



Business and industry in Norway - The structure of the Norwegian economy

Guidelines/brochures | Date: 26/06/2001 | [Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries](#)
(<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/nfd/id709/>)

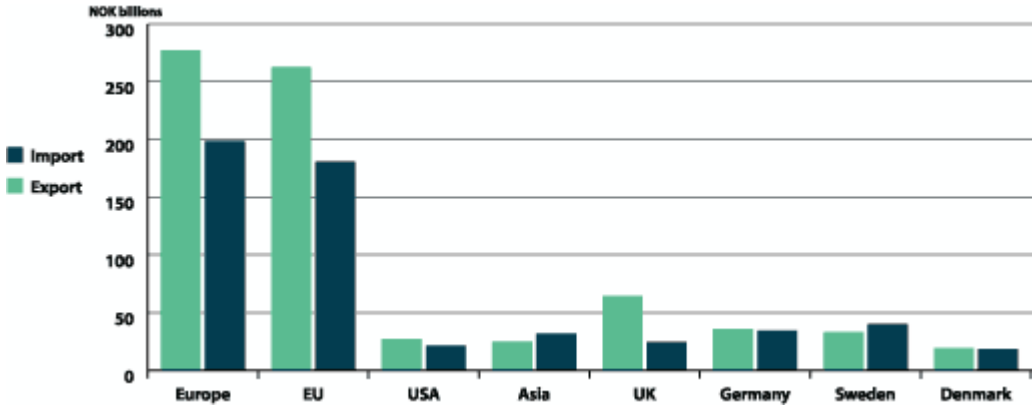
- [Trade with selected regions and countries](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Handel>)
- [Export trends over the past 20 years](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Eksportutviklingen>)
- [Main export goods](#) (<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Sentrale>)
- [Direct investments in companies in Norway and abroad - expansion abroad](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Direkteinvesteringer>)
- [Value creation over the past 20 years](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Verdiskapingen>)
- [The employment structure in industry](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Sysselsettingsstrukturen>)
- [Some key bodies in the industrial-policy system](#)
(<http://psi.regjeringen.no/id/BRO200120010004NHDDDDDEPIS#Noen>)

()

Trade with selected regions and countries

The Norwegian economy is small and the country has a relatively uniform industrial structure. Compared with many other countries, therefore, it has a high share of exports and imports. A major part of Norway's exports and imports is to and from areas near to us, as shown by the figure below. Seventy-four per cent of Norway's exports go to the EU, while just over 68 per cent of its imports come from this area. Exports to the USA are at around the same level as those to Asia, but Norway imports much more from Asia than the USA. The Nordic countries, the UK and Germany are Norway's most important trading partners. The UK and Germany buy significantly larger amounts of Norwegian export products than Sweden or Denmark, for instance. This is due, among other things, to the fact that the first two countries are large markets for Norway's oil and gas. Sweden is the individual country from which we import most goods.

Norwegian exports/imports to/from selected regions and countries, 1999



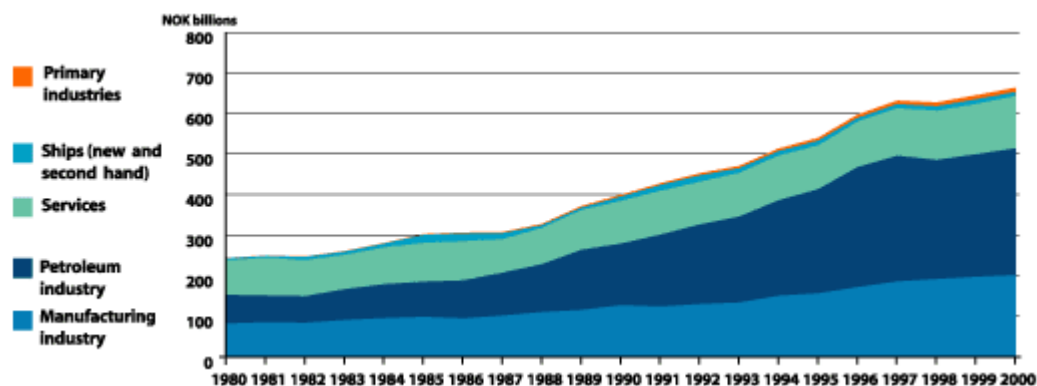
Source: Statistics Norway

()

