



BICENTENARY
NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION
1814-2014



OBJECTIVES DOCUMENT FOR
THE BICENTENARY OF THE NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION 2014

The Norwegian Constitution of 17 May 1814 has laid the very foundations of democratic development in Norway. It has proved itself to be more durable than other constitutions drawn up at the same time in Europe. As Europe's oldest and the world's second oldest prevailing constitution, it is now a unifying symbol of freedom, independence and democracy.

The Bicentenary of the Norwegian Constitution in 2014 will raise awareness of what the Constitution means today and what role it will play in our future democracy.

The Constitution is vital and contemporary. It is also decisive for Norway's identity and development as a liberal democracy. For the Constitution to continue to play this role, it must be conveyed afresh to each new generation. Those who grow up in Norway today must embrace it. They must be able to make sense of it on their own terms. As much as a celebration of the past, the Bicentenary should be an investment in the future.

Consequently, the Bicentenary of the Constitution has three overriding objectives:

- To enhance knowledge about the Constitution and its significance
- To stimulate increased participation and engagement in democratic processes
- To be a broad and inclusive nationwide celebration

In this objectives document, the Main Committee presents its vision, and the objectives and themes that should be emphasized during the Bicentenary.

VISION FOR

THE BICENTENARY OF THE CONSTITUTION IN 2014

To create an engaging Bicentenary celebration that raises understanding of the development of democracy over the past 200 years, the importance of the Constitution today, and the challenges facing democracy in Norway in the future.

Greater knowledge levels will reinforce the basis for participating in the democratic process.

OBJECTIVES FOR

THE BICENTENARY OF THE CONSTITUTION IN 2014

Ever since 1814, the Constitution has been a consolidating and unifying force for Norway and is one of our society's most important symbols. Norway has one of the world's longest continuous traditions of celebrating its national day. Support within Norway for the 17th May celebrations, with children at the centre of proceedings, is huge.

The Constitution has played a decisive role in the development of our democracy. Norway is one of only a handful of European nations that, with the exception of the Second World War, when the Constitution and our system of democracy were temporarily suspended, has not experienced a breakdown in its democratic development. Norway's liberal democracy of the 1920s and 30s was challenged by authoritarian and, in certain cases, totalitarian forces, both from the left and the right. However, our constitutional development never fell victim to an authoritarian backlash.

The Constitution has gradually been changed in line with the growth of democracy. For this reason, it also symbolizes regeneration and relevance, something that is of great importance in the relationship of trust between the population at large and the representatives of the people.

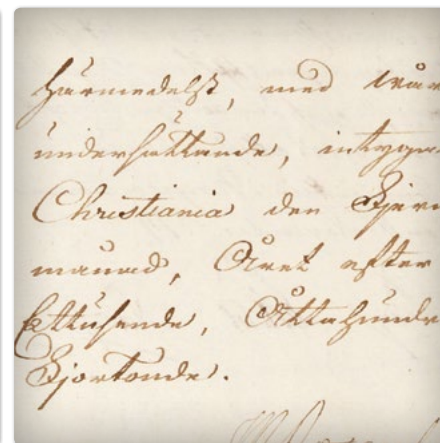
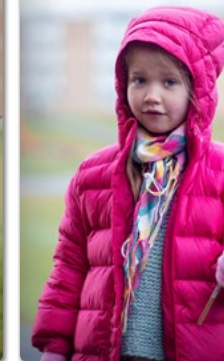
The provisions of the Constitution date from different eras. As a result, its evolution also reflects certain questionable features of Norwegian society over the past 200 years. One of the original provisions of the Constitution specifically excluded Jews, among others, from the realm. In broader terms, the assimilation policy towards other national minorities and the Sami people has caused controversy.

The marking of the Constitution's Bicentenary in 2014 will have the following primary objectives:

- To raise – by means of communication and research – general levels of knowledge about the events of 1814, the Constitution, and democratic development.
- To generate debate about the main challenges facing democracy in the future, and to stimulate reflection, engagement and participation in democratic processes.
- To arrange a broad and inclusive Bicentenary, culminating in a celebration throughout the length and breadth of the country on Norway's national day, 17th May. The Bicentenary must enrich knowledge and be something that everyone experiences in some form or other.



