efficient service. The main strategy of the police is prevention, and Høyre wants to strengthen the police's preventive efforts.

The crime landscape is becoming more complex, and professional criminal actors are gaining a stronger foothold in Norway. Both individuals and businesses are being targeted by ruthless criminals who exploit security gaps and people's trust. Fraud against public welfare systems is becoming increasingly common and poses a threat to our social model. Rising youth crime and gangs that exploit young people challenge traditional police work, as offenders are often minors or even below the age of criminal responsibility.

To deal with this new crime environment, the police need more capacity, and resources must be used more efficiently than they are today. Høyre's goal is a police service with the resources and adaptability to match the increasing creativity of criminals. At the same time, the tools available to the police and the courts must be updated to target criminal activity as effectively as possible.

### Høyre will

- ensure that the police are well-staffed and visibly present throughout the country, and reach the target of two police officers per 1,000 inhabitants
- strengthen crime prevention work and prioritize adequate police resources in high-crime areas
- enhance the police's ability to combat online crime such as fraud, threats, and sexual abuse of children
- prevent Norway from becoming a transit country for drugs, including by strengthening customs control
- increase the capacity of the prosecution service
- expand investigation capacity and consider establishing a separate investigator education program in addition to the current one, to improve investigative expertise and allow more civilians—such as economists and technologists—to contribute
- consider a model where professionals with, for example, economic or technological backgrounds can quickly be granted police authority, inspired by the Swedish model
- increase the confiscation of criminal assets, including through dedicated asset seizure teams in police districts
- introduce general arming of the police
- evaluate which police duties could be handled by others

- implement alternative shift schedules where it could improve readiness, subject to local agreement
- provide more predictable funding frameworks for police operations and investments through a long-term plan
- ensure that uniformed representatives of the state in the police and the judiciary appear neutral and do not display religious or political symbols
- improve identity protection for police employees
- assess the use of body-worn cameras in the police
- maintain police authority to uncover drug use, possession, and sale, and require those caught with drugs for personal use to attend mandatory municipal treatment programs
- allow easier information-sharing between police, banks, tax authorities, and other relevant actors when there is suspicion of financial crime
- establish a commission on the future role of the police to assess how best to equip the force to handle current and future crime

## Courts

Courts and the judiciary are a fundamental prerequisite for a well-functioning rule of law. The courts must have access to expertise, facilities, and technology that ensure swift and legally sound proceedings. The cases brought before the courts today are more complex than in the past. This may be due to their scope, their involvement of organized crime, or their nature as increasingly intricate civil disputes. Høyre seeks to continue the modernization of the courts.

### Høyre will

- increase the capacity of the courts to handle a higher caseload, both in civil and criminal matters, and reduce the time between an offense and potential pre-trial detention, conviction, and serving of a sentence in criminal cases
- ensure effective schemes for legal aid
- provide for the use of audio and video in all courtrooms, so that proceedings and witness testimony are documented and can be used in any appeal or retrial
- further develop fast-track procedures for young offenders and establish them as a nationwide arrangement
- abolish the age limit for lay judges in conciliation boards and for lay judges in district and appellate courts

## Punishment and Public Protection

Høyre believes that a sound penal system should promote the effective rehabilitation of those who commit crimes, while also having a preventive effect and reflecting both the seriousness of the criminal act and the public's sense of justice.

Criminal networks are continually developing new methods. Severe violence, threats, fraud, and money laundering are among the business models of such networks. New technology, combined with a strict culture of honor and fear, can make it difficult for the police to secure convictions against individuals connected to criminal networks. It is therefore necessary to provide additional tools to ensure that the police are able to investigate and prosecute perpetrators within such networks.

Our justice system faces particular challenges when individuals with severe mental disorders commit crimes. Høyre believes that public protection must be given greater weight and will consider introducing a new special sanction and correctional program for such cases. To strengthen prevention, Høyre will improve the provision of mental health services.

### **Høyre will:**

- increase penalties when multiple criminal offenses are committed simultaneously
- increase penalties for coercion and violence of a particularly degrading nature
- raise the maximum penalty for unlawful possession of weapons and for carrying weapons in public places
- impose stricter penalties for using minors in criminal activities
- ensure that children below the age of criminal responsibility face consequences and follow-up measures in cases of repeated or serious criminal behavior
- raise the maximum penalty for honor-related crime, such as forced marriage, and strengthen the police's tools for investigating such cases
- remove the possibility of parole for individuals who have committed particularly egregious crimes against persons, or serious crimes against fundamental national interests
- increase penalties for sexual abuse and for all involvement in, and production of, abuse material
- abolish the statute of limitations for a greater number of offenses, such as sexual abuse of children and aggravated violence
- introduce an obligation for Norwegian service providers to notify the police if they discover that their services are being used to distribute or store abuse material
- grant judges greater discretion in sentencing by both reducing mandatory minimum sentences and increasing maximum penalties
- place even greater emphasis on public protection in cases where offenders deemed criminally irresponsible pose a particular risk of violence
- clarify the division of responsibilities between sectors in cases involving both criminal behavior and the need for mental health care
- implement changes to the rules on indeterminate sentence of preventive detention and tighten the conditions for parole for individuals sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of preventive detention, in order to better safeguard public protection
- improve cooperation between the police, the prosecuting authority, and health services regarding the follow-up of individuals sentenced to compulsory mental health care, and ensure that the police are informed when such patients have completed treatment and are released
- consider a new special sanction for individuals under preventive detention who, due to impaired mental capacity, will require permanent restrictive care, and assess other forms of detention and parole, such as "secure homes"
- include security guards as a professional group afforded special protection against threats and violence under sections 265 and 286 of the Penal Code

## Correctional Services

Offenders who are to be reintegrated into society must receive proper assistance and follow-up while awaiting, during, and after serving their sentence. Høyre will consider housing alternatives for inmates with mental illness who fall between the correctional services and the mental health care system. This will ease the burden on both correctional services and mental health care, while giving the most seriously ill better prospects for the future.

Inmates preparing to return to society must receive reintegration support and be offered opportunities for employment or education. Høyre believes that voluntary organizations working in this field must continue to receive solid support. At the same time, we will facilitate private initiatives to help recruit more inmates into the labor market.

### Høyre will

- reorganize the correctional services to reduce the number of administrative levels and ensure a more uniform system of serving sentences across the country
- ensure that women serving their sentences have conditions equivalent to those of men
- ensure that foreign convicted persons primarily serve their sentences in their home country, by establishing more transfer agreements and making more active use of the ones already in place
- reduce the use of isolation and establish a minimum standard for social interaction for convicted persons serving their sentences, to prevent isolation
- expand the youth units within prisons and maintain a clear separation between adult convicted persons and those under the age of eighteen
- facilitate greater cooperation with private and non-profit actors to ensure that convicted persons can transition into employment after serving their sentence
- strengthen mental health services for inmates
- strengthen follow-up and post-release support for particularly vulnerable convicted persons
- ensure improved follow-up of former substance abusers released from serving their sentence
- provide victims and survivors with routine notification when convicted persons are granted leave or released after serving their sentence

## Youth and Gang crime

Most young people are law-abiding and commit no crimes. However, youth crime has increased both in scope and in severity. Høyre will prioritize prevention through schools, family support, sports clubs, non-profit organizations, and other arenas, and make it easier for young people to turn away from a path of crime.

It is important to ensure that children and young people are not recruited into criminal environments. At the same time, youth crime must result in a swift and tangible response. Høyre will therefore further develop fast-track procedures in the courts for young offenders.

Gangs and other forms of criminal networks use loyalty, threats, and the recruitment of young people to commit crimes without holding ringleaders accountable. Networks with international connections must not gain a foothold in Norway. Høyre will work systematically to target different aspects of organized crime through new measures that make a criminal way of life increasingly difficult.

### **Høyre will**

- ensure that foreign nationals who travel to Norway for the purpose of engaging in criminal activity are expelled
- facilitate the possibility of anonymous testimony in cases where it is particularly relevant, with robust safeguards
- improve interdisciplinary cooperation between the police and municipalities, drawing inspiration from Denmark, including ensuring that confidentiality rules do not prevent cooperation concerning young people who have committed offenses or are at risk of doing so
- strengthen the police's preventive work and presence in areas particularly exposed to crime
- reinforce international police cooperation to combat the establishment of international gang branches in Norway
- expand the use of electronic monitoring as a penalty for young offenders, and introduce the possibility of imposing restraining orders enforced through electronic monitoring
- ensure swift, close, and coordinated follow-up by public authorities for gang members motivated to leave a criminal lifestyle, through local exit programs, with continued close follow-up after serving their sentence
- introduce new rules for civil confiscation of assets and establish confiscation teams, so that valuables traceable to criminal acts can more easily be seized
- provide one-to-one follow-up for young people at risk, through so-called mentorship schemes
- establish a nationwide system of institutions capable of caring for children who commit serious or repeated criminal acts
- involve, commit, and hold parents accountable to a greater extent, and implement support measures in vulnerable families

### **Domestic Violence**

Insecurity or violence in the home from close relations is among the most difficult and most degrading violations a person can experience. Society's response must be clear and unequivocal toward those who commit such acts. Both municipalities and the police have important responsibilities in preventing and uncovering violence and abuse in close relationships. Høyre wants every municipality to have an action plan against domestic violence.

Many victims of crime experience insecurity and a diminished quality of life after being subjected to an offense. Victims of crime are diverse and react differently to what they have experienced. The most important contribution society can make is to ensure that the police and the judicial system handle different types of crime swiftly and effectively. Høyre will strengthen the position of victims.

### **Høyre will**

- strengthen efforts against domestic violence through improved cooperation between the police, the health services, and child welfare services, including through the RISK partnership
- ensure access to high-quality crisis centers across the country and strengthen expertise on substance abuse problems and mental health challenges

- consider introducing the possibility of checking whether a partner has previously been convicted of domestic violence or sexual offenses, modeled on “Clare’s Law” in the United Kingdom, where the police make thorough assessments of severity and risk of reoffending before releasing information about prior convictions
- better safeguard victims by allowing perpetrators to be required to move away from the area where victims live
- ensure that the police across Norway have access to specialized expertise on violence against children and domestic violence
- improve the flow of information between different public agencies to detect violence at an early stage
- examine changes to compulsory visitation and mandatory mediation in cases involving violence or suspected violence
- amend the conditions for imposing indefinite restraining orders, lowering the threshold and placing greater weight on the interests of victims and relatives
- establish that individuals convicted of abuse in close relationships and other serious acts of violence should, as a general rule, be subject to indefinite restraining orders against the victim and relevant relatives
- make perpetrator-worn violence alarms the general rule

## Hate Crime and Extremism

Høyre believes that the rise of right-wing extremism, antisemitism, and radical Islam poses threats to our democracy. Contacts between extremists take place digitally and across national borders. Combating extremist attitudes that lead to violence must be pursued in multiple areas and through close cooperation between public authorities at both national and local levels, the police, the business community, and non-profit organizations.

### Høyre will

- strengthen the police’s capacity to prevent and investigate hate crime
- intensify efforts against racism and discrimination, including through enhanced prevention in schools, by the police, and in cooperation with non-profit organizations
- prevent radicalization and extremism in particularly vulnerable environments and during serving of sentences
- support research on all forms of extremism
- develop a national action plan against hate crime in cooperation with affected groups
- review the enforcement of regulations on bullying, harassment, and hate crime, and assess the need for a dedicated anti-bullying act
- ensure better reintegration of extremists through improved local exit programs
- support non-profit and voluntary organizations and social entrepreneurs working to prevent and counter recruitment into criminal environments and extremist groups
- improve the system of radicalization contacts within the police
- ensure that rules on confidentiality do not hinder the sharing of information within public support services about individuals at risk of being radicalized

## Prepared When Crisis Strikes

Strong preparedness is revealed only when a crisis occurs. A crisis may be triggered by the actions of individuals, nation-states, or natural events. Threats related to, among other things, digital security, water and food supply, and natural disasters may affect multiple sectors of society simultaneously. Strong coordination at both the national and local levels is therefore essential. Responsibilities and lines of command between civilian and military actors must be clear, and strong competence must be ensured at all levels.

Vulnerabilities evolve continuously in societies that are undergoing change, like ours. Actors behind intentional actions that may trigger crises will constantly look for new weaknesses and adopt new technologies to achieve their aims. Preparedness efforts must therefore be continuous and take account of ever-emerging challenges.

Norway must have a strong Total Defense Concept, where the military defense and civilian preparedness work closely together on effective preparedness and the management of crises and unforeseen events. The business community will constitute a decisive contribution in a crisis situation. It is important to clarify the role of the business sector in preparedness, what they are expected to provide, and to establish the necessary routines for cooperation.

Each of us plays an important role if a crisis occurs. All citizens have a responsibility to prepare themselves for handling different types of crises that may arise, and to follow the authorities' advice on individual emergency preparedness. The authorities must have effective communication channels that reach all groups in society.

Society depends on stable access to, among other things, food, medicines, energy, water, materials, and equipment. Norway is to a small degree self-sufficient in medicines, and the rest of Europe is also dependent on imports, particularly of active pharmaceutical ingredients. We have witnessed the vulnerabilities in infection-control equipment, medicines, and medical technology, and must learn from the pandemic.

Health emergency preparedness must be improved to safeguard the population's life and health, and to ensure medical treatment as well as care and support to those affected in all situations. Clear responsibilities, effective alert and reporting procedures, and strong coordination between actors in crisis situations are of particular importance.

Civil preparedness and resilient critical societal functions and infrastructure are crucial for Norway and for NATO. NATO has established seven requirements for all member states in this area, and as a frontrunner in the alliance, Norway must fulfill them.

Climate change resulting from human-made emissions is increasing in both scope and severity. Going forward, we must be prepared for significantly higher costs related to preventing and repairing damages associated with climate change and more extreme weather. Climate change is leading to increased rainfall and flash floods, and municipalities and the state must cooperate to prevent and manage damages caused by stormwater, flooding, and landslides.

### **Høyre will**

- develop a long-term plan for civil preparedness and resilience

- ensure better coordination between Norway's various preparedness plans and agencies in addressing new crises and major events
- ensure that contracts for construction, operation, maintenance, and supply of critical infrastructure are not awarded to actors from countries with which Norway does not have security policy cooperation
- ensure that the police and other preparedness units have sufficient personnel and equipment to handle crisis situations, and strengthen the Civil Defense's ability to safeguard the safety and security of the civilian population
- clarify how and with what the business sector is expected to contribute in various crises, and ensure that relevant business actors train for cooperation with the authorities in crisis scenarios
- ensure that municipalities have the capacity and competence to handle incidents, crises, and disasters, and strengthen coordination between municipalities, counties, and county governors
- recognize the contribution of voluntary organizations to Norway's preparedness and strengthen cooperation through support and binding agreements
- maintain a robust, modern, and coordinated cybersecurity system to protect societal institutions, businesses, and citizens against hacking and other forms of cybercrime
- participate actively in international cooperation on addressing threats from technological developments and hackers
- ensure stable Norwegian food production, in cooperation with producers and distributors, and take the initiative for a joint Nordic food preparedness and supply plan covering fisheries, aquaculture, and agriculture
- facilitate smaller, local facilities for decentralized grain storage on farms
- ensure sufficient bunkering capacity across the country
- strengthen cooperation with the EU on preparedness and participate in the EU Health Union
- work to increase the production of medicines and medical equipment in Norway and Europe
- work actively to prevent shortages of medicines and strengthen and expand Nordic cooperation on the production and storage of medicines and infection-control equipment in the Nordic region
- prioritize effective implementation of EU directives and regulations concerning critical technology and security
- update preparedness legislation and adapt it to today's risk landscape
- increase the coverage of shelters and safe areas for the population in the event of evacuation
- review communication to the population on individual emergency preparedness for war, particularly in light of Swedish and Finnish experiences
- strengthen the protection of power and energy infrastructure against sabotage and attack

- increase municipalities' capacity to prevent landslides, floods, and avalanches through stronger regional cooperation, planning, and support for mapping and competence-building initiatives in municipalities
- develop national climate vulnerability assessments and annual reporting on climate adaptation efforts
- continue efforts on nature-based solutions, such as establishing green roofs, restoring wetlands and riparian vegetation, and reopening streams and watercourses

## A Knowledge Society that Provides Opportunities for All

Education is essential to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live the life they want and to take responsibility for themselves and others. The foundation of our knowledge society is a school that provides strong basic skills, reduces social disparities, prepares students for life, and serves as a counterweight to negative developments in society. Through vocational education pathways and higher education, everyone can acquire the competence needed to enter the workforce. In today's society, no one can complete their education once and be prepared for an entire working life. The opportunity to continue learning and acquire new skills as an adult is therefore a central part of the Norwegian education system.

Høyre wants to strengthen the entire education pathway. Norway's competitiveness depends on having a population with high competence that is able to use it to create value and lead good lives. Knowledge counteracts polarization and helps build trust in society.

The greatest challenge in schools today is that the trend is moving in the wrong direction. Learning outcomes are deteriorating, absenteeism has increased, and too few are applying to teacher education programs. In higher education, too few students pursue and excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), where the future need will be great. Research and development have been deprioritized, and access to continuing and further education for adults is insufficient.

### Kindergarten

Kindergarten is an arena for development, social learning, inclusion, and integration. Kindergartens must have a sufficient number of qualified kindergarten teachers, skilled workers, and other staff. Employees must be offered opportunities for professional development. Høyre will set clear requirements for strong pedagogical work and will particularly prioritize measures to strengthen children's language development.

There are major differences in how mature children are when they begin school. Play-based learning activities have great potential to reduce these disparities. Høyre will therefore ensure more systematic use of such activities during the final year of kindergarten, while also safeguarding sufficient time for free play.

Høyre wants as many children as possible to be able to start kindergarten when they turn one year old and will extend the right to a kindergarten place to children born in December. Together with municipalities, new measures will be considered to enable kindergartens to admit more children during the spring.

Høyre supports diversity in the kindergarten sector, with a sound mix of public and private kindergartens. For Høyre, the most important factor is quality. Everyone who wishes should be able to choose which kindergarten their child should attend.

### **Høyre will**

- provide more employees and leaders in kindergartens with opportunities for continuing and further education, as well as the possibility of obtaining formal qualifications while working, and develop additional career paths for kindergarten staff, modeled on the teacher specialist scheme
- give municipalities greater flexibility to hire staff with different types of competence in kindergartens
- introduce systematic use of play-based learning activities for the oldest children as part of the national framework plan
- require all municipalities to have systems for improving quality in kindergartens
- ensure that all kindergartens have access to special educators in order to implement necessary measures at an early stage
- ensure that all children's language skills are assessed well before starting school, and that children with weak language development receive the necessary support and follow-up so they have strong Norwegian language skills when starting school
- expand the schemes for free core hours and reduced parental payments for the families most in need, while also keeping kindergarten fees low for everyone
- gradually expand the sibling discount scheme in kindergartens to also apply to families with multiple children in kindergarten and in after-school programs (SFO/AKS)
- work to ensure that as many children as possible are offered a place from the age of one, and in cooperation with municipalities and the sector consider measures that enable more children to be admitted in the spring. The right to a kindergarten place will be extended to at least include children born in December
- ensure equal treatment of public, non-profit, and private kindergartens to secure a diverse and predictable kindergarten sector, and provide simultaneous financing when new requirements are introduced

### **Primary and Lower Secondary Education**

Høyre wants a knowledge-based school that provides opportunities for all, regardless of background, gender, or parental circumstances. Høyre has high ambitions for every single student. Much is going well in Norwegian schools. Most students thrive and have a good relationship with their teachers. Norway has a high teacher-to-student ratio and invests heavily in education for all. More students now complete upper secondary education than ten years ago.

