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**DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

Network on Early Childhood Education and Care

RESPONSES ON FINANCING ECEC SERVICES: NORWAY

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Miho Taguma, Policy Analyst; Tel: +33 1 45 24 92 65; Email: Miho.Taguma@oecd.org

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NORWAY - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE 7TH MEETING OF THE NETWORK ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC): FINANCING ECEC SERVICES

Prepared by Marit R. Solheim, Tove M. Slinde and Kari Jacobsen, Ministry of Education and Research

PART I: Data on ECEC costs and financing and data-related issues

1.1 *General information: types of ECEC services*

1.1.1 This question aims to update the information on childcare and early education services presented for your country. Please review Annex A. If updates need to be made, please provide the necessary information below. If existing information is still accurate, simply indicate “No Change”; you do not need to duplicate.

If your country is *NOT* listed in Annex A, please list different types of ECEC services offered in your country and provide the following information for each of the services:

- Which category (a) centre-based care (b) family-day care or (c) pre-primary education;
- What age range is covered;
- Whether public or private; and
- Whether compulsory or not.

1.1.2 This question aims to complement Question 1.1.1 and elicit a fuller picture. Which type of ECEC provision is mostly in use or in operation in your country? Please indicate in the table below the proportion of:

- Children registered for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of children of the age group; and
- Care services, centres or pre-schools for each type of ECEC provision as a percentage of the total number of such services.

Type of provision	Early Childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools	% of registered children	% of services, centres, pre-schools
Public provision					54	46
Private not for profit provision					23	24
Private for profit provision					23	30
Other type of provision						

Source(s): Statistics Norway (2008)

Known data limitations: _____

1.2 *Public spending on ECEC services*

1.2.1 *Public spending on public and private ECEC services*

This question aims to clarify whether public expenditure on ECEC services is spent *only* on public ECEC provision *or* on a mixture of public and private provision, which is not currently well understood.

Annex B provides the public expenditure data on childcare and early education currently available in the OECD Family Database (those figures are currently being updated through other OECD official channels). The public expenditure does not include cash allowances or tax expenditure such as tax credits, parental leave, etc.; here, you should include only public expenditure spent on ECEC services.

Please indicate in the table below the split in public expenditure between public and private ECEC services in your country, indicating the year the data is from.

	Early childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services	Public services	Private services
Public expenditure (as % of GDP)					0,69%	0,39%

Source(s): Statistics Norway (2007)

Known data limitations: *The figures showed in this table are operating expenses for public and private ECEC services. This is the same data that Statistics Norway reports to the OECD Education Database. As for the financing of county and municipal government, the Norwegian national assembly has adopted a decentralised administrative structure, which delegate considerable authority and financial freedom of action to the county level. Block grants are given, and county and municipal authorities determine their activities according to existing legislation and regulations. The total national expenditure includes expenditures for R&D activities and infrastructure. These figures are not fully covered in the table above. We are not able to separate them from the operating expenses for ECEC.*

1.2.2 Public spending on ECEC services at different levels of government

This question aims to clarify funding arrangements between national and sub-national governments.

While Annex B provides overall public expenditure data on ECEC services, we do not currently have figures for what is spent by national governments *versus* what is spent at sub-national levels (e.g. regional and/or local). Please provide the most recent data for public spending for national and sub-national levels of government. Please note that “fiscal transfers” between levels of government should be netted out in order to avoid double-counting. Please also note that the question focuses on direct public spending on ECEC services, excluding cash benefits or tax credits.

Year 2007	Early childcare		Pre-primary education		Integrated system	
	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP	Total amount (local currency)	% of GDP
National/Federal					77 million	0,003%
State/Provincial/ Regional						
Local/Municipal					24 571 million	1,08%

Source(s): Statistics Norway (2007) and the National government budget (2007)

Known data limitations: *In this table we have tried to indicate the national expenditure not included in the block grants. We are not sure if there are some double-counting in these numbers. For the rest of the questionnaire we are using the figures for “/LocalMunicipal” as in the table above for total public spending.*

1.2.3 What is covered by public spending?

This question aims to understand what the public money is specifically spent on. Please indicate the estimated share, as a percentage of total ECEC public spending, for each category in the table below. The total should add up to 100%.

