Norway’s national minorities

For kindergarten and school staff
This publication contains information about Norway's five national minorities. We will give a brief introduction to the history, languages and way of life of Jews, Kvens / Norwegian Finns, Forest Finns, Roma (Gypsies), and Romani people / Tater. The publication is aimed at staff in kindergartens and schools. We hope it will help them better understand the backgrounds of minority pupils. You can also use the material when teaching children or pupils about our national minorities. The introduction includes a brief section on issues you may wish to reflect on if you have children or pupils from national minorities in your kindergarten or school, and it contains extracts from relevant legislation, the Framework Plan and the national curriculum. We have also included extracts from the Framework Plan and national curriculum describing how all children and pupils should learn about our national minorities.

It is not easy to give a brief description of someone's history and way of life. We wish to provide as correct a picture as we can, but there will always be differing interpretations and perceptions of both past and present. For that reason it was important for us to work closely with the organisations representing our national minorities when producing this material.

We should like to extend a big thank you to everyone who has provided input and comments during the process.
INTRODUCTION
What is a national minority?

In addition to the Sami people, Norway is home to several ethnic groups with century-long links to the country. These peoples have helped shape Norway’s cultural heritage, and we refer to them as national minorities. There are five national minorities in Norway: Jews, Kvens / Norwegian Finns, Forest Finns, Roma (Gypsies), and Romani people / Tater.

What protection are national minorities entitled to?
The protection of minorities is an important element in human rights and is based on the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. The UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states:

*In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.*

*The UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 27*

Norway has also ratified two international agreements central to the rights of national minorities: *The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* and *the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*.

**European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

*The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)* stresses that minority languages help maintain and develop Europe’s traditions and cultural wealth. The ECRML requires member states to implement measures to protect, strengthen and further develop minority languages and to make provisions for teaching and learning. Norway ratified the charter in 1993, and it came into effect in 1998. Sami, Kven, Romani (the Roma language) and Scandiromani (the language of the Romani people / Tater) are recognised minority languages in Norway and are therefore protected by the charter. The ECRML does not cover dialects of official languages in a member state or of immigrant languages.

**The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**
The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities requires member states to make provisions to allow national minorities to express, preserve and further develop their culture and identity. Norway ratified the convention in 1999.

The Covenant was incorporated into Norwegian law with the Human Rights Act of 1999. This act takes precedence over provisions contained in other national legislation.
The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Article 5.1

In principle it is up to the member states of the Council of Europe to decide which groups to define as national minorities. However, there is a general consensus that a national minority should originate in or have long-standing links with the country in question.

Some countries have officially declared to the Council of Europe which groups they consider to be national minorities. Norway has opted not to make such a declaration, instead leaving it up to the relevant groups or individuals to determine whether they wish to seek status as national minorities.

Still, Norway adheres to the criterion that a national minority must have associations lasting more than 100 years with a country before being able to claim national minority status. As well as Jews, Kvens / Norwegian Finns, Roma (Gypsies), Forest Finns and Romani people / Tater, the Sami people also meet the criteria for being classed as a national minority. However, the Sami people enjoy even more robust protection as an indigenous people under ILO Convention no. 169. For that reason the Sami Parliament has elected on behalf of the Sami people not to seek status as a national minority.
Experiences of abuse and discrimination of both individuals and groups have caused some to mistrust kindergartens and schools. Some have also experienced being ignored and marginalised. This can affect their relationship with kindergartens and schools. It is important that staff are conscious of this when dealing with and working with national minority families. It could also be useful to be aware of the significance of the following:

Trust and relationships
Good relationships with each child and pupil and good co-operation with parents are key principles for kindergartens and schools. When dealing with national minorities, the level of trust and understanding can often determine what the family wishes to share about their background and how they experience the relationship with kindergartens and schools.

Get to know the individual
All children, pupils and families experience their position as a national minority differently. The wishes and needs of the individual define the extent to which and way in which staff in kindergartens and schools emphasise the background of the child or pupil. Many people are proud of belonging to a national minority and wish to share their background with others. Others may not wish to draw attention to their background, or they may feel that it is not an important part of their identity. Some may also feel that their minority background is of no interest to the kindergarten or school and for that reason consider their ethnicity to be a non-issue. You may therefore have children or pupils from a national minority in your group or class without knowing it. The important thing is to build good relationships and trust with each individual in order to provide the best possible schooling or childcare.

Acknowledging differences
It is important to be aware that there may be differences of opinion within the various national minorities. There may be discussion and disagreement regarding history, language and aspects of the culture and way of life. For example, there is disagreement among some national minorities over how they should be referred to. Two equivalent designations are therefore used to describe two of the minorities. It is important that staff in kindergartens and schools identify and use the designation that the family wants to be used.
The Kindergarten Act and the Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens are the governing documents for everything that happens in kindergartens. The Act and the Plan contain provisions that apply to all kindergarten children. The following provisions are particularly relevant to children from national minorities:

Kindergartens shall take account of children’s age, level of functioning, gender, and social, ethnic and cultural background.
*The Kindergarten Act, Section 2, third paragraph.*

The Kindergarten shall promote democracy and equality and counteract all forms of discrimination.
*The Kindergarten Act, Section 1, third paragraph.*

The Framework Plan emphasises both cultural diversity and the development of each individual child. This is illustrated by the following clauses:

This cultural diversity shall be reflected in kindergartens. Social, ethnic, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic differences in the population mean that children come to kindergartens with different experiences. Kindergartens shall support children on the basis of their own cultural and individual circumstances.
*The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, Page 8*
In addition to the majority population, Norwegian society consists of Indigenous Sámi people, national minorities and minorities with immigrant backgrounds. (...) There are now many ways of being Norwegian. This cultural diversity shall be reflected in kindergartens.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, pages 7 and 8

Children who belong to the Sámi indigenous population, to national minorities or to ethnic minority cultures must be supported in the development of their double cultural affiliations.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, page 32

The need for good co-operation with parents is highlighted both in the Kindergarten Act and in the Framework Plan:

The Kindergarten shall, in collaboration and close understanding with the home, safeguard the children's need for care and play, and promote learning and formation as a basis for an all-round development.

The Kindergarten Act, Section 1, first paragraph

Taking children's participation seriously requires good communication between children and staff, and between staff and parents.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, page 15

The Framework Plan highlights the responsibilities and importance of kindergartens in relation to children's language development. Some children from national minorities have a mother tongue other than Norwegian.

Language is personal and identity-forming, and is closely related to feelings. The mother tongue is important to a sense of identity and achievement in a number of areas. A highly developed mother tongue is a fundamental requirement for the subsequent development of language skills, both in terms of writing and reading comprehension.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, page 31

Kindergartens must support them in their use of their mother tongue, whilst working actively to promote their Norwegian language skills.

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, page 31

How do the Education Act and national curriculum protect the interests of children and young people from national minorities?

The Education Act and associated regulations are governing documents for schools and training establishments. The curriculum has status of a regulation and thus forms part of the rights of all pupils and apprentices. With regard to pupils and apprentices from national minorities, it is particularly relevant to point out some of the provisions contained in the Education Act.
The Education Act

Learning environment and school-parent co-operation

The Education Act makes it clear that schools and training establishments bear a significant responsibility for providing for all pupils and apprentices in collaboration with their parents.

Education and training in schools and training establishments shall, in collaboration and agreement with the home, open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage.

The Education Act, Section 1, first paragraph

Schools and training establishments shall meet the pupils and apprentices with trust, respect and demands, and give them challenges that promote formation and the desire to learn.

All forms of discrimination shall be combated.

The Education Act, Section 1, last paragraph

The Education Act dictates that it is the school’s responsibility to create a good learning environment for all pupils and to take steps if anyone is subjected to bullying, discrimination or racism.

The school shall make active and systematic efforts to promote a good psychosocial environment, where individual pupils can experience security and social belonging

The Education Act, Section 9a-3, first paragraph

If any school employee learns or suspects that a pupil is being subjected to offensive language or acts such as bullying, discrimination, violence or racism, he or she shall investigate the matter as soon as possible and notify the school leaders and, if necessary and possible, intervene directly.

