

# Annual Report 2007

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

ENGLISH



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"Facts and figures", which is published together with the annual report, gives a supplementary picture of the Directorate of Immigration's activities in concrete, measurable quantities, with emphasis on the Directorate of Immigration's work in 2007.

# The Director General's comments

**2007 has been an exciting year for the Directorate of Immigration (UDI). Norway is increasingly becoming a multinational country, and more and more people are coming here to work and live. This trend is also apparent in the number of cases that we receive at the UDI, which again increased substantially in 2007.**




This year more than 100 000 people received a permit to enter Norway, and 55 000 of these received their first-issue work permit. This amount has doubled during the last four years. All indicators suggest that this trend will continue in the coming years. What is new is that many people are bringing their family with them and settling in Norway for a variable length of time.

Most labour immigrants come from countries close to Norway and from the new EU member countries. Another increasing trend is that more people are coming from countries outside Europe. During the course of the year, the UDI granted almost 3 000 specialist permits. More than 600 of these were granted to nationals of India. This is an increase of 500 permits over two years. While admittedly modest figures, they nevertheless represent an interesting development.

The number of asylum seekers arriving in Norway increased during 2007, particularly in the last quarter. We are also granting a higher number of asylum applications than previously. As the UDI has not changed its practice, this increase means that more genuine asylum seekers are coming to Norway.

We have made deliberate efforts this year to improve the service we offer and to be more accessible. This has yielded results. Our annual user survey shows that more people are satisfied with the service and guidance they receive from the UDI than before. Nonetheless, we have ambitions of becoming even better, and to this aim we have contributed to developing a complete service strategy for the entire immigration administration for the 2008 to 2011 period. In the autumn of 2007 we also launched a strategy plan for 2007–2010. The most important elements in this are service and transparency which includes more emphasis on electronic services for users and simpler case-processing procedures.

Serving as the Director General of the UDI is an exciting job. The UDI is a large and varied organisation undergoing rapid development, with more than 300 new employees this year alone. Overall, we have processed a higher number of cases than we received. Thus we are making steady inroads into our backlog of cases. This is good news, but we still have a way to go, especially when it comes to case processing times. However, we are still very pleased to see that we are heading in the right direction.

  
Ida Børresen  
Director General



# Events calendar

## First quarter

- The UDI was part of Norway's delegation to the very first bilateral meeting between the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and a member country.
- The UDI extended the agreement with NOAS (Norwegian Organisation for Asylum Seekers) on running the introductory information and guidance programme for asylum seekers during the arrival phase.
- The UDI had its own stand at the working-life fair for immigrants.
- Frode Forfang was appointed as the new Deputy Director General.
- The UDI's portal for communicating information to the foreign service missions, the Migration Portal, was launched.
- A visa obligation was introduced for cruise passengers who are nationals of countries under the visa obligation. The visa is required before they can come ashore in Norway.
- On assignment from the UDI, Statistics Norway and the Fafo research institute initiated a project to develop methods to determine the number of people staying in Norway illegally.

## Second quarter

- The UDI launched a service for employer enquiries.
- The UDI arranged seminars on labour immigration in Oslo and Stavanger.
- The UDI and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) arranged an experiential conference on working with children and young people, particularly unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.
- Delegations from Chile, Brazil and Argentina received two weeks of training from the UDI and the IMDi on selecting and integrating resettlement refugees in a twinning project under the auspices of the UNHCR.
- The UDI arranged the annual spring conference. This year's theme was visa issues.
- Processing of MUF cases was restarted. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) adopted amendments to the MUF regulations.
- The UDI allocated more resources to processing citizenship cases.
- A Storting Proposition (Proposition to Parliament) with the Government's proposal for a new Immigration Act was presented.
- High level of recruitment to the UDI.

## Third quarter

- Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU and also the Dublin Convention.
- The UDI opened the renovated and refurbished service centre at the head office in Oslo.
- The UDI introduced VISA Portal Norway, a pilot self-service solution for visa applicants.
- The Nordic Immigration Committee (NU) arranged an asylum forum in Oslo.
- The UDI arranged a seminar on labour immigration in Tromsø.

## Fourth quarter

- The service centre for foreign workers was established at Tøyen in Oslo.
- A user council meeting for the UDI's external users was arranged.
- The western region office arranged the seminar "Med barn på flukt" ("Fleeing with children"), which focused on the mental health of children and young people at reception centres.
- The UDI's strategy plan for 2007–2010 was introduced.
- The UDI arranged a seminar on labour immigration in Trondheim and Bergen.
- The Child Welfare Services took over care responsibilities for single minor asylum seekers under 15 years of age.
- The Schengen Treaty was expanded when nine new member countries were added: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Malta.

# The UDI: objectives and figures

The UDI is Norway's central and executive administrative body for immigration and refugees. Its duties are assigned each year by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID). Within the framework of political decisions, the UDI both facilitates lawful and welcomed immigration, involving the provision of protection to refugees when necessary, and contributes to the prevention of unlawful and unwelcome immigration.

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 their case is being processed and in the decision itself.

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 operations, knowledge gained from research and development projects and in-depth knowledge concerning national and international trends.

As a transparent 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.

## Mission statement

- 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 transparent 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.

## Key figures 2005–2007

All figures in NOK	2005	2006	2007
Budget	4 650 mill.	1 458 mill.	1 474 mill.
UDI operations	444 mill.	378 mill.	519 mill.
Number of processed asylum cases	7 500	4 200	6 500
Number of processed work and residence cases	70 000	64 900	84 500
Number of processed citizenship applications	13 900	13 700	18 900
Number of residents at reception centres (average per month)	10 200	8 090	7 200
Number of persons who received protection or residence on humanitarian grounds *	3 400	2 600	2 900
Number of family immigration permits **	13 000	14 000	18 000
Number of persons granted work permits **	50 500	71 000	98 000
Number of incoming calls received by the switchboard	236 000	231 850	236 400
Number of enquiries to the information service	141 700	169 700	195 100
Number of visitors to the service centre	21 300	25 600	33 400
Number of e-mails answered by the information service	13 200	26 600	34 400

\* Excludes resettlement refugees and decisions made by UNE (the Immigration Appeals Board).

\*\* First-issue permits and renewals granted by all levels.

“The UDI shall be a user-oriented and transparent directorate”

SOURCE: THE UDI'S MISSION STATEMENT

## Cooperation in the immigration administration

**In Norway, several actors cooperate on the administration of immigration policies. The various sections of the immigration administration must jointly facilitate legal and welcomed immigration and combat abuse of the immigration provisions.**

### The immigration administration

The Norwegian immigration administration consists of several agencies working together to implement immigration policies within the framework stipulated by the Government and Stortinget (Parliament). The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) is the central administrative body responsible for the immigrant and refugee field. Appeals of decisions made by the UDI are dealt with by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), a politically independent administrative body.

### The Directorate of Immigration

The UDI's core duty is to process applications for various types of residence and work permits, from initial applications for a work permit or asylum to applications for citizenship. Another important duty is to provide expert advice and recommendations in connection with the formulation of policies and regulations.

To process individual cases in an efficient and competent manner, the UDI depends on effective cooperation with the police and the foreign service. The 27 police districts in Norway and more than 100 foreign service missions receive and prepare various types of application for residence and work permits before forwarding them to the UDI for processing. In some types of cases, decisions can also be made by the police and the foreign service. In cases where the decision has been reached by the police or the foreign service, the UDI is the appeals body.

### The Police

The National Police Immigration Service (PU) is responsible for registration and identity checks for asylum seekers. PU is also responsible for the deportation of asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected, and other illegal aliens. The police also undertake the general regulation of immigration, and some police districts are responsible for border control.

### The foreign service

The foreign service assists the UDI in checking individual applicant information and collects general information on conditions in the countries where the service is stationed in (see page 26). The foreign service missions process most visa applications, assist in the collection of country information and draw up reports on themes that are relevant to the UDI's case processing.

In 2007, cooperation with the foreign service missions also included the development of electronic case processing tools, such as pilot projects dealing with biometry (measuring physiological character features, such as fingerprints) and electronic applications for visas (see page 11). The Migration Portal, the UDI's website for information on rules for the foreign service, was also launched this year.

