



SIVILOMBUDSMANNEN

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

Document 4 (2020–2021)

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The Parliamentary Ombudsman's Report for 2020

Submitted to the Storting on 23 March 2021

Preface

My first year as Parliamentary Ombudsman did not turn out as any of us had expected. After my first month in the job, Norway went into lockdown, and we at the Ombudsman's office continued our work from home. By and large, however, we have managed to work on our important mandate; to fight injustice for individuals.

In 1962, the Norwegian parliament (Storting) decided to appoint a Parliamentary Ombudsman, with the mandate of defending and safeguarding the individual's rights in relation to the public administration. This work has also been carried out throughout 2020.

All the Parliamentary Ombudsman's work is aimed at ensuring proper practices in the public administration. The Parliamentary Ombudsman received and processed a record 4009 complaints in 2020. Despite the increase in complaints, we do not have extra resources to deal with them. This is challenging because a high standard is vital for public confidence in us and our standing.

Priorities

It has been important for me to examine whether we are receiving and processing the right complaints. This primarily means complaints for which there are grounds to proceed and that entail major repercussions for the citizens if the public administration makes a mistake. More than half of the cases we receive are rejected. There are various reasons for this and efforts are underway to make the information on the right to complain and complaint criteria as clear as possible.

In 2020, we have been looking more closely at our prioritisation criteria in order to ensure that we address the complaints that we consider to be the most serious, or cases where we see repeated errors. This work will continue.

We have benefited greatly from talking to those who know where damage can be done. In the autumn of 2020, we held a number of meetings with civil society, such as interest groups, student associations, the Norwegian Bar Association and the Norwegian Press Association's committee for freedom of information. We received very useful information in these meetings and were made aware of issues that confirmed our opinion, in addition to new and serious matters.

In addition to handling complaints, one of our priorities is triggering investigations on our own initiative in areas where we suspect that repeated injustices are being committed, so-called 'own-initiative' cases. We undertook various major investigations of this nature in 2020.

The annual report describes trends and statistics for complaints we received in 2020. As in previous annual reports, we also include a detailed presentation in this annual report of important issues that we want to bring to the attention of the Storting. These articles are, however, only available in the Norwegian version of the annual report.

Work during the pandemic

COVID-19 arrived in Norway in March 2020. On 24 March of that year, the Storting passed new crisis legislation. As stated in our mandate, the role of the Parliamentary Ombudsman in this context was to control the public administration's use and follow-up of laws passed by the Storting. The Storting emphasised the importance of such a control mechanism also in respect of the crisis legislation. The Parliamentary Ombudsman followed this up by triggering own-initiative investigations and the traditional processing of complaints.

Preventive efforts

The National Preventive Mechanism's Special Report on Solitary Confinement and Lack of Human Contact in Norwegian

Prisons was discussed in an open hearing in the Storting's Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs in January 2020. The fact that this committee decided to hold an open hearing was an important milestone in the efforts to limit isolation in Norwegian prisons. Work undertaken as part of the prevention mandate was different from usual in 2020 as visits to institutions were difficult due to infection control measures and risk of infection with COVID-19. The pandemic changed the risk profile and exposed the vulnerability of new groups. We conducted online surveys for the first time, in combination with physical meetings, telephone and video interviews and document reviews.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman publishes a separate annual report for the prevention mandate, which includes a more detailed description of this important work.

New Parliamentary Ombudsman Act

The Parliamentary Ombudsman has a central societal function in safeguarding the legal rights of Norway's citizens. Since it was established in 1962, the Parliamentary Ombudsman has worked pursuant to the Act relating to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration (the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act).

In 2020, the committee that reviews the Storting's control function drafted a proposal for a new Parliamentary Ombudsman Act. We have given our input to the bill, and we look forward to the introduction of effective and updated legislation on the important work of fighting injustice.

Sincerely,

Hanne Harlem

Parliamentary Ombudsman

Statistics

This chapter provides an overview of new cases in 2020, case hearings by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the outcome of the cases and a breakdown of cases across administrative bodies.

New cases

A total of 4009 complaints were received by the Ombudsman in 2020. This is the most complaints we have ever received in a year, and is an increase of around 3% from 2019. Additionally, 17 cases were opened on the Ombudsman’s own initiative.

Cases that we take up on our own initiative are a priority area for the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Such cases can be based on individual complaints which for various reasons we cannot deal with as individual cases, and some may be better served by being addressed on a more general basis. They can also be based on areas that we have many years’ experience with. In 2020, we have been working on the criteria and prioritisation of such cases. Emphasis is placed on, inter alia, prioritising and investigating issues that can affect large numbers of people, such as vulnerable groups, or areas for which we do not typically receive complaints.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of new cases					
Complaints and written enquiries	3111	3604	3904	3882	4009
Cases opened on our own initiative	17	23	13	16	18
Total	3128	3627	3917	3898	4026

The number of incoming cases is stable, and high. We are making targeted efforts to increase the number of legitimate complaints.

Closed cases

When a case has been closed by the Ombudsman, it has either been *rejected* for various reasons, or it has been subject to a *substantive assessment* by the Ombudsman. Cases that are rejected are either those that we cannot process for formal reasons, or that we choose not to proceed with. More details are given about the rejected cases later in the chapter.

Closed and open cases	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Cases closed during the year	2998	3600	3992	3979	3962
Open cases at year-end	388	420	345	264	328

Requests for access to information

The Parliamentary Ombudsman received 374 requests for access to information in 2020.

These are not complaints about refusal of access to documents held by the public administration, but access to the Ombudsman's own documents and cases. The Ombudsman's case documents are, in principle, public documents, cf. Parliamentary Ombudsman Act, Section 9 (1). Exceptions are made for documents that are obtained from the public administration in connection with the processing of a complaint.

Outcome of cases

The outcome of cases is divided into two main categories: rejected cases and cases subjected to a substantive assessment.

Cases rejected

Of the 4009 complaints and enquiries received by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in 2020, more than half were rejected. There has been an increase in the proportion of cases rejected. Around half of all rejections were due to the cases still being processed by the public administration. Processing by the public administration must be completed before the Parliamentary Ombudsman can carry out a substantive assessment.

A number of cases are also rejected 'due to the nature of the case'. This is a new category of cases (previously called 'lacks sufficient grounds') that we introduced in 2020 in order to make our priorities clearer.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman is not an ordinary appellate body. We need to prioritise which cases we decide to investigate. We actively prioritise cases that have the greatest impact on preventing injustice.

Cases subjected to a substantive assessment

The vast majority of cases subjected to a substantive assessment, 87%, are assessed on the basis of the documents sent, and resolved or closed without us finding any grounds to proceed with them. The remaining 13% are submitted to the public administration.

Complaints that are subjected to a substantive assessment but are not processed further are complaints for which a preliminary review did not identify any grounds for criticism. We do not therefore submit such cases to the administrative body. There were 936 such cases, which were assessed on the basis of the submitted documents, in 2020. These constitute 64% of the cases subjected to a substantive assessment.

Of the cases we submitted to the public administration, 122 were upheld or closed with a recommendation to re-examine the case. This constitutes around 63% of the submitted cases. Of the cases that were subjected to a substantive assessment, 8% were upheld.

The outcome is often positive for the complainant even in cases that are not upheld, because the situation is resolved whilst the Ombudsman is working on the case. This often occurs after a telephone enquiry or letter to the relevant administrative body. This was what happened in 368 cases, or around 25% of all cases subjected to a substantive assessment.

