

Annual report 2008

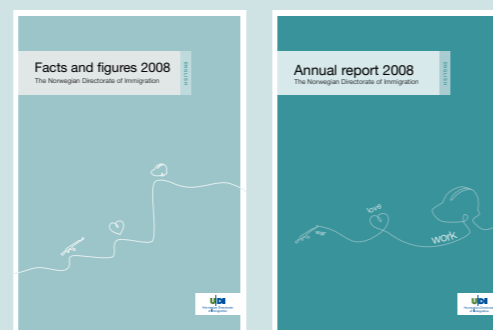
The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration

ENGLISH



Contents

The Director General's comments	3
The UDI in numbers	4
Events calendar	5
One year in the UDI	7
International work	8
Central authorities	9
EFFEKT results in better service	10
User-focused service	11
More asylum seekers	13
Voluntary return	15
Countries in focus	16
Establishing reception centres	18
Here to stay	20
Families	21
20 years of the UDI	23
Good communication creates trust	24
The UDI – too open?	25
Attractive workplace	26
Departments and management	28
The UDI's finances	30
Accounts	31



"Facts and figures", an analysis of the immigration to Norway in 2008, is published with the Annual report. At the end of "Facts and figures" you will find tables and explanations of central terms used in the field of migration.

The Director General's comments

War, love and work are not randomly chosen words to appear on the front page of the Annual report this year. The words are part of the day-to-day life at the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). Three of the main reasons why people move to Norway are precisely war, love and work.



200 million people live in a different country from where they were born. 16 million are in exile. 26 million are refugees in their own country. Nevertheless, war and conflict are not the main reasons why people come to Norway. The most important reasons are love and work. A total of 105 000 foreign citizens were granted permits to reside here in 2008.

Increased immigration


In 2008 we marked 20 years since the UDI was established. During these years, the migration pattern to Norway has changed completely. In 2008, all but two of the 430 local municipalities in Norway had residents with another ethnic background than Norwegian. Now, the majority of people come to work or to be reunited with their nearest and dearest. Of the 105 000 people who came this year, two in ten were granted family immigration permits and seven in ten were granted work permits. Only 4 600 people were granted residence for protection.

Although asylum seekers make up a small proportion of the immigration to Norway, the number of people who applied for asylum in 2008 increased to twice that of 2007. This large flow of people led to an acute demand for many new places in reception centres. In the summer, there was a public debate about tent camps and local municipalities that protested against the rapid establishment of reception centres. In a huge national effort, 43 new reception centres were established in nine months. Despite the fact that media coverage can give a different impression, a large number of local municipalities find having a reception centre in the local area to be enriching.

The UDI is also undergoing change

The UDI has changed and grown significantly as an organisation since it was established in 1988. The number of employees has grown from some 140 to over 1 000 employees today. We see that the increase in immigration is also reflected in the multi-cultural workforce at the UDI, in the same way that multi-culturalism otherwise characterises our society.

In this report, we provide a comprehensive picture of the trends in the field of migration as well as UDI's work and organisation. I hope that the report will provide some new insights into this important and exciting area of society.


Ida Børresen
Director General

The UDI in numbers

The UDI is Norway's central and executive administrative body for immigration and refugees.

Our duties are assigned each year by the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID). Within these frameworks the UDI facilitates legal and desirable immigration with the provision of protection for those who require it. At the same time we contribute to the prevention of unlawful and undesirable immigration.

Service and inspection

We shall treat our users with respect both in our role as a service provider and facilitator, and in our role as an inspection authority. This means that cases should be processed within a reasonable amount of time and that applicants must receive adequate information while their cases are being processed and in the decision letter.

Key role

The UDI also plays a key role as the competent authority in this field. In interaction and dialogue with the AID,

the UDI sets the agenda for the formulation of policies and regulations. The work of the UDI is based on analysis of our own operations, knowledge gained from R&D projects and in-depth knowledge concerning national and international trends.

Open and transparent

The UDI shall be open and transparent. This means that we endeavour to give our users, the media and the general public an insight into our activities and an understanding of the regulations within the immigration field.

Key figures 2004–2008

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Budget	5 168 mill.	4 650 mill.	1 458 mill.	1 474 mill.	2 173 mill.
Operations of the UDI	464 mill.	444 mill.	378 mill.	519 mill.	645 mill.
Operations of reception centres	1 546 mill.	1 100 mill.	930 mill.	836 mill.	1 377 mill.
Number of processed cases (UDI)					
Work and residence	47 841	46 562	44 075	56 333	55 919
Asylum (fully examined)	11 826	6 750	3 707	5 030	7 501
Citizenship*	9 080	13 538	13 016	17 417	12 434
Other	20 906	20 288	16 723	22 447	19 935
Number of persons who received residence permits**					
Work	33 013	28 422	40 528	54 913	52 571
Protections	4 926	3 997	3 198	5 846	3 707
Family reunification	12 750	13 035	13 981	17 913	20 766
Other	5 909	6 793	7 107	8 044	8 497
Service***					
Number of enquiries to UDI's Information Service	-	154 900	196 300	229 500	263 900
Number of visitors to UDI's Service Centre	-	21 300	25 600	33 400	38 400

* Up until the 1st of September 2006, country administration offices also processed applications for citizenship.

** According to decisions from all bodies, first-time permits, excluding renewals.

*** We do not have comparable figures for service in 2004.

Events calendar

First quarter

- It was 20 years since the UDI was established.
- IRRINI, a program for voluntary return and re-entry to Northern Iraq, was started.
- The representation agreements between the Nordic countries were expanded. 25 Swedish, Finnish and Danish foreign service missions are now involved in

representing Norway in immigration cases.

Second quarter

- The Nylov project started. The project shall ensure that in 2010, the UDI will implement the new Immigration Act and regulations in a secure, efficient and comprehensive manner.
- Statistics Norway (SSB) and Fafo (the Norwegian Institute for Labour and Social Research) presented the R&D report "Learning about Illegal Migrants: Issues and Methods". The project was carried out on behalf of the UDI.
- The website www.UDIregelverk.no was launched. The website details the UDI's rules and practice.
- The UDI arranged the Eurasil workshop in Brussels concerning stateless Palestinians. Eurasil is an EU forum that aims to exchange information and contribute to the harmonisation of asylum practices in Europe.
- The UDI arranged the annual spring conference. The topic was labour immigration, and the UDI's 20 year anniversary was also marked.

- White paper no. 18 (2007–2008) on labour immigration was published.
- The UDI published an R&D report about children in immigration cases. The report shall ensure the right of children to be heard (according to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- The UDI arranged a course in Sesam for all operational parties and reception centres. Sesam is an electronic system that simplifies and ensures the quality of information and workflows between the UDI and the reception centres.

Third quarter

- The UDI arranged a seminar on immigrants without legal residence in collaboration with the General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC). International researchers and representatives from European immigration administrations discussed the R&D report on illegal immigrants.
- The government put forward 13 measures to tighten the Norwegian asylum policy.
- A project reviewing the front line services was established. The project shall enable improved efficiency, faster case processing, improved service and satisfactory quality in the Police, the UDI and at the foreign service missions. In addition, a review of the division of tasks and responsibilities between the

- operators in the immigration administration will be carried out.
- Brøset Resource Centre published a report on violence, threats and unstable behaviour among residents in Norwegian reception centres.
- The UDI implemented measures to improve safety for women in reception centres.
- The UDI arranged a conference on unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

Fourth quarter

- Torshov transit centre was opened. The UDI and the National Police Immigration Service collaborate in fast processing of asylum applications from Iraqi citizens that are simple to decide.
- The UDI established new procedures for registration, evaluation and for changing identity information in cases, in accordance with the Immigration Act.
- The UDI arranged a conference on reception centres, and the UDI's 20th anniversary was also marked.
- The UDI arranged a service week and an open day for the first time.
- The first stage of the IC project was completed. The project works on adapting the International Child Development Programme for Norwegian reception centres.
- The UDI arranged a number of seminars and conferences on subjects such as human rights, torture, security and conflict handling.
- eSAK, a common electronic archive system for outgoing documents in immigration cases, was launched in the UDI, the IMDi, the Police and the UNE.

- This is the first stage of the transition to fully electronic case processing in the immigration administration.
- The UDI introduced Websak as an electronic case processing system for general cases.
- Norway and Russia entered into a mutual agreement to adapt visa rules to make it easier to travel between the two countries.
- The UDI arranged a Eurasil workshop in Brussels concerning identity problems.

