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## 1. About the Family Portal

Purpose and structure

Oppdatert delvis 25.1.2024

The Family Portal is an online public information service provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the spouses/cohabitants/partners of all employees in the Foreign Service, i.e. permanent employees from the Ministry and temporary employees (special representatives) from other ministries. The Family Portal is intended to provide accompanying family members with the information they need in connection with a posting abroad.

The Section for Human Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the information in the portal, while the Norwegian Government Security and Service Organisation (DSS) is responsible for the portal's technical operation and maintenance.

## 2. The Foreign Service family policy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives high priority to family policy, which is designed to help employees combine family life with a career in the Foreign Service. Family policy is drawn up by the family policy committee, a joint advisory body in the Ministry which includes representatives of the employer, the employee organisations and the interest group for spouses/cohabitants/partners of Ministry employees who are posted abroad (*UD-partnerne*).

The family policy committee draws up an action plan with priority tasks each year.

The goal and overall guidelines for family policy are set out in the Foreign Service Personnel Policy Document, which is drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the employer and the employee organisations. As stated in the policy:

*The rotation system, which involves alternating between service in the Ministry and service abroad, poses special challenges for employees and their families. Family considerations can make it difficult for employees to serve at missions abroad. The personnel policy must therefore seek to create a framework that makes it possible for family members to accompany employees to the place of service. The fact that families generally have two careers to accommodate presents a particular challenge.*

*The Ministry is to seek to prevent any negative impacts on the accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner's financial situation and career, for example, in relation to social security rights, pension entitlement, leave schemes, opportunities for remote working etc. The framework for an effective family policy is largely developed by government agencies other than the Ministry, for example, the rules relating to residence and work permits, health and social security rights, taxation issues, etc. The Ministry will therefore give priority to dialogue with the relevant agencies to put in place solutions that are better adapted to the specific challenges faced by accompanying family members, including non-Norwegian spouses, cohabitants and partners, in connection with transfers between service abroad and service at the Ministry.*

*Appropriate and adequate training is to be offered to employees who are to be posted abroad and their family members. Steps must be taken to enable employees to maintain contact with family members who do not accompany them to a place of service abroad. Moving between different countries and cultures can be very difficult for children. It is therefore important to assist parents so that they can, as far as possible, prevent problems from arising both when moving abroad and when returning home, and ensure that their children get the most out of their time living abroad. A safe and predictable*

*school routine is particularly important, both at home and abroad. The Ministry and the missions are to give priority to working to achieve this.'*

### **3. Preparing to go abroad**

#### **Introduction**

**We recommend that you start preparing for your departure as early as possible. This is particularly important if you have children who will be accompanying you.**

**The Ministry offers courses, meetings and language training for employees who are preparing for a posting abroad and their families. The Ministry provides a free medical check-up prior to departure.**

**The respective missions provide information about day-care facilities and schools in the relevant country and draw up country reports containing detailed information about living conditions in countries of service, including whether or not it is possible for accompanying family members to work there.**

#### **3.1. Family liaison officer**

All foreign missions have a family liaison officer who can provide local knowledge about schools, day-care facilities and employment opportunities. If you need more information, feel free to contact the mission in advance of your departure. It may also be helpful to consult other people who have served at the mission concerned and their family members. They can provide you with useful information about what it is like to live and work in the country or area in question.

#### **3.2. Key documents, insurance, passports and visas**

##### **3.2.1. The country report**

All Norwegian missions are required to draw up a country report containing information about the country of service, the mission itself, health issues, living conditions, security, transport and traffic, day-care facilities and schools, the formal status of spouses/cohabitants/partners, employment opportunities for accompanying family members, the formal status of same-sex spouses/cohabitants/partners, the currency and banking system, housing, removal goods and issues relating to entry into the country.

Country reports are available to Ministry employees on the Ministry's intranet (UDintra). Employees may print out a copy of the country report to share with their spouses/cohabitants/partners.

##### **3.2.2. Special Agreement on Allowances, Benefits and Remuneration in the Foreign Service**

Employees who are posted abroad receive a number of benefits under the Special Agreement on Allowances, Benefits and Remuneration in the Foreign Service. The parties to the current Special Agreement are the Ministry (as employer) and the employees' organisations.

The Special Agreement is available on the government website, [regjering.no](http://regjering.no) (Norwegian only).

### **3.2.3. Insurance**

#### **3.2.3.1 Household contents insurance, etc.**

During their stay abroad, each family must take out its own household contents insurance policy for personal belongings, and baggage insurance for private holiday travel.

The Norwegian state is self-insured, which means that, as a general rule, government agencies may not take out private insurance to cover expenses incurred from unforeseen incidents. The state's responsibility for its employees is therefore regulated by collective agreements negotiated between the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the trade union confederations for state employees.

The state insurance and compensation schemes form part of the employment conditions for Ministry employees.

#### **3.2.3.2. Accident insurance for accompanying family members**

Accompanying family members are covered by an accident insurance scheme administered by the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund. This applies to spouses, cohabitants, partners, and children up to the age of 18 (or the year the child completes upper secondary school) who accompany a posted employee on a posting abroad. The insurance is valid all over the world and for the entire stay abroad. This includes holidays and transit to the place of service, but not stays in Norway.

The insurance does not cover family members who are only visiting the country of service.

The insurance includes a right to compensation in the event of death or permanent disability resulting from accidents. Injuries sustained as a result of terrorist acts, armed conflict, acts of war, riots, natural disasters and so on are also covered.

More information can be found in the Norwegian civil service handbook (Statens personallhåndbok – Norwegian only).

#### **3.2.3.3. Health insurance**

There is a voluntary health insurance plan for posted employees and accompanying family members to certain EEA countries. The Ministry pays the insurance premium and there are no deductibles, but the premium paid for the posted employee is reported to the Norwegian tax authorities. The current health insurance agreement has been signed with If Skadeforsikring NUF,

and Europeiske (a part of If) serves as the point of contact when using the plan. The policy number is SP 825954.

#### **3.2.3.4. Who does the health insurance plan cover?**

The following individuals can be covered under the health insurance plan:

- 1) A posted employee serving in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK.
- 2) Accompanying family members of the posted employee set out in point 1.
- 3) Mobile staff.

Accompanying children are covered up to the age of 18. Accompanying children over the age of 18 who are entitled to additional schooling pursuant to section 3-1 of the Education Act are also covered.

The insurance plan does not cover family members who are only visiting.

#### **3.2.3.5. What does the health insurance plan cover?**

The health insurance plan provides financial coverage for necessary health care expenses in the event of illness, injury, handicap, family planning, pregnancy, childbirth and termination of pregnancy in line with benefits provided under the Act of 28 February 1997 No. 19 relating to national insurance (National Insurance Act) Chapter IV, Section 5 on health care benefits.

The insurance plan covers admission to hospital for treatment. In the event of admission to hospital, the plan will cover expenses corresponding to the cost of a standard single room with en suite bathroom in a private hospital. This is the maximum amount/room standard and may not be exceeded. All expenses related to the treatment will be covered.

