

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

# Norway

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report



Hertie School



Institut für  
Auslandsbeziehungen

## 1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Norway is a prosperous country in Northern Europe with a small population of 5.3 million. It is a founding member of NATO, the Nordic Council, and the United Nations. Despite opting out of EU membership in 1994, its economy is still an important part of the European Economic Area (EEA). On a per-capita basis, Norway has the sixth largest income in the world according to the World Bank. The country regularly tops many international rankings. For instance, Norway is the first country by human development index in the world since 2009 (HDR, 2020). It performs very well in many other measures of well-being, like the Better Life Index and the Democracy Index, on both occupying the first position in 2020 (OECD, 2020c). In terms of hard power and world trade, Norway ranked lower, 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2019, respectively (Table 1). While its diplomatic influence might not be as extensive (35<sup>th</sup> worldwide), its soft power is growing in tandem with its positive international reputation. Over the past few years, it rose to the ranks of great powers, surpassing even Spain in 2019 (Portland, 2019). Anecdotally known as the happiest country in the world with high life standard, quality education, and proven government effectiveness, Norway has a strong base for its external action.

Given the size of the population and the volume of economy, Norway is a small country, typically overshadowed by its neighbors, in particular Sweden. However, as Nye suggested, some countries wield influence that is not a by-product of their hard or world trade power, but because they “define their national interest to include attractive causes such as (...) aid and peacemaking” (Nye, 2005, p. 9). Norway is one such country. It has made multiple endeavors in brokering for world peace which in turn enhanced its soft power.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Country’s geopolitical and geoeconomic position**

	2019	% change since 2015
Population (millions) / ranking	5.32 / 118 <sup>th</sup>	5.16 / 3%
GDP ranking	30 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
GDP per capita	€67,370 / 6 <sup>th</sup>	0.6
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.60 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0
Education economy (%GDP)	5.40 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.10
R&D economy (%GDP)	2.22	0.12
Media economy (%GDP)	0.10 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.10

Sources: Eurostat, World Bank

<sup>1</sup> Presently, Norway is involved in peacemaking efforts in these countries: Mozambique, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Colombia, the Philippines, Israel-Palestine, Syria, Myanmar, Somalia, Sri Lanka, South Sudan (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

	2019	% change since 2015	
Geopolitical position			
Hard power rank	31 <sup>st</sup> / 0.5277 <sup>(2020)</sup>	-	-
World trade rank (US \$ million)	33 <sup>rd</sup> / 293,918	34 <sup>th</sup> / 269,094	↑
Soft power rank	12 <sup>th</sup> / 71.07	18 <sup>th</sup> / 57.96	↑
Diplomacy rank	35 <sup>th</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup> <sup>(2016)</sup>	↓

Norway spends a large share of national output on education, 5.4 % of GDP in 2018. In 2017, among OECD countries, Norway reported the highest education spending as a percentage of GDP and placed fifth worldwide in relation to its expenditure on higher education (OECD, 2020b). Transfers from the government towards education account for as much as 11 % of all expenses (Table 2). R&D funding also takes up a large portion of total spending, especially since most of publicly funded R&D is performed by higher education institutions (OECD, 2020a). Although it is not a member of the EU, Norway’s R&D intensity was greater than the EU28 average of 2.14% of GDP (Table 1), but still lags slightly behind its Nordic neighbors (Nordic Statistics, 2020a).

**Table 2: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays**

	2019	% change since 2015
Culture	1.30 <sup>(2018)</sup>	0
Education	11 <sup>(2018)</sup>	- 0.10
R & D	1.98	0.09
Media	0.30	0

Source: Eurostat

## 2. External cultural policy: an overview

The Norwegian ECP model has no real equivalent among other countries. It does not have a dedicated promotional institution identical to British Council or Swedish Institute, for example. A defining feature is that public authorities have a lot of influence in the culture sector, like supporting a range of cultural activities (Mangset & Kleppe, 2016). Norway follows a government-centered approach in which the state is virtually the sole supporter of research, education, and culture (SGI, 2020). The latest White Paper on the Norwegian Cultural Policy, “The Power of Culture” 2018–2019, describes the arts and culture sectors as “prerequisites for an educated and enlightened public (...) and an investment in democracy” (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2019). One of the objectives of the strategy is greater international impact and intercultural understanding. In this respect, internationalization has several purposes. Cultural exchange, apart from being a goal in itself, is perceived as a pathway to further professionalization of the Norwegian cultural sector. Furthermore, a stronger international engagement would boost the domestic economy and strengthen its creative industries and other exports. Last but not least, the paper states that external cultural activities can build

Norway's reputation globally and help disseminate Norwegian values and interests (ibid.). In that respect, three overarching themes can be identified in Norwegian ECP: foreign, cultural, and most importantly, trade policy (Berge, 2017).

Commercial activities might not be as explicit since they fall into the larger pattern of promoting Norway as “*innovative culture nation*” both at home and abroad (ibid.). Similar to Sweden, the external cultural policy is at the same time a cultivation of a ‘Norwegian brand’. According to Berge (2017), this cultivation is about establishing strong brands that have recourse to the country-of-origin story. Norway's success in the smartphone apps industry is partly a result of its international image as a stable and trustworthy country. The Norwegian design ‘icons’ share the country's reputation of being ‘cool’ and modern, and yet natural, pure, and low-key. The Norwegianness is in turn reflected in its arts and culture, like for example the now famous Snøhetta's Opera House in Oslo or the Munch Museum (Berge, 2017, 2018). Norway does not shy away from extracting value from its old cultural icons or even clichés. In 2005 the Norwegian government for example celebrated the Ibsen Year with over 8,000 events in 83 countries. Three years later it established the International Ibsen Award (NOK 2,5 million or \$300,000), “world's most prestigious theatre award” (Nationaltheatret, n.d.). Also, Edward Munch and his iconic *The Scream*, are marketed as among the best reasons to experience Norway (VisitNorway, n.d.).

