

ENGLISH



of Immigration

Events calendar

January

- On 1 January the former Integration Department at the UDI is restructured into a separate directorate: the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDI). The Department for Regions, Reception and Return is established.
- Trygve G. Nordby resigns as Director General. Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen is named Acting Director General.

February

- Several amendments to the Immigration Act enter into force. These amendments include measures against abuse and forced marriages.
- A fire at the embassy in Damascus halts the processing of immigration cases.
- The Dublin Agreement is expanded to also apply between Norway and Denmark.
- NORVIS, a new system for processing visa cases, is commissioned.

March

- Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen is appointed as the new Director General of the UDI.
- Ny i Norge ("New in Norway"), the information portal for recently arrived immigrants, is launched.
- The Norwegian daily newspaper VG highlights the UDI's granting of temporary residence permits to 197 Kurds; called the MUF case (temporary permits without family immigration).
- The departure centre at Lierskogen is opened. This centre provides housing for asylum seekers whose applications for asylum have been rejected with final effect.

April

- Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, convenes an independent commission of inquiry to review the processing of the so-called MUF case by the UDI and AID (the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion). In this connection, Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen takes a leave of absence.
- Ida Børresen, Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Education and Research is named Acting Director General.
- A new programme for return and repatriation to Afghanistan is introduced.

May

- Afghan refugees start a 26-day hunger strike to draw attention to the situation in their country of origin and protest against being returned there. They end their strike when promised legal assistance to review their asylum applications.
- The Graver Commission of inquiry issues its first interim report on the MUF case. Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen resigns her position as Director General.
- The UDI resumes processing of asylum applications from Ethiopian nationals following the suspension in November 2005.

June

- The Graver Commission of inquiry presents its second interim report on the MUF case.
- The UDI arranges a knowledge-exchange conference on secure sections at reception centres.
- Parliament's Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs holds open hearings on the MUF case.
- The theme of UDI's spring conference is "The best interests of the child and regulated immigration – a contradiction in terms?"
- The UDI arranges the first European conference on residence cases: "Managed Migration".
- The website Landinfo is launched.

July

- Due to unrest and hostilities in Lebanon, the UDI temporarily ceases the processing of some cases from this country.

August

- Case processing for children who have been waiting for a decision for a long time is put on hold. Pending amendments to the regulations, no decisions are to be made in cases involving children who have been in Norway for three years or more.

September

- A new act relating to citizenship enters into force.
- The UDI holds a national conference for operators and managers of reception centres.
- A seminar for Interdisciplinary cooperation against human trafficking is held in Oslo.

October

- New provisions concerning the right to apply for work and residence permits from Norway enter into force.
- The documentary "The interview – behind the doors at the UDI" is aired on NRK 1, giving a unique insight into how interviews with asylum seekers are conducted.
- Norway and Russia enter into an agreement to simplify travel between the two countries.

November

- The return obligation for Somali nationals is halted.
- Ida Børresen is appointed the new Director General of the UDI.
- The Directorate of Health and Social Affairs and the UDI hold a seminar on the children of mentally ill asylum seekers and children with mental problems who apply for asylum.
- SESAM, a system for electronic communication with reception centres, is commissioned.
- The UDI holds a specialist meeting on labour immigration through the study permit in Norway.

December

- The UDI receives instructions concerning the introduction of temporary work permits of six months' duration to assumed victims of human trafficking.



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Facts and figures, which is published together with the annual report, gives a supplementary picture of the immigration's activity in concrete, measurable quantities, with emphasis on the Directorate of immigration's work in 2006.



The UDI: objectives, values and figures

The UDI's main objectives:

- The UDI shall implement and contribute to the development of the Government's immigration and refugee policies.
- The UDI shall carry out its duties as efficiently as possible within the framework of the Acts, regulations, directives and international obligations.
- The UDI shall be a user-oriented and open directorate.

The UDI's core values

Dignity

Treat users and their situation with respect. Treat your colleagues with respect and do what you can to ensure a good working environment.

Professionalism

Ensure quality and efficiency in everything you do. Be professional and objective. Be loyal to the regulations, directives and our main objectives.

The total picture

See the total picture and the interaction between our duties. Take joint responsibility for creating good results. Communicate openly and clearly.

The UDI is Norway's central executive body for immigration and refugees. Its duties are laid down in the annual appropriations letter from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. Within the framework of political decisions, the UDI both facilitates lawful and welcomed immigration, involving the provision of protection to refugees as necessary, and contributes to the prevention of unlawful and unwelcome immigration.

The UDI also plays a key role as the competent authority in this field. In interaction and dialogue with the Ministry, the UDI sets the agenda for the formulation of policies and regulations. The work of the UDI is based on analyses of its own operation, knowledge gained from research and development

projects and an in-depth knowledge of national and international trends.

The UDI shall treat users with respect both in its role as service provider and facilitator and in its role as an inspection authority. This means that cases should be processed within a reasonable amount of time and that applicants must receive adequate and comprehensible information while the case is being processed and in the decision itself.

As an open directorate, the UDI endeavours to give users, the media and the general public an insight into its activities and an understanding of the regulations within the immigration field and of the administrative work performed by the immigration authorities.

Key figures 2006

	2004	2005	2006
Budget	NOK 5 168 million	NOK 4 650 million	NOK 1 458 million
UDI operations	NOK 464 million	NOK 444 million	NOK 378 million
Number of processed asylum cases	12 500	7 500	4 200
Number of processed work and residence cases	59 700	70 000	64 900
Number of processed citizenship applications	8 800	13 900	13 700
Number of residents at reception centres (average per month)	14 300	10 200	8 090
Number of persons who received protection or residence on humanitarian grounds	4 200	3 400	2 600
Number of family immigration permits	12 800	13 000	14 000
Number of persons granted work permits	33 000	50 500	71 000
Number of incoming calls received by the switchboard	267 600	236 000	231 850
Number of visitors to the service centre	23 000	21 300	25 600
Number of enquiries to the information service	192 750	141 700	169 700
Number of e-mails answered by the information service	10 200	13 200	26 600

1. The change from 2005 to 2006 is due to the transfer of responsibility for the integration subsidy for newly arrived refugees to IMDi.

The Director General's comments

2006 was a demanding year for the Directorate of Immigration (UDI), and it is impossible to look back over the year without mentioning the investigation of the Directorate. This was a year dominated by the public debate on the UDI and the challenges faced by the Directorate following the processing of 197 applications for temporary residence permits from North Iraqi Kurds (called the MUF case).

One of the results of the MUF case was that the undersigned was asked to take on a new job in a new field literally overnight. The intense media attention on the MUF case, and the politically volatile field the UDI is part of, led many to warn me against taking the job. However, I found the UDI to be a well-structured organisation with competent employees who welcome innovation and change. They are also deeply committed and highly aware of the importance of the UDI's social duties.

With this point of departure and with such professional employees, it was easy for me to accept the job at the UDI on a permanent

basis. However, that does not alter the fact that the UDI is facing a great many challenges. There will always be many areas that can be improved in such a large and diverse organisation. The UDI manages important responsibilities on behalf of Norwegian society. Norway's migration challenges, including such issues as the need for labour and the effective protection of people who have fled their native country, represent the UDI's challenges. We must perform our duties in the best interests of society and with loyalty and respect for the individuals who seek our assistance.

The UDI believes that it is important to cooperate positively with the other authorities within the immigration administration, the foreign service missions, the police, the UNE (the Immigration Appeals Board) and IMDi (the Directorate of Integration and Diversity). Good interaction within the administration is a vital part of how we can guarantee our users the service and predictability they are entitled to, whether they are individuals, employers or other actors in the field.

The UDI's case load is increasing, and case processing times and waiting times at the UDI are too long. No one regrets this more than we do. However, I feel reassured by the spirit of the people who work at the UDI, and by their willingness to adapt and seek new solutions. This will enable us to streamline our work and case processing, so that we can be in a position to increase our productivity without compromising quality.

The UDI must increase its use of electronic tools to make case processing more efficient. In 2007, we will be introducing electronic solutions that will enable applicants to apply and pay for a visa and then check the progress of their application on the internet. We plan to develop such solutions for other kinds of cases in the coming years. We must also use electronic solutions to improve how we interact within our own immigration administration and with other public agencies and external partners. This will enable us to redeploy resources and facilitate more expedient and better processing of all cases.



Ida Børresen
Director General



Norwegian immigration administration

The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) is the executive body for immigration and refugee administration in Norway. The UDI also plays a key role as the central competent authority in this field.

In interaction and dialogue with the Ministry, the UDI sets the premises on which the policies and regulations are based.

The Directorate also depends on effective cooperation and a positive dialogue with the rest of the immigration administration.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) has overall responsibility for Norway's refugee, immigration and integration policy. The Ministry directs the Directorate of

Immigration (UDI), the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) and the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) through Acts, regulations, budgets and letters of appropriation.

The Directorate of Immigration

The UDI is responsible for ensuring regulated immigration by processing applications for various types of residence and work permits, and for ensuring that refugees are granted protection through the processing of applications for asylum. The UDI also provides expert advice and recommendations in connection with the formulation of policies and regulations.

The Police

The National Police Immigration Service and the 27 police districts are responsible for many tasks in the field of immigration in both asylum and other cases. Important tasks include receiving and processing certain residence cases, registration and identity checks for asylum cases, border controls and the general regulation of immigration. The police are also responsible for the deportation of asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected and other illegal aliens. The police are under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and the Police (JD).

The foreign service

Norway's foreign service missions play an important role as the first-line service for foreign nationals who wish to visit or move to Norway. The duties of the foreign service missions in the immigration field include providing information on regulations and procedures, processing visitor's visa applications and receiving and preparing applications which are to be processed by the UDI. The foreign service missions are under the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD).