The number of cases subjected to a substantive assessment has fallen in 2020. This is partly due to the fact that we have obtained fewer written statements from the public administration in complaints about long case processing times. Complaints about case processing times make up a significant part of the complaints portfolio. We appreciate that some administrative bodies have had a large case load due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cases rejected and subjected to a substantive assessment

Cases that are not rejected are subjected to a substantive assessment. When the Ombudsman conducts a preliminary investigation to establish whether there are sufficient grounds for considering the complaint, this is also regarded as a substantive assessment even if the case is closed without the matter being raised with the public administration. Cases in which the complainant’s problem has been resolved are also considered to have been subjected to a substantive assessment. Such cases may include criticism of the administrative body in question.

General enquiries that are unrelated to a specific complaint and enquiries submitted for information purposes are classified as rejected cases.

A total of 3962 cases were closed in 2020. The outcome of these is broken down as follows:

Distribution of cases rejected and those subjected to a substantive assessment

	2018	2019	2020
Cases rejected	2341	2276	2510
Cases subjected to a substantive assessment	1651	1703	1452
1. Unnecessary to obtain written statement from the public administration	1394	1427	1258
a) Case settled by a telephone call or similar	348	369	322
b) The letter of complaint, supplemented by relevant case documents where applicable, showed that the complaint could not be upheld.	1046	1058	936

2. Written statement obtained from the public administration (investigation)	257	276	194
a) Case settled without it being necessary for the Ombudsman to issue a concluding statement	46	45	46
b) Case closed without being upheld or a recommendation, i.e. the complaint was not successful	41	49	26
c) The case was upheld or closed with a recommendation to re-examine the case	170	182	122

	2018	2019	2020
Proportion of all closed cases:			
Cases rejected	59%	57%	63%
Cases subjected to a substantive assessment	41%	43%	37%
	100%	100%	100%

What happened in the cases subjected to a substantive assessment (%)?	2018	2019	2020
1. Unnecessary to obtain a written statement from the public administration ¹ The breakdown is as follows:			
c) Case settled by a telephone call or similar ²	25%	26%	26%
d) The letter of complaint, supplemented by relevant case documents where applicable, showed that the complaint could not be upheld. ²	75%	74%	74%
2. Written statement obtained from the public administration (investigation) ³ The breakdown is as follows:			
	16%	16%	13%

¹ Proportion subjected to a substantive assessment

² Proportion 'not submitted'

³ Proportion subjected to a substantive assessment

d) Case settled without it being necessary for the Ombudsman to issue a concluding statement ⁴	18%	16%	24%
e) Case closed without being upheld or a recommendation, i.e. the complaint was not successful ⁴	16%	18%	13%
f) The case was upheld or closed with a recommendation to re-examine the case ⁴	66%	66%	63%

Case processing time

The average case processing time for the Parliamentary Ombudsman is 21 days. The goal is to reduce the amount of time spent on processing cases as much as possible, particularly on cases that need to be rejected. Such cases currently take around nine days to conclude. In 2020, the case processing time was reduced for cases that were closed after being raised with the public administration. This was the result of a targeted effort to conclude older cases that have only started to impact on the case processing time in 2020. The change of Ombudsman also meant that efforts were made to conclude cases already submitted as soon as possible by the end of 2019. Time can therefore be better spent on cases that require investigation by the public administration.

The case processing time must be viewed in the context of the number of incoming cases.

Cases subjected to a substantive assessment

Cases that are considered have three different outcomes:

- The case is resolved for the complainant and can be closed
- The case is not upheld or is closed without a recommendation
- The case is upheld or is closed with a recommendation

25% resolved

8% upheld or closed with a recommendation

66% not upheld or are closed without a recommendation

⁴ Proportion 'not submitted'

What happened in the cases submitted? Proportion of submitted cases

Resolved without a concluding statement	24%
Closed without being upheld or a recommendation	13%
Upheld or closed with a recommendation	63%
<hr/>	
	100%

Basis for criticism in the closed cases

The decision: 74%

The case processing time: 17%

Other case processing issues: 9%

Basis for rejection

More than half of the cases we receive are rejected. There are various reasons for this, but the main one is that the case is still being processed by the public administration.

Letter sent for information purposes: 7%

Outside the remit of the Ombudsman: 6%

Insufficient grounds for complaint/rejected due to the nature of the case: 18%

Still being processed by the public administration: 47%

Enquiries etc. that are not related to a specific complaint: 8%

Time barred: 3%

Anonymous and incomprehensible enquiries: 6%

Complaints that are retracted by the complainant: 2%

No right of complaint: 2%

Case subject areas

Most complaints received by the Ombudsman concern case processing time and non-response by the public administration. There are also many complaints concerning building issues, benefit payments and employment issues, and there has been an increase in requests for access to information relating to the public administration's handling of the pandemic. There has also been an increase in requests for access to information in general in 2020. A case can be classified under several subject areas, which means that the total number of cases will be higher than the number of complaints received.

Examples of subject areas for closed cases in 2020

Subject area	No. of cases in 2020	Change in no. of cases from 2019	Criticism in 2020
Case processing, non-response	886	-8%	25
Planning and construction - including building issues	619	17%	13
Benefit payments	417	-12%	3
Employment issues and labour, including terms of service and freedom of speech	370	-4%	23
Police and Prosecuting Authority, Correctional Services	266	-14%	2
Immigration cases, asylum, visas, residence and work permits, family reunification etc.	240	-8%	2
Medical treatment, coercive measures, complaints about personnel, patient injury	213	-12%	5
Public disclosure, confidentiality, access to documents	248	30%	35

Closed cases, by administrative body 2020

	Total	Rejected	Substantive assessment	Criticism
The Office of the Prime Minister	3	1	2	0
The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	12	9	3	0
Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)	501	374	127	6
Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority	9	6	3	0
Petroleum Safety Authority Norway	1	1	0	0
Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund	8	7	1	1
National Insurance Court	55	20	35	0
Ministry of Children and Families	4	3	1	1
Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) and Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat)	13	6	7	1
County Social Welfare Boards	2	1	1	0
The Norwegian Consumer Council and the Consumer Authority	4	4	0	0
The Market Council	1	1	0	0
The Ministry of Finance	16	7	9	4
The Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway	2	1	1	0
Norges Bank	2	2	0	0
The Norwegian Tax Administration	102	52	50	4

The Norwegian National Collection Agency	13	7	6	0
Statistics Norway	1	1	0	0
Norwegian Customs	4	3	1	0
The Ministry of Defence	9	4	5	1
The Norwegian Armed Forces	8	5	3	0
The Norwegian Defence Estates Agency	3	1	2	0
The Appeals Board for compensation and ex-gratia payments for psychological injuries as a result of participation in international military operations	1	1	0	0
The Ministry of Health and Care Services	39	27	12	4
The Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority	2	2	0	0
The Norwegian Health Economics Administration (HELFO)	4	3	1	0
The Norwegian Directorate of Health	15	11	4	0
The National Office for Health Service Appeals	35	17	18	3
National online health services in Norway (Helsenorge)	2	2	0	0
Supervisory commissions within mental health care	5	3	2	0
The Norwegian Medicines Agency	2	2	0	0
The Norwegian System of Patient Injury Compensation/The Patient Injury Compensation Board	10	8	2	0
The Patient and User Ombud	1	0	1	0
Patient Travel	2	0	2	0

