

Milestones

in Norwegian women's history

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1800-tallet



1839

“Feeble women over the age of 40, who are otherwise unable to make a living”

are allowed to become master craftspersons.

1842 All women who are not financially provided for, are given the right to conduct business:

“ Widows, wives living completely separate from their husbands, and unmarried spinsters, when regarded as being of legal age by concession of the king” .

1845 Unmarried women over the age of 25 are granted the same legal rights as male minors.

1854 The same rights of inheritance for sons and daughters. Before this date, sons inherited twice as much as their sisters.



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1856 Josephine Thrane, employed by the Workers Association newspaper, becomes the first female newspaper editor.

1858 The telephone and telegraph administration is opened to women, as first among the public services.

1860 Women are granted permission to work as teachers in primary schools located in rural areas. In 1869 women are also granted permission to teach in city schools.

1863 Unmarried women over the age of 25 are granted the same legal rights as adult men, but lose this status upon marriage.

1866 All women are granted the same rights as men to become craftspersons.

1869 Unmarried women attain majority at the same age as men, 21 years old.

1874 Charlotte Lund passes the middle-school examination in Stavanger. Two years later the Ministry of Education states that

“there appears to be no obstacle preventing young women from achieving the middle school examination”.

1875 “The Women’s School of Arts and Handicrafts” is established in Christiania.

1882 Women are granted the right to take university entrance exams. Cecilie Thoresen is the first woman to do so, becoming the first female university student.



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Gina Sverdrup Krog (1847–1916), is born in Flakstad, Lofoten. In 1884 she founds The Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights together with Hagbard E. Berner.

1884 Women are granted the right to study and take final examinations in all university departments. Upon passing examinations women may practice as medical doctors and dentists, but are still barred from working in other professions, such as law, philosophy or within other fields in which they are qualified.

The Norwegian Association for Women’s Rights is founded, with Gina Krog as chairperson.

1885 Ragna Nielsen establishes the first integrated school for girls and boys.

1888 A new Marriage Act is passed where married women retain their majority and have the right to separate property.

1889 Women are allowed as members of School Boards. For the first time ever, girls are allowed to participate in the National Day (17th of May) Parade in Oslo.

Women working in a match stick factory are among the first in Norway to go on strike for better pay, better conditions, and shorter working hours.

1895 Women may vote for the first time in the municipalities referendum regarding the sale of spirits.

1898 The National Women’s Suffrage Association is founded, with Fredrikke Marie Qvam as chairperson.





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Miss Anna Rogstad in the classroom, 4/11 1909. Rogstad came from Veisted in Nordre Land and was a teacher, women's rights activist and politician.

«Honourable representatives!

The seventeenth of March, 1911, will be remembered as an important day in our country's history, as it is the first time a woman appears in Parliament as an elected representative – an event which will, without a doubt, garner widespread attention».

With these words the president of the Parliament, Magnus Halvorsen, welcomed the first female representative to the Parliament. A large crowd gathered outside the Parliament building, unable to gain entry to witness the event due to limited space inside.



1900-tallet

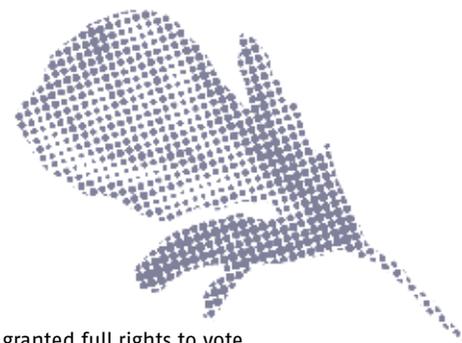
1900 Women are allowed as member of the "Poor Relief Board" in the municipalities.

1901 Women are granted a limited right to vote, and can be elected in the municipalities' elections.

1906 Mathilde Schjødt becomes the first woman to be appointed to the position of government official.

Mary Ann Elizabeth (Betzy), Stephansen, Norway's first female mathematician obtained a teaching position at the Norwegian Agricultural College.

1907 Women are granted a limited right, on the basis of income, to vote in the general elections for the norwegian Parliament (Storting).



In 1910 adult women are granted full rights to vote in municipal elections. In 1913 adult women obtain the right to vote in general elections.