### Strategy 2007 to 2010

The UDI has adopted an overriding strategy for the 2007 to 2010-period that focuses on two main areas. The first is to provide better service and adopt more efficient work methods. This means more differentiated case processing, so that routine cases can be processed faster, and so that control resources are used on risk cases. This part of our strategy also emphasises the development of full electronic case processing, improving interaction between the UDI, the police and the foreign service and improving communication with users. The second main area is the creation of a more open and transparent UDI.



# International cooperation

**The UDI participates in a number of Nordic, European and international forums. Through the international cooperations, we learn how to utilise the advantages and counteract the disadvantages of migration, and we stay updated on international rules.**

## EURASIL

EURASIL is a committee discussing issues relating to political refugees. The committee consists of members from the migration authorities in all the EU countries and representatives of Norway, Canada, the USA and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Conclusions and recommendations from EURASIL meetings and working groups are part of the country information used in case processing in the member countries.

## Inter-Governmental Consultations

The UDI participates in the informal cooperation forum Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC). The forum comprises representatives from countries in Western Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia.

## IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an important global dialogue forum on migration issues which mediates information on the possibility of voluntary return of asylum seekers. IOM also arranges transport for refugees and other migrants needing assistance (see page 22).

## Migration on the international agenda

Migration is currently an important issue for many countries. Many of the international forums that the UDI is participating in serve as arenas for the cooperation and exchange of knowledge on migration. A vital issue is how we can exploit the advantages and counteract the disadvantages of migration.

## The Nordic Immigration Committee

The Nordic Immigration Committee (NU) is a cooperative forum for the director generals of the immigration services in the Nordic countries. The committee discusses all types of issues in the immigration field and has established working groups to follow up practical questions and undertake analyses. This work contributes to the development of common Nordic attitudes, particularly in cases that are also dealt with in other international forums, such as the EU.

## The Schengen Treaty and the Dublin Convention

Since 2001, Norway has participated in the operative Schengen cooperation on border control, visa policy, illegal immigration and return. This cooperation involves such initiatives as joint visa policies, where the UDI ensures that Norwegian practice is in accordance with the Schengen rules and regulations. As of December 2007, nine new countries joined the Schengen treaty: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Malta.

Norway joined the Dublin Convention in 2001 as a stage in implementing national immigration and asylum policies. All EU

countries, Iceland and Norway participate in this cooperation. The Convention regulates which member state is responsible for processing an application for asylum. In 2007, the UDI made 800 decisions relating to accepting and receiving persons from other countries, and 800 decisions to return persons to other countries.

## General Directors' Immigration Services Conference

The General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC) seeks to improve practical cooperation in the field of asylum and migration policies. Twenty-seven EU member states participate in the network in addition to Croatia, Turkey and Macedonia, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland. The UDI is an active member of several working groups, and important themes in 2007 included electronic case processing, illegal immigration into Europe and labour demands.

## Closer cooperation with the UNHCR

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) coordinates the international work to protect refugees and find lasting solutions to refugee problems. In 2007, a meeting was held for the first time between the UNHCR and a member country. The "Biannual Meeting on Protection" was an important event in which the UDI participated as a representative of the Norwegian immigration administration together with the Immigration Appeals Board and the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. The purpose of the meeting was to promote dialogue between the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and member states on the needs that refugees have for protection.

# The UDI's focus on service

**Providing better service has been one area the UDI has especially concentrated on in 2007. To this aim we have developed an overriding service strategy, upgraded the service centre at the UDI's head office and established a separate employer service.**

## Service strategy for the immigration administration 2008–2011

To satisfy user needs, the immigration administration has joined forces to forge a service strategy that will apply to all areas, from the smallest police constable's office to the largest foreign service mission. We want our users to experience good service, where friendliness, transparency and respect are key values no matter who they contact.

## The information service and the service centre

The average waiting time to get through the telephone to the information service was cut by half during 2007. Waiting times have also been reduced at the service centre. The information service gives the UDI's users guidance by e-mail and telephone on rules, procedures and cases being processed. Users can go to the service centre in person and receive the same assistance.

The reduced waiting time is in part due to this year's rebuilt service centre in the UDI's main office, where we now have five reception desks. This refurbishment has also given us better general facilities, as our visitors can now use the Internet while waiting, and children have more space to play in.

The information service has moved to a new location next door to the service centre, and the new office landscape has contributed to far more efficient interaction between our employees. Increased staffing has also given quicker processing times. E-mail enquiries to the information service are now answered within three working days.

## Employer service

To smooth the labour immigration process, in 2007 the UDI established a separate service to employers with its own e-mail address and telephone number to better meet the employers' need for information. This service provides rapid and comprehensive service for employers in Norway. The response has been positive, and we receive around 260 phone calls and 45 e-mails a week.

## New service centre for foreign workers

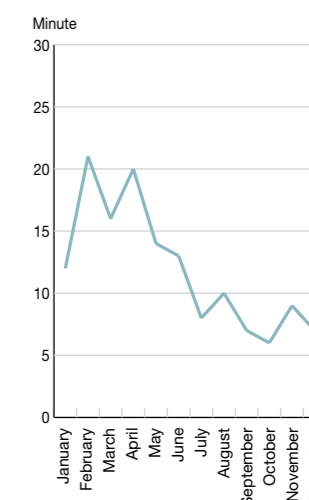
The service centre for foreign workers opened in October 2007 at Tøyen in Oslo. At this centre, the UDI, the police, the tax authorities and the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority cooperate to give foreign workers and their employers better and speedier service.

At the service centre, skilled workers and their employers are offered improved and faster services. This is where to go to apply for a work permit, and to receive both this permit and a tax card within five days. In the second week of December the centre had 857 visitors.

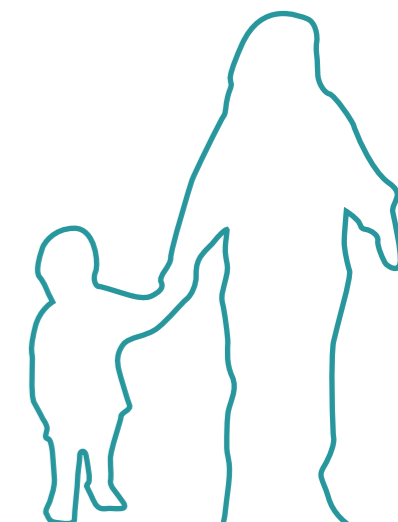
## This year's user survey

The UDI also carried out a survey of people who make enquiries to the information service. This survey showed that nine of ten callers feel they are treated in a friendly way and with respect, and three of four feel that the information service, they received was clear and understandable. Although more people than before find that it is easier to get through to the information service, there are still many who feel the waiting time is too long.

**Average waiting time on the telephone to the information service per month in 2007**



In 2007, there were 195 100 phone calls to the information service.



### Several new churches

The Catholic Church in Norway estimates that there are between 200 000 and 230 000 Catholics in Norway, and will now build ten new Catholic churches to satisfy the demand. Labour immigration from Poland is one of the primary causes for this rise in numbers. St. Olav parish in Oslo offers four masses every Sunday in the Polish language only. Philippine, Slovakian and Lithuanian nationals also help fill the churches.

### Seminars on labour immigration

The user survey showed that there is a need for better and more coordinated information on labour immigration, and the UDI therefore arranged seminars on this topic in Oslo, Stavanger, Tromsø, Trondheim and Bergen. The target group consisted of employers, organisations and public agencies. Assisting the UDI with specific and useful information, were the tax assessment office, the local police districts, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, the health authorities and the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. Around 600 people attended the seminars.

### New user council

To follow-up the seminars on labour immigration, the UDI has established a user board with representatives from employer and employee organisations. Three meetings were held during the year with discussions on improvements in the UDI's services. We are also planning to establish other user boards for other user groups.

### Special information measures

At the end of the 1990s, a large group of people from northern Iraq came to Norway and applied for asylum. After individual assessments, around 2 000 asylum seekers were granted a limited residence permit. These permits were called "MUF" permits, the Norwegian acronym for temporary residence permits without entitlement to family reunification (see page 13). The UDI's aim has been to give this group as comprehensive information as possible, and it has provided a broad range of information via the information telephone, letters and an information meeting.