Regional Health Authorities	3	1	2	0
The Norwegian Appeal Board for Health Personnel	5	1	4	0
The Norwegian Board of Health Supervision	16	12	4	0
Hospitals and health institutions	43	30	13	1
The Ministry of Justice and Public Security	41	27	14	1
Lawyers Licensing Committee	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection	1	1	0	0
The courts, courts administration	43	42	1	0
The Disciplinary Board for Lawyers	2	1	1	0
The Compensation Board for Victims of Violent Crime	3	0	3	0
Judge Advocate General, The Norwegian Armed Forces	1	1	0	0
Joint Rescue Coordination Centres	1	1	0	0
The Criminal Cases Review Commission	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Mediation Service	1	0	1	0
The Norwegian Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	4	4	0	0
The Correctional Services	111	87	24	0
Execution and Enforcement Officers	32	28	4	0
The Norwegian National Police Directorate	40	21	19	3
Police and Prosecuting Authority	183	139	44	2
The Norwegian Civil Defence	1	0	1	0
The Norwegian Civil Security Clearance Authority	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Civil Affairs Authority	26	14	12	1
The Supervisory Council for Legal Practice	2	0	2	0

The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration	145	95	50	2
The Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board	69	31	38	1
The Ministry of Climate and Environment	15	7	8	1
Enova SF	3	0	3	0
The Norwegian Environment Agency	14	7	7	0
The Directorate for Cultural Heritage	4	2	2	0
The Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation	29	15	14	2
The Norwegian Data Protection Authority	7	5	2	0
The Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation	1	1	0	0
The Rent Disputes Tribunal	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Mapping Authority	5	4	1	0
The Privacy Appeals Board	2	1	1	0
The Norwegian Directorate of Elections	1	0	1	0
The Ministry of Culture	4	3	1	0
The National Archives of Norway	2	2	0	0
The Norwegian Anti-Discrimination Tribunal	15	9	6	0
The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud	1	1	0	0
The Lottery Board	2	0	2	0
The Norwegian Gaming and Foundation Authority	1	1	0	0
The Media Complaints Board	1	0	1	0
The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK)	4	4	0	0

The Foundation Appeals Board	1	0	1	1
The Ministry of Education and Research	5	2	3	0
The Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi)	2	1	1	0
The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)	5	4	1	0
The Norwegian Universities and Colleges Admission Service	2	0	2	0
The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund	19	9	10	0
UNIT – the Norwegian Directorate for ICT and Joint Services in Higher Education & Research	2	1	1	0
The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training	5	3	2	0
Universities and university colleges	45	26	19	4
The Ministry of Agriculture and Food	4	3	1	0
The Norwegian Agriculture Agency	13	8	5	0
The Norwegian Food Safety Authority	26	16	10	2
Statskog SF	1	0	1	0
The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries	19	7	12	3
The Brønnøysund Register Centre	5	5	0	0
The Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries	6	3	3	0
The Institute of Marine Research	1	0	1	0
Innovation Norway	2	2	0	0
The Public Procurement Appeals Board	1	1	0	0

The Norwegian Competition Authority	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Maritime Authority	1	1	0	0
The Ministry of Petroleum and Energy	12	6	6	0
The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE)	16	12	4	0
Statnett	1	1	0	0
The Ministry of Transport	20	6	14	3
Avinor AS	1	1	0	0
Bane NOR	2	2	0	0
The Norwegian Railway Directorate	1	0	1	0
The Norwegian Coastal Administration	1	1	0	0
The Norwegian Safety Investigation Authority	1	0	1	0
The Norwegian Public Roads Administration	19	16	3	0
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs	12	10	2	0
County Governors	833	412	421	29
County administration	58	34	24	4
Municipal administration	876	562	314	37
Others	164	160	4	0

About us

Introduction to our activities

Role, instruments and priorities

The Parliamentary Ombudsman for public administration is one of the Storting's external supervisory bodies and its aim is to ensure that individuals are not exposed to injustices by the public administration. The Storting sets out instructions for the Ombudsman's work, but the Ombudsman otherwise performs its duties on an independent basis, and independently of the Storting.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman is based in Oslo and handles cases from all over Norway.

The majority of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's activities relate to processing complaints received from citizens. The Parliamentary Ombudsman takes up some cases on his own initiative, so-called 'own- initiative' cases. These may be based on individual complaints or on matters that the Ombudsman believes should be addressed.

The activity also includes talks and lectures, as well as meetings with and visits to relevant administrative bodies.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's office – list of personnel

As per 31 December 2020, the Parliamentary Ombudsman's office had the following departmental structure and comprised the following staff:

DEPARTMENT 1

Head of Department:	Bjørn Arthur Dæhlin*
Deputy Head of Department 1:	Eirik Namli
Senior Advisor:	Karen Elise Haug Aronsen
Senior Advisor:	Charlotte Bårtvedt Eriksen
Senior Advisor:	Kathrine Evers
Senior Advisor:	Heidi Quamme Kittilsen
Senior Advisor:	Caroline Lundblad
Senior Advisor:	Maya Mori Seim
Advisor:	Mie Cecilie Myhrvold
Advisor:	Karoline Rakneberg Haug
Advisor:	Hilde Kjensmo
Higher Executive Officer:	Jostein Gulbrandsen Frank
Higher Executive Officer:	Kjersti Birkeland Rudslid
Student associate:	Law student Anna Marie Sveen

* Temporary Parliamentary
Ombudsman
1–31 January 2020

Department 2

Temporary Head of Department:	Jostein Løvoll
Acting Deputy Head of Department 2:	Marianne Aasland Kortner
Senior Advisor:	Anders Eldor Boye
Senior Advisor:	Helene Oeding Christensen
Senior Advisor:	Wenche Drangsholt
Senior Advisor:	Kjetil Fredvik
Senior Advisor:	Eivind Vigeland Grøn
Senior Advisor:	Bente Kristiansen
Senior Advisor:	Rasmus Sand
Senior Advisor:	Jannicke Ryun Sæther
Advisor:	Katja Boye
Advisor:	Cathrine Elisabeth Aaseth
Student associate:	Law student Siri Haugsand

DEPARTMENT 3

Head of Department:	Annette Dahl
Deputy Head of Department 3:	Ingeborg Skonnord
Senior Advisor:	Ellen Cathrine Isaksen Beccer
Senior Advisor:	Martine Refsland Kaspersen
Senior Advisor:	André Klakegg
Senior Advisor:	Åse Bækkevold Kloster
Senior Advisor:	Sigrid Marie Fæhn Oftebro
Senior Advisor:	Kari Rørstad
Senior Advisor:	Thea Jåtog Trygstad
Senior Advisor:	Nikolai Kristoffersen Winge
Advisor:	Erlend Kragh Nyhus
Higher Executive Officer:	Andreas Dalaker
Student associate:	Law student Tensaye Alemu
Student associate:	Law student Vegard Vaboen

General Department

Head of Department:	Gustav Haver
Senior Advisor:	Elisabeth Fougner
Senior Advisor:	Mona Keiko Løken
Senior Advisor:	Marianne Lie Løwe

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM

Head of Department:	Helga Fastrup Ervik
Senior Advisor:	Jannicke Thoverud Godø

Senior Advisor:	Jonina Hermannsdottir
Senior Advisor:	Helen Håkonsholm
Senior Advisor:	Pia Kristin Lande
Senior Advisor:	Johannes Flisnes Nilsen
Senior Advisor:	Silje Sønsterudbråten
Senior Advisor:	Mette Jansen Wannerstedt
Advisor:	Mari Dahl Schlanbusch
Advisor:	Aruna Eide Skingen

Inge Lorange Backer – permanent substitute Ombudsman in 2021 for cases relating to Oslo municipality.

Kirsten Sandberg – permanent substitute Ombudsman in 2021 for cases within the prevention mandate.