“War and conflict are not the main reasons why people come to Norway”

IDA BØRRESEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL

One year in the UDI

In 2008, the UDI processed more than 90 000 applications. 105 000 people received permission to reside in Norway.

For those who read or hear about the UDI, it can seem like we mostly work with asylum seekers. But the truth is that asylum is only a small part of our activities. The majority of people who have a case being processed by the UDI are waiting to be able to work, study or be reunited with a family member in Norway.

68 per cent workers

Of the 105 000 people who received a residence permit, 68 per cent received a work permit. 38 900 received permission to work for up to six months, and 32 600 were granted permits to work for more than six months. An increasing number of those who were granted permits to work are professionals from countries outside of the EEA area. In addition, 8 400 people were granted permits to study in Norway in 2008.

Mostly women

20 800 persons were granted family immigration permits, meaning that they were allowed to be reunited with a family member in Norway. It is most common for

a wife/child to apply to be reunited with their husband/father. Four out of five family immigrants in 2008 were female, while almost half were children under 18 years of age. An increasing proportion of those who come to Norway have applied for a family immigration permit with persons who are immigrants themselves – particularly working immigrants.

More rejections

In 2008, asylum seekers and transferred refugees made up four per cent, or 4 600 cases, of all residence permits. The UDI processed 9 700 asylum cases. 59 per cent were rejected, while in 41 per cent of the cases, asylum, residence on humanitarian grounds or other protection was granted. The proportion of rejections thus increased significantly from 2007, when 42 per cent of the asylum applications were rejected. The main reason for more applicants being rejected is a new practice that applies for Chechens and persons from Serbia and Kosovo.

An average week at the UDI

Work, study, family or asylum. Many individuals are in contact with the UDI. In order to illustrate the workload at the UDI and the influx from outside, we will present the figures for an average week at the UDI.

- 1 700 decisions, 46 decisions every hour
- 5 100 enquiries from users
- 750 visits to the UDI's Service Centre
- 30 500 visits at www.udi.no and www.UDIregelverk.no
- 38 press enquiries

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.

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.

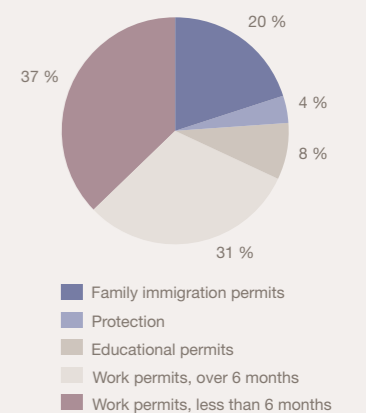
Professionalism

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

Totality

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

Decisions in 2008



A total of 105 000 people were granted permits to reside in Norway.

International work

The UN estimates that over 200 million people have lived for more than one consecutive year outside of their home country. The increasing migration creates global challenges that require global solutions.

Migration is a complex field that covers everything from asylum policy, human trafficking and the return of refugees and asylum seekers to labour immigration and cooperation with the applicants' country of origin. Students, construction workers, asylum seekers, managers of international companies and illegal labour immigrants are all a part of the international migration work.

Cooperation in the migration field

Migration patterns and international regulations are in a constant state of change. Since the UDI administers national and international rules in the migration field, we must keep up to date with developments. Our decisions and practice must be in accordance with international obligations. The UDI therefore participates in many Nordic, European and international forums to influence international development and safeguard Norwegian interests.

One example is the Nordic Immigration Committee, a cooperative forum for the immigration services in the Nordic countries. Some of its work includes discussing common Nordic challenges and problems and exchanging information about one another's practices and rules. This is particularly important with regard to cases that are processed in international forums.

European cooperation

As an EEA member, Norway is part of the collaboration to allow the free flow of

people within Europe. This collaboration now covers all 27 EU countries in addition to Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Norway is also involved in the formation of European immigration policy through the Dublin Convention and the Schengen Treaty, in which it has participated since 2001.

“Increasing migration creates global challenges that require global solutions”

The Schengen cooperation has 25 European member countries. Of these, 22 are EU countries, joined by Norway, Iceland and Switzerland. These countries cooperate on issues including border controls and visa policies. In addition, Norway has a close cooperation with the EU with regard to illegal immigration and returning immigrants.

30 European countries cooperate through the Dublin Convention. This agreement regulates which member state is responsible for processing an application for asylum. The main principle is that an application for asylum should be processed in the first country in which the person sought asylum or was granted an entry visa.

Cooperation with the UNHCR

The UDI also cooperates with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This organisation coordinates the international work to protect refugees and find lasting solutions to refugee problems. UNHCR is an important cooperation partner in questions of international protection for refugees.

Central authorities

The UDI is one of several actors that cooperate on the administration of the Government's refugee and immigration policy. A great deal of work is put into finding the balance between providing services for desirable immigration and preventing illegal immigration.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (AID) has the primary responsibility for refugee-, immigration- and integration policy.

The UDI is the central body in the immigration administration. We process and pass decisions for all types of cases in accordance with the Immigration Act and the Citizenship Act. The AID cannot instruct the UDI in individual cases unless such cases concern national security or foreign policy considerations. However, the AID can instruct the UDI in its interpretation of the law and use of assessment and in this way influence general practice in the immigration field.

Appeals against decisions made by the UDI are dealt with by the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), a politically independent administrative body. The practice expressed through the UNE's decisions is normative for the UDI's practice. The AID cannot instruct the UNE on interpretations of the law or assessments and decisions in individual cases, apart from cases concerning Norway's security or involving foreign policy considerations. Its practice must be governed through laws and regulations.

The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Center (Landinfo) is an independent professional unit, whose most important task is to collect, analyse and pass on general country knowledge to the actors in the immigration administration. The Landinfo is administratively under the UDI, but cannot be instructed in professional questions and evaluations.

The Police

The 27 police districts in Norway receive and prepare applications for residence and work permits, travel documents, settlement permits and citizenship. In some types of cases the police can grant a permit if there is

“The UDI is the central body in the immigration administration”

no doubt that the conditions are fulfilled. The National Police Immigration Service is responsible for the registration of asylum seekers, investigating travel routes, determining identity and preparing and enforcing final rejections in asylum cases. In addition, they are responsible for coordinat-

ing and ensuring the quality of all deportations from Norway of foreigners residing illegally in the country. The Police also have tasks related to border controls and general immigration controls.

The foreign service

Foreign service missions are often the first point of contact for foreigners who wish to visit or move to Norway. The foreign service missions process most visa applications. They also prepare cases for decisions to be made by the UDI and the police by collecting and verifying documents and information, as well as interviewing applicants. The foreign service missions also participate in the task of returning persons without legal residence.

User service

The service strategy for the immigration administration 2008–2011 is a collaboration between the Ministry of Justice and the Police, the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The overall service goal is to develop an efficient and user-friendly immigration administration. The UDI's employees shall meet the users with friendliness, openness and respect, and act in such a way that users trust that their applications will be correctly processed.

Users of the immigration administration are all those who contact different ministries, agencies and foreign service missions, primarily applicants and their representatives or lawyers, but also reference persons, employers, recruitment companies, interest groups, universities and colleges, family members and friends of applicants. Organisations and other public agencies that the immigration administration cooperates with are also included.

Cooperation in the Balkans

In 2008 the UDI took part in an EU project aimed at helping Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to build up an immigration administration. The project resulted in the development of national guidelines for asylum, migration and visas and regional guidelines for the transfer of competence between these countries.



The service strategy for the immigration administration 2008–2011.



Stephan Mo is Head of the EFFEKT Secretariat.

EFFEKT results in better service

Good service, high quality and rapid case processing shall characterise the entire immigration administration. Through the EFFEKT Programme, the major development programme within ICT in the immigration administration, we work to achieve these goals.

The EFFEKT Programme shall change the way the immigration administration works. Applicants will be able to apply for work or residence permits via the Internet whenever and from wherever they wish. Many applicants will be able to renew their permit via SMS and receive a faster response to their application. This will lead to better service.

“Our users will experience a major simplification of the procedures and a more user-friendly immigration administration,” says Stephan Mo, Head of the EFFEKT Secretariat.

Electronic processing

EFFEKT is a collaboration between the UDI, the Police, the Immigration Appeals Board, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (UD). The UDI has the main responsibility for the development of EFFEKT.

The programme consists of three main areas:

- the introduction of electronic services for users
- joint electronic case folders
- electronic interaction with other departments and cooperation partners

The administration shall be able to process cases regardless of where the application was submitted, and the information can flow rapidly between the various departments who are to assess or process a case.

