



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

NORWAY

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

8 September 2025

ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

2-5 June 2021



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I. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Norwegian authorities to observe the 8 September parliamentary elections, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 2 to 5 June. The NAM was composed of Meaghan Fitzgerald, Head of the ODIHR Election Department, and Goran Petrov, ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the pre-electoral environment and preparations for the elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM should recommend whether to deploy an ODIHR observation activity for the forthcoming elections and, if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions and representatives of political parties, the media, civil society, and the resident international community. A full list of meetings is annexed to this report.

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (MLGRD) for their assistance and co-operation in organizing the NAM. ODIHR would also like to thank each of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 8 September parliamentary elections will determine the 169 members of the unicameral parliament (Storting). The 2023 Election Act will be applied for the first time. While the overall organization remains largely unchanged, the act introduced new provisions on vote counting and the publication of results, a permanent appeals body for dispute resolution, and rules for conducting elections under extraordinary circumstances. Many previous ODIHR recommendations were implemented, while some remain outstanding, including those related to independent candidacy, timely campaign finance disclosure, and the regulation of appointments and enforcement under the Political Parties Act. Preferential voting for individual candidates was eliminated, due to its limited impact and the perceived strength of internal party democracy, and alternative proposals to retain and increase the impact of preferential voting did not garner sufficient support.

Election administration duties are shared across multiple institutions. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in election officials at all levels to conduct the elections impartially and professionally. Preparations are on track, with extensive training efforts that include online and in-person sessions on new procedures and the use of the election administration system, as well as targeted support for new officials. The law newly mandates a manual vote count of ballots cast on election day in all polling stations after closing, previously left to the discretion of municipalities. Election authorities engaged in various voter information efforts, though some concerns were raised about the effectiveness of outreach regarding the first-time use of the closed list system and expectations regarding the timing of preliminary results.

The centralised voter register, maintained by the Directorate of Elections and based on data from the National Population Register, includes some four million entries. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not

raise any concerns regarding the accuracy and inclusiveness of the voter register. Voter lists are publicly accessible, and voters may request corrections until election day.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors described candidate registration as accessible and inclusive, with 22 political parties contesting and nearly 5,000 candidates registered across the country. In line with a previous ODIHR recommendation, since 2021, candidates may decline nomination without justification. The law does not permit independent candidacy, which is not in line with OSCE commitments. Parties with at least 5,000 votes in the previous parliamentary elections can submit lists in all districts, while others must collect support signatures from at least one per cent of registered voters in each constituency they wish to contest. There are no legal requirements regarding gender balance, but most parties met with have internal policies on list placement, including in winnable positions. Parties generally lack specific rules for minority or disability representation, although some have adopted general, inclusive measures, particularly for youth.

The election campaign is largely unregulated and does not have a set start date. It is expected to intensify from mid-August, with key issues including living costs, healthcare, taxation, education, and foreign policy featuring in the debate. While campaigns rely heavily on social networks, traditional voter outreach remains important. ODIHR NAM interlocutors generally noted low political polarisation, although concerns persist over online disinformation and divisive narratives. In response to the risk of foreign interference, the authorities have taken a range of measures to strengthen institutional resilience, including through new interagency co-ordination mechanisms. All parliamentary parties signed a code of conduct pledging not to use deepfakes or disinformation in the 2025 campaign.

Political parties in Norway are financed through public grants and private donations. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted there is a potential for excessive influence of private donors on one hand, and unions and other organizations on the other, but most parties do not support introducing donation limits. Parties are required to report their finances annually, by 1 June of the following year. All sizable donations from the same source received by the parties from 1 January of the election year must be publicly disclosed on a dedicated website. To address concerns about hiding donor identities through pooled funding, the Storting amended the law to require the disclosure of the underlying sources of donations exceeding the specified threshold, but the changes will come into effect after the elections. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (MLGRD) informed the ODIHR NAM that it intends to conduct a review of the 2005 Political Parties Act after these elections.

The media environment in Norway is pluralistic, largely self-regulated. According to all ODIHR NAM interlocutors, trust in mainstream media remains high, with press freedoms and journalistic independence contributing to a resilient and credible media environment. The law requires broad and balanced coverage of election campaigns in broadcast media and prohibits political advertising. The public broadcaster plans extensive election coverage as the campaign intensifies, including two debates among leaders of parliamentary parties and one between contenders for the prime minister.