The Education Act, Section 9a-3, first paragraph

It is important to acknowledge that pupils from national minorities continue to be exposed to offensive words or behaviour because of their background.

Language learning

There are special provisions concerning language tuition for pupils with a Kven/Norwegian-Finnish background.

When so required by at least three pupils of Kven-Finnish stock (Kvens) attending primary and lower secondary schools in Troms and Finnmark, the pupils have the right to receive instruction in Finnish. The content of the education and the amount of time allocated to it are laid down in regulations pursuant to sections 2-2 and 2-3 of this Act. From grade 8 onwards, pupils decide themselves whether they wish to receive instruction in Finnish.

The Education Act, Section 2-7, first paragraph

If a pupil does not have sufficient Norwegian language skills to benefit from the tuition, the pupil is entitled to special language tuition both in primary and lower / upper secondary school.
Pupils attending primary and lower secondary school [upper secondary education and training] who have a mother tongue other than Norwegian or Sami have the right to adapted education in Norwegian until they are sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to follow the normal instruction of the school. If necessary, such pupils are also entitled to mother tongue instruction, bilingual subject teaching, or both.

*The Education Act, Sections 2-8 and 3-12*

These rights also extend to pupils from national minorities. The key here is whether the pupil has sufficient Norwegian language skills to be able to follow ordinary tuition in Norwegian. An assessment must be made in each case to determine whether the pupil meets the criteria. The decision must be based on an investigation. If the pupil is sufficiently proficient in Norwegian to be able to follow ordinary tuition, he/she should not be given special Norwegian language tuition.

The following provision applies both to pupils receiving tuition in Finnish as a second language and to pupils receiving special language tuition.

*Pupils receiving tuition in Finnish as a second language under Section 2-7 of the Education Act, Norwegian sign language under Section 2-6 of the Education Act, or special language tuition under Section 2-8 of the Education Act may apply for an exemption from the requirement for tuition in foreign languages or advanced language study.*

Pupils who are granted an exemption from the requirement for tuition in foreign languages or advanced language study shall be given additional tuition in English, Norwegian, Sami, Finnish or another language that the pupil is already familiar with.

*Regulations to the Education Act, Section 1-9, second and third paragraphs*

Exemption and leave of absence from compulsory primary and lower secondary education

The following provisions concerning exemption from tuition are relevant:

*Following written notification by parents, pupils shall be exempted from attending those parts of the teaching at the individual school that they, on the basis of their own religion or own philosophy of life, perceive as being the practice of another religion or adherence to another philosophy of life, or that they on the same basis find objectionable or offensive. It is not necessary to give grounds for notification of exemption pursuant to the first sentence.*

Exemption cannot be demanded from instruction in the academic content of the various topics of the curriculum. If the school does not accept a notification of exemption on such a basis, the school must deal with the matter in accordance with the provisions concerning individual decisions laid down in the Public Administration Act.

*The Education Act, Section 2-3a, second and third paragraphs*
Pupils who belong to a religious community outside the Church of Norway have, upon application, the right to be absent from school on those days their religious community celebrates as holy. This right is conditional upon the parents ensuring necessary tuition during the period of leave, so that the pupil is able to keep pace with the ordinary teaching when the period of leave is at an end.  
The Education Act, Section 2-11, second paragraph.

Travelling

Travelling is often part of the way of life for two of Norway’s national minorities, the Roma (Gypsies) and the Romani people / Tater. The following provisions apply when applying for leave of absence in order to go travelling:

Leave of absence from compulsory education

When defensible, the municipality may upon receipt of an application grant individual pupils leave of absence for up to two weeks

The Education Act, Section 2-11, first paragraph

Pupils may be granted leave for up to two weeks. Pupils are not entitled to leave of absence under this clause. Subject to application, the school may grant leave of absence if it deems it appropriate. Any leave that is granted will curtail the pupil’s entitlement to primary and lower secondary education correspondingly. This means that the pupil will not be given additional tuition to make up for the tuition missed during the leave of absence.

The provisions of the Education Act are the same for all children. There are no exemptions for national minorities, not even in terms of permission to travel.

School tuition is not always tailored to suit groups whose way of life includes travelling (Roma (Gypsies) and Romani people). However, the government takes the line that the right and obligation to receive an education applies to all children.


Absenteism

Prevailing guidelines stipulate that primary and lower secondary pupils who are absent beyond any leave granted (cf. the Education Act, Section 2-11) should be disenrolled from school but will generally speaking be entitled to a school place at their nearest school upon their return (cf. the Education Act, Sections 2-1 and 8-1). This is conditional upon there being available places at the nearest school, however. See guidance notes:


Any absences should be stated on the final diploma at the end of the lower and upper secondary stages (cf. the Regulations to the Education Act, Sections 3-41 and 3-47).
Home schooling
Some schools have arrangements whereby Norwegian Romani people / Tater parents give their children home schooling in the periods when they are travelling. There has been close co-operation with the schools on devising appropriate teaching plans.

The Education Act contains provisions on private home schooling (cf. the Education Act, Sections 2-13 and 14-3). The municipal council must monitor the tuition. Supervision is important in order to ensure that the children are given the education they are entitled to.

The national curriculum
The national curriculum sets targets for the education of all pupils and apprentices in the Norwegian education system. All pupils should be allowed to develop their own identity and culture. This objective is reflected in all parts of the curriculum. It also applies to children and young people from national minorities.

The school and the apprenticeship-training enterprise shall (...) stimulate pupils and apprentices / trainees in their personal development, in the development of identity and ethical, social and cultural competence, and in the ability to understand democracy and democratic participation.
The Quality Framework, page 2

Norwegian language tuition is a core subject in relation to cultural understanding, communication, enlightenment and developing an identity (...) Norwegian language tuition provides an arena where they are able to find their own voice, to express themselves, and to be heard and get answers.
Norwegian subject curriculum, objectives

Thus the subject [of Social Studies] shall help all pupils to consciously forge their identity and develop firm roots in their own communities and culture.
Social Studies subject curriculum, objectives

The national curriculum also emphasises the importance of adapted tuition for all pupils.

The point of departure for schooling is the personal aptitude, social background, and local origin of the pupils themselves. Education must be adapted to the needs of the individual. Greater equality of results can be achieved by differences in the efforts directed towards each individual learner. (...) Individual distinctiveness generates social diversity – equal ability to participate enriches society.
The Core Curriculum, page 5

The diversity of pupil backgrounds, aptitudes, interests and talents shall be matched with a diversity of challenges in the education. Regardless of gender, age, social, geographical, cultural or language background, all pupils shall have equally good opportunities to develop through working with their subjects in an inclusive learning environment.
The Quality Framework, page 5
How to raise awareness of national minorities

The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains clauses relevant to the education sector.

By ratifying the Convention, Norway has committed itself to

- encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Article 6.1

(... where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majorit

The Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Article 12.1

A multicultural Norway and combating prejudice and racism

A multicultural Norway and combating prejudice and racism are important elements in the Framework Plan.

Kindergartens should help ensure that the children

- develop tolerance of and interest in each other, and respect for each other’s backgrounds, regardless of cultural and religious or ideological affiliation
- develop an understanding of different traditions and lifestyles

Staff must

- generate interest in, and contribute towards an understanding and tolerance of, different cultures and lifestyles
- ensure that children extend their understanding of cultural similarities and differences, and work to create an inclusive environment that counteracts bullying and racism

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, pages 40-41

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens reflects articles 6.1 and 12.1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in a number of ways. The Framework Plan also allows activities to be undertaken in kindergartens that are linked to the culture, way of life and situation of national minorities.

National minorities are part of a multicultural Norway, although many people from national minorities have been and continue to be subjected to prejudice and abuse. The issue of national minorities can therefore be included when the children learn about multiculturalism in Norway and in efforts to combat prejudice and racism.
Songs and stories

Songs and stories from national minorities could be included in activities where the children familiarise themselves with different cultural expressions.