THE BICENTENARY MUST ENRICH KNOWLEDGE



TARGET GROUPS

The Bicentenary of the Constitution will be directed towards the whole of the Norwegian population. Every single municipality and county is encouraged to become involved, not only during the celebrations on 17th May 2014, but also through the various different activities throughout the year.

Children and young people are the most important target group for the Bicentenary. Projects for children and young people shall be one of the main elements of the Bicentenary. Particular emphasis will be given to initiatives that promote participation, involvement and enthusiasm in children and young people.

CENTRAL THEMES

FOR THE BICENTENARY OF THE CONSTITUTION IN 2014

The guiding theme for the Bicentenary of the Constitution will be the role of and challenges to democracy in our society and the importance of broad engagement and participation in the complete range of democratic institutions. This has been termed the “Democracy Project”; its terms of reference being anchored in Recommendation no. 162 (2008-2009) from the Presidium of the Storting.

The following themes will form the basis of the Bicentenary celebrations:

- The Bicentenary of the Constitution shall illuminate democratic development – with the emphasis on representation, participation, co-determination and human rights. The Bicentenary shall highlight how democracy was reinforced through political struggles in which popular movements, organizations and individuals played key roles.
- The Bicentenary of the Constitution shall prioritize research into the impact of the Constitution on the development of Norway as a democratic state and the challenges facing democracy in the future.
- The Bicentenary shall disseminate information, raise awareness and provide the groundwork for debate on the values and principles that a liberal democracy is based on.
- The Bicentenary shall be developed as an inclusion project and

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT TARGET GROUP

shall emphasize knowledge, value awareness, participation and communication. The Bicentenary shall have a clearly multicultural profile. It shall contribute to clarifying the challenges and opportunities that exist between cultural diversity and universal human rights in a liberal democracy.

- The Bicentenary of the Constitution should help to shed light on the encounter between Norwegian democracy and the occupying power’s totalitarianism during the war years 1940 – 1945, as well as such other grave threats to society as the terror attacks on 22nd July 2011.
- The Bicentenary shall embrace an international perspective and shall play its part in raising awareness of how Norway as a nation and the modern Nordic countries as a whole grew within a wider European context. Knowledge of our history can help generate understanding of our own age and how nation states are influenced by globalization.
- The Bicentenary shall shed light on the early establishment of systems of representation in Norway, the growth of local autonomy after 1837 (the Local Government Act), and the challenges facing local democracy today.
- The Bicentenary shall draw attention to the role, conditions and status of minorities in Norwegian society, particularly within a democratic and rights perspective.
- The Bicentenary shall generate an increased awareness and effort to combat discrimination, racism and extremism.
- Culture can contribute to communicating the cultural heritage that is attached to the Bicentenary. Culture and the arts played an important role in the development of Norwegian society and can be instrumental in promoting understanding, integration and experience.



THE BICENTENARY
OF THE
CONSTITUTION
SHALL ILLUMINATE
DEMOCRATIC
DEVELOPMENT



THE PROFILE OF

THE BICENTENARY OF THE CONSTITUTION IN 2014

The following provisions form the basis of the Bicentenary's main profile:

- The Bicentenary shall communicate a clear message based on the historical red-letter days and the most important arenas in 1814. The main story behind the 17th May tradition contains an established dramatic element that provides the natural parameters for the Bicentenary.
- The Bicentenary shall combine the national and the local in keeping with the annual 17th May celebrations. The official programme and activities linked to the Bicentenary in general will attach special importance to a regional and local foundation. Major public events that can be distinctly linked to the 17th May tradition shall be arranged.
- The approach to both the Bicentenary's official programme and initiatives linked to the Bicentenary shall be open and inclusive and leave room for diversity, reflection, criticism and debate.