Service category	% of total public expenditure on		
	Early childcare	Pre-primary education	Integrated system
Infrastructure			17%
Workforce supply (e.g. salaries, recruitment etc.)			46%
Workforce development (e.g. in-service training, support services for staff, etc.)			
Curriculum and pedagogical materials			
Ancillary services (transport, meals, etc.)			
Research on ECEC			
Others, please specify			37%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source(s): Statistics Norway(2007)

Known data limitations: *"Others" include figures for infrastructure, workforce development, curriculum and pedagogical materials, ancillary services) and workforce supply in private institutions. The figures reported in infrastructure are capital expenditures.*

1.3 **Private spending on ECEC services**

This question aims to give a comprehensive picture of private spending relative to public spending, covering both childcare services and early education, which has long been wished for by many countries. The UOE (UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT) has attempted to answer this question with regard to early education (* in shaded cells) and is in the process of updating the data (See Annex C).

In order to complement what is already known from the UOE data, please provide in the table below figures on private spending for early childcare (please indicate the year the data is from).

If your country has an integrated system, please provide the figures, which have not been asked by the UOE data collection process.

		Total spent, in local currency		
		Early childcare	Pre-primary education	Integrated system
Private sources	Household expenditure		*	5 155 million
	Expenditure of other private entities		*	
	All private sources		*	
Private: of which subsidised			*	n/a
Others, please specify				

Source(s): Statistics Norway (2007)

Known data limitations: _____

1.4 **Issues on data collection**

Some network members have expressed their concern that data on ECEC in general are collected based on availability rather than policy needs.

1.4.1 What are the most critical gaps in national data and international comparisons?

Norway has a integrated system and the the breakdown between child care and early childhood education are the most critical gap in international comparisons.

1.4.2 Bearing in mind the possible quality limitations of comparative data, what internationally comparable data on financing ECEC would be most relevant for policy making in your country?

- *Data on annual public expenditure per child (in equivalent USD converted using PPPs) on both public and private institutions.*
- *Data on fees and net costs for a family as showed in "PF 12 Childcare support" in the OECD family database:
http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1,00.html but also measured for pre-primary education and integrated system.*

1.4.3 Where quantitative data is not available, what kind of qualitative information – at a national and international level – on financing ECEC would be most useful for policy making in your country?

It would be interesting to know more about the legislation in different countries regarding public financing of private insititutions.

1.4.4 What are the biggest challenges in collecting data on financial aspects of ECEC services in your country (e.g. low policy priority, jurisdictional, lack of resources and capacity, fragmentation of ECEC services, lack of agreed common definitions of ECEC services within a country, etc.)?

Norway has a lot of different forms of business organization in the private institutions. The companies are regulatd by different account standards which makes it hard to compare. It is even harder to compare them with the public "barnehager" because the municipalities have different accounting standards from the private institutions.

1.4.5 If you have taken some actions to improve data on financial aspects or ECEC in general, please describe your country experience.

As mentioned above Norway has lot of different forms of business organization in the private institutions. The private institutions are obliged to present the annual account for the institution in a standardised questionnaire that the Ministry has designed . Because of this new questionnaire Norway have got improved data on financial aspects from these institutions.

Part II. Why invest in ECEC? Research on benefits of ECEC

This section aims to gather updated information on existing research from network member countries relating to ECEC participation and children's outcomes.

Please provide details of research NOT already included in *Starting Strong II*, which you do not need to duplicate. List relevant references and attach corresponding documents if available. If articles/reports are not in English or French, please provide abstracts in English or French.

2.1 What research has been carried out in your own country on:

- Net benefits to children, parents and society of public and private investment in ECEC
- Net benefits or evaluations of specific ECEC programmes or initiatives

*Havnes T & Mogstad M. **No Child Left Behind Universal Child Care and Children's Long-Run Outcomes**, Discussion Papers No. 582, May 2009*

Statistics Norway, Research Department <http://www.ssb.no/publikasjoner/DP/pdf/dp582.pdf>

*Bremnes, R. Falch, T. & Strøm, B **Samfunnsøkonomiske konsekvenser av Ferdighetsstimulerende førskoletiltak (Societal economical effects of pedagogical pre-primary investments) SØF-RAPPORT NR. 04/2006** ISBN 82-8150-023-9 Elektronisk versjon ISSN 1504-5226*

*On behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, **Centre for Economic Research** at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) presented and examined national and international research on the economical effect of investment in ECEC in order to estimate the net benefits of investing in pre-primary education in Norway. The report concluded that net benefits amounted to 1,4 – 4,5 NOK for every INOK invested, that is a rate of return from 40 to 350 percent.*

*Schjølberg S. et al **Forsinket språkutvikling En foreløpig oversikt basert på data fra Den norske mor og barn undersøkelsen** <http://www.fhi.no/dokumenter/3891318ee7.pdf>, FHI rapport 2008:10*

(The Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study, report concerning delayed language development)

Summary of the report: Language disorders are among the most common developmental problems in young children. Because of the frequency of this problem and the potential serious consequences, delayed language development has been of great interest both in research and in educational settings as well as political. Language is one of the most important tools for learning and in society through life. It is of importance to improve our knowledge about language delay to be able to ameliorate the consequences for children's social life and to influence on a positive developmental path.