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1910 Brurskanen Sami Women's Organization (Brurskanen samiske kvindeforening) is founded by Elsa Laula Renberg (1877–1931), the first organization for Sami women in Norway. The organization and Renberg went on to play an important role in organizing the first congress of Southern and Northern Samisin Trondheim between 6.–9. February, 1917, providing the basis for annual celebration of Sami National Day on 6. February.

Women obtain the right to vote in municipal elections.



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1920 The phrase stating that **"a woman must obey her husband"** is removed from the Marriage Service.

1911 Anna Rogstad is elected as an alternate representative to the Storting, becoming the first woman to be elected to the nation's legislature.

1912 All new laws gives women right of access to the most public offices, but not to Cabinet Ministerial appointments.

Kristine Bonnevie becomes the first woman to be appointed Professor at the University of Oslo.

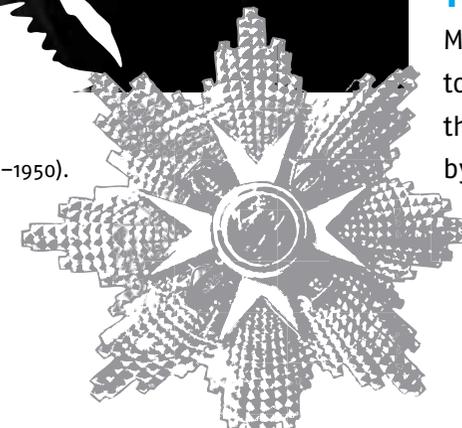
1913 All adult women obtain the right to vote in general elections.

1915 The Castberg Act is launched. The act guarantees the same legal rights for all children, regardless of whether their parents are married or not.



© Anders Beer Wilse, Norsk Folkemuseum

Karen Platou, politician (1879–1950).



1921 Karen Platou becomes the first woman elected into the Storting.

1922 Women are allowed to serve as Cabinet ministers.

1924 The first Health Centre for mothers is established in Oslo by Katti Anker Møller.

1925 Åsa Helgesen becomes the first woman to serve as mayor, in the town of Utsira. The Municipal Board consists of 11 women and 1 man.

1927 The Marriage Act, gives equal economic and legal rights to husband and wife.

1936 The Worker Protection Act grants pregnant women the right to 6 weeks leave from work prior to delivery and 6 weeks leave after birth. In addition, the Act stipulates that women are entitled to their original job upon returning from this leave.

1937 Legislation is passed which requires mandatory payment of alimony in cases of divorce.

1938 Women are allowed to hold Ministerial positions, and have equal rights to hold all public offices except positions in the clergy, which are subjected to approval by the Church Council.



Ellinor Lillegraven (right) from Nordstrand and Else Woxvold fra BSK compete in the first women's handball championships in 1938. Nordstrand won 1-0 with the point scored by Lillegraven.



From the final match in the 1939 national women's, handball championships; Signy Engen shoots the ball.

1938 The first Norwegian handball championship for women is organized, predating the establishment of a similar championship for men.

1939 The Norwegian Supreme Court decides that marriage does not constitute grounds for dismissal. (Married women's right to paid employment was criticised strongly during the interwar period of mass unemployment).



Kirsten Hansteen, Communist Party of Norway.

1945 Kirsten Hansteen becomes the first woman as cabinet member, serving as consultative official for the care of prisoners and refugees in the post-War coalition government. She was consultative member for care of prisoners and refugees, in the coalition government.

Claudia Olsen from the Conservative Party becomes the first female president of a parliamentary committee, the Committee for health-related affairs.

1948 Aaslaug Aasland is appointed Minister of Health and Social Affairs, the first woman to head a ministry.

1949 Edith Carlmar becomes the first woman in Norway to direct a film.

1950 A new Citizenship Act allows Women to retain their Norwegian citizenship despite marriage to foreigners. Children of a Norwegian mother and a foreign father are still given the father's nationality.

1952 Membership in the clergy becomes fully open to women.

1954 First national ski championship for women is organized.

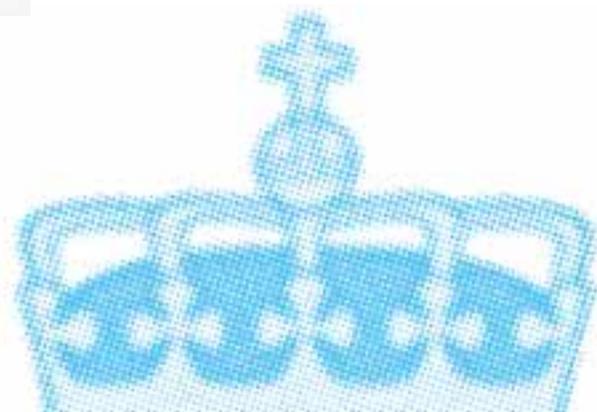
1956 The Act limiting women's access to public office is repealed.

The Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs is established.

1959 An Act is passed allowing separate income tax assessment for husbands and wives in certain conditions.

Norway ratifies the ILO Convention no. 100 on equal pay. Establishment of Equal Pay Council.

Lov om Folkeskolen is enacted on 10. april 1959 and is the first law governing all schools, in both urban and rural areas. Under the law, male and female pupils are to be taught the same curriculum and are required to complete nine years of mandatory schooling.





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The picture, taken in 1964, shows Røsvik school in Sørfold, Nordland. Under the law, male and female pupils are to be taught the same curriculum and are required to complete nine years of mandatory schooling.

1961 Trade Unions and the Norwegian Federation of Employers enter a framework agreement for the implementation of the principle of equal wages.

Ingrid Bjerås is appointed as the first woman vicar in Norway.

1964 A new Personal Name Act is enacted. Women are allowed to retain their maiden names upon marriage. Children continue to take their father's family name.



Aase Lionæs (1907–1999), a member of the Labour Party, served as Norway's delegate to the UN for 20 years and was one of the driving forces behind the UN convention guaranteeing women equal political rights.

1965 Aase Lionæs becomes the first woman to serve as President of one of the chambers of Parliament.

For the first time in Norwegian history two women serve in Cabinet positions at the same time: Elisabeth Schweigaard Selmer of the Conservative Party becomes the first female Minister of Justice, and Elsa Skjerven from the Christian Popular Party becomes Minister for Family Affairs and Consumption.

1966 The National Insurance Act ensures rights for unmarried mothers.

1968 Lilly Helena Bølviken becomes the first woman to preside as Supreme Court judge.

1971 Temporary Act concerning divorced/separated couples. (These provisions lasted for 10 years until they were integrated into the National Insurance Act.)

A new national curriculum for the nation's schools establishes that active efforts shall be made to promote equality between the sexes.

"A female coup" takes place during the municipal elections: women representatives make up the majority in the boards of three municipalities – Asker, Oslo, and Trondheim.

The first unofficial Norwegian women's football championship is being organised by Dagbladet (the Daily News) and Frigg at the Norwegian Physical Education College.

1972 The Equal Status Council is established, replacing the Equal Pay Council. The mandate is expanded to cover equality between men and women in all areas of society.

1973 "Sports action '73" is launched, demanding "Sports for all and equal opportunities for both sexes and all age categories".

Gender equality is adopted as part of the Labour Party's official political programme.

1974 The Act on Allodial Tenure is amended. Sons and daughters obtain equal inheritance right.

1972 In protest against the rules barring women from competing in the Holmenkollen Relay Race, Gerd von der Lippe registers and competes as a member of the university team "Pedisten" under the man's name, "Øyvind Foss". As punishment, Von der Lippe and Ingrid Ellingsen, another female teammate also competing under an assumed name, are both excluded from participating in qualifying rounds for membership the National Team. Not until three years later, in 1975, are women allowed to participate in the Holmenkollen Relay Race. Gerd von der Lippe is a member of the winning team, "Tyrving". Here we see her waving in the middle of the front row.

The winning team "Tyrving" in the Holmenkollen Relay Race.



Upon being elected leader of The Liberal Party of Norway in 1974, Eva Kolstad became Norway's first woman to serve as the head of a political party. Kolstad became the world's first Gender Equality Ombud in 1979. Here she can be seen during an investigation of hiring practices a newsstand franchise on 20. august 1979, together with regionsjef Wilhelm Bruvold.

1975 The Kindergarten Act is enacted. The municipalities are required to prepare a programme for the establishment and development of kindergartens.

Berit Ås becomes the first leader of The Socialist Left Party.

Organisers of the prestigious Holmenkollen Relay Race open the event to women competitors.

1976 The assembly of the Norwegian Football Federation formally accepts the establishment of organised football for women.