In the case of hospitalisation of children, necessary accommodation for parents will be covered.

Treatment at a hospital or an out-patient clinic must be based on a referral from a doctor, chiropractor or specialised physical therapist.

The insurance plan does not cover surgical procedures that are mainly for cosmetic purposes, nor does it cover any treatment for typical effects to be expected from these types of procedures.

The insurance plan does not cover vaccines.

#### **3.2.3.6. How can you enrol in and withdraw from the health insurance plan?**

The relevant mission is to enrol or cancel enrolment of posted employees and their accompanying family members in the health insurance plan via the If service [Confidential Message](#) which

encrypts email and attachments. There is to be at least one staff member at each mission who has access to the message service.

Europeiske notifies the Section for Human Resources about the individuals enrolled in the insurance plan so that the Ministry can report correctly to the Norwegian tax authorities.

Individuals do not need to submit a health assessment or satisfy any specified health requirements to be enrolled in the plan.

### **3.2.3.7. Reimbursement of expenses for treatment**

For reimbursement of expenses paid out, insured employees can contact the claims department at Europeiske in Oslo via the website (for electronic claims) or call a customer service agent to have a case assessed/processed on the phone. The website is: [Insurance | If P&C Insurance](#) and [here is the link to the online claim report](#).

Contact information for Europeiske is: +47 21 49 78 00, email [expat@europeiske.no](mailto:expat@europeiske.no)

All claims will be registered immediately, and a response is to be provided within 24 hours. Most of the claims are settled/paid out immediately.

### **3.2.3.8. Scheduled treatments**

For non-emergency medical treatment, insured individuals must contact the customer service desk at Europeiske. Europeiske will then take immediate steps, in close consultation with the individual, to plan and manage the required treatment as follows:

- clarify diagnosis and necessary medical treatment;
- determine which doctor/hospital is to be used;
- based on this, Europeiske can issue a payment guarantee to the designated doctor/hospital;
- Europeiske pays the doctor/hospital once the treatment is completed;
- reimburse any expenses the client has incurred.

Contact information for Europeiske is: +47 21 49 78 00, email [expat@europeiske.no](mailto:expat@europeiske.no)

### **3.2.3.9. Need for medical assistance in emergency situations**

When there is need for emergency assistance, such as serious illness, hospitalisation, or injuries due to an accident, insured individuals can contact the 24-hour Europeiske alarm centre (SOS International). The phone number for Europeiske's alarm centre is: +47 21 49 50 00, then press 1.

### **3.2.4. Passports and visas**

Oppdatert 17.1.24

Oppdatert delvis 25.1.2024



**Passports:** All posted employees will need a diplomatic passport. The passports are issued by the Section for Diplomatic Relations in the Ministry to the posted employee and accompanying family members. To be eligible, individuals must already possess a valid ordinary Norwegian passport.

Personal attendance of the employee and accompanying family members is required for collection of biometrics. Processing time for passport issuance is approximately one week.

**Visas:** The Section for Diplomatic Relations assists employees and family members with acquiring visas from the authorities in the country concerned. You should contact the Section well in advance to find out whether a visa is required and fill in the necessary visa application forms.

**Questions regarding passports and visas** can be addressed to the Section for Diplomatic Relations on [pass@mfa.no](mailto:pass@mfa.no) and [visa@mfa.no](mailto:visa@mfa.no)

### **3.2.5. Children and service abroad**

#### **Introduction**

**Moving between different countries and cultures can be difficult for children. It is therefore important to do as much as possible to prevent children from experiencing problems when moving abroad and when returning home, and to ensure that they get the most out of their time living abroad.**

**We recommend that parents take the Ministry's online course about potential psychological problems that can arise in connection with service abroad. Among other things, the course focuses on children's perspectives and how children may react to different cultures and languages. See under 'Information meetings, courses and language training' for more details.**

#### **3.2.5.1. Children with special needs**

Children with special needs, for example relating to their health or their physical or social development, may experience greater difficulties than other children. Parents should be particularly aware of this, and should consider their child's needs when choosing the place of service, as well as how often they want the child to have to move. As the employer, the Ministry will seek to ensure that the best possible information is provided in job advertisements, during interviews, in the country reports, in the information meetings and courses for employees preparing for a posting abroad, and at the individual medical check-ups that the Ministry provides in connection with a posting abroad (see the section on vaccinations and medical check-ups).

#### **3.2.5.2. Family counselling services**

Family counselling services in Norway can provide advice and counselling in connection with a wide array of family issues. There are family counselling offices in all counties and the service is free. You can find a list of family counselling offices on the website of the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs ([Family counselling](https://www.bufdir.no) ([bufdir.no](https://www.bufdir.no))).

Family counselling offices are staffed by psychologists, social workers and other specialists in family therapy. Family counsellors have a duty of confidentiality.

### **3.2.5.3. National helpline for children and young people and other useful links**

The Norwegian Red Cross offers a free and anonymous helpline for children and young people up to the age of 18.

For more information, see the [Norwegian Red Cross Kors på halsen English information webpage](#).

Chatservice for young people on [ung.no](#)

Ung.no is a public service information channel for young people. Young people can find information here regarding their rights, opportunities and obligations. The website offers questions and answers about family life; friends and leisure activities; feelings; identity and falling in love; violence and abuse; school, employment and future paths; society; laws and rights; body issues, health and sex, and more.

#### **Useful links**

- [Flexid | Mine muligheter med flere kulturer](#) (only Norwegian)
- [Forsiden - Voksne for Barn \(vfb.no\)](#) (only Norwegian)
- [The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs | Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet \(bufdir.no\)](#)
  
- [Kors På Halsen - Hjem \(rodekors.no\)](#) (only Norwegian)
- [ung.no](#) (only Norwegian)
- APP: [SMART. SMART – a stress management tool](#)
- APP: [ZuperSmart – stress management](#) and [ZuperSmart – about the APP](#)

## **3.3. Day-care facilities and schools at the place of service**

### **3.3.1. Applications for coverage of day-care and schooling expenses**

Applications for coverage of day-care and schooling expenses are to be processed by the missions. It is important to contact the relevant mission before your departure to ask for information about local day-care services and schools. All missions have a family liaison officer who can provide families with practical assistance and information on topics such as day-care facilities and schools, opening hours, enrolment deadlines and fees, as well as alternative child-care options where they exist. This information is included in the country report. The family liaison officer can also arrange contact with day-care facilities and schools as needed.

More information about coverage and guidelines relating to children's day-care and schooling expenses is found in the Special Agreement on Allowances, Benefits and Remuneration in the Foreign Service, available on the Government website, [regjeringen.no](http://regjeringen.no) (Norwegian only).

In cases where there is a need for greater educational and psychological support than can be provided with private extra tuition, the employee is to submit an application for this to the Section for Human Resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The application must include documentation that the measures for special needs have been approved by the relevant authority as being satisfactory and necessary.