### Information for the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has seen a large increase in the number of church goers from the new EU countries and receives many questions on immigration matters. Catholic priests have expressed the wish to be able to give better guidance to their members, and the UDI therefore participated at the annual meeting for priests arranged by the Oslo Catholic Diocese in October. The 40 priests were given information about the rules and regulations and where to enquire to obtain further information about residence permits for labour immigrants and their families.

# New electronic services

**In recent years, the UDI has focused on providing good user service, and in 2007 we launched several projects to develop new electronic services. Around NOK 90 million has been allocated for this for the 2007 to 2010-period.**

### Better service with new electronic services

The introduction of a joint electronic archive is crucial in the work to improve our service; today's paper-based solutions will be replaced by a joint electronic archive. When we start to use the new solutions, our case processing will become more efficient and the user service will be improved.

The UDI is also developing internet-based solutions where, for example, users can apply for a visa, citizenship and work, education and family reunification permits. Electronic case processing of work permits is given special priority.

### The EFFEKT programme

The EFFEKT programme was launched in 2007 to ensure good control of the development and introduction of new electronic services in the immigration administration. The police, the foreign service, the Immigration Appeals Board and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity are all participating in this work. The programme comprises a number of projects dealing with the following main areas:

- electronic services for users
- joint electronic case folders for the entire immigration administration
- electronic interaction between the immigration administration, public agencies and other partners we cooperate with

### Joint electronic document archive for immigration cases

In 2007, a solution for an electronic document archive was tested by the Immigration Appeals Board. The aim is to establish a joint electronic document archive for the entire immigration administration which will eliminate paper flow and make case folders accessible, regardless of where the case processing takes place.

### Fingerprints of visa applicants

Norway's obligations under the Schengen Treaty will eventually mean that fingerprints will be taken of every person who applies for a visa to Norway. This year the UDI has cooperated with the police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare for this.

### Better financial control of reception centres

The development project "System for electronic interaction with reception centres" (Norwegian abbreviation Sesam: "System for elektronisk samhandling med asylmottakene") was concluded in 2007. The purpose of Sesam is to simplify the processes in the reception field and to provide the basis for better control of reception centre finances. The system is now being used by all the reception centres and is connected to the immigration administration's joint database.

### Visa on the Internet

Since September 2007, visa applicants who have submitted an application via the Norwegian general consulate in Edinburgh have been able to do this electronically. The visa fee is paid over the Internet, and the applicant can also check the status of his or her application online. In 2008, this solution will be introduced at several foreign service missions. The large majority of visa applicants to Norway will then be able to submit an application electronically.<sup>1</sup> This will reduce the workload for foreign service missions and lead to quicker case processing.

<sup>1</sup> Visa Portal Norway was launched in September 2007:  
<https://selfservice.udi.no/VisaPortal/>

“The UDI shall treat everyone with respect, friendliness and a professional attitude”

SOURCE: THE UDI'S REQUIREMENTS TO MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES



## Labour immigration

**The increasing demand for labour in Norway makes it important to improve the conditions for the recruitment of foreign labour. Labour immigration to Norway increased during 2007 and this trend is on the rise.**

### Demand for labour

There is great demand for labour in many areas of Norwegian working life, and this is reflected in the demands and expectations placed on the authorities to improve conditions for the recruitment of labour from abroad.

To satisfy these expectations, the UDI has focused on a high service level and quick case processing. The UDI has, however, a dual responsibility: While we aim to ensure an adequate supply of labour, we must also ensure controlled immigration. Our challenge is thus to balance and control this through service and quality, which requires a comprehensive approach throughout our case processing procedures.

To perform our duties in the best possible manner, the UDI is constantly working on information measures for users, while at the same time continuing to develop our organisation. In 2007, we improved our case processing capacity. We also implemented initiatives to simplify the rules and regulations in the labour immigration field.

### Cooperation in focus

In 2007, we cooperated with both public and private actors. This cooperation has resulted in a number of measures, including the establishment of the service centre for foreign workers, the publication of brochures, the provision of better information to users and employer seminars across Norway (see page 9 and 10). The UDI also partici-

pates in the cooperative forum “Seriositet i byggebransjen” (Honesty in the construction business), a cooperative forum for public authorities and the construction industry.

Cooperation with other public authorities is intended to coordinate information and the rules where this is beneficial. The aim is to make it easy for labour immigrants and employers to find out about their rights and obligations. Good information leads to better applications, which in turn helps to reduce case processing times. Cooperation with employer and employee organisations is also important, as it helps us to ensure that the measures we implement are optimally adapted to the needs of both employers and employees.

### Simplification of the rules

In 2007, several changes were made to the rules to simplify the recruitment of foreign labour and the hiring of foreign workers who are already in Norway. It is, for example, now possible for nationals of EEA countries that come under the transitional rules<sup>2</sup> to start working as soon as they have submitted a complete application to the police. Previously, this group needed to be granted a permit prior to commencing work. Another change is that skilled workers who move from one employer to another can now start working as soon as they have submitted an application for a new permit to the police and do not have to wait for a permit to be granted.

### MUF cases reopened

In 2005, Iraqi Kurds with limited and temporary residence permits in Norway without entitlement to family reunification, so-called MUF permits, were allowed to obtain ordinary work permits in Norway if they satisfied particular criteria.

However, the UDI's processing of several of these cases prompted political debate so that the Graver Commission was convened to examine the UDI's processing of these applications. The processing of MUF cases was suspended for the duration of the investigation.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion changed the temporary regulations from 2005. The change meant that the around 200 applicants who had previously been granted work permits due to strong humanitarian considerations were to be reassessed in accordance with general practice. Because of this change, the UDI drew up new case-processing guidelines, and the pending cases were reopened in June 2007. MUF cases are, however, time-consuming, partly because identity documents have to be checked thoroughly.

<sup>2</sup> The transition rules set slightly stricter conditions for permits on job-seekers from the new EU countries. The main purpose of the transition rules is to counteract social dumping. The rules initially apply until 1 May 2009.



# Family immigration

**More labour immigrants than before now settle permanently in Norway, and often the whole family will follow. In 2007, the UDI processed more family immigration cases than the preceding year. Poland headed the family immigration statistics for the second year in a row.**

## Better protection against abuse

In 2006, the Immigration Act was amended to protect some applicants in family establishment cases against abuse and gross exploitation. The immigration administration may now deny a woman residence in Norway if there are clear indications that she or her children could end up in a harmful or dangerous situation if she were to enter into cohabitation with a particular man in Norway. This regulation is only used in family establishment cases.

## Increase in family immigration

In 2007, almost 18 000 family immigration permits were granted by the immigration administration, compared to approximately 14 000 in 2006. This is in part due to a genuine increase in the number of applicants in recent years, and in part due to the UDI's greater case processing capacity.

The closest family members of a person who lives in Norway may be granted a permit for family immigration, but other family members may also be granted family immigration if certain conditions are met. Spouses, partners and children are counted as closest family members, while fiancées and parents wishing to visit their children for a period of up to nine months are counted as other family members.

The increase in family immigration also requires us to be more aware of the relationship between labour immigration and family immigration. If Norway is to attract the labour it needs, we must have better conditions for the families of labour immigrants. One possible approach may be to process applications from job-seekers and their families together.

## New directive on pro forma marriages

Starting in September 2006, the UDI has been instructed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion to pay extra attention to cases where there are suspicions of pro

forma marriage, and bearing this directive in mind in 2007, the UDI rejected a greater number of applications for family immigration than previously.

A marriage is deemed to be a pro forma marriage if it is entered into primarily to gain a work permit or residence permit. The UDI is cooperating closely with foreign service missions and the police to establish whether a marriage is entered into with this purpose in mind.

## The new Nationality Act

The new Nationality Act came into force on 1 September 2006, and has thus played a key role in case processing over the last year. One of the most important changes in the Act is that an individual may only have one nationality. In practice this means that persons may have their Norwegian nationality rescinded if they have not been released from their previous citizenship within a year.

Another important change in the act is that the age limit for applying for citizenship has been lowered from 18 to 12 years. Moreover, maintenance allowance debts are no longer grounds for rejecting an application for Norwegian citizenship.

After the introduction of the new Act, the UDI has also taken over the processing of all notifications of Norwegian nationality which were previously processed by the County Governor. Nordic nationals who have lived more than seven years in Norway and former Norwegian nationals who have moved back to Norway are examples of persons who may submit notification that they wish to become Norwegian nationals. Children born after 1 September 2006 of a Norwegian mother or father do not have to submit notification that they are Norwegian – they become so at birth.