There are also challenges. Too many students achieve too little after ten years of schooling, and too many go through years of school without learning to read, write, and do mathematics properly. Lack of mastery can lead to more disruption, unrest, and absenteeism. Parents' level of education has too much influence on children's school results, and there is too much variation in quality between municipalities, schools, and even within schools. More students than before need additional support, and more report experiencing bullying, violence, and

threats at school. Digital distractions reduce students' ability to concentrate and diminish learning to an excessive degree.

There is a clear connection between results in primary and lower secondary school and completion of upper secondary education. More of the effort in schools must therefore be directed early, so that no one goes through years of schooling without mastering basic skills. Skills in reading, writing, and mathematics open the doors to all other learning and must be prioritized in every subject throughout the school system.

Høyre believes that digital learning materials should only be used where they have a clear learning effect, and physical learning materials must always remain a genuine option for teachers. More varied and adapted teaching methods and physical activity in more subjects should be facilitated. Schools should place a stronger emphasis on building students' endurance, concentration, and academic depth. Students should experience that effort pays off, and that they are important to the school community.

Lower secondary schools do not adequately prepare students for upper secondary today. The transition from primary to lower secondary school can also be challenging for many. Some students have large gaps in knowledge, lose motivation, find teaching irrelevant, and leave lower secondary school without sufficient skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Høyre will implement a reform of lower secondary education to increase learning and motivation.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has come to stay in society. With increasing use in working life and in schools, constructive and critical use of the technology will be an important skill in the future. Artificial intelligence should be a tool that enables more adapted teaching, strengthens students' ability for critical thinking, and frees teachers' time for the most important tasks. At the same time, the use of artificial intelligence must not come at the expense of basic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

### **Høyre will**

- strengthen the follow-up of schools' obligation to provide additional support and intensive instruction to students who fall behind in reading, writing, and mathematics in grades 1–4, and implement measures where schools fail to fulfill this obligation
- improve reading, writing, and mathematics instruction for the youngest children, including by ensuring that all schools have access to teacher specialists in early education and by developing a national strategy for improved reading instruction
- allow for greater flexibility in school start by giving parents more influence over whether their child begins school one year earlier or later
- adapt teaching to the student and give teachers greater opportunity to differentiate instruction by level, so that all students experience mastery and joy in learning
- raise teachers' competence in identifying students with high learning potential, and offer more of these students additional instruction and accelerated pathways
- review competence goals with a view to ensuring that basic skills are prioritized in all subjects, and consider introducing clearer guidance and expectations for what students should learn in each subject

- ensure that students practice building endurance and concentration, for example by reading longer texts on paper, limiting screen use, and doing more tasks that require in-depth work rather than multitasking
- ensure that primary and lower secondary schools are mobile-free, except when teachers use them as pedagogical tools in teaching
- ensure that all teaching, including swimming lessons and school camps, is gender-neutral unless pedagogical considerations speak otherwise
- strengthen research on measures that reduce social disparities in schools, by establishing national longitudinal registers on children in kindergartens and schools, under strict data protection rules
- ensure better follow-up of concerning absenteeism and introduce a national registration system for absenteeism
- intensify efforts against bullying, violence, and discrimination, including by providing schools and kindergartens with competence-building measures on how to prevent physical and digital bullying, negative social control, discrimination, and violence, as well as holding parents more accountable in this work
- set stricter requirements that students entitled to individually adapted instruction receive support from staff with special education competence in schools, strengthen competence-building in special education, and reduce the number of students exempted from subjects, instead providing adapted teaching with requirements for assessment
- ensure predictable and secure financing of independent schools
- facilitate more specialized schools at the lower secondary level, such as vocational independent schools and STEM-focused schools, so that the school system becomes more diverse and students can pursue in-depth studies in different areas
- increase the quality of after-school programs (SFO/AKS), reduce parental payments for low-income families, and gradually expand discount schemes to apply to both kindergarten and after-school programs
- introduce an obligation for schools to provide intensive instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for students with weak basic skills at the start of grade 8
- ensure that all students are offered a vocational elective subject in lower secondary school, by requiring all schools to offer at least one vocational elective
- retain grading in nationally determined elective subjects and review these electives to ensure they maintain high quality and provide relevant learning outcomes
- strengthen students' knowledge in STEM subjects, including by strengthening science centers and increasing the number of weekly natural science lessons by one hour in grades 8–10
- implement ability grouping so that students encounter academic challenges that reflect their level
- retain exams and grading in lower secondary school and ensure that students receive regular grade assessments

- ensure that exam questions to a greater extent allow students to demonstrate that they have basic knowledge of and understanding of the subject, as well as the skills the subject requires, even without aids
- establish clear and age-appropriate guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in schools, with a focus on reflective use, critical thinking, and clear boundaries for use, while also safeguarding teachers' freedom of method
- apply artificial intelligence as an assistive tool where it is particularly useful for students with learning difficulties
- facilitate safe and privacy-friendly AI solutions that can be used in schools

## Upper Secondary Education

More students are completing upper secondary education. This is good for society, and it is good for young people. The consequences of not completing and passing upper secondary education will become even greater in the years ahead. Høyre therefore believes that one of our most important tasks going forward is to ensure that even more students complete and pass upper secondary education. Høyre's goal is that by 2030, at least nine out of ten students who begin upper secondary education will complete and pass.

It is crucial that upper secondary education is adapted to the students' abilities. It must reach those who are at risk of not completing, as well as those who are ready for greater challenges.

### Høyre will

- allow for more specialized upper secondary schools that reflect society's needs, for example in STEM, vocational subjects, and languages
- maintain free school choice throughout the country
- reduce the number of final grades in Norwegian, so that there is one grade in written Norwegian and one grade in oral Norwegian in lower and upper secondary school, including abolishing a separate exam in the secondary written form of Norwegian
- maintain a national absenteeism limit
- review elective subjects to ensure that all maintain high quality
- move the graduation celebration (russetid) to after final exams, in consultation with the students
- introduce anonymous grading for major written assessments in upper secondary school
- ensure that upper secondary schools cooperate with higher education institutions so that students who wish can take courses at a higher level
- allow students to complete academic preparatory programs in two years
- introduce an obligation for upper secondary schools to provide intensive instruction to students at risk of failing subjects due to insufficient competence, and ensure that more schools offer an optional 11th school year after grade 10
- strengthen follow-up of students at risk of dropping out of upper secondary education
- facilitate more alternative learning arenas under both public and private auspices

- provide students with weak grades in Norwegian, mathematics, and English from lower secondary school with a more adapted and varied pathway, and introduce a requirement for extra instruction in these subjects when moving on to the next level
- strengthen the use of combination classes, where students with weak Norwegian skills receive targeted Norwegian instruction while also taking subjects in upper secondary education
- study the introduction of a semester model in upper secondary school, modeled on higher education
- conduct more pilots with modularized instruction and test the use of centrally administered exams more often than twice a year
- better facilitate exchange and internationalization in upper secondary education, in both academic preparatory and vocational programs
- maintain zero tolerance for threatening or violent behavior, drug use and sales, and other criminal activity on school grounds. Each school must, within defined parameters, be able to decide on preventive measures such as hiring more support staff, using security cameras, and introducing access control
- raise the income threshold for student enterprises and youth enterprises, and simplify the transition to ordinary enterprises

## Vocational Education and Training

Norway needs more skilled workers in both the private and public sectors, now and in the future. Without competent employees in elderly care, at car workshops, in industry, in the ICT sector, or elsewhere, society will not function. Høyre will therefore continue the vocational education and training initiative to provide students with solid and relevant vocational education and to secure the skilled workforce the country needs.

Too many students drop out of the education pathway, and many do not obtain apprenticeships. It is important that upper secondary education programs are adapted to society's needs, so that students do not pursue a dead end where they are unable to get a job, an apprenticeship, or a real opportunity to complete and qualify.

The supplementary program for general university admissions certification after vocational training should be a pathway to further studies, not a fallback solution for students who primarily want an apprenticeship. Dropout rates from these supplementary programs are very high. Høyre will cooperate with county authorities with the aim of reducing the number of places and intensifying efforts to secure apprenticeships for these students.

### Høyre will

- increase apprenticeship subsidies and consider an apprenticeship fund, where all enterprises in trades with established craft or journeyman's certificates contribute financially to cover part of the costs of training apprentices in companies
- facilitate that students who do not obtain an apprenticeship in their home county are offered an apprenticeship in another county if there are available placements there
- provide more students with weak language skills and a short period of residence in Norway, who struggle to obtain apprenticeships, with work training in cooperation with NAV to make them apprenticeship-ready

- strengthen the equipment grant
- consider introducing grade requirements for admission to “VG3 supplementary program for general university admissions certification” to prevent dropout, while also intensifying efforts to secure apprenticeships for students with weak grades
- make it easier to switch from academic preparatory to vocational programs, by working to ensure that more schools offer such crossover pathways
- facilitate opportunities for students to change program between VG1 and VG2 by allowing them to complete missing subjects in addition to the regular timetable
- ensure that the structure of educational programs is determined to a greater extent by labor market needs and the availability of apprenticeships, and strengthen the role of the Y-committees, giving decisive weight to their recommendations
- conduct pilots where “VG3 school-based vocational training” is replaced with a new combined program over two years, with a significant portion of the training taking place in companies
- further develop the training candidate scheme so that more students enter ordinary working life
- support vocational skills competitions as an important arena for showcasing vocational education and for building pride and mastery among vocational students, for example school championships and the national skills competition
- continue the “Vocational Teacher 2” program, which enables skilled professionals from working life to teach in schools
- allow vocational examinations to be conducted in English, or orally, where needed

### **Teachers, School Leaders, and School Owners**

The teacher is the authority in the classroom and the most important factor for student learning. Teachers and school leadership must have the tools needed to foster a positive school environment that promotes learning and well-being, and to set clear expectations for students. Høyre’s goal is that all teachers have specialization in the subjects they teach, that teachers have the time and opportunity to provide high-quality instruction, and that teachers collaborate in robust professional learning communities.

Teachers report that they must spend more time on tasks not related to their teaching mission. This takes away valuable time and prevents the core task: that teachers educate their students. Parents and guardians have the responsibility for the upbringing of their children. This is an expectation that society and schools must clearly communicate. It is important that home–school cooperation functions well, and that parents and students show respect for teachers and the work they do.

Today, there are major quality differences in Norwegian schools, between counties, municipalities, schools, and classes. The best are characterized by professional school owners who are actively engaged with the schools, work systematically on quality development, monitor and track student performance, and implement academic measures where needed.

Høyre will set clear expectations and requirements for school owners to lift the weakest schools, so that variation is reduced. The Directorate for Education and Training and the county

governors must to a greater extent supervise that students are learning what they are supposed to, and guide school owners in their academic work.

Høyre believes national tests and various assessment tools are important to provide knowledge about student learning and make it possible to learn from schools that succeed in raising all students. Likewise, it is crucial to participate in international assessments that compare the quality of Norwegian schools with those of other countries. Høyre will ensure transparency regarding the quality of Norwegian schools.

### **Høyre will**

- introduce requirements that teachers who teach Norwegian, mathematics, and English must have subject specialization, and consider extending such competence requirements to additional subjects
- ensure that the teacher's role primarily involves instruction and classroom management
- ensure that teachers have the tools needed to maintain order and discipline in the classroom in order to promote the best possible learning environment
- establish new career pathways for teachers in schools, for example as teacher specialists
- strengthen the support team around students and teachers by employing other professional groups in schools, including social work competence
- increase the recruitment of teachers and kindergarten teachers to work in schools and kindergartens with weak results and in disadvantaged areas, for example through schemes with higher salaries or student loan forgiveness
- pilot new schemes to increase the number of qualified teachers, for example by employing individuals without formal teacher education on the condition that they complete teacher training while employed
- strengthen guidance for newly qualified teachers to help ensure that more remain in the profession longer
- raise admission requirements for teacher education and for the Practical-Pedagogical Education (PPU) program, and limit the possibility for institutions to obtain exemptions from the requirements
- strengthen competence in classroom management through a new continuing education program in leadership for teachers
- further develop the principal education program, including by making it a permanent program and expanding the supply of modular continuing education for experienced school leaders
- introduce an obligation for school authorities to offer training in pedagogical leadership for newly appointed school leaders who lack this competence, and to follow up participants both during and after the program
- reform the follow-up scheme for municipalities and schools with persistently weak results, allow for mandatory academic measures and cooperation with municipalities that achieve better results, and give a limited number of research and development environments responsibility for the scheme

- introduce a continuing education program in school ownership to ensure that more people in municipalities acquire competence in how to carry out quality development in schools as professional school authorities
- ensure that supervision by the Directorate for Education and Training and the county governors focuses more on the academic content of schools rather than on documentation requirements and individual cases
- strengthen guidance from the Directorate for Education and Training and the university and higher education sector for schools on how to achieve curriculum goals, how to use national tests, and what constitutes best practice in instruction
- require school authorities to monitor learning outcomes throughout the entire school pathway, ensure full transparency about results at the school level, and facilitate test sets that better reflect students' different skill levels
- reintroduce mandatory assessment tests in reading and mathematics in grades 1 and 2, and consider the need for additional national tests

### Universities and University Colleges

Students must encounter research-based study programs characterized by high quality, high ambitions, a positive learning environment, and clear expectations. Sound prioritization of resources is essential. A small country like Norway must invest in developing some academic environments into world leaders, while also investing heavily in research and development in areas where we have particular strengths and needs, and which are crucial for the competitiveness of the business sector. The link between academia and business must be strengthened. Høyre will work to ensure that more students complete their studies and graduate on time.

#### Høyre will

- maintain the principle of tuition-free education and continue to ensure equal access and the right to higher education
- adapt the number of study places and study programs at universities and university colleges more closely to labor market needs
- raise the requirements for obtaining university status
- review the program structure in higher education in cooperation with institutions, with a view to ensuring sufficient academic quality
- allow institutions to set their own admission requirements beyond grades
- develop a new framework for financing and capacity planning that emphasizes institutional autonomy, diversity, and division of responsibilities, and that incentivizes quality and relevance
- work systematically to increase the share of students in STEM and technical fields
- award extra admission points for STEM subjects in higher education in order to particularly encourage full specialization in subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology
- safeguard Norway's knowledge preparedness by ensuring that vulnerable academic and competence environments that may become important for Norway in the long term are not allowed to deteriorate

- consider whether there should be further restrictions on academic cooperation in certain critical fields with countries that may pose a security policy threat
- strengthen the long-term plan for research and higher education, so that it provides predictability and direction for the sector and enables better results
- follow up the work on academic freedom of expression in the development agreements with public universities and university colleges
- ensure that language requirements in regulations do not restrict institutions' ability to attract the best talent and to work strategically with outstanding international academic environments
- ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to acquire new skills and education, including through flexible and decentralized education programs
- test models for a tri-semester structure, primarily at the master's level, where studies will last for 15 months with three semesters and a summer break between the first and second semesters
- introduce additional measures to raise the quality of instruction, including through the National Arena for Quality in Higher Education
- ensure strong campus environments and require that professional education programs cannot be fully digital
- strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship in higher education, with the aim, among other things, of increasing student participation in research and innovation projects
- introduce a requirement that universities and university colleges make lectures freely available to their own students
- promote the internationalization of Norwegian higher education, prioritizing allied and strategic partner countries
- facilitate digital education offerings from top international universities to be made available to Norwegian students in Norway

## Research and Development

Research and development are essential for improving productivity, supporting the green transition, and safeguarding society. Collaboration between businesses and research environments is crucial for securing the jobs of the future. The university and college sectors and the research institutes are among the key actors driving the necessary transformation in both the private and public sectors.

Research is a long-term endeavor, and sound research policy requires long-term national plans and stable framework conditions. It is important to prioritize excellence in research, with the goal of developing more world-leading academic environments in Norway. Høyre will place particular emphasis on strengthening industry-oriented research and ensuring that a larger share of research results contributes directly to business development.

Høyre will strengthen research aimed at addressing major societal challenges and contributing to innovation, competitiveness, and an informed public debate. Høyre places particular importance on ensuring that publicly funded research is of high quality and remains independent of political directives or special interests that could undermine its credibility.

Norwegian research environments must cooperate more closely and effectively at the international level. This is essential to raise the quality of research and education, to participate in the global effort to create new knowledge, and to bring home knowledge developed beyond Norway's borders. Norway already invests significantly in publicly funded research. We must prioritize more clearly the areas where Norway needs strategic knowledge capacity, where we have advantages and ambitions, and where knowledge is crucial for meeting Norway's international obligations – for example in the fields of climate and defense.

### **Høyre will**

- secure Norwegian participation in the EU's research and innovation programs and work to ensure that Norwegian institutions perform strongly in the competition for funding, with the goal that high-quality Norwegian applications bring in more funds than Norway pays into the schemes
- uphold the target that research and development shall constitute three percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030, with at least one percent from the public sector and two percent from the business sector
- further develop instruments that provide a comprehensive approach to solving societal missions, modeled on Finland
- strengthen investment in research of particularly high quality and ensure sound and predictable framework conditions for research institutes
- strengthen efforts to commercialize research results
- reinstate the program for Centers for Excellence in Education (SFU), with the aim of improving educational quality and teaching practices
- continue the Return-EU scheme in full strength to support Norwegian participation in EU programs
- establish a targeted societal mission for research on green transition and growth, including renewable energy, digitalization, and sustainable animal feed for the blue and green sectors
- cooperate more closely with the other Nordic countries on joint research and development projects, based on the countries' natural advantages and strong academic environments

### **Vocational Colleges – Higher Vocational Education**

Vocational colleges are an important part of Norway's education system. Many skilled workers both want and need competence beyond their trade or journeyman's certificate, and the labor market increasingly demands such skills. Vocational colleges are also vital for achieving the goal of lifelong learning. For Høyre, it is important to continue strengthening vocational colleges so that more people see the opportunities vocational education provides, and to ensure two equal pillars within the education system.

### **Høyre will**

- ensure equal treatment of public and private vocational colleges
- better facilitate exchange and internationalization in the vocational college sector
- ensure that accreditation criteria for vocational colleges promote high quality and are based on up-to-date knowledge and practice in the professions

- ensure quality in the delivery of vocational education programs and consider greater use of external examiners and national examination boards
- carry out periodic inspections of vocational colleges under the responsibility of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)
- establish a link to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for vocational colleges in Norway
- open for vocational college programs at higher levels

## Student Welfare

Høyre will facilitate the best possible conditions for students to succeed. We must improve the quality of instruction and make it easier to study full time. Too many students take too many years to complete their studies, and some never finish their degree. Høyre's goal is for more students to complete their degrees faster. Many students face challenges related to mental health, finances, and life skills. The student welfare organizations (*studentsamskipnader*) play a central role in providing services that support students in their daily lives. Høyre will strengthen these organizations and students' finances so that more students have the tools they need to succeed—both in their education and in life.

For Norway to succeed in the international competition of the future, we must invest more in research and education. Norway must have research and education environments of high quality, and Høyre will contribute to strengthening these environments. We want students to encounter study programs characterized by high quality, high ambitions, and clear expectations.

## Høyre will

- increase student financial support, raise the income and asset thresholds for grants and loans, and allow for additional student loans of up to 1.5 G
- accelerate the construction of student housing by opening up to private and non-profit developers, simplifying regulations, and removing costly requirements
- open the Norwegian State Housing Bank's grant scheme for student housing to foundations and private developers
- allow Norwegian students abroad to work alongside their studies without losing membership in the National Insurance Scheme
- facilitate that more students can have children while studying, including by extending the repayment period for student loans and increasing the conversion grant for students who have children
- ensure that all students have access to a student health service, including considering how online students can be offered better services
- facilitate that general practitioner positions can be tied to student welfare organizations, in cooperation with municipalities

## Lifelong Learning

It is important that no one becomes outdated in the Norwegian labor market. Work life increasingly demands formal competence. This means that those with little or no education are particularly vulnerable, while many with longer education may find that their skills are no longer in demand before they reach retirement age. For many, the solution to returning to work, or remaining there, will be to acquire new skills.