The 2023 Elections Act introduced a permanent National Electoral Commission (NEC) as the final instance for most election-related complaints. The NEC, composed of five members including three judges, ensures judicial review of election management decisions, addressing a prior ODIHR recommendation. The law also introduced a new procedure allowing contestants to appeal to the Supreme Court the Storting's decision validating election results. ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the impartiality and effectiveness of the dispute resolution bodies and process.

The municipal authorities must ensure that all polling stations are independently accessible. The Election Act does not regulate in detail other aspects of accessibility to election processes, including

on election day. However, the municipalities should implement recommendations provided at the national level related to the use of clear signage, appropriate lighting, and accessible voting equipment or supplies. In general, political parties do not employ any rules related to opportunities to stand for persons with disabilities.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in all aspects of the electoral process. While they unanimously welcomed the presence of international observers, most considered that a comprehensive election observation mission was not necessary. Nonetheless, many interlocutors emphasized the value of an external assessment in light of the newly introduced Elections Act. Although the new Elections Act enjoys broad support among stakeholders, it introduces several changes that have yet to be tested in practice, particularly regarding vote-counting procedures, publication of results, and ensuring equal access for voters with disabilities. Additional important amendments related to campaign financing were also adopted ahead of the elections, and the overall system of political finance could benefit from closer scrutiny, particularly in light of the authorities' intention to conduct a comprehensive review of the relevant legislation after these elections. While interlocutors generally found that physical accessibility to polling stations is well addressed, other issues related to the participation of persons with disabilities could benefit from further review. Based on these findings, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Expert Team (EET) for the 8 September 2025 parliamentary elections. The EET should assess the regulatory framework governing election proceedings, with particular attention to recent legal changes and new systems, the accessibility of various stages of the electoral process for persons with disabilities, as well as the political and campaign finance framework.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND

Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of representation. The King heads the executive branch, although executive power is exercised in practice by a Council of State, which is comprised of ministers selected by the Prime Minister and formally appointed by the King. Legislative authority is vested in the unicameral parliament (the *Stortinget* or Storting). The Constitution does not provide for the dissolution or self-dissolution of the Storting before the end of its term.

Nine parties were elected to the Storting in the 2021 parliamentary elections: the Labour Party (48 seats), Conservative Party (36 seats), Centre Party (28 seats), Progress Party (21 seats), Socialist Left Party (13 seats), Red Party (8 seats), Liberal Party (8 seats), Green Party (3 seats), and Christian Democratic Party (3 seats). In addition, one seat was won by the organization Patient Focus. Women make up approximately 45 per cent of the outgoing Storting, and some parliamentary parties are led by women.

Following the 2021 parliamentary elections, the Labour Party and Centre Party formed a coalition government. The government faced persistent challenges, including inflation, energy prices, and complex negotiations on climate, regional, and EU-related policies. In January 2025, amid ongoing political friction, the Centre Party exited the government coalition, and the Labour Party continued to govern as a minority government in the lead-up to the elections.¹

¹ The Council of State, formally acting in the King's name, sets the date for parliamentary elections on a Monday in September of the final year of the term of the outgoing Storting, and on 3 May 2024, the election date was set for 8 September 2025. Sámi parliamentary elections will be held on the same day.

Norway continues to enjoy high levels of public trust in its institutions and judiciary. However, in recent years, business-related actions by some senior politicians or their spouses have raised concerns about conflicts of interest and perceived ethical misconduct, leading to some decline in public trust in the political establishment.²

ODIHR has previously observed three elections in Norway.³ Most recently, ODIHR deployed an Election Expert Team for the 2017 parliamentary elections. The final report, issued in December 2017, contained eight recommendations aimed at enhancing the electoral process in line with OSCE commitments.⁴

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Elections are regulated by the 1814 Constitution (last amended in 2024) and the newly adopted 2023 Act on Elections to the Storting, County Councils and Municipal Councils (Election Act).⁵ Norway is a party to major international and regional instruments related to democratic elections.⁶ All ODIHR NAM interlocutors stated that the legal framework provides a solid foundation for democratic elections.