The report provides a general overview of children's language development at 3 years of age, based on the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study. The analyses presented are based on questionnaire data from 22 509 children. The questionnaires provide information on children's early development within areas such as communication and language, and in addition report on different factors that are of importance for learning language. The questionnaires presented in the analyses are based on mothers answers when the children are 1½ and 3 years of age. The results presented show that many aspects of language development needs further research to get a more complete picture.

The rapport classify all children with delayed language development in one group independent of whether they also show other developmental disorders that could explain the delay.

We will emphasize three main findings in this report.

The first finding is presented in chapter 3. Of the children that show delay in use of complex sentences at 36 months of age, almost half of them are late in use of early communication skills at 18

months. Still only a small subgroup of their parents is concerned about the language delay at that time and few are seen by special services at this early point in time. The variation in language skills are less at 36 months (more children score within normal variation), but those children that appear to be delayed in language development based on communication skills are also noted by parents to have delayed language development and a greater proportion are referred to a specialist for assessment.

The second finding is presented in chapter 4. There seem to be a tendency that language delayed children has more co-existing difficulties than peers with no language delay. This association is seen for problems with motor development, over activity, attention, aggression, anxiety and social difficulties. Furthermore we see that there are gender differences in the sense that more difficulties with language skills are related to delayed motor development and aggression in boys, whereas girls has higher frequencies of over activity, inattention and anxiety. Looking at social skills, we found no gender differences.

The last finding we want to highlight is presented in chapter 5. The analyses in this chapter show that there is an association between children's language development and the parents' choice of day care solution. Among children in kindergarten we see a smaller proportion of children with delayed language than amongst those that are cared for at home. The same trend is evident across social conditions. Regardless of level of education, parents' income or mother tongue of the parents, the proportion of children with delayed language development is less for children in kindergarten than for those cared for at home. Likewise, the proportions of children that speak in long complex sentences are larger for children attending kindergarten than those cared for at home.

See also the **Memo on Research on Day Care** from Prof. Anne Inger Helmen Borge, University of Oslo, attached.

We would also like to point to a recent Danish study that looks into the effect of intervention.

Professor Anders Holm, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen: **The effect of a ECE-intervention program in day-care centres on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) - as a learning-outcome**

2.2 What research has been carried out in your country on the relative benefits of public ECEC investment to increase accessibility (i.e. children's enrolment) versus increasing quality of services (e.g. raising staff qualifications, improving staff/ child ratio, etc.)?

Norway does not have research into the question on investment in accessibility versus increasing quality of services. Research showing effect of high quality ECEC has been used in the debate promoting investments in increased accessibility; ECEC/kindergarten as a universal good.

Part III. Financing mechanisms and funding strategies

This section aims to elicit:

1. information on overall policy contexts and trade-offs between different policy alternatives;
2. where resources on ECEC come from;
3. how the resources are managed; and
4. other policy issues.

3.1 Overall policy contexts

3.1.1 Policy objectives

Starting Strong II identified 5 main policy objectives for public investment in ECEC:

1. Responding to the rise of the service economy and the influx of women into salaried employment;
2. Reconciling work and family responsibilities in a manner more equitable for women;
3. Managing demographic challenges: falling fertility and continuing immigration;
4. Acting against child poverty and educational disadvantage;
5. Early childhood education and care as a public good.

Please indicate which of the above can explain the current policy objectives, underpinning your country's public investment in ECEC. If there has been a shift of policy focus in recent years, please describe how policy thinking has evolved.

Pre-primary institutions serve a dual function: they contribute to the education of children of pre-primary age, and they provide care during parents' working hours.

The kindergarten shall give children below primary school age good opportunities for development and activities, and offer a safe and stimulating community, as well as individual support and care. Kindertartens are as such a public good. Good, moderately priced and accessible places in kindergarten institutions are important to give all children equal opportunities.

The policy objective number 5 has been an important objective for public investment in ECEC, as well as responding to the influx of women into salaried employment and making it possible to reconcile work and family responsibilities. A policy supporting equality between the genders has been part of the policy contexts where ECEC has been promoted.

The ECEC has also been part of targeted policies toward children in need of special support.

Since 2006 there has been an increased emphasis on policy objective number 4: Acting against child poverty and educational disadvantage. Places in kindergarten institutions may improve knowledge of the Norwegian language for children with minority language parents (immigrants), and may contribute to helping children in families with different types of problems. Early intervention is one of the governments main efforts to achieve the goal of equal possibilities for learning and to equalize social differences.