This places greater demands on individuals, employers, and our education sector to ensure that everyone can learn throughout life. Høyre will develop more tailored programs suited to people in different life situations and establish more flexible and alternative pathways to vocational qualifications or additional competence. Høyre's goal is an education system that secures lifelong learning.

Completion of upper secondary education has become an important entry ticket to the labor market. A large share of the working-age population has not completed upper secondary education, and many of them are outside the labor market. Everyone now has the right to complete upper secondary education, at any point in life. The challenge is that education programs are not sufficiently adapted to people with established lives. Høyre will make it genuinely possible to exercise the right to complete upper secondary education, through cooperation between the state, counties, and the labor market.

### **Høyre will**

- encourage the establishment of more flexible continuing education programs that people need and that the labor market demands
- establish more education programs where the state and the social partners cooperate to tailor continuing education in selected sectors (sectoral programs)
- encourage larger companies to share their in-house training programs with small and medium-sized enterprises locally and regionally
- provide support to workplaces that offer employees training in basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, oral communication, ICT, and Norwegian for non-native speakers (Kompetansepluss)
- cooperate with university colleges and education institutions to develop high-quality modules tailored to labor market needs
- create a common portal in cooperation with the social partners and the education sector to connect supply and demand through a digital one-door policy
- ensure that the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (Lånekassen) is adapted to adults who are employed and wish to pursue shorter formal education programs alongside work
- support pilots on recognition of prior learning, where the social partners cooperate to document the real competence that a worker has acquired within a sector
- ensure that the “vocational certificate on the job” scheme is available in all counties, so that more unskilled workers can complete vocational education through shorter modules while remaining employed
- provide the opportunity to complete upper secondary education while simultaneously pursuing a vocational college education, modeled on combination classes in upper secondary school
- offer adults in upper secondary education an additional loan to complete their education, and consider whether the grant component of the loan fund should be increased for this group
- establish clearer guidelines for attendance and participation in upper secondary education for adults, including considering an adapted absenteeism limit

## Responsible Economic Policy

We need sound economic policy to address major challenges and to give future generations better opportunities than we ourselves have had. Høyre guarantees good economic management of the country, and to provide people and businesses with greater predictability in economic policy. Value must be created before we can share, and more people must enter the workforce. Personal initiative, responsibility, and entrepreneurship must play a larger role in the economy, while growth in public administration must be limited. Public spending must be redirected toward measures that promote growth and restructuring. People and businesses should be able to keep more of their own income, and Høyre's goal is to reduce taxes as a share of mainland GDP. We have a great responsibility to ensure a sustainable welfare society and environment for future generations, and to make sure they inherit both a secure public sector and a vibrant Norwegian business community.

Høyre upholds the fiscal rule for the use of revenues from the Government Pension Fund and believes the returns to a greater extent should be spent on measures that promote to long-term economic growth. The fund should not be used as a political tool but invested responsibly to provide today's and future generations with the best possible return within ethical boundaries. These ethical boundaries must be developed in line with broadly anchored common values in Norwegian society and rest on respect for human rights, the need for sound international rules, and preparedness against shared threats to the climate, democratic values, and national security.

Policies enacted in recent years have set Norwegian private ownership back. The government's approach has been unpredictable, and tax increases have been sudden and steep. Norwegian private owners have faced poorer conditions for doing business than public and foreign owners. Stable and predictable conditions for private enterprise is an end in its own right, and the authorities should help reduce, not increase, the risk of investing in Norway. Høyre will facilitate the dispersion of power and broad private ownership to promote value creation and employment across Norway.

State ownership may at times be justified by special national considerations. Høyre believes the state's role as an owner in Norwegian business is too large and should be reduced. State ownership must be predictable, professional, and exercised based on principles of sound corporate governance.

### **Høyre will**

- pursue a responsible economic policy that provides room for investments to the benefit of future generations and ensures a good balance between the private and public sectors
- ensure that withdrawals from the Government Pension Fund Global are primarily used for purposes that strengthen economic growth capacity, and consider tightening the fiscal rule
- allow the Government Pension Fund Global to invest in listed defense industries important for Norwegian and allied security
- cap the total value of the Government Pension Fund Norway (Folketrygdfondet) and transfer any excess to the Government Pension Fund Global
- aim to reduce the public sector's share of mainland GDP

- strengthen private ownership and reduce state ownership without important strategic justification
- ensure that headquarters functions of strategically important companies remain in Norway
- review the organization of Statkraft, keeping ownership of Norwegian hydropower in the hands of the state, while allowing both foreign risk investments and domestic investments in other forms of energy to be conducted in cooperation with private actors

## **Taxes and Duties**

Høyre wants to significantly reduce taxes for everyone. People should keep more of their own income, giving them greater freedom to make good choices for themselves and their families. The level and design of taxes and duties should motivate more people to work, promote a greater dispersal of economic power and private ownership, and encourage environmentally friendly behavior. Høyre will reduce taxes and duties that weaken the incentive to work and that hinder investments in Norwegian jobs. The pace and scope of tax reductions must be adapted to the situation in the Norwegian economy. Høyre will remove the uniquely Norwegian taxation of Norwegian owners and, if necessary, adjust other taxes to achieve this quickly.

To create predictability, Høyre will facilitate broad agreements in Parliament wherever possible, so that important policy for businesses can stand the test of time. Høyre will continue with green tax reform, making it profitable to make environmentally friendly choices, while reducing taxes on ordinary wages, particularly for low and moderate incomes. Changes to the tax system that could cause major adjustments should be subject to thorough assessment and real consultation processes and implemented gradually where they may lead to greater restructuring.

Høyre wants to build broad, popular ownership in which Norwegian investors and entrepreneurs choose to remain in Norway. Norway should be a society of self-ownership, where as many as possible are given the opportunity to co-own businesses, run their own companies, and own their own homes. The tax and regulatory framework for investments in Norwegian business must be attractive, so that more people choose to establish themselves—or reestablish themselves—in Norway.

## **Høyre will**

- lower income taxes for everyone
- raise the tax-free allowance and introduce a work deduction for young employees
- introduce a stable and internationally competitive tax level for establishing, owning, and running businesses in Norway
- abolish the wealth tax on business capital
- increase the basic allowance for all wealth tax
- design a lower and less bureaucratic taxation scheme for aquaculture in Norway that ensures predictability for the industry
- improve the scheme for tax deductions on investments in start-up companies

- make it easier to become a co-owner in one's own company, for example by introducing schemes that provide favorable tax treatment for employee share purchases, and improve the taxation of stock options
- not reintroduce inheritance tax
- ensure that Norway continues to be a driving force for binding international cooperation against aggressive tax planning and base erosion
- maintain the duty-free scheme and reintroduce the exchange option between tobacco and alcohol
- remove the 2024 increase of the exit tax. Emigrants should pay tax on gains accrued in Norway when those gains are realized

## A thriving business sector

A strong and profitable private business sector is essential for our society. Predictable framework conditions, good market access, a competitive tax level, access to skillful labor, and adequate energy supply, is crucial for value creation. The business sector has a pivotal role in the green transition, both by providing solutions that reduce emissions and by transforming their own operations. There can be no green transition with red ink on companies' bottom lines. Predictable framework conditions are a prerequisite to ensure that businesses can make sound choices and investments.

A changing geopolitical environment demands increased attention to and securing of critical resources and supply chains. In Europe, industry and production capacity is being ramped up so that the continent becomes less dependent on others. Norway has a security interest in contributing to this shift. Høyre wants Norway to contribute more to our common security by extracting minerals and producing the goods and services we are well positioned to deliver. National ownership and control of patents, knowledge, and resources are significant for our security and preparedness. Private investments from our allies are also important from a security perspective, as it creates a shared interest in safeguarding assets in Norway.

Small and medium-sized enterprises make up the vast majority of the Norwegian business sector. They also employ most of the workforce. Laws and regulations should be designed so that these businesses can comply with them. While public support schemes should be straightforward to navigate.

The public sector, as a purchaser of goods and services, can lay the foundation for increased value creation, innovation, export opportunities, and business development in the private sector. Høyre will use public procurement strategically to strengthen the Norwegian business sector and to ensure the best possible delivery of public services.

The tax burden on private ownership in Norway has in recent years increased and become less favorable compared with other countries. This gives Norwegian owned businesses a competitive disadvantage, leads to companies being sold to foreign owners, and makes it more profitable to relocate abroad. Tax increases have been introduced at short notice and contrary to previous promises and signals. Reduced predictability, a more rigid bureaucracy and regulations, in addition to higher taxes, have made Norway a less attractive country in which to start and run a business.

## Høyre will

- make Norway one of the best countries in the world in which to start and run a business, with regard to taxes, processing times, predictability, access to energy, and regulatory burden
- reduce the overall costs for the business sector by simplifying and digitalizing regulations and reporting requirements
- establish new mechanisms for systematic simplification, such as a simplification panel where the business sector proposes regulatory changes and the authorities must either comply or explain (reverse burden of proof), and expand the mandate of the Regulatory Council to also assess existing laws
- facilitate parallel processing of applications in the public administration where appropriate, to reduce processing times
- establish a transparency portal for business integrity, bringing together information from existing registers so that companies and individuals can easily check whether other businesses meet integrity criteria
- review and modernize the ban on alcohol advertising in the Alcohol Act
- reduce the backlog of EEA legal acts and promptly implement new ones once adopted, so that Norwegian businesses can enjoy equal competitive conditions as their European counterparts
- ensure that public procurements have clear and consistent requirements for the same purpose, making it easier for companies to comply
- facilitate public-private partnerships and use the state's purchasing power to promote more innovation and sustainability in the private sector
- strengthen business-oriented research and innovation, by prioritizing the main share of resources to where they provide the greatest benefit and highest commercialization potential
- maintain the main structure of the SkatteFUNN tax incentive scheme, while considering ways to differentiate it to encourage increased cooperation between the business sector and research environments
- review public support schemes with the aim of making them more business-neutral and removing measures without adequate documented effect
- streamline and simplify schemes within the support systems that provide venture capital in the early phase and for scaling, without displacing private capital
- help ensure that the state triggers more private venture capital, including by shifting more of the state's instruments toward fund-of-funds investments
- secure predictability for the cluster program and establish a long-term strategy for clusters that increase value creation and exports
- strengthen existing test centers and consider establishing new ones, to ensure that start-ups have better access to equipment and technology enabling their ventures

## Data- and Technology-Driven Business

Norway's business sector has an excellent starting point for strengthening itself with data, technology, and innovation. We can improve the use and industrial application of data, both

for optimizing existing processes and for developing new products and solutions. Many organizations do not necessarily recognize the value of the data they possess, nor the benefits of sharing data to create greater value.

We are at the forefront in process industries, green shipping, aquaculture, and petroleum sectors. In addition, we have high levels of trust and a strong culture of cooperation between the public and private sectors. We have extensive public data registers, competitive professionals, and a business sector that is adaptable and has a tradition of employee-driven innovation.

The service industries constitute an ever-larger share of the Norwegian economy and value creation. This development is driven by rising prosperity, digitalization, technological progress, and a general specialization in the labor market and business sector. Policies must stimulate the creation of good jobs, increase exports, and create more value in the service industries. This will further broaden the Norwegian economy's foundation.

The space industry is a future-oriented sector where Norway has comparative advantages for further development. An innovation center and a space observatory could enable more value creation, high-tech expertise, and jobs in the space industry. Close cooperation with the EU will be crucial for this to succeed.

## **Høyre will**

- ensure that public support schemes better serve service and technology industries and their export opportunities
- actively work to promote equal competitive conditions across borders in the digital economy, including by pushing for the EU's Digital Single Market
- facilitate the development of new services and value creation based on public data and data shared between companies
- secure Norwegian participation in joint European digital initiatives, in the same way as in European research programs, through national mobilization funds
- facilitate more data sharing and establish arenas where the business sector can provide advice and recommendations on which data should be prioritized for sharing
- initiate the establishment of a marine data bank as a public-private partnership among established actors already developing ocean data-sharing platforms. The platform should ensure the sharing of marine data among small and medium-sized enterprises and within industry
- do a regulatory cleanup of digital regulations to identify which parts of the legal framework are unclear with regards to adaptation of new technologies such as artificial intelligence. The review should particularly safeguard transparency and access, legal certainty, privacy, and consumer rights
- ensure a sustainable development of the data center industry in Norway
- develop a national strategy for quantum technology to position Norway for the next stage in technological development
- facilitate regulatory sandboxes where companies and authorities can test emerging technologies and services

- make use of Norway's natural advantages for space activity based in Northern Norway and Svalbard, and better enable innovation throughout the value chain of Norway's space industry
- strengthen cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) so that Norwegian businesses can benefit more from ESA's programs

## Tourism

The tourism industry employs people in all parts of Norway. For many, it is also a pathway into the labor market. Norway has numerous attractions, stunning nature, diverse food and cultural offers, heritage sites, and World Heritage areas that draw visitors from all over the world. Høyre will facilitate sustainable growth in the tourism industry.

### Høyre will

- facilitate year-round attractions and activities being available where possible, and help develop year-round tourism
- allow municipalities that wish to do so to introduce a visitor contribution or tourist tax, adapted to local circumstances
- explore options for regulating tourist traffic on important national hiking trails
- consider how public efforts in tourism should be organized
- define hunting, fishing, and wilderness experiences as an industry
- maintain river-based fish stocks to safeguard the environment, tourism, and value creation
- promote Norwegian food and drink as cultural carriers and contributors to local identity, and ensure that Norwegian food and drink culture drives business development
- promote Norway as a destination for cultural tourism

## Minerals in the Mountains and on the Seabed

Norway has abundant natural resources. Høyre is convinced that these resources must be utilized for job creation, ensure economic growth, and contribute to the production of materials that are necessary for the green transition. Mineral extraction in Norway is important to safeguard Norwegian and European strategic autonomy. National control of ownership in the Norwegian mineral sector is also essential. Our national security must be safeguarded in the allocation of rights to engage in mineral activity in Norway, and it must be possible to deny access to conduct mineral activity for security policy reasons.

In addition to extracting new minerals, greater emphasis should be placed on recycling and making better use of opportunities in the circular economy.

### Høyre will

- continue a step-by-step opening of the Norwegian continental shelf for seabed mineral activity, while ensuring that any future permits for extraction are granted only if knowledge demonstrates it can be done sustainably and in an environmentally sound manner

- ensure parallel processing in licensing processes for mineral development on land to establish a fast track that reduces processing times, including considering deadlines and providing more guidance to municipalities throughout the process
- introduce requirements for climate and environmental accounting and sustainability reporting across value chains at all stages and throughout the life cycle of minerals, and develop these in cooperation with related industries and stakeholders
- strengthen cooperation with our neighboring countries and the EU to secure strategic value chains, technologies, products, and raw materials that Norwegian business depends on, and facilitate Norwegian minerals and raw materials becoming a central part of our allies' value chains
- consider whether mining facilitating municipalities should receive a share of the value creation

## Ocean-Based Industries

Norwegians have lived by and with the sea throughout history. Our long and resource-rich coastline has formed the basis for a diverse and value-creating business sector. Our seafaring traditions have made us one of the world's leading maritime nations, and the fisheries and aquaculture industry is Norway's second largest export industry, providing large parts of the world with healthy and climate-friendly food.

Høyre's goal is to further develop a sustainable, modern, and diverse fishing fleet, making it even better equipped to harvest Norwegian resources at very high quality, while asserting Norwegian sovereignty over our seas. Because there currently are not any fully emission-free alternatives, the fishing fleet must have time to undergo a green transition.

Norway's aquaculture industry is world-leading, and Høyre will, in dialogue with the sector, set targets for where the industry should be in 2050. Høyre will emphasize profitable, sustainable production, improved fish health, and reduced environmental impact. Mortality rates are currently too high, and Høyre will work together with the industry to reduce them.

By processing more fish in Norway, we can achieve more value creation in the seafood industry. Høyre will pursue a trade policy that ensures better market access for Norwegian seafood. The seafood industry must have predictable access to raw materials, enabling year-round processing, stable jobs, and competence-building in Norway.

The interplay between marine and maritime industries has made Norway a world leader in shipbuilding, equipment supply, aquaculture technology, and fisheries. For Høyre, it is important to ensure that this position can be further developed. Our long coastline also entails a major responsibility for having the best preparedness possible at sea. Høyre will pursue a zero-vision for fatal accidents among commercial fishers.

### Høyre will

- facilitate sustainable growth and increased value creation in the seafood industries through strengthened research and innovation, resource control, and technology development
- work to reduce tariffs on Norwegian seafood, remove trade barriers, and improve market access

- ensure good coexistence between marine and maritime industries in the development of offshore wind, seabed minerals, or other activities
- maintain current rules for resource allocation between fishing fleet groups
- give the fishing industry competitive conditions compared to similar countries, including an exemption from the CO2 tax for the fishing fleet
- review the Participation Act with a view to simplification and clarification, greater opportunities for generational changes in locally owned shipping companies, and better enforcement of the nationality requirement
- facilitate sustainable development of aquaculture, both coastal, land-based, and offshore, and for both existing and new species
- support the development of cod farming and other new marine species
- allocate sufficient space for aquaculture and ensure effective administration at all levels of government, with as uniform rules and practice as possible across aquaculture zones
- strengthen and develop sustainable, environmentally friendly, and fish-health-focused aquaculture through technology-neutral environmental flexibility mechanisms and economic incentives, and review the traffic-light system
- maintain and further develop the scheme for educational and demonstration permits within the aquaculture sector
- facilitate the use of sludge and other surplus resources from aquaculture to produce biogas and other products
- ensure more Norwegian-owned ships under the Norwegian flag through favorable framework conditions, a customer-oriented Norwegian Maritime Authority, and competitive ship registers
- support a strong shipbuilding industry in Norway, including by considering an advance guarantee scheme and aligning support schemes for new ship technology to ensure that more ships are built at Norwegian yards

## Agriculture, Food, and Animal Welfare

Høyre's goal is a Norwegian agriculture sector that is profitable, innovative, and sustainable. Høyre will facilitate agriculture across the country and pursue policies so that the sector is attractive to work in. The agricultural sector must contribute to preparedness, maintaining a traditional cultural landscape, lower emissions, dispersed settlement, and produce safe food that consumers demand.

Norwegian agriculture and food production is influenced by several societal trends. Yet many of the instruments and schemes have remained unchanged for decades, while economic transfers to farmers have increased significantly, without producing notable improvements in profitability. The Norwegian agriculture sector is dependent on increased innovation and a stronger emphasis on technology. Agricultural policy as such must therefore be better aligned with the market.

Food prices in Norway are higher, and we have less variety than our neighboring countries, with only a few actors holding significant market power. Høyre wants to strengthen competition both in the grocery market and across the entire food chain.