The Immigration Appeals Board

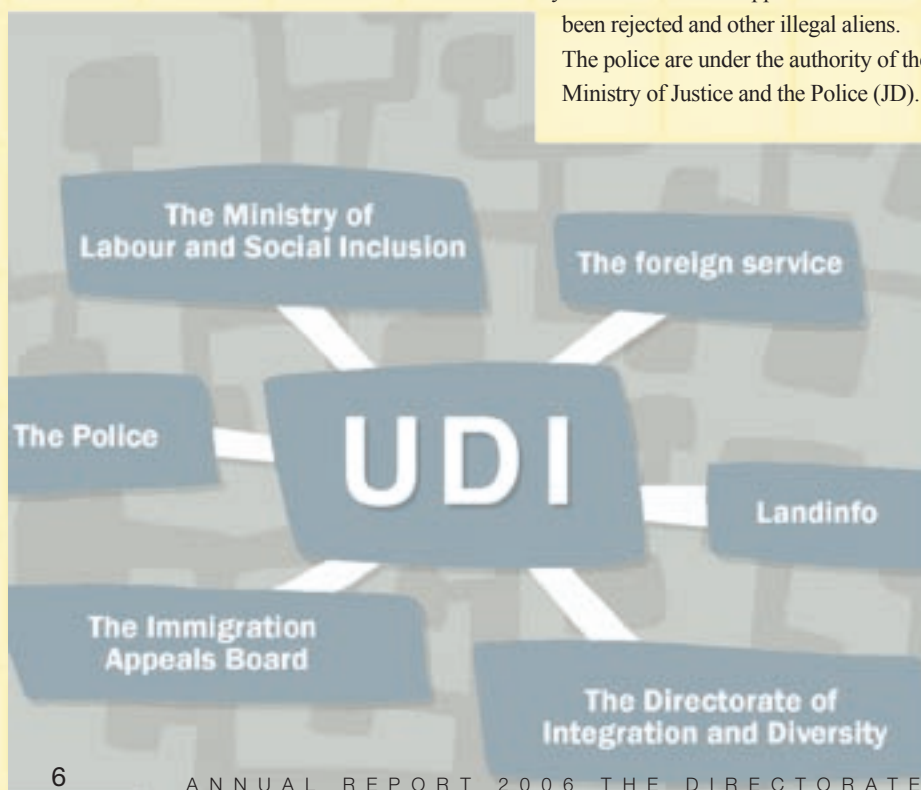
The UNE is an independent administrative body which acts like a court to consider appeals lodged against the UDI's decisions pursuant to the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act.

Landinfo

Landinfo is the immigration administration's specialist division for country information. Landinfo's task is to obtain and analyse information on social conditions and human rights in countries that the UDI, UNE and AID need information about. The division works independently within its area of responsibility but is administratively linked to the UDI.

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity

The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) was established on 1 January 2006, when responsibility for integration was transferred from the UDI. IMDi's tasks include increasing participation in the labour market for people with immigrant backgrounds, implementing government policy for settling refugees and following up the Introductory Act, the programme of rights and obligations to receive tuition in the Norwegian language and Sorting Report No. 49 (2003–2004) "Diversity through inclusion and participation – responsibility and freedom").



The UDI is investigated

In the spring of 2006, the UDI was the subject of public debate and inquiry due to the way in which it processed 197 applications for residence in Norway from a group of Kurds from northern Iraq (the MUF case).

The Graver Commission of inquiry

Professor Hans Petter Graver led the independent commission of inquiry that was appointed by AID in April 2006 to review the MUF case (see “The MUF conflict”, page 20). Ida Børresen, Deputy State Secretary, was named Acting Director General of the UDI.

The commission submitted two reports, one in May and one in June. The commission concluded that the UDI had violated its reporting obligation to the Ministry and stretched the regulations without establishing whether this practice was within the bounds of the Act and regulations. The commission also identified challenges in connection with understanding roles and the chain of authority, issues connected to production demands, the quality assurance of decisions and the establishment of UDI practice. The reports also referred to challenges relating to the UDI’s organisation culture and internal communication, management and human resources policy.

Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen stepped down as Director General after the commission’s first report in May.

This matter was also raised in Parliament, where a hearing was held under the auspices of Parliament’s Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs.

Follow-up

Due to the investigation, a follow-up project was established within the UDI. This project is scheduled for conclusion in the summer of 2007.

The follow-up project consists of seven sub-projects: reviewing quality in case processing, establishing practice and making it visible, internal control, management and human-resources policy, values and ethics, competence, communication and reputation.

Quality of case processing has been an important area in the project. General requirements have been drawn up for the quality of case processing. The UDI is currently formulating procedures and processes to ensure case processing quality on a day-to-day basis.

The project has examined and recommended a number of measures to quality-assure how practice is established with a view to ensuring that all practices are duly authorised and in accordance with political

signals.

The project has worked on introducing a framework for internal control and risk analysis in the residence and asylum departments. This will help the departments to raise the profile of, and act in response to, the circumstances that affect the ability and scope of the UDI to meet its objectives.

The project has also prepared a recruitment manual and the UDI’s core values and ethical guidelines have been reviewed. The project has also approved a number of immediate measures to ensure that the Directorate’s heads and executive officers have the appropriate competence. Correct competence is a basis for quality and efficiency in case processing. The project has met this challenge by introducing the UDI- school, a complete plan for developing and securing competence. Immediate measures have also been undertaken in the winter of 2006/2007

The project has devised a plan for internal communication, and is drawing up further schemes to strengthen management and human resources policy.



The UDI's main priorities in 2006

The national budget sets the financial framework for the UDI's activities and formulates the Government's general objectives in the policy area. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) formulates performance goals and priorities for the UDI's activities in the appropriations letter.

New user groups

Changes in the migration pattern lead to new requirements as to how the UDI communicates and provides services to its users. In 2006, the UDI's information service received enquiries from users from more than 100 countries. Almost half of those calling the information service are Norwegian citizens.

In 2006, the UDI received substantially more applications for work permits than in previous years, which in turn means much more communication between the UDI and employers. Employers need different kinds of information and services than individuals who are waiting for their family to enter Norway. Communicating with so many groups represents a challenge, and this is one particular area where the UDI wishes to provide better service in 2007.

User service

Answering enquiries from users is a key part of the UDI's services. Due to the steep rise in the number of telephone and e-mail inquiries in 2006, our accessibility goals were not met. To satisfy user needs, the UDI hired additional employees to answer telephone enquiries. More staff increases are planned in 2007.

In addition to internal service polls, a survey is undertaken each year amongst those who have submitted enquiries to the information service. The results from 2006 showed clearly that the users thought the waiting times on the telephone and at the service centre were too long. A large majority nevertheless felt that they were treated with courtesy and respect and that the information they received was generally clear and understandable.

In 2006, a qualitative survey was also carried out to determine what kind of information labour immigrants and employers need from public agencies. The survey showed a clear need for the coordination of information on rights, options and obligations and confirmed the importance of quick case processing of work permits.

Case processing times

In 2006, the case processing time was reduced slightly for most case types. However, the number of outstanding cases increased during the year.

A total of 77 000 residence permit applications were received for processing by the UDI, including appeals. Just under 65 000 applications were processed, exceeding the Ministry's production target of 62 500. The UDI gave priority to applications relating to the start of school, applications for work permits, applications for family reunification from children under 18 years of age who apply on their own, and applications for temporary residence from victims of human trafficking.

The goal for the processing of asylum cases was set at 5500. During the year 4200 cases were processed. The main reason for the shortfall relative to the production goal is the requirement to improve the quality of case processing and the fact that more time is now spent on interviewing asylum seekers. Moreover, many new employees were recruited in the asylum department during 2006, and this required resources for training and supervision.

Comprehensive approach

One priority area in 2006 has been the development of cooperation with the child welfare services, the police and the foreign service missions.

To improve service and rationalise case processing in general, the UDI launched several measures aimed at improving the work of the foreign service missions. These measures include the introduction of the



case processing tool NORVIS, training foreign service personnel and using cover staff from the UNE, UDI and AID during the summer. A special web portal (the Migration Portal) was developed, enabling foreign service mission staff to find the information they need to give correct information to applicants and to prepare cases properly. The portal was launched in February 2007.

Users must receive the same answers regardless of where they make their enquiry. To improve the coordination of information, the UDI cooperates with the police and foreign service missions on this matter.

The cooperation and coordination of information are particularly important aspects of crisis management. One example was the fire at the embassy in Damascus in February 2006, where the situation required close cooperation between the UDI and the UD (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in immigration cases, particularly with regard to case processing procedures and personnel.

Reports to the AID

Another of the UDI's priority areas in 2006 was its work to provide the Ministry with adequate and updated overviews of practice and development trends within the field of migration. Together with AID, in 2006 the UDI developed procedures for, and the content of, statistical reports to the Ministry. The UDI has also focused on its reporting duties to the Ministry by following up the reports from the Graver Commission, see page 7.

Differentiated asylum case processing

The UDI continued to differentiate asylum case processing in 2006. This means that different procedures are followed depending on the country that the applicant comes from or due to special circumstances in the case. For example, special procedures are used for

unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and for Dublin cases (see the "Dublin cooperation" on page 18). Differentiation of case processing has had particularly beneficial effects on asylum cases that require rapid processing (Dublin cases, the 48-hour procedure and the three-week procedure).