### **3.3.2. Right to a school place in Norway**

Primary and lower secondary pupils have the right to attend the school that is closest to where they live or the school designated for the catchment area where they live, cf. [the Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training \(the Education Act\)](#). When determining the school the main consideration will be distance to the school, but weight will also be given to other factors such as the safety of the route to and from school, siblings already attending a school, school capacity or special individual considerations. If the number of applicants to a school exceeds the space available, it is up to the school to decide which pupils to refer to the closest school with openings. The school's decision to refer pupils to another school is an individual decision and may be appealed.

In general, families may not apply for a school place until they are back in Norway. However, the Ministry recommends that families contact the school before they return home. If it would be helpful for the family, the Section for Human Resources can send a letter from the Ministry asking the school to take account of the child's and the family's need for predictability on their return to Norway.

### **3.3.3. Online educational programmes**

*Globalskolen* offers supplementary online courses in Norwegian, Social Science and CREE (Christianity, Religion and Ethics Education) to primary and lower secondary pupils living abroad. For more information about what the school offers, fees and enrolment dates, etc., see the [Globalskolen website](#).

*Norskskolen* offers supplementary online courses in Norwegian, Social Science and CREE to pupils in years 1 to 10. The programme is free. For more information about what the school offers and enrolment dates, etc., see the *Norskskolen* website (Norwegian only).

## **3.4. Information meetings, courses and language training**

### **3.4.1. Information meetings and courses to prepare for a posting abroad**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs arranges information meetings for employees and family members who are preparing for a posting abroad in order to provide information on topics such as health, national insurance, insurance, moving, employment opportunities for family members, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, etc. In recent years, the meetings have been held online.

The aim of these meetings is to raise awareness about the challenges employees and their families may encounter during the moving process and during the posting abroad, and to provide advice and guidance about the various kinds of support the Foreign Service and other public bodies can offer.

The Ministry offers an online course on potential psychological problems that can arise in connection with a posting abroad. This is an individual course both for employees who are about to be posted to a mission and for employees returning to the Ministry after completing a posting abroad. The course consists of six videos, as well as a podcast and a web page. The podcast and the web page have a special focus on employees who will be accompanied by children. The course has the following learning objectives:

- increasing awareness of different types of problems and reactions that may arise in connection with a posting abroad;
- identifying various coping strategies;
- identifying common pitfalls;
- identifying children's needs in connection with moving – in particular, children at missions abroad.

The course looks at challenges that the posted employee and his/her family may encounter, including how living in different countries can shape and change the individual's personality. It also focuses on children's perspectives and how children may react to different cultures and languages. The course is available on the Learning Management System, which can be accessed via the Ministry's intranet (UDintra).

### **3.4.2. Language**

The Ministry offers language courses for accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners. Further information can be found on the website of the Foreign Service Language School on UDintra, or by sending an email to: [sprakenheten@mfa.no](mailto:sprakenheten@mfa.no).

### **Norgesskolen**

Norgesskolen is a summer school that revolves around Norwegian language and culture. For more information, see <https://www.norskskolen.com/>. Ministry employees can apply for financial support from the Diplomatic Academy for their child to attend Norgesskolen. The support scheme is only open to the children of posted employees abroad. Priority will be given to children and young people who have been away from Norway for longer periods of time, and children who have not previously been granted support. The Diplomatic Academy can cover up to NOK 5 000 in fees for each child.

## **3.5. Vaccinations and medical check-ups**

### **3.5.1. Medical check-ups**

The Ministry provides a free medical check-up for employees and accompanying family members prior to each posting abroad.

Employees who will be serving at a mission where there are special stipulations for rest and recuperation (R&R) leave are required to have a more comprehensive medical check-up before and during the posting. This will include evaluation by a psychologist. The comprehensive medical check-up will also be available to accompanying family members.

Medical check-ups and vaccinations are currently carried out by Avonova Helse, which has expertise in travel medicine, tropical medicine and treatment of work-related disorders. A number of issues will be discussed during the medical check-up, including the climate in the country concerned, local diseases, drug and alcohol abuse and other dependency problems, issues that can affect children, and various health problems you and your family may experience during the posting. The purpose is to have the chance to reflect on potential problems with a view to ensuring the best possible stay abroad for you and your family.

In recent years, there has been particular focus on air pollution and how this affects the health of employees and accompanying family members in both the short and the long term. In response to a request from the Ministry, the Norwegian Institute of Public Health has recommended a number of steps that the Ministry, the individual missions and the employees themselves should take to minimise health risks. In addition, the Ministry has drawn up an action plan that contains advice for employees, actions to be taken by the missions, and guidelines on the length of service, as well as appropriate training courses and systematic health, safety and environment work. The action plan, recommendations of the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and other relevant documents are available on UDintra. Employees can download and share these documents.

The Ministry urges parents to give careful consideration to whether children under the age of 16 should accompany them on postings to areas with severe air pollution.

### **3.5.2. Vaccinations**

Vaccinations are carried out by Avonova Helse (see contact information below). The Ministry covers the cost of any necessary vaccines. If vaccinations are carried out by a different health care provider, the Ministry will cover these expenses if a receipt is provided and the expenses are entered into the travel expenses system. Further information can be found in the country report.

It should be noted that in Norway, vaccination of children is provided through the municipal health service and is carried out by your local family health clinic (helsestasjon). The posted employee must cover the cost of vaccinations carried out at the place of service, and compensation for these expenses is included in the overseas allowance (see the Special Agreement). Vaccination expenses

for children are only reimbursed for vaccines against diseases that may be contracted in the country concerned.

### **Avonova Helse Bryggeklinikken**

Munkedamsveien 45, 0250 Oslo

[bryggeklinikken@avonova.no](mailto:bryggeklinikken@avonova.no)

[23 11 58 50](tel:23115850)

[Avonova Clinic](#)

### **3.6. Right to residence in Norway for spouses/cohabitants/partners and children who are not Norwegian or EEA citizens**

Spouses/cohabitants/partners who are not Norwegian or EEA citizens should contact the [Norwegian Directorate of Immigration \(UDI\)](#) before leaving Norway to find out about their rights and obligations in connection with moving back to Norway, including whether they will need to apply for a new residence permit and, where applicable, how to keep a permanent residence permit in Norway. For more information, see the [Want to apply: Keep a permanent residence permit - UDI website](#). Please note that there are special rules for the acquisition of Norwegian citizenship for members of the households of posted employees, including exemption from some of the general provisions on required period of residence, completion of Norwegian language training, etc. See section 8-2 of the Norwegian Nationality Regulations for more information (Norwegian only).

### **3.7. National Population Register (Folkeregisteret)**

Foreign Service employees who are posted abroad are considered to be resident in the municipality where they were living before their departure from Norway. Please note that accompanying family members who are nationals of the country of service will automatically be registered in the National Population Register as having emigrated from Norway. Remember that you need to notify the National Population Register, which is under the Norwegian Tax Administration (Skatteetaten), of any changes in civil status (marriage, divorce, birth of children, etc.). Changes to your residential address in Norway during your posting abroad must also be reported to the Norwegian Tax Administration.

### **3.8. Redirecting private mail**

You should make arrangements well in advance of your departure from Norway to redirect your private mail to the mission or your private address in the country of service.