## Høyre will

- set food security and value creation as the overarching goals of Norwegian agricultural policy
- maintain that farmers are primarily independent entrepreneurs, and make farmers less dependent on government transfers by facilitating more income opportunities and greater profitability
- conduct a comprehensive review of Norwegian agricultural policy to modernize and simplify it, including assessing changes to the yearly agricultural settlement and integrating it more closely with overall economic policy
- simplify the subsidy system, reduce the number of subsidy schemes, and reduce the agricultural bureaucracy
- improve efforts to preserve Norway's cultural landscape, by clearly separating support aimed for this purpose from that directed toward food production
- facilitate technological development in the agriculture sector and develop a strategy for the export of agricultural technology
- strengthen Norwegian plant production, such as grains, legumes, berries, fruits, and vegetables
- ensure that Norway remains at the forefront in limiting the use of antibiotics in livestock and maintain a strict regulatory regime for environmentally harmful pesticide use
- evaluate existing regulations on market regulators to ensure that competition is not unnecessarily restricted or preventing new actors from entering the market
- transfer responsibility for market regulation of milk and meat to an independent body to ensure more impartial regulation, and abolish market regulation of eggs
- maintain import protection, but review and ease import barriers for certain products
- maintain reindeer husbandry as an industry and work to reduce land-use and grazing conflicts, while safeguarding landowner interests
- abolish residency requirements while maintaining the requirement that farmland must be cultivated
- amend the Allodial Act (odelsloven) so that it only applies to descendants of current owners
- grant owners of agricultural and forestry properties greater control over their own land
- make it easier to sell state-owned common land where there is local agreement
- expand opportunities for local producers of alcoholic beverages to sell directly to visitors
- promote healthy competition in the Norwegian grocery and food industry and ensure greater transparency in the grocery supply chain
- uphold high animal welfare standards for all livestock and ensure that owners who fail to comply with government orders after violations of Animal Welfare Act (dyrevelferdsloven) can more easily be deprived of their animals and prohibited from operating

- increase penalties for serious violations of the Animal Welfare Act (dyrevelferdsloven) and raise fines for grossly negligent breaches of the Act

## **Sustainable Forestry**

Norwegian forests have for centuries provided the basis for employment, value creation, and exports. Forests also play a vital role for the environment and climate, outdoor recreation, and biodiversity. They supply raw materials for many important value chains, from biochemistry and building materials to energy and food production. Through sound and efficient forest management, forests offer significant potential for CO<sub>2</sub> absorption.

Norway can accommodate both protected forests and professional forestry. Cooperatives and forest contractors have increased efficiency in forestry, but lack of capital has held back the development of the Norwegian forest industry compared to neighboring Finland and Sweden. Høyre will work to make it easier for Norwegian forest owners to buy, own, and manage forests, including through tax policy.

### **Høyre will**

- allow forests to be traded in ways that promote active management and ownership, without licensing requirements or price regulations
- increase private and local ownership of Norwegian forest resources to improve management
- continue supporting voluntary forest conservation and actively ensure that forests are managed as a sustainable resource under existing legislation and certification schemes, to secure greater value creation and effective carbon capture
- improve public infrastructure to strengthen the industry's competitiveness, while also safeguarding the need to protect valuable and carbon-rich nature in these areas
- further research and development in forestry and facilitate new business opportunities within the circular economy and bio-based industries
- help diversify forest-related industries, including commercial opportunities in hunting, fishing, tourism, energy production, and cabin development

## The Path to a Low-Emission Society

Human-made climate change is now being felt across the world, including in Norway. Rising temperatures and more extreme weather threaten human life and health, food security in parts of the world, and biodiversity. The costs, both from direct damage and from reduced value creation, are enormous. In the future, climate change will also lead to increased migration. Over time, it will be far less costly to stop greenhouse gas emissions than to allow them to continue.

It is important that Norway takes its own climate commitments seriously and that we support international cooperation. Energy and environmental policy are cheapest and most effective when we achieve our goals in cooperation with our European neighbors, and Høyre will therefore continue cooperation with the EU on energy and climate policy.

### Energy for the Future

Høyre's goal is that affordable electricity should be a competitive advantage for industry and business in Norway and a benefit for households.

Norway is heading toward a weaker power balance and persistently higher electricity prices. The solution is to expand both generation and grid capacity, while using energy more efficiently. Power development must be conducted responsibly, with local acceptance, and in ways that protect important natural values. At the same time, it is critical for industry, jobs, and national preparedness that power and grid expansion proceed much faster than today. Energy and climate policy must be seen in connection with industrial and security policy.

In the short term, upgrading hydropower plants, small-scale hydropower, onshore wind power, solar energy, bioenergy, district heating, and energy efficiency measures can strengthen Norway's power balance. After 2030, offshore wind may play a significant role, contributing both more electricity and industrial opportunities for Norway and the Norwegian supplier industry. Høyre is positive toward the future potential of nuclear power and SMR technology and will follow up on the assessment of the need for and opportunities of nuclear power in Norway's energy mix after 2030.

Norway is a stable and long-term energy supplier to Europe. Norway should maintain this position and further develop activities on the Norwegian continental shelf within the framework of our climate commitments. A condition for continuing oil and gas production on the shelf is that, over time, production must take place with zero or near-zero emissions. There will be demand for Norwegian oil and gas in Europe for many decades, and in the coming years an important market may also open for blue hydrogen based on Norwegian natural gas with carbon capture and storage (CCS). Høyre will therefore maintain predictable and responsible exploration activity on the continental shelf. Further electrification of the shelf must not lead to power shortages onshore.

Norway also has major opportunities in offshore wind and carbon capture and storage. Norway has Europe's best wind resources and vast potential for CO<sub>2</sub> storage on the continental shelf. To realize these opportunities, we need predictable and long-term policies that build on the expertise and experience from the Norwegian shelf. Steady access to area and regulatory conditions that stand the test of time will be crucial to realizing the potential of the continental shelf.

## Høyre will

- work to lower electricity prices across the country, including by reducing the electricity tax
- accelerate measures that reduce differences in costs between price zones, such as lowering grid tariffs where electricity is most expensive
- maintain an electricity support scheme as long as necessary, and return the state's extraordinary surplus to consumers in areas where electricity is most expensive
- facilitate a better system of fixed-price contracts for both businesses and households to ensure more predictable and stable electricity prices
- announce the 26th licensing round and facilitate an area solution for gas transport from the Barents Sea
- conduct an impact assessment aimed at reopening Nordland VI
- conduct an impact assessment of Nordland VII and Troms II, with particular consideration of the consequences for biodiversity and vulnerable ecosystems
- facilitate emission-reducing measures on the Norwegian continental shelf, but require companies to provide replacement power in the last electrification projects that draw power from shore
- reduce barriers that prevent the development of smaller discoveries on the shelf near existing infrastructure, thereby ensuring good resource utilization and increased revenues for the community
- facilitate new industries on the Norwegian continental shelf, such as offshore wind, CO<sub>2</sub> storage, and blue hydrogen, through regular and predictable allocation of areas for offshore wind and CO<sub>2</sub> storage and the development of infrastructure
- continue using contracts for difference as a tool to realize new industrial initiatives such as offshore wind, carbon capture and storage, hydrogen, and ammonia
- consider whether a resource rent tax should be introduced for new offshore wind projects
- facilitate the development of a North Sea grid in cooperation with other countries
- further develop Norwegian ocean management and marine environmental mapping to enable more offshore activity within sustainable boundaries
- require solar power in more public buildings and infrastructure and remove regulatory barriers that prevent local energy production, including allowing greater energy sharing and storage, for example in neighborhoods and business areas
- map larger areas of "grey land" that can be used for local energy production, and introduce simplified licensing processes in these areas
- review protection plans for Norwegian waterways and assess the potential for power production that does not diminish conservation values while also improving flood protection
- consider new incentives and potential tax changes to stimulate more efficiency upgrades in the short term
- facilitate nuclear power development in Norway, provided private actors finance construction, operation, and decommissioning

- take an active role in international research and development of new nuclear technology, including considering membership in EURATOM
- ensure that host municipalities that facilitate power production receive a fair share of the value creation, and consider temporary and time-limited incentive schemes for municipalities that contribute to reaching the power targets and ambitions by 2030
- expand power and grid capacity more quickly, including by simplifying regulations and reducing overall processing time
- ensure that grid companies can to a greater extent pre-finance grid expansion based on expected power consumption
- facilitate better use of the grid by requiring assessment of alternatives to new infrastructure such as increased digitalization, sensor technology, battery solutions, and greater consumer flexibility
- pursue an energy efficiency policy in which households and businesses experience that it pays to implement measures, including by considering requirements for energy flexibility and the introduction of energy savings certificates
- require reuse of waste heat from industry, waste incineration, data centers, and hydrogen production where conditions allow
- support energy storage solutions and energy-flexible heating systems that reduce pressure on the grid, and increase district heating production, for example through new financing models
- facilitate increased production of biogas
- consider establishing a national test center for tidal and wave power

### Lower Emissions, Higher Value

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time. Norway is to transition to a low-emission society by 2050 and achieve significant emission reductions by 2030 in cooperation with the EU. This cooperation provides greater flexibility and is more cost-effective than reaching the targets alone, while ensuring that Norwegian enterprises operate under the same framework conditions as their competitors in Europe.

Høyre wants to put the market to work in the service of the environment, making it profitable to pursue sound climate policies and helping to create growth and profitable green jobs. Høyre will strengthen the polluter-pays principle in the tax and fee system. It must pay off to make climate-friendly choices. Høyre's goal is for climate policy to be as cost-effective as possible, to strengthen the competitiveness of Norwegian industry and business, and to lay the groundwork for new jobs and value creation.

Høyre believes it is crucial to prevent industry from relocating out of Norway and Europe, both for the sake of Norwegian jobs, greenhouse gas emissions, and security policy. A shortage of power is about to short-circuit both climate policy and industrial policy. Novel approaches to the framework conditions are needed to cut large point emissions and to ensure that mainland industry can scale up emission-reducing measures with sufficient speed and scope.

### Høyre will

- continue raising CO<sub>2</sub> taxes while compensating by reducing other taxes and fees and strengthening instruments for green transition
- maintain cooperation with the EU on climate policy to ensure the most cost-effective climate policy possible, cutting emissions in Europe and globally
- establish a support scheme (point-source program) to cut emissions from the largest emission points in Norway, for example by using carbon contracts for difference with competition for the lowest support requested
- ensure that Enova increasingly supports measures that quickly cut emissions or save energy, including giving Enova the ability to support mature technology through the point-source program
- maintain a CO<sub>2</sub> compensation scheme for industry, with the scheme increasingly linked to investments in emission reductions and energy efficiency
- ensure that Norway fully participates in the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to prevent carbon leakage to other countries, and work for changes that better safeguard Norwegian industry
- facilitate industrial scaling of carbon capture and storage technologies, including direct air capture, capture of CO<sub>2</sub> from biomass, and the use of CO<sub>2</sub> in industrial processes
- ensure that public procurement contributes to lower emissions, efficient resource use, and a stronger circular economy
- enable municipalities to develop their own climate budgets and have a plan to reach climate targets in cooperation between central and local government
- enable significant emission reductions from waste incineration, including by increasing requirements for sorting and material recycling and supporting emission-reducing technologies
- review the framework conditions for waste incineration to avoid distortions of competition, and assess the consequences for district heating
- strengthen cost-effective measures in the forestry and land-use sector that can contribute to increased CO<sub>2</sub> uptake, such as afforestation
- continue results-based and cost-effective contributions to Norfund's Climate Investment Fund and to rainforest conservation in cooperation with other countries
- introduce a consumption-based climate accounting system to highlight how Norwegian consumption affects emissions and environmental degradation beyond our territorial borders

## Green Transport

The transport sector is one of Norway's largest sources of domestic emissions. Høyre will gradually phase out fossil energy in all transport and logistics by introducing measures that accelerate the adoption of zero- and low-emission solutions. It must pay off to use green alternatives. Høyre will maintain and further develop Norway's leading position as a green shipping nation and use it to cut emissions both domestically and internationally.

### **Høyre will**

- support the transition of vans, heavy transport, and long-distance buses from fossil fuels to zero-emission solutions, and adopt a plan for building charging and fueling infrastructure for heavy transport nationwide
- set a target that all new passenger cars shall be zero-emission, supported by a tax system and charging and fueling infrastructure that underpin this goal
- phase in zero-emission requirements for transport in public procurement when the technology allows, and consider targeted support schemes to facilitate the transition, for example for express boats
- develop a plan to increase the production of advanced sustainable biofuels
- facilitate greater blending and Norwegian production of sustainable fuels to lower greenhouse gas emissions from aviation, while safeguarding the competitiveness of Norwegian airlines against foreign carriers
- work for international emission standards in the maritime sector and ensure that all new vessels built can use sustainable fuels

### From a Linear to a Circular Economy

An effective climate policy requires long-term commitment and a comprehensive approach across sectors. Land-use and environmental policy also play a central role. A circular economy will be an important contribution to reducing emissions, curbing biodiversity loss, and making better and more efficient use of resources. We must create more with fewer resources. A circular economy also has a security dimension, as it reduces dependence on other countries.

We must to a much greater extent reuse and recycle resources in the economy. Høyre believes that products must be designed for reuse and recycling from the outset, and that producer responsibility must be introduced for a far wider range of products sold on the market, to ensure that goods are reused or recycled responsibly. Greater reuse of building materials and more recycling of construction materials are essential for securing the transition to a more circular economy and reducing resource use tied to the production of new materials.

### Høyre will

- review regulations and the tax and duty system to remove unnecessary barriers and make reuse and recycling more profitable than producing and purchasing new goods
- expand and strengthen producer responsibility schemes by placing greater obligations on producers for the products they put on the market
- facilitate better resource utilization of Norwegian waste and higher value creation in the waste sector, based on competition and efficient solutions
- expand recycling requirements to cover more products and critical and strategic raw materials
- in line with the EU, require that more products contain recycled materials
- phase in requirements for reduced greenhouse gas emissions from material use in construction and facilitate the establishment of material banks for reuse of building components
- convert parts of the basic tax on beverage packaging into a material tax that decreases with the increasing share of recycled content in packaging

- implement measures to reduce food waste, in cooperation with the industry
- consider a tax on fossil-based plastics and support the establishment of infrastructure for collection, sorting, and recycling of plastic waste
- reduce the scale of “fast fashion” by introducing producer responsibility and robust ecolabelling schemes, and facilitate more sorting and textile recycling
- work to ensure that textiles containing synthetic fibers are clearly labeled “plastic in product,” modeled on the EU requirement that covers all single-use products made wholly or partly from plastic
- further develop ecolabeling schemes so that consumers can make informed choices
- facilitate the reuse of surplus masses, including through the establishment of digital marketplaces for surplus materials
- facilitate the sharing of heat and surplus resources in industry and business
- establish a strategy for how Norway’s high recycling rate can create commercial opportunities by extracting minerals from existing products—so-called “urban mining”

## Working with Nature

Nature has intrinsic value and provides us with many vital goods and services such as clean water, medicines, outdoor recreation, hunting and fishing opportunities, and food and energy. It is important to manage natural resources in a way that preserves nature’s ability to contribute to economic growth and welfare for the next generation as well. Economic activity must take place within nature’s limits. We must limit the loss of vulnerable nature and biodiversity, both on land and at sea, restore already degraded nature, and manage natural resources so they are able to deliver essential ecosystem services. Man-made climate change is one of the greatest threats to nature and biodiversity. At the same time, protecting nature more effectively is one of the most cost-efficient measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Sound knowledge of nature and biodiversity is a key prerequisite for this.

Sound management of natural resources and land use also provides many other benefits. Cities and towns that are developed from the inside out make it possible to achieve the urban qualities many people want. Well-managed nearby forests provide opportunities for hiking, outdoor recreation, and public health. It is possible to facilitate new green industries and develop thriving local communities, while at the same time safeguarding important natural values.

The greatest obstacle to sound nature management is lack of oversight. When a municipality does not have sufficient knowledge of the natural assets within its boundaries, it becomes more difficult to prioritize the right developments in the right areas. Many municipalities lack the expertise and capacity to maintain up-to-date land-use plans and conduct mapping of important areas. Høyre will increase efforts to map Norwegian nature and support municipalities in updating their land-use plans.

Many municipalities and counties are making important efforts to ensure more environmentally sound land management. Decisions are better when made locally without state intervention. Høyre will give municipalities more tools to make wise land-use decisions and ensure effective mitigating measures when important societal interests must be

balanced. Local self-government provides a strong basis for effective measures and sustainable land use.

Høyre takes as its starting point that all resources are scarce, including land and nature. Nature management must be based on the mitigation hierarchy: to avoid, limit, restore, and, where possible, compensate for encroachments on nature and land. Effective conservation and restoration require good data. The projects prioritized for restoration must be those that most effectively reduce the critical loss of nature and biodiversity. Høyre believes that a national plan and regional overviews of the most valuable areas will make restoration efforts more effective.

The international nature agreement of 2022 commits countries to step up their efforts considerably to safeguard nature. Norway has for many years made major contributions to protecting important natural values internationally, for example by working to prevent deforestation of the rainforest and by being a driving force for a cleaner ocean. Høyre will continue to be a strong advocate of robust international commitments to protect nature.

### **Høyre will**

- prioritize representative conservation and protection of sufficiently large, varied, and contiguous areas on land and at sea, in line with Norway's commitments and in cooperation with affected industries and municipalities
- increase the use of already developed areas rather than taking new natural areas into use
- support voluntary forest conservation and consider whether larger parts of the state's forest holdings should be protected
- develop a comprehensive national plan for nature restoration, including measures to restore kelp forests
- make greater use of ecological compensation as a tool to offset large encroachments on nature in state projects
- strengthen efforts for comprehensive mapping of nature and the ecological base map, including through the use of remote sensing, artificial intelligence, and the compilation of local and national data
- require key environmental data to be published in a digital and usable format, including from impact assessments and risk and vulnerability analyses
- contribute to improving existing environmental databases so users spend less time because registrations are correctly recorded, georeferenced, and quality controlled
- update requirements for independence and quality in impact assessments in order to strengthen trust in such assessments
- develop a national natural capital account to make it easier for municipalities to prepare their own land use accounts showing what types of land they have and how this changes over time
- support municipalities in updating their own land use plans and land use accounts, both to ensure their own overview and to contribute to better national knowledge of land use changes

- maintain Norway's leading role in the national and international fight against marine litter
- contribute to reducing the destruction of carbon-rich peatland
- base predator management on the predator settlement (rovdyrforliket) and the dual objective of maintaining both grazing animals and sustainable predator populations, and improve dialogue between local communities and the authorities
- undertake major efforts to restore a cleaner and richer Oslofjord, including nitrogen treatment, stricter requirements for agricultural runoff, and regulation of fishing activity
- step up efforts to combat high-risk invasive alien species, in line with the international nature agreement
- follow up Norway's action plan for wild reindeer and restore more of the reindeer's habitats
- ensure that particularly important societal interests such as renewable energy production and transmission lines are prioritized and strongly weighed up in land-use policy
- strengthen efforts to conserve wild salmon stocks, including reducing the spread of salmon lice, infections, and invasive species, and explore the possibility of increasing salmon populations through, for example, stock enhancement

## The Patient's Health Service

Høyre will create the Patient's Health Service, where no decisions about you are made without you. Every patient shall experience respect and transparency in encounters with the health service. As a patient, you shall have access to high quality health services with short waiting times. Next of kin shall be recognized as important resources and supporters, both for the patient and for the health service.

Høyre will reduce the long waiting times and ensure patients faster access to publicly funded health services of high quality. The solution is to make use of private and non-profit providers in a strong public–private partnership, give hospitals better compensation for treating more patients, and ensure predictable financing of the public health service.

### **Høyre will**

- reduce waiting times in the health service
- provide patients with rapid, high-quality healthcare through a strong public health service that cooperates well with non-profit and private actors
- increase patients' freedom of choice and the diversity of treatment options, including by reinstating a predictable scheme for Free Choice of Treatment (Fritt behandlingsvalg)
- make it easier for patients, relatives, and caregivers to understand their rights and to exercise participation and influence
- ensure that patients gain quicker access to new medicines, access to more clinical studies, and sufficient access to necessary medicines
- ensure systematic work with next of kin in the municipalities

## Prevention and Public Health

A large share of healthcare spending goes to treating illness rather than preventing it. Høyre believes there must be a shift toward more preventive health work. It is better for the individual, and less costly for society, if we succeed in preventing poor health rather than treating it. Høyre's policy is based on positive measures involving incentives and encouragement. Public health work must be adapted to people in all stages of life and help reduce social disparities.