Operation of reception centres

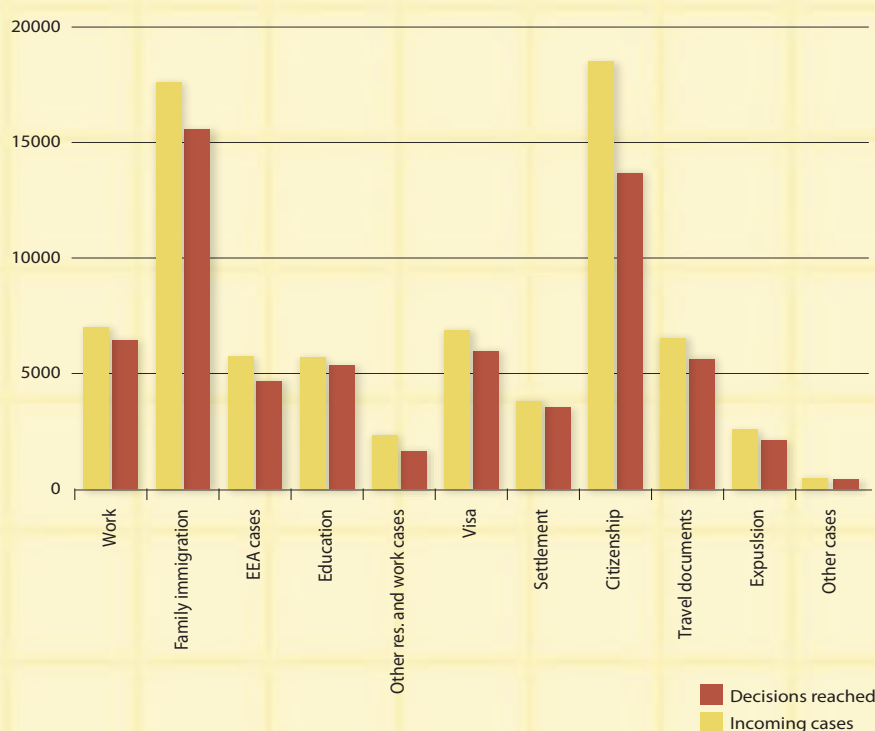
During 2006, a number of measures were launched to ensure sound financial management of the substantial funds spent on operating the state reception centres. One of these was SESAM, an electronic tool for communication with the reception centres (see also page 27). Together with the continuous development of the UDI's monitoring of the quality of the programmes provided to reception centre residents, this has led to a general improvement in the level of control. Special monitoring of financial and administrative matters has been introduced in addition to the monitoring of the programmes.

NORVIS

NORVIS is a new tool for processing visa applications. The system was launched in the spring of 2006. NORVIS links the foreign service missions to the immigration database, to which only the UDI, the UNE and the police were previously linked. NORVIS facilitates more efficient case processing and better interaction between the UDI and the foreign service missions.

The long-term aim is that NORVIS will enable the foreign service missions to decide more cases independently. NORVIS represents a stage in the development programme "A simpler electronic workday" (see page 27).

Received and concluded residence cases at the UDI including appeals. 2006



Migration on the international agenda

The term migration covers voluntary, involuntary, legal and illegal movement across national borders. People relocate for a variety of reasons. Students, labour migrants, refugees and human trafficking victims are all part of the international migration scene.

European Migration Conference

At the end of June 2006, the UDI held a conference for the European migration authorities (GDISC – General Directors' Immigration Services Conference) in Oslo: "Managed Migration". This was the first European conference on residence cases and formed part of the European cooperation on migration issues. This initiative reflects the strong international focus that is now found on student and labour immigration, family reunification and other temporary immigration. Among the themes for the conference were the social consequences of migration, labour immigration programmes for highly qualified labour, DNA testing, biometry, verification of documents, illegal immigration and family immigration. Delegates from 32 countries attended the conference.

What is migration?

Migration is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that comprises the need for labour, financial and democratic development, trade, integration, family immigration, human rights, social security and the need to combat illegal immigration.

Migration is a frequently discussed topic. It is no longer a question of whether a country should allow immigration, but rather how society handles the influx of immigrants. Each country must develop a clear migration policy that considers the connections between the different dimensions of migration.

When handled properly, migration can have a positive impact on the financial and social situation in each country and region. Migration nevertheless represents a major challenge for most societies.

International activities

In October 2005, the GCIM (Global Commission for International Migration) published its report on behalf of the UN which considers all aspects of migration. This report has become the standard reference for much of the work undertaken nationally and internationally. The European Commission has followed up many of the themes in a number of reports on how the EU wishes to deal with international migration.

Migration and development

The relationship between migration and development was in focus in 2006. In Norway, an inter-ministerial working group with representatives from the AID (the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion), the UD (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the UDI (the Directorate of Immigration) and Norad issued the report "Migration and development – better continuity and coordination" in May 2006. This is the first step on the way to further cooperation between the ministries and agencies

involved. The aim is to deal with migration in a manner that reinforces the positive effects of migration while reducing the negative consequences as much as possible.

Migration can promote development in the migrants' countries of origin through the transfer of funds and competence. Registered remittances alone constitute almost three times the amount of official development aid and are considered to be an important effect of migration. Norway wishes to establish the best possible system for remittances, so that as many migrants as possible use the official channels and so that as much of the money as possible reaches the intended recipients in developing countries.

Migrants also acquire knowledge, which in turn can be transferred to their country of origin. Norway intends to facilitate the development and exchange of competence which occurs when individuals move from one country to another. It is therefore necessary to focus on circular and non-



permanent migration by developing flexible rules. Furthermore, measures are needed to prevent a brain-drain of human resources from undermining poor countries. In particular, Norway wishes to counteract the brain drain from the health sector in developing countries.

Migration in Europe

Over the past five years, significant changes have been made to the EU's migration policy and procedures due to the heavy influx of migrants into Europe. In 2006, the EU implemented a number of measures in the migration field and has focused on cooperation with African countries, not least with respect to migration flows across the Mediterranean, and is therefore trying to encourage cooperation and dialogue with these countries.

When it comes to labour migration, the EU focuses on a needs-based approach to migration (such as skilled labour and seasonal workers), as well as a common legal status for all lawful work migrants. The possibility of temporary and circular migration will also be considered, in addition to issues relating to the brain-drain problem.

Countering human trafficking

Norway has long had a sharp focus on human trafficking and is working on prevention, protection and international prosecution measures. In December 2006, the Government launched its new action plan against human trafficking, and the Ministry also laid down new and expanded rules governing residence for assumed victims. The current scheme, which has a reflection period, was also extended.

More specifically, the UDI's efforts to combat human trafficking are primarily focused on ensuring that assumed victims are identified at an early stage and receive the follow-up they are entitled to within the Directorate's area of responsibility. Applications for asylum and residence and work permits from this group are given priority.

In 2006, substantial efforts were also made to provide assistance and protection to assumed victims in the reception system. In cooperation with the reception centres, the police, health service and child welfare services, the UDI has been actively involved in ensuring that unaccompanied minor asylum seekers who may have been victims

Interdisciplinary cooperation

During 2006, the UDI's Department for Regions, Reception and Return held five seminars on interdisciplinary cooperation to counter human trafficking. The target group comprised reception centre employees, child welfare service employees, police and health service employee in the host municipalities, the UDI, IMDi, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, outreach services, shelter centre employees and NGOs.

of human trafficking are cared for and treated appropriately. Procedures have been developed to provide possible victims with protection, health examinations and care.

The UDI has also established five reception centres for the close follow-up of asylum seekers over 18 years of age who may have been victims of human trafficking. The objective is to provide follow-up that satisfies individual needs for information, care, safety and security.



Countries in focus

Every year many people apply to enter Norway. They have different reasons for coming here, so the UDI needs to have a knowledge of the countries they come from.

In 2006, Poland, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Somalia in particular stood out, either by attracting media attention or because of the number of applicants, or both.

Lebanon

From 1975 to 1991, Lebanon was ravaged by civil war. The neighbouring states of Syria and Israel were also heavily involved during the civil war period, and Israel occupied areas of Southern Lebanon until May 2000. Syria withdrew its military presence from Lebanon in the spring of 2005, but continues to exert a strong influence in key areas of Lebanese politics.

On 12 July 2006, Israel carried out large-scale attacks against Lebanon after the Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel and took two Israeli soldiers as prisoners. A ceasefire was introduced on 14 August and has with only minor exceptions been observed. Approximately one million Lebanese fled the area, but most have now returned to their homes. In the wake of the war, a political power struggle arose which has so far not been resolved.

The war in the summer of 2006 led the UDI to set up an information telephone line for applicants and next of kin with ties to Lebanon. To minimise the burden on individual applicants, case processing was adapted to the special circumstances of the applicants. For example, the UDI gave priority to urgent cases and relaxed the requirements for visa and family immigration applications. While the situation lasted, the UDI did not make decisions which involved an obligation to return to Lebanon, and this included persons whose asylum application had been rejected.

Poland

After the Berlin wall came down in 1989, the Communists in Poland lost power through a partially free election. The Solidarity Party won a majority and formed the government. In 2006, the country was governed by the national conservative party PiS (Law and Justice) and the liberal party PO (the Citizens' Platform).

Poland's high unemployment rate is the biggest economic problem in the country.

Through their EU membership in 2004, Polish citizens gained easier access to the Norwegian labour market. Poland represented the largest proportion of work permits granted to foreign nationals in 2006. A total of 21 270 people were granted a first-issue permit, while 17 493 were granted renewed work permits. Possible motivation factors for working in Norway include high unemployment in the country of origin, the high wage level in Norway and having family and friends here.

Poland was also the country from which most family immigrants came in 2006. During the year 1700 permits were granted, mostly for reunification with a Polish national working in Norway.

Irak

From 1979 to 2003, Iraq was ruled by Saddam Hussein. His rule was characterised by suppression, conflict and war.

In March 2003, a coalition led by the USA invaded Iraq and Saddam Hussein was overthrown.

Northern Iraq has had limited self-rule since 1992. For many years, the two dominant parties in the region were in conflict, but since the ceasefire agreement in 1998 the region has seen positive development and political stability. There are no hostilities in the country and the security situation is generally good.

In southern and central regions of Iraq, the situation is quite different. In many places, the level of conflict is approaching that of civil war. In 2005 and 2006, Iraq saw a number of attacks on the civilian population based on religious and ethnic background.