## **Private letters**

In order for you to receive private letters at the mission when you are posted abroad, the senders must write the name of the mission where you are serving clearly on the envelope.

Letters to accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners and children must be addressed c/o the name of the posted employee.

### **Address for letters:**

Name (and, if necessary, c/o name of posted employee)

Name of mission

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Postboks 8114 Dep

NO-0032 Oslo

**Remember to send out notification of your new address when you move from a mission abroad.**

## **Private parcels**

In general, the Ministry does not forward private parcels to missions abroad. Exceptions apply to missions in countries with particularly poor postal services. Parcels may not exceed the size of a medium Norgespakke.

Parcels are sent in a diplomatic bag, and there are restrictions on what they may contain. The Ministry will not send the following items:

- dangerous goods/batteries
- liquids
- foodstuffs/confectionery
- tobacco products
- medicines may only be sent by direct agreement with the courier service: [kurer@mfa.no](mailto:kurer@mfa.no)

All parcels will be opened to ensure compliance with these restrictions. Items that cannot be sent will be removed and destroyed. All employees are requested to inform their family members and friends of these restrictions.

### **Address for sending parcels:**

Name

Ministry of Foreign Affairs/name of mission

DSS varemottak

Akersgt. 59

NO-0180 Oslo

### **3.9. Leave for spouses/cohabitants/partners from their own jobs**

Spouses/cohabitants/partners may apply to their employers for leave of absence if they wish to accompany a Foreign Service employee on a posting abroad. The Unit for Personnel and Legal Matters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can assist by providing a letter of support as needed.

Government employees accompanying a spouse/cohabitant/partner who has a duty to accept a posting (i.e. is a rotational employee) to a new place of service may be granted up to 12 years' leave (see the Norwegian civil service handbook (Statens personalthåndbok – Norwegian only)).

Government employees who accompany their spouse/cohabitant/partner on a posting abroad in cases where the employee does not have a duty to accept a posting (i.e. is a non-rotational employee) may be granted unpaid leave of absence at the discretion of their employer.

Some municipalities, such as Oslo and Bærum, follow a practice that is similar to that of the central government administration.

Municipal and private-sector employers decide whether to grant leave in accordance with their internal provisions on leaves of absence, which are generally set out in the company's rules for personnel management.

### **3.10. Moving**

#### **3.10.1 Leave in connection with moving**

Posted employees are entitled to two days of paid leave before they leave Norway and two days after arrival at the place of service. These allow for time to carry out various tasks in connection with moving.

#### **3.10.2 The moving process**

As set out in chapter 15, section 5 of the Foreign Service Instructions of 13 December 2002, the Ministry covers the expenses for removals of personal belongings of employees posted abroad and their families according to the applicable specifications stipulated by the Ministry.

The Ministry has entered into framework agreements with the following removals companies:

- NFB International Relocations AS for missions in Africa, Asia and Oceania, as well as North, South and Central America.
- SIRVA (Team Relocations AS) for missions in Europe.

Contact the supplier with the framework agreement for the region where the mission is located. The agreement also applies to employees who are returning to Norway from a mission abroad.



The supplier will send a removal form to the posted employee to fill in. The employee is to return the completed removal form to the supplier. Receipt of the completed form from the posted employee constitutes the formal contract for the removal.

Local agents abroad are not to be used. Removal coordinators in Norway are to be the main contact in organising all aspects of the move.

The new framework agreement does not apply when a posted employee is moving to a third country (moving between missions).

### **3.10.3. Registration and identification form for removal goods**

As soon as employees have been informed that they are being posted to a mission abroad, they must fill in the [registration and identification form for removal goods \(Norwegian only\)](#) and send it to the Unit for General Services. The information on the form lays the foundation for the Ministry's calculation of maximum removal and storage volume allowances.

If an employee's family situation changes after starting the posting abroad, the Unit for General Services must be notified in order to adjust the removal volume allowance correspondingly in connection with a move back to Norway or to another mission abroad.

### **3.10.4. Removal volume allowances**

For postings abroad of minimum two years' duration	Volume m <sup>3</sup> , posted employee	Volume m <sup>3</sup> , accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner	Volume m <sup>3</sup> , each accompanying child
UNFURNISHED (to Europe and North America)	40.0	10.0	2.5
FURNISHED (to South and Central America, Africa, Asia and Australia)	13.0	3.5	1.0

For removals to and from Africa, the permitted volume for accompanying children is twice the normal allowance for children.

In cases where the posted employee is moving from a mission with unfurnished accommodation to a mission with furnished accommodation, the volume allowance for furnished accommodation is to be used, and the difference (up to the maximum volume allowance for unfurnished accommodation) may be sent to Norway for storage during the posting abroad.

If the posted employee is moving from a mission with furnished accommodation to a mission with unfurnished accommodation, the volume allowance for unfurnished accommodation is to be used between the missions, and the difference (up to the maximum volume allowance for furnished accommodation) will apply for removal of belongings from storage in Norway.

According to the Instructions for the Foreign Service, each posted employee is allowed only one removal shipment. However, the Ministry recognises that shipments may have to be split up for various reasons (e.g. the spouse/cohabitant/partner's job, children's educational needs), and therefore takes a flexible approach to this. Any splitting up of shipments must be cleared beforehand with the Unit for General Services.

The shipment must only contain the personal belongings of the posted employee and his or her accompanying family. It is not possible to include items for anyone else in the shipment. This applies regardless of whether or not the full volume allowance for the shipment has been filled.

### **3.10.5. Removals and packing**

The removals company is to undertake packing of all removal goods. Furniture that is disassembled as part of the packing process is to be reassembled by the removals company/agent. The removals company is not responsible for assembling new items, such as flat-packed furniture. Packing and transport are to be carried out from a single address. If goods are to be picked from other addresses in addition, this must be paid for privately by the posted employee. The same applies to delivery.

### **3.10.6. Required forms**

When bringing removal goods into Norway from abroad, you must complete [Importation of removal goods - declaration - Norwegian Customs \(toll.no\)](#). The completed form is to accompany the shipment.

The posted employee is responsible for determining which documents are required for importing removal goods into other countries. The relevant mission may be able to help in obtaining and providing information about the documents required by the authorities of the country of service. Check the country report for more information.

It is a good idea to remind the mission abroad about the need to carry out follow-up/start-up processes when your removal goods arrive. (Submitting documentation to the local authorities.)

You must be in place in your country of service and been granted your diplomatic status before your removal goods will be allowed into the country. This will follow the various countries' customs rules for diplomatic shipments.

### **3.10.7. What may and may not be included in the shipment?**

The rules for what goods may be shipped have become more strict, and you should ask the removals company for detailed information about the types of goods/items that are permitted.

We also ask you to consult the removals company regarding the inclusion of goods such as alcoholic beverages, as the import and export of these items between certain countries may pose some problems.

Motor vehicles, motorcycles and boats may not be included in the shipment even if there is room in the container. This applies when returning to Norway as well. Detailed information about exporting/importing motor vehicles and boats is available on the Norwegian Customs Service web page: [Moving to or out of Norway - Norwegian Customs \(toll.no\)](https://www.toll.no).