Over the past couple of years Norway has pursued external cultural policy more intensively. In 2004, the MFA recognized the fact that still too little was known about Norway and created a commission (Omdømmeutvalg) to analyse and work on the country's international profile. The commission set the objective to promote Norway's reputation as an innovative, responsible and culture-oriented nation (Norwegian Government, 2006). From that base was derived the mentioned “Brand Norway”. Many other organizations got involved in projecting the national brand: Visit Norway, Innovation Norway, and NORAD, for example have all developed similar visual identities and mission statements. Messages about Norway are often related to its natural wonders and wilderness but also its hi-tech modern design. The country, which is only 100 years young, is already punching above its weight internationally as a trustworthy peace-broker and generous aid-donor (Bound, Briggs, Holden, & Jones, 2007). The results of its low-key diplomacy might not be immediately evident or recognized, but Norway is in it for the long run.

### 3. Fields of ECP

#### 3.1. Culture and the arts

**Table 3: Key ECP Statistics for Country**

	<b>2019</b>
Number of countries with ECP activities	~ 79
Total number of institutions abroad	-
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	~ 270
Government financial support (€ million)	-
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€ million)	-
Comparative ECP ranking	minor

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has the responsibility for “the presentation of and information about Norwegian culture abroad” (Berge, 2017). In fulfilling this goal, the MFA cooperates with many other domestic organizations, including for example the Arts Council Norway or the Directorate for Cultural Heritage (ibid.). The core of external cultural action is designed by the MFA, Section for Cultural Affairs. In 2015, 11 staff were employed there (ibid.). In addition, Norwegian diplomatic mission personnel abroad facilitate cultural cooperation with other countries. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), operating under the MFA, supports the cultural sector in developing countries as part of its mandate to strengthen democracy and human rights<sup>2</sup> (Norwegian Government, 2015). The Ministry of Culture is equally involved in ECP, including multilateral and Nordic cultural cooperation.

The Ministry of Culture provides funding for several cultural institutions which are at the core of Norwegian external cultural activity. They function as advisory agencies to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although a significant part of their work is international cultural exchange, an overarching goal is to support Norwegian interests abroad, and more precisely, commercial interests. This claim is supported by the previous White Paper report from 2013, where culture is identified as industry which “can contribute to export and value creation abroad” (Berge, 2017; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). Since 2017, these organizations gather under the umbrella Norwegian Arts Abroad (NAA). The NAA facilitates the promotion of Norway through managing grants and programs of ‘artistic, commerce, and export-oriented nature’ (NORLA, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> The three main focus areas are cultural rights, freedom of expression, and professionalization of the cultural sector, (Norwegian Government, 2015).

The advisory organizations are:

- 1) Music Norway
- 2) NORLA (Norwegian literature abroad)
- 3) Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA)
- 4) Norwegian Film Institute (NFI)
- 5) Performing Arts Hub Norway (PAHN)
- 6) Norwegian Crafts
- 7) Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture

**Music Norway** is Norwegian music industry's export facilitator and promotional organization. It operates as an arm's length NGO, sponsored through the Ministry of Culture and the MFA. The Ministry of Culture supports the greater part of its activities (€2.5 million in 2019) while the MFA offers grants (€77,600 in 2019) (Music Norway, 2020) (NAA, n.d.).

**NORLA**, the export body for Norwegian literature, was founded in 1978. It disseminates information about Norwegian literature and Norwegian authors and provides translation subsidies to publishers of Norwegian literature abroad, as well as various travel grants. The translation funding is at around €600,000. Annually, NORLA provides subsidies for more than 400 translations, into about 50 languages (NORLA, 2019). In 2019, Norway was the guest of honor at the renowned Frankfurt Book Fair (*Frankfurter Buchmesse*)<sup>3</sup>. The project was one of the largest cultural initiatives abroad for that year, worth around NOK 52 million (€5.3 million) and with the government support of NOK 30 million (€3 million). Around 26 percent of the financing came from private funding and foundations. The goals set out by NORLA were to create or renew interest in Norwegian literature and present Norway as "a modern cultural nation" (NORLA, 2019). NORLA also cooperates with European literature offices, and especially with the Nordic region through NordLit, an organization of the literature centers in the Nordic countries.

**The Office of Contemporary Art Norway (OCA)** is a foundation established by the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs in 2001. The main objective of OCA is to develop international cooperation in contemporary arts and support Norwegian artists in their activities around the world. OCA is responsible for Norway's contribution to the visual arts exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. For the 2022 Venice Biennale edition, Sámi<sup>4</sup> artists will have a chance to transform the Nordic pavilion into a national Sámi pavilion - a historic first for the indigenous community (Breivik, 2020). Further, the OCA coordinates residences and visitor programs for international artists, cultural curators and producers in Norway. For their Norwegian counterparts, OCA offers support in form of grants. In 2019, €180,000 were provided for travel support to 99 projects; additional €309,000 went to promotion of 84 Norwegian artists at international fairs and exhibitions. OCA (six residencies abroad) currently has agreements with residencies in USA, Germany, Belgium, Brazil, and India (OCA, 2020).