Iraqis have been the largest group of asylum seekers over the past two years, although the figures are lower than at the end of the 1990s. The background of asylum seekers has gradually changed from being dominated by individuals from Northern Iraq in the 1990s (see "The MUF conflict" on page 20) to also include individuals from other parts of the country. Asylum applications often mention the risk of staying in Iraq due to a particular religious or ethnic background in a certain area.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has suffered political and military unrest for the last 25 years and has endured long periods of hostilities and anarchy. The Taliban declared Afghanistan an Islamic republic and introduced strict Islamic rule in 1996. In 2001, the Taliban were ousted and a transitional government took over.

Afghanistan is dominated by widespread poverty, extensive corruption, instability and a weak government. In the southern and eastern regions, armed conflict continues between coalition forces and the Taliban and other elements that are hostile to the government. The central authorities have no control outside the capital of Kabul. The rest of the country is generally controlled by warlords and local commanders.

Afghanis have for many years been one of the largest groups of asylum seekers in Norway. Until August 2003, all applicants were granted residence in Norway due to the security situation. Since April 2004, applicants not requiring protection have been rejected. Some particularly vulnerable groups, such as single women, unaccompanied minors, the sick and families with children, are granted residence either on protection or humanitarian grounds.

More than 3.5 million refugees have in recent years returned from neighbouring countries to what the UNHCR defines as safe areas. In 2006, Norway entered into an agreement with the UNHCR and Afghanistan concerning the return and reintegration of refugees. The agreement makes it possible to carry out both voluntary and forced return of former asylum seekers. One consequence of the agreement was the establishment of a project (the IRRANA project), which the UDI's six regional offices administer in cooperation with the IOM (the International Organisation for Migration). The project will run until April 2007 and consists of financial aid and various forms of assistance to those returning.

2. Information, Return and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan.

Somalia

The majority of the population in Somalia belongs to the Somali ethnic group, which consists of six large clan families divided into sub-clans. Siad Barre led the country from 1969 until he was overthrown in 1991, and since then Somalia has been without a functioning central government. In the northern regions, state-like entities have been established, called Somaliland and Puntland, where the security situation has been relatively good.

In southern Somalia, clan-based militia fractions led by warlords have established control over various areas. The situation has been dominated by lawlessness and periodic armed conflict. Ethnic minorities and weak clans occupied by the militia of another clan have been particularly vulnerable in this situation. In December 2006, Ethiopian forces entered southern Somalia and helped the transitional government to take control from an alliance of Sharia courts. The situation continues to be very unclear.

For several years, Somalis have been one of the largest groups of asylum seekers coming to Norway. Due to the increased risk of a major armed conflict, the UDI and the UNE withdrew the obligation to return to Somalia, including the northern areas of Somaliland and Puntland, in November 2006 (in February 2007 the suspension on the obligation to leave Norway was abolished). The end result of this was that the processing of Somali cases became very complex. Ethiopia's involvement in Somalia and the USA's attack on suspected Al Qaeda members in January 2007 made the situation even more acute.

Labour immigration

Since the expansion of the EU, labour immigration to Norway has risen dramatically, and this trend is continuing. In 2006, around 40 per cent more work permits were granted than in 2005. The highest number of permits was granted to persons from the EEA area, but the number of permits granted to skilled labour from third countries also increased. Around 2 000 skilled workers were granted work permits, with workers from India topping the statistics.

Sought-after skills

Suneel Regulla is one of around 300 Indians who were granted a work permit in 2006.

After earning his Master of Business Administration degree in India, Suneel was employed by the international consultancy company Capgemini, working for them first in Singapore, Tokyo and London and now more recently in Oslo.

"After two and a half years in London I wanted a fresh challenge and when the option of a year in Norway turned up I didn't hesitate to accept," says Suneel.

Friendly Norwegians

Suneel has been in Norway for a month now and has already formed some opinions about the country. One of the things he noticed quickly was that most Norwegians are friendly and easy to get along with.

"Almost everybody I have met speaks English, and that makes it so much easier to shop and find my way around."

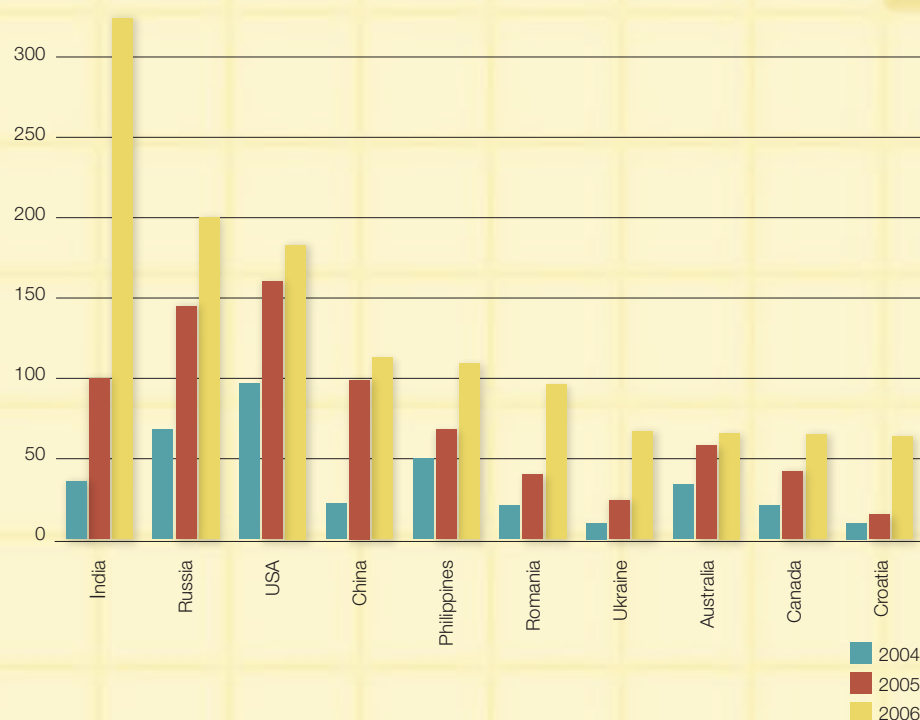
Suneel says that he read much about Norway before he arrived and was therefore prepared for the cold Norwegian winter. "I really had no idea how cold it actually is when it's 15 below and snowing and blowing a gale!"

India an obvious choice

Ivar Spydevold, marketing and communications director at Capgemini in Norway, says that his company is recruiting a growing number of people from India.

"Previously we generally found our employees in other European countries, particularly Sweden, Netherlands, Germany and France, but now we're unable to find competent employees in Europe. For us India is an obvious choice for recruitment. Several hundred thousand Indians are trained in IT each year, and they have excellent skills. As many Indian schools use English as their

Work permits granted to skilled workers, ten largest countries. 2004–2006



language of instruction, there is no language barrier either.”

Many Indians choose to either study or work abroad. Suneel says that he has many friends and acquaintances living beyond India's borders. “Many Indians train in fields where there is great demand for labour; currently IT, technological subjects and natural science subjects,” says Suneel.

Back to Hyderabad

After spending more than six years abroad, Suneel is planning to return to India after his year in Norway. He is planning to move back to the metropolis of Hyderabad in the south of India.

“I have gained invaluable international experience which will be extremely useful when I return to India,” concludes Suneel.

Labour in demand

On several occasions the political authorities have pointed out that Norway has and will continue to have a shortage of skilled workers. A national strategy for increased and targeted labour immigration is therefore needed, also covering countries outside the EEA area.

However, Norway is competing with a number of other countries for labour with skills and qualifications in particular trades. This can be seen in connection with the future demographic trend where the proportion of elderly citizens is increasing and the need for labour is growing significantly.

To meet the competition for skilled workers, Norway must be seen as an attractive choice. Therefore, in 2006 the Directorate concentrated on preparing easily accessible information on the conditions for different types of permits, application procedures and requirements regarding necessary documentation. To speed up case processing, the Directorate has also made organisational changes to process the greater influx of cases and intensified its cooperation with employer and employee associations.

Skilled worker

A skilled worker, previously called a specialist, is a person with training in a trade or special qualifications needed in the Norwegian labour market. Training in a trade means vocational training corresponding to at least three years of upper secondary school or a degree from university or college. Special qualifications means competence gained through practical work experience, possibly in combination with some training.

Organisation of case processing

The UDI wants to process applications for work permits quickly. Procedures were therefore established to filter the applications for which all the necessary information and documentation is available. When the conditions are deemed to be satisfied, a work permit is granted shortly after the case has been received by the Directorate. The same procedure applies to residence permit applications from citizens who come under the EEA regulations. However, it takes significantly longer to process cases where there is doubt and cases which are being considered for rejection. The estimated case processing time towards the end of 2006 was three to four months for EEA cases and four or five months for most work permit applications, including those from skilled workers.

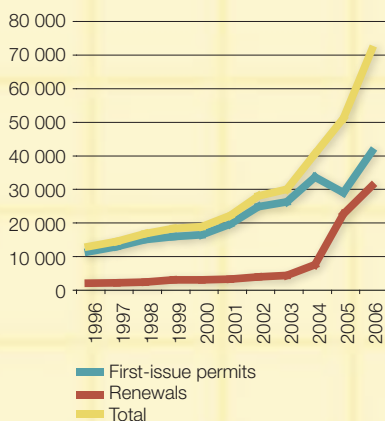


Engineers and IT competence

After many years during which craftsmen and health service personnel in particular came to Norway, the proportion of skilled workers in the IT industry and the oil and ship building industries has increased substantially.

In 2006, the highest number of permits for skilled workers was granted to Indian nationals. Compared with 2005, this figure has more than doubled. Other countries contributing skilled workers in a high number of trades are the USA, Russia, China and the Philippines.