The new Elections Act will be applied for the first time in these elections. While the organization of the elections remains largely unchanged, new aspects include mandating the first vote count of the ballots cast on election day to be publicly conducted in all polling stations and results published at that level, establishing a permanent National Electoral Committee (NEC) responsible for election dispute resolution, and explicit provisions for postponing or extending the polls under extraordinary circumstances. The new act eliminates some prior provisions, including the framework for internet voting trials. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors described the law-making process as comprehensive and inclusive, and all parliamentary parties voted in favour of the Act's adoption.⁷

Several prior ODIHR recommendations were implemented, including on clarifying acceptable forms of identification for voting, publishing polling-station level results, introducing candidate consent for nomination, barring candidates from serving on the election commission where they run, and requiring the testing of digital election administration systems. Still, some recommendations remain to be addressed, including on the right to stand individually, timely campaign finance reporting, transparency in third-party campaigning, and the lack of regulation on membership appointments for the Political Parties Act Commission and its detailed enforcement framework.

The Storting comprises 169 members directly elected for four-year terms through a system of proportional representation. A total of 150 members are elected from among 19 multi-member

² See for example, the 2024 OECD [Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions](#). On 10 June 2025, the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) [concluded](#) its compliance procedure for Norway, having positively assessed the country's implementation of reforms aimed at promoting integrity and preventing corruption in government and law enforcement.

³ See previous [ODIHR election-related reports on Norway](#).

⁴ In paragraph 25 of the [1999 OSCE Istanbul Document](#), OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations".

⁵ In May 2024, Norway amended its Constitution to strengthen judicial independence by codifying the court hierarchy, setting a cap and retirement age for Supreme Court judges, mandating independent judicial appointments, and protecting judges from arbitrary dismissal.

⁶ Including the 1966 [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), 1965 [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#), 1979 [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#), 2003 [UN Convention against Corruption](#), 2006 [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), and 1950 [European Convention on Human Rights](#). Norway is also a member of the [Council of Europe's Venice Commission](#) and [Group of States against Corruption \(GRECO\)](#).

⁷ Many of the amendments in the Elections Act were based on the 2020 [report](#) and recommendations by the multi-partisan Election Act Commission, created in 2017 with the mandate to propose changes to the Election Act.

constituencies.⁸ In addition, 19 at-large compensatory seats are distributed among parties that receive at least four per cent of the national vote.⁹ The number of members elected from each constituency is determined according to a formula based on the electoral population and geographic surface area.¹⁰ As a result, there are significant discrepancies in voting power across some constituencies.¹¹

The new Election Act also eliminated the possibility of preferential voting; voters select a party list containing a predetermined order of candidates (closed lists).¹² The MLGRD informed the ODIHR NAM that the government opted for proposing closed lists, given the lack of genuine impact of the previously used model and the perceived high level of internal party democracy, which the ministry opined provides voters with genuine and diverse choices.¹³

C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Under the 2023 Elections Act, the core structures and functions of election management bodies are largely retained. The MLGRD is responsible overall for the conduct of elections and formulating electoral policy; it proposes legislative changes and issues binding regulations and additional guidelines. The Directorate of Elections, an institution subordinate to the MLGRD but operating independently, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of electoral processes and providing guidance, support, and training for election officials. It also develops and administers the Integrated Electronic Administration System for Elections (*EVA*), which is used to run key electoral functions, including the approval of candidate lists, maintaining voter registers, registering advance ballots, ballot scanning, and managing election results.¹⁴ *EVA* is designated as critical infrastructure, and the MLGRD and the Directorate closely co-operate with national security and cybersecurity agencies on preventive measures and securing *EVA*.¹⁵

Nineteen District Election Committees (DECs) are appointed by county authorities before each election to approve candidate lists, print ballots, tabulate election results, and allocate district seats. At the municipal level, councils appoint a total of 357 Municipal Election Committees (MECs), who set up polling stations, train election staff, supervise advance and election-day voting, and conduct the second vote count. According to the MLGRD, some 20,000 election officials will be responsible for election day procedures in a total of 2,000 polling stations nationwide. The law provides for the accreditation of citizen and international observers and obliges municipal and county authorities to

⁸ Following the amalgamation of counties in January 2020, which reduced Norway's administrative regions from 19 to 11, the 19 electoral constituencies no longer correspond directly to county boundaries.