**The Norwegian Film Institute (NFI)** is an administrative body under the Ministry of Culture, tasked with the internationalization of Norwegian audiovisual industry (films, series, games) and establishing networks and opportunities for the Norwegian creators abroad. The

<sup>3</sup> Frankfurt Book Fair is one of the most important events of its kind. It attracts around 300 000 visitors and 7000 exhibitors from around 100 countries annually (NORLA, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> The Sámi are an indigenous Finno-Ugric people inhabiting Sápmi (northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula in Russia).

Norwegian film production is very dependent on state subsidies, for example, 85% of the funding was channeled through the NFI in 2014 (Bjerkeland, 2015). The NFI supports Norwegian auteurs and video game creators in a global market either financially or through consulting services: grants for international training and promotion of Norwegian films on international venues were each supported with around €250,000 (NFI, 2019). The focus on increasing export value of Norwegian audiovisual products has been set out in a white paper in 2015 (A Film Policy for the Future). The export value of the Norwegian cinema in 2015 was more than €9 million (NFI, 2017). Other grants include the Incentive Scheme, introduced in 2016 (2017 budget NOK 55 million), which aims to increase the number of international productions in Norway and so promote Norwegian culture, history, and nature, but also contribute to the capacity development in the domestic film industry (NFI, n.d.).

**Performing Arts Hub Norway (PAHN)** is another state-subsidized agency which supports the performing arts sector in Norway. PAHN works closely with the Ministry of Culture, the Norwegian Arts Council, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. PAHN is for example the distributor of the travel grants issued by the MFA to support international artistic exchange. In 2019, around €223,300 were available for this purpose. The most visited countries were the Czech Republic, Germany, France, and Denmark (PAHN, 2020).

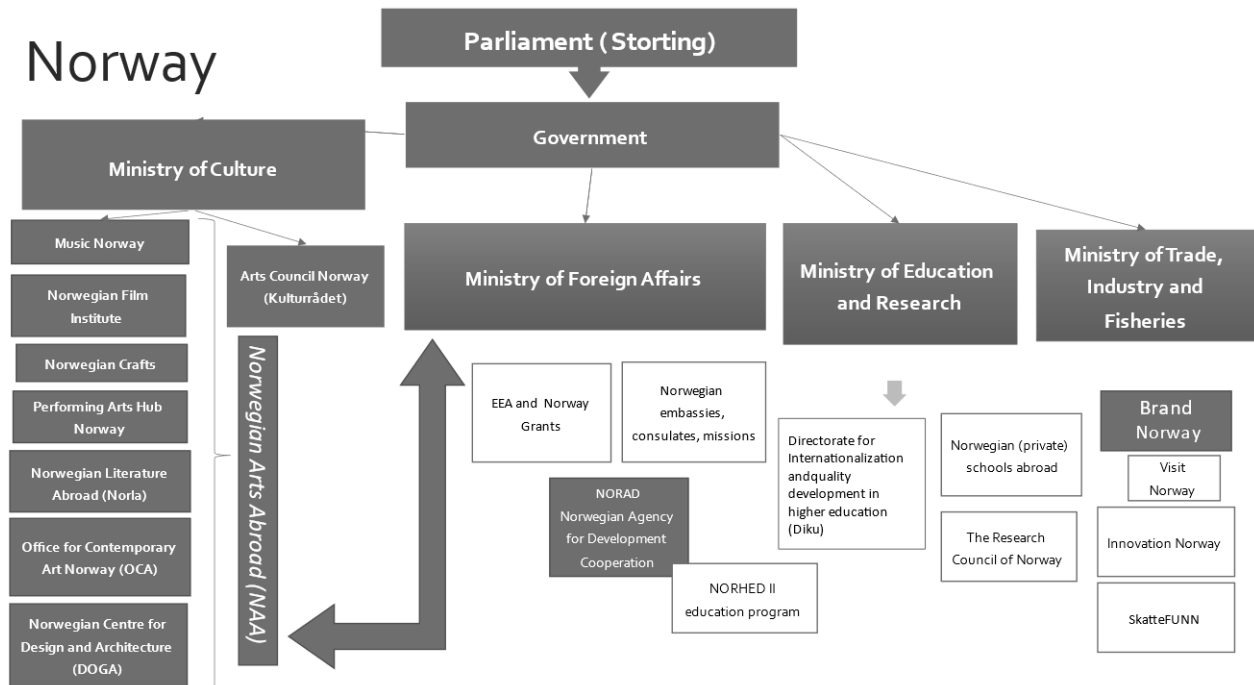
**Norwegian Crafts** is a non-profit organization founded by the Norwegian Association for Arts and Crafts in 2012, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 2019 budget was around €720,000, half of which was covered by the Ministry of Culture. The nonprofit has for a principal aim to strengthen the international position of contemporary crafts from Norway and increase demand for its products. In that respect it advises the MFA and foreign missions on all issues related to contemporary crafts. An integral part of its activities is also international networking. Norwegian Crafts offers grants and support schemes for Norway-based artists and professionals, and visitor programs for international guests. In 2019, six such programs hosted 26 artists from 12 countries (Norwegian Crafts, 2020).

**Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture (DOGA)** is another state-sponsored foundation active in the fields of design, architecture, and urban development. DOGA was established in 2014 with the merger of the Norwegian Form and the Norwegian Design Council. Besides its advisory role to the MFA, it administers travel grants for designers and architects. In collaboration with Innovation Norway<sup>5</sup>, DOGA helps strengthen the brands-driven design industry and increase the export rate. Following in the steps of its already-established Swedish and Danish neighbours, Norway is seeking to take on a more substantial role in the international design market (Menon Economics, 2019).