Labour immigration permits. 1996-2006



Labour immigration from the EU/EEA

The largest group of labour immigrants from the EEA area comes from Poland. The trend shows that a growing proportion of this group wishes to have long-term or permanent residence, which is also reflected by the increase in family immigration. For employees from Poland and other countries that joined the EU in 2004, the transitional rules have been extended by up to three years from 1 May 2006.

The trend in 2006 was, however, for the basis for residence to increasingly be self-employment or service provision. For this group of applicants, the same rules apply as for applicants from the old EU countries.

On 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU. It has been decided that transitional rules will apply to these countries from the date on which they come under the EEA agreement. Norway has traditionally allowed musicians from Bulgaria to perform on temporary permits. Whether the EU membership will in the

long run lead this group to request permanent residence in Norway more frequently is difficult to determine.

Seasonal workers

Traditionally, many foreign seasonal workers have come to Norway each year, mostly from Poland and the Baltic states. Since these countries joined the EU, the Directorate of Immigration has seen an increasing number of applications for seasonal worker permits from nationals from countries such as Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

A condition for a work permit as a seasonal worker is that the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV) recommends approval of the permit. The UDI had close cooperation with the local NAV offices in 2006, enabling these applications to be processed rapidly.

Social dumping

Labour immigration does not always take place in controlled settings. The Directorate has seen cases of unacceptable working conditions. To keep this problem in check, in



2006 the Directorate intensified its focus on drawing the line between real employees and service providers/self-employed people.

An EEA permit as a service provider may be granted to a person who enters Norway to provide a service based on a contract between a Norwegian company and the foreign company in the EEA area where the person in question is employed. As there is no requirement in the Immigration Act for a general wage agreement for service providers, some less reputable employers may offer workers standards that would not satisfy the normal requirements for working conditions in Norway. To remedy this situation, the Act relating to the General Application of Wage Agreements sets a minimum wage requirement for various trades and industries.

UDI's initiative

In 2006, the UDI also focused more on the actual employment relationship. The Directorate rejects applications where there is doubt as to whether the applicant is indeed a service provider or self-employed person or whether he or she is actually employed by a Norwegian company. The Directorate is also cooperating with other agencies, such as the Norwegian Labour Inspection Directorate, NAV and the tax authorities, to improve information measures providing employees and employers with an easy to understand and comprehensive overview of the regulations and penalties for violations.

When it comes to employees in Norway, it is easier to check that the requirements are satisfied. An employee must be paid according to the general wage agreement in force. If there is no agreement in the trade in question, the wage must be in accordance with what is normal in the trade/industry in question. If it subsequently becomes apparent that the wage requirement is not being met, the Directorate will rescind the permit. Serious violations of the Immigration Act or the Working Environment Act are dealt with by the police and the Norwegian Labour Inspection Directorate.

Other measures

On 1 December 2006, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Directorate and the Petroleum Safety Authority were authorised to intensify their efforts to control social dumping. They now have powers to shut down enterprises where there are violations of the working conditions.

In December 2006, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) sent a proposal for a new package of measures for comments and recommendations from interested parties. These measures are aimed at cleaning up the situation in the labour market and employment agencies and gaining more control over wages and working conditions.

International focus on labour immigration

- Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, spoke on a number of occasions in 2006 about the importance of labour immigration in the years to come. In October the Ministry announced that it would be looking into possible measures to satisfy the need for more labour immigration. One of the ideas the Ministry is going to assess is a points system for recruiting foreign employees. Similar systems have been introduced in Canada and Australia.

- A Spanish study estimates that Spain will need around four million immigrants before 2020 to satisfy the need for labour. This is because, as in the rest of Europe, low birth rates will lead to a considerable rise in the proportion of elderly people in the population.

- In September 2006, the Irish Government adopted a new Immigration Act which introduces measures to attract highly qualified employees from third countries. The designation "foreign national" is only used in the new act to refer to persons from countries outside the EU.

- Denmark introduced a scheme for specially qualified labour immigrants, such as research scientists, engineers, registered nurses and doctors. Under the scheme employees with an employment contract will be granted a work permit immediately.



In 2006, the UDI launched a renewed website which makes it easier to find information on permit application procedures. The website is available in English, and facts about a number of permits have also been translated into many other languages..

Asylum seekers and refugees

Each week, about 100 people from various countries arrive in Norway to seek protection. In 2006, 5300 applicants arrived from a total of 104 countries.

Asylum seeker or refugee?

An **asylum seeker** is a person who individually and with no prior notification asks the Norwegian authorities for protection and recognition as a refugee. The person is called an asylum seeker until a decision has been made on the application.

A **refugee** is a person fleeing, for example, from war, civil war or persecution. In a legal sense, a refugee is a person who satisfies the requirements in Article 1 of the UN Refugee Convention. A convention refugee is a person who has good reason to fear being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Processing asylum applications

Over the last three years, the number of asylum seekers has declined, yet a greater proportion of applicants are granted residence or work permits. The combination of higher number of eligible applications, applicants from many countries and fewer arrivals from each individual country is giving executive officers a broader range of work tasks and magnifying the need for interdisciplinary cooperation. It is necessary to have both a broad knowledge of countries and decision-making and interviewing skills.

The UDI aims to ensure that individual applications are processed in accordance with the regulations in force, as set out in the Immigration Act and international conventions and based on an assessment of the situation in the asylum seeker's country of origin.

The explanation given by the asylum seeker during the asylum interview is assessed together with his or her personal statement, necessary verifications and language tests, in addition to any additional information from the applicant and his/her references provided while the case is being processed. The UDI compares the

statement to facts about the conditions in the asylum seeker's country of origin.

Outcome of the application

There are five possible outcomes of an application for asylum:

- The asylum seeker is granted asylum and thus receives the status of convention refugee (i.e. the person in question satisfies the conditions in the Refugee Convention of 1951).
- -The asylum seeker is granted protection on grounds similar to a refugee situation.
- The asylum seeker is granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds.
- The asylum seeker's application is rejected.
- The asylum seeker's application is rejected pursuant to the Dublin Convention.

An asylum seeker whose application is rejected must return to his or her country of origin voluntarily. If the person in question fails to do so, the police will escort him or her out of the country wherever possible.

The Dublin cooperation

The Dublin cooperation is of great importance to the processing of asylum cases. The basic premise for this agreement is compliance with the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human



Rights. The agreement makes the country where the applicant initially applied for asylum or was granted a residence permit/Schengen visa responsible for processing an application for asylum. If another country that has acceded to the Dublin Convention is responsible for processing an application for asylum, the application submitted to the Norwegian authorities is rejected without further consideration.

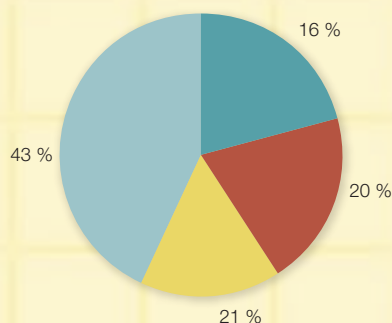
About one in five asylum applications in 2006 was a Dublin case. More than 40 per cent of these cases are resolved because the applicant's fingerprints are contained in the common European EURODAC database, where fingerprints of all asylum seekers are stored for a limited period of time.

Exclusion from refugee protection

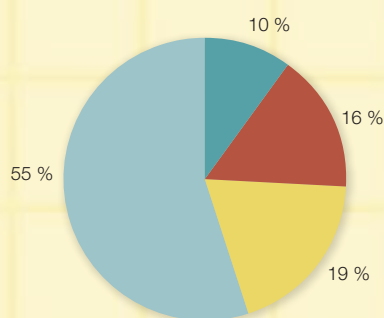
The Refugee Convention stipulates that asylum seekers who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity or other serious crimes shall be excluded from protection as refugees. Even if the asylum seeker is excluded, other international obligations, such as the European Human Rights Convention, may nonetheless stipulate that the person in question may not be deported from Norway if he or she could face the death penalty, torture or inhumane treatment in the country of origin. These provisions have so far been used in relatively few cases.

The Norwegian authorities pay close attention to how other Western countries handle these complex cases. In 2004, the UDI initiated a research project to compare Norwegian exclusion practice with that in Canada, Netherlands, Denmark and Great Britain. The project report was submitted in the spring of 2006 and a number of recommendations were made. One such recommendation was to establish a special group to process asylum applications in cases where serious crimes are suspected which might indicate exclusion. The group, which commenced its work in November 2006, will establish a more systematic approach in accordance with the principles applying to such cases.

Asylum decisions by the UDI. 2006



Asylum decisions by the UDI. 2005



■ Asylum
■ Other protection
■ Humanitarian grounds
■ Rejection*

* Only cases processed based on facts in issue

Identity issues

In 2006, the UDI put much effort into resolving issues concerning the identity of foreign nationals and the way in which identity is assessed and clarified in various case types. This is due to concern relating to threats of terrorism and security issues, the fact that some asylum seekers are unable to document their identity and the problem of forged identity papers.

In 2006, the media showed considerable interest in a case of forged identity papers allegedly sold in Iraqi and Kurdish communities. The case was brought to court and the principal perpetrator was sentenced to five years in prison.

The UDI's point of departure is that the credibility of immigration policy depends on it being impossible to forge papers to gain residence in Norway under a false identity. It is also important for the nation's security that the authorities know the correct identity of people who are lawfully resident in Norway.

One result of this work is a draft circular concerning the registration, assessment and amendment of identity information. The draft was distributed for comments and recommendations in January 2007. The circular aims to clarify the requirements for the documentation of identity and what is to be assessed in such cases.

The UDI also wants applicants to be more aware of the possible consequences if a claimed identity cannot be substantiated, for example when subsequently applying for a settlement permit or citizenship.



Resettlement refugees

Resettlement refugees are people who have fled their country of origin and are recognised as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They cannot continue living in the country they have fled to, and must therefore be resettled in a safer country.