⁹ The 2020 report of the Election Act Commission recommended lowering the electoral threshold for compensatory seats to 3 per cent; however, this recommendation was not adopted.

¹⁰ The distribution is recalculated before each parliamentary election. The formula remains unchanged since its introduction in 1952.

¹¹ Three constituencies (Vestfold, Aust-Agder and Nordland) have a number of registered voters per MP that deviates by more than 10 per cent from the national average, while the sparsely populated Finnmark deviates by more than 30 per cent. In its report, the Election Act Commission recommended reducing the weight of geographic surface area while ensuring a minimum number of representatives in smaller constituencies, but this was not taken on board.

¹² Previously, if a candidate received a preference mark by at least 50 per cent of voters in the district, they would top the list. Preferential voting remains available in local and regional elections. The ODIHR NAM was informed that, due to the high number of required preferential votes, this instrument was never successfully used to elect an MP.

¹³ The Electoral Act Commission was divided on the matter and proposed either a solution to retain the preferential voting but reduce the number of required votes equal to the model used in municipal council elections or to use closed lists. Due to the change to closed lists, a prior ODIHR recommendation related to preferential voting, to either give effect to it or remove it was addressed, and ODIHR's prior recommendations on providing equal access to it in out-of-constituency advance voting and for visually impaired voters, are no longer applicable.

¹⁴ The Directorate maintains a comprehensive [election staff portal](#) with detailed guidance and instructions.

¹⁵ The system documentation for *EVA*'s components and source code are [available](#) on the Directorate's website.

facilitate observation. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the election officials at all levels to conduct the elections impartially and professionally.

According to ODIHR NAM interlocutors, electoral preparations are on track. In addition to online training, the Directorate already conducted several in-person sessions in 2025, focusing on new procedures, hands-on election management, and the use of EVA, with special attention to less experienced and newly appointed election officials.¹⁶ Mock elections at the MEC and DEC levels are also planned for the second half of August.

The law requires MECs to ensure that all polling stations are independently accessible, while also providing for voting with assistance, at home or in care institutions upon request. ODIHR NAM interlocutors indicated that, in isolated cases, some polling stations, particularly those not located at ground level, may remain inaccessible due to organizational reasons, such as elevator availability. While the law does not regulate in detail other aspects of accessibility, the MLGRD regulations instruct MECs to use clear signage, appropriate lighting, and accessible voting equipment.¹⁷

Advance voting begins on 11 August and continues until the final Friday before election day.¹⁸ Voters residing abroad may vote either by post or in person at diplomatic or consular missions during this period. The law requires that all ballots cast at the polling stations be counted manually at the polling station after closing, a change from a previous practice of leaving the provisional count under the discretion of MECs. A second vote count must also be conducted in the municipality, and the MEC can choose to either scan the ballots or re-count them manually.

The Directorate of Elections is responsible for conducting voter outreach and mailing voter information to all voters. It also operates a grant scheme for civil society organizations, including those engaged in accessibility and minority issues, to support outreach efforts.¹⁹ Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns that information about the closed list voting system may not reach all voters effectively, potentially leading to some confusion during voting. Concerns were also raised about the expected timing of preliminary results, which may be delayed compared to previous elections due to changes in vote-counting procedures and in media access rules. In the past, media had advance voting results under embargo on election day, allowing them to publish partial results immediately after polls closed.

D. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens who are at least 18 years of age or will be by the end of the election year are eligible to vote. The articles of the Constitution that could be used to suspend voting rights of those convicted by a court for certain grave crimes and those with intellectual or psycho-social disabilities were repealed in 2022. By law, the MLGRD maintains a centralised electronic voter register based on citizen data from the National Population Register; however, it has delegated this duty to the Directorate of Elections. The voter register includes 4,058,516 voters. ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise any concerns regarding the accuracy and inclusiveness of the voter register.

¹⁶ All municipalities are required to use the EVA system for election management.

¹⁷ The MLGRD regulations require that at least some voting booths in each polling station be equipped with ballot shelves labelled in *Braille*. See also MLGRD's 22 May 2025 [Guide](#) on the universal design of polling stations and voting equipment.