# Meeting places

**Each year the UDI arranges conferences and seminars and participates at a number of events where migration is in focus. In 2007, we have cooperated with various organisations and agencies on setting up meeting places where we can share our experience and expertise with others.**

## The UDI's spring conference

The theme for the spring conference was dilemmas and challenges connected to visas and visa policy. The balance between immigration considerations and freedom to travel represents the major challenge in the visa field. The Schengen rules control developments in this field in Europe, but individual states have the right to control who is allowed entry into their country. Visa policy is thus also part of Norwegian immigration policy.

At the conference, the politicians, the UDI, foreign service missions and users shed light on this issue from their various perspectives, and the conference gave the UDI useful input on user service and the publication of practices in the visa area.

Among those giving presentations were Libe Rieber-Mohn, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID), Long Litt Woon, researcher, Jan de Ceuster, head of the visa office at the EU commission, and Rita Kumar representing Norway's Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities (KIM). The target group for the conference was public administration staff, research communities, NGOs and politicians. Around 250 people participated at the conference.

## Student Day

In August, the Student Day was arranged for the third time under the auspices of Oslo Police District, and the UDI participated together with the University of Oslo, the Norwegian School of Management (BI), Oslo University College and Oslo Tax Office. The purpose of the Student Day is to provide foreign students with information and assistance with the necessary applications. Some student groups can have their application processed and a residence permit granted on the same day. This measure takes some of the workload away from the reception desk at the Oslo Police District, thus also benefiting other applicants.

## Meeting on education

In March 2007, the UDI arranged the annual meeting for universities and colleges in Norway, selected police districts and other partners in the education field. The aim of the meeting is to give information to foreign students and education institutions in Norway so that applications are submitted in time and adequately filled in.

## New guidelines for the au pair scheme

In 2007, the UDI issued new guidelines to clarify the purpose of the au-pair scheme. The au pair scheme is a work and cultural exchange programme where young people can learn the Norwegian language and more about Norway and Norwegian culture by living with a Norwegian host family.

The new guidelines mean that the standard contract for employing an au pair has become compulsory, and that the host family must pay up to NOK 6 000 a year for Norwegian language teaching for the au pair. The rate for pocket money/pay has also been adjusted upwards to a minimum of NOK 4 000 per month. An information letter has also been prepared on the rights and obligations of au pairs and host families. This information letter must be signed by the au pair, the host family and the mediating organisation.



# Countries in focus

Many people apply to enter Norway each year. They have various reasons for coming, and therefore it is vital that the UDI has knowledge about the countries they come from. In 2007, attention has been particularly focused on Eritrea, Iraq, India, Pakistan and the new EU members Bulgaria and Romania.

## Romania and Bulgaria

Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU on 1 January 2007 and implemented the EEA rules and regulations on 1 August 2007. This means that the possibility of being granted a residence permit and work permit has now been significantly simplified for nationals from these two countries.

Workers from Romania and Bulgaria are, however, covered by transition rules on pay and working conditions to ensure that their employment is arranged appropriately and to preclude abuse of Norwegian welfare schemes. The rules will initially apply for a period of two years, but may be extended by up to a further five years.

From November 2006 to November 2007 the number of work permits granted has increased by 47 per cent for Bulgaria and has more than doubled for Romania. Workers from Bulgaria and Romania are primarily men employed in the shipyard and mechanical engineering industries and in the hotel and restaurant industry.

Through their EU membership, these two countries also take part in the cooperation based on the Dublin Convention and Eurodac, but they have not yet joined the Schengen treaty.

## Pakistan

People with Pakistani backgrounds constitute the largest group of immigrants in Norway. This migration started with the wave of labour immigration in the 1970s. Today, immigration from Pakistan is generally due to establishing a family and family reunification.

Each year we receive around 2 500 visa applications from Pakistani nationals. The primary purpose of these visa applications is family visits. The percentage of rejections of these cases has been relatively high, a fact which has come under criticism. The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion has therefore instructed the UDI to adopt a more lenient practice, particularly for sibling visits.

The political situation in Pakistan has been dominated by shifts from authoritarian military regimes to democratically elected governments. Pervez Musharraf assumed power through a coup in 1999, and was elected President at the general election in 2002. In the autumn of 2007 Musharraf resigned as army chief. Elections for a new national assembly are due to be held in Pakistan in 2008.

## India

Increasing numbers of Indian nationals are applying for work permits in Norway. India heads the statistics for skilled labour with 617 first-issue permits granted to skilled workers in 2007. They are primarily trained and educated in the technical trades.

Indian nationals often bring their families with them to Norway, and many settle here permanently. But we also see a trend where some wish to return to their country of origin after working and living here for a period of time.

Short-term seasonal work is another reason why Indian nationals come to Norway. Seasonal work is only carried out during a limited period of the year, and a work permit may only be granted for six months. After this period is over, the applicant must return to his or her country of origin. The Indian seasonal workers primarily work in agriculture and nurseries/garden centres. Many return to the same employer every year. They are often hired by employers originally from the same country but now settled in Norway, but they are also attractive to Norwegian employers.

## Iraq

With 1 200 applicants, Iraqi nationals were the largest group of asylum seekers in 2007, an increase of 22 per cent compared to 2006. Iraqi Kurds comprised the group of asylum seekers that increased most in 2007, amounting to half of the asylum seekers from Iraq. Their applications for asylum are often linked to religious or ethnic persecution and clan conflicts.

After the US-led invasion, Iraq has experienced problems in establishing a well-functioning state. It has been difficult to put in place a number of fundamental state functions, and the country is dominated by internal strife and conflicts. Figures from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees show that more than 2.5 million Iraqi nationals have fled to neighbouring countries, while 2.3 million are internally displaced.

The American escalation of forces in 2007 improved the situation in the Sunni triangle in central Iraq, but violence between Shia and Sunni Muslims is still common. In parts of southern Iraq, particularly the Basra province, there have been violent conflicts between different Shia Muslim factions. The security situation in the border region between central Iraq and the Kurd-controlled northern areas is uncertain as both Kurds and Arabs are striving for dominance. In recent years the Kurd-controlled areas have been politically stable and have experienced good financial growth. Conflicts between the militant Kurd movement PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and Turkey have, however, escalated, with the danger of military actions on the border between Iraq and Turkey.

## Eritrea

The human rights situation in Eritrea has deteriorated in recent years, and the number of asylum seekers from this country has increased significantly. In 2007, 95 per cent of asylum seekers from Eritrea were granted residence, whereof half on the protection ground.

Eritrea gained independence in 1993. Leadership of the country is characterised as an autocracy with the President, Isayas Afwerki, having the real power. None of the promised elections have been held, the Constitution from 1997 has not been implemented, and all opposition is harshly suppressed.

Military service is compulsory for men and women, and due to the conflict with Ethiopia it is not uncommon for Eritrean nationals to remain in military service for a long period of time. Many desert, which the authorities consider to be treason. Many of the asylum seekers from Eritrea are deserters who fear retribution from the authorities.

Another large group of applicants state that they are persecuted because of their religion. In 2002, the President decided that all religious groups except those who were Catholic, Christian Orthodox, Muslim and Evangelical Christian would have to be registered or cease practising their religion. Christian minority groups have been subjected to persecution by the authorities since May 2002, and Pentecostals in particular apply for asylum in Norway.

Genital mutilation is also a relevant issue in asylum cases from Eritrea. It is estimated that around 90 per cent of girls are subjected to this.

# Asylum seekers and refugees

**International conventions oblige Norway to protect refugees. In 2007, we saw an increase in the number of applications for asylum, and a larger proportion than previously were granted asylum.**

## International rules

When processing asylum applications, the UDI administers both national and international rules. The content of the rules and regulations is developed because the states actively deal with binding international conventions, declarations and directives.

## The UNHCR

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a mandate based on the Refugee Convention. The UNHCR provides recommendations that are not legally binding. In 2007, the cooperation between the Norwegian immigration administration and the UNHCR was strengthened due to the introduction of biannual meetings on protection.

## Resettlement refugees

Resettlement refugees are people who are recognised as refugees by the UNHCR. In 2007, the quota was 1 200 resettlement refugees. Those who came to Norway were generally taken from refugee camps in Zambia (Congolese and Burundians) and from Thailand, Malaysia and India (Burmese).