---

<sup>5</sup> Innovation Norway is a state-owned company focusing on innovation and development of Norwegian enterprises.

**Figure 1: Institutional map of country's ECP**



The Arts Council Norway is the most important arm's length institution in the field of culture. Apart from focusing on the development of national culture, it has the responsibility to facilitate international cooperation. Arts Council is involved in several networks and projects at the European and multilateral levels, including the EU's *Creative Europe (2014-2020)*, the EEA grants<sup>6</sup>, the Norwegian-Icelandic cultural cooperation, the Baltic Region Heritage Committee, and other international initiatives.

An important part of Norway's ECP activities is regional cooperation, primarily through the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Council. The joint work involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Nordic co-operation aims to strengthen regional interests, and with a number of instruments including the Nordic Culture Fund. The fund has been active since 1966, focusing on the allocation of grants. The budget of approximately DKK 37 million (around €5 million) in 2019 was distributed to support 320 cultural projects (Nordic Culture Fund, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> EEA grants support cultural exchange with Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.



**Table 4: Key statistics on culture and the arts**

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	79 <sup>7</sup>	-
Number of organisations	7 <sup>8</sup>	7
Number of FTE staff	~ 130	-
Number of artists in exchange programmes	-	-
Budget (€ million)	at least 9	-
Government financial support (€ million)	-	-

### 3.2. Language

Norwegian is Norway's official national language along with Northern Sami, and the language policy is administered by the Ministry of Culture and the Language Council (*Språkrådet*). The promotion of the Norwegian language abroad is not one of the country's core objectives. One reason could be that Norwegian is a casualty of different language policies and standards. Norway has a long history of occupation by its neighboring countries, Denmark and Sweden. As a result, today there are two written norms of Norwegian, *bokmål*, based on written Danish, and *nynorsk*, created as a combination of Norwegian regional dialects. In addition, the Sami languages used by the indigenous peoples are completely different from Norwegian. The great majority of Norwegians are proficient in English and this is often their language of choice in business and higher education settings. The fairly complex situation explains why the language promotion has not been one of the priorities. The focus seems to be instead on strengthening the common national language which would unify the increasingly multiethnic society, as evidenced in the 2005 national language strategy.<sup>9</sup> It states that: "[t]he overall goal of a language preservation policy is that Norwegian shall be the natural language choice in all situations where it is unnecessary to use a foreign language" (qtd. in Sanden, 2020).

### 3.3. Primary and secondary education

Similar to language, Norway is not well-represented in education abroad. Nonetheless, there are a small number of Norwegian private schools abroad. These independent schools, which can apply for government funds are, for instance, the secondary schools in Costa Blanca, Gran Canaria and Ciudad Quesada (Spain) (vilbli.no, n.d.). In addition, there are many organizations active in student exchange, both outgoing and incoming. Norwegian students may apply for stipends from the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (*Lånekassen*). Based on an

<sup>7</sup> Based on the Lowy Diplomacy Index.

<sup>8</sup> Seven advisory organisations to the MFA: Music Norway, NORLA (Norwegian literature abroad), Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA), Norwegian Film Institute (NFI), Performing Arts Hub Norway (PAHN), Norwegian Crafts, Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture.

<sup>9</sup> The Strategy has been aptly named "Norwegian at full speed! Norwegian as the national language in the age of globalisation".

agreement between the Nordic countries, young Nordic citizens which move to another Nordic country have the same access and rights to upper secondary education as their local peers. For young Norwegians who took Russian as a foreign language, there is an option of continuing education at the upper secondary Norwegian-Russian school in Murmansk.

### 3.4. Tertiary education and science

International cooperation in higher education is primarily administered by the Ministry of Education and Research and its subsidiary agency Diku – the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education. The agency has offices in Bergen, Tromsø, and Brussels with around 130 employees. Its aim is to strengthen the quality of Norwegian education and support internationalization efforts (Diku, n.d.).

Norway stands out among other Nordic countries with the number of students abroad, a total of 14,480 in 2019, very close to Sweden (15,420 students) (Nordic Statistics, 2020b). This makes around 6 per cent of the total student body, and the share of Norwegian students who have studied abroad as part of their degree is 16 per cent. However, it should be noted that Norwegian students predominantly opt for countries where the language of instruction are Nordic languages or English. Fewer students want to obtain their degrees in Germany or France for example (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019). The number of incoming students has increased substantially from 9731 in 2015 to 12216 in 2018 (UIS, 2020). Traditionally, Norway did not attract many foreign students, but this changed since the early 2000s<sup>10</sup>. Most students come from China, Sweden and Germany, followed by Denmark and Syria (Diku, 2020). Russia too used to be a large sender, but the number of Russian students nearly halved in past years. An upward trend can be identified in the share of international PhD students: from 27.5% in 2010 to 40% in 2020 (Nordisk institutt for studier av innovasjon, 2021).

International student mobility is high on the list of Norwegian ECP priorities. Besides being an obvious imperative in the knowledge economy, mobility is perceived as a tool for improving the quality of Norwegian educational institutions, or “to add competence to the country which cannot be obtained within the Norwegian education system, or which is scarce in Norway” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2009). In other words, the emphasis is on “internationalization at home”, or quality development for own education system (Norwegian Government, 2008). As far as the university sector is concerned, this strategy has yielded results. As many as 5 Norwegian universities feature on the 2019 THE ranking of world universities: University of Oslo, University of Bergen, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), the Arctic University of Norway, Norwegian University of Life Sciences. The University of Tromsø is not on the list, but it stands out as the world’s northernmost university. Next to it are the Norwegian Polar Institute, the Norwegian Institute of Marine Research, and the Polar Environmental Centre, which situate Tromsø as an important international center for Arctic research.

