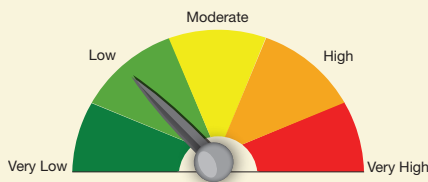


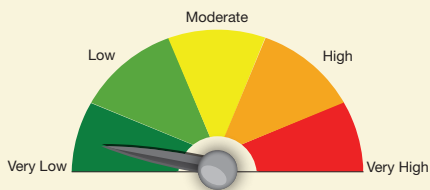
Country Risk Tier

CRT-1

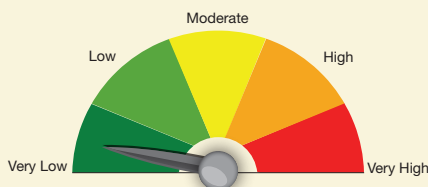
Economic Risk



Political Risk



Financial System Risk



[For information on companies followed](#)

[Market Outlooks](#)

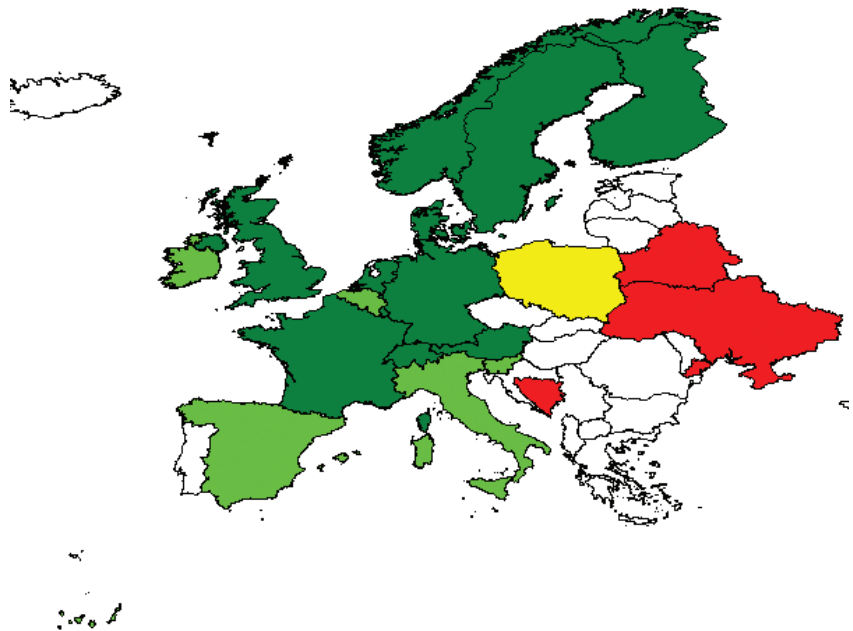
Norway

- The Country Risk Tier (CRT) reflects A.M. Best’s assessment of three categories of risk: Economic, Political and Financial System Risk.

- Norway is a CRT-1 country with very low levels of risk across all three categories. While not a member of the European Union, Norway does have access to European markets and relies heavily on trade with its European neighbors.

- The Norwegian economy is a large petroleum and natural gas exporter. The global economic slowdown and the fall in commodity prices has led to a contraction in the Norwegian economy (real gross domestic product is expected to contract by 1.5% in 2009). However, recovery is expected to be underway by mid-2010.

- A.M. Best considers the majority of countries pictured below to be categorized as CRT-1 and CRT-2. The exceptions are the Eastern European countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.



CRT 1 2 3 4 5



Regional Summary: Western Europe

- Western Europe is a highly developed and affluent region. The European Union (EU) is an economic and political union of 27 countries that accounts for 30% of world gross domestic product (GDP). The EU is facilitating a single European market with standardized regulatory systems and free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

- The euro-zone is made up of the 16 EU members that have adopted the euro as their currency.

- Most, if not all, of Western Europe is experiencing a severe economic slowdown and many countries are, or soon will be, in an official recession. While the European Central Bank has cut interest rates to spur demand, economic growth in the region has stagnated.

Economic Risk: Low

- The Norwegian government effectively uses the proceeds from the petroleum industry and high taxes to support the well-being of its citizens. Over the past decade, Norway performs well in terms of well-being of the population including education, life expectancy and standard of living.