Removal goods for multiple employees will be shipped together to or from Norway when possible. In other words, your removal goods will not always be shipped in a dedicated transport to you. This means you may experience some delay.

Medications should not be packed in the removal goods shipment, but should be carried in your hand luggage. Remember to bring any necessary documentation.

### **3.10.8. Storage**

For posted employees who are moving into furnished (85 %) accommodation, and who wish to store goods during their posting abroad, the Ministry will reimburse the rental expenses for storage space according to the permitted volume allowance.

For posted employees moving into unfurnished accommodation, the Ministry will reimburse the cost of storage for the difference between the maximum volume allowance and the actual removal volume. The removals company is responsible for coordinating removals to and from the storage unit, and the arrangements for this are to be agreed directly between the posted employee and the company.

Goods in long-term storage are to remain stored in the same facility even if you change missions and need to use a different removals company.

The Ministry covers the cost of insuring goods stored in Norway during a posting abroad for six months from the date of departure and three months after the date of return. Insurance beyond this period must be covered by the posted employee. Many posted employees transfer their existing household contents insurance over to their goods in storage, or take out a new insurance policy to cover this.

Employees are encouraged to think critically about what they place in storage before a posting abroad. Dispose of or give away things that you do not think you will need later.

On your return to Norway, the Ministry will only cover storage costs for three months after the arrival of your removal goods.

The Ministry covers the cost of removal to and from the storage facility once only. The cost of transporting any additional loads to or from the storage facility must be covered by the employee.

### 3.10.9. Removals insurance

The Ministry has a collective policy with If Skadeforsikring for removals and storage insurance, the costs of which are covered by the Ministry. The current framework is set at NOK 1.3 million.

Employees who would like higher insurance cover should contact Kari Steinlein at If Skadeforsikring, tel. +47 934 03 801, or send an email to: [iftrans@if.no](mailto:iftrans@if.no). The additional premium will be invoiced directly by If Skadeforsikring, and the additional cost is to be covered by the employee.

**The insurance company should always be notified of individual items or groups of items that are valued at NOK 100 000 or more. Jewellery and medals are not included in the removals insurance.**

In the event of damage to removal goods, the employee should contact Kari Steinlein at If Skadeforsikring, tel. +47 934 03 801, or send an email to: [bedriftskade@if.no](mailto:bedriftskade@if.no).

Follow the procedure described on If Skadeforsikring's information sheet '*Enkle regler ved mottak av flyttegods,*' which can be downloaded [here \(Norwegian only\)](#).

The following are **not** defined as removal goods and are not covered by the insurance: foodstuffs, alcohol, weapons and motor vehicles.

The insurance policy enters into effect:

- when the removal goods leave the storage facility to be loaded directly onto the means of transport where the insured removals journey starts;
- continues during transport, including temporary storage in the normal course of transit, as well as during loading, reloading and unloading activities; and
- terminates when the removal goods are delivered to the recipient.

### 3.10.10. Expenses that are covered as part of approved travel expenses

- Adaptation and installation of electrical equipment and transformers will be covered on the basis of submitted receipts in connection with both the posting abroad and the return to Norway. The costs involved must be reasonable in relation to the cost of purchasing new equipment. The Ministry will cover voltage conversion of equipment to and from 110 volts and the cost of the transformer, but not the laying of cables etc.
- Baggage - the Ministry covers the cost of up to 30 kg of excess baggage for the posted employee and each family member, over and above the airline's free allowance.
- Tipping the removals workers abroad. Tips paid should be in keeping with the custom in the particular location. Tips to removals workers in Norway are not covered.

### 3.10.11. Expenses that must be covered by the posted employee

- Extra costs incurred because the employee does not have time to receive removal goods as planned with the removals company/agent are to be covered by the posted employee or the relevant mission.
- If the posted employee changes the original moving date agreed with the agent, causing a delay, he or she will have to cover any extra costs incurred.
- Packing and transport are to be carried out from a single address. If goods are to be picked from other addresses in addition, this must be paid for privately by the posted employee. The same applies to delivery.
- The cost of transporting any additional loads to or from the storage facility must be covered by the employee.
- Refunds of value-added tax on newly purchased goods for export. The agent carries out the exportation of goods, but it is the shop where the item was purchased that is responsible for refunding value-added tax to the posted employee's bank account.
- Import of alcoholic beverages to Norway.

### **3.10.12. Pets**

The Ministry does not refund expenses associated with the vaccination, transport, quarantine, etc. of pets.

Airlines have different guidelines in relation to the type and size of transport crates that may be used for transporting pets. Contact the airline in question well in advance of your departure to clarify practical issues concerning transport of pets.

Information about importing pets to Norway can be found on the website of the [Norwegian Food Safety Authority \(mattilsynet.no\)](https://mattilsynet.no).

You should contact the relevant mission or the embassy of the country in question for information on the rules for importing pets to the country.

### **3.10.13. Hotel accommodation in connection with a transfer abroad**

In cases where hotel accommodation is needed in connection with the transfer to or from the place of service, the cost of *up to* 17 days' hotel accommodation will be covered at the current government rates for the posted employee and accompanying family members, provided that these expenses are documented. This is the total number of days that may be divided between hotel accommodation in Norway and the place of service. A subsistence allowance will be awarded for the corresponding number of days.

If hotel accommodation is required for more than 17 days in connection with arrival at or departure from a place of service, for instance because accommodation has not been found in time, or removal goods have not arrived/been dispatched, the actual costs of necessary hotel accommodation for the family will be covered *for an unlimited period*. No subsistence allowance will be paid in such cases.

The period of time for using hotel accommodation is to be kept as short as possible, and limited to what is necessary for packing and dispatching removal goods. An application for a specified number of days of hotel accommodation must be submitted to and approved by the mission. Hotel rooms abroad must be reserved through the relevant mission.

Hotel accommodation in Norway *in connection with a transfer to a mission in Europe* is only covered for the period during which the household contents are being removed and the house is being cleaned. Hotel accommodation in Norway is not considered necessary when the removal goods shipment has arrived at the destination, or the household contents have been put into storage in Norway.

If the posted employee and accompanying family members choose to stay with friends or relatives rather than in a hotel in connection with the transfer, they will receive half the subsistence allowance (and no overnight allowance) in accordance with the above rules.

#### **3.10.14. Transfer to the mission**

The transfer to the mission is to be booked through the Ministry's travel agent. If the journey includes an unbroken flight that exceeds six hours, the posted employee may travel by the least expensive form of business class. If it is necessary to travel to and from the airport by taxi, the taxi fares will also be covered. If the time of departure is during the night, necessary accommodation at an airport hotel may be covered as well.

Please note that if the posted employee and accompanying family members do not travel together, taxi fares to and from the airport, hotel accommodation and meals in connection with the transfer will not be covered for the family members.

#### **3.11. Baggage**

The Ministry covers the cost of up to 30 kg of excess baggage for the posted employee and each family member. This is in addition to the airline's free allowance. These expenses are to be paid privately, and a claim entered on the travel expenses form.