In terms of geographic foci, European cooperation has always been a top priority, and the program ERASMUS+ <sup>11</sup> is particularly important. With its Nordic and Baltic neighbors, Norway cooperates within the NORDPLUS program. A separate strategy for cooperation with

---

<sup>10</sup> The increase is partly a result of intensive labor and refugee migration.

<sup>11</sup> Norway joined the ERASMUS program in 1989.

North America exists and the North American Partnership Program. Over the past few years, more attention has been given to countries from the so-called BRICS block (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and Japan. There are also additional programs of collaboration with Russia (Wiers-Jenssen, 2019).

In the field of science and research particularly important actors are the Research Council of Norway (*Forskningsrådet*), Innovation Norway, and *Skattefunn* (an R&D tax incentive scheme, one of the largest sources of innovation support funding). Innovation Norway is an agency under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Fisheries, with a funding capacity of nearly €1 billion in 2018. The Research Council Norway is overseen by the Ministry of Education and Research. (Ekrem, 2019). It invests around €40 million in internationalization efforts (Forskningsrådet, 2020).

Participation in the EU framework programs like Horizon2020 is one of the priorities for Norwegian research. As an ‘associated’ member through the EEA agreement, Norway has limited capacity to influence the European policy but it does benefit greatly from its various programs. It is the second in a group of sixteen based on the amount of funding received from H2020 (€1.55 billion) (EC, 2020). Further, Norway is an active participant in Nordic research cooperation. The dedicated organization under the Nordic Council of Ministers – NordForsk – is based in Oslo and provides funding for regional research cooperation. In total, during the period 2009-2018, NordForsk awarded NOK 2.12 billion (€215 million) to 323 Nordic research projects, involving more than 2,640 researchers (NordForsk, 2019).

### 3.5. Foreign Media

Besides the now long-defunct Radio Norway International,<sup>12</sup> Norway is not represented in the international broadcast media. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation - NRK (*Norsk rikskringkasting AS*) is the Norwegian radio and television public broadcasting company. Another nationwide channel was introduced in the 1990s, TV2, thus ending NRK’s monopoly. Both operators have virtually no programming for foreign audiences.

The NRK has a responsibility to strengthen Norwegian and Sámi languages, identity, and culture. NRK also disseminates knowledge about the Nordic region. It is an active member in Nordvision, a cooperation platform between the Nordic public broadcasters on co-productions and exchanges of programs. At the same time, NRK’s programs reflect the cultural diversity of the population. As part of its mandate to strengthen national languages and identity, NRK for example offers content in all three Sámi languages (Norwegian Media Authority, 2020).

The NRK gained popularity through a popular culture phenomenon – the broadcaster’s teen series, *Skam* (Shame in English) which took over the internet by storm. *Skam* owed a good deal of its success to viral marketing and its unique format. When the drama was on air, it actually took place in real time and appeared on the show’s website. The viewers were also able to follow characters’ interactions on social media and their texts. Although the show was only available from the NRK’s website and entirely in Norwegian, without English subtitles, online fandom community made it popular across the globe. With fan translations of *Skam*, the

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, not enough information is available about Radio Norway International to present it here.

Norwegian language also rose in popularity. The series' recognition was well deserved when it won the Nordic Language Award in 2016 for its ability to engage young audiences (NTB/The Local, 2016). Following the success of the series, *Skam* had remakes in Denmark, France, Germany, Belgium, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Netherlands, the US, Italy, Spain.

Norway also made headlines worldwide in 2017 when it decided to be the first country to abandon analogue radio signal and go fully digital (The Guardian, 2017). Similarly, reporting on Norway and Norwegian affairs for international audiences is confined to digital spaces. One example is the English-speaking website "Norway Today" which "aims to provide international readers with valuable insight on all things (...) Norwegian" (Norway Today, n.d.).

### ***Other***

Despite the low media engagement, Norway did manage to have its voice heard across the globe and "through a ruthless prioritization of its target audiences and its concentration on a single message-Norway as a force for peace in the world" (Nye, 2005, p. 112). In other words, instead of external cultural policy, Norway has had a longer engagement in "niche diplomacy" of peacekeeping (Henrikson, 2005). For example, in the post-Cold-War period it assumed the central role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, and also actively engaged in peace-making process in Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and many more (ibid.). The Nansen Dialogue Centers, the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM), and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRS) are only some of the notable actors in Norwegian policy for peace (Taulbee, Kelleher, & Grosvenor, 2014).

Finally, not to go without mention is Norway's substantial involvement with the developing countries in the field of education: the Quota Scheme and NORAD's<sup>13</sup> programs: the Program for Master Studies (NOMA, 2006-2014, financed by NORAD), and the Norwegian Program for Development, Research and Education (NUFU, 1991-2012, funded by the MFA). The now-discontinued Quota Scheme provided financial support for students from the developing South and countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, to study in Norway (Wiers-Jenssen & Sandersen, 2017). A new program NORHED (2013-2020), like its predecessors aims to strengthen institutional capacity and performance of institutions in the Global South. The project has continued into its second edition, NORHED II, with a generous budget of NOK 1 billion, or around €105 million. The focus is on the partner countries in Norway's development policy: Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (NORAD, 2020).