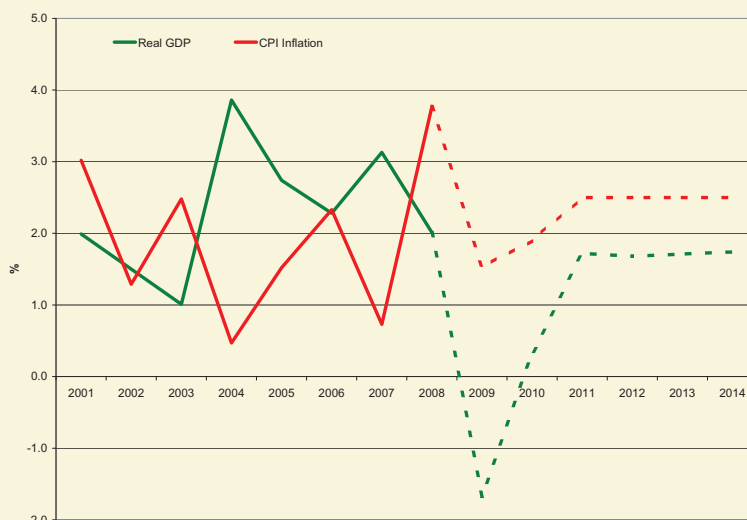
- Much of Norway’s abundant wealth comes from its oil and natural gas industries. Norway is currently the world’s third-largest oil and natural gas exporter and has the largest proven oil reserves in Western Europe.

- The Norwegian economy is experiencing an economic downturn but recovery is expected for 2010.

Vital Statistics 2008		
Nominal GDP	USD bn	456.23
Population	mil	4.8
GDP Per Capita	USD	95,062
Real GDP Growth	%	2.0
Inflation Rate	%	3.8
Premiums Written (Life)	USD mil	11,711
Premiums Written (Non-Life)	USD mil	8,771
Premiums Growth (07-08)	%	5.3

Regional Comparison	
	Country Risk Tier
Norway	CRT-1
Germany	CRT-1
Netherlands	CRT-1
Denmark	CRT-1
Finland	CRT-1
Sweden	CRT-1

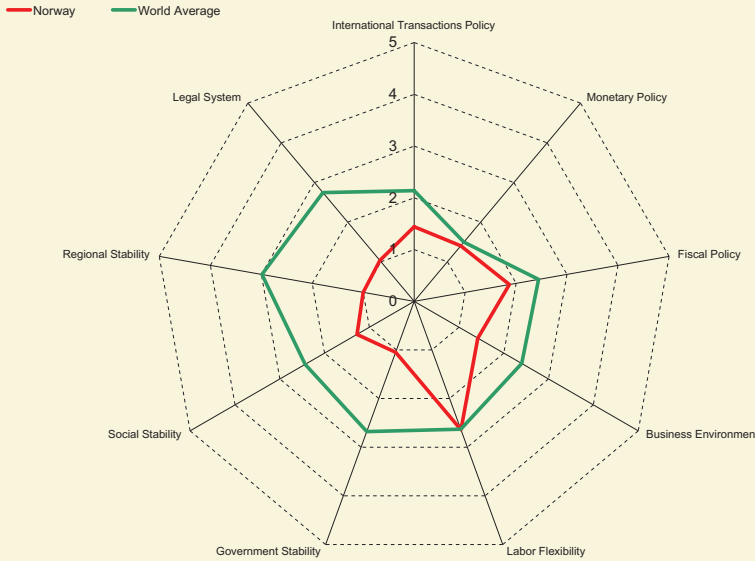
Source: IMF, Swiss Re and A.M. Best



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook (10/08) and A.M. Best

Political Risk Summary

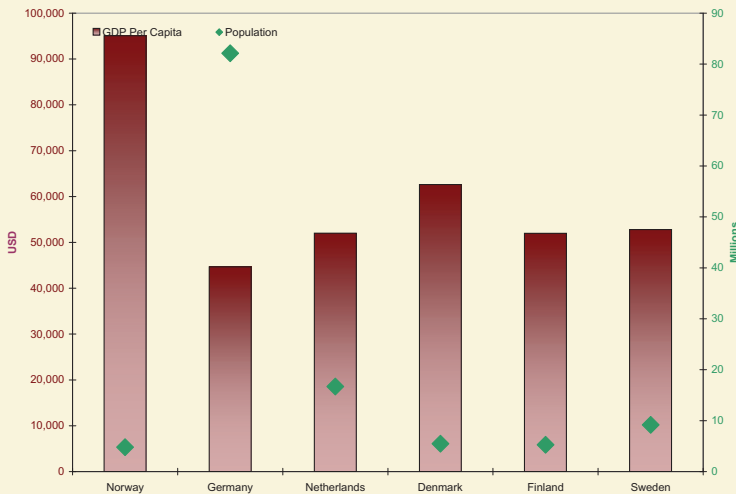
Score 1 (best) to 5 (worst)



Source: A.M. Best

Political Risk: Very Low

- Norway is not a member of the European Union (EU). However, as part of the European Economic Area, Norway has nearly full access to European markets and has adopted almost all EU directives.
- The government plays an important role in the oil sector with a controlling stake in Statoil, the country's largest oil company. The government takes 80% of oil revenues and invests them in what is today the second largest sovereign wealth fund, Norway's Government Pension Fund – Global.