ADMINISTRATION

Head of Administration:	Solveig Antila
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Finance, corporate governance, personnel, office management

Senior Advisor/Deputy Head of Administration:	Einar Fiskvik
Senior Advisor:	Marianne Guettler Monra
Senior Advisor:	Shima Mootori
Senior Executive Officer:	Mary Anita Reich-Jørgens
Senior Executive Officer:	Mette Stenwig

IT

Head of IT: External IT operations	Lasse Hansen
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Communications

Head of Communications:	Trude Julie Dommerud
Communications Advisor:	Turid Årsheim
Student associate:	Richard Apeland

Archives

Head of Archives:	Annika Båshus
Senior Advisor:	Elisabeth Nordby
Advisor:	Seida Rizvanovic
Senior Executive Officer:	Beate Braastad
Senior Executive Officer:	Anne Kristin Larsen
Senior Executive Officer:	Nina Olafsen
Higher Executive Officer:	Trude Undheim
External personnel:	Anne Ragnhild Felberg

Security/reception and cleaning: External personnel

The following members of staff were on leave as per 31 december 2020:

Head of Department: Joakim Øren

Senior Advisor: Siv Nylenna

Senior Advisor: Christian Ranheim

Senior Advisor: Lindy Helene Ulltveit-Moe

Senior Advisor: Rannveig Bakke Tvedten

Senior Advisor: Stine Elde

Senior Advisor: Kari Bjella Unneberg

Advisor: Kristin Johanne Rydning

Payroll					
		Men %	Women %	Men, average per month	Women, average per month
Total for workforce	2019	21.3%	78.7%	58 238	57 995
	2020	23.8%	76.2%	55 655	57 815
Executive management	2019	50%	50%	99 684	97 388
	2020	50%	50%	102 417	99 322
Part-time	2019	0%	1.3%		
	2020 ⁵	33.4%	66.6%		
Sick leave	2019	0.4%	7.1%		
	2020	2.8%	8.5%		

⁵ The proportion of part-time employees in 2020 is 7.5%. Of this, 33.4% are men and 66.6% are women.

Activities and results in 2020

A special year

2020 was an unusual year for the Parliamentary Ombudsman, as it was for many others. Much of the planned activity was cancelled or different from originally envisaged.

However, the pandemic had less of a direct impact on the complaints work than on many other activities in 2020. The number of complaints in 2020 increased from the previous year, and surpassed 4000 for the first time. Despite this increase and the somewhat more difficult working conditions, an emphasis was placed on reducing case processing times. Physical meetings and visits have largely been cancelled or replaced by digital solutions.

Most of the work was carried out by staff working from home in 2020, in line with government guidelines. It has been possible to deal with complaints and perform most administrative tasks remotely. Physical document management has been maintained in the office premises. When tight restrictions were in force in Oslo municipality, almost all work was carried out from home, but some staff returned to the office when infection control measures were eased.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's working methods and IT solutions were already well adapted for remote working. The transition to more extensive use of the home office in 2020 was therefore relatively painless. The case processing is already fully electronic, and digital interaction solutions were in place even though they were seldom used before the pandemic. However, investments were needed in new equipment. Staff have laptops and were given the opportunity to borrow a screen and other equipment.

Most group meetings were cancelled or held on digital platforms. It has at times been possible to gather in small groups outdoors in an effort to maintain a healthy psychosocial working environment.

A sample of goals and initiatives in 2020

The overarching goal of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's strategic plan in the period 2019-2022 is to prioritise the tasks that have the greatest impact on preventing injustice and torture, to be a central professional body within the scope of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's work, and to be an effective and well-run organisation.

The work processes that will help us to reach these goals are set out in the annual operating plans. In the operating plan for 2020, the objectives related to further quality and efficiency improvements.

The work on goals and initiatives in 2020 is described below.

New ombudsman

An important part of the internal activity in 2020 was to appoint a new ombudsman. Aage Thor Falkanger resigned his position as Parliamentary Ombudsman on 31 December 2019. Hanne Harlem took office as the new Parliamentary Ombudsman on 1 February 2020.

Following the appointment of a new ombudsman, corporate governance has been further adapted and developed.

The Storting appointed two substitute ombudsmen for cases concerning Oslo municipality for 2020 and 2021; Inge Lorange Backer and Kirsten Sandberg.

New case and archive system

Efforts to procure a contract for a new case and archive system were put on hold in 2020. Pending the introduction of new interaction solutions, it was instead decided to further develop the current solution.

Part of the year has been spent on testing a new user interface, devising training plans and considering necessary changes in routines. This work is continuing in 2021.

Development of expertise

In-depth work has been carried out within administrative law and human rights, and efforts have been made to develop the understanding of what characterises a good statement.

Follow-up of employee satisfaction survey

Work has also been carried out internally to follow up the main findings of the employee satisfaction survey that was conducted at the turn of the year 2019/2020. It is also a goal that Parliamentary Ombudsman staff have opportunities for training and development in the workplace in a way that supports the goals in the strategy plan. Emphasis is placed on employee development in connection with, for example, the employee appraisal review.

Planned work that was postponed

Planned initiatives and activities that were postponed in 2020 include a number of visits and trips, an open event on administrative law, the annual office seminar for the entire organisation, various welfare initiatives, the further development of the aforementioned case and archive system, and work on an action plan to reduce sick leave.

Strengthened communication

A presence in the public sphere is important for ensuring that citizens are aware of their right to complain and that the public administration is aware of errors identified by the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Active media work and outreach activities, such as participation in seminars, debates, giving lectures and writing academic papers and features articles, helps raise awareness of our work.

The media coverage of our statements, reports, letters and hearings has increased in line with the focus on disseminating information. In 2020, we worked extensively to increase our visibility in relevant social media, in addition to traditional media. Nevertheless, the number of articles in national and local media in 2020 fell slightly, which we assume is largely due to the focus on COVID-19.

One result of being more known is that we receive more complaints. There is therefore a danger that we will receive more complaints that we are unfortunately unable to process or investigate. This is partly because the criteria for having a complaint processed are not well enough known. We are working to address this by further developing the complaint form and improving the information on our website.

Internal communication takes place through traditional channels such as departmental meetings, intranet and information meetings for all staff. Managers have had a special focus on the need for communication in connection with the pandemic.

Assessment of outlook

Every year, the Norwegian public administration processes a large number of cases. Based on the complaints we receive, our impression is that the state of the public administration in Norway is generally good. The administration in Norway functions well and public trust is high. However, the number of complaints submitted to the Parliamentary Ombudsman is increasing. When there is growing pressure in the public administration, more mistakes can be made. There is reason to believe that more cases will end up on the desk of the Ombudsman. We know that only a small proportion of the administration's decisions are appealed to us, and the potential for an increase in complaints is therefore significant. This dilemma is further exacerbated to a certain extent as awareness of the Ombudsman grows. Societal development brings with it a growing awareness of citizens' rights.

At the end of 2020, Norwegian society is facing a number of uncertainties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may lead to more people complaining to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, for example as a result of rule changes, higher unemployment, more cases of hardship and a general increased risk of mistakes by the public administration. The long-term ramifications of the pandemic are not yet known. Our main assessment of the future is that the increase in complaints is likely to persist.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman service is available for anyone who thinks they have been treated unfairly by the public administration. A large proportion of all complaints received by the Parliamentary Ombudsman are rejected because they have not been dealt with by the public administration first. This may be an indication that the administration is confusing for many citizens, and that it is not always easy to know who to contact with any complaints.

Efforts are ongoing to reduce the use of resources, particularly for cases where it is clear that the Ombudsman will not proceed. Analyses need to be made of how such cases are registered in the case processing system so that control information can be extracted more easily. In the years ahead, it will be important to use analyses and statistics to a greater extent so that resources can be targeted where they are needed most. We will give priority to conducting further investigations into the complaints and the areas that we believe are particularly important for preventing injustices by the public administration. We believe that initiating investigations of so-called own-initiative cases will aid this work. This can apply to matters that we consistently receive complaints about, or other areas where we suspect that serious mistakes have been made.

