

# Sufficiency as Climate Action and for Sustainable Lifestyles in Nordic & Baltic Countries and Belarus

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## Sufficiency Policies in Norway

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# Overview

## 1. Housing & Buildings

Tiny houses, co-housing, energy efficiency

## 2. Mobility

Reducing transport demand, public transport, limiting cars & flights

## 3. Consumption

Repair, reuse, lending, reducing single-use products

## 4. Food

Lower-impact diets, food waste

## 5. Holidays

Sustainable tourism

## 6. Key Takeaways & Discussion

# 1. Housing & Buildings - Implemented

## Tiny houses & co-housing

- 2023 amendment to the Planning and Building Act defined tiny houses
- Growing interest: tiny house villages (e.g. Eplehagen)
- 2.4% of homes are co-housing (2021); OBOS building new shared-facility projects
- 5,222 kindergartens with open playgrounds

## Energy efficiency

- Enova: state-owned enterprise funding energy efficiency measures
- 99% smart meter rollout (as of 2023)
- Municipal climate budgets promoting savings in public buildings
- Oslo: zero-emission building sites by 2030

# Housing & Buildings - Challenges

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**The government's 10 TWh energy savings target (by 2030 vs 2015) is not on track**

- "Norgespris" fixed electricity price weakens incentives to save energy as households pay a flat rate instead of market prices
- Mortgage interest tax deductions may create incentives for larger dwellings
- Connecting tiny houses to water/sewage is costly. Unclear who bears the cost
- National statistics on co-housing units and their energy/space savings are scarce
- Nationwide data on tiny houses used as permanent residences is limited

## **Recommendations**

- Strengthening existing policy instruments
- Increasing public knowledge of energy efficiency
- Expanding the use of surplus heat for residential heating
- Removing Norgespris

## 2. Mobility - Implemented

### Reducing demand

- 44% of workforce worked remotely (2023)
- Urban growth agreements (byvekstvtaler) in largest cities: zero growth in car traffic
- Compact urban development policies. Densification in major cities

### Active & public transport

- National funding for cycling and walking
- City bike systems in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim
- Public transport subsidised by state and counties
- Children under 6 travel free. Youth/student/elder discounts

### Limiting car use

- 95.5% of new cars sold are electric (2025)
- Road tolls and urban access regulations
- Strict parking regulation and pricing
- Park-and-ride facilities near transit
- Emerging car-sharing schemes

# Mobility - Challenges

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- EV subsidies made car use more favourable overall, so harder to reduce total car use
- No permanent low or zero-emission zones in Norway
- No national cycling masterplan with binding, time-limited targets
- CO2 tax on domestic flights removed from January 2026 and aviation passenger tax reduced
- Tax-free shopping scheme for EU/EEA travel stimulates air travel
- Fragmented public transport: no national approach and county financial challenges
- Tax deductions on commuting do not differentiate between car and public transport
- In rural areas, land-use policies still increase car dependence

# 3. Consumption - Implemented

## Repair, reuse & lending

- Government mission on circular economy: reuse, repair, sharing
- BUA: free sports equipment lending at ~ 290 locations across 200+ municipalities
- Repair cafes run by municipalities and volunteers (NNV overview)
- Growing second-hand markets (loppemarked) and increasing number of shops
- Children's product rental (e.g. Parkdressen outdoor suits)

## Packaging & single-use

- Deposit-return system (Infinitum): 92.5% deposit rate, 97.7% total return rate
- Plastic carrier bag fee via Handelens miljøfond (voluntary industry scheme)
- Public procurement: min. 30% weight to climate/environmental criteria
- New law on lending to strengthen consumer position

# Consumption - Challenges

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- 25% VAT on repairs and on second-hand goods, so no reduced rates
- No mandatory repairability labelling or extended warranty laws comparable to EU proposals
- Only 3% turnover of collected second-hand clothes
- Prohibition on sale of disposed useable goods except at the dump
- No uniform plastic packaging tax (unlike Denmark, which introduced one in 2025)
- Norway did not meet the EU requirement of max 40 single-use plastic bags per capita by 2025
- Shift from plastic to other materials, rather than reducing unnecessary products

## Recommendations

- Extended producer responsibility

## 4. Food - Implemented

- New food waste law adopted (2025, not yet in effect)
- National dietary guidance emphasising vegetables and fish
- Public procurement increasingly includes plant-based targets
- Matsentralen food bank (private/volunteer initiative)

# Food - Challenges

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- Meat and dairy production are subsidised
- 35% food waste reduction target (2015-2025) was not met
- Limited binding regulation across the food chain

## 5. Holidays - Implemented

- Some cruise ship restrictions in popular fjords
- Private train travel initiatives (Arctic Train, Golden Train)

# Holidays - Challenges

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- Continued cruise tourism growth with high environmental impact
- Weak incentives for local holidays and low-impact travel
- Restrictions shift largest ships to other fjords rather than reducing traffic
- Growing winter tourism in the north (northern lights)
- Growing cabin culture (~ 500 000 cabins)

# 6. Key Takeaways

## **Strong implemented measures**

Deposit system, smart meters, urban growth agreements, BUA lending, EV adoption, public procurement requirements

## **Countervailing policies weaken sufficiency effects**

Fixed electricity pricing (Norgespris), EV subsidies boosting total car use, meat/dairy subsidies, tax-free air travel scheme, 25% VAT on repairs and second-hand

## **Recurring gaps**

Lack of binding national targets (cycling, food waste), fragmented public transport, no emission zones, no packaging tax, limited data on sufficiency outcomes



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# Thank you!

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