Visas on the Internet

In 2008, electronic case processing was used to process around 6 000 visa applications. During the last month of the year, more than half of the visa applications that were submitted to the foreign service missions in Moscow, Kiev and London were submitted via the Internet.

By applying for a visa online, applicants can submit the application electronically, receive individual guidance and carry out payment. In addition, the applicant can check the status of the application.

When the UDI and the UD introduce the system in their foreign service missions in Murmansk, St. Petersburg and Baku in January 2009, half of the approximately 130 000 who apply for a Schengen visa at Norwegian foreign service missions will submit their applications online.

Challenges

The development of EFFEKT takes place at the same time as the immigration administration prepares to introduce the new Immigration Act in Norway, which will come into force in 2010. This will result in both professional and technical challenges for the immigration administration.

“The introduction of the new system and the implementation of the new Immigration Act will be both exciting and demanding,” says Stephan Mo.

User-focused service

In order to be an accessible and user-friendly directorate, the UDI aims for a closer dialogue with our users. Better cooperation and more meeting places are important keywords in the development of better service.

“We always aim to get better at meeting our users. Communicating clearly, listening and showing respect are therefore some of the most important aspects of our work,” says Gro Bjerkvoll, Service Coordinator in the UDI.

Open day

In 2008, the UDI arranged an open day for the first time. People were invited to talk to our staff about rules, permits and career opportunities. In addition, presentations were held on topics such as human trafficking, the establishment of reception centres and openness in the UDI.

“The open day was a great success. We will therefore continue to hold more open days in 2009,” says Bjerkvoll.

Common service strategy

The common service strategy for the immigration administration from 2008 shall help to create a more user-friendly and efficient administration.

The immigration administration has many different user groups, including educational institutions, employers, interest organisations and applicants and their families. For foreign applicants, the immigration admin-

istration represents their first meeting with Norway.

“An overall policy in the immigration administration makes Norway a more attractive country to visit, work or live in,” says Bjerkvoll.

Service Centre for Foreign Employees

An example of a general policy in the immigration administration is the Service Centre for Foreign Workers that was established in October 2007. More than 60 000 people have used the centre, which issues work permits to skilled workers and to employees from the EU/EEA area within five days, given that the application is complete. The Service Centre is a collaborative project between the Labour Inspection Authorities, the Police, the Tax Administration and the UDI.

User council

Over the past year, the UDI has set up several user councils which consist of representatives from different organisations. By meeting regularly and discussing all of the UDI’s professional fields, we will be able to develop better solutions and better service.

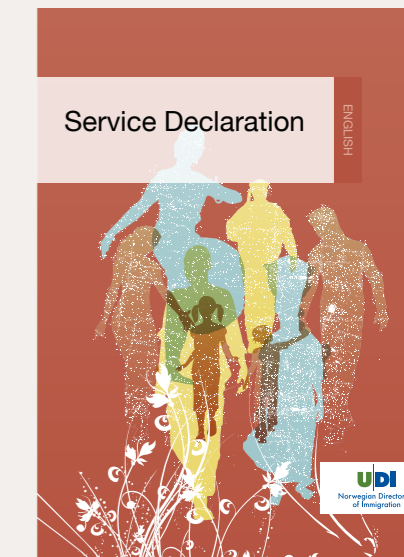
“Adapting our services to the needs of our users is a matter of respect. Our users should feel that we are here for them, and that we do what we can to help them,” says Bjerkvoll.



Gro Bjerkvoll is the UDI's Service Coordinator.

The UDI's service declaration

In 2008 the UDI developed a service declaration. The declaration informs users what they can expect when they contact us. It also explains what we expect of our users to ensure that applications are processed as quickly and efficiently as possible.



The UDI's new service declaration from 2008.

“Our users will notice a major simplification of the procedures and a more user-friendly immigration administration”



“More and more people bring their families to Norway”

IDA BØRRESEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL

More asylum seekers

More than twice as many asylum seekers came to Norway in 2008 compared to 2007. The increase was particularly large for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

During 2008, 14 400 asylum seekers came to Norway, compared to around 6 500 in 2007.

“This is an increase of 120 per cent, which has led to challenges for the UDI,” says Head of the Asylum Department, Hanne Jendal.

Not only Norway experienced a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2008. The same was true in many other European countries. The background for this is complicated, but the main reason is the unstable and insecure conditions in the applicants’ home country and neighbouring countries.

The majority of asylum seekers came from Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Somalia and Russia. The biggest group of asylum seekers was men between 18 and 29 years of age.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers

1 400 of the asylum seekers who came to Norway stated that they were unaccompanied youth under 18 years of age. This is three and a half times as many as in 2007.

“A part of this increase is due to the fact that many more asylum seekers came from Afghanistan and Iraq. Applicants from these countries have made up the biggest proportion of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in recent years,” explains Jendal.

Since this group comes to Norway without parents or other guardians, they are appointed a temporary guardian who is to safeguard their interests and assist them during the asylum interview.

Both the asylum interview and the application assessment are adapted to the age of the unaccompanied minor applicant. If there is any doubt about the applicant’s age, a medical age examination is undertaken.

“The asylum evaluation is different in these cases because we cannot expect a child to be able to explain his or her situation in the same way as an adult,” says Jendal.

“Additionally, we cannot send minors back to their home country without knowing the identity of their care persons. This means that an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker can be granted a permit in a case in which another asylum seeker would have been rejected,” she explains.

Six out of ten were rejected

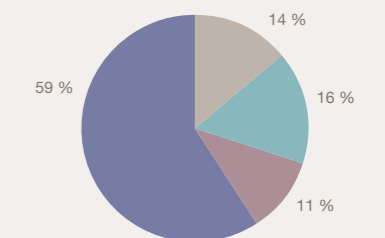
“It is important to point out that not all asylum seekers are allowed to stay in the country. Only those who are in genuine need of protection are granted residence. In 2008, around 60 per cent of the cases we handled were rejected,” says Jendal.

“Only those who are in genuine need of protection are granted residence”

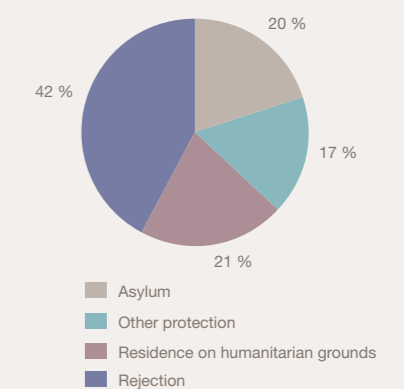


Hanne Jendal is Head of the Asylum Department.

Asylum decisions made by the UDI in 2008



Asylum decisions made by the UDI in 2007



Only cases processed after full examination.



Petter Sterud Hansen is the Project Manager of the Torshov project.

International conventions

Persons who have been persecuted in their home countries have the right to apply for asylum in Norway. According to the UN Refugee Convention, Norway is obliged to grant protection to those people who have good reason to fear being persecuted for reasons of religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.

Asylum seekers and refugees

An asylum seeker is a person who, on their own initiative, and without advance notification comes to Norway and asks for protection and recognition as a refugee. If the application is approved, the asylum seeker is granted refugee status. The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) is responsible for obtaining accommodation for refugees who come to Norway.

The asylum interview and application form the basis for evaluating whether the applicant is in genuine need of protection. The case officer must assess how the general security situation in a country will affect the individual applicant in the event of repatriation.

Information about the security situation in different countries is primarily obtained from the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Center (Landinfo), the immigration administration's independent professional unit for country information. However, the UDI also obtains such information from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), various human rights organisations and through information exchanges with other countries.

Rapid processing at Torshov

The high number of arrivals and the large case volumes in 2008, meant that the UDI had to find new ways to make its case processing more efficient.

One result of this process is the Torshov project, a collaboration between the UDI and the National Police Immigration Service (PU) for the fast processing of Iraqi asylum applications where it appears obvious what the outcome will be.

By the UDI and PU working together at Torshov transit centre, the time from an asylum application is submitted to the Police until the UDI makes a decision will be as short as possible, whilst safeguarding the legal security of the applicant. Project Manager Petter Sterud Hansen is satisfied with the results so far.

"We have reduced the processing time for cases with a clear result to an average of

13 days, and reduced the number of days spent in transit," he says.

The main aim of the project is to reduce the number of asylum arrivals from Iraq.

"Despite the fact that the total number of asylum seekers flattened towards the end of 2008, the number of Iraqi asylum seekers has

fallen since the project started in October," says Sterud Hansen.