## International conventions

Norway has signed the UN Refugee Convention, which obliges us to give protection to refugees who satisfy the requirements in Article 1 of the Convention. These refugees are people who have good reason to fear being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Those who are recognised as convention refugees are granted asylum.

Norway is also internationally obliged to grant protection based on provisions in other conventions, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It follows from these obligations that no one should be transported out of Norway if he or she would then face torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.

## Need for protection

After some years with a stable number of asylum seekers, the number in 2007 increased by 23 per cent compared to the preceding year. A total of 6 500 people applied for asylum, and most of these came from war- and conflict-torn areas of Iraq, Chechnia, Eritrea and Serbia.

During the last four years, a far greater proportion of the applicants have been granted asylum in Norway, and in 2007 the proportion was 20 per cent. Seventeen per cent of the applicants did not meet the criteria for asylum, but were granted protection on

other grounds, for example danger of being killed or subjected to inhuman treatment in connection with hostilities in the country of origin. Asylum or protection on other grounds means protection against being sent out of the country.

Twenty-one per cent were granted residence on humanitarian grounds. This is granted if there are strong humanitarian considerations, such as serious health issues or consideration of children or other vulnerable groups.

A greater proportion of women than men were granted residence after applying for asylum. Almost 70 per cent of the women who applied for asylum in 2007 were granted residence, and a third were granted asylum. This shows that many of the women had genuine needs for protection.

## Gender-related persecution

The Refugee Convention also covers abuse that particularly affects women. To be granted asylum, the persecution must be connected to one of the grounds given in the convention. Gender on its own is not a convention ground, but can explain why or how the persecution takes place. The danger of gender-related persecution is often connected to the ground in the convention referred to as "membership of a particular social group."

In many of the asylum cases concerning gender-related persecution, the women have been subjected to sexual abuse or the threat of forced marriage. Other types of

gender-related persecution is violence in the home, honour killing, genital mutilation, punishment for acting in violation of gender-discriminatory laws or social norms and discrimination of lesbians and gays. Men are also subjected to gender-related persecution, but this happens far more often to women.

It is vital that UDI interviewers have knowledge of the gender-related aspects of the refugee concept. Gender-related persecution often concerns personal matters that are difficult to speak openly about. As far as possible, we use female interviewers and female interpreters. In 2007, the UDI drew up interview guides on central issues such as human trafficking and genital mutilation to improve the quality of the asylum interviews.

## Processing applications for asylum

An asylum seeker is responsible for giving a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for applying for asylum. The UDI at the same time is obliged to ensure that sufficient information is available concerning the case. The onus of proving that returning to the country of origin would be safe rests with the authorities. Only when sufficient information has been obtained on the asylum case will the UDI undertake an assessment as to whether the asylum seeker is entitled to asylum, other protection or residence on humanitarian grounds.

In 2007, the UDI attached more importance to the use of language analyses in certain cases, as such analyses provide the UDI with a better basis for assessing whether the information given by an asylum seeker about his or her place of origin and ethnic background is correct. Language analyses are used in particular in cases where there are no identity papers. In 2007, the UDI administered 200 language tests, while the National Police Immigration Service (PU) conducted around 1 000 such tests.

In cases of doubt as to whether an applicant has correctly stated his or her age, the UDI offers age examinations. Some asylum seekers state an incorrect age to unjustly receive benefits limited to unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. In 2007, 43 per cent of those who received a decision after applying as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, were considered to be 18 years or older at the time the decision was taken. Their applications were therefore processed as adult asylum seekers.

The UDI faces a major challenge because the majority of asylum seekers arrive without identity documents. There may also be reasons to doubt the authenticity of ID documents, as we know that these documents can be bought or the authorities in the country in question may not have control over the issuing of such documents.

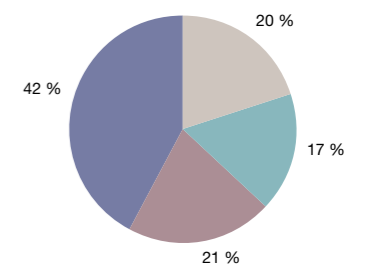
The UDI examines various documents and other information in the cases. We cooperate closely with the foreign service missions, and have special envoys for immigration cases who verify asylum cases and report on the conditions in several countries. In 2007, the UDI had special envoys stationed in Nairobi, Islamabad and Damascus, and other envoys have also, when needed, travelled to Teheran, Moscow and the Balkan states.

Country information is very important. Landinfo is the immigration administration's specialist division for country information. The UDI also collects important country information from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, human rights organisations and through exchanging knowledge with other countries. The UDI at times goes on fact-finding trips jointly with Landinfo and the Immigration Appeals Board. In 2007, the UDI visited Sri Lanka, China, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

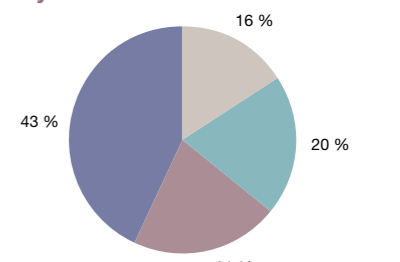
## The asylum seeker's personal statement

The asylum seeker has the right to be interviewed, and many are given the opportunity to fill in a personal statement. During the asylum interview, it is important that the asylum seeker can explain about all matters and circumstances concerning the application. The UDI has many years of experience of asylum interviews and is continuously endeavouring to ensure they have a high quality. All our interviewers are well versed in interviewing skills and asylum law and have a good knowledge of the countries in question and their cultures.

Asylum decisions made by the UDI in 2007



Asylum decisions made by the UDI in 2006



Asylum  
Other protection  
Residence on humanitarian grounds  
Rejection

Only cases processed after full examination

# Reception centres

**The UDI is responsible for ensuring that the quality of reception centres is satisfactory. In 2007, we have paid special attention to children and young people, the return of persons who have received a final rejection of their asylum application, and health, environment and safety activities.**

## Various types of reception centres

### Transit centres

The first place where asylum seekers stay is a transit centre. They will stay there until they have had an asylum interview. Transit centres are located in eastern Norway.

### Ordinary reception centres

Applicants are offered a place at an ordinary reception centre while their asylum application is being processed.

### Departure centres

Staying at a departure centre is voluntary for asylum seekers who have received a final rejection of their application. In departure centres, activities are arranged to inspire residents to return to their country of origin.

## Focus on reception centre quality

Reception centres are operated by local authorities, NGOs and private companies under contract with the UDI. The UDI is responsible for the quality of reception centre operations. In 2007, we have paid special attention to children and young people, the return of persons who have received final rejections to their asylum application, and health, environment and safety activities.

Reception centres are located across the country. At the end of 2007, there were 61 state reception centres in Norway. All asylum seekers receive an offer to stay at a reception centre on arrival in Norway, and living in a reception centre is a requirement for receiving financial subsistence benefits.

At the end of 2007, there are around 7 600 residents in reception centres. Of these, 2 050 were children and around 180 were unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

## Reception centre programmes

The length of time that residents stay at reception centres varies, with some living there for years. It is therefore important that residents have a say in their day-to-day affairs and participate in the running of the reception centre. Participating in planning, activities and information programmes can help residents feel more at home, strengthen their self-respect and improve their general well-being.

The Government wishes to strengthen the day-to-day communication in reception centres and the local community, and to this aim introduced a programme to give asylum seekers 250 hours of instruction in the Norwegian language in the autumn of 2007.

## Children and young people

Playing games and taking part in activities can help children who need to put difficult experiences behind them, enabling them to deal with a challenging new reality. In 2007, NOK 5.5 million was allocated for activities for children living in reception centres. The funds were spent on cultural and recreational activities and ball-sports cages both in and outside the reception centres. Workshops on conflict management for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between 15 and 18 years of age were also arranged.

The UDI has also arranged seminars on children and mental health throughout Norway. A programme for parental guidance

has been developed in conjunction with the Centre for Crisis Psychology and International Child Development Programmes (ICDP). The programme will be initiated in 2008. Competence-raising measures for reception centre employees were also initiated in 2007.

In December 2007, the Child Welfare Services assumed responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers under 15 years of age. In time, the Child Welfare Services will also take over responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between 15 and 18 years of age.

