The Kingdom of Norway (or short: Norway) is a state in northern Europe bordered by Sweden, Finland, and Russia as well as the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. It is considered to be part of Scandinavia and the Nordic states. On May 17, 1814, it adopted its current constitution after resisting the cession to Sweden. Therefore, May 17 now is Norway’s national holiday, Constitution Day. After Norway initially accepted a union under a Swedish king, a referendum in 1905 granted it independence. Norway operates under a parliamentary constitutional monarchy and the current Norwegian government has been led by the Center-Right Coalition under Prime Minister Erna Solberg since September 2013. Although it is part of the border-free Schengen Area, Norway is not a member of the European Union.

RELIGION

Norway is a majority Christian country. 82.1% belong to the Church of Norway, an Evangelical Lutheran church, and another 3.9% identify with another Christian religion. Furthermore, there are 2.3% Muslims, 1.8% Roman Catholics, and 7.5% are unspecified. The Norwegian constitution provides for freedom of religion, and church and state are separate, although the government provides certain benefits solely to the Church of Norway.

ETHNICITY and DEMOGRAPHICS

As of 2016, Norway has a positive population growth rate of 1.07%, with births outnumbering deaths and more people immigrating than emigrating. Norway’s population thus will continue to grow in the years to come, both through its birth rate and an increase in immigration. Based on data from a 2007 census, 94.4% of the people living in Norway are Norwegian, including 60,000 Sami, an indigenous people living in the far northern part of the country. Moreover, 3.6% of the population are other Europeans, while the remaining 2% are classified as other.

TOURISM

The touristic highlight that leads most people to visit Norway is its stunning nature. Many fjords are listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites and are easily accessible to explore. Likewise, the mountains as well as urban cities such as Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, or Stavanger present great vacation spots. Due to its geographical location, the northern parts of Norway are also great areas to see the northern lights in the winter and the midnight sun in the summer months.
CONTEMPORARY NORWAY & RELATIONS TO EUROPE

Norway’s economy consists of a vibrant private sector as well as a large state sector, making it a stable economy. Although it is not a member of the European Union, due to rejected referendums in 1972 and 1994, it nevertheless is part of the European Economic Area and thus contributes sizably to the EU budget. However, it is not part of the eurozone, meaning that it kept its own currency, the Krone, instead of adapting the Euro. Moreover, Norway is a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), despite staying neutral during both World War I and World War II.

The country is richly endowed with natural resources, especially oil and gas. Furthermore, resources such as hydropower, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, titanium, fish, timber, and minerals exist. Just how important these resources are can be seen through the extensive regulations the Norwegian government puts on its petroleum resources. This sector makes up for 9% of the jobs in Norway, 15% of the GDP, and 39% of all exported goods, making Norway one of the world’s leading petroleum exporters.

In anticipation of eventual declines in oil and gas production, Norway saves state revenue from petroleum sector activities in the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, valued at over $800 billion as of early 2016. The government allows itself to use up to 4% of the fund’s value, its annual expected real rate of return, to help balance the federal budget each year. After solid GDP growth in 2004-07, the economy slowed in 2008, and contracted in 2009, before returning to modest, positive growth from 2010 to 2015. Lower oil prices in 2015 caused growth to slow, increased unemployment, and weakened the Norwegian currency.

Some of the most pressing domestic issues Norway faces include immigration and integration of ethnic minorities (especially in the aftermath of the Syrian refugee crisis), maintaining the country’s extensive social safety net, and preserving economic competitiveness.

Norwegian settlement in the Americas started in 1825 and quickly became popular because of the success story of the first Norwegian sloop to cross the Atlantic, the Restaurationen.

By the end of the 1860s more than 40,000 Norwegians had arrived in the United States, and in the 1880s as many as 176,000 Norwegians emigrated to the US. Today, the majority of Norwegian-Americans live in Minnesota and Wisconsin, with an estimated total of 4,640,000 Norwegian-Americans living in the United States.

The Norwegian flag is red with a blue cross outlined in white. The colors recall Norway’s past political unions with Denmark and Sweden.

USEFUL LINKS

- https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/g_eos/no.html
- https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3421.htm

FAMOUS NORwegians

A few famous Norwegians include: Edvard Munch, Magnus Carlsen, Trygve Lie, Ole Einar Bjornadal, and Hendrik Ibsen.

NORWEGIAN WORDS

Hi.............................................Hei
Bye...........................................Ha det!
Good morning...........................God morgen!
Yes..............................................Ja
No.................................................Nei
Please........................................Veir så snill!
Thank you.................................Tusen Takk!
I do not understand...................Jeg forstar ikke
Do you understand?.....................Forstar du?
What is your name?......................Hva heter du?
My name is.................................Jeg heter
Where are you from?..............Hvor kommer du fra?
Do you speak English?..........Snakker du engelsk?

NORWEGIAN HERITAGE IN THE USA

Norwegian settlement in the Americas started in 1825 and quickly became popular because of the success story of the first Norwegian sloop to cross the Atlantic, the Restaurationen. By the end of the 1860s more than 40,000 Norwegians had arrived in the United States, and in the 1880s as many as 176,000 Norwegians emigrated to the US. Today, the majority of Norwegian-Americans live in Minnesota and Wisconsin, with an estimated total of 4,640,000 Norwegian-Americans living in the United States.