Vaccines have a strong preventive effect, and it is important to maintain a high vaccination rate across the population. Høyre will build on the vaccination program for adults, which will make it easier for people to keep track of whether they have the vaccines recommended by the health authorities.

### Høyre will

- invest more in work-oriented rehabilitation to ensure that more people return to working life more quickly
- strengthen work on habilitation and rehabilitation and ensure good coordination between the specialist health service and the municipal health service
- help ensure that physical activity and dietary change are more often prescribed by general practitioners, in the same way as medicines, including by further developing the "green prescription" scheme and creating new follow-up models
- work to reduce tobacco use and introduce a national smoking cessation program
- strengthen health centers and the school health service as preventive health measures
- adopt an action plan to prevent and reduce loneliness, and establish schemes that reduce loneliness among older people by involving voluntary organizations
- continue cooperation with the business sector to facilitate healthy products in grocery stores and clear labeling of healthy alternatives
- secure the highest possible vaccination coverage by raising knowledge about vaccines, further developing the vaccination program for children, and introducing a vaccination program for adults with an automatic reminder system
- allow nicotine-free snus to be sold in Norway
- introduce requirements that healthcare personnel in contact with patients have relevant vaccinations
- strengthen systematic nutrition efforts for the elderly and vulnerable groups
- ensure a strong dental health service, in which those who need it most receive necessary treatment in the public dental health service

## Hospitals and Specialist Health Services

Høyre will ensure a strong public specialist health service in which patients have rapid access to high-quality treatment. Citizens must have the assurance of emergency care and specialist health services throughout the country. With an aging population and an increasing burden of disease, good cooperation between the specialist health service and municipalities is essential, including to secure proximity to healthcare and good preparedness nationwide. A decentralized hospital structure must safeguard preparedness, emergency care, and local

access to hospital services, while the major hospitals must be specialized and support the activity of smaller hospitals.

## **Høyre will**

- ensure strong predictable hospital financing that provides room for stable operations and new investments
- make use of available capacity at private providers to give patients rapid treatment and reduce waiting times
- increase activity-based financing (ISF) in hospitals to reduce waiting times and provide rapid patient treatment
- reintroduce Free Treatment Choice (Fritt behandlingsvalg) to expand patient choice and the diversity of treatment options
- ensure that patients have the right to treatment at a private facility with a public contract if the public system cannot provide care within the deadline
- develop more standardized patient pathways and prioritize new ones for women's diseases, victims of violence, and dementia
- support the pilot study for prostate cancer screening for relevant age groups and risk populations
- introduce additional measures to accelerate the eradication of HPV-related cancer and disease
- ensure targeted use of new technology, digitalization, and artificial intelligence to work smarter and improve task-sharing in hospitals
- strengthen research and development work in both the specialist and municipal health services
- ensure that more patients gain access to clinical trials
- further develop healthcare services for persons with gender incongruence in line with best practice and research
- ensure systematic work to improve patient safety in the health service
- guarantee access to 24-hour assault centers for children

## **A Professionally Strong Health Service**

One of the greatest challenges for the health service in the coming years will be the shortage of healthcare professionals. Høyre will make public hospitals better employers in order to retain staff. More flexible working time arrangements and greater interdisciplinary cooperation and task-sharing must be facilitated. Through targeted use of technology, innovation, and artificial intelligence in both clinical and administrative everyday work, we can free up capacity among healthcare personnel.

Høyre will invest in skills development, leadership training, research, and professional advancement across the entire health and care sector and work to strengthen tripartite cooperation. High-quality health care ensures the right treatment at the right time and creates security and dignity for patients. Good patient experiences must be created every day in the meeting between those who need health care and those who provide it. Høyre will pursue a

competence policy in the health sector that supports recruitment while also retaining skilled health workers in the sector.

### **Høyre will**

- facilitate more flexible working time arrangements to reduce the workload on healthcare personnel
- encourage greater use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies to improve scheduling and workflow planning
- promote better task-sharing in the health service in cooperation with employees
- expand multidisciplinary general practitioner (GP) practices through a renewed reimbursement system that supports more professional groups at GP practices, and strengthen the scheme for general practitioners in specialization
- maintain private practice as the main organizational form for GPs
- further develop the general practitioner scheme through predictable framework conditions, strong recruitment, and greater interdisciplinary cooperation
- assess which tasks pharmacists in pharmacies can take over in order to relieve the health service
- introduce grade requirements for admission to nursing education
- map the need for more skilled workers in home nursing and set a national ambition of ten percent fewer unskilled workers in user-oriented care services by 2030, with emphasis on home nursing
- promote the use of simulation as part of practical training in nursing education and in municipal health services
- approve more groups of nurses as specialists, to recognize competence and create more career paths
- strengthen leadership competence in the health service, both professionally and at the patient level
- ensure faster access to specialists by expanding the scheme for contracted specialists, and maintain the current system for contracting and financing
- systematically work to build a culture of improvement in the health service by facilitating greater openness about, and learning from, adverse events

### **Living a Full Life with Quality Elder Care**

Høyre wants to build a society where everyone can live a full life. This is about how society can ensure that each individual is able to use their resources when facing the challenges and opportunities of old age. Høyre believes age discrimination must be combated, and that everyone should have a place in both community and working life.

In the coming years, there will be far more elderly people than young people in the population. This will require new solutions and changes in a number of areas. Most elderly people manage well on their own and take steps to prepare well in advance for old age. Some will require care services in order to remain at home or in adapted housing. Høyre will expand the availability of adapted housing and communal living arrangements, where older people can receive services while continuing to live as independently as possible. At every stage of elder care, the

elderly should meet a health system of equal quality to that offered to others. Dementia is becoming an increasingly common illness, affecting a large number of relatives. Høyre will establish care pathways for dementia, providing greater predictability for both those affected and their families.

Elder care will require many more staff and novel solutions to reduce the demand for services in the years ahead. Høyre will emphasize strengthening the skills of those working in the care sector today, while ensuring that tasks are divided in the most effective way possible.

Private and non-profit providers can play a decisive role in increasing capacity and quality in elder care going forward, and Høyre will make use of them to ensure that older people receive the best possible services.

### **Høyre will**

- facilitate opportunities for everyone who can and wants to, to remain longer in the workforce
- implement a quality initiative in home-based services with permanent, multidisciplinary teams and qualified health personnel
- introduce a national framework that makes it easier for municipalities to adopt free choice of provider in home care services
- ensure that tasks in care services are organized in a way that makes the best use of available skills
- encourage all municipalities to offer voluntary preventive home visits with follow-up
- introduce systematic user and relative surveys and ensure transparency about the results in health and care services
- support the construction of more full-time residential care facilities and adapted housing options for the elderly and people with dementia
- ensure faster access to detection and treatment of sensory loss, such as impaired hearing
- contribute to greater adoption of welfare technology in municipalities and promote stronger innovation in services
- ensure high-quality palliative care and end-of-life services, building on the hospice philosophy, which emphasizes a holistic approach to the individual

### **Mental Health**

In the patient's health service, effective treatment of mental health conditions is just as important as treatment of physical illness. Timely and appropriate care is primarily essential for the patient, but it is also of great importance for society as a whole. Mental health services must to a greater extent be designed around whether the treatment contributes to improved quality of life and coping, from the patient's perspective. Waiting times must be reduced, and more people must receive care that genuinely helps. Høyre is committed to a zero vision for suicide. Three out of four people who take their own lives are men, and half of them have not been in contact with the support system beforehand. We must create effective preventive measures and build a health service that reaches boys and men more effectively.

Each patient must be able to provide feedback throughout the course of treatment on how the treatment works. Patient experiences must be captured systematically and used actively in quality improvement. It is important that patients are able to exercise influence over their treatment. Høyre will ensure that there is choice within the system, including the option of non-medication-based treatment in mental health care.

### **Høyre will**

- ensure a nationwide rollout of the Rapid Mental Health Help program (Rask psykisk helsehjelp) in all municipalities where there is a basis for it, by 2030, with continuous evaluation of outcomes and publication of results and waiting list figures
- establish a pilot project for Rapid Mental Health Help for Youth (Rask psykisk helsehjelp ung), with strengthened expertise on social media, bullying, and family dynamics
- use prevention programs with documented effects against self-harm and suicide, and develop targeted measures for suicide prevention in at-risk groups
- further develop a more interdisciplinary public health clinic and school health service
- introduce a right to assessment and consultation with a specialist within three weeks of referral to child and adolescent psychiatric outpatient clinics (BUP)
- extend the upper age limit in child and adolescent psychiatric outpatient clinics (BUP) to 25 years
- establish health teams and other measures to ensure that children in child welfare institutions receive the mental health services they are entitled to
- increase capacity in mental health care for children, young people, and adults, in both inpatient and outpatient treatment, so that all patients who require inpatient care are able to receive it
- ensure that all municipalities have access to ACT/FACT teams that provide outreach, integrated, and holistic services for people with severe mental illness and substance dependency

### **Substance Abuse Care**

Høyre will pursue a knowledge-based substance use policy aimed at preventing substance use problems. Høyre will work to limit the harmful effects of substance use. The use of narcotics is at an alarming level, and Høyre is particularly concerned about use among young people. Narcotics use has severe consequences for the individual and for society. The use and possession of narcotics shall remain prohibited. Persons apprehended for use or possession of narcotics shall be met with follow-up in the health service, with a mandatory meeting in the municipal substance abuse unit. Failure to attend shall result in a fee.

Norway is among the European countries with the highest number of overdose deaths each year. The risk of overdose is particularly high after discharge from substance abuse treatment. It is crucial that aftercare in substance abuse services is prioritized, in cooperation with non-profit and private actors with expertise in the field. Specialist health services must cooperate more closely with municipalities to ensure that users transition to a safe and drug-free environment after discharge. Treatment services, including the number of institutional placements, must meet actual needs. Better interdisciplinary cooperation is needed between mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and somatic health services, both in treatment

and in aftercare. Aftercare must ensure that the individual is able to manage his or her own life. Høyre is committed to a zero-vision for overdose deaths.

### **Høyre will**

- strengthen preventive efforts, particularly targeting children and young people, to reduce the risk of harmful substance use
- ensure sufficient inpatient capacity in mental health and substance abuse services, and make both private/non-profit and public treatment options available to secure patient choice and access to timely help
- reduce waiting times and provide better continuity from completed treatment to follow-up care
- ensure that patients with narcotics addiction are offered treatment of sufficient duration and have the option of medication-free and/or recovery-based treatment programs
- provide specific treatment options for female patients with narcotics addiction
- strengthen aftercare in substance abuse services through cooperation with private and non-profit actors, social entrepreneurs, and municipalities, so that more people gain access to work training, housing, and other activities after treatment and rehabilitation
- contribute to more outreach health services operating in substance use environments
- consider integrating aftercare as part of the specialized interdisciplinary substance abuse treatment system
- base substance abuse policy on harm reduction
- not legalize the use or possession of narcotics
- ensure that persons apprehended for possession of narcotics for personal use are referred to help, treatment, and follow-up instead of punishment. Support services shall be mandatory, and youngsters under eighteen shall be required to attend together with their parents. Failure to attend shall be sanctioned with a fee

### **Women's Health**

Both women and men must encounter a health service that is responsive to their needs. Some diseases and conditions affect only women, affect women to a greater extent than men, or affect women and men differently. The Women's Health Commission has pointed out that women often have poorer experiences with the health service than men. Substantial changes are needed to correct these disparities. Norway must have one of the world's best maternity and postnatal services, and new parents must be assured that they will receive proper support and follow-up when needed.

Abortion must be a safe and professionally sound health service. The limit for self-determined abortion is a question of conscience to be decided by each individual representative according to their conviction. At the same time, Høyre emphasizes that the Abortion Act (abortloven) should not be changed at every parliamentary election. Høyre will therefore not take the initiative to amend the limit for self-determined abortion during the 2025–2029 parliamentary term.

## Høyre will

- review financing in the specialist health service and municipal health service to ensure that women's health is prioritized
- consider expanding access to medicines under the blue prescription scheme or individual reimbursement of expenses for hormone treatment during menopause
- review national guidelines and recommendations for common women's diseases
- strengthen research on women's health
- require that gender perspectives are integrated into all medical and health-related research and education
- consider expanding the breast cancer screening program in line with professional recommendations
- ensure high-quality maternity services across the country, including adequate escort services
- strengthen midwifery services in municipalities by giving midwives greater responsibility for women's health
- enshrine in law the right for mothers to be accompanied by a support person of their choice during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period
- secure better follow-up and support services during pregnancy and the postnatal period to prevent and treat postpartum depression
- consider revising the financing model for maternity and postnatal care
- assess the possibility for primary health services, in addition to the specialist health service, to provide medical abortion up to the tenth week of pregnancy
- offer women free follow-up after both self-determined abortion and spontaneous miscarriage

## Health Industry and Pharmaceuticals

New technology and innovative solutions can help us get more value for money spent on health care, while also creating export opportunities for Norwegian business. For the health industry, the domestic market is crucial, yet many companies find it difficult to gain entry. In the health and care services, the barriers may be a lack of willingness, competence, time, or resources for development and implementation, as well as insufficient documentation of cost and benefit compared with existing solutions.

The lack of experience with cooperation between the health sector and business means that in many parts of the health and care services, there are no established routines, competence, or guidelines for such collaboration. This can lead to uncertainty and fear of making mistakes, resulting in the simplest and safest choice being to refrain from collaboration altogether.

Through better interaction between the public and private sectors, it will be possible to promote service innovation in care and support services. Preventive health work also offers major opportunities. The use of welfare technology—where users receive technological assistance—can increase security, safety, and social participation.

## Høyre will

- make the health industry a priority area by better utilizing health data and biobanks and facilitating entrepreneurship
- ensure faster realization of the benefits from digital solutions and new technology in the health and care services
- ensure that health technology can be validated and quality-checked more quickly, shortening the path to commercialization
- assess whether the current financing of health technology clusters supports the long-term work on health technology, and establish a long-term strategy for the clusters that promotes continued development
- establish a dedicated “catapult” for health technology and health innovation, linked to leading research and innovation environments
- conduct more clinical studies in Norway
- allow actors other than the Norwegian Medicines Agency (Direktoratet for medisinske produkter) to conduct health technology assessments, in order to accelerate the approval of new methods
- assess the need for financial instruments that promote the development of, and access to, new antimicrobial agents, including narrow-spectrum antimicrobials
- take a leading international role in efforts to prevent and reduce antibiotic resistance
- reduce the overall use of antibiotics in order to limit antibiotic resistance

## Biotechnology

All human beings have an inherent and inviolable dignity, regardless of characteristics, abilities, or functional level. Høyre is positive toward the potential of gene therapy and gene editing to provide better medical treatment for a wide range of diseases and conditions. Høyre will not permit gene therapy or gene editing that lacks a medical purpose and is solely aimed at enhancing human abilities or traits. Gene therapy that involves permanent alterations to hereditary material in germ cells, embryos, or fertilized eggs carries unknown implications for the development of humanity and must therefore be prohibited under the precautionary principle.

### Høyre will

- ensure a modern regulation of biotechnology, based on an ethically sound framework
- strengthen research in biotechnology

## An Inclusive Working Life

Norwegian working life is generally good, and the vast majority thrive in their jobs. Having a job is the most important source of welfare for the individual. Ensuring that as many people as possible are employed is crucial for maintaining high value creation and a sustainable welfare system for the future. Høyre therefore believes that one of the most important tasks going forward is to ensure that more people currently outside the labor market are given the opportunity to work and thereby provide for themselves and their families.

In recent years, the trend has reversed, and an increasing share of young people are now without work, education, or training. There is also a growing share of Norwegians receiving health-related benefits. This is a matter of serious concern and is occurring at the same time as the demand for labor is increasing. Especially for young people, it is essential that benefits and support measures are better designed to encourage activity rather than passivity.

### **A safe and flexible working life**

Høyre's goal is a safe, well-organized, and flexible working life where everyone who can and wants to work is given the opportunity to do so. The Norwegian labor market model, where employees and employers cooperate closely, benefits businesses, the country, and individuals alike. Høyre will facilitate a well-functioning and genuine tripartite cooperation and a high level of organization, ensuring necessary restructuring and productivity growth. For tripartite cooperation to be genuine, it must involve all main confederations of employees and employers, and their voices must be heard on equal terms.

The main rule in Norwegian working life shall be permanent full-time employment, while at the same time making provisions for part-time work where employees need it. A predictable workday contributes to a more family-friendly and inclusive labor market. While Høyre will actively work to reduce involuntary part-time employment, arrangements must also allow people to adapt working life and everyday life in ways that best suit themselves and their families. At a time when businesses face labor shortages while many stand outside the labor market, it is important to facilitate more pathways into employment.

### **Høyre will**

- maintain permanent full-time employment as the main rule and develop working time provisions that enable as many as possible to work in permanent full-time positions, particularly in the public sector
- facilitate greater use of alternative shift arrangements to provide more continuity and full-time work
- promote forward-looking labor regulations that safeguard the need for flexibility and adaptation for both employees and employers
- consider extending the current probationary period from six to twelve months where there are significant inclusion benefits and where it is in the employee's interest to extend it
- lower barriers to entering the labor market by allowing general access to temporary employment within a strict regulatory framework, and consider changes in legislation to make it possible to include more people through part-time positions
- open for partially independent positions with stronger protections than today's fully independent positions
- make it easier for young people to take evening and weekend jobs by allowing somewhat longer working hours and simplifying the rules for serving alcohol
- ensure that businesses can hire temporary workers when needed, in line with the rules that applied from 2019
- continue the approval scheme for staffing agencies and open for sole proprietorships and single employee limited companies to receive approval

- maintain the trade union deduction and consider whether other measures could increase union membership

## Inclusive working life

Today, there are too many ways out of working life, and too many remain outside. Høyre will implement an inclusion reform to create more pathways into and back to working life and ensure that support measures help more people remain in work for longer. The many different income security schemes currently provide different incentives and appear confusing to recipients. This contributes to greater insecurity and a lack of control over everyday life. The inclusion reform must make it easier to understand the benefits system and how to attempt work without losing income security.

Høyre believes that the most important measure to include more young people in working life is to ensure that more complete their education. The longer one remains outside work and education, the greater the likelihood of never entering. Høyre will therefore give particular priority to young people registered with Nav, ensure closer follow-up of young people without work or education, and invest in activities that provide work experience and skills. We must also place expectations on young people at risk of dropping out of work and education. Høyre's goal is that society must never give up on young people who are able to work.

## Høyre will

- conduct a comprehensive reform of benefits, including a review of all income security schemes, to ensure that work pays for those combining social benefits with earned income, and that the transition from benefits to employment and wages is easier
- coordinate the payment of benefits through Nav and assess whether some benefits could be granted for longer periods at a time to provide recipients with a more stable living situation
- introduce a main rule whereby people under thirty are not granted disability benefits unless there are clear grounds, and ensure that more young people instead receive income security through an employment-oriented benefit
- ensure that more young people enter an employment-oriented path rather than receiving the health-related benefit work assessment allowance (arbeidsavklaringspenger, AAP), and assess a state employment-oriented income security scheme inspired by the qualification program (kvalifiseringsprogrammet, KVP)
- conduct trials with employment-oriented disability benefits for new, young applicants
- reduce the claw back of disability benefits for those who are 100 percent disabled and have earned income, so that work pays more
- expand the activity requirement for social assistance recipients to cover everyone, initially all up to the age of forty, improve quality, and make Norwegian language training part of the activity requirement in all municipalities
- establish a commission to review all labor legislation to identify barriers to inclusion in working life
- make it easier for young people to gain work experience

- reintroduce the target that five percent of new hires in the state should be people with CV gaps or reduced functional capacity, and work for municipalities to adopt the same target
- consider introducing a follow-up responsibility for Nav in cases where a person's health has improved and the individual is willing and able to attempt work
- implement an innovative reform in Nav's labor market measures where successful pilots are scaled up and more social entrepreneurs are involved through innovative procurement and greater local control, along with more small tenders and simplified tender processes
- allow greater flexibility for when during the day labor market measures are conducted, adapted to the needs of each user and business
- prioritize wage subsidies and other labor market measures proven to be effective, to ensure more efficient and targeted use of resources
- conduct trials where users themselves can choose which type of measure and placement they wish to try, with the aim of increasing the transition to employment, and trial free user choice for selected placements
- increase the number of places and convert sheltered employment (varig tilrettelagt arbeid, VTA) and sheltered employment in ordinary working life (varig tilrettelagt arbeid i ordinært arbeidsliv, VTA-O) into a more flexible, individualized scheme called tailored employment (tilrettelagt arbeid, TA), with closer follow-up both inside and outside ordinary working life

### [Sick leave](#)

The level of sick leave in Norway is too high. Being ill is a burden both for the individual and for society. It is particularly concerning that sick leave due to mental ill-health is increasing the most, and that long-term absence remains high. Extended sick leave often leads to people become detached from working life.