¹⁸ In addition, early voting is available from 1 July for those unable to vote during the regular periods, typically arranged through municipal offices.

¹⁹ The Directorate also co-operates with the Association of the Deaf to produce materials in sign language and the Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted to provide election information for radio programmes and podcasts.

Voter lists must be made available for public inspection by the MECs, containing names, addresses and dates of birth of voters. Voters can verify the accuracy of their records and request changes until election day. However, changes to residential addresses after 30 June of the election year are not reflected in the voter lists, and in such cases, voters vote according to their previous residence. Those residing abroad are registered in the municipality where they were most recently residing in Norway. Contestants may request voter list copies from the MECs for campaigning purposes, including subsets such as first-time voters, which MECs can extract through *EVA*. They are obliged to destroy the obtained lists within two years.

E. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Any eligible voter is entitled to contest elections, except judges of the Supreme Court and employees of the ministry and the foreign service. Since the 2021 elections, in line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, candidates can decline nomination without needing justification. Registered political parties and groups of voters could submit candidate lists to DEC by 31 March, with DEC deciding on registration by 1 June.²⁰ The law does not allow for standing independently, which is not in line with OSCE commitments. There are no legal requirements regarding gender balance on candidate lists; however, most parties that the ODIHR NAM met with have internal policies in place to promote gender balance, including in winnable positions, and some use a zippered system. In general, political parties do not have specific rules for ensuring the representation of minorities or persons with disabilities in their candidate lists, but some have reported adopting inclusive measures as a general approach, particularly for youth.

A candidate may run on only one list per constituency but may run in multiple constituencies. List submitters and registered parties that received at least 5,000 votes nationwide in the previous parliamentary elections only need to have their lists signed by two party board members. Other submitters must provide support signatures from at least one per cent of voters registered in each district in which they want to contest elections (using registration figures from the last election). If a DEC finds deficiencies, such as missing support signatures, the submitter has seven days to complete the application. Each voter may sign in support of only one list, contrary to good electoral practice.²¹

On 12 June, the Directorate published a list of 22 contestants with a total of 4,912 candidates running across the country. Some prospective lists were not registered, mostly due to missing support signatures. ODIHR NAM interlocutors generally described the candidate registration process as inclusive and accessible; however, some commented on the underrepresentation of candidates from minority groups.

F. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Election campaigns are largely unregulated, and there is no legally defined campaign period. Political parties expect the campaign to intensify in August. The main campaign issues include living costs, healthcare, taxation, education, as well as foreign policy and national defence. While immigration is not a dominant topic for these elections, there is an ongoing debate on balancing societal inclusion and public safety.²² All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed the view that established parties

²⁰ Each list must include a number of candidates equal to the number of seats in the constituency and up to six additional candidates.

²¹ See paragraph I.1.3.ii of the 2002 Venice Commission [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#).

²² In May 2025, the Progress Party released a campaign video portraying a group of youths mugging a boy in a public housing estate, accompanied by a call to vote for Progress Party for more police presence and funding. Several organizations, including Amnesty International Norway, [condemned](#) the video as a harmful and misleading depiction of minority youth, warning that such portrayals risk undermining trust and integration. In response, the Progress Party defended the video as a reflection of public safety concerns.

generally promote institutional integrity, public trust, and non-discrimination, leading to low levels of political polarisation.

ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that a significant portion of the campaign will occur on social networks, particularly on Meta platforms and TikTok. Political parties also emphasised the value of traditional methods and intend to directly engage with voters. Most interlocutors noted that online pockets of anti-immigration rhetoric and hate speech persist, with some far-right figures and fringe parties promoting divisive narratives. Interlocutors raised some concerns about the spread of disinformation as well as unequal access to visibility of relevant information driven by online platforms' algorithms. Authorities and civil society organizations have responded by promoting transparency, fact-checking, and ethical standards for online campaign conduct. There is no specific regulation related to online content.²³