We will also implement other measures with regard to recurring themes or cases of a less serious nature, for example developing brochures on themes for the public administration that give specific advice. Overall, this could lead to more individual complaints being rejected in the future, but we believe that it will help uncover major system errors and enable us to devote more time to the most important cases.

The pandemic will have ramifications for the Ombudsman's activities going forward. The uncertainty makes it more challenging to plan the activity, and will probably require flexibility in corporate governance. For the preventive efforts, the choice and use of working methods will be affected. Working from home has an impact on the internal working environment, and requires special follow-up, at least in 2021.

Under normal circumstances, the Ombudsman is exposed to competition in the labour market for qualified lawyers in particular, and has observed that it is especially difficult to recruit and retain this type of expertise. The return to normality after the pandemic may push up staff turnover after a period of stability. Overall, the potential for a long-lasting increase in the number of cases in the next few years, compared with the human resources we have at our disposal, is a challenge in terms of the possibilities for getting results from our efforts to prevent individuals being exposed to injustices by the administration.

The outlook also depends on the Harberg Committee's proposal for a new Parliamentary Ombudsman Act. The report also contains a proposal for a new law that expands the Parliamentary Ombudsman's mandate to also cover individual cases for the Storting's ombuds commission for the Armed Forces, which could potentially have an impact on the organisation of the Ombudsman. We will also follow the discussion on a potential new NAV ombudsman. The planning of this will start once the Storting has made a decision.

Annual accounts for the Parliamentary Ombudsman 2020

Management remarks

Introduction

In accordance with the adaptations to the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government that the Storting's Presidium has determined for the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the annual accounts are submitted in line with the requirements stipulated for ministries, cf. Sections 2.3.3 and 3.4 of the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman reports its activities to the Storting in 2020 in its annual reports, Document no. 4 (2020-2021) and Document no. 4.1 (2020-2021). The Parliamentary Ombudsman's accounts are prepared in accordance with the cash accounting principle.

Purpose

The Parliamentary Ombudsman is one of the Storting's external supervisory bodies and carries out its activities in line with the Act relating to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for Public Administration (the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act) of 22 June 1962 and the Storting's instructions for the Ombudsman of 19 February 1980. The Parliamentary Ombudsman shall work to ensure that citizens are not unjustly treated by the public administration and that senior officials and others who work in the public administration do not make mistakes or neglect their duties. The Ombudsman also visits places where people are deprived of their liberty, for the purpose of preventing torture and inhumane or degrading treatment.

Confirmation

The annual accounts have been submitted in accordance with the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government and Ministry of Finance Circular R-115, relating to the preparation and submission of government agencies' annual accounts. The annual accounts provide an accurate picture of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's available allocations and expenses, income, assets and liabilities.

Material issues

The Parliamentary Ombudsman has total available allocations of approximately MNOK 94.55 in a dedicated budget account. Total allocations in account 43 item 01 comprise original allocations for 2020, transferred reduced costs from 2019, and compensation for wage settlements, cf. the appropriation statement and Note A. In addition, the Parliamentary Ombudsman has a debit authorisation from the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) for expenses in connection with co-localisation and administrative services, cf. the appropriation statement.

Consumption is approximately MNOK 88.9. Reimbursements of MNOK 3.5 from NAV are included, and mean that the Ombudsman has an underspend of approximately MNOK 5.6 in

relation to the allocation. The underspend represents 5.94 per cent of the total allocations for 2020. Five per cent of the allocation for 2020 is the suggested transfer amount to 2021.

The discrepancy between reported expenses/income and available allocations in 2020 is mainly due to three factors:

1. Significantly higher sick pay and parental benefit reimbursements than expected.
2. Reduced activity due to the pandemic.
3. A major procurement for a case and archive system was put on hold.

More details are given below.

Disbursements for labour costs and other operating costs in 2020

Labour costs

The Ombudsman's executive officers are its most important resource for safeguarding both quality and quantity and thereby the Ombudsman's authority and impact. Our employees are attractive in the labour market. In recent years, staff turnover has remained at an acceptable level. In 2020, two permanently employed executive officers and one student associate left their positions, while three employees took a leave of absence. We attribute the stability of the workforce in 2020 to the special labour market this year, and assume that staff turnover may increase again when the labour market returns to normal.

Labour costs have increased. Including employer's contribution etc., corrected for reimbursements, labour costs amounted to approximately MNOK 66, compared to MNOK 63.8 in 2019 (Note 2). The total increase of approximately MNOK 2.3 in relation to the preceding year is mainly due to the fact that we recruited more staff to address the staff turnover and cover sick leave, in addition to part-time students, and hourly paid and fee-based workers. The full year effect of the wage settlement in 2019 is also included. In isolation, labour costs have increased by MNOK 2.7. The number of man-years increased by 2.83 from 2019 to 2020. The increase includes the effect of a higher staff level, corrected for the effect of sick leave and the fact that a number of employees are working a reduced number of hours.

Labour costs also include fee-based work, and these costs have been relatively high in 2020 due to need for a substitute ombudsman in cases concerning Oslo municipality. The costs of the two substitute ombudsmen amounted to approximately MNOK 0.27.

NAV reimbursements, which reduce the total labour costs, were significantly higher in 2020 than the year before, which is a reflection of the increase in sick leave in 2020. The total reimbursements increased by approximately MNOK 1.15 in relation to 2019.

Labour costs corresponded to around 73.4 per cent of total operating costs.

Investments

Investment expenditure increased by MNOK 0.92 million from 2019 to 2020, and is due to both normal replacement of IT equipment and the procurement of new equipment for

remote working in connection with the pandemic. The investments amount to a total of approximately MNOK 1.025, of which approximately MNOK 0.94 is IT equipment for home offices and meeting room upgrades for teleconferencing etc. Investments were also made in furniture and equipment for staff to borrow.

Other operating expenses

Other expenses for operations totalled approximately MNOK 23.9. Overall, this is a reduction of MNOK 1.6 compared to 2019. High expense items such as travel, training and meetings fell in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

Lease charges are the largest individual expense. Lease charges for the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) are included in this item. Of the total lease expenses of approximately MNOK 12.7, the Parliamentary Ombudsman's own lease expenses amount to MNOK 10.8. The lease charge was subject to a price adjustment in 2020.

Expenses for lease of machinery, fixtures and fittings etc. of MNOK 1.8 mainly relate to IT in connection with IT equipment and licences for IT services. The amount has been reduced by MNOK 0.29, mainly because some expenses that were previously regarded as licences in accordance with the delivery model of our external IT services provider have now been posted as procurements of other external services.

Procurement of consultancy services amounted to approximately MNOK 1.26, a reduction of MNOK 0.12 compared to 2019. This item includes consultancy services for IT development and external expertise for the National Preventive Mechanism. The IT consultancy services have been impacted due to the fact that the procurement of a new case and archive system, which was planned as a high expense item in 2020, was put on hold and replaced with an upgrade of the existing system. These expenses were therefore lower in 2020 than expected, and some activity has been postponed until 2021. This also applies to consultancy expenses for automating work processes.

Other operating expenses show a reduction of MNOK 1.5 from 2019 to 2020, which is mainly due to the reduced activity.

Debit authorisations

In 2020, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, in line with the Storting resolution in 2014, has been co-localised with and provided administrative services to the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM). In 2020, NIM has more or less taken over its own administrative operation in areas such as financial, payroll and personnel administration, but the Ombudsman still provides support in, for example, office operations, reception services and administrative advisory services.