## **3.6. Challenges and future outlook**

Norway is not a major actor in international cultural cooperation. However, as a result of its extremely favorable perception abroad, it is a notable soft power player. Here, it has set high standards of good governance and transparency, quality education, and social protection, and leads by example. At the same time, the international perception of Norway is still blurry. For most, Norway is a far-north country with breathtaking fjords and friendly people. Depending on the perspective, Norway's global footprint is either very important or barely there. This namely has to do with its preference for "quiet diplomacy" (Taulbee et al., 2014). Norway is

<sup>13</sup> NORAD - the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

not a high-profile destination for tourists or international students and does not have an easily exportable language and culture. Instead, it attracts attention as a facilitator, with a special emphasis on world peace. It is a very good example of how a small nation can “exploit a diplomatic niche that enhances its image and role” (Nye, 2005).

Like its Nordic neighbors, Norway is keen to strengthen its national brand and reputation, and it does so by promoting particular values and narratives. Fostering peace is definitely one such cause, which in turn promotes the national fundamental values. The previously mentioned Biennale Sami pavilion is an important step for the ethnic minority but it also sends a strong message of “a modern and multiethnic culture nation, combining historic (authentic) values with cutting-edge innovation” (Berge, 2018). Moreover, the government is active in international gender equality efforts as seen in the latest “Action Plan for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2016-2020” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). However, the environment and sustainability narratives are hard to believe considering that Norway is the third largest exporter of fossil fuels, after Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Compared to other more active European neighbors, Norway does not have a clear strategy on the recruitment of international students. The motivation of foreign students is however not lacking. There are no tuition fees and universities offer plenty of English-taught programs. Moreover, students are attracted by the quality of the education, Norwegian nature, and the perception of Norway as a peaceful and safe society (Diku, 2019). The recent positive developments, like the increasing number of international doctorate students, is certainly a trend that could be accelerated if there is enough will from the Norwegian policymakers.

Following in the steps of its Nordic neighbors, in particular Denmark, Norwegian designers and artists are looking to take on the international markets. The seven advisory agencies to the MFA consistently put focus on the export capacities of Norwegian products. Their relatively low profile might give the Norwegian design a potential edge. While for example Danish designers have a strong legacy to fall back on, they also risk clichés and overproduction. Meanwhile their Norwegian colleagues have a free rein to develop their own brands, although they will have quite a bit of catching up to do. Norwegian brands like Fjordfiesta, Eikund and Hjelle are still not household names (Dowdy, 2020). Indeed, a 2009 report released by the MFA highlights culture as one of the main fields in which improvements are required (qtd. in Popa, 2015). Apart from design, very little is known about Norwegian culture abroad. With the strategic support for Brand Norway, Norwegian companies and products have the potential to become more sought-after, not only because of their quality, but also because they stand for Norwegian values and the Norwegian social model. One hindrance will be how to break free from the regional mold: Norway is often perceived as a mere part of the whole of Scandinavia.

## References

- Berge, O. K. (2017). *Look to Norway™ - Current Norwegian foreign cultural policy*. (PhD Doctoral dissertation), University College of Southeast Norway, Kongsberg. Retrieved from [https://openarchive.usn.no/usn-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2463081/2017\\_26\\_Berge.pdf](https://openarchive.usn.no/usn-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/2463081/2017_26_Berge.pdf)
- Berge, O. K. (2018). The Art of Foreign Policy: Aesthetics' Developmental Agency in Foreign Cultural Policy. In *Aesthetics and Politics* (pp. 137-164)
- Bjerkeland, I. (2015). The Rise of the Regions - Norwegian film policy and the new regional cinema. *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidsskrift*, 18(1) (pp. 125-142)
- Borchgrevink, C. P., & Knutson, B. J. (1997). Norway Seen from Abroad: Perceptions of Norway and Norwegian Tourism. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 4(4) (pp. 25-46). doi:10.1300/J150v04n04\_02
- Bound, K., Briggs, R., Holden, J., & Jones, S. (Eds.) (2007). *Cultural Diplomacy*. London: Demos
- Brevik, A. (2020, 16.10.20). *The Nordic Pavilion Becomes the First Sámi Pavilion*. Retrieved from <https://kunstkritikk.com/the-nordic-pavilion-becomes-the-first-sami-pavilion/>
- Diku (2019). *International Students in Norway: Contributors to Quality in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://diku.no/rapporter/international-students-in-norway-contributors-to-quality-in-higher-education>
- Diku (2020). *Condition report for higher education 2020*. Retrieved from <https://diku.no/rapporter/diku-rapportserie-03-2020-tilstandsrapport-for-hoeyere-utdanning-2020>
- Diku (n.d.). *About Diku: Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://diku.no/en/about-diku>
- Dowdy, C. (2020, 27 May 2020). The quirky charm of Norwegian design. *BBC Culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20200526-the-quirky-charm-of-norwegian-design>
- EC (2020). *Norway Horizon 2020 country profile*. Retrieved from <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/sense/app/a976d168-2023-41d8-acec-e77640154726/sheet/d23bba31-e385-4cc0-975e-a67059972142/state/0>
- EEA Grants (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from <https://eeagrants.org/about-us>
- EIU (2020). *Democracy Index 2020: In sickness and in health?* Retrieved from [https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt\\_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF8IaxVjSKYjXn3imr8B5Wl4pLRsNdSmZnAs9u071ZwkjKKZTy52Gd4nPdgv93VzxnawGQT03Hcr5tFNefZIV9gKeLNKUbv2bzCMrMXrkZ1s8ohjg](https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/democracy-index-2020.pdf?mkt_tok=NzUzLVJJUS00MzgAAAF8IaxVjSKYjXn3imr8B5Wl4pLRsNdSmZnAs9u071ZwkjKKZTy52Gd4nPdgv93VzxnawGQT03Hcr5tFNefZIV9gKeLNKUbv2bzCMrMXrkZ1s8ohjg)
- Ekrem, J. (2019, 26 Nov 2019). More than an oil powerhouse? A closer look at Norway's evolving research system. *Science Business*. Retrieved from <https://sciencebusiness.net/international-news/more-oil-powerhouse-closer-look-norways-evolving-research-system>
- ENICPA. (n.d.). *Members*. Retrieved from <http://enicpa.info/members/performing-arts-hub-norway-pahn/>
- Forskningsrådet (2020). *The Research Council in numbers - tables and figures*. Retrieved from <https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/statistics-and-evaluations/statistics-and-evaluations/the--research-councils-statistics/>
- HDR (2020). *Norway*. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NOR>