The ODIHR NAM was informed by security agencies that while no incidents had occurred by the time of the NAM, the upcoming elections may present a target for foreign influence operations seeking to erode public trust, underscoring the need for proactive and coordinated responses.²⁴ Since 2019, a government interagency working group, led by the MLGRD, has been working to strengthen resilience against foreign interference and disinformation in elections, as well as enhance awareness and competencies among institutions and election stakeholders. In response to growing concerns about the impact of artificial intelligence (AI), the MLGRD appointed an expert group in 2024 to assess how AI could influence elections, which *inter alia* recommended enhancing transparency in political communication, strengthening media and digital literacy, and establishing mechanisms for oversight and redress related to the use of AI in elections.²⁵ In November 2024, all nine parliamentary parties signed a code of conduct pledging not to use deepfakes or AI-manipulated content during the 2025 election campaign, even if intended as satire.²⁶

G. POLITICAL PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Political parties in Norway are financed through public grants and private donations. A basic grant is provided equally to parties meeting minimum eligibility criteria, such as having nominated candidates in several constituencies, and an additional grant proportional to the number of votes received in the last Storting elections.²⁷

The 2005 Political Parties Act (PPA), last amended in 2023, allows donations to include monetary gifts, goods or services provided free of charge or at a discount, loans on non-commercial terms, and support from affiliated organizations, such as party membership fees or contributions from trade unions. Anonymous donations, donations from foreign donors, and donations from state-owned enterprises are prohibited. All parties and party units are required to report their finances annually, no later than 1 June of the following year. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted that excessive private donations on the one hand, and financial support by unions and other organizations on the other, could distort the level playing field, but most parties did not express an interest in having donation limits.

²³ The EU's Digital Services Act will come into effect in Norway after its incorporation into the European Economic Area Agreement and further incorporation in domestic law. The ODIHR NAM was informed that the government is in the process of drafting the DSA implementation law, expected to be ready for public consultation this summer.

²⁴ See also the [2025 threat assessment](#) by the Police Security Service.

²⁵ See the February 2025 [report](#) and recommendations published by the group.

²⁶ See information about the [initiative](#).

²⁷ Parties received approximately NOK 539.5 million (approximately EUR 47.0 million) in public funding in 2023, which accounted for 62 per cent of parties' total income.

All parties must disclose the identity of any donor who contributes above a set threshold within the calendar year, as part of their annual reports.²⁸ During the election year, all contributions from the same source that cumulatively exceed NOK 10,000 (approximately EUR 848) must be publicly disclosed on a dedicated website within four weeks of receipt. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about possible funding by undisclosed donors routed through corporations and other organizations.²⁹ On 17 June, following a long-standing cross-party agreement and a government proposal submitted in May, the Storting amended the PPA to require parties to disclose the underlying sources of donations exceeding legal thresholds or to refuse such donations if the donating organization fails to provide details on the original donors' identities and amounts.³⁰ These provisions will come into effect on 1 January 2026. The MLGRD informed the ODIHR NAM that it intends to conduct a review of the 2005 Political Parties Act after these elections.

The Political Parties Act Committee (PPAC) is an independent body under the auspices of the MLGRD, responsible for overseeing campaign finance. It has the authority to impose sanctions and decide on complaints related to party registration, funding, and campaign contributions.³¹ Its sanctioning power includes formal warnings and revocation of up to all annual public funding, and these decisions can be appealed in court. Since January, the PPAC has considered and rejected two complaints related to party registration and access to registration documents, and issued ten formal warnings to different parties for late disclosure of sizable campaign donations. Additionally, one decision was made to reduce public funding to a party due to repeated warnings. The PPAC also requested further information from an extra-parliamentary party on suspicion that it received an illegal donation, but later suspended further investigation.³²

H. MEDIA

The media environment is pluralistic, and the media are largely self-regulated. Some 250 news outlets operate in the country, with a strong local media presence. In recent years, online media and digital platforms have become the primary source of news for most of the population, surpassing television, which remains significant among older audiences but has seen a decline in overall use. According to all ODIHR NAM interlocutors, trust in mainstream media remains high, with press freedoms and journalistic independence contributing to a resilient and credible media environment.³³

The Constitution guarantees freedoms of expression and of the press, including access to public information. The media legislation remains largely unchanged since the last elections. The 1992 Broadcasting Act requires broad and balanced coverage of election campaigns in broadcast media and prohibits political advertising on broadcast media. The 2020 Media Liability Act ensures that media content is subject to identifiable editorial responsibility and legal accountability. The 1997 Media Ownership Act regulates against private media concentration by granting the Norwegian Media Authority the power to intervene if media ownership structures threaten diversity and pluralism.