"However, it is still too early to conclude that this is due to the Torshov project," he emphasises.

20 years ago

20 years ago, Chileans made up the largest group of asylum seekers in Norway. At that time, Chile was a military dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet. A total of 1 940 Chileans applied for asylum in Norway in 1988. After 1990 there was a significant reduction in the number of Chilean asylum seekers coming to Norway. From 1989 to 2008, a total of 57 asylum seekers arrived from Chile.

"We have reduced the processing time for cases with a clear result"

Voluntary return

Voluntary return with dignity. This is the goal of the Norwegian authorities regarding asylum seekers who receive a final rejection of their application for protection in Norway.

In 2008, 568 people chose to return voluntarily to their homeland. This is 28 per cent more than in 2007.

"It is gratifying that more people are choosing to return voluntarily. The feedback we receive is that many wish to follow Norwegian law and return home without the police following them. The voluntary return scheme gives them this opportunity," says Anne Siri Rustad, Head of the Department of Regions, Reception and Return.

One of the reasons why more people returned voluntarily was an information campaign carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the first half of 2008. The number of people who returned voluntarily increased by ten per cent after the IOM campaign.

Successful return programmes

In order to protect the right to asylum and protection, it is important that those who do not require protection leave the country voluntarily.

There are specific return programmes for people from Northern Iraq and Afghanistan that include support for reintegration in their

home country. The return programme for people from Iraq began on the 1st of March 2008. During the first ten months of the programme, 97 persons who had received a final rejection of their asylum application returned to Iraq.

"568 people chose to return voluntarily to their homeland"

Iraqis who do not have a residence permit and return through the programme receive NOK 10 000. In addition, support up to NOK 25 000 per person is offered for reintegration measures in their home country. There is an equivalent scheme for persons from Afghanistan.

Positive to more return programmes

Representatives from the UDI travelled to Northern Iraq in November to meet some of those who have returned through the programme.

"Many people emphasised how important it is to return with dignity and also receive financial support to re-establish themselves. We would therefore like to develop additional similar programmes," emphasises Rustad.

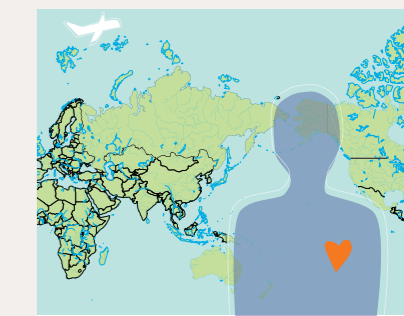
The IOM organises voluntary return on behalf of the Norwegian authorities. Since 2002, the organisation has helped more than 5 400 people from 100 different countries to return with dignity.



Anne Siri Rustad is Head of the Department for Regions, Reception and Return.

Information campaign

The IOM carried out a successful information campaign for voluntary return during the first half of 2008. This led to more people making use of the voluntary return scheme during the year.



**CONSIDERING RETURNING HOME?
IOM HELPS MIGRANTS!
VURDERER DU Å RETURNERE HJEM?
IOM HJELPER MIGRANTER!**

Email: RETURN-INFO@iom.int
Tel: 2310 5335 Fax: 2310 5323

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Migraasjonshjelpen (IOM) - 116, Vestvoll 0653 Oslo
Postboks 116, 0653 Oslo, Norge
Mailing Address: 116, Vestvoll 0653 Oslo, Norway

Information notice from the IOM.

Countries in focus

Many people apply to come to Norway each year. There are different reasons why they come, and it is therefore important that the UDI has an understanding about the countries from which they come. The focus has among others been directed at Poland, Iraq, Somalia, Russia and China.

Poland (population: 38 500 000)

From being a country of origin for many asylum seekers in the early 1990s, Poland is now the biggest country of origin for foreign workers (excluding the Nordic countries). It started with seasonal workers after the fall of the Berlin Wall, continued with specialist permits and increased manifolds with Poland's EU membership in 2004. Of the 94 200 people who had valid work permits at the end of 2008, 40 900 of them were from Poland.

The transition from seasonal to year-round work has led to more Polish families coming to join the workers. In 2008, the UDI approved 4 700 applications for family immigration from Poland, the most of any country for the third consecutive year. 90 per cent of family immigration permits were granted to women and children to reunite with Polish workers.

Almost half of the Polish labour immigrants work in the building and construction industry and for recruitment companies. Many Polish labour immigrants are now in the process of securing Norwegian approval of their training within professions such as engineering, teaching and pre-school teaching.

Iraq (population: 28 200 000)

Iraq has a long history of asylum seekers coming to Norway, and in 2008, for the fourth consecutive year, represented the country of origin for the most asylum seekers (3 100). Although there has been less fighting and civilian victims, certain areas in Iraq continue to experience an extremely difficult humanitarian and security situation. The Kurdish area of Northern Iraq is considered stable.

In October, the UDI and the National Police Immigration Service started a trial project with rapid processing of Iraqi asylum applications. The aim is to reduce the case processing time of clear cases for rejection or the granting of permits. Many Iraqis choose to return with the voluntary return programme IRRINI that started on the 1st of March 2008.

In recent years, fewer Iraqis have applied for family immigration. The so-called MUF cases are now reaching the final phase. Of the around 200 Kurds from Northern Iraq who were granted a temporary residence permit without the possibility for family immigration (MUF) and who had to have their cases processed once more, around 20 cases were still not processed at the end of the year.

Somalia (population: 9 550 000)

With the exception of 2007, Somalia has been in the top four in asylum seeker statistics since the UDI was established in 1988. The country has not had a functional central government since 1991 and there have been conflicts between different groups. While the northern areas have been considered relatively stable, southern Somalia has been suffering from a difficult safety and humanitarian situation.

Southern Somalia is also the area from which the majority of asylum seekers say they come. Many of these people are unaccompanied minors and women with children, and the percentage of granted permits has been high for a long time. In 2008, 84 per cent of the fully examined applications were approved.

Since Somalia does not have an authority to issue identification papers, it is often difficult for the applicants to document their identity. This also applies to family immigration, an area in which Somalia has been high on the list due to the many approved asylum applications. In 2008, 1 500 Somali people applied for family immigration.

Russia (population: 140 700 000)

Russia and Norway share a 196 kilometre long border. Russian citizens have often crossed the border and thus represented a major part of the UDI's case portfolio throughout the UDI's existence.

With regard to visitor visas, in 2008, Russian citizens accounted for four times as many permits granted (48 300) than Chinese citizens who were number two on the list. In 2008, Norway and Russia agreed to allow all businesses in the three northernmost counties to employ unskilled persons from the Barents region in Russia.

At the same time, Russia has long been among the countries from which Norway receives the most asylum seekers. In 2008, 1 100 Russian citizens applied for asylum. Over 90 per cent were Chechens. A change in practice in the summer of 2007 reduced the percentage of permits granted to Chechens from 80 to 20 per cent.

Marriage between Norwegian men and Russian women has led to an over-representation of women as family immigrants. Many have come to Northern Norway and particularly to the county of Finnmark.

China (population: 1 330 000 000)

In August, the world looked to China as the host of the 29th Summer Olympic Games. At the same time, the human rights situation in the country was the topic of much debate. Norway receives applications for asylum, work and study permits and family immigration from China.

80 Chinese citizens sought asylum in Norway in 2008. This is twice as many as in 2007. The majority of these asylum seekers are highly educated and hail from the autonomous province of Xinjiang in western China. They cite persecution by the authorities on political grounds as the reason for seeking asylum, and many say that conditions have become worse after the Olympics.

All the same, the UDI receives mostly application for work or study permits from Chinese citizens. In 2008, as in 2007, the majority of student permits were granted to Chinese citizens, if we exclude EEA permits. A total of 350 Chinese students were granted student permits in 2008. The majority of work permits are specialist permits.

One challenge for the UDI has been applications from many cooks who lack the formal training and education required for the work permit for ethnic cooks. These cooks are often recruited by agents working on behalf of Chinese restaurant owners in Norway.



Anne Siri Rustad and Atle Berge from the Department for Regions, Reception and Return.

Establishing reception centres

2008 did not turn out as expected for the Department for Regions, Reception and Return in the UDI. Due to the significant increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the country, the reception system had to be expanded extensively during the year.

At the end of the year, there were 104 reception centres with a total capacity of 16 300 at different locations all over the country. 43 new reception centres with a capacity of 8 500 were established during the year. Reception centres were established in 37 new municipalities.