## Health, environment and safety

Conditions relating to physical safety in reception centres were surveyed in 2007. Based on the survey findings, proposals for initiatives were sent to the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. In 2007, a contact forum was established for the authorities involved, employee organisations and reception centre operators. The UDI also arranged several regional conferences on the working environment and the prevention of violence in reception centres.

Reception centre employees help residents with particular needs. Such needs can include being shielded from other residents, being moved to another reception centre, provision of health services or adapted information and activities. Reception centre employees cooperate with NGOs, private individuals, schools, the health service, Child Welfare Services and the police.

## Preparation for settlement

If the asylum application is granted, reception centre employees must prepare the resident for settlement in a municipality through individual interviews, conversations, information and activities. The UDI's regional offices and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity cooperate with each other and the potential settlement municipalities to prepare asylum seekers for permanent residence in Norway.

## Nordic cooperation

In 2007, the UDI cooperated with the other Nordic countries to compare conditions in reception centres for children. The Nordic cooperation takes place through a contact group established under the Nordic Immigration Committee (NU) (see page 8).

## Asylum seekers in the local community

Residents at reception centres often interact positively with the local community, particularly with respect to cultural activities and sports.

One example of residents at reception centres participating positively in the local community was seen when Heimly reception centre arranged a 17 May celebration (Norwegian Constitution Day) in the municipality of Finnsnes. Work on this event helped strengthen the sense of community among reception centre residents and helped them to integrate into the local community, while the local population enjoyed the extra special 17 May celebrations.

Another example is the cooperation between the UDI, the Norwegian Football Association (NFF), Sjøvegan reception centre and Vasshaug school, which led to the construction of a ball-sports cage at Vasshaug school. Sjøvegan reception centre residents and staff all actively participated in the preparations and the construction of the cage, which has become an important meeting place for everybody in the local community.



# Return

**The UDI cooperates with the police and a number of organisations to develop a good framework for expulsion, and for returning people who are not granted a residence permit. In 2007 we focused on provision of better information about programmes for voluntary return.**

## Return programme for Afghan nationals

The UDI cooperates with the police and the IOM concerning the return of asylum seekers to Afghanistan through the programme Information, Return and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan (IRRANA). The programme includes NOK 15 000 in reintegration benefits per person, assistance to find accommodation, reintegration on arrival in the country of origin and information about the conditions there. Those who return also receive NOK 10 000 to support the establishment of a business, education or similar. Thirty-one persons returned voluntarily through the IRRANA programme in 2007.

## Voluntary return

If the application for asylum is rejected, the applicant must return to his or her country of origin. The UDI and the reception centres are constantly working to develop new procedures and methods for the work relating to voluntary return. Groups have been established for youths, women and families who have received rejections, where residents can talk to each other and reception centre employees about returning and about their country of origin. At some children's centres, the activities have focused on the country of origin, and parents have been encouraged to read literature from the country of origin to their children, so that they can retain and develop their native language.

Persons who have been rejected but who will not return voluntarily and who cannot be returned by force must either cope on their own or stay at a departure centre which has a very modest standard.

The UDI cooperates with the police and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on a voluntary return programme for asylum seekers, the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARP). The IOM provides information on how asylum seekers can return voluntarily and helps them with their travel documents and travel arrangements to the country of origin. Travel expenses are covered by the Norwegian state. In 2007, 443 persons returned through this return programme. The majority returned to Kosovo, Iraq and Nepal.

## Expulsion and rejection

The UDI makes decisions on expulsion, while the police prepare the cases for a decision. The police are therefore our most important cooperative body in this field, and in 2007 we cooperated closely with

the police districts. This close contact with the police is not least important to ensure good understanding and efficient case flow between the agencies.

A rejection does not preclude later entry, and is thus a milder form of reaction than expulsion. A foreign national who is rejected by Norway is denied entry into or residence in the country. Expulsion, on the other hand, is the strictest type of sanction the immigration authorities have against foreign nationals. As a general rule, the decision to expel a person and deny entry also applies to the other Schengen countries. A ban on entry can either be permanent or limited to a specific period of time, which cannot be less than two years. Reasons for expelling a person can be a conviction for a criminal offence or violation of the Immigration Act. The police and foreign service missions send cases to the UDI for assessment of expulsion. The UDI can also uncover matters on its own that could form the basis for expulsion.

## Expulsion of convicted criminals

Expulsion of foreign nationals who have been convicted of a criminal offence has also been a hot topic of debate in 2007. Special procedures have been established for dealing with cases where a foreign national is transferred to continue his or her term in prison in the country of origin.

## Expulsion of EEA nationals

The Immigration Act sets stricter requirements on expelling a foreign national who comes under the EEA agreement or the EFTA Convention than nationals from other countries. In 2007, the UDI has worked on clarifying the rules and practices in this field by issuing guidelines for the rejection and expulsion of EEA nationals.

# Violation of human rights

**Crimes against fundamental human rights are a major problem area. In 2007, the UDI worked on measures to combat human trafficking, forced marriage and genital mutilation.**

## Human trafficking

Combating human trafficking was an important issue for the UDI in 2007. Human trafficking can occur within national borders, but most commonly occurs in connection with irregular migration. People who are victims of human trafficking are exploited as cheap labour or forced into begging or prostitution. The traffickers behind the scenes use violence and threats or take advantage of their victims' vulnerable situation.

One of the measures in the Government's action plan for 2006–2009, "Stop human trafficking" (Stopp menneskehandelen) is the so-called period of reflection. This is a residence permit granted for up to six months to foreign nationals assumed to have been the victims of human trafficking, and who have no other grounds for legal residence in Norway. In 2007, 31 people were granted a period of reflection for six months.

The UDI is actively working to ensure that all our officials processing immigration cases are able to identify people where human trafficking is suspected, and some of the UDI's interviewers have received special training in how to interview trafficking victims. Reception centre employees have also received training in how to follow up victims in the best possible manner while they are staying at a reception centre. The UDI is working closely with other agencies such as the police, child welfare services and social welfare and health authorities to ensure that victims of human trafficking receive assistance and follow-up from the public authorities.

## Forced marriage

Not everyone has the right to freely choose a spouse. The UDI continues to receive enquiries relating to forced marriage, fear of forced marriage and other types of honour-related violence. Such abuse is a criminal offence under Norwegian law, and is also in violation of international human rights.

The specialist team combating forced marriage was founded in 2004 as a joint effort involving the UDI, the police and the Norwegian Red Cross. The national budget for 2007 established the specialist team as a permanent authority-based team with representatives from the UDI, the police and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). The team receives enquiries from all over Norway, and the aim is to increase efforts, quality and expertise in combating forced marriage.

In 2007, the specialist team combating forced marriage helped 195 persons. Most cases are reported by the police, the child welfare services, schools, the UDI or the victims themselves. Girls between 15 and 18 years of age are most vulnerable. The enquiries show that the danger of being forced into marriage increases substantially if the girl has previously had conflicts with her family or if she has a boyfriend. Some enquiries are directly connected to a forced marriage, while others concern the fear that it might happen. The team also received enquiries relating to genital mutilation and violence.

Responsibility for the specialist team combating forced marriage was transferred to the Directorate of Integration and Diversity on 1 January 2008.

## Genital mutilation

In 2007, the UDI drew up guidelines for the immigration administration's processing of asylum and residence cases where genital mutilation might be a relevant factor. The guidelines aim to ensure that girls and women who would be at risk of genital mutilation if they were to return to their country of origin are granted protection in Norway.

Genital mutilation is a serious violation of fundamental human rights. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines genital mutilation as "any type of procedure involving full or partial removal of a woman's external genitals or other harm to a woman's external genitalia without medical grounds."

Genital mutilation is most prevalent in Africa, but also occurs in some Asian countries. The scope of the procedure and the way in which it is carried out vary substantially between ethnic groups, countries and regions. The age of the women also varies, from one week after birth to adulthood, but the procedure is generally carried out before puberty.



“The UDI shall provide a good working environment”

SOURCE: THE UDI'S ETHICAL GUIDELINES

## The UDI as a workplace

**The UDI is continually active in recruiting, developing and keeping competent employees. In 2007, we strengthened our organisation with 309 new employees.**

### Recruitment

To recruit, develop and retain competent employees, we are continually developing recruitment strategies, a senior employee policy, equal rights and diversity measures. In 2007, the UDI hired 309 new employees, primarily as case processing officials in the asylum and residence departments.