It is recommended that you bring your most essential items with you so that you have them while you wait for your removal goods shipment.

Any baggage items that are refused by the airline at the airport are the individual's responsibility.

#### **3.12. Accommodation at the place of service**

It is the mission's responsibility to find appropriate accommodation for posted employees. In general, missions seek to make the best possible use of the accommodation already at their disposal, and the posted employee will not automatically be taking over his or her predecessor's accommodation. It should be noted that apart from the ambassador's residence, no account is

taken of seniority or status in this connection. The size and cost level of the accommodation are determined solely by the number of family members.

It is not normally possible to change your accommodation during your posting. Posted employees who are arriving alone but are planning for their families to follow later must ensure that the accommodation provided is suitable for housing the whole family from the outset.

The Ministry covers the rent and any running expenses that are not included in the rent, such as electricity, fuel, gas, and water use. These expenses are normally paid by the mission directly.

Home insurance (general liability insurance and insurance against fire, water damage, etc.) is covered by the mission. Posted employees must take out their own household contents insurance (against theft, fire, etc.). Your Norwegian insurance policy may not be valid outside Norway, and you should check this with your Norwegian insurance company or, if relevant, your trade union.

For more information about accommodation, you should contact the mission where you are being posted.

## **4. During the stay abroad**

### **Introduction**

**The following section provides useful information about eligibility for health services, national insurance, work opportunities and privileges**

#### **4.1. Medical advisory and transport services**

The Ministry currently has an agreement with SOS International that applies globally and may be used by:

- posted employees;
- accompanying family members, as defined in the Special Agreement;
- public sector employees and senior officials on official business abroad under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Norwegian locally employed staff who are members of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme.

SOS International has a 24-hour alarm centre that is to:

- provide reliable medical advice;
- assess whether it is possible to provide necessary medical treatment at the place of service;
- if necessary medical treatment cannot be provided at the place of service, assess the need to organise medical transport to the nearest suitable treatment centre.

The medical advisory service is a low-threshold service that provides you with simple and immediate access to advice and information about health, illness, and treatment, free of charge. The alarm centre answers all types of health-related questions. Alarm centre personnel are subject to the rules of confidentiality for health personnel. The alarm centre is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The medical transport service is an emergency service. If the doctor at the alarm centre decides that adequate treatment cannot be provided at the place of service, and it is not viewed as medically sound for the patient to travel to the treatment centre on his or her own, for example on a scheduled flight, the alarm centre will arrange medical transport. This transport must be approved by the Ministry in advance.

**The phone number for the alarm centre is +45 3848 9362**

## **4.2. Membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme and insurance benefits**

### **4.2.1. Membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme**

While membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme does not in itself confer the right to any benefits, you must be a member to be eligible to receive any relevant benefits.

All posted employees are automatically mandatory members of the National Insurance Scheme during their stay abroad. As a general rule, it is not necessary to apply for membership, but the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) recommends that all employees use the form [NAV 02-08.05](#) (Application for membership in the National Insurance Scheme during stay outside Norway - Applications - [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no).) This form is also used to apply for proof of membership for accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners. There may be a need to show proof of membership, for example to health institutions at the place of service.

Accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners and children under 18 years are as a rule mandatory members if they are living with and are classified as a *dependent* of the posted employee. NAV generally employs an *income threshold* of 1.5 times the basic amount in the [National Insurance Scheme \(Nav.no\) \(Norwegian only\)](#) as the basis for determining whether an individual is to be considered a *dependent*. Pension is not counted as income. The spouse must be citizen of an EEA country or Switzerland. Cohabitants/partners have the same status as spouses if the couple have, or have had, children together or were previously married to each other.

Please note that if accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners are working, or begin in a job in the country of service, this may affect the right to membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme. For example, the country of service may have entered into an insurance agreement with Norway under which individuals may be exempted from the principle of compulsory membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme because they are provided with coverage under the insurance scheme in the country of service instead.



We recommend that accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners check with NAV before departure to clarify what insurance scheme they are covered by in connection with the posting abroad: [Contact us - nav.no](#)

**NAV International phone number +47 21 07 37 00.**

In cases where a posted employee enters into a marriage/cohabitation during the posting abroad with a person who did not come with them from Norway and who is not a member of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme, the employee must submit an application for automatic enrolment of the individual as a dependent. This is because the spouse/cohabitant/partner does not have prior membership of the scheme.

#### **4.2.2. Accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners and children over 18 years who are not Norwegian or EEA citizens**

An accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner who is not a Norwegian or EEA citizen must apply for voluntary membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme if they wish to keep their membership during the stay abroad.

A condition for application for voluntary membership is that the spouse/cohabitant/partner has been a member of the National Insurance Scheme for at least three of the previous five calendar years prior to the date of departure from Norway. He/she must also have a close affiliation with Norway.

Children over 18 years must apply for voluntary membership separately. It is important to note that this also applies if the child turns 18 during the posting abroad.

Au pairs who accompany the family abroad may also apply for voluntary membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme. The posted employee is then the official employer and must pay tax to the National Insurance Scheme.

[NAV](#) processes applications for voluntary membership. Be sure to submit the application well before the departure date: [Stay or work outside Norway / certificates of coverage - Applications - www.nav.no](#)

#### **4.2.3. Benefits under the National Insurance Scheme – health services**

#### **4.2.4. Within the EEA**

If you are going to an EEA country, you must apply for the S1 certificate (previously entitlement form E106) from Helfo, which confirms your right to use the public health system in the country of service on a par with the citizens and residents of that country. You must submit the S1 certificate to the appropriate National Insurance authorities in the country of service to be entitled to use the health care services. [See here for additional information on how to apply for the S1 certificate via](#)

[the digital form in Altinn on the helsenorge.no website](#). If you are a posted Foreign Service employee, you do not need to attach an A1 certificate from NAV, which documents that you are covered by Norwegian National Insurance legislation. If you are a posted worker in another Nordic country, you will be entitled to health care services without an S1 certificate. Please note that some countries, for example Finland, require an A1 certificate to prove that you are covered by Norwegian National Insurance legislation. You can find a link to the application for the A1 certificate (form NAV 02-08.07) at [nav.no](#). Contact the health authorities' helpline: +47 23 32 70 00 if you have further questions. They are open Monday to Friday, from 8:00 to 15:30.

In Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia you may use the public health care system, and you may also choose to use private health care services and subsequently submit a claim to Helfo for reimbursement of these expenses. You can read more about the rules that apply to these countries on [www.helsenorge.no](#) (Norwegian only).

Please note that the Ministry offers a voluntary collective private health insurance plan for posted employees and accompanying family members in certain EEA countries. Enrollment and deregistration are carried out by the foreign stations.

