

Norway — Va-PoReg Country Report

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05/17/1814 Start Constitutional Monarchy: Despite being recognized as an independent kingdom, Norway had been linked with Denmark under a shared monarchy since the 16th century, with the government of the united state centered in Copenhagen. Denmark, having aligned with France during the Napoleonic Wars, was obliged to relinquish Norway to Sweden by signing the Treaty of Kiel in January 1814, which established the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway.¹ In 1814, the Kingdom of Norway made a short-lived and unsuccessful effort to reclaim its sovereignty. On 05/17/1814, the Norwegian Constitution was signed by the Eidsvoll assembly, which changed Norway's political regime from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.² The United Kingdoms, also known as Sweden and Norway or Sweden-Norway, was a personal union between the independent kingdoms of Sweden and Norway, which shared a single monarch and foreign policy from 1814 to 1905 when it ended peacefully.³ Women's suffrage was introduced in 1913.⁴ The Union between Norway and Sweden was dissolved on 06/07/1905.⁵ From 1906 to 1918, elections were governed by a two-round run-off system. In the first round, a candidate could win if they received an absolute majority of the votes. If no majority was achieved, a second round was held a few weeks later. In this second round, the candidate with the most votes won, and there were no restrictions on the number of candidates or entry requirements. This system was not mechanically driven by electoral rules but rather controlled by the elites (Fiva/Smith 2017: 4-5). On 10/17/1927, Norway conducted parliamentary elections. The Labour Party secured the position of the largest party, securing 59 out of 150 seats in the Storting. Nevertheless, the subsequent government was led by Ivar Lykke of the Conservative Party.⁶ In accordance with LIED, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. For the relevant period, LIED identifies political liberties as present except during World War I, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties are present. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

01/28/1928 End Constitutional Monarchy/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy: An important incident in the early years of the new monarchy occurred in 1928 when the King appointed the first Labour government. The Norwegian Labour Party was then relatively radical, even advocating for the abolition of the monarchy in their program. Traditionally, the King would consult the previous prime minister for advice on appointing the new prime minister. In this instance, the previous conservative prime minister opposed granting power to the social democrats. Nevertheless, the King upheld the established practice of parliamentarism and selected Christopher Hornsrud as the inaugural Labour Prime Minister.⁷ Nevertheless, the cabinet had a weak parliamentary basis and was only in office for three weeks from January to February. While the 1814 constitution confers significant executive powers to the King, these powers are nearly always exercised by the Council of State on behalf of the King.⁸ The monarch has not had any influence in the government formation process since 1928 (Anckar 2021: 26). The next elections were held on 10/20/1930. The Labour Party won the most seats (47 of 150 seats) in the Storting and Johann Ludwig Mowinckel of the Liberal Party became the prime minister.⁹ This period was marked by multiple changes in government (Anckar 2021: 26).¹⁰ The next elections were held on 10/20/1930. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since 1928 the elections scored

fully competitiveness according to LIED. V-Dem's CEI indicates constant cleanliness, and the overall elections conditions are acknowledged as free and fair by V-Dem's EF&FI. Additionally, LIED and V-Dem's PCLI confirm that political liberties were achieved since 1928. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For 1928-1939, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

04/09/1940 End (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: On this date German troops invaded the country and quickly occupied Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Narvik.¹¹ Vidkun Quisling, party leader of the Nasjonal Samling, a fascist party that did not have a single seat in the Storting, declared himself Prime Minister via radio broadcast on the same day. Lacking any significant popular support, however, the Nazi occupiers ignored Quisling and Reichskommissar Josef Terboven appointed a government accountable only to himself. The government was itself mostly made up of officials from Nasjonal Samling. Quisling was not granted a formal position until 02/01/1942 when he became Prime Minister of the puppet government.¹² However, the real power rested with Reichskommissar Josef Terboven, who oversaw the collaborating government. We, therefore, do classify Norway in this period as a direct rule occupation regime. During this occupation period, Norway's traditional democratic institutions were suspended, civil liberties were severely restricted, and political repression intensified, especially targeting resistance movements and those opposed to the occupation. The occupation regime aligned with Nazi ideology, which represented a stark departure from Norway's pre-war democratic system. No elections were held during this period (LIED). LIED identifies political liberties as absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are not truly present in this timeframe. For 1940 and 1941, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. From 1942 to 1944, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are moderate. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

05/08/1945 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Germany, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Democratizing Regime: On this date Germany surrendered and Norway regained its independence. The Quisling regime surrendered one day later.¹³ After the occupation regime collapsed, Norway entered a transitional period under the leadership of a broad-based coalition government, which was non-electoral in nature but multiparty, representing various political factions committed to restoring democracy. The transitional government was led by Johan Nygaardsvold's pre-war cabinet, which had operated in exile in London during the occupation.¹⁴ In 1945, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, while V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the status of political liberties. For 1945, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive.

10/08/1945 End Democratizing Regime/Start (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy: On this date parliamentary elections were held. The result was a victory for the Labour Party, which won 76 of the 150 seats in the Storting.¹⁵ From then on Norway remained a stable democracy. The Labor Party ruled almost uninterruptedly between 1945 and 1965.¹⁶ On 09/12/1965 and on 09/13/1965 parliamentary elections were held. Although the Labor Party became the largest party, the four non-socialist parties were able to form a coalition and Per Borten became Prime Minister.¹⁷ Norway is a parliamentary democracy with a unicameral system. The prime minister is formally appointed by the monarch. The monarch is officially designated as the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces; however, his responsibilities are predominantly ceremonial.¹⁸ Political parties in Norway operate freely and are competitively. Elections are generally deemed free and fair. Civil liberties and political rights are generally upheld. As per FH's classification for this regime period, the country is considered free with a score ranging from 2 to 4, which we also interpret as free in our framework. Therefore, according to LIED and V-Dem's PCLI, political liberties were constantly present ever since 1946. On 11/13/2021 parliamentary elections were held, with the result of the Labour Party winning the largest share

of votes. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Ever since the end of the German occupation, the elections held were competitive following LIED. Electoral cleanliness is scored for the entire time (V-Dem CEI). In addition, V-Dem's EF&FI affirms free and fair overall election conditions. Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. From 1946 onward, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

(Monarchical) Liberal Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Cadoret 2010, Derry 1973, Derry 1979, Eriksen 1988, Groß/Rothholz 2009, Larsen 1974)

Notes

¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Norway_\(1814\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Norway_(1814))

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Norway

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_between_Sweden_and_Norway

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_union_between_Norway_and_Sweden

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1927_Norwegian_parliamentary_election

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_Norway

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_Norway

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1930_Norwegian_parliamentary_election

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Ludwig_Mowinckel

¹¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Norway/World-War-I-and-the-interwar-years>

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasjonal_Samling

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quisling_regime#Dissolution

¹⁴ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/the-government/previous-governments/regjeringer-siden-1814/historiske-regjeringer/norways-governments-1940-1945/johan-nygaardsvolds-government/id438691/>

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1945_Norwegian_parliamentary_election

¹⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Norway/World-War-II>

¹⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Norway/World-War-II>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1965_Norwegian_parliamentary_election

¹⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/norway/freedom-world/2023>

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