In 2006, more than 900 refugees were granted residence in Norway, fully utilising the full annual quota. Two selection committee trips were made to Thailand and Malaysia, primarily to assess Burmese refugees.

The UNHCR presents the needs for resettlement on a global basis for the coming year, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) uses this information to determine which countries Norway will resettle refugees from. The decision is based on input from the UDI and a close dialogue with the UNHCR. The UDI cooperates closely with the UNHCR on resettlement, both with the resettlement department at the head office in Geneva and with the UNHCR's field offices.

The AID and UDI also participate in permanent working groups for resettlement

together with the UNHCR and the other 14 resettlement countries. The UNHCR arranges annual meetings with the humanitarian organisations involved and the resettlement countries. There is also close cooperation between the Nordic resettlement countries.

The UDI has entered into an agreement with the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) on transporting resettlement refugees to Norway. The IOM also assists with medical examinations of refugees as necessary before departure.

The MUF dispute

At the end of the 1990s, a large group of people from northern Iraq came to Norway and applied for asylum. After individual assessments of the asylum applications, around 2000 persons were granted a limited residence permit in Norway. These permits were given the name "MUF", a Norwegian abbreviation for "temporary residence permit without the right to family reunification".

Many of those who were granted a MUF permit remained in Norway. In 2005, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development drew up temporary regulations which enabled people from this

group to be granted an ordinary work permit if they were employed at a particular point in time. This permit would be valid for one year at a time, and facilitated the possibility of family reunification (after the first renewal) and permanent residence.

Of those who applied, around 550 were granted a residence permit pursuant to the regulations. Moreover, 197 persons were granted permits on strong humanitarian grounds pursuant to the Immigration Act. The permits granted on humanitarian grounds led to a commission of inquiry being convened (the Graver Commission, see page 7) to examine the UDI's work relating to this matter. The Ministry then decided to formulate new regulations to regulate applications for the renewal of residence permits from those who had received residence permits on humanitarian grounds.

In connection with the inquiry, it was decided to suspend all MUF applications. In the autumn of 2006, work permits which were valid for one year began to expire and many applied for renewal. The Directorate will resume the processing of these cases when the new regulations have been completed and these applications can again be processed.



Family immigration

In recent years, many persons have arrived in Norway to be reunited with their spouse, cohabitant, partner, child or parents.

High rate of family immigration continues

In 2006 14 000 family immigration permits were granted. This was a slight increase compared to 2005. Most of those who were granted a permit based on family immigration are nationals of Poland, Thailand, Somalia, Germany and Great Britain.

The increase is in part due to the fact that European nationals are increasingly applying for family immigration with their spouse, partner or cohabitant working in Norway. The EU expansion and the fact that Norway is an attractive country to work in may explain this increase. Family immigration also includes uniting foreign nationals with Norwegian nationals resident in Norway.

Pro-forma marriage

In recent years there has been an increasing focus on the abuse of the rules for family immigration, including pro-forma marriages where a marriage is entered into to obtain a work or residence permit. A pro-forma marriage does not constitute a valid basis for family immigration in Norway. In September 2006, AID instructed the Directorate to scrutinise cases more closely when a pro-forma marriage is suspected.

This type of case presents major challenges. The aim of preventing the misuse of the family immigration regulations must be balanced against an individual's right to family life. The Directorate cooperates closely with the foreign service missions and the police in these cases.

Combating forced marriage

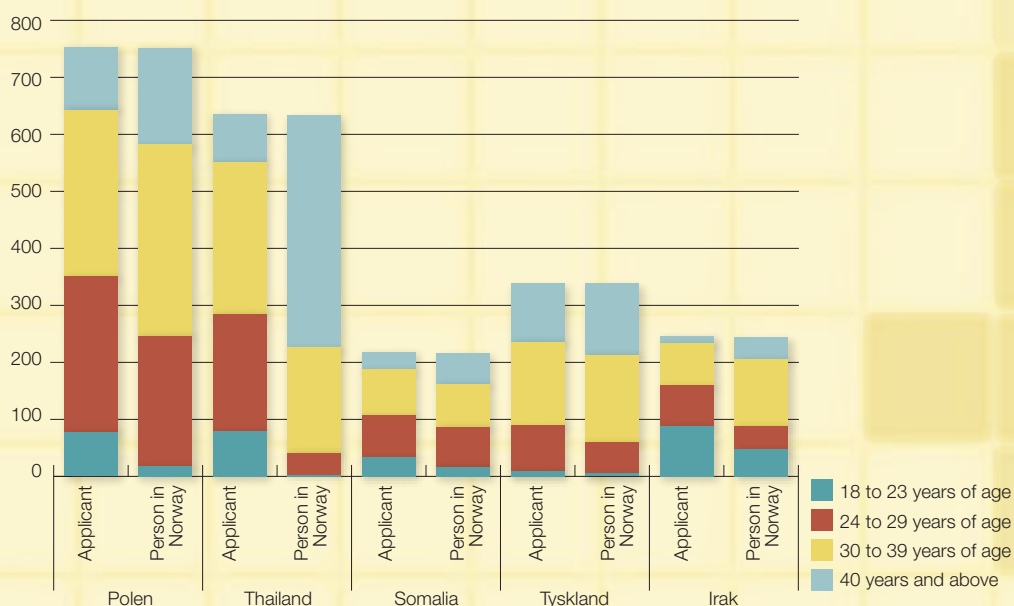
A forced marriage is a serious violation of fundamental human rights. There is currently no clear overview of the number of forced marriages in Norway. The UDI's

specialist team combating forced marriage worked on approximately 220 cases in this field from 2004 to 2006.

Immigration legislation makes it clear that forced marriage cannot provide a valid basis for family immigration. In February 2006, several amendments to the Immigration Act came into force, one of which is aimed at counteracting forced marriage by allowing the authorities to reject an application for a work or residence permit if the reference person, when asked, does not consent to the applicant being granted a permit, or if it is probable that the marriage has been entered into against the will of one of the parties. The aim of the amendment is to prevent a marriage that is entered into against the will of one of the parties from constituting the basis for a work or residence permit.

These measures must be considered together with other legal and practical measures introduced in recent years.

Family immigration permits for spouse/cohabitant/partner by age of the person residing in Norway and the applicant's age, five largest countries. 2006



Specialist team

UDI's team specialized in combating forced marriages was established in 2004. As part of their duties, they are to help those working with victims of forced marriages. Participants in this collaborative team are the UDI, the police, Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (BUFDIR). The team also places emphasis on cooperation with voluntary organizations. Funding has been granted in 2007 to establish this group on permanent basis.

Children and the immigration administration

Every year, several thousand children come to Norway. More than half come to be reunited with their family. Others come as adopted children, asylum seekers or on a visit.

The best interest of the child

There are many considerations to take into account when processing residence cases involving children. "The best interests of the child" must be the fundamental consideration. Other important aspects to consider include the child's health and connection to Norway, the care situation here and ties to the country of origin.

Many of the children who arrive or already live in Norway are affected

by applications being processed by the UDI. The best interests of the child are assessed in several types of residence cases, for example in family immigration cases, expulsion cases and in connection with applications for asylum. "Maria's story"³ (see text box) illustrates some of the aspects that the Directorate must take into consideration when deciding what is best for the child.

The example illustrates that deciding "what is in the best interests of the child" is a difficult process. Is it best for Maria to be granted residence? Experts will suggest that being separated from parents is a very heavy burden for children to bear. The UDI therefore finds that consideration of what is best for the child indicates that all necessary steps must be taken to reunite Maria with her mother.

The case also shows the tension between regulated immigration and what is in the child's best interest. Bearing the idea of regulated immigration in mind, it is not desirable for foreign national children to be left alone in Norway to obtain a residence permit. In most cases where children are left behind, the parents reappear after a period of time (after a few weeks to a year).

Maria's story

A mother from the former Eastern Europe and her child, Maria, are staying at a reception centre. Their application for asylum has been rejected. The mother places Maria with another family and disappears. This family does not want to be responsible for Maria and contacts the child welfare services in the municipality. Maria continues to stay at the reception centre and applies for asylum as an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker. The UDI rejects her application because she does not need protection and there are indications that she knows where her mother is.

3. This is not an authentic case, but elements of the story have been taken from real events.



Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable because they usually come to Norway without an accompanying carer.

When assessing a child's grounds for asylum and need for protection, special attention is paid to whether there is a risk of persecution of a nature particularly damaging to children (such as forced marriage or forced recruitment into military service), and consideration is given to the fact that children are vulnerable and less tolerant than adults. The threshold for granting them protection may therefore be lower than for adults.

The UDI gives priority to applications from unaccompanied minor asylum seekers when processing cases, but many cases need closer examination. When a child does not need protection, residence on humanitarian

grounds is granted if the parents cannot be found in the country of origin or in a safe third country where reunification is possible.

One problem here is that many asylum seekers wrongfully claim that they are minors in an attempt to benefit from the special case processing given to this group. In the case of doubt as to whether the stated age is correct, the applicant is offered an age test. This test is voluntary and any doubt will be counted in the applicant's favour. In decisions made during 2006 where the applicant was age-tested, the tested person was found to be 18 years or older in 38 per cent of the cases.

Important to find caregivers

The UDI traces parents or other caregivers for unaccompanied single minors without an independent need for protection. This is partly done to enable the child to establish contact with his/her parents or caregivers and receive the security this provides.

In 2006 UDI worked on the possibility to develop a method that can be used in its

tracing activities, at the same time it also collected information on the experiences other countries have gained from their tracing activities.

The Rights of the Child

In 2003, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was incorporated into the Human Rights Act. The convention itself does not give any child or adult the right to asylum or residence in Norway, but it does take precedence over other Norwegian legislation in the event of a conflict between the Convention and the legislation.