#### 4.2.5. Outside the EU/EEA

- The employer (the mission) is required to pay treatment costs upfront for all health care services to which their employees are entitled to under the Norwegian National Insurance legislation. The mission is also responsible for issuing a payment guarantee in the event of hospital admission. Contact the SOS International Alarm Centre to be directed to the nearest approved treatment facility.
- The mission may, on request, pay treatment costs upfront for health care services to which accompanying family members are entitled to under the Norwegian National Insurance legislation.
- Note: Accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners and children under 18 **who are dependents of a posted employee** are entitled to have their health care expenses covered on a par with the posted employee, regardless of whether they are members of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme.
- [A claim for reimbursement or health care expenses must be submitted via Helfo's digital form within the six-month deadline: Posted workers outside the EU/EEA - helsenorge.no.](#)
- [If necessary, you can ask Helfo to issue a letter confirming that you are entitled to health coverage during your stay abroad.](#)

#### 4.2.6. USA

For many years, Norway had an agreement with the American insurance agent Optum, which assisted students, posted employees and pensioners in gaining access to healthcare and coverage of healthcare expenses in the USA. The agreement ended on 11 September 2022. Now, the same rules apply as for other countries outside the EU/EEA - see information above.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has entered into a private agreement on health insurance that applies in the USA. This is a voluntary health insurance scheme that is available to posted foreign officials and accompanying family. Enrollment and deregistration are carried out by the foreign stations.

### **4.3. Travel and accommodation expenses**

In general, the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme does not cover travel and accommodation expenses in connection with medical examination and treatment.

Exceptions may be made based on an assessment by a medical expert, for example a doctor at SOS International, that travel to a different location is necessary to receive appropriate medical help. **The assessment should specify where the closest treatment facility is located** (this will normally not be Norway). This written confirmation is necessary in order for Helfo to reimburse travel and accommodation expenses to a non-local treatment centre or different country.

Members of the National Insurance Scheme are free to decide to travel to Norway and have the cost of treatment covered in accordance with the National Insurance Act, but must cover the travel and accommodation expenses to and from Norway themselves.

### **4.4. Pension, child benefit, cash-for-care benefits, etc.**

#### **4.4.1. Benefits from NAV**

Questions about transferring or earning other social security benefits abroad must be directed to NAV.

#### **4.4.2. Pension for accompanying spouses/cohabitants**

A special pension scheme for spouses accompanying posted employees was established in 1999 as part of the family policy measures. The conditions for this are set out in [the Act of 15 January 1999 relating to the pension scheme for accompanying spouses in the Foreign Service](#) (Norwegian only). This pension (Ledsagerpensjonen) is financed by the Ministry.

##### **4.4.2.1. Conditions for entitlement to the pension**

To be entitled to the pension for accompanying spouses/cohabitants, the person applying must have accompanied a posted employee during his or her service at a Norwegian mission abroad for at least 10 years. Full pension rights are accrued after a total of 20 years as an accompanying spouse/cohabitant. For accrual periods of less than 20 years, the pension will be reduced proportionally.

##### **4.4.2.2. Calculating the pension**

The pension is set at 30 % of the basic amount in the National Insurance Scheme multiplied by five.

Individuals do not need to have Norwegian citizenship or be a member of the National Insurance Scheme to be entitled to the pension.

The pension is paid out in arrears from the month in which the accompanying spouse/cohabitant turns 67.

The Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund administers the pension scheme and calculates the individual's pension based on information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad.

The pension is disbursed by NAV together with other pension benefits paid out under the National Insurance Scheme. The pension for accompanying spouses/cohabitants is not coordinated with other pension benefits.

#### **4.4.2.3. How to apply for a pension for an accompanying spouse/cohabitant**

The individual must register to start receiving payments of the pension for an accompanying spouse/cohabitant. A few months before they turn 67 years old, spouses/cohabitants who are entitled to the pension are to fill out and submit **the application form** to e-mail:

[Personalseksjonen@mfa.no](mailto:Personalseksjonen@mfa.no).

#### **4.5. Opportunities for paid employment at the place of service**

Opportunities for paid employment for spouses/cohabitants/partners at the place of service will depend on the legislation and procedures of the country of service. This information is found in the mission's country report. Country reports are available to Ministry employees on the Ministry's intranet (UDintra). The individual missions may also be contacted directly for more information. There are very limited opportunities for accompanying family members to be given jobs as locally employed staff at the missions, and the head of mission's spouse/cohabitant/partner is not permitted to take paid employment.

## VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 sets out the applicable international rules for the legal status of spouses/cohabitants/partners in the country of service. While the Convention does not preclude accompanying family members from taking paid employment in the country of service, it does not establish any specific right for them to be granted a work permit. The opportunities for spouses/cohabitants/partners to take paid employment in the country of service will depend on the legislation and rules of the individual country of service. Most countries of service have internal procedures that must be followed if spouses/cohabitants/partners are to take paid employment in that country, and some countries require bilateral agreements on work. Norway has entered into bilateral agreements on work permits for accompanying family members with Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Türkiye, South Africa, the UK and the US.

## COUNTRIES IN THE EU/EEA

Under the EEA Agreement, all EEA nationals have the right to work within the EU/EEA. However, certain EU countries have their own rules for spouses/cohabitants/partners who wish to work, for example relating to how this is registered with the authorities. Norway has entered into bilateral agreements on work permits for spouses/cohabitants/partners with the following EU countries: Italy, Portugal and Romania. In these countries, spouses/cohabitants/partners can apply for a work permit under the provisions of the bilateral agreements. In EU countries where separate bilateral agreements on work have not been signed, consult the relevant mission to find out whether the country of service stipulates any additional requirements for spouses/cohabitants/partners wishing to work, beyond the right to work established under the EEA Agreement.

If you are planning to look for a job in an EU/EEA country or in Switzerland, NAV can provide assistance through the European employment services (EURES) cooperation network.

Find work in the EU/EEA or Switzerland (NAV.no)

## CHECKLIST – THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Find out about employment opportunities in the country of service: Read the country report for the specific mission. The country reports are available to Ministry employees and employees may print out a copy of the report to share with their spouses/cohabitants/partners. You can also contact the individual mission to find out more.
- Contact NAV well ahead of your departure to clarify whether paid employment will affect your membership of the National Insurance Scheme. Accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partner who are Norwegian or EEA citizens are as a rule mandatory members of the National Insurance Scheme if they are living with and are classified as a dependent of a posted employee who is a Norwegian citizen (see the National Insurance Act in Norwegian only). If you have your own income and are not classified as a dependent, and thus do not meet the conditions for the right to

mandatory membership, you should look into options regarding other social security or insurance schemes. Under the provisions of the National Insurance Act, it is possible to obtain voluntary membership of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme provided that certain conditions are met. You must apply for voluntary membership yourself. It is possible that you automatically become a mandatory member of the social security scheme in the country of service as a result of your employment. Norway has entered into bilateral social security agreements with some countries to determine which country's national insurance scheme the individual is to be a member of and pay contributions to.

- Employment in the country of service may be subject to taxation in that country. In some cases, you may be required to pay tax to both Norway and the country of service. Norway has entered into bilateral tax agreements with some countries to prevent double taxation. Skatteavtaler mellom Norge og andre stater - The Norwegian Tax Administration (skatteetaten.no) – Norwegian only.