The expenses for NIM in 2020 that are debited from NIM's allocations are as stated in the Parliamentary Ombudsman's general ledger accounts report with appurtenant notes. In 2020, the Parliamentary Ombudsman debited NIM's allocations, account 45 Norwegian National Human Rights Institution, item 01, with just over MNOK 2 in connection with co-localisation. Most of the sum paid by the Parliamentary Ombudsman relates to the lease of premises, which amounted to approximately MNOK 1.88.

Outstanding accounts with the Treasury

Outstanding accounts with the Treasury amounted to approximately MNOK 2.5 as of 31 December 2020. The general ledger statement shows which assets and liabilities are included in the claims. In addition to the outstanding accounts, the Parliamentary Ombudsman had accrued trade creditor liabilities of approximately MNOK 0.076, which have not been paid and therefore do not appear as an expense in the annual accounts. Cf. information concerning settlement with the Treasury in Note 8. The Parliamentary Ombudsman does not have capital items in the central government capital accounts.

Supplementary information

The Office of the Auditor General is the external auditor for the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The audit of the annual accounts for 2020 has not been completed yet; however, it is assumed that the auditor's report will be available by the end of Q2 2021. The auditor's report for the annual accounts will be published on the Ombudsman's website when it becomes publicly available.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman does not manage any government funds.

Oslo, 1 February 2021

Hanne Harlem
Parliamentary Ombudsman

Note on the accounting principles in the annual accounts

Annual accounts for government agencies are prepared and submitted according to specific guidelines set out in the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government ('the Regulations'). The annual accounts are in accordance with the requirements in Section 3.4.1 of the Regulations and further provisions in Ministry of Finance Circular R-115.

The appropriation statement and the general ledger statement have been prepared based on Section 3.4.2 of the Regulations – the basic principles for annual accounts:

The financial statement follows the calendar year.

The financial statement includes all reported expenses and revenues for the fiscal year.

Expenses and income are recognised as gross amount in the accounts.

The financial statement is prepared in accordance with the cash accounting principle.

The appropriation statement and general ledger statement have been prepared according to the same principles, but are grouped according to the different charts of accounts. The principles correspond to the requirements in Section 3.5 of the Regulations on government agencies' reporting to the central government accounts. The total item 'Net reported to appropriation accounts' is the same in both statements.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman is linked to the central government's group account scheme in Norges Bank in accordance with Section 3.7.1 of the Regulations. Gross-budgeted entities do not receive liquidity throughout the year, but have drawing rights on their group account. At the end of the year, the balance of each settlement account is reset to zero.

Appropriation statement

The appropriation statement consists of a top part showing the government appropriations and a lower part that shows the holdings listed for the Parliamentary Ombudsman in the capital accounts. The appropriation statement shows accounting figures that the Parliamentary Ombudsman has reported to the central government accounts. It is presented according to the accounts and items in the appropriations accounts that the Parliamentary Ombudsman has been authorised to have at its disposal. The 'Total allocation' column shows what the Parliamentary Ombudsman has been granted in the letter of allocation for each government account (account/item). In addition, the statement shows all financial assets and liabilities listed for the Parliamentary Ombudsman in the central government capital accounts.

Authorisations to debit another government agency's account/item (debit authorisations) are not shown in the column for total allocation, but are referred to in Note B in the appropriation statement. Expenses related to received debit authorisations are recognised and reported to the government accounts, and are shown in the column for accounts.

Granted debit authorisations are included in the column for total allocation, but are not recognised or reported to the central government accounts by the Parliamentary Ombudsman. Granted debit authorisations are recognised and reported by the agency that

has received the debit authorisation and are therefore not shown in the column for accounts. The granted authorisations are listed in Note B to the appropriation statement.

General ledger statement

The general ledger statement includes an upper part that shows what has been reported to the government accounts according to the standard chart of accounts for government agencies, and a lower part that shows assets and liabilities included in the outstanding accounts with the Treasury. The general ledger statement shows the accounting figures that the Parliamentary Ombudsman has reported to the central government accounts according to the standard chart of accounts for government agencies. The Parliamentary Ombudsman has drawing rights on the group account in Norges Bank. These allocations have not been reported as income and are therefore not shown as income in the general ledger statement.

Parliamentary Ombudsman accounts and allocations for 2020

Appropriation statement 2020					
Expenses account	Name of account	Item	Total allocation *	Accounts 2020	Additional expenses (-) and reduced expenses
0043	Storting's Ombudsman for Administration - operating expenses	01	94 550 000	88 936 079	5 613 922
0045	Norwegian National Human Rights Institution - operating expenses	01	0	2 035 950	
1633	Net recognition of VAT in the Treasury	01	0	2 742 167	
Total recognised expenditure			94 550 000	93 714 196	

Income account	Name of account	Item	Total allocation *	Accounts 2020	Additional income and reduced income (-)
5309	Incidental income	29	0	94 300	
5700	Employer's contribution	72	0	8 154 654	
Total recognised as income			0	8 248 954	

Net reported to appropriation accounts				85 465 243	
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Capital accounts	Name of account	Item	Total allocation *	Accounts 2020	Additional income and reduced income (-)
60049601	Norges Bank, deposits			3 493 288	
60049602	Norges Bank, disbursements			-89 031 409	
716107	Change in outstanding accounts with the Treasury			72 879	
Total reported				0	

Holdings reported to capital accounts (31.12)					
Account	Text	Item	31.12.2020	31.12.2019	Change
716107	Outstanding accounts with the Treasury		-2 503 418	-2 576 296	72 879

* The total appropriation shall not be reduced by any debit authorisations granted (applies to expenses accounts and income accounts). See note B for further details.

NOTE A – Details of total allocation expenses			
Account and item	Transferred from last year	Allocations for year *	Total allocation
0043 01	3 143 000	91 407 000	94 550 000

* Allocations for the year are comprised of the original allocation for 2020 of NOK 91 100 000, and compensation for the wage settlement of NOK 307 000.

NOTE B – Details of applied authorisations and calculations of possible transferrable sums to next year				
Account and item	Additional expenses (-)/reduced expenses	Recognised as expense by others according to debit authorisations granted (-)	Additional expenses (-)/reduced expenses according to debit authorisations granted	Total basis for transfer
0043 01	5 613 922		5 613 922	5 613 922

* The maximum sum that can be transferred is 5% of the year's allocation in operating items 01-29, with the exception of item 24 or the sum of the last two years' allocations for items categorised as 'can be transferred'. See annual Circular R-2 for more detailed information on the transfer of unused allocations.

Details concerning the use of budget authorisations

Debit authorisations granted:

The Parliamentary Ombudsman debits the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM) in account 45 item 01 for expenses in connection with co-location and administrative services to NIM.