Four articles are especially relevant for children and immigration cases:

- Article 3 - the child's best interests
- Article 10 - family reunification
- Article 12 - the right to express one's views
- Article 22 - child refugees



The UDI's spring conference

The topic for the UDI's spring conference in 2006 was children in immigration cases, including the balance between the best interests of the child and regulated immigration. Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, signalled that the regulations for processing asylum cases concerning children would be relaxed, and was particularly interested in cutting the waiting time for children staying at a reception centre.

Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child was an issue that many of the experts addressed:

Professor Kirsten Sandberg elaborated on the importance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the field of immigration, pointing out that the child's health, connection to Norway, ties to the country of origin, the need for stability, the care situation and the parents' health are factors to take into consideration when assessing what is in the best interests of the child.

Anne Kirsti Ruud, a clinical educator, examined the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and explained how fleeing their country and the waiting period at a reception centre influence children's mental health. She pointed out that children at reception centres are not only in a post-traumatic state, but also in the middle of a traumatic situation.

Children and young people at reception centres

As of 31 December 2006, around 2000 children were staying at reception centres. This means that one in four residents at a reception centre is a child. Reception centres are intended to be places of temporary residence, rather than a home where children grow up.

The early development conditions of children at reception centres are often in the public eye. This issue was addressed at the UDI's spring conference. It is important that children at reception centres have day-to-day routines and tasks that can help them experience life as meaningful.

Reception centres in Norway support parents in their provision of care. School-age children must go to school and children over two years of age must have daily programmes lasting at least three hours at a day-care centre or the reception centre's child base. Activities can help to normalise an abnormal life situation, and children seeking asylum must therefore have one or more optional recreational programmes and the opportunity to have normal contact with children of the same age in the local community.

In accordance with the UDI's focus on improving living conditions for families with children, these families are offered flats in normal housing areas wherever possible. The UDI is also considering the introduction of a requirement for minimum housing standards for families with children.

Child welfare

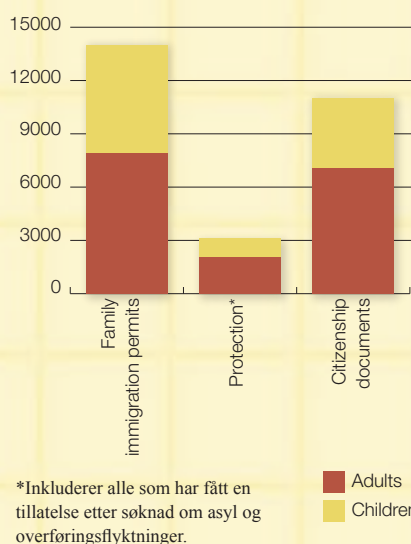
The Child Welfare Services Act applies to all children in Norway, including children without a residence permit, for example those staying at a reception centre.

In recent years, the UDI has seen an increase in the number of child welfare cases. Mental illness, events in their country of origin, fleeing their country, the exile situation, the stay at the reception centre and uncertainty about the future can affect the ability of parents to provide care for their children.

Many parents with mental problems therefore need assistance from the child welfare services, such as parental guidance and outreach contact. In some cases a child may move to a child protection relief home or foster home for a brief or long term.

From 1 October 2007, the Ministry of Children and Equality will offer unaccompanied minor asylum seekers under 15 years of age housing and care through the child welfare services. The UDI will help the child welfare services take over the responsibility for caring for these children. For the time being, the UDI will continue to have care responsibility for unaccompanied minors over 15 years of age.

Permits granted to children and adults. 2006



Visas

Record number of visa applications

The number of visa applications received by Norway was higher in 2006 than ever before. Some foreign service missions experienced a dramatic increase in the number of applications compared with

2005. This increase reflects a growing interest in Norway as a tourist destination. The foreign service missions with the highest increase are Moscow (37 per cent), Beijing (46 per cent) and Shanghai (59 per cent).

The Schengen cooperation

Through its participation in the Schengen agreement, Norway undertakes to cooperate with the other Schengen countries on issuing visas. This means that all the countries comply with common visa regulations and endeavour to harmonise their practice in the processing of visa applications.

A visa to one Schengen country is generally also valid in the other countries. Thus a person entering Norway on a visa may freely travel in other Schengen countries while the visa is valid.

Steep rise in the number of applications

There was a sharp rise in the number of applications for Norwegian citizenship in 2006. As the general rule is that applicants for Norwegian citizenship must have lived in Norway for seven years, or four if they are married to a Norwegian citizen, the number of applications generally coincides with the number of asylum and residence permits granted seven and four years ago.

New Citizenship Act

On 1 September 2006, a new Citizenship Act came into force in Norway. The new Act continues the principle of one citizenship. The major changes are:

- Children automatically become citizens if the mother or father is a Norwegian citizen, regardless of the marital status of the parents and regardless of whether the child was born in Norway or abroad.
- Children may apply for citizenship independently once they have turned 12 years of age.
- A settlement permit is required.
- There are requirements concerning Norwegian language skills (to be implemented from 1 September 2008)

Citizenship ceremony

From 1 September 2006, applicants who have been granted Norwegian citizenship are invited to a ceremony held by the County Governor. The ceremony is considered to be a dignified and solemn celebration of the transition to Norwegian citizenship.



The UDI as a workplace

The UDI is characterized by a young staff (of workers) where most of the people are highly educated. Many female academicians choose UDI as their first working place.

The UDI desires to be an attractive work place, for this reason, work with developing employee competence and a positive work environment was strengthened in 2006.

The UDI's Director of Human Resources, Astrid Aksnessæther, is responsible for the Directorate's human resources development, where recruitment, motivation and development are the core activities.

The working environment is important

"The UDI is paying greater attention to psychosocial matters in our health, environment and safety activities," says Astrid Aksnessæther, Director of Human Resources.

When talking about HES activities, the focus has often been on physical working conditions such as light, noise or air quality. As 2006 was dominated by the Graver Commission's inquiry (see page 7), reports and the aftermath, the UDI's HES activities have focused on psychosocial conditions.

"We have addressed the issues that were raised by the inquiry report and had a constructive dialogue with the trade unions during this process," says Aksnessæther. "The challenge in 2006 was nevertheless to find a balance between following up the report and following up our employees, while continuing to make decisions relating to a growing number of immigration cases."

"It is worth noting that in spite of the difficult times we experienced last year, sickness absenteeism decreased, particularly in the autumn of 2006. This is quite the opposite trend to that experienced by other state agencies, where the sickness absenteeism rate is increasing," she continues.

Increased competence

In 2006, the UDI continued its efforts to raise staff competence and to implement and integrate the Directorate's core values in its day-to-day activities.

"We are continuing to work on ethics and values, requirements for managers and employees, managerial evaluation and training employees in the UDI's core competence. Refresher courses on human rights and the integration of positive values are a key part of ensuring quality in our decisions and the way in which we treat our users," Aksnessæther says. She also adds that the UDI needs to continue the development of IT-related knowledge and understanding of technology.

"Visiting other units within our organisation is also a scheme that will increase the competence level and give our employees wider perspectives. It is unquestionably important that we see and understand the entire scope of the UDI's activities."

Challenges in a competitive labour market

The labour market will become even more competitive in the coming years. The UDI will need to assess the competence requirements of our employees and be an attractive workplace for the people already working here."

"We want to adopt a new approach to recruitment. We could consider lowering the education requirements. We may find that we don't need as many people with for example, a master's degree within our



organisation. Other types of skills may be important. New impulses are healthy in an organisation as large as the UDI, but we must also ensure a degree of continuity. By being an attractive work place we will continue to strengthen the UDI in 2007,” concludes Astrid Aksnessæther, Director of Human Resources.

Who works at the UDI?

The UDI has highly educated employees, with many (around 22 per cent) being legal experts. The staff are young and the proportion of women is high.

The UDI had 749 employees at year-end, with approximately 100 staff members currently on leave. Eighty employees of whom 41 were temporary, left the UDI to seek new challenges.

In 2006, around 14 per cent of the employees had immigrant backgrounds⁴. The Directorate is actively seeking to increase this proportion, as our staff should reflect the multicultural situation within society in general. The UDI also cooperates with NAV and many people with an immigrant background have work periods with us throughout the year.

Competence at the UDI

The Directorate is putting much effort into developing the skills of its employees. A broad training programme has been offered throughout the year, including courses on basic human rights, immigration law, project management, managerial development, an introductory course for new employees and safety courses.

4. Immigrant background: first-generation immigrants and people born in Norway of two parents with a non-Norwegian background, excluding the Nordic countries.

Our “Faglig forum” (Expertise forum) is a programme aimed at all UDI personnel. External lecturers are invited to talk about relevant issues or we can ask one of our own experts to give a presentation. This forum is a source of inspiration, providing updates in our fields of expertise and acting as a common educational arena that improves interdisciplinary communication. The forum contributes to a common language and culture in important areas.

Four of these forums were held in 2006. The topics covered were control of the immigration field, the new Citizenship Act, legal source theory and forced marriage.

Electronic workday

The UDI is a modern organisation which focuses on electronic solutions. One of our goals is that by 2010 the immigration administration will be at the cutting edge of electronic case processing in public administration.

The development project “A simpler electronic workday” will make case processing more efficient, create a simpler workday for executive officers at all stages and ensure better services for users.

2006 was a year of comprehensive development in a number of areas. The most important of these was the introduction of two new systems: NORVIS and SESAM.

NORVIS is a new case processing tool for processing visas at the foreign service missions. The system also gives foreign service missions access to other relevant case information and is the first stage on the way to a common visa database for the Schengen countries (see also page 9).

SESAM is a new system for reception centres. The system will rationalise the supervision, administration and operation of reception centres. Since the launch of the first version, communication between the UDI and reception centres has almost exclusively taken place electronically. This saves the UDI much duplicated registration, while registration is executed without delay and data quality is improved. In 2007, the system will be expanded to cover resident and reception centre finances.