3.1.2 Political debate – balance between parental leave benefits and childcare services

Countries often look to find a balance between encouraging parents with young children to stay home to care for their children and encouraging parents, especially mothers, to maintain an attachment to the labour market by providing ECEC services. Policy instruments – which can be used in combination - include:

- Paying parents through “parental leave”, “child-rearing leave” with low flat-rate payment, etc.
- Giving universal child/ family allowances;
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by income level,
- Giving targeted child/ family allowances by work status, etc.

Regarding public investment in childcare services *versus* parental leave benefits, what are the current challenges and trade-offs in your country? Are these underpinned by specific policy objectives?

In Norway both goals have been encouraged. A number of measures such as parental leave, cash-benefit scheme up to 23 months of age, universal child allowances, tax-reduction, parents have been encouraged in their effort to provide good care for their children. At the same time it has been an important goal to provide universal access to affordable ECEC services in the form of barnehage (kindergarten), making it possible for parents to maintain attachment to the labour market.

The cash benefit scheme entered into force for 1-year-olds in August 1998 and for 2-year-olds in January 1999. The scheme is a state grant given to parents of children who do not attend a kindergarten institution full-time. It is possible to combine part-time attendance with reduced cash benefit. Statistics show that the cash benefit scheme has been particularly attractive to parents with low education and weak participation in the work force and provides an incentive for them not to put the child into barnehage. The take-up rate of this benefit is much higher for non-western immigrant parents – in Oslo, in 2004 84 % of non – western immigrant parents received cash-benefit compared with only 33 % of the majority population. Participation is increasing, but there is still an under-representation of immigrant children in the ECEC.

3.2 Main sources of financing ECEC – where do resources come from?

3.2.1 Various sources

This question aims to give a fuller picture of the main sources of financing ECEC services in your country to complement your responses in questions under 1.1.2 and 1.3. Six major sources of financial resources have been identified in past research:

1. governments (See question 3.2.2);
2. parents;
3. for-profit providers,
4. ECEC as business communities;
5. social organisations, and
6. international organisations

Please indicate which of the above is applicable in your country and describe challenges and advantages associated with the current financing mechanism. Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”.

The Government covers a great part of the annual costs of all approved institutions, private or public, through earmarked grants to the municipalities. The rest of the costs are shared between the municipality and the parents. There are regulations concerning maximum parents' fees. For children with special needs, such as disabled children and immigrants, the Government gives special economic support to municipalities. This support makes it possible to establish programmes for integrating children with special needs in kindergarten institutions.

The Storting has decided that the earmarked kindergarten state grants to municipalities will be replaced with block grants. As a part of this process the ministry is working on adjusting the rules concerning financing of non-municipal kindergartens, so these kindergartens will be treated equally with regard to public grants. This kind of financing has worked well in a period with a very big expansion in the ECEC sector in Norway (see 3.2.2).

3.2.2 Sources from governments

This question aims to identify what kind of public revenue sources are allocated to ECEC services at different levels of governments. Please complete the table below, indicating “x” in the columns applicable in your country.

Types of public finance	Federal/ national	State/ province/ region	Local/ municipal
General tax revenues	x		
Ear-marked tax revenues for ECEC sector			
Earmarked tax revenues for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure			
Transfers from other levels of government as part of general block grants			x
Transfers from other levels of government as block grants to ECEC sector			x
Transfers from other levels of government earmarked for specific ECEC programmes, type of services or categories of expenditure			x

Source(s): Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Known data limitations: _____

3.3 Funding strategy – how to manage financial resources for ECEC

3.3.1 Strategies to increase public spending on ECEC

Has there been an increase in public spending on ECEC services since 2005? If yes, how much increase? What were the driving forces in making a case for increased spending on ECEC? Feel free to answer separately for the childcare and early education sectors if more appropriate in countries with the “split systems”.

Please share your country experience such as:

- where the increased resources came from;
- strategies or research evidence that helped the argument for the increase;
- challenges associated with the increase and policy lessons you have learnt in tackling them;
- key political debates among politicians, general public, and the media of the time;

- how the increased budget was spent (e.g. to build more childcare places, increase the number of staff, increase staff salaries, increase participation of low-income families, etc.); etc.