To ensure that we have adequate access to labour, in 2007 we started to market the UDI as a workplace in arenas with potential job-seekers. For example, we presented the UDI as a potential workplace at the University of Oslo and prepared a leaflet to be used for company presentations and working-life/trade fairs.

### Senior employee policy

Experienced employees are an important asset, and in 2007 the UDI adopted a senior employee policy to help make us an attractive workplace for senior employees. To maintain continuity, the UDI depends on the skills and knowledge of our seniors, and we must ensure this is carried forward and utilised well.

### Equal rights

Male and female employees shall have equal opportunities for salary and career development at the UDI. In 2007, specific

new measures were introduced to promote the intentions of equal-rights legislation and the agreements in force. More women have been recruited to senior management positions, which has made the gender distribution on this level more balanced. Overall, we still have a skewed gender balance, as the proportion of female employees at the UDI is around 70 per cent.

### Diversity

As a state directorate, the UDI wishes to reflect the diversity of the Norwegian population in our workforce. Diversity is also important if we are to perform our complex portfolio of duties. We therefore aim to conduct a deliberate recruitment policy that will increase the percentage of employees with immigrant backgrounds. At the end of 2007, 17.5 per cent of our workforce had an immigrant background.

Each year, the UDI has pledged to give at least six qualified persons with an immigrant background relevant work experience. When making announcements of vacancies, at least one qualified applicant with an immigrant background must be called for an interview, and if there are many qualified applicants with an immigrant background, at least one quarter of those called for interview must have an immigrant background.

### The UDI abroad Representative of the UNHCR

“In 2007, I was sent to Thailand for a year on a secondment to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Secondment means that the UDI places staff at the disposal of other organisations. While secondment is an expression of support for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, it is also very useful for the immigration administration because employees return with international experience.

I was sent to a small Thai town on the border of Myanmar. In the field office, my job was to identify refugees for new settlement, interview them and introduce them to a country they could be settled in, for example Norway. The office was responsible for three refugee camps with around 46 000, 18 600 and 11 200 refugees, respectively. This was a year with much hard work and a lot of travelling to the camps, but it was also very exciting and it taught me a lot.”  
*Cathrine Elisabeth Fari, the UDI.*

### UDI employees as of 31 December 2007 (including employees on leave)

	Total number of employees	Women	Men
Senior managers	17	9	8
Middle managers	36	23	13
<b>Total managers</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>
Case processing officials	744	521	223
Office employees	139	113	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>270</b>

# UDI projects

## The UDI abroad Special envoy for immigration cases

"I am the special envoy for immigration cases for the embassy in Teheran, in addition to being a case processing official in the asylum department at the UDI.

My duties generally involve examining information in individual cases, particularly asylum cases, on assignment from the UDI and the Immigration Appeals Board. I am also involved in establishing contact with envoys from other countries and representatives of national and international organisations in Iran. This position also includes responsibility for maintaining a continuously updated overview of circumstances in the country that could affect Norwegian immigration administration. How often and how far I travel always depends on the needs of the UDI and the Immigration Appeals Board.

Even though I am a woman and a foreigner I have never felt unsafe while I have been in Iran, but it does take time to get used to the strict dress code which is in force, even for non-Muslims."  
*Kjersti Nymo, the UDI.*

## Common UDI culture

The survey of the UDI in the spring of 2006 pointed out the need to review the Directorate's core values. The outcome was a new mission statement and new core values, a new organisation principle, requirements for managers and employees and ethical guidelines. The aim is for the UDI to have a common culture with common values.

The core values, requirements for managers and employees and ethical guidelines all have the same view on values: loyalty to our goals, efficiency and a professional attitude in our work, respect for the users and the belief that our most important asset is our human resources.

## The UDI school

In 2007, the UDI had a strong focus on manager and employee development. To expand the variety of courses and other competence-raising programmes, we established the UDI school, which has four modules:

- one-year introductory programme for new employees
- competence programmes for employees with more experience
- in-house and external auditing visits
- special manager development programme

We also want to connect our overriding professional aims more closely to the goals of our work and the competence of each employee.

**In 2007, the UDI has been active in several projects to raise the quality of case processing. We have also been active in a number of research and development projects (R&D projects).**

## Quality in case processing

Good procedures, frequent checks and openness about our practices will help ensure the quality of the UDI's case processing. In 2007, we therefore launched a number of major projects aimed at raising the quality of case processing.

## The follow-up project

The follow-up project was established after the assessment of the UDI in 2006. The project has devoted considerable resources to developing methods to improve the quality of case processing. Several measures were initiated during 2007. We have for example established quality standards for a number of different cases. Based on the new standards, annual quality measurements are now carried out, in addition to quality reviews of all units every six months.

## The practice project

The practice project is a direct consequence of the follow-up project. The UDI was directed by the Government to be more open about the guidelines that case processing officials are using, and having transparent case processing practices is also a crucial element in the UDI's new strategy. The practice project aims to ensure that the UDI has good control information, and that the general public gains an insight into the practices we follow. The principal aim of the project is to protect applicants' legal rights and to ensure that similar cases are handled in the same way.

This work will lead to the publication of the UDI's practices on a new rules portal on the Internet in the spring of 2008. The primary target group for the portal is the immigration administration and partners we cooperate with, such as lawyers, organisations and the press. The portal can also be used by applicants wanting to know more about the UDI's practices.

## R&D projects

The UDI's R&D activities are aimed at improving our knowledge of various migration issues. One important task has been to examine the consequences that rules, regulations and practices have for users. In 2007, the UDI has been active in several R&D projects. Key projects have included:

- assessing whether the immigration administration complies with its obligations pursuant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- comparing the documentation requirements of several countries in immigration cases
- evaluating the cooperation between the UDI and the foreign service missions
- evaluating the programme for resettlement refugees
- evaluating the Afghanistan return programme
- evaluating the scheme using secured sections at reception centres
- developing methods to identify persons staying illegally in Norway
- assessing compensation to local authorities for extraordinary expenses connected to residents at reception centres

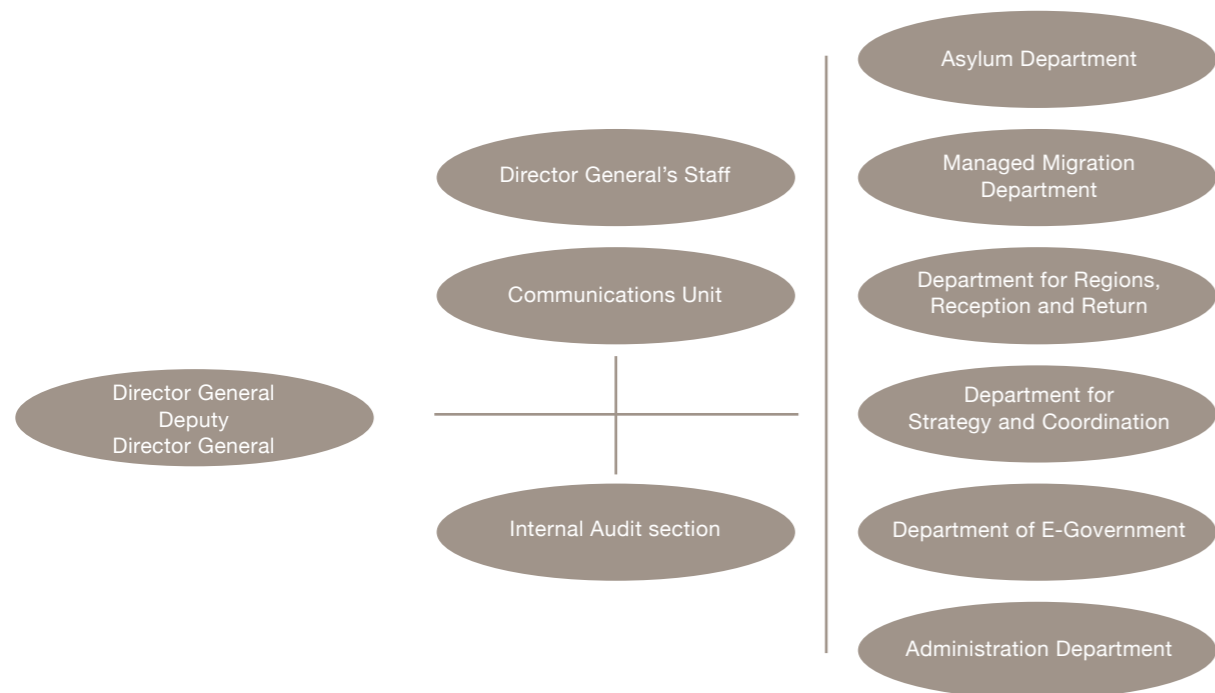
The UDI has also been engaged in an R&D project where we have examined user information needs in connection with labour immigration. This survey showed that there was room for improvement, and we have therefore created better websites and established a service for employers and a service centre for foreign workers (see pages 9 and 13).

