

Core  
values of  
Norway's  
defence  
sector



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**“Attitude is  
a little thing  
that makes a  
big difference”**

Winston Churchill

# Introduction

The defence sector defends Norwegian territory, the Norwegian people and Norway's interests. The defence sector promotes certain general values. This values platform for the sector is aimed to highlight these values.

These are values for the entire defence sector. The sector encompasses the Ministry of Defence and four administratively subordinate agencies: the Norwegian Armed Forces, the Norwegian Defence Estates Agency, the Norwegian National Security Authority and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. All of these must adhere to the values platform. Core values have already been laid down in each of the four agencies. The defence sector's values platform, with its set of core values, forms a superstructure. It is a standard which we strive to attain, intended to bring together, commit and raise awareness in the entire sector.

As a value-based organisation we are measured not only by how we carry out our mission, but also by our values and ethics. If our organisation is not sufficiently aware of values and ethics, we lose both motivation and credibility. If we are highly aware of our values and we operationalise them in an ethical manner, the values act to bring together and inspire us, and our reputation is strengthened. Therefore, values and ethical conduct are intrinsic to our daily operations and goals for the sector.

Our values platform is built around the assigned role of the defence sector in society, and is linked to values of Norwegian society. This contextualises and grounds our own core values.

# The defence sector's role and activities

The defence sector exists in order to defend Norway's freedom. The Norwegian Armed Forces are the state's primary power instrument for exercising national sovereignty and protecting against outside threats. Military power is one of several policy instruments that a sovereign state may utilise to safeguard its interests and values, and ensure national independence and autonomy.

The Norwegian Armed Forces' main task is to deter war. This deterrence is our primary protection of our sovereignty and to prevent war and conflict in Norway. This involves a series of tasks. First and foremost, the Norwegian Armed Forces, with our allies' support, defends Norway's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, the Norwegian Armed Forces contribute to enforcing Norway's sovereign rights, as well as preventing and managing incidents and security crises in Norway and its neighbouring regions in peacetime. The Norwegian Armed Forces also contribute to societal security, which has become increasingly important in accordance with the changed threat scenarios. For example, the Norwegian Armed Forces have the primary responsibility for handling terrorist attacks deemed to constitute an armed attack against Norway, and which trigger the right to self-defence under international law. The Norwegian Armed Forces also contribute to collective security under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty, and to multinational crisis management. Contributions to international peace and security within the limits laid down by international law and the Charter of the United Nations also figure prominently.

The defence sector consists of agencies with great variety in their organisation, mission and tasks. By far the largest agency in the defence sector, the Norwegian Armed Forces play a principal role. The other agencies have independent areas of responsibility, and also support the Armed Forces. The Ministry is at the apex of the organisational hierarchy,

representing the political and democratic governance of the Norwegian Armed Forces, through the execution of the government's defence and security policies. Such democratic governance of military power is a precondition for the legitimacy of the Norwegian Armed Forces.

The defence sector contributes to peace, security and the exercise of national sovereignty through operational use of military forces internationally and domestically. Young Norwegians participate in compulsory national service. Skills are acquired, competencies developed and research conducted. Security assessments are performed. Large resources and values are administered. Civil-military relations are consolidated, and Norway actively participates in NATO and the UN.

In the defence sector meaning and identity, tradition and culture are created and re-created. This affects a large number of Norwegians directly or indirectly – over the generations.



# Values of Norwegian society

Society's values are in a constant state of change. Values are created and re-created continuously. Today's society exhibits more width than before. Nonetheless certain values are identifiable as being of key importance in contemporary Norwegian society, even taking our openness to change and respect for diversity into account.