Kindergartens should help ensure that the children

- develop their sensitivity to listening, observing and expressing themselves through a range of encounters with and reflections on culture, art and aesthetics

Staff must

- ensure that children everyday have access to books, pictures, instruments, dressing-up gear and rich, varied materials and tools for creative activities
- ensure that children experience local, national and international artistic and cultural expressions, and that they get possibilities to meet artists

The Framework Plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens, page 37

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training

Articles 6.1 and 12.1 of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities are reflected in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training in a number of ways.

National minorities – history and culture

The curriculum explicitly states that pupils should acquire knowledge about our national minorities.

- discuss ethnic, religious and faith minorities in Norway and reflect on the challenges posed by a multicultural society

Religion, Faith and Ethics subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 10

A multicultural Norway

In addition to this, the multicultural aspect is emphasised throughout the national curriculum as shown in the examples below.

A meeting between diverse cultures and traditions can generate new impulses as well as stimulate critical reflections. The school system embraces many pupils from groups which in our country constitute minority cultures and languages. Education must therefore convey knowledge about other cultures and take advantage of the potential for enrichment that minority groups and Norwegians with another cultural heritage represent (…).

The Core Curriculum, page 4

- talk about ethnic, religious and ethical minorities in Norway, and reflect on the challenges of multicultural society

Religion, Faith and Ethics subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 7

National minorities are part of a multicultural Norway, and it may be appropriate to incorporate this in the teaching surrounding this topic.

Prejudice and racism

We know that many people from national minorities have been and continue to be subjected to
prejudice and abuse. National minorities may therefore be included as a topic in efforts to combat prejudice and racism.

*Education should counteract prejudice and discrimination, and foster mutual respect and tolerance between groups with differing modes of life*

*The Core Curriculum, page 4*

- provide examples of and reflect on how language can express and form opinions towards individuals and groups of people

*Norwegian subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 7*

- give an account of the terms “attitudes”, “prejudice” and “racism” and assess how attitudes can be influenced and how individuals and society as a whole can combat prejudice and racism

*Social Studies subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 10*

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**Norwegian history and language history**

Norway’s history is also the history of the national minorities. Their experience of important periods and events in history help expand and balance Norway’s historical narrative, including how the nation-building that took place in the 19th century affected attitudes and policies. Amongst other things, this is relevant in respect of the assimilation policies pursued towards minorities.

- present key developments in Norwegian history in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century and describe how they gave rise to our modern-day society

- give an account of the emergence of the welfare state and describe characteristics of Norwegian society today

*Social Studies subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 10*

- give an account of the Norwegian language debate and language policies in the 19th century
- describe how different interpretations of Norwegianness are expressed in key texts from the late 1700s to the 1870s and in a selection of contemporary texts

*Norwegian subject curriculum, attainment targets after the Level Vg1 general study programme*

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The same applies to the suffering of the Jews and Roma (Gypsies) during World War II.

- discuss the causes and effects of major international conflicts during the 20th and 21st centuries

*Social Studies subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 10*

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**Songs, poems and stories**

Songs, poems and stories from national minorities form part of our cultural heritage and can be incorporated into the attainment targets in this area.

- discuss the content and form of old and new songs, rhymes and poems

*Norwegian subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 2*

- express own ideas about language, persons and plots in texts from different periods and cultures

*Norwegian subject curriculum, attainment targets after Year 4*
Who are the Jews?

The Jews are one of Norway's five national minorities. A Jew is a person who is born to a Jewish mother or who has converted to Judaism. Being Jewish means being part of a particular religious group, a people, a culture, and a history.

Judaism has many traditions and rules, both in everyday life and during religious festivals throughout the year. The degree to which Jews choose to observe the rules in practice varies from person to person. Some people associate their Jewish identity more with culture, tradition and history than with the religion. Most Jews in Norway celebrate the major Jewish festivals where gathering the family and maintaining old traditions, especially culinary traditions, are important. The Jewish dietary rules, kosher, are observed by some families. Some people abide by some of the instructions, by not eating pork for example, while others do not follow a particular dietary regime.
The Jewish people originated in the Middle East but are now spread over large parts of the world (the diaspora). The few people of Jewish heritage who settled in Norway in the early 19th century had to convert to Christianity before or when they immigrated. While Danish Jews were granted ordinary civil rights in 1814, the Constitutional Assembly in Eidsvoll that same year went in the opposite direction. A clause in Section 2 of the Norwegian constitution barred Jews from entering the realm. Jews who arrived in the country without being aware of the ban were immediately deported and usually fined.

The poet Henrik Wergeland has been given much of the credit for the abolition of the Section 2 clause in 1851, six years after his death. As a sign of gratitude, Swedish and Danish Jews erected a monument to Wergeland at Vår Frelsers cemetery in 1849. The organisers had to apply for entry permits to Norway when the monument was built.

During these decades around 1,200 people arrived from present-day Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine and Northern Poland. They fled from oppression, poverty, forced and prolonged military service and sometimes gruesome persecution (pogroms). Between 2 and 3 million Jews left Tsarist Russia during this period. Most of them left for the US, and only a few came to Norway. Still, the foundations had been laid for a small yet active Jewish community in Norway.

Most Jewish immigrants in Norway started with nothing. A few started businesses or became tradespeople, many found work as travelling salesmen, while others arrived to take up skilled work in the Norwegian tobacco industry. Most of them settled in the big cities. In 1892 the Mosaic Religious Community was established in Kristiania, and in 1905 a Jewish congregation was formed in Trondheim. These institutions were important in maintaining the cultural and religious traditions. Jewish youth organisations, women’s groups and social clubs, funeral arrangements, children’s homes and care homes were established. The Jews gradually began to make their mark in many areas of society, and their circumstances slowly started to improve.

Until 1880 only a few Jews, predominantly merchants from Denmark and Germany, settled in Norway. Between 1880 and the 1920s Jewish immigration began to reach a certain size.
After World War I, anti-Semitism started to become more explicit also in Norway. A ban on the Jewish method of slaughter, shechita, in 1930 and the preceding debate had clear anti-Semitic undertones. Norwegian asylum policy in the 1930s was very restrictive, and it was difficult for Jewish refugees to get residence permits. Events on the night between 9 and 10 November 1938 in Germany, known as *Kristallnacht*, nevertheless came as a shock to many Norwegians. At the outbreak of the war in April 1940 the Norwegian Jewish population counted around 1,700 people in addition to some 350–400 Jewish refugees from Central Europe, including 40 or so children who had arrived in the country without their parents. More than 150 Norwegian Jews, that is almost 10% of the Jewish population, became involved in the resistance and the military fight against Nazism in the period 1940–1945.

Action against the Jews in Norway was limited in the first year of the war, but the aggression affected Jewish refugees and families in small local communities in particular. In some places Jews would be arrested, harassed and maltreated. Shops and offices belonging to Jews would sometimes be marked as such. The Jews were the first to have to hand in their radio sets. A ban on practising came into force for Jewish lawyers and artists, for example.

In parts of the country Jewish shops were expropriated. Anti-Jewish propaganda increased in intensity after the newspapers fell under German control.

In June 1941 Jewish men in Northern Norway who were capable of work were arrested alongside stateless Jewish men in the rest of the country. The Jews from Northern Norway would never be released. In January 1942 the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police announced that all Jews were to carry a red J stamp on their ID papers. In the same year Section 2 of the constitution with its ban on Jews entering and residing in Norway was reintroduced in its original form.

**Raids in autumn 1942**

On the night between 6 and 7 October Jewish men in Trondheim were rounded up, and on 26 October Jewish men across Norway aged 15 and over were arrested. The Quisling regime enacted two anti-Jewish laws in order to legalise the operation. A law that called for the confiscation of all Jewish assets in favour of the Norwegian state was announced the very same day. The
oldest remaining family members – in practice the women – were required to report to the police daily. Hundreds of Jewish men were arrested by the Norwegian police and taken to labour camps in Norway, where many of them were subjected to abuse and violence.

