



Norwegian Ministry
of Local Government and Modernisation

Summary

Meld. St. 18 (2016–2017) Report to the Storting (white paper)

Urban sustainability and rural strength – in brief



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*Recommendations of the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation 17 February 2017,
approved in the Council of State the same date.
(Solberg Government)*

Sustainable urban and strong rural areas are mutually beneficial. Resources are available throughout the country. Cities generally grow from high birth rates and immigration, and urbanisation provides opportunities for the country as a whole. Cities provide greater access to expertise, capital, infrastructure and services. Rural areas hold significant resources and provide a basis for industry and growth. Fisheries and aquaculture have enjoyed strong growth in recent years, and provided new activity in many sparsely populated areas and villages along the coast of Northern, Central and Western Norway. At the same time, knowledge-intensive service industries, often located in cities, benefit from the strong, resource-based industry in rural areas.

In this white paper, the Government presents new objectives for its regional and rural development policy. All citizens in Norway are to have equal living conditions, wherever they live. The Government emphasises how the population will have access to basic services, irrespective of where they live. Access to more specialised public services will depend on the location of the services on offer.

A well-functioning business community is imperative for welfare, living conditions and quality of life in all types of communities, in both urban and rural areas. We need active and profitable businesses that innovate and create jobs. At the same time, the composition of the population is important for future growth and development. Policies must facilitate development that safe-

guards resources for future generations, while ensuring minimal differences between the regions in Norway. This will help maintain the main features of the current settlement pattern. The Government attaches particular importance to the long-term resilience and competitiveness of industry and trade. Increased commitment to infrastructure and innovation, growth-promoting tax cuts and the rationalisation of the public sector will stimulate growth in business and industry. In addition, the Government aims to:

- give priority to policy instruments that boost long-term competitiveness and potential for regional growth
- prioritise policy instruments that encourage businesses to apply research in their development work
- provide incentives for increased and more effective interaction between the tertiary education sector and labour market, industry and society by emphasising such cooperation in the funding of the sector
- strengthen collaboration and coordination at the regional level through further development of regional strategies for growth and access to skills
- ensure balanced localisation of government jobs and make use of competencies available in various parts of the country
- ensure that the Ministry considers the use of agreements between sectoral authorities and local/regional governments to meet particular challenges in specific areas