“It has been a demanding year for all who work with establishing reception centres. At the same time, many municipalities have laid the grounds for the quick establishment of reception centres. This confirms my impression of a cooperative municipality sector,” says Anne Siri Rustad, Head of the Department for Regions, Reception and Return.

However, it is not the first time the UDI has had to expand the reception centre system. Developments over time show that there are major fluctuations in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the country. This requires a flexible reception system that can be expanded and reduced as required.

Better information

The UDI’s information procedures with regard to local municipalities received a particularly large degree of attention during the past year.

“We know that the local municipalities want and need information, as their involvement

is sought as early as possible when a reception centre is to be established in the municipality,” says Atle Berge, Head of the Western Region Office.

During the year, the UDI improved the information procedures with local municipalities, and is now in contact with them at an earlier stage in the process of establishing reception centres.

“We wish to have a good dialogue with the municipalities both before and after establishing a reception centre, in order to create a good foundation for further cooperation. The new procedures shall include a uniform practice from the entire UDI,” Berge explains.

Meeting with the local community

It is not only the local municipalities which require information. According to Berge, there is also a major need for information in the local community in general, and particularly in areas where reception centres are to be established.

The regional offices always clarify if there is a requirement for information meetings in a municipality when a new reception centre is to be established.

“People who come to such meetings often have questions about nationality, numbers, health, traumas and criminality. We then have the opportunity to present factual information and clarify misunderstandings. It is important that the UDI shows an understanding of the insecurity some people feel,” emphasises Berge.

Berge finds it is sensible to use the experiences of both the UDI and its collaborative partners to present a more nuanced picture of asylum seekers and reception centres. It has been useful to point to the experiences of the police districts, which show that there is no more criminality amongst asylum seekers than amongst the general population.

“This way, we can show that the fear does not relate to reality,” he points out.

Positive experiences

Both Rustad and Berge are glad that the media, especially local and regional newspapers, have helped to portray a more nuanced picture of reception centres and asylum seekers. Rustad believes that such positive coverage may be due to the fact that much of the criticism disappears after the reception centres are established.

“The feedback that the UDI has received from local municipalities across the country shows that the reception centres increase turnover for local businesses, provide more jobs and enrich the cultural life in the local community. The success stories far exceed

the negative ones,” she says, and points to an NRK (The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) survey in which some 28 of 34 host municipalities say that they view reception centres as something positive.

Good future prospects

According to Norwegian law, the UDI is responsible for providing asylum seekers

with accommodation as soon as they arrive in Norway. In order to be able to take them in, good cooperation with both the municipalities and the reception centre operators is necessary.

“The year 2008 illustrates this,” says Berge. He describes it as hectic and exciting. The regional offices have worked together with the operators and reception centre staff to provide asylum seekers with a place to live.

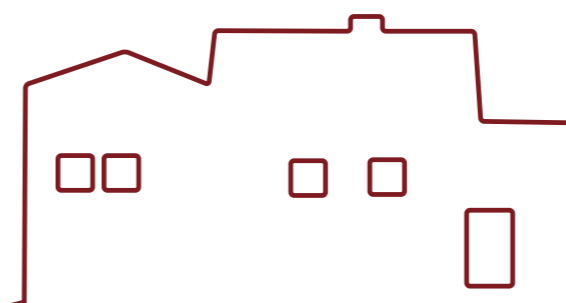
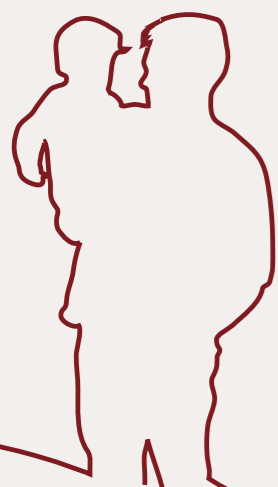
“The reception centre staff and operators, both new and old, have demonstrated an enthusiasm that is extremely promising for 2009. The way the local municipalities have adapted for host municipality services represents local government in Norway at its best,” he adds.

20 years ago

Prior to 1988, the municipalities had responsibility for all the residents in their municipality, which also entailed providing asylum seekers with an offer of accommodation. The local municipalities, as well as the Red Cross and other voluntary organisations, ran the reception centres.

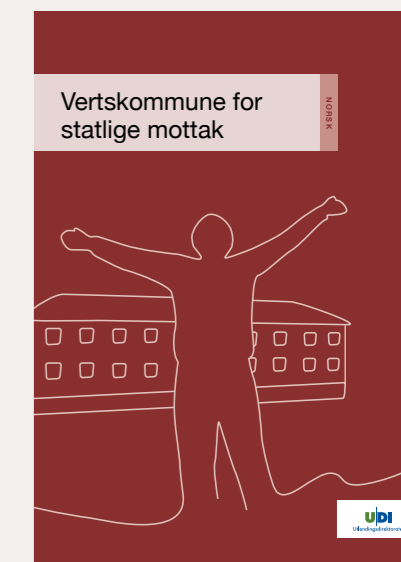
“We wish to have a good dialogue with the municipalities both before and after establishing a reception centre”

“The successful stories far exceed the negative ones”



How is a reception centre established?

The process of establishing a reception centre is subject to competition in the same way as other business enterprises. Potential operators, who may be private operators, local municipalities or voluntary organisations, then present an offer to the UDI. The bidders must clarify necessary conditions related to the use of the buildings they wish to utilise. The UDI enters into an agreement with the operator that submits the best total bid. Price, location, available services to residents and the input from the local municipality all play a part in the total evaluation.



The UDI has developed a new information brochure for local municipalities where reception centres are to be established. The brochure is available only in Norwegian.



Christian Seter and Per-Kristian Ljostveit are Heads of Units in the Managed Migration Department.

Here to stay

In 2008, the number of new work permits fell by four per cent compared to 2007. Nevertheless, there were over 94 000 valid work permits at the end of the year.

“The majority of labour immigrants work within building and construction, industry or in service enterprises such as the hotel and restaurant industry or commerce. During the summer there are many who work within agriculture, but this sector is clearly under-represented in the total number of permits with longer validity,” says Head of Unit in the Managed Migration Department, Christian Seter.

The majority of labour immigrants come from Poland, Lithuania and Germany.

The decline in the number of work permits issued was greatest in the final quarter of 2008, and it was the building and construction industry that was most affected. The Service Centre for Foreign Employees in Oslo receives an increasing number of enquiries regarding termination of employment contracts and unpaid leave.

“Economic developments will determine whether this trend continues into 2009,” says Seter.

More people from countries outside the EEA

Despite the decline in the number of persons coming from the EEA area, more labour immigrants came from countries outside the EEA area, for whom the main requirement is typically that one has professional training or specific qualifications.

“We have had an increase of 16 per cent compared to 2007,” says Per-Kristian Ljostveit, acting Head of Unit in the Managed Migration Department.

India accounts for the most first-time permits for professionally trained persons from outside the EEA area, followed by Russia, China and the Philippines.

“The professionally trained labour immigrants work in many different sectors. While many Indian and Chinese citizens work with ICT, the shipbuilding industry in Northern Norway employs many Russians. Many Filipinos are seamen,” says Ljostveit.

Fight against social dumping

The UDI and the Labour Inspection Authority have worked more closely together to fight social dumping with regard to foreign workers during 2008.

“We have reported more cases to the police in 2008 than in any previous year,” says Per-Kristian Ljostveit.

Norwegian employers have, for example, used foreign workers without work permits in Norway or not given employees the conditions of pay and working hours they informed the UDI that they were going to give them.

“We will continue to work hard against social dumping and report cases to the police where there has been a clear breach of laws and regulations,” says Christian Seter.

20 years ago

In 1988, many of the work permits were granted to seasonal workers and to young people working within agriculture.

Families

An increasing number of people come to Norway to live together with a family member. In 2008, 20 800 such permits were issued, 15 per cent more than in 2007.

“When more foreign citizens are granted work permits, asylum or residency on humanitarian grounds, the number of family immigration permits often increases too,” says Head of Division in the Managed Migration Department, Snorre Sæther.

Most Polish citizens

People from Poland made up the largest group with 4 400 permits, followed by people from Germany, Thailand, Somalia and Lithuania.

The majority of those from Poland, Germany and Lithuania come to live together with family members who live and work in Norway. Thai citizens mainly receive family immigration permits with Norwegian citizens with whom they have formed a family, while people from Somalia are reunited with family members who have come to Norway as refugees or who themselves have been granted family immigration.