The debit authorisation of NOK 2 040 000 in 2020 covers, inter alia, expenses for lease of premises and cleaning. See Note 3

General ledger statement 31.12.2020			
Operating revenue reported to appropriation accounts	Note	2020	2019
Payments received from fees	1	0	0
Payments received from subsidies and transfers	1	0	0
Sales and rental income	1	0	0
Other payments received	1	0	0
Total operating revenue		0	0

Operating expenses reported to appropriation accounts		2020	2019
Labour costs	2	66 027 068	63 770 575
Other operating expenses	3	23 900 135	25 529 172

Total operating expenses		89 927 203	89 299 747
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Net reported operating expenses		89 927 203	89 299 747
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Investment and financial income reported to appropriation accounts	Note	2020	2019
Financial income	4	0	0
Total investment and finance income		0	0

Investment and financial expenses reported to appropriation accounts	Note	2020	2019
Investments	5	1 025 652	103 927
Share purchases	5,8B	0	0
Financial expenses	4	19 174	10 868
Total reported investment and financial expenses		1 044 826	114 795

Net reported investment and finance expenses		1 044 826	114 795
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Collection activities and other transfers to the Treasury	Note	2020	2019
Payments received from taxes, charges, fees etc.	6	0	0
Total collection activities and other transfers to the Treasury		0	0

Grant administration and other transfers from the Treasury		2020	2019
Payments of grants and subsidies	7	0	0
Total grant administration and other transfers from the Treasury		0	0

Revenues and expenses reported under common accounts	Note	2020	2019
Group life insurance account 1985 (ref. account 5309, income)		94 300	85 558
Employer's contribution account 1986 (ref. account 5700, income)		8 154 654	7 874 066
Net recognition scheme for VAT account 1987 (ref. account 1633, expense)		2 742 167	2 688 210
Net reported expenses under common accounts		-5 506 786	-5 271 414

Net reported to appropriation accounts		85 465 243	84 143 128
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Overview of outstanding accounts with the Treasury			
Assets and liabilities	Note	2020	2019
Receivables		0	0
Cash		0	0
Bank accounts with state funding outside of Norges Bank		0	0
Taxes and other deductions owed		-2 522 924	-2 576 755
Public fees owed		0	0
Other liabilities		19 506	459
Total outstanding accounts with the Treasury	8	-2 503 418	-2 576 296

NOTE 1 Operating revenue		
	2020	2019
Payments received from fees		
Total payments received from fees	0	0
Payments received from subsidies and transfers	0	0
Total payments received from subsidies and transfers	0	0
Sales and rental income	0	0
Total sales and rental income	0	0
Other payments received	0	0
Total other payments received	0	0
Total operating revenue	0	0

NOTE 2 Labour costs		
	2020	2019
Payroll	54 703 636	51 989 875
Employer's contribution	8 154 654	7 874 066
Pension cost	6 150 321	5 913 799
Sick pay and other reimbursements (-)	-3 493 288	-2 345 485
Other benefits	511 746	338 321
Total labour costs	66 027 068	63 770 575
No. of man-years:**	61.49	

*** Further information on pension costs**

Pensions are recorded in the profit and loss account based on actual accrued premiums for the fiscal year. The premium rate for 2020 was 12 per cent. The premium rate for 2019 was 12 per cent.

**** Further information on man-years**

The number of man-years for 2019 has been recalculated here to correspond with the new definition of man-years.

NOTE 3 Other operating expenses		
	2020	2019
Lease of premises	12 684 378	12 001 280
Maintenance of own buildings and systems	0	0
Maintenance and refurbishing of leased premises	78 363	206 835
Other costs for operation of property and premises	1 630 959	1 856 462
Repairs and maintenance of machinery, equipment etc.	0	0
Minor procurement of equipment	144 109	145 058
Lease of machinery, furnishing and similar	1 838 515	2 128 165
Procurement of consultancy services	1 263 950	1 380 495
Procurement of other external services	3 026 646	2 838 196
Travel and per diem	107 434	334 516
Other operating expenses	3 125 782	4 638 165
Total other operating expenses *	23 900 135	25 529 172

* Other operating expenses include operating expenses charged to the Parliamentary Ombudsman's own allocation in account 43, as well as operating expenses in other budget accounts: Other payments made for the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM): NOK 2 035 950.

NOTE 4 Financial income and financial expenses		
Financial income	2020	2019
Income on interest	0	0
Currency gain	0	0
Other financial income	0	0
Total financial income	0	0

Financial expenses	2020	2019
Interest costs	19 174	10 868
Currency losses	0	0
Other financial expenses	0	0
Total financial expenses	19 174	10 868

NOTE 5 Investments and share purchases

Investments	2020	2019
Intangible fixed assets etc.	0	0
Land, buildings and other property	0	0
Infrastructure assets	0	0
Machinery and vehicles	0	0
Operating equipment, fixtures, tools etc.	1 025 652	103 927
Total investments	1 025 652	103 927

Share purchases	2020	2019
Capital contribution	0	0
Bonds	0	0
Investments in shares and units	0	0
Total share purchases	0	0

NOTE 6 Collection activities and other transfers to the Treasury		
	2020	2019
Total collection activities and other transfers to the Treasury	0	0

NOTE 7 Grant administration and other transfers from the Treasury		
	2019	2018
Total grant administration and other transfers from the Treasury	0	0

NOTE 8 Relationship between settlement with the Treasury and outstanding accounts with the Treasury			
	31.12.2020	31.12.2020	
	Specification of <u>recognised</u> settlement with the Treasury	Specification of <u>reported</u> outstanding accounts with the Treasury	Difference
Financial fixed assets			
Investments in shares and units	0	0	0
Bonds	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
Current assets			
Accounts receivable	0	0	0
Other receivables	0	0	0

Bank deposits, cash etc.	0	0	0
Total			
Long-term liabilities			
Other long-term liabilities	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
Current liabilities			
Trade creditor liabilities	76 693	0	76 693
Taxes owed	-2 522 924	-2 522 924	0
Public fees owed	0	0	0
Other current liabilities	19 506	19 506	0
Total	-2 426 724	-2 503 418	76 693

Total	-2 426 724	-2 503 418	76 693
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External activities

Date	Arrangements 2020
	Talks and lectures given in Norway
7 February	Talks at seminars - General administrative law: Past and future, organised by the University of Oslo.
13 February	Annual course in administrative law, organised by the Centre for Continuing Legal Education (JUS) - the Parliamentary Ombudsman's class.
25 February	Talk at JUS course on government employees' rights - The qualification principle and the duty to advertise positions.
10 March	Talk at the Norwegian Armed Forces' personnel and military service centre, for civilian selection committees in the Armed Forces, in Harstad. About recruitment in the public sector.
11 March	Teaching of bachelor students at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Service (KRUS), about isolation and inmates' mental health.
17 March	Talk on administrative law topics, for the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning.
11 June	Talk at a webinar organised by DFØ, with all government agencies as the target group: The qualification principle.
10 August	Lecture on the treatment of people with eating disorders, by psychologist Maria Øverås.
13 August	Talk for new law students.
28 August	Contributed to the input meeting held by the Directorate of the Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI), Region East on KDI's proposed measures to reduce and prevent isolation.
11 September	Lecture in postgraduate education for psychologists - on human rights, coercion in mental health care and the work of the National Preventive Mechanism.

15 September	Talk at a follow-up webinar organised by DFØ, on how to safeguard both the qualification principle and inclusion in recruitment in the government sector.
16 September	Contributed to a course on the Freedom of Information Act, organised by JUS.
17 September	Talk at the annual course on the right to asylum and immigration 2002, organised by JUS.
23 September	Talk at a webinar organised by the Norwegian Association for Outdoor Organisations - the Ombudsman's investigation of dispensations in the coastal zone.
25 September	Talk for journalists on the Parliamentary Ombudsman's work, organised by E24.
6 October	Participated in a panel debate at the House of Literature, arranged by the free legal advice service run by law students, Jussbuss: Body searches in Norwegian prisons.
8 October	Talk for E24 on the Ombudsman's processing of access to information cases.
20 October	Talk for JUS - the Parliamentary Ombudsman's investigations of dispensations in the coastal zone.
22 October	Talk for the County Governor in Trøndelag on our work in health law.
27 October	National conference in planning and building law 2020, organised by the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation.
6 November	Talk at a seminar for JussBuss, the legal advice service for women JURK, the legal advice service Jussformidlingen in Bergen and the student-run legal service Jusshjelpa in Tromsø.
16 November	Lecture on the ban on torture, for law students at the University of Oslo, arranged by Amnesty's law group.
18 November	Talk for the forum for nature and outdoor life, on control in environmental management.
20 November	Contributed to a webinar for the supervisory commissions in mental health care, on findings and recommendations after visits to three institutions in mental health care for children and young people.
23 November	Talk on the work in mental health care, for staff in the Acute Psychiatric Department at Oslo University Hospital.