In 2006, work was also started on a common system for storing documents and developing web-based services for applicants. Common electronic document storage will ease case processing, as more of the information relating to a case will be available to those who need it. Services for applicants will also be improved, as in 2007 the UDI will test new electronic visa applications. Applicants can register their application, check the status of their case and pay the fee on the internet.

UDI employees as of 31 December 2006

	Total number	Men	Men %	Women	Women %
Senior management	8	6	75	2	25
Middle management	38	13	34	25	66
Total managers	46	19	41	27	59
Executive officers	544	175	32	369	68
Office staff	44	13	30	31	70
Total	634	207	33	427	67

Employees on leave are not included in this table.

The departments

International cooperation

The most important organisations and cooperation forums that the UDI participates in and cooperates with are:

- Schengen and EU. The UDI participates in various council groups and in the Strategic Committee for Immigration, Frontier Issues and Asylum (SCIFA). Under the EU commission, the UDI participates in a working group in connection with the Dublin Convention and EURASIL, a network of agencies in the asylum field.
- GDISC (General Directors' Immigration Services Conference), a forum for the director generals of the European migration administrations.
- The Nordic Immigration Commission (Nordic migration administrations).
- The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), a global cooperation forum for migration policy issues.
- The UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), on selecting resettlement refugees for settlement in Norway.
- Inter-Governmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies (IGC), which consists of a number of countries in Western Europe and the USA, Canada and Australia.

Department for Strategy and Coordination

The department is responsible for developing and communicating the regulations relating to the immigration field, for coordinating the UDI's participation in international cooperation and for preparing statistics and carrying out analyses.

Communications and Service Department

The department is responsible for general communication with a focus on society, the media and the UDI's users. It is also responsible for providing services to applicants and their contact persons. The Communications and Service Department is also responsible for coordinating strategic information programmes and for developing communication strategies, and manages the UDI's website and internal information service. The switchboard, service centre and Information Service for UDI (OTS) also come under this department.

Administration Department

The department is responsible for financial, budgetary and operational management and human resources, and is also responsible for human resources administration and competence development, administration of the computer system for immigration and refugee cases (DUF), other information and communications systems (ICT), the archive, security, crisis and contingency planning, office services and the operation of the buildings.

Residence Department

This department's primary task is to process cases relating to work permits, family immigration, visas, study permits, citizenship and expulsion. The department also assists in developing practice in the residence field.

Asylum Department

The primary task of the department is to process applications for asylum in an appropriate and efficient manner and to process the number of resettlement refugees stipulated each year by the Norwegian Parliament and the Ministry. The department also assists in developing practice in the asylum field.

Department for Regions, Reception and Return

This department, established on 1 January 2006, manages all tasks connected to the reception of asylum seekers, from their arrival at a transit centre, through their stay at a regular reception centre to their settlement or return. The department has six regional offices.

Internal audit

In 2006, the UDI hired an internal auditor as the first stage in the establishment of an internal audit system. The internal audit service will help the organisation's management to control its activities through an assessment of the Directorate's management and control processes.



Management

Ida Børresen (56), Director General
Has a cand.polit. degree in political science from the University of Oslo. Acting Director General from 7 April 2006, and previously Deputy Secretary General and Director General at the Ministry of Education and Research, consultant and partner at STRADEC a.s., consultant and principal officer in the Ministry of Justice. Chairman of the board of Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and member of the board of the National Theatre.

Gry Aalde (37), Acting Deputy Director General

Has a cand.jur. law degree from the University of Oslo. Acting Deputy Director from June 2006 to February 2007. Previously consultant for the ISCO Group, head of Department at the Ministry of Education and Research, assistant head of the University and College Section and various project manager positions.

Frode Forfang (47), Deputy Director General and Acting Head of the Department for Strategy and Coordination

M.Sc. in political science from the London School of Economics and cand. mag. degree from the University of Oslo. Deputy Director General from February 2007. Head of the Department for Strategy and Coordination since 2002. Previously head of the information office at the UDI, State Secretary for the Minister of Interna-

tional Development, international secretary for the Norwegian Labour Party and head of information for the EU commission's Oslo delegation.

Agnar Kaarbø (45), Head of the Communications and Service Department

Journalist from the Norwegian College of Journalism. Head of the Communications and Service Department since September 2005. Previously journalist for the major Norwegian daily Aftenposten, head of the political department in Dagsavisen, editor and journalist of Kommunal Rapport.

Tore Dæhlin (52), Head of the Administration Department

Cand.polit. degree in political science from the University of Oslo; M.Sc. in business from the Norwegian School of Management and additional education in labour law and IT from the University of Oslo and NTNU. Head of the Administration Department since March 2003. Previously Administration Director for the Norwegian Competition Authority, organisation director of Kommunalbanken Norway and manager of the National Academy of the Arts.

Morten Hansen (56), acting head of the Residence Department

Cand.jur. law degree from the University of Oslo. Assistant head of several units/sections of the Legal Department and

Asylum Department at the UDI. Deputy head of section of OPA from 2003. Before joining the UDI in 1988, had many years of experience from several positions and departments at the National Insurance Administration, and for a period also at the Ministry of Social Affairs. Also has experience from a legal office, social security office and as a chief superintendent of the police.

Karl Erik Sjøholt (40), Head of the Asylum Department

Cand.jur. law degree from the University of Oslo. Various managerial positions at the UDI since 1998. Head of the secretariat for the Immigration Act Committee 2002–2004. Previously executive officer at the National Insurance Court and Deputy Director General of the Ministry of the Environment.

Anne Siri Rustad (57), Head of the Department for Regions, Reception and Return

Cand.philol. degree from the University of Oslo, additional education in public law, international human rights and asylum and refugee law. Head of the Department for Regions, Reception and Return since 19 January 2007. Previously deputy head of the same department, various managerial positions in the Asylum Department and various positions with the UNHCR and OSCE.

Above left to right:

Karl Erik Sjøholt, Frode Forfang, Tore Dæhlin and Agnar Kaarbø.

Below left to right:

Anne Siri Rustad, Ida Børresen, Gry Aalde and Morten Hansen.



Finances and accounts

Budgets

Each year, the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) sets the Directorate of Immigration's budget and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion allocates the budget to the Directorate through a letter of appropriations. In addition to the budget for operating the Directorate, funds are allocated for operation of the reception centres and some benefit schemes.

The letter of appropriations placed a total of NOK 1 268 million at the Directorate's disposal in 2006. Together with transfers from 2005, the additional appropriations in the revised national budget, Proposal to Parliament No. 3 and compensation for the wage settlement, the budget for 2006 amounted to approximately NOK 1 458 million. This represented a substantial reduction in the UDI's budget compared to 2005. The reduction is primarily due to the fact that the activities and benefit schemes that form part of the implementation of integration policy were transferred to IMDi (Directorate of Integration and Diversity) from 1 January 2006.

The figures in the accounts differ from what was allocated in most of the chapters and posts. This is because the consumption was lower than calculated when the appropriations were given..

Accounts

The Directorate of Immigration's accounts are prepared in accordance with the State accounting rules. This means that cash flow accounting is used for the accrual accounting of income and expenses, which in turn means that all expenses, regardless of their type, are entered in the accounts in the year in which they are incurred. No balance sheet summary in the normal sense is therefore prepared for the operation.

The structure of the accounts follows the structure of the national budget.

Operating expenses

The accounts for 2006 show that around NOK 379 million was spent on running the UDI. This accounting figure appears as a net figure after the deduction of sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursements from IMDi. The UDI and IMDi operate some administrative functions jointly, and the reimbursements from IMDi relate to expenses that the UDI has incurred for IMDi-related administration. Payroll expenses amounted to NOK 239 million. The payroll figure includes a total of NOK 21 million, which primarily concerns sick pay and the reimbursement of maternity benefits entered as income. The reduction in operating expenses is primarily due to the establishment of IMDi on 1 January 2006.

Other operating expenses in 2006 were:

(figures in NOK 1000)	
Rent, building operations, electricity, etc	41 840
Consultant services	40 634
Office services	24 710
Investments	11 199
Employee travel expenses	15 428
Other operating expenses	6 219
Total	140 031

Operating expenses for reception centres

Reception centres are voluntary housing for asylum seekers. Each reception centre is operated by a private operator or a municipal authority. Contracts to run the centres are established after a bidding process. All the operating expenses, essential subsistence benefits paid to asylum seekers and other expenses incurred are covered through the Directorate's budget. The total amount under this item came to NOK 930 million in 2006, compared to NOK 1 084 million in 2005, representing a reduction of around 17 per cent. The number of residents showed a declining trend throughout the year, from around 8900 at the start of the year to around 7400 at the end of the year. There has been little change in the price for each reception centre place compared to 2005, amounting to around NOK 110 000 annually. The average price per resident in 2005 was around NOK 107 000.

(figures in NOK 1 000)

Accounts	2006	2005
Operating expenses UDI minus sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursements and IMDi reimbursements	378 822	432 251
Of which wages minus sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursement and IMDi reimbursements	238 791	279 201
Other operating expenses minus IMDi reimbursements	140 031	153 050
Operating expenses state reception centres	930 333	1 083 817
Of which benefits paid to residents	241 025	304 485
Of which operating expenses, reception centres	682 055	764 384
Of which ordinary operating expenses – Hereby other expenses	7 253	14 948
Special operating expenses, interpreting and translation	20 492	17 764
Of which wages and fees	15 243	12 171
Other expenses	5 249	5 593
Return of refugees	10 501	8 524
Of which individual benefits	556	1 503
Of which projects/local funding	9 945	7 021
Major equipment purchases and maintenance	451	
Special operating expenses, knowledge development migration, integration and diversity	2 367	
Transport of refugees/travel expenses to/from foreign countries	6 923	8 549
Legal assistance in asylum cases	1 073	2 245
Participation in the development of the Migration Portal	295	
Total	1 351 257	1 553 150



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