“It is most common for a wife/child to apply to be reunited with their husband/father in Norway. Four out of five family immigrants in 2008 were women, while almost half were children under 18 years of age,” says Snorre Sæther.

Pro forma marriage

Although the UDI approves many applications for family reunification, there are also those who try to abuse the regulations. In 2008, the UDI rejected 200 applications for family immigration due to a suspicion that the marriage had been entered into primarily

with the purpose of obtaining work or residence permit. Roughly the same number of women and men are rejected due to suspicion of marriage of convenience.

“We work actively to ensure that a marriage of convenience does not lead to a residence permit in Norway,” says Sæther.

“Four out of five family immigrants in 2008 were women”

It is difficult to prove that a marriage is a marriage of convenience. The UDI always carries out a complete evaluation which includes an examination of the age difference between the parties, how well the parties know each other, whether the marriage is atypical with regard to marriage traditions in the home

country, whether the persons applying have tried to obtain residence in Norway on other grounds previously and whether the parties can communicate in a common language.

20 years ago

The approximately 2 500 persons who came to Norway with a family immigration permit in 1988 were spouses and children of labour immigrants in Norway. The majority came from Asia and Western Europe.



Snorre Sæther is Head of Division in the Managed Migration Department.

Family immigration

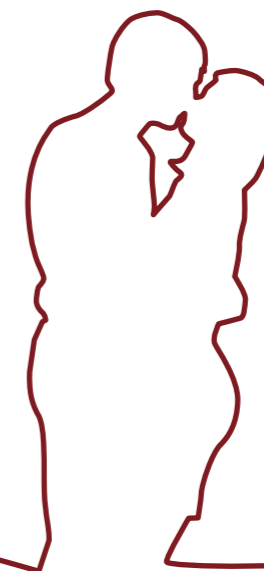
The term family immigration means the process of a family member in a foreign country coming to Norway to live together with their family. Permits are primarily given to close family members and normally given for one year at a time.

Turkish marriage of convenience cases

The UDI is considering withdrawing or rejecting up to one hundred residence permits, Norwegian citizenships or applications for family immigration from Turkish men. After a thorough investigation, a conclusion was reached that these men had entered into marriage with Norwegian women first and foremost for the purpose of obtaining a residence permit in Norway.

Turkish citizens receive the most rejections due to suspicions of marriages of convenience, followed by Moroccan and Vietnamese citizens.

“We will continue to work hard against social dumping”



“Today, the majority come to Norway to work,”

IDA BØRRESEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL

20 years of the UDI

In 2008, it was 20 years since the UDI was established. Over those years, Norway has become a more multi-cultural society and international migration has increased. The UDI and the immigration administration as a whole, has changed as well.

The UDI was established in 1988 due to the increasing number of asylum seekers coming to Norway. In 1987, 8 700 asylum seekers came to Norway, the following year there were 6 700. In addition to control tasks the UDI was also given the responsibility for settlement and following up the integration work carried out by the local municipalities, a responsibility we had until the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) was established and took over these tasks in 2006.

Airlift

The number of asylum seekers continued to increase through the 1990s, as war raged in the Balkans and many refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia came to Norway.

“One of the strongest impressions from that era was when the government decided to take in 6 000 refugees from Kosovo in 1999. Together with the aviation authorities, we organised an airlift to Norway. For each new plane that arrived, we had to establish a new reception centre,” recalls the UDI veteran Erling Kielland, who has worked for the UDI for 17 years.

From control to service

Since 2000, labour immigration has exploded, mainly because of the expansion of the EU, and thus becoming one of the UDI's biggest areas of responsibility. More and more labour immigrants now establish themselves permanently in Norway and often bring their families.

In 1988, immigration control comprised the UDI's most important field of work. Today, we focus more on adapting to legal and desirable immigration.

“The change in the immigration pattern during these 20 years has increased the awareness that the immigration administration is not just about carrying out control work. It is just as important to ensure that business has access to foreign workers and that these foreign workers have the opportunity for family life over country borders,” says the UDI's Director General, Ida Børresen.

A mirror image of the community

In line with the increased immigration, the UDI has changed and become a larger organisation. In 1988 we had 141 job positions at one address in Oslo and four regional offices.

At the end of 2008, the UDI had grown to a large organisation with over 1 000 employees at eleven addresses in Oslo and six regional offices. Half of these employees have been recruited during the last seven years. At the same time, almost 200 of our employees were transferred to the IMDi when it was established.

“The organisation is like a mirror image of the community. We will also experience major changes in the years to come, when the entire immigration administration goes over to fully electronic case processing,” says Børresen.



20th anniversary

The 20th anniversary was marked at the spring conference in May, at the UDI's annual internal conference in June and at a conference focusing on reception centres in October.

Two information booklets were produced, but are available only in Norwegian. You can order *De første 20 årene* and *Asylmottak gjennom 20 år* via bestilling@udi.no.





Agnar Kaarbø is Director of Communications in the UDI.

Good communication creates trust

A public body such as the UDI depends on the trust of its users and society in general. In the early summer, this trust was tested when the need to establish new reception centres increased.

“The combination of a large flow of asylum seekers, dramatic events at two reception centres and a lack of understanding of asylum seekers and reception centres created a major communications challenge in 2008,” says Director of Communications, Agnar Kaarbø.

Headlines such as “Neighbours in conflict over reception centre,” “Fear of asylum seekers in local communities” and “The UDI ignores local municipalities” clearly show how the UDI had trouble explaining why there was a need for reception centres and what that actually entailed. The actual situation in the municipalities and local communities was more nuanced. This was demonstrated by headlines such as “Great having a reception centre” and “Reception centre wanted in Molde”.

Better information

The establishment of a reception centre is often met with scepticism and resistance. Now that the UDI has established improved information procedures related to such establishments, the process is much smoother. However, critical enquiries from the media are still part of day to day life at the UDI.

“We receive a great deal of attention, and that is good. It gives us the opportunity to explain what we do and how we work,” says Kaarbø.

Increased interest

In addition to the asylum field, labour immigration and family immigration were also visible aspects of the migration field in 2008. Around 12 000 media reports indicate the degree of attention given to the work of the UDI.

In the modern, open information society, the media demands comprehensive and detailed information, both on general questions and on the handling of individual cases. In addition, communication work has become more demanding due to the fact that there are more media channels, Internet newspapers and news channels that publish material on a continuous basis.

“Today we have a much more hectic working day, compared to information work 15–20 years ago,” says Kaarbø, who describes communication work as a permanent public education project.

“Our experience is that the more the press and the public know about the UDI, the more understanding we get for our work,” says Kaarbø.

“The more the press and the public know about the UDI, the more understanding we get”

The UDI – too open?

Monday the 18th of August was not a completely normal day at the UDI. We are often criticised for being too closed as an organisation, but under the headline “Asylum criteria on the Internet” in the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten, we were criticised for being too open.

“We shall contribute to an informed debate on the immigration field. When we publish a memo that was intended to be public, it is strange to be criticised for being too open,” says Deputy Director General, Frode Forfang.

He finds the criticism to be proof that the UDI has actually become more open.

Emphasise openness

The background for the article in Aftenposten was the new UDI website, www.UDIregelverk.no. The portal was launched in April and is an important stage in the work to provide the public with an insight into how we carry out the regulations. The portal shall contribute to giving a better factual basis for the immigration debate, and to giving those with pending cases better insight into the case process.

“Insight, openness and active information distribution are important principles in government enterprises, and we aim to take these principles seriously. This is

clearly expressed in our overriding strategy plan. We wish to put greater emphasis on openness. There must be heavy grounds for keeping a document from the public,” says Forfang.

“We shall contribute to an informed debate on the immigration field”

Difficult disclosure

In specific cases with information governed by a confidentiality agreement, the UDI and other administrative bodies have a duty to maintain confidentiality. Given that we cannot comment on individual cases, the general public

can get the impression that we are a closed directorate. The UDI therefore strives to publish information that is not covered by the protection of privacy.

“Since most of the time we are unable to comment on specific cases, it is even more important that the general guidelines for case processing are made available. Then the press, organisations and the general public can gain a better basis for evaluating our work,” says Forfang.



Frode Forfang is Deputy Director General in the UDI.

www.UDIregelverk.no

On the 10th of April, the UDI launched the website www.UDIregelverk.no, which contains the regulations we use in case processing. The portal had around 66 000 visitors in 2008, and visitor numbers are constantly growing.