4 November	Talk at a seminar for the forum for training in correctional services, at Sundvollen.
10 December	Talk for the Directorate for Cultural Heritage. Cultural heritage management - the intersection of law and politics.
16 December	Talk at the Correctional Service's isolation conference, on the follow-up of a special report to the Storting on isolation and on the reports on COVID-19 measures and the use of safety beds in Norwegian prisons.
	Meetings, visits and participation at seminars in Norway.
2 February	Meeting with the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution.
17 January	Launch of the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children's report on children living in child welfare institutions, <i>'De tror vi er shitkids'</i> .
21 January	Launch of the book by Marthe Rua and Peter Scharff Smith on isolation in prisons, <i>'Isolasjon - et fengsel i fengselet'</i> .
3-4 February	The conference <i>'Vondt inni seg'</i> organised by the Change Factory, on mental health care for children and young people.
5 February	Participation in Working Days in Bergen.
7 February	Meeting with Bufetat region east, on approval and control of child welfare institutions and the main challenges in institutional child welfare.
27 February	Launch of the Red Cross report on identifying and rehabilitating torture victims in Norway, <i>'Torturert og glemt?'. Identifisering og rehabilitering av torturofre i Norge'</i> .
2 March	Meeting with an advisory committee, with a focus on the importance of families in the preventive efforts. The Norwegian Ombudsman for Children presented its report on children living in child welfare institutions, <i>'De tror vi er shitkids'</i> .
20 March	Meeting with the secretariat of the Committee to review the Storting's control function (Harberg Committee).
14 May	Meeting with the Norwegian Correctional Service and the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM), on the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in the correctional services.
8 June	Meeting with an advisory committee on the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the preventive efforts. The National Preventive Mechanism presented a report on the use of safety beds in Norwegian prisons.
17 June	Meeting in NIM's advisory committee, with a focus on institutional racism and NIM's role in the justice system.

19 June	Meeting with the Change Factory and head of the supervisory commission for Levanger Hospital, Grethe Gilstad, on children's legal rights.
20 August	Meeting with Barnehuset in Oslo, on conversation techniques and interviews with people with developmental disabilities.
21 August	Meeting with the Directorate of the Norwegian Correctional Services and the Norwegian Directorate of Health, on the Parliamentary Ombudsman's report on the use of safety beds in Norwegian prisons.
3 September	Digital meeting with the Norwegian Board of Health Supervision on methods for implementing supervision of screening practices in mental health care.
8 September	Meeting with the Norwegian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, on the Parliamentary Ombudsman's visit to housing cooperatives for people with developmental disabilities.
9 September	Digital meeting in NIM's advisory committee on the committee's role, the protection of human rights during the pandemic and international reporting.
10 September	Webinar organised by the Equality Ombudsman, on the living situation for people with developmental disabilities.
14 September	Meeting with the rehabilitation service at Oslo University Hospital, on conversation techniques and interviews with people with developmental disabilities.
15 September	Meeting with Jussbuss.
16 September	Meeting with the organisers of the Red Cross visits scheme at the immigration detention centre at Trandum, on the situation at Trandum and Haraldvangen.
17 September	Meeting with the legal advice service for women, JURK.
17 September	Meeting with the Office of the Auditor General.
17 September	Received instruction in conversation techniques in meetings with people with dementia, by Kari Lislerud Smebye, associate professor at Lovisenberg Diaconal College.
22 September	Meeting with Gatejuristen.
22 September	Meeting with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health on the infection control standard for visits under the prevention mandate.

25 September	Received instruction on the development of living conditions and circumstances for people with developmental disabilities in Norway, by Jan Tøssebro, professor of social work at NTNU.
6 October	Received instruction on conversation techniques and interviews with people with developmental disabilities, rehabilitation service at Oslo University Hospital.
6 October	Meeting with the Norwegian Bar Association.
12 October	Digital meeting with Jusshjelpa in North Norway.
12 October	Meeting with advisory committee, on the National Preventive Mechanism's visits to nursing homes and in the homes of people with developmental disabilities.
13 October	Received instruction on reviews, supervision and supervision methods, etc. under Chapter 9 of the Health Services Supervision Act, by lawyer Liv-Sara Birkeland.
14 October	Digital meeting with the legal advice service in Bergen, Jussformidlingen.
15 October	Conference on elderly care and COVID-19, organised by the Norwegian Hospital and Health Service Association (NSH).
29 October	Brainstorming meeting about Official Norwegian Report (NOU) 2020: 5 Equality before the law - Act relating to free legal aid. Digital meeting arranged by NIM.
2 November	Meeting with Jussbuss on free legal aid and de facto isolation.
9 November	Exchange of experiences with Bufdir on the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic for people with developmental disabilities.
10 November	Meeting with the Norwegian Board of Health Supervision on supervision methods in nursing homes and in the homes of people with intellectual disabilities.
11 November	Meeting with Freddy Øvstegård (Socialist Left Party, SV), member of parliament and of the Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs, about the Ombudsman's resources and mandate.
11 November	Meeting with the Office of the Auditor General.
11 November	Digital meeting in NIM's advisory committee on climate and human rights, and teaching freedom of speech.
16 November	Lecture on the ban on torture, for law students at the University of Oslo, arranged by Amnesty's law group.

18 November	Meeting with the Supervisory Board for the Police Immigration Detention Centre at Trandum, and the Board's work and the situation at Trandum.
18 November	Internal talk by Kirsten Sandberg on new child welfare judgements by the Supreme Court and the Grand Chamber cases in the European Court of Human Rights, ECHR.
19 November	Meeting with the Ministry of Children and Families, on the work of the National Preventive Mechanism in the child welfare sector and findings in other sectors that affect children and young people.
19 November	The TryggEst conference 2020 on results from the pilot project TryggEst - a comprehensive model for the prevention, detection and addressing of violence and abuse aimed at at-risk adults.
10 December	Meeting with the Norwegian Press Association's committee for freedom of information.
	Meetings and visits outside Norway
24 January	Meeting of the Nordic NPM network in Oslo. The theme of the meeting was children who have been deprived of their liberty - rights and the use of interventions.
11-13 February	Study trip to Brussels, the General Department.
5 May	Participation in the video conference: 'Monitoring Places of Detention and the "Do No Harm" Principle: From Theory to Practice', organised by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT).
13 May	Participation in a video conference on experiences with preventive work during the COVID-19 pandemic, organised by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT).
9 June	Contributed to the webinar 'The relationship between civil society and the NPM: A webinar for Australian civil society and oversight bodies', organised by the Australian OPCAT network.
18 June	Participation in the webinar 'The monitoring of psychiatric institutions in times of COVID-19: challenges and good practices', organised by the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT).
25 June	Participation in the video conference 'Global Perspectives on Human Rights and Torture in the Era of Covid-19', organised by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

26 June	Meeting of the Nordic NPM network, on the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was held via a digital platform.
28 August	Meeting of the Nordic NPM network on the challenges and possibilities for national prevention mechanisms during COVID-19. The meeting was held via a digital platform.
26 October	Digital conference organised by the European Ombudsman.
20 November	Meeting of the Nordic NPM network, with a focus on the challenges and possibilities for national prevention mechanisms during COVID-19. The meeting was held via a digital platform.