Source: IMF and A.M. Best

Financial System Risk: Very Low

- Norway is part of the European Economic Area and therefore follows European rules in terms of regulation and accounting standards. The insurance regulatory authority is Kredittilsynet, The Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway.

GUIDE TO BEST'S COUNTRY RISK TIERS

A.M. Best defines country risk as the risk that country-specific factors could adversely affect the claims paying ability of an insurer. Country risk is evaluated and factored into all Best's Credit Ratings. Countries are placed into one of five tiers, ranging from "CRT-1" (Country Risk Tier 1), denoting a stable environment with the least amount of risk, to "CRT-5" (Country Risk Tier 5) for countries that pose the most risk and, therefore, the greatest challenge to an insurer's financial stability, strength and performance.

A.M. Best's Country Risk Tiers are not credit ratings and are not directly comparable to a sovereign debt rating, which evaluates the ability and willingness of a government to service its debt obligations.

Country Risk Tiers

Country Risk Tier	Definition
CRT-1	Predictable and transparent legal environment, legal system and business infrastructure; sophisticated financial system regulation with deep capital markets; mature insurance industry framework.
CRT-2	Predictable and transparent legal environment, legal system and business infrastructure; sufficient financial system regulation; mature insurance industry framework.
CRT-3	Developing legal environment, legal system and business environment with developing capital markets; developing insurance regulatory structure.
CRT-4	Relatively unpredictable and nontransparent political, legal and business environment with underdeveloped capital markets; partially to fully inadequate regulatory structure.
CRT-5	Unpredictable and opaque political, legal and business environment with limited or nonexistent capital markets; low human development and social instability; nascent insurance industry.

Country Risk Reports

A.M. Best Country Risk Reports are designed to provide a brief, high level, explanation of some of the key factors that determine a country's Country Risk Tier assignment. It is not intended to summarize A.M. Best's opinion on any particular insurance market, or the prospects for that market.

Categories of Risk

Country Risk Reports provide "scores" for three categories of risk for each country. These "scores" are: (1) Very Low; (2) Low; (3) Moderate; (4) High and (5) Very High.

Category of Risk	Definition
Economic Risk	The likelihood that fundamental weaknesses in a country's economy will cause adverse developments for an insurer. A.M. Best's assessment of economic risk evaluates the state of the domestic economy, government finances and international transactions, as well as prospects for growth and stability.
Political Risk	The likelihood that government or bureaucratic inefficiencies, societal tensions, inadequate legal system or international tensions will cause adverse developments for an insurer. Political risk comprises the stability of the government and society, the effectiveness of international diplomatic relationships, the reliability and integrity of the legal system and of the business infrastructure, the efficiency of the government bureaucracy and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the government's economic policies.
Financial System Risk	Financial system risk (which includes both insurance and non-insurance financial system risk) is the risk that financial volatility may erupts due to inadequate reporting standards, weak banking system or asset markets and/or poor regulatory structure. Along with the risk that the insurance industry's level of development and public awareness, transparent and effective regulation and reporting standards and sophisticated regulatory body will contribute to a volatile financial system and compromise the ability of an insurer to pay claims.

Political Risk Summary

To provide additional detail on the political risk in a given domicile the Country Risk Reports include the Political Risk Summary. The Political Risk Summary is a radar chart that displays scores for nine different aspects of political risk scored on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least amount of risk and 5 being the highest amount of risk.

Category	Definition
International Transactions Policy	Measures the effectiveness of the exchange rate regime and currency management.
Monetary Policy	Measures the ability of a country to effectively implement monetary policy.
Fiscal Policy	Measures the ability of a country to effectively implement fiscal policy.
Business Environment	Measures the overall quality of the business environment, and ease of doing business.
Labor Flexibility	Measures the flexibility of the labor market, including the company's ability to hire and fire employees.
Government Stability	Measures the degree of stability in a government.
Social Stability	Measures the degree of social stability including human development and political rights.
Regional Stability	Measures the degree of stability in the region
Legal System	Measures the transparency and level of corruption in the legal system.

Country Risk Tier Disclosure

A Country Risk Tier (CRT) is not a credit rating, rather it represents a component of A.M. Best's credit rating methodology that is applied to all insurers. A CRT is not a recommendation to purchase, hold or terminate any security, insurance policy, contract or any other financial obligation issued by a government, an insurer or other rated issuer, nor do they address the suitability of any particular policy, contract or other financial obligation for a specific purpose or purchaser.

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