

Historic places of worship: basic information by country

This up-to-date background information will be used to provide comparative data and a policy overview that will be shared with other delegates at the forum in November and before the event on the website.

We aim to have only one form per country, so ask that delegates from the same country share information and return it to hockley@tcct.org.uk when all parties are all satisfied with the overview. Please avoid abbreviations and explain any country specific terms. Thank you.

Country	Norway
Names and email address/web site for people who have completed form	Oddbjørn Sørmoen Oddbjorn.sormoen@ka.no
The current situation	
Brief country context to explain current situation	<p>Demography is important to understand the current situation of Norway. The population is 4.9 million and the density is 12.5 inhabitants per square kilometre. (The density in England is 394.54).</p> <p>The Lutheran church is still the state Church of Norway (CofN), as it has been since the Reformation in 1537. In 2010, 79% of the population belongs to this church.</p> <p>The Roman Catholic is the 2nd largest denomination with 75.000 registered members. The number of Catholics is higher, however, due to unregistered East European immigrants and guest workers. There is a need for more RC church buildings. Smaller Christian denominations are Pentecostals, Evangelical Lutheran free Church, Methodists, Baptists, Orthodox, Adventists, Assyrians and Chaldeans and others.</p> <p>Islam represents 1.5% of the population, mainly of Somali, Arab, Albanians and Turkish origin as well as Norwegians of Pakistani decent.</p> <p>Other religions comprise less than 1%, including 803 Jews.</p> <p>There is currently a rapidly increasing secularisation in Norway, which in its present form also undermines the awareness of the values of faiths and the respect for places of worship.</p>
Places of worship in use	
Number of places of worship by religion/denomination and religious attendance.	<p>Church of Norway churches: 1620</p> <p>Roman Catholic churches: 36</p> <p>Islam: 126</p> <p>Synagogues: 2</p>
Who is responsible for the management of buildings?	<p>CofN: The owners, "the parish", are responsible for the management, which means the "joint parish council", which employs a fully employed "Church Warden". The joint parish council consists of one member from each Parish Church Council and a member of the Municipality. The Church Warden and his staff are responsible for the maintenance and management of all the churches in the municipality, as well as the cemeteries and churchyards.</p> <p>RC: The parish own their church and is responsible for the management.</p>
Who finances the maintenance? (State funding, Church tax...)	<p>CofN: The local authorities, e.i. the municipality, through the regular municipal budgets. The state of Norway has the recent years run a programme for maintenance of CofN churches where the loans taken up by local authorities are interest free.</p> <p>The other denominations: receive a state support according to the number of members, app. the same percentage received by CofN. (This is a support and not a tax refund.)</p>
What support organisations exist (to help a church or other organisation when there is a problem?)	<p>The Directorate for Cultural Heritage and KA Association for Employers in the Church of Norway and Church-related NGOs give advices as well as run various programs to increase the competence, do research about many topics like heating systems, security matters, maintenance, etc. Many of the</p>

	projects are done together or coordinated.
Places of worship not used for worship	
Number of places of worship that have closed for worship in recent years	Negligible number. However, there is an ongoing discussion about the sizes of the parishes, and of diverse use of church buildings in the cities. The result of these discussions will inevitably end up in more churches taken out of regular use in the future. Some of the historic churches at the verge of redundancy are in very remote areas, and it is not easy to find alternative use. The RC is in need of churches and is interested in buying redundant buildings.
What organisations are responsible for the management of these places of worship	No organisations as such. The owner will still be responsible. A few but historically important churches are owned and taken care of by the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments.
Who finances the above organisations?	The members and some state support.
General information	
Number of buildings of architectural or historical importance.	CofN: 60% of the churches are regarded as of architectural or historical value, i.e. 952. Of these, 13% are listed according to the Cultural Heritage Act. Of the other denominations many buildings obviously have importance but not officially been recognised by the heritage authorities.
Rural/urban issues	According to the Church Act there should be at least one church in every parish. This means that if parishes are merged the number of abandoned churches might raise. The merger of municipalities as well as parishes is a hot topic in the discussions at the moment, not the least because there is on the way a change in the relation between the Church of Norway and the state.
Tax situation	There is no tax exemption for work on churches.
Have any surveys been compiled recently? (Please attach weblink or email document).	“Vel bevart? – en tilstandsrapport for norske kirker 2009/2010” (Well preserved? – a survey report for the Norwegian churches) published 5 November 2010, covers 1600 of the Norwegian CofN churches: maintenance, interiors, exterior, organs, fire safety, security, accessibility etc.
Which subjects are of special concern?	Future ownership, management and financing. How the future relationship between state and church will affect the number of churches in use, financial circumstances, state support/compensation for church heritage values etc.
Which are the areas that could be helped by working together at a European level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about values, conservation principles, differentiating between what is important to take care of and not. • See the uniqueness and the similarities between our sacred heritages. • How to handle change/pressure from the modern “needs” in the wider sense and in the particularities as change of the buildings. • Professional management of church heritage. • How to promote this rich heritage to the modern society, and create understanding, joy, tolerance and respect for POW of all kinds.
Predicted future national situation/direction it is heading	There will be a split between church and state in the near future, and an increase pressure to merge parishes, which will lead to taking certain churches out of use.
Any other comments	A European network will give confidence and inspiration; promote this rich heritage in a specialised but still more simplified and ignorant world. The religious heritage is the basis of any nation’s culture, secular or sacred. To move on into the future with confidence, we need to carry with us a reflection on the past.