An R&D project on family visit visas was received with great interest in the Schengen countries. The project has, for example, contributed to new guidelines for Pakistani nationals wishing to visit siblings in Norway.

## The SVAR project

In the autumn of 2007, the Government initiated the SVAR project, an interministerial cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Police. The project is headed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion.

SVAR is a Norwegian abbreviation for "solid, well-run, accepted and quick." The purpose of the project is to improve case processing flow, quality and service, use resources more efficiently and reduce case processing times in the immigration administration. In 2007, the UDI has contributed surveys and statistics to provide the best possible basis for decisions on the further activities of the project. Through to the spring of 2008, we will undertake a comprehensive review of procedures to determine which measures can be implemented quickly and to assess whether other areas can be streamlined.



From the left: Stephan Mo, Frode Forfang, Ida Børresen, Astrid Aksnessæther, Hanne Jendal, Tore Dæhlin, Karl Erik Sjøholt, Anne Siri Rustad and Eva Nordvik.

# Departments and management

## Director General's Staff

The Director General's Staff consists of Ida Børresen (57), Director General, Frode Forfang (48), Deputy Director General, a personal assistant, a senior advisor and the head of security.

The head of security assists the Director General in exercising good security management that guarantees the security of the UDI's applicants, staff and visitors. The Director General's Staff is also responsible for the UDI's institutional contact with the police.

The Internal Audit section is an objective and independent function organised as a separate staff section under the Director General. The Internal Audit section helps management to exercise good control over all activities, which in turn improves the UDI's operations.

## Asylum Department

The Asylum Department is headed by Hanne Jendal (45). Its primary task is to process applications for asylum. Subordinate units are responsible for various country regions. The department works on case logistics, arranges and conducts interviews of asylum seekers, recruits and quality assures interpreters, assists in developing practice in the asylum field and is also responsible for resettlement refugees.

## Managed Migration Department

The Residence Department is headed by Karl Erik Sjøholt (41). Its primary task is to process cases pursuant to the Immigration Act and the Nationality Act, with the exception of applications for asylum. The department also works on developing the rules in this field, and is responsible for family immigration, visas, travel documents, citizenship, settlement and adoption. The department also has units working on labour immigration, applications pursuant to the EEA rules and cases relating to education.

## Department for Regions, Reception and Return

This department is headed by Anne Siri Rustad (58). Its tasks are connected to the operation of state transit centres, departure centres, regular reception centres, centres for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, secured sections at reception centres and programmes for return and repatriation. In addition to the department administration in Oslo, the department also has regional offices in Bergen, Narvik, Kristiansand, Oslo, Trondheim and Gjøvik.

## Department for Strategy and Coordination

The Department for Strategy and Coordination is headed by Stephan Mo (40). It deals with strategic tasks in cooperation with the other departments. This includes reviews and reports, and the development of rules and input for legislation and regu-

lations. The department has a special office responsible for international and general cases and ensures that national rules and practices comply with international obligations. The department is also responsible for distributing the UDI's rules and regulations through the Information Portal for Rules and Regulations and to the foreign service through the Migration Portal. The department develops statistics in the areas administered by the UDI, and produces monthly production reports and ongoing in-house and external statistics reports.

## Department of E-Government

The Department of E-Government, headed by Tore Dæhlin (53), is responsible for operation of the UDI's information systems and administration and development of the joint expert systems for the immigration administration. The department is also involved in preparing overriding strategies and development plans in the ICT field and the follow-up of plans for the implementation of major projects and programmes. As the UDI is the system owner of several central case processing systems in the entire immigration administration, the department also has a special responsibility for maintaining the total system portfolio.

## Administration Department

The Administration Department, headed by Astrid Aksnessæther (43), is responsible for human resources policies, organisational development, competence-raising, trade union relations, labour law, general tariff agreements and health, environment and safety activities. The department is also responsible for pay and human resources administration, accounts, budgets, operations control and archiving services for immigration cases. In addition to this, the department is responsible for procurement, operation of the buildings, office equipment and the NOARK archive. The department also runs the central switchboard, reception desk functions, the service centre and the information service.

## Communications Unit

The Communications Unit is headed by Eva Nordvik (58), acting Director of Communications, and is responsible for general communication and service focusing on the media, the general public and users. The Communications Unit coordinates general information issues and develops communication strategies. The unit is also responsible for the UDI's publications and graphic profile, and has editorial responsibility for udi.no, the intranet and the portal "New in Norway" (Ny i Norge). Service and in-house communication are also key areas of responsibility.



# Finances

## Budgets

Each year, Stortinget (the Norwegian Parliament) determines the UDI'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 running the Directorate, funds are allocated for operating the reception centres and some benefit schemes.

Parliament placed a total of NOK 1 253 million at the UDI's disposal in 2007. Together with funds carried forward from 2006, the appropriations in Proposals to Parliament no. 56 and 69 (2006–2007), compensation for the wage settlement and the additional appropriations in Proposal to Parliament no. 12 (2007–2008), the budget for 2007 amounted to approximately NOK 1 468 million. This represented a substantial reduction in the UDI's budget compared to 2005, but is a slight increase of around NOK 10 million in the appropriations to the UDI compared to 2006.

## Accounts

The UDI's accounts are prepared in accordance with state accounting regulations. 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 operations.

## Operating expenses

The accounts for 2007 show that around NOK 519 million was spent on running the UDI. Payroll expenses amounted to NOK 300 million after reimbursements. These figures are a net result after deductions for sickness and maternity benefits and reimbursements from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). The UDI operates some administrative functions for the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, and the reimbursements represent the expenses the UDI has incurred in connection with these administrative duties.

## Operating expenses for reception centres

Reception centres can be operated by a private operator or a municipal authority. Contracts to run the centres are entered into after a bidding round. All the operating expenses and essential subsistence benefits paid to asylum seekers are covered through the Directorate's budget. The average price per resident place has changed very little compared to 2006, and lies at around NOK 115 000 per resident annually. The average price per resident in 2006 was around NOK 110 000. The total amount under this item came to NOK 836 million in 2007, compared to NOK 930 million in 2006, representing a reduction of around 11 per cent.

# Accounts

Accounts (figures in NOK 1 000)	2006	2007
<b>Operating expenses UDI minus sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursements and IMDi reimbursements</b>	<b>378 822</b>	<b>519 424</b>
Of which wages minus sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursement and IMDi reimbursements	238 791	299 606
Other operating expenses minus IMDi reimbursements	140 031	219 818
<b>Operating expenses state reception centres</b>	<b>930 333</b>	<b>835 530</b>
Of which benefits paid to residents	241 025	194 961
Of which operating expenses, reception centres	682 055	634 285
Of which ordinary operating expenses	7 253	6 284
<b>Special operating expenses, interpreting and translation</b>	<b>20 492</b>	<b>25 159</b>
Of which wages and fees	15 243	15 336
<b>Return of refugees</b>	<b>10 501</b>	<b>14 203</b>
Of which individual benefits	556	345
Of which projects / local funding	9 945	13 858
<b>Major equipment purchases and maintenance, departure centres</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Knowledge development, migration</b>	<b>2 367</b>	<b>6 641</b>
<b>Transport of refugees / travel expenses to / from foreign countries</b>	<b>6 923</b>	<b>9 003</b>
<b>Integration subsidies</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3 031</b>
<b>On behalf of the Ministry of Justice and the Police</b>	<b>1 073</b>	<b>1 180</b>
<b>On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 351 257</b>	<b>1 414 362</b>





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