Høyre believes that changes are needed in how the sick pay scheme is financed and how people on sick leave receive follow-up. By redistributing costs between employers and the state, the incentive for employers to help employees on long-term sick leave back to work can be strengthened. Today's compensation for employees on full pay up to six times the basic amount (6 G) will be maintained. More knowledge is needed about which measures are effective, including how the person on sick leave, the employer, Nav, and the physician can cooperate more effectively to ensure a quicker return to work. Høyre will therefore establish a fast-working sick leave commission to provide more knowledge about how sick leave can be reduced.

### **Høyre will**

- establish a sick leave commission to identify the causes of high sick leave levels and the obstacles to getting people back to work more quickly. As part of this work, the sick pay scheme will be evaluated, and changes will be considered in cooperation with the social partners
- improve employer incentives to reduce long-term absence, including by requiring employers to pay for part of long-term sick leave in exchange for fewer days of short-term sick leave, so that overall employer costs remain approximately the same as today

- contribute to greater competence among employers on how to follow up employees on long-term sick leave
- promote increased use of dialogue meetings between the person on sick leave, the employer, and the physician, including considering whether these should be required earlier than is the case today
- ensure that the physician's assessment of residual work capacity, and the justification for the degree of sick leave, is always included in the medical certificate
- strengthen the practice that partial sick leave should be the main rule for recipients of sick pay and other health-related benefits, to ensure that those who can work to some extent make use of their remaining work capacity
- improve the exchange of information between the health services and Nav, give greater weight to the importance of work for good health, and increase investment in programs that combine healthcare with job training and work participation
- review the remuneration system for general practitioners with a view to providing better compensation for following up patients on sick leave or for preventing sick leave
- initiate stronger prevention and follow-up of sick leave in cooperation with individual industries and sectors

## **Labor market crime**

A well-functioning and law-abiding labor market is a prerequisite for profitable businesses, secure jobs, and the financing of our shared welfare. Labor market crime undermines the very foundation of the welfare state, weakens the competitiveness of legitimate Norwegian enterprises, and erodes workers' rights. It must therefore be combated through close cooperation between public authorities and social partners.

It is important that the rules designed to prevent labor market crime do not impose unnecessary burdens on the large majority who comply with them, thereby increasing the relative advantage of those who do not. The overarching direction of regulatory work must be simplification.

## **Høyre will**

- update the toolbox in the fight against labor market crime, including through improved information sharing, stricter procurement rules, cooperation with the social partners and the establishment of more tripartite industry programs, new certification schemes, and strengthening of the centers for combating labor market crime
- publish severe and repeated violations where orders or decisions from the Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority are not complied with within set deadlines
- assess introducing a requirement for written employment contracts from the first day of work, and as a minimum, require that wage information and the most essential employment terms are provided in writing from day one
- consider a fine-based sanction system (similar to a parking fine system) for clear violations of the Working Environment Act and other labor market crime, with simplified evidentiary requirements for the Labor Inspection Authority
- abolish the 1,000-krone banknote as a unit of cash

- allow the state to take over enforcement in clear cases of wage theft, and make wage recovery for workers who are not paid by their employer part of the legal aid scheme
- assess a digital solution for employment contracts to ensure easier monitoring of workers' rights and safeguard wage claims
- explore the introduction of a dedicated Act on labor market crime, with provisions for information sharing and the conduct of joint on-site inspections
- strengthen preventive campaigns in workers' own languages, such as the Labor Inspection Authority's "Know Your Rights" campaign
- consider extending the statute of limitations for wage claims under the wage guarantee scheme in cases of bankruptcy, including whether the limitation period should be interrupted by legal action from the employee
- introduce a demerit point system/registry for legal and natural persons convicted of labor market crime, where repeated serious violations result in disqualification or loss of the right to own and operate a business
- expand the mandatory HMS card scheme to cover more vulnerable industries, strengthen the cards with biometric data and formal qualifications, and subsequently extend their validity period
- increase the use of ICT, registry data, and artificial intelligence in intelligence work at the labor market crime centers
- work to strengthen international cooperation against cross-border labor market crime

## Pensions and Age Limits

People live longer than before, and many older workers are both able and willing to remain in employment for a longer period. To preserve the sustainability of the welfare state, it will be essential in the years ahead that more people work more and stay in employment longer. Both private enterprises and public institutions must facilitate that older employees are not forced to leave work if they still have the capacity. Høyre will further develop a sustainable and predictable pension system that encourages longer participation in working life, while at the same time maintaining arrangements for those who are worn out after a long working life. Høyre will combat age discrimination in the labor market and evaluate benefits and schemes that may create barriers for businesses or employees to remain in employment.

### Høyre will

- through cooperation with the social partners, take the initiative to establish arrangements enabling more people to stay longer in work, with adjusted wages and working conditions so that both employee and employer benefit
- work to abolish the mandatory retirement requirement upon reaching special retirement ages in all occupations, in order to encourage continued employment
- review which positions should in the future be subject to special retirement ages, and what those ages should be, in consultation with the social partners
- remove the statutory age limit for employment protection at 72 years, and abolish the possibility of setting a lower company-specific age limit

- establish a scheme within the National Insurance Scheme for those who choose to retire earlier, modeled on the current private contractual early retirement scheme (AFP)
- increase the amount that self-employed persons may set aside for pension purposes before tax
- make private pension saving more rewarding by raising the annual contribution limit for individual pension savings (IPS)

## Labor immigration

Labor immigration enables both public and private employers to carry out more tasks for which there is insufficient qualified labor available in Norway. Høyre considers it positive that skilled people from abroad wish to work in Norway. It must become quicker to have qualifications recognized in Norway and to obtain a work permit. Many labor immigrants stay for a long time and become an important part of local communities. Arrangements must be made to ensure that Norwegian language training is available in cooperation with workplaces.

Some labor immigrants experience unacceptable working conditions. Høyre will strengthen the information that workers receive upon arrival and take stronger action against labor market crime.

### Høyre will

- ensure that more people have their foreign qualifications recognized more quickly
- consider establishing a joint Nordic recognition scheme for higher education
- introduce a fast-track scheme for highly skilled labor, inspired by Denmark, with pre-approval of employers who are granted simplified application procedures
- ensure that the regulatory framework makes it possible for highly skilled workers to obtain work permits in Norway, even when they lack formal qualifications
- expand the scheme for digital, teacher-led Norwegian language training so that more labor immigrants learn Norwegian

## Infrastructure that connects the country

Høyre wants to connect the country through robust infrastructure. A strong investment in transport is about building all of Norway for the future and ensuring that people can live and create jobs in every part of the country. We must shorten the distance between rural and urban areas and between different regions, make it easier to reach regional centers, and ensure that cities are easy to navigate.

The key challenge is to get the most out of every krone spent on transport. Infrastructure must be built continuously and as a whole, not in fragments. In recent years, solutions such as *Nye Veier* and competition in the railway sector have been limited or reversed. Høyre will renew efforts to pursue measures that can deliver more transport for the money. New technology should be deployed so that investments are optimized and existing infrastructure becomes safer and more efficiently used. Maintenance must be strengthened, as it is cheaper to preserve what we already have than to build new. In many places, however, new routes are needed to bring the country closer together.

Security and preparedness have become more important. Robust infrastructure is critical for effective crisis response, while at the same time infrastructure must be protected against malicious acts. It is essential that infrastructure is reviewed and secured in light of the deteriorating security situation.

The transport sector accounts for significant emissions, and new infrastructure projects often entail major encroachments on nature. The green transition in transport must accelerate. Better decisions must be made during the planning phase to minimize environmental impact, and Høyre will, among other things, ensure that reusing existing routes is more often considered. Nature and environmental values must be taken into account in the planning and development of infrastructure.

### **Høyre will**

- connect Norway with robust infrastructure by raising the level of ambition in the National Transport Plan
- develop the National Transport Plan to improve the link between planning and construction, and to get more out of every krone invested
- maintain existing infrastructure and reduce the maintenance backlog to improve traffic safety and accessibility
- ensure sufficient incentives to maximize the overall social benefits of projects, and systematically use tools such as value analyses to keep scope and costs under control
- ensure that requirements and standards in the transport sector promote the best possible use of resources
- use technology to improve transport solutions, build and maintain more effectively, and distribute traffic more evenly across periods with greater capacity
- deploy sensor technology and other novel solutions for avalanche monitoring and warning, while continuing the work on physical avalanche protection
- include the consequences of new technological trends and vulnerabilities to technological change in project assessments
- place greater emphasis on innovation in procurement within the transport sector to stimulate novel solutions and development
- adjust the publicly funded postal delivery system so that it meets the needs of different population groups, ensures preparedness, and frees up state funds; increased public-private cooperation should be considered
- ensure good mobile coverage on road networks, in tunnels, along public transport routes, and on the railways

### **Roads**

Roads are the lifeline that connects regions and parts of the country, supporting value creation in business and improving everyday life for families. Høyre will implement measures to improve the quality and safety of the transport system, ensure frequent ferry departures, and facilitate upgrades, avalanche protection, and reduced maintenance backlogs on county roads.

Høyre is committed to the Vision Zero principle for fatalities and serious injuries in traffic. Unfortunately, the trend in recent years has moved in the wrong direction. It is important to strengthen knowledge about which measures help reduce traffic deaths, while continuing to implement targeted measures to improve road safety.

### **Høyre will**

- assign more projects to Nye Veier AS, and ensure predictable framework conditions and sufficient funding
- grant the Norwegian Public Roads Administration greater flexibility in portfolio management and in operations and maintenance, so that resources are used as efficiently as possible
- be open to new public-private partnership projects
- introduce targeted and earmarked co-financing schemes for counties to reduce the maintenance backlog on county roads and improve key business routes
- ensure that the state retains maintenance responsibility for bridges built by the state, even if county or municipal roads connect on either side
- allow for longer repayment periods on toll projects to reduce the toll burden on certain projects, and explore solutions in national road projects that reduce the impact on local traffic from toll stations within municipalities
- prioritize increasing the frequency and quality of ferry services, rather than making ferries free of charge
- continue the ferry replacement scheme to allow more ferry connections to be replaced by roads
- permit autonomous vehicles to operate in regular traffic at normal speeds on selected parts of the ordinary road network once the technology makes this possible
- base road safety policy on the Vision Zero principle for fatalities and serious injuries, prioritizing awareness campaigns, divided highways, and the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure
- continue targeted cooperation with international actors to combat labor market crime and illegal cabotage, safeguard fair competition, and protect road safety on Norwegian roads
- strengthen roadside inspections, especially during winter
- use innovative technology and digital information to provide warnings—for example, about driving conditions—and to prevent accidents
- grant county authorities responsibility for road signage on county roads
- set the speed limit to 120 kilometers per hour on roads suitable for it

### **Railways**

The railway is particularly well suited for transporting people in and out of cities and for moving freight over long distances. The customer must be at the center, whether it is freight operators or passengers. Competitive tendering of passenger services has delivered better service at lower cost on the routes where it has been applied. Høyre will continue to open routes for competition and maintain *Flytoget AS*.

Punctuality and reliability on the railways remain inadequate despite increased funding. Many projects spiral out of control already in the planning phase. It is necessary to find novel solutions that deliver better results. Høyre wants the positive experiences with *Nye Veier AS* to also be applied to railway development.

### **Høyre will**

- place the customer at the center in the further development of railway services and improve service through more departures, newer trains, better punctuality, and improved customer service
- facilitate a shift of more freight transport from road to rail
- further develop the railway reform with less bureaucracy and administration, clearer division of roles and responsibilities, and by opening more passenger routes to competition
- retain Flytoget as a separate company and ensure a dedicated and efficient connection to and from Oslo Airport
- allow Nye Veier AS to build railways in addition to roads
- expand the railway network to shorten travel times, increase capacity, and improve punctuality for both freight and passengers
- place greater emphasis on preparedness in railway development by viewing the Scandinavian rail network as a whole and expanding cross-border connections
- use new technological solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from trains that currently operate on diesel

### **Coast and Ports**

There is a need to further develop ports and shipping lanes in order to maintain and strengthen competitiveness and preparedness. Høyre will work for more efficient ports so that a greater share of freight transport can be shifted from road to sea. The shipping sector must undergo a green transition and cut emissions. Høyre will provide the industry with stable and predictable framework conditions and instruments to support the transition to a net zero society.

### **Høyre will**

- strengthen maritime safety and preparedness against spills and accidents at sea
- prioritize maintenance and development of fairways and port entrances
- ensure that pilotage fees and boarding areas support the needs of business across the country
- contribute to efficient and well-functioning ports and improve infrastructure connected to the ports
- upgrade fishing ports so they can accommodate larger vessels and increased production from the ocean industries
- facilitate a shift of more freight transport from road to sea

## Aviation

Air services connect us domestically and provide access to the rest of the world. In many areas, aviation constitutes the public transport system for long-distance travel. A well-functioning air transport system is essential for an export-oriented business sector and for attracting international tourism to Norway. Høyre will work for aviation that is as safe, efficient, and environmentally friendly as possible, and for good air services across the entire country. Access to sustainable aviation fuel in Norway must be facilitated.

Høyre believes the state must set clear requirements and function as a long-term and predictable owner of Avinor. The company must be given the framework conditions necessary to carry out essential investments in airports.

### Høyre will

- facilitate commercial competition and profitable aviation through a balanced fee system and adequate infrastructure
- promote better competition on public service obligation (FOT-routes) routes to ensure people have access to reliable services at reasonable prices
- preserve the Avinor model, whereby the most profitable Avinor airports finance those with weaker economies
- provide predictable framework conditions for both Avinor and non-state-owned airports
- set stricter requirements for efficiency in Avinor, including through the introduction of new technology, greater use of competitive tendering, and clear demands for cost-effective solutions
- ensure an updated regulatory framework for drones that safeguards aviation safety and public security while also facilitating the development of unmanned aviation in Norway
- simplify the regulatory framework for recreational drone flights, with the aim of limiting regulation to what is necessary and improving understanding of the rules that remain in force
- make Norway a test country for zero-emission aircraft when the technology is ready
- improve opportunities for pilot training in Norway

## Public Transport and Urban Areas

Høyre will ensure that there is a good public transport system in all parts of the country. Needs and opportunities differ between large urban areas and sparsely populated regions. In areas with low population density, reliable connections to buses and trains are an important supplement to the private car.

In major cities, a flexible and climate-friendly public transport system, combined with safe pedestrian and cycling routes, will be essential to handle future population growth. This requires large state investments. Høyre believes that the use of state funds must be accompanied by requirements to facilitate housing, business, and welfare services near public transport hubs. Urban growth agreements are a strategic tool to encourage the use of public transport, cycling, and walking through more environmentally friendly land use policies.

As the share of older people in the population increases, tailored transport solutions will become more important, both in terms of having well-adapted public transport services and the opportunity to continue using one's own car.

### **Høyre will**

- ensure user focus in public transport to make it more attractive and accessible, and ensure universal design in publicly funded transport services
- further develop public transport services to deliver more individual solutions, such as shuttle services, tailored transport for the elderly, or facilitating carpooling through public transport apps
- ensure that all counties are included in the national TT scheme
- further develop urban growth agreements and incentive schemes that promote greater investment in public transport and more cycling and walking routes in cities and towns, as well as land use that supports environmentally friendly forms of transport
- ensure that the state meets its obligations under the urban growth agreements
- finance up to 70 percent of major public transport projects in and around the largest cities
- develop the taxi industry as an important part of public transport, and consider regulatory changes that improve services and reduce prices
- establish more commuter parking with greater capacity at railway stations and other public transport hubs
- improve how freight transport is integrated into urban planning, and consider introducing incentives based on efficiency and load factor in city centers to reduce the number of kilometers driven in urban areas

## Strong Families and a Safe Childhood

The family is the most important community in society. Sound family policies lay the foundation for a safe childhood, higher quality of life, and greater participation and inclusion in society.

Høyre believes that public services should step in where parents are unable to cope, but should primarily help families to manage on their own rather than taking over their responsibilities. Many children grow up in families with persistently low income. Høyre's goal is for these children to have the same opportunities for development, participation, and belonging as all other children. It must become easier for low-income families to understand which services are available, and public support schemes must provide greater predictability in everyday life.

The decision to have children is among the most important choices a family can make. Høyre wants to encourage more children to be born in Norway by ensuring sound household finances, a varied housing supply, good conditions for raising children, reliable health services, and secure jobs. The goal is to increase the number of children born in Norway.

### Høyre will

- reduce the number of children growing up in poverty by increasing labor market participation, making adjustments to the overall benefits low-income families receive, and strengthening predictability in the schemes
- increase child benefit and maintain it as a tax-free, universal benefit
- abolish the cash-for-care benefit (kontantstøtten) but introduce a waiting allowance for parents awaiting a kindergarten place
- increase families' ability to decide how to use parental leave by setting both the father's and mother's quotas at ten weeks for full leave, and equivalent shares for leave periods with lower wage compensation
- provide greater flexibility in the use of parental leave and allow for adjustments during the leave period, without reducing the total amount of parental benefit paid
- ensure that parents have equal time with the child after birth by extending the leave period if the child is born after the due date
- split the lump-sum birth grant into several installments to provide greater financial predictability, and consider replacing the lump-sum grant with a minimum parental benefit
- grant fathers and co-mothers independent entitlement to parental benefit
- improve coordination of municipal family services, including by sharing best practices from successful municipalities
- strengthen the family counseling service and ensure that it is available across the country
- enhance health centers' guidance for parents and their role in preventing violence and abuse against children
- make shared residence the default arrangement after parental separation and safeguard children's right to contact with both parents

- strengthen cooperation with other countries on the collection of child support from foreign parents who evade their responsibilities
- ensure a safe and predictable adoption system and strengthen guidance for adoptive parents, including considering a national center of expertise on adoption
- ensure that children conceived through surrogacy are granted full rights to both their parents upon arrival in Norway
- study the challenges faced by single parents to prevent exclusion and poor health outcomes
- reinstate the voluntary contact family scheme to provide peer support and guidance services for expectant parents of children with disabilities

## Child Welfare Services

The child welfare service protects the most vulnerable among us. Its purpose is to ensure that children and young people living in conditions that may harm their health and development receive the right help and care at the right time. At the same time, it is clear that the service has significant potential for improvement. Too many children in Norway wait too long for a foster home placement. A major challenge is that many children experience multiple relocations because appropriate support measures are not provided early enough, or because changes in the child's circumstances lead to a transfer to a completely different institution. Høyre wants the child welfare service to be of equally high quality across the country and will make use of both public and private providers to ensure that the most vulnerable children receive the best possible care.