On 26 November Jewish women, children, sick and elderly citizens were arrested and taken straight on board the prisoner ship Donau. A total of 532 Jews from Norway were deported to Stettin with the Donau on 26 November 1942 and then to the extermination camp Auschwitz. All women and children were gassed immediately. In February 1943 another crossing from Norway took place with 158 people of all ages on board. A total of 772 Jews were deported during the Norwegian Holocaust. Only 34 of them survived. More than 1,100 Jews from Norway fled to Sweden – most of them with the help of Norwegians.

The post-war years
After the war ended a horrific realisation began to emerge that almost all of the deported – family, relatives and friends – would never return. They had been exterminated in a genocide without parallel in the history of the world. No one remained unaffected, many families were almost completely wiped out, and the years after the war were very difficult for the surviving Norwegian Jews.

The liquidation of Jewish property made the post-war years very difficult economically, too. Many families had lost their breadwinners. It was a heavy burden to see how the trials after the war all but failed to address complicity in the arrest and deportation of Norwegian Jews. It also took a long time before the Jews’ experience of the war was given much attention in the Norwegian public sphere. The congregations in Oslo and Trondheim slowly rebuilt their activities. With the help of donations from the Jewish community, memorials were erected for Holocaust victims in the two cities. The Jewish population grew somewhat as a result of Norway’s taking former concentration camp prisoners from Europe, but many of these would eventually leave the country again.

A strong desire to integrate
Most of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants considered Norway their primary homeland. This led to a strong desire to integrate with Norwegian culture and way of life, while at the same time preserving their Jewish culture and religion. It was important that the children attended Norwegian schools and received an education, learned Norwegian and made Norwegian friends. The Norwegians’ passion for outdoor life was something that the Jewish families quickly adopted. The children were often given Norwegian first names in addition to their Jewish names, and some norwegianised their surnames to make them more intelligible to wider society. Through the choices they made, Jews in Norway developed a particular Norwegian-Jewish identity which was adapted to Norwegian culture and way of life while at the same time keeping Jewish traditions alive.
Language
The first Jewish immigrants spoke Danish and German, while the Jews from Eastern Europe brought Yiddish language and culture to Norway. Many were quick to learn Norwegian, often through their children who were attending Norwegian schools. In the home both Ibsen and Shakespeare would be read in Yiddish, while the synagogue newsletter Hatikwoh was published in Norwegian. Yiddish was effectively obliterated with the Holocaust, although it is currently experiencing a revival. Hebrew is the religious and ritual language of Judaism. In order to be able to read the prayer books, Hebrew language teaching has always been an important part of religious instruction, cheder, amongst the Jews. Following the creation of the state of Israel and recent Jewish immigration, a number of Jewish children and young people in Norway now speak Hebrew.

Jews today
Norway is currently home to around 1,500 Jews, most of them living in the Oslo region. There are two Jewish congregations – one in Oslo and one in Trondheim. More than half of all Jews living in

Restitution and public apology
In 1998 the Norwegian Parliament resolved to reach an historical and moral settlement over the treatment that Norwegian Jews suffered during World War II. The settlement was both a collective and an individual one and was intended to compensate for the financial liquidation the Jews were subjected to and for the deficiencies in compensation schemes after the war. On Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2012 Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg apologised on behalf of the Norwegian state for allowing the arrest and deportation of Jews on Norwegian soil, actively aided by Norwegian police officers and other Norwegians.
Jews in Norway are members of these congregations. Smaller groups and individual families live in other parts of the country. Some are affiliated to smaller Jewish communities, and relatively many Jews are not members of any congregation. In a European context

Jews in Norway have always been a small minority. There are currently an estimated 14 million or so Jews in the world, most of them living in Israel (around 5.9 million) and in the USA (around 5.4 million).

We should like to thank the following for all their help:

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and the Jewish Museum in Trondheim
Who are the Kvens / Norwegian Finns?

The Kvens / Norwegian Finns are a minority with a Kven / Norwegian-Finnish cultural background and Kven and Finnish languages. This minority refers to themselves as Kvens and Norwegian Finns.

In order to emphasise their status as one national minority, the Norwegian Parliament resolved in 2011 to refer to the group as Kvens / Norwegian Finns (Kvenere/Norskfinner in Norwegian).
The Kven / Norwegian-Finnish people has lived in the North Calotte region since time immemorial. In the past their work was seasonal and took them both to the coast and further inland. They fished in the sea, rivers and lakes, and they hunted and worked the land. Their main territories were around the Bothnian Bay, in Torne-dalen and in the regions bordering the Arctic Ocean. We do not know when the Kvens / Norwegian Finns started settling in Norway, but there are Kvens / Norwegian Finns mentioned in written records from the 16th century.

The Kven / Norwegian-Finnish population in present-day Finnmark and Troms grew during the first half of the 18th century. Population growth in Northern Finland and Northern Sweden led more Kven / Norwegian-Finnish farmers to begin working the land in what is now Northern Norway. The wars between Sweden and Russia and years of crop failures and occasional famine in Northern Sweden and Northern Finland also contributed to the emigration. The Norwegian authorities wanted to see more permanent settlements in the sparsely populated north and gave the Kven / Norwegian-Finnish settlers both rights and tax breaks. The Kvens / Norwegian Finns combined agriculture with fishing in the fjords of Finnmark and Troms, and they formed farming communities in inland regions such as Karasjok, Kautokeino and Tanadalen. The Kvens / Norwegian Finns and the Sami people hunted and fished in the same areas, which led to both co-operation and sometimes conflict.

The number of Kvens / Norwegian Finns rose between the 1820s and 1900. Growth in this period was increasingly generated by newly established industry. The development of a fisheries sector and various types of fishing and mining resulted in an increased demand for labour. Workers came from both Southern Norway and the hinterland in the North Calotte. The rumours of the many opportunities in Northern Norway led enterprising and resourceful people to settle there, and they set up new businesses in the existing Kven / Norwegian-Finnish communities.

The Kvens / Norwegian Finns eventually came to make up the majority of the population in many communities, fishing villages and towns. In Finnmark and Troms the Kvens / Norwegian Finns retained both their language and cultural traits for a long time, first and foremost because...
some settlements were almost exclusively Kven / Norwegian-Finnish, and because in the towns there were clear dividing lines between the Kvens / Norwegian Finns and the ethnic Norwegian population. These places continued to attract new Kvens / Norwegian Finns, and they had close links with Finnish-speakers in Northern Sweden and Northern Finland. We may describe this as an exchange between different areas in the North Calotte rather than a migration of Kvens / Norwegian Finns.

Around the mid-19th century the authorities’ positive attitudes and policies towards the Kvens / Norwegian Finns began to change, partly as a result of nationalist, racist and Darwinist thinking. There was a perceived, yet not real, “Finnish threat” whereby it was feared that the Kvens / Norwegian Finns would not remain loyal to Norway if the Russian Empire, of which Finland was part, attempted to annex Norwegian territory. Many also feared that nationalist movements in Finland would stake claims against Norway. The new policy on the Kvens / Norwegian Finns had several consequences: since many Kvens / Norwegian Finns did not hold formal Norwegian citizenship, several of them were expelled. The Sale of Land Act of 1902 stipulated that only Norwegian-speaking Norwegians were permitted to own land in Finnmark. The authorities deliberately neglected to build roads and communication routes across the border to Finland in order to prevent contact between Kvens / Norwegian Finns and Finland. During the building of the new Norwegian nation, the press, libraries and radio should essentially only promulgate Norwegian culture, and Kvens / Norwegian Finns were excluded from holding public office in the border regions. Belonging to the Kven people became associated with shame and was suppressed by many. Boarding schools were set up providing teaching in Norwegian only and tasked with norwegianising Kven / Norwegian-Finnish children both linguistically and culturally.