Export trends over the past 20 years

All of Norway's industries have increased their exports over the past 20 years - by a total of 270 per cent. The petroleum industry is currently the most important export sector, accounting for 46 per cent of Norway's export revenues. This is followed by the manufacturing industry, with around 30 per cent, and the services industry, with around 20 per cent. This picture was very different in 1980. Service industries then accounted for 34 per cent of the Norwegian export figures. More than two-thirds of these were linked to the shipping industry, but this share has been cut to around 50 per cent over the past few years. The traditional manufacturing industry accounted for 33 per cent of the export revenues and the petroleum sector for 28 per cent in 1980. The primary industries did not export much at that time, but, as a result of the increased export of Norwegian fish, they now account for 2 per cent of the export figures. Processed fish and fish products are classified as industrial products.

Export trends from 1980-2000, divided into main industries (fixed 12000 prices)



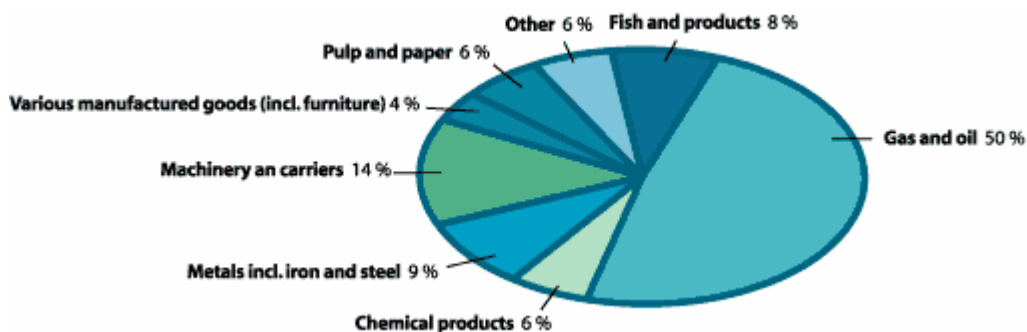
Source: Statistics Norway

()

Main export goods

Norway's major export products are gas and oil, which have an export value of more than NOK 312 billion, or 46 per cent of the country's total exports in 2000. Machinery and means of transport manufactured by the mechanical-engineering industry contribute around NOK 49 billion to Norway's export revenues. This includes large power and office machinery as well as telecommunications and computer equipment. Ship exports provide around 25 per cent of the export value of this section of the mechanical-engineering industry.

Norway exports fish and fish products worth approximately NOK 28 billion - 5 per cent of Norway's total goods export. Chemical products to a value of NOK 22 billion are exported, covering everything from medicines and pharmaceutical products to chemical fertiliser and plastics raw materials. Aluminium, ferro-alloys and other metals exports are worth almost NOK 40 billion. The percentage-wise distribution between the sectors in the figure and the relative importance of individual goods may vary slightly from year to year, depending on the oil prices.



Source: Statistics Norway (exports by type of goods, two-digit SITC)

()

Direct investments in companies in Norway/abroad - expansion abroad

()_()

Foreign capital and foreign [direct investments](#) in Norwegian companies have been of great significance to the growth of Norwegian industry. The figure below shows that Norwegian investments in foreign companies are now greater than foreign investments in Norwegian industry. Prior to 1994, the situation was the opposite. Norwegian investments abroad have risen strongly over the past decade, and a significant amount of the expansion that has occurred has taken place there. Direct investments have primarily been in the manufacturing industry, and the reasons given for them are often the desire to have access and proximity to new markets, access to knowledge and technology, and access to and the ability to utilise natural resources and reasonably priced labour. A survey conducted by [SNE](#) of a selection of Norwegian companies' activities abroad in 1996 showed that the largest Norwegian companies had 150 000 employees in their subsidiaries abroad (43 per cent of all the companies' total employees). This is equivalent to around 40 per cent of those employed in manufacturing goods in Norway (with the exception of agriculture). Seventy-six per cent of these companies' total revenues came from outside Norway.