1977 The Working Environment Act extends rights to maternity leave while an amendment to.

The National Insurance Act is amended to give 18 weeks paid leave (previously 12 weeks).

A Family and Equal Status Department is established at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Government Administration.

The Research Council of Norway establishes the Secretariat for Research on Women.

Women are allowed to attend officers' training school.

1978 The Abortion Act is enacted, guaranteeing women the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

The Gender Equality Act is passed on 9. June 1978, with provisions for the creation of a Gender Equality Ombud and Appeals Board.

The first National women's football championship takes place.

1979 The Gender Equality Act is enacted. The Gender Equality Ombud is established as the first public agency of its kind in the world. Eva Kolstad serves as the first Gender Equality Ombud. The Gender Equality Appeals Board is established. New provisions are enacted in the Marketing Act, forbidding gender discrimination in advertising.

The Citizenship Act is amended. Children with Norwegian mother and a foreign father are entitled to Norwegian citizenship.

1980 Amendment to the Personal Names Act enters into force. If the National Register is not otherwise informed within six months of birth, the child automatically takes the mother's name.

1981 A new record for participation of women in government is set, with a woman serving as Prime Minister and three women serving as cabinet members. Gro Harlem Brundtland is the first woman to be elected head of the Labour Party.

A new provision (§21) is added to the Equal Status Act requiring representation of both sexes on all public committees, boards, etc.

1982 ILO-Recommendation no.165 and Convention no.156: Equal opportunities for women and equal treatment of women in working life: "Employees with family obligations", is ratified by the Storting.



In 1981 Gro Harlem Brundtland becomes the first woman in Norway to serve as Prime Minister. Brundtland formed her second cabinet in 1986 and her third in 1990.

Equal status agreements are included in the Main Agreement (Trade Union Federation/ Employer's Federation), and in the agreements between the State on the one hand and the main confederation of trade unions and the Norwegian Unions of Teachers on the other.

The Parents and Children Act is enacted, establishing equal responsibilities for both parents, and strengthening children's rights to self-determination and participation in decisions regarding their lives.

1983 The Storting approves voluntary military service for women to be served together with male recruits for the same number of months.



In 1983 women are granted the right to serve in the military. The year after, Parliament passes legislation stipulating full gender equality among Defense Department employees.

Adoption at the Labour Party national congress of the 40% women's quota rule regarding all Labour Party committees and councils. The rule is to apply also to government formation.

Norwegian runner Grete Waitz wins the women's marathon during The World Track and Field Championships in Helsinki, Finland. This is the first time the women's marathon is organized as a World Championship event.

1984 The Storting declares gender equality a guiding principle for the Armed Forces, valid at all levels.

1985 The Seamen's Act is amended, affirming equal minimum age of service for male and female recruits.

1986 The Storting adopts a new Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality.

The Government is appointed, women making out 44 per cent of the Minister Posts. This stakes out a new trend for female representation in Governments to come.

1987 From now on and until the maternity leave is increased annually, from 18 weeks to 42 weeks.

All ministries prepare their own Action Plan to Promote Gender Equality.

1988 The Equal Status Act § 21 is strengthened, requiring at least 40 per cent representation of each sex in all public committees.

1990 The Norwegian Constitution is amended, entitling women to become heirs to the Norwegian Throne on the same terms as men (in force for those born after 1990).

Mette Grøtteland becomes Norway's first military pilot.



1991 New Marriage Act is enacted. One spouse can demand separation without consent from the other spouse and without referring to the reason for the separation.

Kaci Kullman Five becomes the first female leader of the Conservative Party.

Anne Enger Lahnstein becomes the first female leader of the Centre Party.

1992 Changes in National insurance gives up to three pension points a year for unpaid care of children under seven years.

Lucy Smith becomes the first woman to serve as rector, the most senior official in a university, at the University of Oslo.

1993 Kirsti Kolle Grøndahl is the first woman to serve as President of the Parliament.

Rosemarie Køhn is the first woman in Norway to be appointed bishop.

51 percent of graduate students with higher degrees from university are women.

“Fathers quota” – four weeks of parental leave – is exclusively earmarked the father.

A new “Time account scheme” enables parents to combine portions of their paid parental leave with the part-time resumption of work.

A new provision is added to the Municipal Act outlining procedures to ensure at least 40 percent representation of each sex in municipal committees, boards etc.