During the first half of the 19th century many Kven / Norwegian-Finnish pupils were in practice taught in their mother tongue. From around 1870 Kven / Finnish was downgraded to being an auxiliary language in the teaching of Christianity. In 1936 the Norwegian Parliament declared that Kven was no longer permitted as an auxiliary language. Even when Kven / Finnish was merely an auxiliary language, many Kven / Norwegian-Finnish children were able to learn how to read and write Kven / Finnish at school. A disparity thus emerged between the generations that grew up before and after 1936. As language skills were weakened and replaced with Norwegian, spoken Kven / Finnish also began to go out of use. The ban on Finnish as a teaching language in primary and lower secondary schools was only lifted in 1980.
The Kvens / Norwegian Finns stood up against the assimilation policies in the late 19th century, including by publishing a Finnish language newspaper, creating book collections of Finnish literature, and trying to establish their own school in Vadsø. Finnish was the working language in many places. However, official policy and negative attitudes towards the Kvens / Norwegian Finns led parents to stop teaching their children Kven or Finnish in order to protect them against discrimination. The parents would often be told that multilingualism was bad for the children. Many Kvens / Norwegian Finns also felt it was important that their children could speak Norwegian, since this was the teaching and working language in Norway and could therefore prepare them for a future in the country.

By the 1960s it appeared as if Kven / Norwegian-Finnish culture was heading for oblivion. From 1970 onwards international focus on the rights of minority peoples grew, and several interest groups for this minority were established in Norway. The Norwegian authorities have now abandoned their earlier assimilation policies and have committed themselves to take steps to allow Kven / Norwegian-Finnish culture and language to survive and evolve. Municipalities such as Porsanger and Storfjord have declared themselves trilingual and tricultural by putting Norwegian, Sami and Kven / Norwegian-Finnish language and culture on an equal footing. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration maintains trilingual signage on national roads in many areas.

Language

After some debate the Norwegian authorities recognised Kven as a separate language in 2005. Having been neglected as a written language for almost 100 years, new grammar, dictionaries and teaching aids are now needed to rebuild the language. Kven is closely related to Meänkieli, or Tornedalsfinska. It is also related to Finnish but still remains clearly distinct from all these languages. The Kven language is influenced by interaction with Norwegian and has assumed some Norwegian loan words, especially when it comes to modern life and society.

Kven is a highly vulnerable language. It is largely the older generation of Kvens who speak it on a daily basis. Kven is no longer handed down from parent to child, but we are seeing a growing tendency for grandparents to pass on the language to their grandchildren. Young people are once again taking an interest in the language and are given the opportunity to learn it. Norwegian Finns consider Finnish to be their mother tongue, and the language is rejuvenated through migration over several generations.
Religion
Religion was and is important to many Kvens / Norwegian Finns. The Laestadian revivalist movement took firm roots in many parts of the Kven / Norwegian-Finnish community in the mid-19th century. While the Church of Norway usually preached in Norwegian, and eventually developed into an agent for the state’s assimilation policies, Laestadianism gave the Kvens / Norwegian Finns the opportunity to engage with religion in their own language by using the Finnish language bible and hymn books. The movement continues to help preserve the language traditions with its Laestadian gatherings.

Finnish as a second language in schools started as a pilot project in 1990, after having been offered as an optional subject in some schools. In 1997 a dedicated curriculum for the subject was developed, and the following year pupils in Finnmark and Troms with a Kven / Norwegian-Finnish background were granted the legal right to tuition under this curriculum in Kven or Finnish. In autumn 2013 a total of 594 pupils chose Finnish as their second language. This is a sharp decline on the 2001 / 2002 academic year, however, when 1,073 pupils did so. There are still few teaching materials in Kven, but teaching aids are being developed.

Kvens / Norwegian Finns today
It is uncertain how many Kvens / Norwegian Finns live in Norway today, as we do not record people’s ethnicity. 10,000–15,000 is an estimate often used in public documents, although this may be much too low. The number of people who speak Kven is much lower and has fallen dramatically over the last few generations. Many Kvens / Norwegian Finns have both Sami and Norwegian relatives. Evacuation and migration south during and after World War II have meant that there are now Kvens / Norwegian Finns living all across the country.

Despite the assimilation that has taken place, Kven / Norwegian-Finnish culture is still alive. Many people sing Kven / Norwegian-Finnish and Finnish songs and hymns, especially children’s songs. Kven / Norwegian-Finnish musical traditions live on. Kven fiction and poetry are being published, and the first Kven language children’s books have just been released. Kven / Norwegian-Finnish homewares, handicrafts and cuisine are being preserved by supporters and local communities. There are now several Kven / Norwegian-Finnish interest groups and institutions aiming to document and disseminate Kven / Norwegian-Finnish culture.

The Kvens / Norwegian Finns have made their mark on Northern Norwegian culture in a variety of ways, including with their unique building traditions. The so-called Varangerhuset is a large timber building with residential quarters, stables and animal shed all under one roof. Like the Forest Finns further south, Kven / Norwegian-Finnish dwellings had a chimneyless open hearth. The sauna was and still is a typical feature of Kven / Norwegian-Finnish culture.

Organisations:
The Kvens / Norwegian Finns have three interest groups with differing views on identity and language:
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Trygg Jakola, Norske Kveners Forbund
Carita Jansson, Norsk-Finsk Forbund

Ruijan Kveeniliitto / Norske kveners forbund
stresses that Kven is a language distinct from Standard Finnish / Finnish. The organisation uses the Kven language and primarily wants all tuition to be given in Kven. Ruijan Kveeniliitto / Norske Kveners Forbund identifies the Kven people as an indigenous northern people alongside the Kvens / Tornedalians in Sweden and Finland.

Kvenlandsforbundet (KLF)
refers to the language as Kven-Finnish (Kvensk-finsk in Norwegian) and considers Kven to be a dialect of Finnish. The organisation uses Finnish spelling and believes this is the best strategy for keeping the language alive. It is of the opinion that Finnish should be recognised as a minority language for Kvens. KLF considers the Kvens to be an indigenous people in the north.

Norsk-Finsk Forbund / Norjalais-Suomalainen
Litto is a nationwide interest group for people of Finnish ancestry living in Norway. The organisation has adopted Finnish as its minority language. The term Norwegian Finns has been in use by Norwegian-Finnish organisations since the 1920s. The organisation aims to promote and preserve Finnish language, Norwegian-Finnish and Finnish culture and to safeguard the rights of Norwegian Finns as a national minority as well as those of Finns living in Norway. Apart from these interests, the organisation does not make any claims concerning the status of Kvens / Norwegian Finns as a separate or indigenous people or concerning trade policy.
Who are the Roma (Gypsies)?

When we talk about the Roma (Gypsies) as a national minority we are referring to Roma (Gypsies) families with long-standing ties to Norway. They hold Norwegian citizenship and live more or less permanently in Norway.

The Roma (Gypsies) were previously referred to as Gypsies (Sigøynere in Norwegian). The official Norwegian designation is Rom (singular of Roma (Gypsies)). The term Romfolk is often used by the Norwegian media to describe visiting Roma (Gypsies) from Romania and Bulgaria.
History

We do not know much about the early history of the Roma (Gypsies), but the origin of Romani (Romanés in Norwegian), their language, has been traced back to India. 1,000–1,500 years ago the ancestors of the Roma (Gypsies) emigrated from Asia to Eastern Europe, especially to present-day Romania, Balkans and Hungary, where many of them were held as slaves and lived under difficult conditions. Some slaves were able to live relatively freely, however, and they continued their itinerant way of life. The fact that they were slaves and not permitted to marry outside their own ethnic group helped the Roma (Gypsies) maintain and preserve their language and traditions.

Major upheaval in Romania in the second half of the 19th century led both to the release of the slaves and to deep poverty in the country. Many Roma (Gypsies) emigrated to Northern and Western Europe, including Norway, during what is known as the Second Migration. The Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) are descendants of these migrants. In the beginning little attention was paid to the small Roma (Gypsies) entourages staying in Norway, and they were usually left in peace by the authorities.