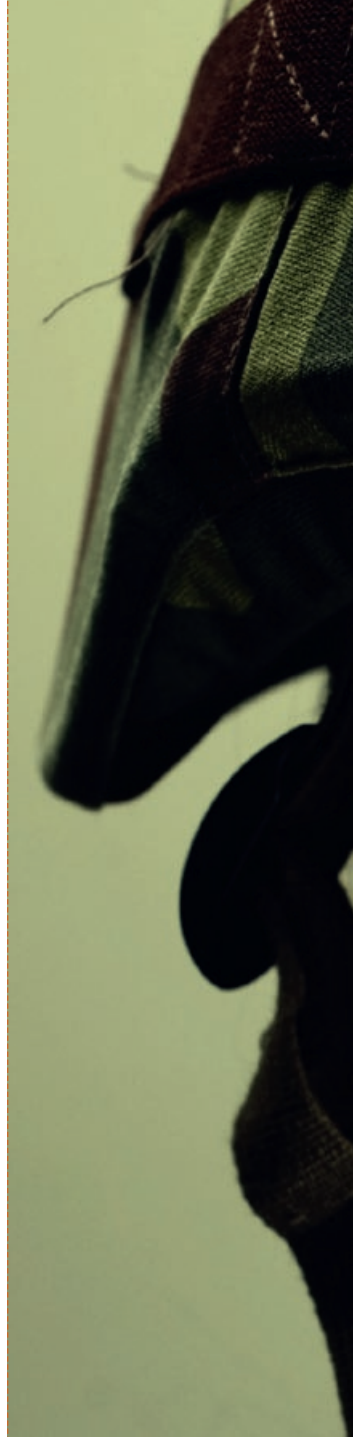
Modern and diverse Norway entails an expanded set of values in some areas. At the same time, our history and values are rooted in Christian and humanist ideals. The ideals are also found in other religious and cultural traditions. Standards for interpersonal behaviour are of key importance. The golden rule of doing to others as you would want them to do to you, is formulated in similar wording across world religions. Many Christian and humanist ideals derive from the philosophical teachings of ancient Greece. Plato's philosophy accentuates the virtues of wisdom, justice, moderation and courage, and Christianity adds the virtues of faith, hope and love. The philosopher Immanuel Kant requires us to never use other people as a means to an end, but to treat people as an end in themselves. Each person has their own independent, inherent dignity. Inherent dignity is a concept in the introduction to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN. The inherent dignity of all human beings is the foundation of what we can broadly call humanism.

Over the course of many centuries, ethical principles have been developed to regulate warfare and conflict management: the just-war tradition. Just-war principles state the conditions under which a war may be just, and establish acceptable conduct within war. The international rules on states' right to the use of force are regulated by the Charter of the United Nations. Even if one party to an armed conflict violates rules of international law, the rules still apply. Norway is obligated by these rules through conventions such as the Geneva Conventions and common law.

On behalf of Norwegian society, the defence sector is committed to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, human dignity and the international legal system. We defend Norway and the Norwegian people, by maintaining and safeguarding collaboration with other countries and organisations such as the UN, NATO and the EU. As a member of the world community and in solidarity with other countries, we share responsibility for stability in our neighbouring regions and in the world at large. The Norwegian tradition of international solidarity is in line with Arnulf Øverland's poem "Dare not to sleep" where he writes, "You cannot permit it! You dare not, at all. Accepting that outrage on all else may fall!"

“You cannot  
permit it!  
You dare  
not, at all.  
Accepting  
that outrage  
on all else  
may fall!”

Arnulf Øverland









# Core values

Many organisations develop their own core values. Core values are vital to achieving organisational goals. Core values are also a means of placing ethics on the agenda.

The defence sector has many different goals and specialisations. Nonetheless a set of common core values has emerged. These core values are *openness, broadmindedness, respect, responsibility* and *courage*. The values, and the description of them, came to light in part based on a survey of over 1,300 respondents from among defence sector employees in the spring of 2011. The respondents were asked what values they deemed essential to achieving overall defence sector goals. Several of the core values are also to be found among the four agencies' core values. They help describe an identity to aspire to for the organisation and its members.

For an organisation to be viewed as ethically sound, core values are not sufficient in themselves. Applying these core values ethically is key. For example, the core value of courage may be used for a noble or a morally reprehensible cause. Providing in-depth descriptions to exemplify every moral practice is not possible. Yet each of the core values is expanded upon in the next few pages, as an inspiration and guide for the organisation and the individual.



“The best weapon of a dictatorship is secrecy, but the best weapon of a democracy should be the weapon of openness”

Niels Bohr

## Openness

In an organisation characterised by openness, the organisation can be likened to a glass house, transparent to and facing society. Day-to-day operations are undertaken with honourable intentions and transparency.

The leaders communicate the goals, and they recognise that the goals clearly, if necessary, may need to change if the conditions change.

Decision-making processes are inclusive, involving new and critical thinking, before decisions are made. Clear decisions are made and communicated, along with their rationale. The personnel are loyal to these decisions, in order to reach the goal.

The organisation has arenas for lively debate, praise and criticism. A system for whistle blowing is in place and in use.



“The whole is greater than  
the sum of its parts”

Aristotle

## **Broadmindedness**

A broadminded organisation avoids narrowmindedness and introversion, and recognises itself as part of an entity of greater importance. The regional, national and global perspectives are all taken into account.

In matters of diversity and differences in the organisation, an inclusive attitude dominates. The focus is on the future – on recruiting, developing and retaining broad and relevant expertise, and on contributing to the sector’s development.

The broadminded perspective leads to an understanding that resources are limited. Therefore innovative thinking is important in order to optimise resources and recruit for the future. Flexibility predominates – the ability to rapidly change and adapt.



ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ  
ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹ ਦਾ ਚਕਰਾਨਮਾ  
ਪਾਸਸਰੀ ਸਰਲਾ ੫  
ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ  
ਗੋਰਖਮ ਸਮਥੜ  
ਸਿ 1121

2-11





“I look only to the good qualities of men. Not being faultless myself, I won't presume to probe into the faults of others”

Mahatma Gandhi

## Respect

In an organisation characterised by respect, this is clearly noticeable. People respect and cooperate with each other, across backgrounds, competencies and positions. People, regardless of their gender, world view, sexual orientation or ethnicity, are valued equally and for their inherent worth. The organisation leads the way in preventing bullying, harassment and other discrimination, and also seeks to guide and treat with respect those who have made mistakes.

The individual is humble in regard to their own role, the role of the sector and the use of resources. Administration is effective and prudent. Resources and efforts spent are aimed at maximising efficiency gains.

There is loyalty to the overarching mission, which is to be carried out in line with the best available practice, expert recommendations and legal obligations. Loyalty is about being part of a team. At the same time, loyalty is not seen as blind loyalty. A duty to comply with commands and obey orders does not entail a duty to engage in illegal or unethical practices.



“Good actions give strength to ourselves and inspire good actions in others”

Plato

## Responsibility

The organisation takes social responsibility and a responsibility for achieving the goals of the sector. The goals and adherence to them are in focus. Initiative is rewarded.

Leaders take responsibility for planning, executing and completing tasks. They take responsibility for their subordinates, just as subordinates support their leaders. This builds mutual trust. Responsibility is delegated wherever possible. Every colleague pulls their weight in order to achieve common results.

Quality standards are adhered to.



“We must leave our  
mark on life while we  
have it in our power,  
so that once we exit  
this life, we leave a  
trace behind”

Karen Blixen

## Courage

Courage and bravery are hallmarks of the organisation. There is courage to exercise self-criticism as well as an eagerness to learn. Leaders encourage constructive feedback.

Leaders and colleagues are aware of their roles, so that they can carry out their work impartially and professionally. Each one is open to provide guidance or correction, and to be guided. Each one dares speak up in cases where actions conflict with ethics.

It is acknowledged that risk is part of daily life, and that courage is not the opposite of safety. Nonetheless, if the situation and task at hand require it, individuals will set their own life and welfare aside. Acts of courage are rewarded.

“When you  
have gone so far  
that you cannot  
manage one  
more step,  
you have gone  
precisely half  
the distance  
you are  
capable of”

Proverb from Greenland







# Value through action

This values platform is aimed to influence all activities in the defence sector. As a superstructure for the agencies' respective core values, the platform must be incorporated and put to use.

Values are not automatically internalised. Internalisation requires relentless effort. We are always underway: we can always do better. Therefore the sector has a responsibility for promoting its values, as well as providing guidance in applying the values ethically. For this to happen, ethical expertise and good practices must be assembled and applied. Awareness of values and ethics must be incorporated into everyone's competency, regardless of specialisation.

Leaders are role models and custodians of culture. Their responsibility is to inspire and provide space for reflection and discussion on ethics and values. Subordinates are equally responsible for doing their part. Many who work in the defence sector have stated in surveys that they value the autonomy which their job provides. Autonomy requires a willingness to take on responsibility. Leaders and their subordinates must share in an openness and willingness to learn, and sometimes to challenge their own preconceived notions and routines.

Awareness training may be channelled into lectures and education, action plans, seminars, dilemma training based on specific examples and cases, meetings, employer-employee dialogue, mentoring, internet portals, e-learning and more. The aim is implementation and visible results.

This values platform is part of our comprehensive work on attitudes, ethics and leadership. All the agencies and the Ministry report on this work annually.

The defence sector already upholds values and ethics. This provides good conditions for our common values to take root throughout the entire sector, and for the focus to be continuous. The future looks bright – the rest is up to us.



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Photo: Tine Poppe, the Norwegian Defence Estates  
Agency. Glass facade of the mess hall building in KNM.  
Harald Haarfagre, Madla



**p 14**  
Photo: The Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre  
/ Torbjørn Kjosvold. View from the northernmost  
border station. The small river to the right separates  
Norway from Russia.



**p 16**  
Photo: The Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre  
/ FMS Jan Erik Eriksen. Captain Hans Kristian Felde  
promotes educational opportunities in the Norwegian  
Armed Forces at a Sikh temple in Alnabru, Oslo.



**p 18**  
Photo: The Norwegian Armed Forces Media Centre  
/ Torgeir Haugaard. Students at the Officers training  
school in the Home Guard during a training exercise  
at Porsangermoen.





**Published by: Norwegian Ministry of Defence**  
Public institutions may order additional copies from:  
Norwegian Government Administration Services  
Distribution Services

Internet: [www.publikasjoner.dep.no](http://www.publikasjoner.dep.no)  
E-mail: [publikasjonsbestilling@dss.dep.no](mailto:publikasjonsbestilling@dss.dep.no)  
Telephone: +47 22 24 20 00  
Publication number: S-1015 E

Print: Andvord Grafisk 12/2013 - Impression 2000