Preventive work and cooperation between child welfare services and other support agencies must be improved. The child welfare reform placed greater responsibility on municipalities through accountability, a stronger emphasis on prevention, and the ability to implement the right measures at an early stage. Public assumption of care must always be a last resort. Høyre will impose stronger requirements on municipalities to succeed in this and follow up on those that do not. Particular emphasis will be placed on sharing best practices from municipalities that have already succeeded in this cooperation.

## Høyre will

- conduct a comprehensive review of institutional child welfare services in close dialogue with all relevant actors
- ensure that all municipalities have access to 24-hour emergency services with child welfare expertise
- require inter-municipal cooperation on child welfare for municipalities with five or fewer employees in their child welfare service, and introduce state follow-up for municipalities with persistent challenges
- include private providers of child welfare services under predictable conditions that ensure stability of services
- strengthen the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir)'s duty to assist municipalities by including specialized foster homes and by requiring the state to cover costs when municipalities purchase institutional placements in cases where Bufdir cannot provide a suitable placement
- develop and implement standardized user surveys for the child welfare service

- ensure that children's right to bring a trusted adult is realized in practice, including through better guidance material
- include the child welfare service within the mandate of the Norwegian Board of Health Supervision's Commission of Inquiry into Health and Care Services
- maintain competence requirements for employees in the child welfare service and improve continuing education opportunities for staff
- simplify information-sharing between cooperating agencies and make it more automatic through better notification routines, including improving the flow of confidential information between child welfare services, schools, educational psychology services (PPT), the police, and the specialist health service
- ensure that children under child welfare care with mental health or substance use problems receive treatment in the specialist health service
- strengthen the obligation to conduct physical and mental health assessments of children for whom public authorities assume responsibility
- assess a model where municipalities are responsible for preventive and advisory measures, while the specialist health service is responsible for children placed in child welfare institutions
- strengthen the legal rights of foster children by lowering the age for party rights to twelve and granting foster parents party rights
- ensure that full-time foster parents have rights to occupational pensions, occupational injury coverage, and sick pay from day one
- improve information on support services available to relatives of children and young people who are struggling
- review the practice of paying for children and young people to travel to their own or their parents' country of origin, to prevent them from being subjected to negative social control

## Equality

Høyre envisions a society where everyone has the same opportunities to succeed and to feel safe in everyday life, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Høyre will ensure that everyone can live free and independent lives and will be a driving force for making universal design a guiding principle in community planning. Respect for diversity is a fundamental value for Høyre.

### **Høyre will**

- make the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (likestillingsloven) gender-neutral
- strengthen efforts to address challenges particularly faced by boys and men in today's society
- raise competence on gender and sexual diversity among employees working in services for children and young people
- prioritize kindergartens, schools, and public transport in the work towards a universally designed society
- ensure that families with children with disabilities receive well-coordinated services tailored to their needs

- ensure that persons with developmental disabilities receive services that enable them to live full and meaningful lives
- adapt the scheme for activity aids for persons with disabilities so that as many as possible in the target group can benefit from it
- further develop the scheme for user-controlled personal assistance (BPA) to ensure genuine equality and participation in society for persons with disabilities who are entitled to this service
- introduce a national framework that municipalities can use to implement free user choice in BPA services

## Supporting the Consumer

Consumer protection is strong in Norway, with several robust consumer protection laws governing the purchase of goods and services. This is necessary to safeguard consumers' rights and to promote sound and informed choices. At the same time, society is constantly changing, which also gives rise to new challenges. Høyre therefore seeks to update and strengthen consumer protection.

### **Høyre will**

- facilitate good and effective out-of-court complaint mechanisms for consumers, in order to reduce the burden on the courts and help ensure that consumers who are in the right receive justice
- ensure that supervisory authorities, such as the Norwegian Consumer Authority (Forbrukertilsynet), can require companies to provide compensation or reimbursement to consumers if they violate consumer rights
- expand the debt register to cover all forms of debt, provided that privacy is safeguarded
- maintain strict regulation of the marketing and issuance of credit cards, deferred payment schemes, and consumer loans, and protect people against debt traps by placing stronger limits on the ability to profit from late payments
- make the electricity contract market more predictable and transparent for consumers, and increase supervision of the industry
- prevent children and young people from being manipulated and exploited financially in digital games
- extend the opening hours for alcohol sales in stores and at Vinmonopolet

## Culture that Enriches

Culture and the experiences it provide enrich us as human beings. Art and culture are part of our national infrastructure. The overarching goal is a free, independent, and accessible cultural life that anchors us in our shared history. Høyre recognizes the contribution of the cultural sector in preserving and developing national identity and building societal resilience against external threats.

Stable and predictable public funding of music and performing arts institutions is important for the development of the sector and for strengthening cultural offerings to audiences across the country. Høyre will help ensure that core institutional funding is not fragmented into unpredictable one-off grants and project-based support that threaten institutional autonomy and undermine core activities.

Høyre believes there is significant growth potential in the cultural industries. We need more people who earn a living from their creative work, as well as more who work with the distribution and marketing of artistic and cultural expressions. Digitalization and globalization represent new opportunities for cultural distribution. The cultural industries will also strengthen cultural tourism and contribute to destination development.

Diversity is a prerequisite for a vibrant cultural life. Greater diversity requires both more sources of funding than today and easier pathways for establishing oneself. Høyre will therefore make it more attractive to contribute private funding as an important source of income for the cultural sector. Less bureaucracy and simplification will give more people the opportunity to try.

### **Høyre will**

- work for a free and vibrant cultural life
- implement a simplification reform in the cultural sector to reduce bureaucracy, improve the division of responsibilities, simplify application processes and reporting, and strengthen transparency and democratic legitimacy
- promote quality and diversity in cultural life with stronger emphasis on culture's business potential
- stimulate infrastructure that creates "cultural clusters" and ecosystems where artists can draw on shared expertise and share costs
- consider establishing an investment mandate aimed at creative industries
- strengthen the framework conditions for public-private partnerships by reintroducing the gift reinforcement scheme and introducing a system where sponsorship contributions and gifts to culture are tax-deductible for both businesses and individuals
- amend the Foundations Act, including measures to facilitate more private capital for culture and civil society
- expand the Talent Norway initiative and Norwegian talent development to include talents from more sectors

- further develop the School of Music and Performing Arts (Kulturskolen) as an important arena for young people to encounter diverse art forms, and strengthen its role as a regional talent developer
- expand the use of apprenticeships and trainee programs at cultural institutions receiving state funding
- contribute to greater diversity in art and architecture education at public institutions
- strengthen the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Equality in their work to promote Norwegian art and culture abroad
- further develop and scale up the film incentive scheme for film and television production into an internationally competitive scheme that promotes sustainability, and transfer responsibility for it from the Ministry of Culture and Equality to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries
- safeguard nationally important cultural buildings and contribute to ensuring that major initiatives and rehabilitation projects for cultural buildings across the country can be conducted
- rehabilitate the National Theatre (Nationaltheateret) within a prudent financial framework

## Norwegian Cultural Heritage and Language

Our cultural heritage is an important part of our democratic and historical infrastructure. In today's global situation, knowledge of our own culture is more important than ever. Only we can safeguard our culture, and Høyre will strengthen these efforts.

Strong language skills are essential for understanding society, and language is our most important cultural common denominator. For Høyre, it is important to promote interest in reading and literacy as early as possible. Libraries play a vital role as meeting places and in fostering the joy of reading, and their role must be further strengthened. The Norwegian language is also crucial for understanding our Scandinavian sister languages, and together this contributes to a shared Scandinavian identity that Høyre wants to preserve.

In our digital and globalized era, there is reason to have a national debate and reach conclusions on what constitutes central cultural values, intangible cultural heritage, and works. Høyre wants to develop a Norwegian cultural canon to establish which works are essential in Norway's artistic and cultural heritage. The canon should list the most important works in architecture, visual arts, design, arts and crafts, film, literature, music, and performing arts. This will be a way to make our cultural history more visible for future generations.

### Høyre will

- develop contingency plans for safeguarding Norwegian cultural heritage in times of crisis and war
- appoint a committee to prepare a proposal for a Norwegian cultural canon, listing the most important works in Norway's artistic and cultural heritage
- promote the active transmission of folk music, folk dance, and traditional crafts, particularly small and vulnerable crafts
- support both Bokmål and Nynorsk as written standards of the Norwegian language

- strengthen Nordic language cooperation with the aim of ensuring that Scandinavian languages are understood and used when Scandinavians communicate with one another
- strengthen the role of libraries as important community actors in local societies and as contributors to a national literacy initiative, including through expanding the book purchase scheme
- strengthen the production of Norwegian fiction and non-fiction literature, help it reach a larger international audience, and review the Book Act with a view to strengthening competition in the book market
- promote cooperation on Norwegian and Nordic language models for artificial intelligence
- strengthen museums' capacity to preserve and make our national cultural heritage more accessible
- give local authorities greater influence over the spelling of local place names
- streamline documentation management in the public sector and make the most important public archives more easily accessible in digital form

## Media and Freedom of Expression

Free and independent media are among the cornerstones of democracy. Public authorities must facilitate an open and informed public conversation by ensuring sound framework conditions for the media. At a time of increasing polarization and the spread of misinformation, editor-controlled media with high levels of trust are becoming ever more important. The conditions for local media and outlets conducting investigative journalism must be improved. Economic policy instruments, such as the VAT exemption for news media, must be applied in a platform-neutral manner and support innovation and development.

NRK is an important public service broadcaster but holds a dominant position in the media landscape. Høyre will maintain the arrangement of having a commercial public service broadcaster as a supplement to NRK and ensure that NRK does not weaken the operational basis of media outlets that rely on market-based revenue.

The experience with algorithm-driven social media since their emergence shows that stronger regulation is needed. Too many young people gain access to content they should not see, and algorithms reinforce echo chambers in ways that can be harmful to social cohesion and democracy in the long term. Norway should take the lead where possible and work toward international rules where necessary.

Freedom of expression is fundamental to democracy and must be continuously protected. Høyre will safeguard media diversity and ensure sound and predictable framework conditions for the media. The Freedom of Expression Commission provided valuable insight into where freedom is currently under threat, and Høyre will implement targeted measures to strengthen freedom of expression and expand the space for public discourse.

### Høyre will

- maintain NRK as a publicly funded, advertisement-free, and universally available broadcaster, and continue the arrangement of providing support for a commercial public service broadcaster

- phase down press subsidies for nationwide newspapers, strengthen them for local media, establish schemes to make news more widely available, and prioritize funding for digitalization and a fund for investigative journalism and verification
- work for stricter international regulation of algorithm-driven social media to safeguard privacy and prevent manipulation of users
- introduce a government-mandated age limit of 15 years for social media and require Norwegian users to verify their age, for example through electronic ID
- work to level the playing field between global companies that receive advertising revenue from businesses in Norway targeting a Norwegian audience and Norwegian media companies, and ensure that such companies also pay tax in Norway
- pursue stricter regulation of, and possible bans on, digital platforms owned by companies linked to states with which Norway does not have security policy cooperation
- update the Copyright Act to harmonize the regulatory framework with the EU
- counter political and social restrictions on freedom of expression
- amend the wording of Section 185 of the Penal Code on hate speech to make the provision easier to understand, in line with recommendations from the Freedom of Expression Commission
- establish a digital assistance portal to collect and make visible the legal boundaries of freedom of expression

## Faith and Belief

The right to believe, or not to believe, must be protected in our society. Society must accommodate both the practice of religion and respect for a secular and humanist outlook. Freedom of expression applies to both religious and religion-critical speech.

Høyre will safeguard Norway's anchoring in a Christian-humanist cultural and value tradition. The Church has major cultural significance, also for non-believers in Norway. Many wish to use the Church to mark important life events, and it is a place we turn to in times of local and national crises. Høyre will ensure that this service is available throughout the country.

Religious leaders and other key figures in faith communities play an important role in preventing extremism and radicalization. It is therefore important that they possess sound knowledge of fundamental Norwegian values. Høyre will therefore ensure that more of them receive supplementary education in Norway.

## Høyre will

- maintain and finance the Church of Norway as a people's church and cultural bearer in Norwegian society
- reform the financing scheme for faith and belief communities in order to reduce the overall cost to the state budget
- continue the Church Preservation Fund to safeguard the national cultural heritage represented by our historic church buildings

- introduce incentives for faith communities outside the Church of Norway to employ religious leaders who have approved supplementary education from Norway
- facilitate better competence among religious leaders in faith and belief communities
- consider introducing standards for proper funeral practices within the funeral sector

## Indigenous Peoples and National Minorities

Through national decisions and the ratification of international conventions, Norway has committed itself to safeguarding diversity by protecting the Sami people as an Indigenous people, as well as national minorities. They all have the right to develop their language, culture, and community life. Høyre believes this diversity is an enrichment for the country and will work to promote mutual respect and solidarity among different population groups.

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has provided important insight into the consequences that the Norwegianization policy has had for individuals, families, and communities well into our own time. This historical knowledge can help us avoid repeating the same mistakes. Høyre will pursue policies that ensure equality between the majority and minority populations and will work to increase general knowledge in society about Indigenous peoples and national minorities.

### Høyre will

- preserve and further develop Sami language, culture, and community life as part of Norway's common cultural heritage
- support the institutions responsible for safeguarding minority languages such as North, South, and Lule Sami, Kven, Romani, and Romanes (nord-, sør- og lulesamisk, kvensk, romanes og romani)
- safeguard Sami cultural traditions, including joik, duodji (traditional crafts), and storytelling traditions
- preserve the culture and history of national minorities
- facilitate sustainable outfield industries in Sami areas, in cooperation with Sami communities

## Sports, Volunteering, and Outdoor Recreation

Sports and voluntary activities are important for public health, social cohesion, and inclusion. For Høyre, it is a goal that everyone should be able to participate, regardless of income, geography, or functional ability.

Sports and voluntary activities provide safe meeting places and are the glue of local communities, with participation levels in Norway among the highest in the world. This makes good sports facilities, attractive arenas for self-organized activity, and well-adapted outdoor recreation areas essential.

For many children and young people, family finances are a barrier to taking part in the leisure activities they want, with the necessary equipment. Høyre will work with municipalities and

voluntary organizations to ensure that all children and young people can take part in at least one leisure activity, and to strengthen equipment lending schemes.

Volunteering should be rewarding, without time being consumed by administration. To ensure that voluntary efforts are directed toward activity, Høyre will make it simpler and more predictable to deal with the various public support schemes, while also making the rules for private co-financing more flexible. Voluntary organizations should be free and independent, with sound and predictable framework conditions.

### **Høyre will**

- ensure, in cooperation with municipalities, that all children and young people, regardless of their parents' income, can participate in at least one leisure activity
- ensure that family finances are not a barrier to children's participation in leisure activities, by strengthening equipment lending schemes
- support the national strategy for sports facilities, including national arenas, grassroots facilities, and multi-sport arenas where appropriate, and assign counties a greater role in prioritizing the location of cost-intensive facilities
- facilitate more self-organized activity by creating innovative and forward-looking activity arenas designed for multi-use
- maintain predictable VAT compensation for new sports facilities, consider schemes to allow earlier disbursement of grant pledges, and simplify the rules for facilities invested in and/or operated through public-private partnerships
- support sports organizations' efforts for more sustainable operations by reviewing support schemes for energy efficiency and supporting large-scale initiatives such as alternatives to rubber granules on artificial turf pitches
- simplify application and reporting procedures, enhance predictability through multi-year grants, and maintain a sound and predictable VAT refund scheme for voluntary and nonprofit organizations
- improve the framework for voluntary organizations' lotteries authorized under the Gambling Act, and increase the deduction ceiling for gifts from private donors and businesses to voluntary and nonprofit organizations
- ensure that voluntary organizations, cultural activities, and sports have good access to premises and spaces, by facilitating free use of public buildings outside working hours
- maintain the exclusive rights model and Norsk Tipping's responsible gambling model, where the needs of problem gamblers are given priority
- support meeting places for gaming and digital culture, preferably in cooperation with local sports clubs, youth clubs, and other voluntary organizations
- work to attract larger international events to Norway in cooperation with international partners that meet good governance standards
- support the work of marking, signposting, and mapping hiking trails and routes in municipalities

- contribute to ensuring that youth clubs can offer activities that provide children and young people with good leisure opportunities, prevent exclusion, and strengthen social inclusion

## Immigration and Integration

High levels of immigration over time create challenges for society if integration is not successful. In such cases, the positive contributions that immigration has brought will be overshadowed by the problems. The level of immigration must be balanced against Norway's capacity to integrate those who arrive. Based on the current situation, this indicates maintaining immigration at a low level going forward, and Høyre will tighten immigration policy to reduce arrivals. At the same time, Høyre will implement stronger measures to better integrate newly arrived refugees and assist those who have been in the country for a long time to enter the workforce and participate in society.

### Asylum and Refugee Policy

Norway has a responsibility to assist people in need and to grant protection to individuals who are persecuted. Høyre's goal is to ensure that assistance reaches as many as possible. For this reason, providing aid in regions close to conflict remains Norway's most important contribution to helping people in flight. Financial support for reconstruction and assistance in the surrounding areas is far more effective than increasing the number of refugees resettled in Norway.

Today's asylum system has weaknesses. The system encourages many people to embark on long, expensive, and dangerous journeys to reach the country where they wish to apply for protection. Many of those who travel do not qualify for asylum. Høyre will work nationally and internationally to reduce the need for people to travel long distances to seek asylum, and instead to receive necessary protection in their regions. The goal is joint European solutions to refugee and migration challenges and contributing to effective border control. Norway's contribution should primarily be financial rather than admitting individuals with unresolved refugee status. It is a goal that Norway should not be perceived as easier to obtain residence in than our neighboring countries.

### Høyre will

- pursue a strict, predictable, and sustainable immigration policy
- ensure rapid and fair processing of asylum applications and swift implementation of returns
- review differences in asylum procedures between Norway and other Nordic countries and propose stricter measures where Norway applies more liberal practices
- maintain a low number of resettlement refugees in the years ahead and consider this number in relation to asylum arrivals
- prioritize, when selecting resettlement refugees, persecuted sexual minorities, complete families without a need for family reunification, and individuals with a high likelihood of successful integration

- tighten the conditions for family reunification within the framework of international conventions and human rights, including considering the introduction of a subsistence requirement for refugees applying for family reunification
- consider new requirements for participation in integration programs for persons with family residence permits, including requirements to pass oral Norwegian language tests shortly after arrival, modeled on Denmark
- as a general rule, grant only temporary residence and expect return to the area from which individuals fled, once it is safe to do so
- return asylum seekers who have resided in other safe countries before coming to Norway
- act as a driving force for agreements where people with genuine protection needs are granted residence in countries closer to their homeland
- assess a system in which Norway grants protection by financing relocation to other safe countries closer to the homeland
- strengthen return efforts, including actively working to conclude more readmission agreements to ensure effective return of persons without residence permits
- increase support for, and awareness of, voluntary return, making it easier for individuals who wish to leave Norway to build a new life in their home country
- consider stricter rules for family establishment, with the aim of preventing domestic violence, for example by introducing a waiting period for family establishment for perpetrators of violence
- review regulations and practices concerning the revocation of residence permits, with the aim that more criminal offenses should result in expulsion

## Citizenship and Permanent Residence

The Norwegian welfare state is built on trust and participation. It is a prerequisite that as many people as possible are employed, take part in local communities, and respect fundamental Norwegian values. Høyre will set the requirements for acquiring citizenship and permanent residence so that they reinforce these prerequisites. At the same time, individuals must be given good opportunities to acquire sufficient skills through integration and participation in the workforce.

It is essential that those who are to obtain Norwegian citizenship speak Norwegian and have sound knowledge of society. Permanent residence implies that one is no longer expected to return to the country of origin, even if conditions there improve. It is therefore important that acquiring permanent residence also entails supporting oneself, respecting Norwegian values, and participating in working life.