THE TERMS OF

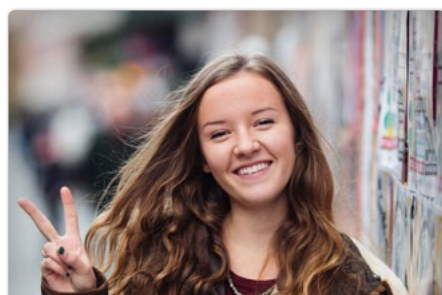
REFERENCE OF THE MAIN COMMITTEE

The Storting has appointed a Main Committee for the Bicentenary of the Constitution in 2014. The Chair of the Main Committee is the President of the Storting. The Main Committee shall have overall responsibility for the management and planning of the official marking and celebration of the Bicentenary of the Norwegian Constitution in 2014.

The Committee shall:

- draw up an objectives document outlining the main principles and significant elements of the Bicentenary.
- institute and coordinate official initiatives, projects and events at a national level, which can create an awareness and enthusiasm for the Bicentenary in the period leading up to 2014.
- seek to optimize contact and coordination with other initiatives, projects and events – both nationally and internationally – that are of relevance for the marking of the Bicentenary.

The objectives document will set the parameters for the official Bicentenary celebrations. Consequently it will be decisive for the further planning of the programme and activities that come under the Main Committee's auspices.



**DIVERSITY,
REFLECTION,
CRITICISM AND
DEBATE**

ORGANIZATION

The Main Committee is responsible for ensuring that the following common initiatives are taken care of for the Bicentenary of the Constitution:

- Preparation of the Bicentenary's official programme
- Web pages for the Bicentenary and information about events and initiatives
- The Bicentenary's identity, logo and design programme
- Coordination of and collaboration with initiatives and projects relevant to the Bicentenary
- Liaison and guidance for events organizers
- Press relations
- Documentation and evaluation

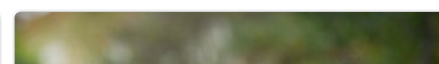
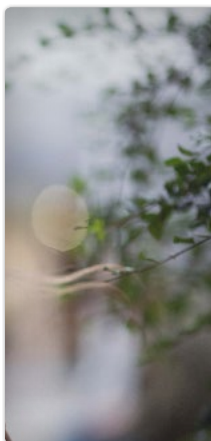
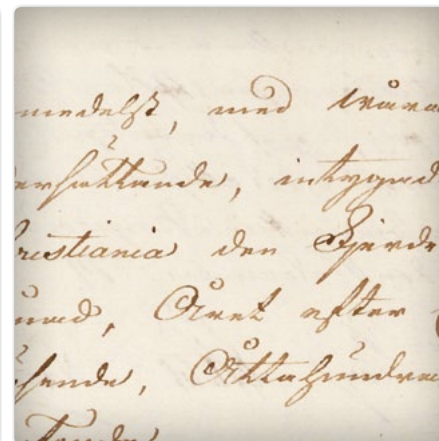
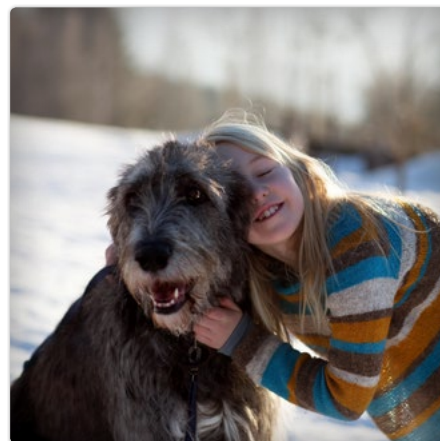
A secretariat responsible for assisting the Main Committee in its work has been set up.

FUNDING

The Storting has worked on the assumption that official funding or part-funding of Bicentenary events will be taken care of via the ordinary budget processes.

It is assumed that the Main Committee will have the necessary budget funds at its disposal to cover its own activities as well as other Bicentenary activities that come under its own auspices.

**COMMUNICATE A
CLEAR MESSAGE
BASED ON THE
HISTORICAL RED-
LETTER DAYS
AND THE MOST
IMPORTANT
ARENAS IN 1814.**





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