In the early 20th century there were calls to close the borders and later also to deport the Roma (Gypsies) population. The Roma (Gypsies) were not deemed to belong in Norway and therefore did not become a target for the country’s assimilation policies in the same way as the Romani people / Tater. There is much to suggest that the authorities expected the Roma (Gypsies) to leave the country if only they tightened their grip sufficiently. In the 1920s a change in the law meant that “gypsies and other foreign vagrants” would no longer be granted entry to the realm, and their Norwegian passports became invalid. By 1930 life had become so intolerable for many Roma (Gypsies) that they emigrated from Norway to France, Belgium and Germany. This would prove to be ill-fated for many of them, because when they tried to flee Germany for Norway in 1934 they were turned away by the Norwegian authorities. Most of these people were later killed in the concentration camps.

After the war many Roma (Gypsies) found they were not believed when they described the abuses they had suffered, and they were not allowed to access the compensation schemes that were set up for concentration camp prisoners.
Survivors from the group that had applied to return to Norway in 1934 applied again to the Norwegian authorities for entry permits during the 1950s. Many of them were either born in Norway or had other ties with the country, and many were also able to prove it by producing their birth certificates. All the applications were initially rejected. Following political pressure and extensive media coverage, the authorities finally allowed most of them to return. Only in 1956 was the legislative clause on a special entry ban for Roma (Gypsies) repealed.

Roma (Gypsies) who settled in Norway after the ban was lifted found life difficult. Their traditional trades were no longer in demand, and the Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) were deeply affected by the fate of many of their family members in the concentration camps. A committee for gypsy issues was set up in 1962 in response to the

Porajmos – the Roma (Gypsies) genocide

Roma (Gypsies) were subjected to persecution and abuse by the Nazi regime in Germany. A belief prevailed, based on prejudice and ignorance of Roma (Gypsies) culture, that the Roma (Gypsies) lifestyle was rife with criminality, alcoholism and low sexual morals, and that they neglected their children. Like the Jews and disabled, they were deemed to be a threat to society. In the late 1930s several thousand Roma (Gypsies) were interned in labour camps, where many were forcibly sterilised and suffered as a result of overwork and malnutrition. In 1941 the Nazis began to send thousands of Roma (Gypsies) to the concentration camps. It is difficult to say how many Roma (Gypsies) were killed in these camps, because the Nazis did not keep as detailed records of murdered Roma (Gypsies) as they did of murdered Jews. However, it is estimated that the proportion of Roma (Gypsies) who died in the concentration camps is the same as the proportion of Jews. The Nazi attempt to exterminate the Roma (Gypsies) is referred to by some Roma (Gypsies) as Porajmos, “The Destruction”.

Roma (Gypsies)
difficult predicament that many Roma (Gypsies) found themselves in. Just over a decade later the “Gypsy Office” was established in Oslo on the Roma (Gypsies)’s own initiative to co-ordinate services for the Roma (Gypsies). Separate kindergartens, leisure clubs and school classes for Roma (Gypsies) were established, and many were given their own homes. Following the so-called Diamond Raid, a fraud perpetrated against the Norwegian central bank by people with a Roma (Gypsies) background, many Roma (Gypsies) experienced growing prejudice and many moved to Sweden. Dedicated services for the Roma (Gypsies) were also discontinued in 1991. It was claimed that the services had had limited effect considering the resources spent, and that the Roma (Gypsies) could use the ordinary social services system in the future.

Several agencies have since pointed out that mainstream social services did not serve the Roma (Gypsies) well and that the authorities’ knowledge of the Roma (Gypsies) – not to mention the trust between the Roma (Gypsies) and the authorities – had been set back several years when dedicated Roma (Gypsies) services were withdrawn.

Traditional lifestyle

Most Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) were travellers. In the past many made a living as coppersmiths and tinsmiths, horse traders and salespeople, and they offered their services to villagers in the areas where they travelled. Some also earned their keep as fortune tellers, musicians and beggars. Unlike many other travellers, the Roma (Gypsies) were Catholics.

The itinerant lifestyle helped define the unique Roma (Gypsies) culture. Rural people would recognise the Roma (Gypsies) by their idiosyncratic dancing and music and by the women’s distinctive dress style with long skirts and oversized jewellery.
Language

The Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) call their language Romanés (Romani in English) – “in a Rom way”. It can be classed as an Indo-European language that has absorbed words from all the areas where the Roma (Gypsies) have lived over time. Unlike Scandoromani – the language of the Romani people / Tater – Romani / Romanés is defined by the fact that it has evolved in areas where the Roma (Gypsies) have made up a significant part of the population and has therefore barely been influenced by European grammar. Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) speak Roman/ Romanés as their mother tongue, and they only use Norwegian when communicating with Norwegians. The Roman/ Romanés language is an important part of the Roma (Gypsies) identity, and many people have managed to preserve their language despite attempts to eradicate it during World War II and Norwegian policy in the post-war years. Roma (Gypsies) from different countries can understand each other, and the time they spend travelling abroad helps enable the Roma (Gypsies) to preserve their language.

For most of their history the Roma (Gypsies) have lacked a written language, and the art of storytelling has therefore always been highly valued. Their history and other forms of important knowledge have been passed on orally from generation to generation.

Roma (Gypsies) today

The exact number of Roma (Gypsies) resident in Norway today is not known, but it may be between 500 and 750, most of living them in the Oslo region. The Roma (Gypsies) suffer some discrimination in the housing market, and many struggle with their careers. Most Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) have received little schooling. Many of them have been and continue to be fearful that schools and kindergartens will seek to assimilate or put their children into care. Their itinerant way of life can also be difficult to combine with continuous schooling. The Roma (Gypsies) themselves believe it is very important that the education sector understands the nature of their peripatetic lifestyle as well as their historical apprehension associated with sending their children to kindergarten and school.

Most Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) are informally organised into a few extended families led by a family elder, usually the oldest male in the family. Their family ties are strong, and the extended family constitutes the most important social, economic and political network for most
Roma (Gypsies). The family offers care, protection and a social safety net and requires strong loyalty from its members. For most Roma (Gypsies) it is important to maintain the traditional lifestyle of travelling, both for financial reasons and in order to keep in contact with family and relatives in the rest of Europe. They will therefore often live in flats for parts of the year, usually during winter, before travelling across Norway and Europe during spring, summer and autumn. Norwegian Roma (Gypsies) today travel with modern caravans, and extended families or clans will often travel together. Some, on the other hand, have stopped travelling altogether and remain settled throughout the year.

Important points of reference in the Roma (Gypsies) system of morals include mahrime (ritual uncleanliness relating to food and hygiene, for example), pachiv (honour) and lazav (shame). Most Roma (Gypsies) make a clear distinction between people who are Roma (Gypsies) and people who are not. The latter are described as gazje. Conflicts between Roma (Gypsies) can be settled by a kris, a tribunal where neutral judges known as krisinatori mediate between the parties and reach a solution. Today’s Roma (Gypsies) have modernised their style of dress, but it still shows that they are Roma (Gypsies). As long as they are unmarried, girls may wear trousers, but once they marry most of them wear skirts.

The Roma (Gypsies) are a knowledgeable people who are proud of their identity, language and culture, and they wish to be treated with respect.

We should like to thank the following for all their help:

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Who are the Romani people / Tater?

The national minority of Romani people / Tater was first documented in the Nordic region in the 16th century. The minority has been referred to by various names over the years. Divergent views are held within the group as to whether to describe themselves as Tater or Romani People. The minority is therefore referred to as Romani People / Tater (Romani- folket/Tatere in Norwegian).

Reisende and Vandriar are other names used by the group. Romani People / Tater who travelled by sea and lived on boats were called Kystreisende. There are thought to be several thousand of Romani people / Tater in Norway today.
The ancestors of the Romani people / Tater probably migrated from Asia to Eastern Europe some time after the turn of the first millennium. They then spread across large parts of Europe during the period known as the First Migration. The presence of Romani people / Tater in the Nordic region was first described in the 16th century. The first arrivals of Romani people / Tater were well received, but this changed with the Reformation in 1536.