²⁸ This is donations exceeding NOK 35,000 to the national party organisation, NOK 23,000 to a county-level unit, and NOK 12,000 to a municipal-level unit. EUR 1 is approximately NOK 11.5.

²⁹ In recent years, the Progress Party received substantial contributions through an entity that pooled funds from undisclosed individuals. Between 2023 and 2024, donated a total of 12 million NOK to the party, including 5 million NOK in 2024, without disclosing the underlying source of the funds in received.

³⁰ See the 2024-2025 [Proposition 144 L](#) Amendments to the Political Parties Act (reporting and publication of contributions from behind-the-scenes donors).

³¹ The Committee comprises three members from political parties and three professional members.

³² In May 2025, the Party for Peace and Justice spent an estimated NOK 1.4 million (approximately EUR 119,000) on metro ads in Oslo. The donation was not initially disclosed, raising suspicion it might be from a foreign or anonymous source. Following disclosure, the PPAC ceased further investigation.

³³ The 2025 [World Press Freedom Index](#) by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranks Norway 1st globally for the ninth consecutive year.

The public Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (*NRK*) and the private *TV2* are the dominant national broadcasters. The *NRK* informed the ODIHR NAM that it plans an extensive election coverage for late August and September, including two debates among leaders of parliamentary parties and one between contenders for the prime minister in a talk-show format.³⁴ The *NRK* maintains an interactive digital tool designed to help voters identify which political parties align most closely with their views, which it sees as especially useful for younger voters.³⁵ It also produces programs in easy-to-read, national minority and sign languages.

The Norwegian Media Authority (NMA) oversees the activities of broadcast media and handles related complaints. The NMA does not conduct media monitoring during the campaign, but it produces annual reports on the compliance of broadcast media with applicable regulations, such as the prohibition on political advertising and the collection and dissemination of information about media ownership structures. The NMA implements media literacy initiatives, and for these elections, plans to conduct a campaign aimed at first-time voters related to recognising trustworthy information in news items.³⁶

I. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The 2023 Elections Act consolidated and streamlined the processes for complaints and appeals. The newly established National Electoral Commission (NEC), a permanent body responsible for resolving most electoral disputes in the final instance, comprises five members, of which the chairperson and two other members are judges, which in effect meets a prior ODIHR recommendation to have a judicial review of the administrative decisions by election management bodies. All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the dispute resolution processes.

Complaints related to the voter list may be submitted by voters or citizens seeking inclusion to the relevant MEC. Complaints regarding the approval or rejection of candidate lists must be submitted to the DEC within seven days after the approved lists are published. Voters and list submitters may file complaints regarding violations of election rules, criminal acts, and infringements on voting rights. Election results can be disputed by voters registered in the relevant constituency, list submitters, and parties running in all districts. Complaints on district-level results must be submitted within four days after the protocol with the results is announced. In all cases, further appeals are submitted to the NEC. There are no deadlines for considering complaints and appeals; however, the law requires that both be handled without undue delay. The EC decisions are final and not subject to appeal. By 24 June, the NEC considered and rejected two appeals and reversed a DEC decision on list registration.

The parliamentary elections are formally validated by the newly elected parliament, after considering the report and recommendation of the NEC. In a newly established procedure, in line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, list submitters and individual candidates may appeal this decision to the extent that it impacts them in terms of seat allocation. Appeals against the Storting's decision are adjudicated by the Supreme Court.

³⁴ See also the [NRK elections 2025](#) news portal.

³⁵ See the [tool \(*Valgomat*\) for 2025 elections](#).

³⁶ For example, prior to the September 2021 elections, the NMA developed a [media literacy toolkit](#) targeting senior citizens, who were [identified](#) as more susceptible to fake news.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a high level of confidence in all aspects of the electoral process. While they unanimously welcomed the presence of international observers, most considered that a comprehensive election observation mission was not necessary. Nonetheless, many interlocutors emphasized the value of an external assessment in light of the newly introduced Elections Act. Although the Act enjoys broad support among election stakeholders, it introduces several changes that have yet to be tested in practice, particularly regarding vote-counting procedures, publication of results, and ensuring equal access for voters with disabilities. Additional important amendments related to campaign financing were also adopted ahead of the elections, and the overall system of political finance could benefit from closer scrutiny, particularly in light of the authorities' intention to further review the relevant legislation after these elections. While interlocutors generally found physical accessibility to polling stations to be well addressed, other issues of participation of persons with disabilities could benefit from further review.