“The establishment of www.UDIregelverk.no is an important measure to reach our goal of being an open and accessible directorate,” says Marius Mølmen Moen, editor of www.UDIregelverk.no.

In addition to the UDI’s circulars, internal memos and practice documents, the website contains instructions from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, high court judgements, international laws, acts and regulations.





Azra Avdagich works in the Department for E-Government.

New at the UDI

Azra Avdagich, Information Architect in the Department for E-Government, joined the UDI in 2008.

“I arrived as a refugee from Bosnia in 1993 and had a very positive experience of the UDI at the time. Now, the UDI has grown much bigger and faces new challenges. We need a better structure for information and ensure that we have a better electronic information flow and interaction. In this way, we can achieve an even more complete immigration administration.”

Why did you choose to work for the UDI?

“I had read quite a lot in the media about the changes to the UDI and when major organisations undergo changes it is always exciting to be involved. I felt I had something to offer.”

Attractive workplace

The UDI offers courses, training and development to all employees. A higher level of competence will result in a higher level of service to our users and make the UDI a more attractive workplace.

The UDI has an internal professional school for competence development for employees and for the organisation as a whole.

“The UDI school offers training in the Immigration and Public Administration Acts for new employees. For more experienced case officers, there are further education courses,” says Astrid Aksnessæther, Head of the Administration Department.

A course in professional guidance has been successful and popular. 140 employees have received training in providing guidance to their colleagues.

Internal development

The UDI focuses on recruiting and developing more managers internally. The internal school at UDI has therefore implemented a development programme for new managers.

“The programme gave us the time and opportunity to share the experiences and challenges we met in our new working day,”

says participant and Assistant Head of the Service Unit, Stian Molvik.

“The UDI wishes to have employees with different professional and cultural backgrounds”

The UDI has also established a practical placement scheme. This gives employees an opportunity to learn about and reap the experiences from work carried out in other departments. It is also possible to undertake a practical placement at other units in the immigration administration.

“Normally, there are one or more of the UDI’s employees on a practical placement at the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion,” says Aksnessæther.

Development and debate

The UDI is an organisation with a high level of tolerance. Therefore, focus is directed towards creating meeting places where employees can gain new impulses and input.

A monthly forum keeps employees updated in the field of migration. Internal

and external persons are invited to cover relevant topics and be a source of inspiration and debate.

All employees in the UDI also meet at the annual internal conference. The management passes on important information to the whole organisation, and at the same time puts the day-to-day work into a broader context.

Diversity

The increase in asylum and family immigration applications and the many labour immigrants led to the UDI requiring more employees in 2008. Almost 300 new employees were therefore recruited during the year. The UDI wishes to have employees with different professional and cultural backgrounds. This is important to solve tasks in the area of immigration in a professional manner. At the end of the year, 15 per cent of the staff at the UDI had an immigrant background.

Competence development

The UDI works actively with universities, colleges and recruitment fairs to attract a competent and varied workforce.

“We have many good candidates for positions at the UDI”

“We have many good candidates for positions at the UDI,” says Aksnessæther.

For the first time, the UDI carried out an HR audit in 2008, which included a survey of employee satisfaction and enthusiasm. The results showed that the UDI is already doing a lot of the right things, and those who work here enjoy it.

“The focus on increasing competence, senior employment policy and measures to keep employees with experience and expertise has been well received,” emphasises Aksnessæther.

Many female managers

In the table below you can see the composition of employees and managers in the UDI divided by gender. More than half of all managers in the UDI are women. We manage to employ women in management positions by internal recruitment and by encouraging women to apply for the management positions we advertise.

“We are proud to have so many competent female managers in the UDI,” says Aksnessæther.



Bjørn Fridtfelt works in the Department for Regions, Reception and Return.

UDI veteran

Bjørn Fridtfelt, Head of the Northern Regional Office, has been working for the UDI since 1988.

“20 years ago, the UDI was in the establishment phase. That lasted a few years. For most of us, the refugee field was completely new and there was a lot to learn. We had to build the UDI in professional terms and establish procedures for all fields. The cooperation between the central and regional UDI needed to find its shape, and that was not always easy. Today, the majority of procedures are in place, cooperation lines are working and we have developed good computer systems that have taken over the manual procedures.”

Why are you still working at the UDI?

“Because of the challenges! The fact that I am always learning something new, and that I have something to strive towards.”

UDI employees as of the 31st of December 2008

Position	Female	Male	Total
Managers	57	38	95
Employees	678	296	974
UDI in total	735	334	1 069



Departments and management

Director General's Staff

The Director General's Staff, the Internal Audit Section and the Communications Unit are organised directly under the UDI's Director General Ida Børresen and Deputy Director General Frode Forfang.

The Director General's Staff consists of the Head of Security and a Senior Advisor. The Internal Audit Section is an objective and independent function organised as a separate staff section under the Director General.

The Communications Unit is responsible for general communication work at the UDI for users, cooperation partners, the media and the community. The Communications Unit is also responsible for the UDI's publications and has editorial responsibility for www.udi.no, the portal "Ny i Norge" ("New in Norway") and the intranet.

"The Communications Unit works towards an open and accessible UDI. Thus, we must allow insight into all areas of our operations. We also wish to contribute to a more fact-oriented discussion on the immigration field," says Director of Communications, Agnar Kaarbø.

Asylum Department

The department's primary task is to process applications for asylum in an appropriate and efficient manner and to develop practices in the asylum field.

"The main challenge for the department is to find the balance between quantity and quality at a time when we have so many new employees and so many pending cases following the major influx of asylum seekers in 2008," says Head of Department, Hanne Jendal.

Managed Migration Department

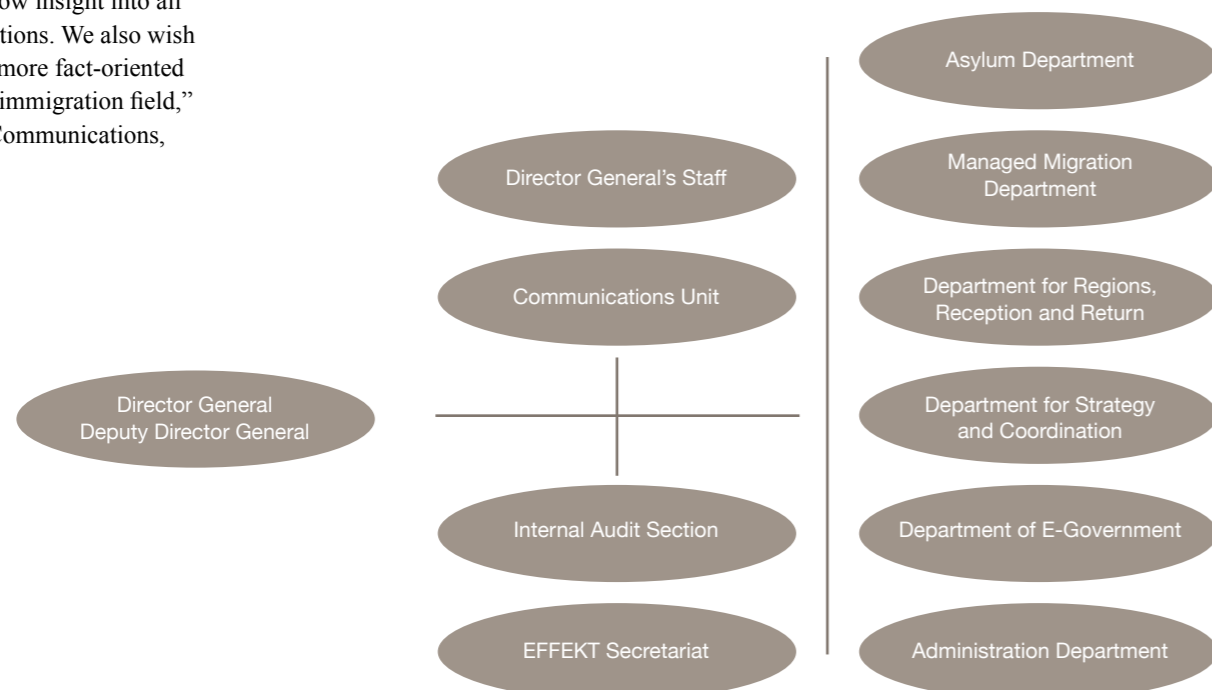
The department processes applications for residence permits for work, family immigration or studying, and applications for permanent residence permits, travel documents and citizenship. The department is also responsible for assessing whether breaches of the Penal Code and the Immigration Act give grounds for deportation.