Since the Romani people / Tater were nomads, they were considered difficult to tax and to rule over. The authorities therefore deemed them unwanted in Norwegian society. The King issued the first deportation orders in 1536, and a few years later he declared the Romani people / Tater outlaws. Just over 50 years later the then king ordered all so-called “vagrants” to be captured and executed. This decree also affected the Romani people / Tater. Romani people / Tater were later forced to carry passports in order to stop them from travelling. For the Romani people / Tater themselves it was also problematic that the church refused to christen them and bury them in consecrated ground. The first prisons built in the 18th century were aimed at Romani people / Tater and vagrants.

The 1800s saw emerging nationalism and a vision of one nation and one people – there was little room for being different. The abuse continued, but now in the form of assimilation. The Child Protection Act of 1896 allowed the authorities to take children away from all travellers, while the Vagrancy Act of 1900 made the itinerant lifestyle a crime since it was deemed a “scourge” and a “threat to law and order”. The Animal Welfare Act of 1951 barred Romani people / Tater from travelling with horses.

Modern genetics came to have significant influence in Norway and on Norwegian government policy from the 1920s onwards. This hit the Romani people / Tater hard. Alongside groups such as alcoholics, criminals and so-called “retards”, the Romani people / Tater were seen as carrying undesirable genes. The Sterilisation Act of 1934 allowed for forced sterilisation of people with serious mental conditions, people who were mentally deficient, or people whose mental development was severely impaired. It
Traditional lifestyle

Romani people / Tater have always been a nomadic people. Their itinerant way of life has been and continues to be important both economically and in terms of their identity. They travelled from village to village selling goods and offering traditional trades. In summer they would settle in fields, by fjords and on islands, and in winter they were often given shelter in barns, stables, storehouses or attics by hospitable farmers. They frequently travelled by horse and cart in summer and by sledge in winter. Many of them also used boats as a means of transport, travelling along the coast offering goods and services to local residents. Many coastal travellers had permanent homes during winter and went travelling during summer.

The Romani people / Tater and their skills are said to have been, and continue to be, important to many farming communities. There were significant variations in how well they were treated by the settled population. In some places they were welcome; elsewhere they would be sent packing. Because the Romani people / Tater were a nomadic people, they became important news bearers. They were known as skilled artisans, and they would adapt to meet market demand. Tinsmithing, tinkering, silversmithing, woodcarving and tinplating were some of the services that locals would often buy from Romani people / Tater. Later on the construction and fitting of roof gutters became an important source of income, especially after the process of making cake tins, pots and pans was industrialised in the 20th century.

The women would often produce homewares and sell small items. The Romani people / Tater were known to be skilled at animal husbandry, and they often traded horses in the numerous local markets. Many of them also repaired watches and fine mechanics, and they dealt in silver, gold and various antiques.

Song and music was and is important to Romani people / Tater. Musicians of traveller stock were popular across the country, and they have helped shape and preserve Norwegian folk music. Arts and crafts was important to the Romani people / Tater household economy. Much of what we consider to be distinctively Norwegian forms of art, such as silver brooches and knives, has been influenced by Romani people / Tater culture.

Fortune telling was a common source of income amongst women. Just like the permanent population, their style of dress was determined by which materials were available, but it also had certain unique traits. The women would often wear several layers of long skirts, colourful shawls, large brooches and other jewellery. Romani people / Tater women covered their hair with a diklo, a headscarf tied in a particular way. The women would store their valuables in a removable pouch under their skirt, known as a posikka. The men would often wear a hat or other headgear, a waistcoat with silver buttons, a watch chain and a studded belt with a knife. They would also wear a colourful neck scarf tied together with a large, heavy buckle made from precious metal.
has been documented that up until 1977 at least 125 Norwegians of travelling ancestry were sterilised under this act, while the Romani people / Tater were sterilised without basis in law. Many of them were left with physical and mental scars, and several later committed suicide. Lobotomy was also carried out on Romani people / Tater, resulting in death for some of them.

In 1897 the government delegated the work to assimilate the Romani people / Tater to a private organisation, commonly known as the Norwegian Mission for the Homeless. The mission ran children’s homes, schools and labour colonies for Romani people / Tater with the express aim of eradicating the Romani people / Tater culture. One important strategy was to remove children from their parents and then raise them as “good Christians” and settled Norwegians in children’s homes. In total at least 1,500 children were separated from their parents, often growing up without knowing about their traveller background. Many of these children suffered violence and abuse. More than one hundred families of Romani people / Tater descent were sent to the Svanviken labour colony in Nordmøre to be “weaned off” their traditional way of life and become “good Christians”. Under the threat of having their children taken away from them, Romani people / Tater families were prohibited from speaking Scandoromani, wearing traditional clothes and practising traditional handicrafts. They were not permitted to receive visits from relatives. The Norwegian Mission for the Homeless continued its activities in Svanviken until 1989.

Language
Scandoromani has evolved from the language the Romani people / Tater spoke when they arrived in Norway in the 16th century. It has gradually shifted towards what is known as code switching, where Norwegian serves as a grammatical framework, while most of the words are Scandoromani. It is common to incorporate some Norwegian words.

The assimilation policies led many Romani people / Tater to lose their language, but Scandoromani is still an important part of Norwegian Romani people / Tater culture. Scandoromani was previously exclusively a spoken language. Work is underway to systematise and standardise the language into a written language.

Romani people / Tater today
As industry continued to replace an increasing number of manual production methods, the Romani people / Tater saw a change in their financial circumstances. In recent years more modern forms of trading, such as the purchase and sale
of antiques and scrap metal along with manual trades, have become important sources of income for some, while others are employed in ordinary, salaried jobs. The vast majority of Romani people / Tater now have permanent homes, but many maintain their itinerant culture by going travelling for parts of the year.

There are differences within the group as to how much they wish to emphasise the part of their background that relates to their Romani people / Tater heritage. Many of them have grown up in a society where Romani people / Tater have been oppressed and where words such as *tater*, *fark*, *splint* and *fant* have been used as derogatory and pejorative terms. Some are frightened that increased focus on the Romani people / Tater will lead to further oppression. Others strongly identify with their Romani people / Tater heritage and have become involved in organisations that work actively and preventively to promote the interests of Romani people / Tater and to maintain their traditions. After a few feeble attempts to organise themselves, the organisation Roma-

Public apology and reparation

In February 1998 the Norwegian authorities officially apologised for the way in which Romani people / Tater had been treated. The Romanifolket/Taternes Kulturfond (the Culture Fund for Romani people / Tater) manages a fund to finance projects to promote Romani people / Tater culture and traditions, amongst other things. The Latjo Drom section of the Glomdalsmuseum in Elverum documents and disseminates the culture and traditions of the Romani people / Tater. The exhibition is open to the public. An investigation committee was set up by the government in January 2011 following requests from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee and organisations representing the Romani people / Tater. The committee will be examining policies and initiatives towards the Romani people / Tater by the authorities, organisations and businesses from the mid-19th century until the present day. It will also look at the consequences of these policies and initiatives. The process will be completed by May 2015.
nifolkets Landsforening (RFL) was formed in 1995 before eventually changing its name to Taternes Landsforening. Additional organisations have since appeared, including Landsorganisasjonen for Romanifolket, Romanifolkets Kystkultur and Romanifolkets Riksforbund.

Many Romani people / Tater have been given insufficient schooling. Children of Romani people / Tater have experienced bullying, harassment and xenophobia from teachers, other pupils and parents because of their ethnic background. This has led many of them to view educational institutions with scepticism. There is still irregular school attendance amongst this minority, and many drop out of education altogether, sometimes as early as at the primary stage. Many of them are anxious to give their children a good education. Representatives from the minority have themselves pointed out that it is important for schools to acknowledge the historical wariness associated with sending their children to school along with the travelling lifestyle that many of them still pursue.

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Who are the Forest Finns?