Based on these findings, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an Election Expert Team (EET) for the 8 September 2025 parliamentary elections. The EET should assess the regulatory framework governing election proceedings, with particular attention to recent legal changes and new systems, the accessibility of various stages of the electoral process for persons with disabilities, as well as the political and campaign finance framework.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Geir Håkon Johansen, Senior Adviser, Section for Eastern Europe / OSCE

Erik Furu, Coordinator for Council of Europe Affairs, Section for Human Rights, Democracy and Gender Equality

Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Siri Dolven, Deputy Director General

Cathrine Sørli, Head of Evaluation and Analysis

Sissel Lian, Senior Adviser

Øyvind Kind Robertsen, Senior Adviser

Directorate of Elections

Benedicte Bjørnland, General Director

Julie Janssen, Senior Adviser

National Electoral Committee

Ørnulf Røhnebak, Leader

Jan Petersen, member

Jan-Morten Sundeid, Head of Secretariat

Ministry of Justice

Kristin Hemmer Mørkestøl, Deputy Director General

Camilla Elseth, Senior Adviser

Anniken Grønli Foss, Senior Adviser

Norwegian National Security Authority

Andreas Skjöld-Lorange, Specialist Director

Oslo City Council Administration

Karina Miller, Head, Department for General Elections

Petrus Granlund, Special adviser, Department for General Elections

Akershus District Electoral Committee

Thomas Sjøvold, County Mayor and Leader of the County Electoral Committee

Are Ausland, Senior Adviser

Elin L'Estrange, group leader of the Labour Party in Akershus County

Kjersti Sjaatil, Head of Elections

Political Party Act Committee

Ragna Aarli, Leader

Daniel Giske, Head of Secretariat

Norwegian Media Authority

Mari Velsand, Director General

Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation

Laurie MacGregor, Project Manager

Kyrre Nakkim, Head of Economics and Politics, NRK News desk

Political Parties

Marit Arnstad, MP, Centre Party
Kathrine Kleveland, MP, Centre Party
Siv Mossleth, MP, Centre Party
Cecilie Juul Stensrud, Political Adviser, Centre Party
Tom Erlend Skaug, Secretary General, Conservative Party
Pia Wexels, Campaign Manager, Conservative Party
Sverre Myrli, MP, Labour Party
Mari Aaby West, Deputy Party Secretary, Labour Party
Mari Marte Tingelholm, Political Adviser, Labour Party
Nikolai Vadseth, Administrative Adviser, Labour Party
Fredrik O. Carstens, Secretary General, Liberal Party
Bard Hoksrud, MP, Progress Party
Ola Buvik Skedsmo, Political Adviser, Progress Party
Reidar Strisland, Party Secretary, Red Party
Johan Brox, Political Adviser, Red Party
Audun Herning, Party Secretary, Socialist Left Party

Civil Society

Guro Slettemark, Director, Transparency International Norway
Henrik Urdal, Director, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Cato Lie, Senior Adviser, The Norwegian Federation of Persons with Disabilities (FFO)
Olav Østrem, *Faktisk*
Solve Karlsen, *Faktisk*
Anne Sofie Molandsveen, Norwegian Capacity to International Operations (NORCAP)
Lisa Jacobsen, NORCAP
Sondre Martinussen, NORCAP
Sara Rydland Nærum, Managing Director, Norwegian Women's Lobby
Johannes Bergh, Research Director, Institute for Social Research
Signe Bock Seggaard, Research Professor, Institute for Social Research

International Community³⁷

Representatives of diplomatic missions of Czechia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United States.

Meta Platforms, Inc.

Martin Ruby, Director for Public Policy, Nordic Countries
André Assarsson, Government Manager, Nordic Countries

³⁷

The ODIHR NAM extended an invitation to representations of all OSCE participating States resident in Norway.