#### **4.6. Privileges and immunities**

The family members who are part of the posted employee's household in the country of service enjoy the same privileges and immunities as the posted employee, as long as they are not nationals of the country of service. However, if a family member takes paid employment, these immunities and privileges will not apply when the family member is engaged in work-related activities. You must obtain the Ministry's consent to waive privileges and immunities in connection with your job if you are asked to do so.

Posted employees and accompanying family members have a duty to respect the legislation and rules of both Norway and the country of service. The privileges and immunities referred to here follow from the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. As the conventions set out, the purpose of these privileges and immunities is not to benefit individuals and their families, but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of 'diplomatic missions as representing States' and 'of consular posts on behalf of their respective States.' Therefore, the privileges and immunities may only be waived with the consent of the sending state. This means you must obtain the Ministry's consent to waive privileges and immunities when asked to do so in any context. If an accompanying family member behaves in a way that is incompatible with the posted employee's diplomatic status, or is in violation of the legislation of Norway or the country of service, this could put the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian authorities in a difficult position. In the worst case, an individual may be declared *persona non grata* as a diplomat or accompanying family member in the country of service, and prosecuted in Norway for their actions.

#### **4.7. Substance abuse and dependency**

A posting abroad can entail both positive and negative challenges for the whole family. Settling in a new country, getting to know a new culture, meeting new people, being a long way from home – all of this can be exciting and interesting, but it can also be a difficult and lonely time.

Accompanying spouses/cohabitants/partners will encounter alcohol at work-related functions and events during a posting abroad. It may be wise to plan how often/how much you intend to drink on different occasions and how many alcohol-free days you intend to have. This applies to both the posted employee and to the accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner. Some people may turn to other substances or resort to other forms of addictive behaviour (computer games, gambling, or other online activities) as a way of coping with what may be a very different life.

Early intervention reduces the risk of problems and/or dependency. Reporting a concern is a way of showing that you care. It also means that we, as the employer, can act quickly to help. The Ministry has been working to prevent and alleviate problems associated with substance abuse and dependency for many years. As an accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner, you may well be the first to see that your spouse/partner could have problems related to substance abuse and dependency. In such cases, it is important and right to seek help if you are worried. You can for example go to the head of mission, who will then raise the matter with the employee in question. You can also contact the HSE adviser at the Ministry for advice and guidance (email: [trine.e.stensrud@mfa.no](mailto:trine.e.stensrud@mfa.no), tel. +47 99 36 01 37).

As an accompanying spouse/cohabitant/partner with diplomatic status, it is important to remember that you too represent Norway and that a certain standard of behaviour is therefore expected of you. If you find yourself in a situation where you need help or guidance, it may be a good idea to contact your doctor in the first instance. If you are registered at an address in Norway while you are abroad, you can also contact your own doctor (GP) in Norway, who can refer you as appropriate.

#### 4.8. Security and emergency preparedness: Contact points during crisis, illness, etc.

- The mission is the first point of contact in the event of a crisis.
- In the event of theft, contact the local police.
- You can always reach the Foreign Service Response Centre (UD ops) on tel. +47 23 95 00 00 or by email to: [UDops@mfa.no](mailto:UDops@mfa.no). UD ops is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information (Norwegian only): [Utenriksdepartementets operative senter \(UDops\) - regjeringen.no](https://utenriksdepartementets.operativ.senter(UDops)-regjeringen.no).
- Travel information relating to countries that have diplomatic ties to Norway, and an overview of the services and assistance the missions can provide to Norwegian citizens travelling in these countries can be found [here](#) (Norwegian only).
- If you become ill during your stay abroad and require medical advice, you can contact the SOS International alarm centre which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. **The phone number for the alarm centre is: +45 3848 9362.** More information about the services provided by the SOS International alarm centre can be found [here](#) (Norwegian only).

## 5. Preparing to return to Norway

### 5.1. Did you study during your stay abroad?

ANSA, the Association for Norwegian Students Abroad, has a network that can help you contact potential Norwegian employers when you return home. ANSA also arranges events such as career days. More information about what ANSA offers can be found on their website [ANSA.no](https://ansa.no) (Norwegian only).

### 5.2. Children returning to Norway

#### 5.2.1 Folder: Du har fått en ny elev i klassen

Some children find it difficult to start or return to school in Norway after several years abroad. The Ministry has issued a pamphlet entitled 'You have a new pupil in the class' (*Du har fått en ny elev i klassen* – Norwegian only), which provides advice to schools on how they can help children settle in. This can be sent to the school your child will be attending.

#### 5.2.2. Online course: Psychological challenges of serving abroad

The Ministry offers an online course on potential psychological problems that can arise in connection with a posting abroad. This is an individual course for employees and their spouses/cohabitants/partners who are preparing for posting to a mission and for employees and their spouses/cohabitants/partners who are returning to the Ministry after completing a posting abroad. The course is available on the Ministry's intranet (UDintra).

#### 5.2.3. Right to a school place in Norway

Under section 8-1 of the Education Act, primary and lower secondary school pupils have the right to attend the school that is closest to where they live. When determining the closest school, the main consideration will be distance to the school, but weight will also be given to other factors such as the safety of the route to and from school, siblings already attending a school, school capacity or special individual considerations. If the number of applicants to a school exceeds the space available, it is up to the school to decide which pupils to refer to the closest school with openings. The school's decision to refer pupils to another school is an individual decision and may be appealed.

Please note that the Education Act makes no provision for reserving a place in a school pending a child's return to Norway after a posting abroad. Families may not apply for a school place until they are back in Norway. However, the Ministry recommends that families contact the school before they return home. If it would be helpful for the family, the Section for Human Resources can write to the school on the Ministry's behalf asking the school to take account of the child's and the family's need to ensure some predictability on their return to Norway.



#### 5.2.4. Useful links

- [Flexid | Mine muligheter med flere kulturer](#) (only Norwegian)
- [Forsiden - Voksne for Barn \(vfb.no\)](#) (only Norwegian)
- [The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs | Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet \(bufdir.no\)](#)
- [Kors På Halsen - Hjem \(rodekors.no\)](#) (only Norwegian)
- [ung.no](#) (only Norwegian)
- APP: [SMART](#). [SMART – a stress management tool](#)
- APP: [ZuperSmart – stress management](#) and [ZuperSmart – about the APP](#)

#### 5.2.4. Victoria day-care centre

The Victoria day-care centre is open to children of employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad. It is located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vika in central Oslo. The outdoor area of the day-care is in the Ministry's courtyard. More information, including opening hours and costs can be found on the City of Oslo website (Norwegian only): [Stiftelsen Victoria barnehage](#). The kindergarten also has a Facebook page.

When the ministry moves out of Victoria Terrasse in 2025, the day-care will also have to move out and the Ministry will no longer contribute to the financing of the day-care.

#### 5.3. Returning diplomatic passports

Diplomatic passports must be returned to the Section for Diplomatic Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as soon as possible after employees and accompanying family members return to Norway.