- Henrikson, A. K. (2005). Niche Diplomacy in the World Public Arena: the Global ‘Corners’ of Canada and Norway. In M. J. (Ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy. Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Johnsen, T. O., & Rieker, P. (2015). The EEA and Norway Grants: A Source of Soft Power? *Journal of European Integration*, 37(4) (pp. 417-432)  
doi:10.1080/07036337.2014.987139
- Mangset, P., & Kleppe, B. (2016). *Country profile: Norway*. Retrieved from [https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf\\_full/norway/norway\\_102016.pdf](https://www.culturalpolicies.net/wp-content/uploads/pdf_full/norway/norway_102016.pdf)
- Menon Economics (2019). *Finished goods industry and internationalization*. Retrieved from <https://doga.no/aktiviteter/rapporter-og-caser/ferdigvareindustrien-og-internasjonisering/>
- Music Norway (2020). *Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/musicnorway/docs/mn\\_\\_rbok\\_2019](https://issuu.com/musicnorway/docs/mn__rbok_2019)
- NAA (n.d.). *Norwegian Arts Abroad (NAA). Support schemes for international arts and culture cooperation*. Retrieved from <https://www.stikk.no/reisestotte/>
- Nationaltheatret (n.d.). *The International Ibsen Award*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationaltheatret.no/international-ibsen-award/about/>
- NFI (2017). *From the annual report: the 2017 export survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.nfi.no/eng/about-us/facts-figures/from-the-annual-report-the-2017-export-survey>
- NFI (2019). *Facts & Figures 2019*. Retrieved from [https://www.nfi.no/statistikk/statistikk-analyse-og-rapporter/\\_/attachment/download/a49285c2-6545-4331-9ccc-afa7411b800c:c0edf94a1c90f22e6726582dac46fefde0f128d5/Facts%20&%20Figures%202019.pdf](https://www.nfi.no/statistikk/statistikk-analyse-og-rapporter/_/attachment/download/a49285c2-6545-4331-9ccc-afa7411b800c:c0edf94a1c90f22e6726582dac46fefde0f128d5/Facts%20&%20Figures%202019.pdf)
- NFI (n.d.). *About NFI*. Retrieved from <https://www.nfi.no/dette-gjor-nfi/dette-gjor-nfi>
- NORAD (2020, 20.03.2020). *Norway giving NOK 1 billion to developing countries for higher education and research*. Retrieved from <https://www.norad.no/en/front/about-norad/news/2020/norway-giving-nok-1-billion-to-developing-countries-for-higher-education-and-research/>
- NordForsk (2019). *Ten years of Nordic Research Funding*. Retrieved from <https://www.nordforsk.org/2019/ten-years-nordic-research-funding>
- Nordic Culture Fund (2020). *Annual report 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.nordiskkulturfond.org/media/30186/nordisk-kulturfonds-aarsberetning-2019.pdf>
- Nordic Statistics (2020a). *Expenditure on Research and Development by sector, reporting country, unit and time*. Retrieved from <https://www.nordicstatistics.org/>
- Nordic Statistics (2020b). *Number of students abroad by reporting country, age, sex and time*. Retrieved from <https://www.nordicstatistics.org/culture/>
- Nordisk institutt for studier av innovasjon, f. o. u. (2021, March 19, 2021). *Share of international doctorate graduates in Norway from 2010 to 2020 [Graph]*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123786/share-of-international-doctorate-graduates-in-norway/>
- NORLA (2019). *Norway as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurter Buchmesse 2019*. Retrieved from <https://norla.no/en/news/news-from-norla/norla-presents-its-report-on-norway-as-guest-of-honour-at-the-frankfurter-buchmesse-2019>
- NORLA (n.d.). *Norwegian Arts Abroad*. Retrieved from <https://norla.no/en/about-norla/norwegian-arts-abroad>
- Norway Today (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from <https://norwaytoday.info/tips-us-2/>