The minority is referred to as Forest Finns (Skogfinner in Norwegian) because they are descendants of Finnish immigrants who settled in coniferous woodland. The first Forest Finns arrived in Norway in the early 17th century. There are thought to be several hundred people defining themselves as Forest Finns in Norway today. In addition to the designation Forest Finns, many of them also refer to themselves as Finns.

The term Kvæner was often used as a collective term for people of Finnish heritage in Norway, including the Forest Finns. This helped undermine the Forest Finns’ position as a separate ethnic group with their own immigration history in Norway. As late as the 1990s there were examples of how the authorities considered the Forest Finns as a Southern Norwegian group of Kvens. New knowledge about the Forest Finns and Kvens / Norwegian Finns shows that they are distinct groups, however.
History

The Forest Finns originated in Finland, in particular in the Savolaks region where they made a living from slash-and-burn agriculture. By the late 16th century the region had become overpopulated, and the forests could no longer sustain this form of agriculture. Many people therefore began to search for woodland elsewhere so that they could continue practising this method of farming. Finland was part of Sweden at this time, war was raging between Sweden and Russia, and there had been years of famine. These factors also contributed to the emigration of Forest Finns from the region.

Duke Karl of Värmland (later King Karl IX of Sweden) invited the Forest Finns to settle in Värmeland – a larger population could help boost tax revenues. The number of Forest Finns living in Sweden grew rapidly, and conflict eventually arose between the Forest Finns’ use of woodland for slash-and-burn and other forestry interests. The mining industry was growing fast, and the authorities favoured the use of timber in ironworks and sawmills. A ban was therefore introduced on slash-and-burn farming except on privately owned land. In the 1630s the Forest Finns began moving across the border to Norway. Many settled in woodland uninhabited by Norwegians. The Finnskogen region, stretching from Trysil in the north to Østfold in the south, became their largest continuous habitat. Some travelled further inland and cleared land for new

Slash-and-burn agriculture

The Forest Finns practised slash-and-burn agriculture in spruce forests. All trees in a selected wooded area would be felled and left to dry for a year or two before the ground was burnt. The fertile layer of ash was sown with svedjerug – a biennial species of rye. This way of growing rye generated large harvests compared with barley and oat crops from arable farming. Only one harvest would usually be reaped from each field. Slash-and-burn farmers would therefore continually move on to new woodland.
In addition to slash-and-burn cultivation, the Forest Finns had several cultural traditions that differed from Norwegian culture. They include their building traditions. The Forest Finns lived in so-called smokehouses heated by a large hearth with no chimney. The hearth provided excellent heat retention, and the Forest Finns’ smokehouses were much more heat-efficient than Western Norwegian smokehouses. Each farm also had a smoke sauna, and during the slash-and-burn era many farms would have a rie—a specially built smokehouse for drying rye crops. Both saunas and rier were heated by open hearths. The Forest Finns were skilled at using materials found in the forest. Using birch bark for weaving is an old Forest Finnish tradition and appears to have been introduced to Eastern Norway by the Forest Finns. From the bark they would weave konter (backpacks), shoes and various other everyday equipment. Distinctive culinary traditions and a rich heritage of song and music rooted in the old Finnish rune song tradition are also typical of their culture.

Traditional lifestyle

In addition to slash-and-burn cultivation, the Forest Finns had several cultural traditions that differed from Norwegian culture. They include their building traditions. The Forest Finns lived in so-called smokehouses heated by a large hearth with no chimney. The hearth provided excellent heat retention, and the Forest Finns’ smokehouses were much more heat-efficient than Western Norwegian smokehouses. Each farm also had a smoke sauna, and during the slash-and-burn era many farms would have a rie—a specially built smokehouse for drying rye crops. Both saunas and rier were heated by open hearths. The Forest Finns were skilled at using materials found in the forest. Using birch bark for weaving is an old Forest Finnish tradition and appears to have been introduced to Eastern Norway by the Forest Finns. From the bark they would weave konter (backpacks), shoes and various other everyday equipment. Distinctive culinary traditions and a rich heritage of song and music rooted in the old Finnish rune song tradition are also typical of their culture.
Sweden, which at the time also included Finland, had converted to Protestantism in the 16th century. The Forest Finns therefore belonged to the same religion and denomination as the people in the villages where they settled when they arrived in Norway. The authorities registered the Forest Finns with surnames based on the father’s given name rather than their Finnish family name, and the archives also show that their given names were norwegianised. This way the Finnish naming traditions disappeared, something that makes it difficult to identify people as Forest Finns when studying genealogical source material, for example. The nation-building that occurred after 1814 was marked by its assimilation policies and negative attitudes towards minorities, including the Forest Finns. The education system, where all teaching was conducted in Norwegian, was also a traumatic experience for many.

**Religion**

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The Forest Finns have often been associated with magic and mysticism. Their use of magic has its background in the shamanic view of nature shared by the different Finno-Ugric cultures and is not a religion which, in the case of the Forest Finns, posed a conflict with official religion. Their shamanic magic was performed through rituals, invocations and symbols and was used to cure sickness and provide protection against evil spirits. The rune songs of the Forest Finns could be both religious and narrative.
Many Forest Finnish parents therefore stopped speaking Finnish at home in order for their children to learn Norwegian. Being of Finnish ancestry was deemed to be a negative thing, and many people did their best to hide and repress their cultural and ethnic heritage. Many aspects of Forest Finnish culture was suppressed in the first half of the 20th century.

Thanks to extensive efforts by many Forest Finns from the 1940s onwards, Forest Finnish culture is now seeing a recovery. The status as a national minority and changes in the authorities’ policies towards minorities have helped bring about this change. Since the 1970s the Finnskogdagene festival has been held every year in Svullrya in the municipality of Grue in Hedmark, showcasing Forest Finnish traditions to visitors. In 1999 the interest group Skogfinske Interesser i Norge was established, and since 2005 the Norsk Skogfinsk Museum in Grue has made significant progress preserving Forest Finnish culture.

**Language**

The Forest Finns originally spoke Finnish – more specifically a 17th century dialect from Savolaks. After leaving Finland, their language did not mirror the development of Finnish as spoken in Finland. For that reason they retained much of the language as spoken when they emigrated. In order to be able to communicate with the Norwegian-speaking population in the areas where they settled, the Forest Finns learnt Norwegian and were therefore often bilingual. Forest Finnish was spoken in Finnskogen well into the 20th century, but then the language died out. Contributing factors that led to its demise include the fact that children had to speak Norwegian in school and that churches only used Norwegian.

Forest Finns today speak Norwegian, but certain Forest Finnish words are still in use in Finnskogen, as are several hundred Forest Finnish place names. Some place names are entirely Forest Finnish, while others are compounds made up of Forest Finnish elements, such as Mostalamb (*black + lake*) and Hokkavika (*the first segment means wolf*). Many Finnish personal names are still in use, and some people have reassumed their Finnish surnames. A few people in Finnskogen still speak Norwegian with an intonation stemming from the Forest Finnish language.
Forest Finns today

Many Forest Finns feel great affinity with their Forest Finnish ancestry, while others find that the distinction between their Norwegian and Forest Finnish heritage is all but gone. Some people do not want to divulge their Forest Finnish background, or they do not wish to define themselves as Forest Finns.

Forest Finns interpret their cultural affiliation in a variety of ways. Some are actively involved in clubs and organisations, while others work to document their history, traditions, handicrafts etc in partnership with museums and history associations. Many people conduct genealogical research, and there is a growing interest in adopting Finnish personal / given names. Numerous books about Forest Finnish culture and history have been written and published in recent decades, and Forest Finnish cuisine and traditional crafts are being preserved by new generations. A Forest Finnish national costume has been designed, and surviving Forest Finnish rune songs have been recorded and released in CD format. Alongside the museums and history associations, the Finnskogdagene festival plays an important part in highlighting Forest Finnish cultural heritage to the rest of Norwegian society. Although the Forest Finns no longer practise slash-and-burn agriculture, or live in traditional smokehouses, or even speak Forest Finnish, their traditions are still being passed on.

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