

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION IN NORWAY

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I. Religious instruction organised during the school hours (in lower and in secondary education) in state funded schools

I.1 Question: Religious instruction organised during the school hours (in lower and in secondary education) in state funded schools. Is – and if affirmative please refer to the provisions in the law (add the text separately) – the teaching of religion in your country organised during school time in public educational institutions: in primary education, in secondary education.

Answer:

According to The Education Act and The National Curriculum shall Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics be an ordinary school subject normally attended by all pupils. The teaching in Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics shall provide knowledge of Christianity, other world religions and philosophies of life, knowledge of the significance of Christianity as a cultural heritage and of ethical and philosophical topics.

The teaching in Religion, Philosophies of life and Ethics shall present different world religions and philosophies of life in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. The teaching in the different topics shall be founded on the same educational principles.

The school shall respect the religious and philosophical beliefs of pupils and parents and ensure their right to an equal education.

(Education Act § 2-3 and §2-4).

I.2 Question: What choices amongst the religious education possibilities are offered in public educational institutions , e.g. catholic religion, Islamic teaching,

Answer:

There is no possibility for choices amongst the religious education in public schools. The education is meant to be common for all pupils. But it is possible to opt out if parents ask for that. Following written notification by parents, pupils shall be exempted from attending those parts of the teaching at the individual school that they, on the basis of their own religion or own philosophy of life, perceive as being the practice of another religion or adherence to another philosophy of life, or that they on the same basis find objectionable or offensive. It is not necessary to give grounds for notification of exemption. (Ed. Act § 2-3a)

II. State funded denominational schools and state supervision

II.1. Question: Are there state funded denominational schools in your country? If affirmative, what is the numeric importance of state funded schools. If affirmative, what is the numeric importance of Islamic state funded schools. Please refer to statistical information on-line

Answer: No, only private schools (see hereunder)

II.2. Question: Are there non-state funded denominational schools in your country (private)? If affirmative, what is the numeric importance of private schools. If affirmative, what is the numeric importance of Islamic private schools. Please refer to statistical information on-line

Answer:

Yes. Private schools are state funded 85 pct. at fixed subsidy rates; and parents/pupils pay the rest.

Less than 3 pct. of the pupils are in private schools. We have two types of private schools: (A) religious schools : 63 christian schools primary/lower secondary (10 years) and 28 secondary schools (3 years). 3 muslim schools have asked for approval. (B) Pedagogical alternatives: 33 Steiner-/Waldorfschools and 47 Montessori schools. (Year 2010)

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II.3. Question: How do the authorities control the teaching in state funded denominational schools and are there any special questions about the control of the content of teaching in state-funded denominational schools? Please refer to the provisions in the law.

Answer:

Private schools must follow The National Curriculum with some exceptions. The Ministry provides advice and guidance in order to ensure the provision of good and equivalent educational facilities in compliance with statutes and regulations.

The Ministry supervises activities pursuant to the Act and shall in this connection have access to school premises and documentation. (Education Act § 14-1)

III. Refusal or limitations on the number of pupils of another conviction/belief by the governing board of a confessional (catholic) school

III.1. Question: Does the head of a state funded denominational (e.g. Catholic) school has the right to refuse pupils from other religious beliefs? Please refer to the provisions in the law.

Answer: No. State funded private schools must be open to all and accept applicants from the whole country. (Act about private schools, § 3-1)

III.2. Question: Does the head of a state funded denominational (e.g. Catholic) school the authority to limit the number of pupils from other religious beliefs (e.g. Muslim pupils) in order to support the specificity of the project?

Answer:

IV. Point of views of the authorities concerning the teaching of Islam in denominational (Catholic) education, Islam instruction or instruction on other convictions/beliefs in denominational (catholic) schools for (a number of pupils requesting it) and alternative ethical course

IV.1. Question. Is there a legal obligation to organise, if parents ask for, classes of Islamic religion in denominational (Catholic) education funded by public authorities? a. for any pupil for whom a request has been made? b. from a minimum number of pupils for whom a request has been made?

Answer: No

IV.2. Question. Does the same obligation exist for the offer of (a) other religions and/or philosophical convictions, (b) an alternative class of conception of life, philosophy, ethics

Answer:

IV.3. Question. Can you shortly mention the pro and contra standpoints that have been expressed concerning the respect of fundamental rights (among others, freedom of education and right to education) in relation with this obligation?

Answer:

IV.4. Question. Reference to the legal basis, with Website address, and also if possible to the parliamentary preparation of texts.

Answer:

V. Teaching of Islam in denominational (e.g. Catholic) schools at their own initiative

V.1. Question: Is there in your country a general guideline for teaching of Islam in denominational (e.g. Catholic) schools at their own initiative defined by (a) the Bishops' Conference, (b) another body, namely. . .

Answer: Not known

V.2. Question: If affirmative, does the guideline implies that (a) the teaching of other religions is organised when: one parent asks for, or a sufficient number of parents ask for (how many?), (b)

only teaching of Islam is offered as alternative religion when one parent asks for or a sufficient number of parents ask for (how many?)

Answer:

V.3. Question: There is no guideline and: (a) in fact, teaching of Islam is never proposed in Catholic schools, or (b) the teaching of Islam is organised in some schools, which have taken themselves the initiative. If possible, explain the importance of this option

Answer:

VI. Religious symbols in public schools

VI.1. Question: Are religious symbols (e.g. crucifix) in public schools compulsory, allowed, or forbidden?

Answer: Allowed

VI.2. Question: Is a teacher allowed to wear the Islamic headscarf and manifest her religion? Please explain if not allowed on which grounds.

Answer:

Teachers can wear religious symbols

VI.3. Question: Is a pupil allowed to wear the Islamic headscarf and manifest her religion? Please explain if not allowed on which grounds.

Answer:

Pupils can wear religious symbols

VI.4. Question: Who decides on the dress code in schools. Please refer to the law.

Answer: we have no dress code in Norwegian schools

VI.5. Question: Can a pupil and/or a teacher be exempted from the dress code when she considers it her religious duty to wear the Islamic headscarf?

Answer:

VI.6. Question: Who is the regulatory authority in this sphere?

Answer:

VI.7. Question: What kind of disciplinary measures and proceedings are taken if the pupil or teacher fails to comply with the rules on dress codes?

Answer:

VI.8. Question: Please describe the case-law in your country.

Answer:

VII. After-school education in private religious institutions. Islamic instruction organised after the school hours (age 6-18)

VII.1. Question: Is there any form of Islamic teaching (for children and youngsters of age 6-18) in your country organised after school time in private religious institutions:

Answer: Information not open/ available

VII.2. Question: Is there any form of Islamic teaching in your country organised in primary education age (6-12)

Answer:

VII.3. Question: Is there any form of Islamic teaching in your country organised in secondary education age (12-18)

Answer:

VII.4. Question: How many such institutions are there in your country providing Islamic instruction organised after the school hours?

Answer:

VII.5. Question: How many children take part in the activities of Islamic instruction organised after the school hours?

Answer:

VII.6. Question: How is the pedagogical quality of Islamic instruction organised after the school hours safeguarded?

Answer:

VII.7. Question: How would you characterize the public debate about this form of Islamic instruction organised after the school hours?

Answer:

VIII. Additional comments

XI. Bibliography

Reference to the legal basis, with Website address:

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/doc/Laws/Acts/education-act.html?id=213315>