- Norwegian Crafts (2020). *Norwegian Crafts - Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved from <https://indd.adobe.com/view/71faccf0-9bc7-4d96-9637-a75c16bbe4e7>
- Norwegian Crafts (n.d.). *About Norwegian Crafts*. Retrieved from <https://www.norwegiancrafts.no/about>
- Norwegian Government (2006). *Omdømmeutvalgets Sluttrapport: Nyskapende i samspill med naturen*. Retrieved from Oslo: [https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kilde/ud/bro/2006/0049/ddd/pdf/v/275674-nyskapende\\_i\\_samspill\\_internett.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kilde/ud/bro/2006/0049/ddd/pdf/v/275674-nyskapende_i_samspill_internett.pdf)
- Norwegian Government (2008). *Report No. 14 to the Storting (2008-2009): Internationalization of education*. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-14-2008-2009-/id545749/?ch=1&q=>
- Norwegian Government (2015, 26/11/2015). *Supporting the cultural sector in developing countries*. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/int-cultural-engagement/kultur/supporting-cultural-sector/id2459957/>
- Norwegian Media Authority (2020). *The Public Broadcasting Report 2019*. Retrieved from [https://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/allmennkringkasting/2019\\_allmennkringkastingsrapporten\\_tv-2-og-nrk.pdf](https://www.medietilsynet.no/globalassets/publikasjoner/allmennkringkasting/2019_allmennkringkastingsrapporten_tv-2-og-nrk.pdf)
- Norwegian Ministry of Culture (2019). *The Power of Culture: Cultural Policy for the Future. Report to the Storting No. 8 (2018–2019)*. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/9778c28ab1014b789bbb3de0e25e0d85/en-gb/pdfs/stm201820190008000engpdfs.pdf>
- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2009). *Internationalization of education. Cooperation 2012-2015. Report to the Storting No. 14 2008-2009*. Retrieved from Oslo: <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/stmeld-nr-14-2008-2009-/id545749/sec7?q=internasjonisering>
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013). *Meld. St. 19 (2012-2013) The Government's international cultural efforts (Regjeringens internasjonale kulturinnsats)*. Retrieved from <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Saker/Sak/?p=56766>
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019). *Norway's engagement in peace work – by country*. Retrieved from [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/norways\\_engagement/id2522229/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/peace-and-reconciliation-efforts/norways_engagement/id2522229/)
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020, 05/02/2020). *About the EEA and Norway Grants*. Retrieved from <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/european-policy/about-the-eea-and-norway-grants/id685567/>
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021, 05/03/2021). *Women's rights and gender equality*. Retrieved from [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/the-un/innsikt/womens\\_rights/id439433/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/the-un/innsikt/womens_rights/id439433/)
- NTB/The Local (2016, 5 December 2016). *'Skam' hailed for making Norwegian language cool*. Retrieved from <https://www.thelocal.no/20161205/skam-hailed-for-making-norwegian-language-cool/>
- Nye, J. S. (2005). *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs
- OCA (2020). *Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved from [https://www.oca.no/download/2020/06/23/OCA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://www.oca.no/download/2020/06/23/OCA_Annual_Report_2019.pdf)
- OECD (2020a). *Education at a Glance 2020*
- OECD (2020b, September 8, 2020). *Expenditure on higher education as a share of GDP in selected countries worldwide in 2017 [Graph]*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/707557/higher-education-spending-share-gdp/>



- OECD (2020c). *Norway*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/norway/>
- PAHN (2020). *Statistics for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs travel support performing arts / Travel grants for artists and companies*. Retrieved from <https://www.pahn.no/statistikk>
- Plecher, H. (2018, Apr 18, 2018). *Norway - Statistics & Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/3888/norway/>
- Popa, S. T. (2015). Norway's Public and Cultural Diplomacy. *Journal of Global Politics and Current Diplomacy*, 3/2015(1) (pp. 35-49)
- Portland (2019). *Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power*. Retrieved from <https://softpower30.com/>
- Sanden, G. R. (2020). The second-class Norwegian: marginalisation of Nynorsk in Norwegian business. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 21(2) (pp.202-228). doi:10.1080/14664208.2019.1697556
- SGI (2020). *Norway Report*. Retrieved from [https://www.sgi-network.org/docs/2020/country/SGI2020\\_Norway.pdf](https://www.sgi-network.org/docs/2020/country/SGI2020_Norway.pdf)
- Taulbee, J. L., Kelleher, A., & Grosvenor, P. C. (2014). *Norway's Peace Policy: Soft Power in a Turbulent World* (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US
- The Guardian (2017, Wed 13 Dec 2017). *Norway becomes first country to end national radio broadcasts on FM*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/13/norway-becomes-first-country-to-end-national-radio-broadcasts-on-fm>
- UIS (2020). *Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students*. Retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>
- vilbli.no (n.d.). *Private schools that are entitled to public funding*. Retrieved from <https://www.vilbli.no/en/en/friskoler/survey-of-schools/f/0>
- VisitNorway (n.d.). *A man worth travelling for*. Retrieved from <https://www.visitnorway.com/things-to-do/art-culture/edvard-munch/>
- Wiers-Jenssen, J. (2019). International student mobility - from and to Norway. Trends. *NIFU Working Paper 2019(21)*
- Wiers-Jenssen, J., & Sandersen, H. T. (2017). The Norwegian Framework for Educational Cooperation with Russia: Educational Policy with a Hint of Foreign Affairs. In P.-A. F. Marit Sundet, Anders Örténblad (Ed.), *Higher Education in the High North: Academic Exchanges between Norway and Russia*: Springer International Publishing

## Imprint

The External Cultural Policy Monitor

Developed by Helmut K. Anheier, Hertie School & UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, and ifa Competence Centre. Supervised by Helmut K. Anheier. Coordinated by Sarah Widmaier for ifa.

Preferred citation

Markovic, Darinka (11/2021). “Norway. Country Report,” in: Helmut K. Anheier and ifa (eds.). The External Cultural Policy Monitor. Stuttgart: ifa.

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the ifa.

Publisher:

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)  
Charlottenplatz 17,  
70173 Stuttgart,  
Postfach 10 24 63,  
D-70020 Stuttgart

[www.ifa.de](http://www.ifa.de)

© ifa 2021

Author: Darinka Markovic

Copy-editing by:

ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”

Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17901/ecp.2021.068>