1994 Sexual- and other forms of harassment are forbidden under the Working Environment Act.



Lucy Smith becomes the first female Professor of Law in 1987. In 1992 Smith becomes the first woman to serve as Rector of the University of Oslo, the highest leadership position at the University. Here Smith receives the Rector's title from her predecessor, Inge Lønning.



Rosemarie Køhn becomes the first Norwegian woman to serve as bishop in 1983.

Flere kvinner (51%) enn menn avlegger embetseksamen ved universitetene.



1994 Liv Arnesen becomes the first woman in the world who went alone on ski to the South Pole.

“Most goals can be reached, provided one's motives are authentic and strong enough.”
Liv Arnesen, South Pole, Christmas Eve 1994.

50 days. 1200 kilometers. Liv Arnesen makes international headlines as the first woman in the world to walk on skis to the South Pole, alone and without support or supplies. Six years later, in 2001–02, together with Ann Bancroft, she is also the first woman to cross the Antarctic on skis. 94 days. 2747 kilometers.



2000-tallet

1995 The right to take unpaid parental leave from work and return to one's position is extended from one to three years.

Solveig Krey becomes the first woman in the world to command a submarine.



Solveig Krey is Norway and the world's first female submarine commander.

Valgerd Svarstad Haugeland becomes the first female leader of The Norwegian Christian Democratic Party.

1996 The Government imposes measures to hinder domestic violence, for instance by introducing alarm protection for women exposed to violence.

Nita Kapoor becomes political advisor at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, and is the first woman with a non-western background to enter political top management.



Nita Kapoor is the first woman with a non-western background to enter political top management.

1997 The Centre for Gender Equality is established, replacing the Equal Status Council.

1999 Berit Ovesen is the first woman Colonel in the Armed Forces.

Eldbjørg Løwer, of the The Liberal Party of Norway, becomes the first woman Minister of Defense.

Rubina Rana, Labour Party member born in Pakistan, is the first non-Western immigrant and muslim to head the capital's National Day committee and lead the country's largest National Day parade before the royal family.



Rubina Rana, Labour Party member, heads the capital's national Day committee.

2001 Afshan Rafiq from the Conservative Party of Norway is the first woman with a non-western background to be elected representative to the Parliament.

Gerd-Liv Valla becomes the first female head of the LO, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO).

2002 An updated and revised version of the Gender Equality Act is accepted by the Parliament. The Act now also includes protection against sexual harassment, as well as requiring public organizations and private companies to develop policy plans regarding gender equality.

The Government approves of ethical guidelines for State employees against buying and accepting paid sexual services.

The Storting ratifies an extended restriction order as a measures towards the prevention and elimination of violence against women.

Elisabeth Natvig becomes the first woman to serve as Commodore in the Royal Norwegian Navy.



Afshan Rafiq from the Conservative Party of Norway.

2003 A new paragraph in the Gender Equality Act enters into force, requiring public and private employers to account for the current state of gender equality in their enterprise in their annual report.



Kristin Halvorsen er Norges første kvinnelige finansminister.



Aili Keskitalo is the first woman to serve as president of the Norwegian Sami Parliament.

2005 Kristin Halvorsen becomes the first female minister of Finance.

Aili Keskitalo is the first woman to serve as president of the Norwegian Sami Parliament (Sametinget) since its establishment in 1989.

2006 The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud is established, replacing the previous Gender Equality Ombud, Gender Equality Centre and Centre for combating Ethnic Discrimination. At the same time the Equality and Anti-discrimination Tribunal/ Board of Appeals is established.

The Public Limited Company Act is amended, requiring at least 40% of each sex to be represented on the Board of Directors of publicly traded corporations. Firms established or registered before 1 January 2006 must comply with this rule within two years.

Women are called in for military examination/ review in the same manner as men, but on a voluntary basis.

Lieutenant Colonel Ingrid Gjerde becomes head of HM The Royal Guard (HMKG), the first woman to command The Royal Guard in the unit's 150 year existence.

Siv Jensen is appointed head of the Progress Party.

2007 For the first time ever there is a majority (53%) of women in a Norwegian governmental administration after Prime Minister Stoltenberg reorganizes his cabinet.

Manuela Ramin-Osmundsen, born on the island of Martinique and raised in France, makes history when she is appointed Minister for Childhood and Equality, becoming the first Black, non-native Norwegian speaker to serve as member of the cabinet.