"It is a constant and demanding task to find the right balance between good user service, high efficiency, legal safeguards and sufficient control that the conditions for a permit are fulfilled," says Head of Department, Karl Erik Sjøholt.

Department for Regions, Reception and Return

This department is responsible for the establishment and operation of state reception centres and for the development and operation of work on voluntary return and repatriation programmes.

"The challenge for the department is to follow up on all the new reception centres we have established. We have new working procedures to ensure that this is achieved. We also have to plan well to strengthen information work on voluntary return," says Head of Department, Anne Siri Rustad.



UDIs management group (from the left): Anne Siri Rustad, Astrid Aksnessæther, Gry Aalde, Hanne Jendal, Ida Børresen, Frode Forfang, Tore Dæhlin, Karl Erik Sjøholt and Stephan Mo. Agnar Kaarbø was not present when the picture was taken.

Department for Strategy and Coordination

The department is responsible for a number of professional tasks, including the development of rules, international cooperation, statistics, calculations and analysis. The department is also responsible for distributing information on the immigration administration's rules and practices and allowing public insight through www.UDIregelverk.no.

"The department's ambition is for the UDI to contribute to a good professional foundation of the policy and practice in the immigration field, and that our own practice and the public debate are based on solid knowledge and good analysis," says Head of Department, Gry Aalde.

Department of E-Government

The department is responsible for operation, administration and development of the information and case processing systems for the UDI and the immigration administration.

"The department's ambition is for the UDI and the immigration administration, with the help of the systems we manage, to be able to carry out its task for society with high quality and low costs," says Head of Department, Tore Dæhlin.

Administration Department

The department is responsible for the Service Unit that replies to questions from users and applicants. In addition, common services such as the archive, accounts, operations control, personnel administration, operation of the buildings, the central switchboard and procurement are found here.

"The UDI depends on the competence, knowledge and enthusiasm of our management and our employees. Our main task is to create good working conditions for UDI employees so that they can provide the best possible service," says Head of Department, Astrid Aksnessæther.

EFFEKT Sekretariat

EFFEKT is the development programme for the immigration administration in the ICT area. This covers the development project within electronic user services, electronic case processing and electronic collaboration with other departments and cooperation partners.

"The EFFEKT Programme shall help us to reach our goals of better user service and increased efficiency in the entire immigration administration," says Head of the EFFEKT Sekretariat, Stephan Mo.

The UDI's finances

Internal accounts

The UDI keeps internal accounts to measure the costs of our various activities. We have defined 24 activities in 2008, including decisions in different types of cases, statistics and prognosis work and international work. We record all types of expenses we incur in connection with an activity in our internal accounts, based on entries in the accounts and an overview from employees of the number of hours they have used on the different activities.

Internal accounts show that the cost per decision rose from 2007 to 2008. This can partly be explained by the fact that there was a larger proportion of complicated cases in 2008 than in 2007, but it can also be explained by the fact that productivity declined somewhat.

However, for asylum cases the number of interviews and decisions increased significantly from 2007 to 2008, while the costs per decision dropped during the same period. This can be explained by the fact that economies of scale led to fixed costs being distributed over several units, and that the productivity of the case officers has risen.

Each year, Stortinget (the Norwegian Parliament) determines the UDI's budget. The budget is formally allocated to the UDI through a letter of appropriations from the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. In addition to the budget for our own operations, funds are also allocated for operating the reception centres and certain benefit schemes.

A total of NOK 1 294 million was placed at the UDI's disposal in 2008. Together with funds carried forward from 2007, the appropriations in Proposals to Parliament nos. 59 and 80 (2007–2008) and compensation for wage settlement, the budget amounted to NOK 2 173 million. This represented an increase in the appropriations in our budget of NOK 879 million from 2007. The main reason for this increase is that in 2008, more than twice as many asylum seekers arrived as in 2007.

The UDI's 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. This 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 2008 show that around NOK 645 million was spent on running the UDI. 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 IMDi, and the reimbursements represent the expenses the UDI has incurred in connection with these administrative duties.

Payroll expenses amounted to NOK 400 million after NOK 20 million of reimbursements were deducted. In both 2007 and 2008, we have had major expenses for consultancy services due to extensive ICT projects. The growth in other operating expenses from 2007 to 2008 is related to the fact that the number of employees has increased.

Operating expenses for reception centres

Reception centres can be operated by a private operator, a municipality or voluntary organisations. Contracts to run the centres are entered into after a competitive tender in accordance with public procurement legislation. All the operating expenses and essential subsistence benefits paid to asylum seekers are covered through the UDI's budget.

With the increase in the number of asylum seekers, there were also more residents in reception centres throughout the whole of 2008, from 7 606 people on the 1st of January to 13 582 people at the end of the year. The average price per resident was NOK 126 000 in 2008, compared to NOK 115 000 in 2007.

The total amount under this item came to NOK 1 377 million in 2008. This represents an increase of 65 per cent from the NOK 836 million used in 2007.

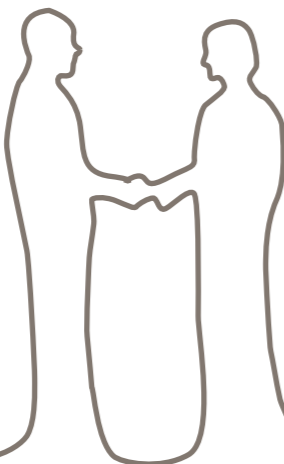
Accounts

Accounts (figures in NOK 1 000)

	2007	2008
Operating expenses of the UDI (minus sick pay and maternity benefit reimbursements and IMDi reimbursements)	519 424	645 400
Wages including social security payments and pension commitments	298 647	401 742
Machinery, inventory and equipment	33 350	21 862
Consumables	18 403	25 205
Travel expenses etc.	20 536	26 542
Office services etc.	21 481	24 035
Consultancy services	63 923	68 322
Operation of buildings and rental of premises	63 084	77 693
Special operating expenses for state reception centres	835 530	1 376 649
Of which benefits paid to residents	194 961	261 774
Of which operating expenses, reception centres	640 569	1 114 875
Special operating expenses, interpreting and translation	25 159	54 802
Major equipment purchases and maintenance, departure centres	191	8 543
Knowledge exchange, migration	6 641	5 046
Return of refugees	14 203	20 049
Of which individual benefits	345	600
Of which project funding	13 858	19 449
Integration subsidies / resettlement of refugees, support schemes	3 031	3 036
Travel expenses for transport of refugees to / from foreign countries	9 003	9 257
On behalf of the Ministry of Justice and the Police	1 180	1 260
Total	1 411 331	2 124 042

Internal accounts

Activity	2007		2008	
	Number	Unit cost	Number	Unit cost
Residency cases, decisions	84 537	1 978	79 535	2 339
Asylum cases, interviews	4 349	10 784	10 621	7 923
Asylum cases, decisions	6 449	12 190	9 700	11 144





The Inland Region Office

P.O. Box 1253
N-2806 Gjøvik

Office address:
Storgata 10, Gjøvik

Telephone: +47 61 14 65 00
Fax: +47 61 17 08 95
+47 61 17 57 14

Counties: Buskerud, Hedmark,
Oppland, Østfold

The Central Region Office

N-7005 Trondheim

Office address:
Peter Egges plass 2,
Trondheim

Telephone: +47 73 89 24 00
Fax: +47 73 89 24 01

Counties: Møre og Romsdal,
Nord-Trøndelag, Sør-Trøndelag

The Southern Region Office

P.O. Box 647
N-4666 Kristiansand

Office address:
Slottsquartalet
Tordenskjoldsgate 9,
Kristiansand

Telephone: +47 38 10 60 60
Fax: +47 38 02 04 80

Counties: Aust-Agder,
Telemark, Vest-Agder, Vestfold

The Western Region Office

P.O. Box 4048
N-5835 Bergen

Office address:
Bugården 8, Bergen

Telephone: +47 55 30 09 99
Fax: +47 55 30 09 88

Counties: Hordaland, Rogaland,
Sogn og Fjordane

The Northern Region Office

P.O. Box 683
N-8508 Narvik

Office address:
Havnegaten 28, Narvik

Telephone: +47 76 96 58 10
Fax: +47 76 96 58 39

Counties: Finnmark, Nordland,
Troms

The Oslo Region Office

P.O. Box 8108 Dep.
N-0032 OSLO

Office address:
Storgata 32, Oslo

Telephone: +47 23 35 15 00
Fax: +47 23 35 15 80

Counties: Akershus, Oslo