### Høyre will

- introduce a requirement to have supported oneself through employment for at least four years in order to obtain permanent residence, unless special circumstances make this unreasonable
- introduce a requirement that persons must not have debts to the public sector, including unpaid taxes or mandatory repayment claims for public benefits, in order to be granted permanent residence or citizenship

- evaluate the current language requirement of oral proficiency at B1 level and consider raising the requirement for citizenship to oral proficiency at B2 level
- strengthen the work of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) in verifying identity, and not grant citizenship or permanent residence if the applicant's identity is in doubt
- consider whether additional criminal offenses should result in the loss of citizenship

## Integration

Every individual who immigrates to Norway must be met with expectations, requirements, and opportunities. To be integrated means to be able to participate in Norwegian society through work, education, and engagement in local communities. It also entails respect for fundamental Norwegian values such as gender equality, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and the right of all people to live free and independent lives.

Høyre wants to improve the Introduction Program. The follow-up provided must be adapted to each individual's needs and potential. Most people who come to Norway are capable of finding work after a short period of time. Municipalities and local communities must provide strong integration services, in cooperation with volunteer organizations, non-profit actors, and social entrepreneurs. The most important factor for successful integration is the effort of the individual immigrant.

Norwegian society's capacity to integrate immigrants is limited. The dispersed settlement model works well but must be accompanied by better job qualification measures tailored to local needs.

## Høyre will

- raise the quality of the Introduction Program, with the aim that participants transition into permanent employment
- ensure that refugees waiting to begin the Introduction Program are offered activities that strengthen their Norwegian language skills
- strengthen training in Norwegian values and social norms, particularly relating to freedom of expression and acceptance of women and minorities
- introduce national tests in Norwegian language training to ensure quality
- require that the municipality and each refugee enter into an "integration contract" outlining rights, obligations, and expectations in Norway
- assess each refugee's skills at an early stage so that education in the Introduction Program and settlement in municipalities can be tailored, increasing the likelihood of early employment
- maintain a managed and dispersed settlement model, prioritizing municipalities with strong results in the Introduction Program. As a general rule, refugees should not be settled in areas with living condition challenges or where the immigrant share exceeds 25 percent
- work to ensure that refugees remain in their first settlement municipality, through more targeted settlement and by considering whether the period during which a

municipality can require a refugee to remain there in order to receive social benefits should be extended

- require parents making use of free core hours in kindergarten or reduced parental payments for after-school care (SFO) or kindergarten to participate in Norwegian language training or qualification programs if they are not otherwise active
- consider linking activity requirements and further Norwegian language training to additional non-universal benefits
- use wage subsidies and job programs to help immigrants enter employment more quickly, with a particular focus on immigrant women
- involve volunteer organizations and social entrepreneurs in integration work to bring more people into employment and community life more quickly
- increase the proportion of children with minority backgrounds attending kindergarten, particularly in their early years
- offer reception class students additional Norwegian language training during the summer holidays and set clear requirements to ensure that reception pupils are included in the school's activities and learning environment

## Negative Social Control and Honor-Related Crime

The strongest force working against successful integration is negative social control and honor-related crime. This deprives both young people and adults of the freedom enjoyed by others in society. Høyre will strengthen competence on these challenges across all frontline services, so that help can be provided early and those who exercise such control are guided away from it.

### Høyre will

- establish an interdisciplinary follow-up program in cooperation between schools, child welfare services, and health services for children returning after extended stays abroad
- strengthen efforts against negative social control and honor-related crime, including by enhancing competence in frontline services such as the police, child welfare services, and schools on how such practices can be detected and addressed
- step up efforts to uncover forced marriages and female genital mutilation, with the aim of preventing these practices as much as possible
- expand the scope for imposing prison sentences and consider financial sanctions on parents who abandon children abroad against their will
- implement necessary measures to prevent permanent after-school programs with overnight stays, in order to avoid segregation, parallel communities, negative social control, and radicalization
- ensure that municipalities have the legal authority to supervise and shut down activities and organizations directed at children and young people that are deemed to have a clearly negative effect on integration, within the framework of freedom of religion and freedom of assembly

# An Efficient and Citizen-Oriented Public Sector

Høyre wants an efficient and transparent public sector that places the needs of citizens, civil society, and business at the center. Public services should be characterized by competence, quality, and a strong ability to deliver. The public sector should also be a good and attractive employer. Citizens should have more influence over the services provided than they do today.

By allowing people to choose between services, have more options within each service, and provide feedback on what is delivered, their influence can be strengthened. Høyre believes the best ideas for improving public services emerge through cooperation between public, private, nonprofit, and voluntary actors. This enhances quality, innovation, and choice.

Over the past decades, Norway's public sector has grown, but satisfaction with welfare services has not increased at the same pace. Going forward, we must improve welfare services without increasing resource use to the same extent. This is critical for maintaining confidence that the public sector is efficient and that taxation corresponds to the welfare people receive. It is a political responsibility to eliminate tasks the public sector should not spend time on and to solve core tasks as well and as efficiently as possible. Høyre will work systematically across all sectors to ensure that people and resources are used wisely.

Regulations, directives, and guidelines can be complex for those affected and time-consuming for public agencies to administer. A simpler public sector will strengthen trust between citizens and authorities and streamline administration. Høyre will simplify, improve, and where possible remove regulations to create a simpler public sector for employees, businesses, and citizens.

In the years ahead, we will need more labor and resources in health and care services, defense, police, and in business growth. This makes it especially important that the rest of the public sector is run as efficiently as possible. Høyre believes the public sector can deliver better results than today. A fixed annual efficiency target will provide predictability and clear expectations.

## Høyre will

- systematically review the public sector to simplify administration and regulation, reduce costs, and combat waste
  - including establishing a new Public Administration Commission to review the state's organization with a view to making it more efficient and better equipped to handle major cross-sectoral challenges
- establish a fixed, annual efficiency target for state administration
- significantly reduce the number and scope of state subsidies, with the main rule that subsidies should be temporary
- appoint a "cut commission" to present annual proposals for reducing public spending
- use better organization, digitalization, and other forms of innovation to deliver better services while reducing the burden on employees

- ensure that labor in the public sector is used as efficiently as possible, including by enabling more flexible work schedules and redistributing tasks across occupational groups in new ways
- strengthen cost control in state construction projects, drawing on the experiences of Nye Veier and considering value analyses and other tools to keep project costs and scope under control
- use internal competition in new areas to improve cost control and increase innovation in public administration
- expand citizens' freedom of choice and influence within publicly funded services
- implement regular, comparable user surveys across all publicly funded services at the state, county, and municipal levels to develop services further in line with user needs
- make information about the quality of different services available to citizens, along with information about options where relevant
- explore the scope for requiring transparency and fair wages and working conditions among private and nonprofit providers of welfare services
- welcome trials of new approaches to service delivery, open up for experimentation in more areas, and help scale up pilot projects that show good results
- increase innovation in public procurement, emphasize sustainability, and facilitate the sharing of best practices
- emphasize leadership development, execution capacity, and skills enhancement in state employer policies
- support a greater role for local wage negotiations in the public sector, including retaining two main collective agreements in the state sector
- work for moderate executive pay in the public sector and publicly owned companies

## Digitalization

Norway has made significant progress in digitalization, but there is still great potential for further improvement. To provide citizens and businesses with better services and to make the public sector more efficient, more services must be digitalized and more digital solutions interconnected. In every context, Høyre will emphasize the protection of privacy.

A central challenge for successful digitalization in Norway is ensuring that everyone has access to digital services, regardless of individual circumstances and background. As services become digital, efficiency gains must be realized. This requires a comprehensive approach that accounts for technological, legal, and social barriers.

Artificial intelligence presents society with new challenges. Høyre believes it is crucial that Norway seizes the opportunities and participates actively in international forums for safe and innovative development, while at the same time taking the challenges seriously.

## Høyre will

- apply the "just-once" principle, such that citizens and businesses never need to submit the same information to the public sector more than once

- combat digital exclusion by providing support, alternatives, and well-designed solutions
- stimulate increased use of artificial intelligence in public administration, including through public procurement
- prioritize digitalization projects that reduce public costs while maintaining or improving service quality
- ensure that all digital platforms have interfaces that allow interaction between the state, counties, and municipalities, as well as with businesses and individuals
- establish common frameworks and solutions for data collection, sharing, and analysis in both state and municipal sectors
- strengthen digital skills both for those already in the workforce and for those outside it who want to participate
- introduce a single digital login at the highest security level that all citizens, or their guardians, can use
- ensure that all households have access to high-speed broadband—fixed, mobile, or satellite-based—and open fiber networks to competition, similar to what exists for electricity and telephone services today
- facilitate more regulatory sandboxes for testing new technologies in the public sector
- uphold the principle that public data should be open whenever possible but restricted whenever necessary. Privacy must be respected and security prioritized
- establish a Council for Artificial Intelligence to assess ethical issues, consider opportunities and threats from technology in a long-term perspective, and identify needs for responsible use, modeled after the Biotechnology Council
- assess the consequences of generative artificial intelligence for copyright, media, culture, democracy, and freedom of expression, and explore measures to address them

## Thriving Local Communities Across the Country

Local welfare services matter deeply to people. They are the schools for our children, home care for the elderly, and building permits for entrepreneurs—along with much more. Local government should be close to the citizens and is well placed to assess their interests and concerns, weigh different considerations, and allocate resources effectively.

Municipalities and counties have different conditions for delivering good services. For Høyre, the most important thing is that citizens everywhere in the country receive high-quality welfare services. Municipalities and counties differ and must shape their services accordingly. The state should focus more on ensuring quality outcomes, rather than micromanaging how services are organized. Too many detailed state requirements reduce the ability of municipalities to adapt services to local needs. Excessive central control, objections in planning processes, and national directives increase bureaucracy and weaken local self-

government. Greater freedom and simplification are crucial to enabling municipalities to deliver better services in the years to come.

Municipalities and counties must be equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow and provide high-quality services to their residents. Many small municipalities find their competence environments eroding and struggle to deliver their statutory services adequately. Høyre wants more municipalities to choose voluntary mergers and will support such processes.

### **Høyre will**

- design a municipal revenue system that ensures equitable services, promotes efficient resource use and local value creation, encourages cooperation with public and private actors, and guarantees that more local value creation remains in the municipalities
- review state directives on how services must be delivered, with the aim of less micromanagement and greater flexibility to adapt services to local needs
- pilot “free municipalities,” exempted from certain laws, regulations, or other provisions, to give municipalities greater freedom in tailoring services locally
- strengthen municipalities’ and counties’ general revenues while reducing earmarked funds and application-based grants
- review the financing of resource-intensive care services to achieve more predictability for municipalities and more equal services for users across the country
- reward efficiency measures such as municipal mergers and resource-saving cooperation in the revenue system
- ensure sufficient financial compensation for municipalities and counties when they assume responsibility for state tasks
- make staffing norms more flexible, allowing municipalities to allocate extra resources where needed to ensure equal services for all
- require county governors, when coordinating objections, to prioritize which carry the most weight and to give due consideration to local decisions
- require the state to cover all or part of processing fees if county governors fail to resolve appeals within deadlines
- strengthen the advisory role of overarching planning authorities
- review and simplify the legal basis for objections, with the clear goal of raising the threshold for objections and ensuring more local self-determination
- reduce and harmonize sector-specific legislation to simplify planning, limit and streamline the objection process, and strengthen local self-government
- introduce a separate deadline for county governors to issue a complete deficiency notice in appeal processes
- reduce the county governor’s ability to object in cases without national significance, and reduce counties’ ability to object in local cases without regional significance
- allow municipalities to decide for themselves whether to permit Sunday shopping, in whole or in part, and remove size-based restrictions on stores

- facilitate larger municipalities with stronger professional environments, better able to deliver high-quality services and take over more responsibilities from the state and counties
- encourage more municipalities to merge voluntarily to ensure better services for citizens
- save costs and simplify services by moving to two tiers of government in Norway, thereby abolishing the county level
- allow the state to mandate inter-municipal cooperation where municipalities consistently fail to deliver adequate services
- cooperate with municipalities on measures to keep local taxes, fees, and charges low
- expand mobile public services, modeled on mobile passport offices
- allow longer depreciation periods for water and sewage infrastructure and take measures to achieve more efficient organization, less water leakage, better treatment, and lower user fees
- make local authority the guiding principle in local land-use planning, with trade-offs primarily resolved through local democracy
- strengthen property rights, simplify the planning system, and give landowners more influence over the management and use of land, including in protected areas, provided conservation values are not compromised
- time-limit municipalities' ability to act against measures carried out in violation of the Planning and Building Act
- amend the Planning and Building Act, regulations, and guidelines to prioritize the need for increased housing construction, business activity, and jobs

## Cities

Norwegian cities are growing because people want to live there. Businesses gain access to more competence, and people get more employers to choose from, as well as access to a broad range of entertainment. It is positive that we have growing cities in Norway, and that over time we have managed to combine development with the preservation of green qualities. Strong, attractive cities are a benefit for the whole country.

At the same time, our cities face challenges related to the environment, transport, housing, and living conditions. Høyre wants to develop more targeted solutions to meet these challenges better than today. This requires measures that cut across a wide range of sectors. Høyre believes that these tasks are easier to solve when the same authority has responsibility for as much as possible.

## Høyre will

- take a comprehensive approach to challenges related to living conditions and particularly implement measures aimed at families to ensure better social mobility, in cooperation with voluntary organizations
- further develop the area-based initiatives with greater emphasis on labor market participation and social programs

- work together with the cities on measures that can lead to more housing construction, and open for local pilot projects where state regulations are an obstacle
- continue city growth agreements as an instrument for better coordinated transport and land use planning between the state, county, and municipality
- revise and strengthen the system of city growth agreements by allowing stronger emphasis on local conditions
- carry out more pilot projects where large municipalities take over responsibility for county or state tasks

## Rural districts

Opportunities for achieving more positive development in rural districts are greater than ever. The resources found there—such as fish, farmland, forests, minerals, energy, and natural experiences—are in higher demand worldwide than before. At the same time, many jobs have become less location-bound and can now be performed virtually anywhere with internet access.

The biggest challenge is the shortage of labor. The demographics in many municipalities, with few births and many elderly people, create difficulties. Norway's defense depends on people living throughout the country. In recent years, tax changes have hit business investments in rural areas hard. Høyre will ensure that the framework conditions for investing in jobs in rural districts are predictable, stable, and favorable.

The most important measure to counter centralization toward the largest cities is to strengthen the smaller towns. Høyre will reinforce regional centers, which concentrate private and public services for their surrounding areas. The precondition for achieving this is good transport solutions combined with smart land-use development, where housing and services are built from the inside out, creating qualities that enhance attractiveness and the desire to live there.

## Høyre will

- further develop digital public services so that the need to appear in person at a public office is reduced
- use technological solutions and decentralization of suitable health services to reduce the number of patient travels and provide services closer to the patient
- continue differentiated employer contributions
- recognize the differences between municipalities and allow shoreline and outfield management that permits more development in areas with low development pressure
- ensure the greatest possible local ripple effects from value creation based on the use of local natural resources
- relocate government jobs out of the capital area and establish more government jobs that are location-independent
- offer more government employees digital workplaces, enabling recruitment across the country

- encourage municipalities to provide “Jobs for Two” concepts, meaning partner job opportunities for newcomers
- further develop assisted living facilities for the elderly near service centers in rural districts, which can be built by both public and private actors

## Housing and Development

In Norway, there is a strong tradition of homeownership, and the ownership democracy is one of the cornerstones of Norwegian society. Owning one's own home provides greater financial security and predictability for families. At the same time, it has become more difficult for young people to enter the housing market, especially in high-pressure areas. The main reason housing prices have risen so much over time is that too few homes are being built, and that building homes has become too expensive due to many cost-driving requirements.

Høyre wants to make it easier to build more homes faster and at a lower cost. Good availability of construction-ready lots is a prerequisite for this. Simplifications in the Planning and Building Act and in zoning processes, faster case processing, modernization of technical regulations, as well as digitalization and the use of artificial intelligence, are other measures that can help build more homes and reduce construction costs. Norway also needs more properties managed and owned by professional actors with a long-term perspective on management.

In the coming years, the number of elderly people who may need new housing or living arrangements will increase. With enough adapted housing, more elderly can remain at home longer. The elderly may need support for health challenges or new forms of housing communities and shared living arrangements. It is important that building regulations and public support schemes are adjusted to make it possible to build enough adapted housing.

It is a political responsibility to help disadvantaged groups enter the housing market. The most important tool for this is the Norwegian State Housing Bank (Husbanken), which plays a particularly important role as a social housing actor.

### Høyre will

- implement a simplification program for the housing sector, in which laws and regulations are reviewed and expanded trial and exemption schemes are used to increase supply and reduce prices
- increase the pace of digitalization in building permit processing and planning work, including pilot projects for the use of artificial intelligence
- introduce a specific deadline for municipalities to issue a complete deficiency notice in connection with building application processing
- ensure that municipal deadline breaches lead to significant reductions in fees for processing building applications and private zoning proposals; in the case of serious deadline breaches, the fee requirement should be waived entirely
- facilitate more housing purchase models to make it easier to enter the housing market
- promote increased public-private cooperation in developing adapted housing for the elderly
- promote good architecture and urban planning in cooperation with municipalities

- ensure that the lending regulations provide flexibility for first-time buyers and those who have repayment capacity but lack sufficient equity
- carry out pilot projects to help low-income groups enter the housing market through an alternative start-up loan in Husbanken
- increase flexibility and reduce detailed regulation in Husbanken's framework, giving municipalities and Husbanken's regional offices more freedom to find good solutions adapted to local needs
- introduce a grant scheme for rental housing to help more disadvantaged people enter the housing market, make it easier to access housing in settlement work, and test new housing models for people with special housing needs
- give people with developmental disabilities or physical disabilities greater opportunities to own their own home by ensuring that housing grants go directly to the individual or to private actors, such as housing cooperatives, when these build on behalf of relatives
- increase both the annual and the total savings limits for the housing savings scheme for young people (BSU)
- extend the maximum rental period for housing cooperative apartments from three to five years
- introduce declining-balance depreciation for rental housing

## Elections and Democracy

Norway has one of the most well-developed democracies in the world. High voter turnout and trust in election results and institutions are crucial for democracy to survive. It is important in itself that as many voters as possible feel their voice is heard and that they can influence the society they live in. Høyre will therefore ensure greater voter influence in elections, so that voters can truly be heard on the composition of all elected bodies.

Countries hostile to liberal democracy encourage polarization and division. Democracy is also weakened from within in countries where it was previously assumed to be stable. False information is once again on the rise, threatening the basis for informed public opinion and free elections. All political parties, opinion leaders, and the media share a responsibility to ensure open and respectful debate.

Norwegian elections are also exposed to influence from authoritarian actors. Høyre will work both nationally and with our allies to prevent election interference from taking place, and to minimize the consequences if it occurs. Artificial intelligence gives malicious actors new opportunities, and it is essential that this risk is contained.

### **Høyre will**

- give voters greater opportunity to influence the composition of the Storting in parliamentary elections, for example by allowing them to mark the candidates on the list they most want to see elected
- safeguard the constitutional monarchy as a form of government

- protect elections in Norway from foreign interference by strengthening election processes and by enhancing the authorities' efforts to prevent and uncover potential influence operations
- establish mechanisms to address the risks artificial intelligence poses for the conduct of elections and democratic discourse
- increase knowledge about the threat authoritarian forces may pose to our society, and improve the ability to recognize false information
- strengthen research on attitudes toward democracy and radicalization, with a view to identifying causal links and effective measures to safeguard democracy
- strengthen teaching in schools that promotes democratic resilience, including the ability to distinguish between true and false information and awareness that malicious actors seek to influence with the aim of undermining Norwegian democracy
- strengthen education in democracy and citizenship, for example by ensuring that more school students from across the country have the opportunity to visit former prison and concentration camps