In 2002 the opposition parties in the Norwegian Parliament entered into an agreement for a reform on the financing of the pre-primary sector. Public funding from state and municipality was to be increased to cover 80 per cent of the costs. Correspondingly, parents' fees were to be reduced and a maximum fee was to be established. The government was asked to make a proposal on how the agreement could be carried out. In 2003 the Conservative-Liberal Government presented a White Paper on Kindergarten offer to all – economy, variety and freedom of choice (No 24 2002-03), and a proposition on changes in the Kindergarten Act. The outcome of the parliamentary debate was a broad political agreement on changes in economic and legal means in the sector. The main objectives were expansion of the sector and reduced parents' fees. The means were a strengthened municipal responsibility for the pre-primary sector and increased state financing.

To reach the goal of full access the government increased the state grants for establishing and running kindergartens. In 2008 87,2 % of children aged 1-5 years and 95,6 % of children aged 3-5 had a place in kindergarten. The state grants have increased over 100 % from 2005 to 2009.

An individual, legal right to a place in kindergarten institution was introduced and put into effect in 2009. The municipalities are obliged to provide a kindergarten place for children that are one year by the end of August the year of admittance and that has applied for a place.

3.3.2 Distribution of public resources to the providers (supply-side subsidies)

Past research categorises supply-side subsidies broadly into two types:

1. government-run and subsidised non-profit private ECEC services; and
2. subsidies to for-profit private providers.

Please fill in the table below with relevant information. Examples are provided in Annex E. Where information is missing, please enter “m”. If your country has the “split system” for childcare and early education sectors, please prepare separate tables; one table for childcare and another for early education.

	Municipalities-run and subsidised non-profit and for-profit private ECEC services	Subsidies to for-profit and non-profit private providers	Others (Specify) Open kindergartens
Name/ type of scheme	<i>Barnehager</i>	<i>Familiebarnehager</i>	<i>Open kindergartens</i>
Duration of programme: hours per day, days per week, hours per year	<i>Full day</i>	<i>Full day</i>	<i>16-20 hours per week</i>
Purpose of subsidies	<i>Ensure equity and quality in children's wellbeing and outcomes</i>	<i>Ensure equity and quality in children's wellbeing and outcomes</i>	<i>Offered to children who not attend kindergarten</i>
Universal or targeted (if targeted, specify conditions or eligibility)	<i>Universal 0-6</i>	<i>Universal 0-6</i>	<i>Universal 0-6</i>
Parents' share (e.g. %, free, set ceiling, etc.)	<i>17%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>Free</i>
Annual costs of programme per child/family (in local currency, year)	<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>M</i>

Source(s): Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Known data limitations: *The information given for “barnehager” accounts for ECEC services runed by the municipalities, non-profit private ECEC services and for-profit private services.*

3.4 **Other policy issues**

Market mechanisms to widen access to, and ensure quality of, ECEC services

3.4.1 How are ECEC services regulated by public authorities? Please detail minimum quality standards. How are these statutory quality standards set? Who polices them and how? How is the quality (e.g. curriculum, staff qualifications, staff-child ratio, space, etc.) of individual services communicated to parents?

The Kindergarten Act No 64 of 17 June 2005, in force from 1 January 2006, regulates the authorisation, operation and supervision of the institutions. The institutions must be approved by local authorities.

The Ministry has laid down regulations according to the Act, among these is the Framework Plan (national curriculum) for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens. The new Framework Plan was laid down 1 March 2006. All approved institutions are obliged to follow the Act and the Framework Plan.

Municipalities have since 1984 had a legal obligation to provide a sufficient amount of places in kindergarten institutions. An amendment concerning an individual, legal right to a place in kindergarten institution was introduced and put into effect in 2009.

The Kindergarten Act sets standards for staff qualifications. According to the regulations there should be at least one trained pedagogical leader per 15-18 children over the age of three and one trained pedagogical leader per 7- 9 children under the age of three. Decisions about the number of personnel employed should be taken on basis of the age of the children, the number of hours in institution and the educational programme. (On average, a kindergarten will have 2 to 3 staff for a group of 15 to 18 children above the age of three, and 2 to 3 staff for a group of 7 to 9 younger children.) The head teacher is also required to have pre-school teacher education/pedagogical education (at bachelor level).

The Directive from the Ministry of Education and Research on the understanding of the Kindergarten Act article 10, defines the minimum standard of space to be 4 squaremeters per child over three years of age, and in addition 1/3 squaremeters more for children under the age of three. The area outside should amount to about 6 times as much as the approved space inside the institution.

According to the Kindergarten Act, every parent in the barnehage (kindergarten) is part of the parents' council. A coordinating committee consisting of parents/guardians and the staff of the kindergarten shall be an advisory, contact-promoting and coordinating body. The owner of the kindergarten shall ensure that matters of importance are submitted to the parents' council and coordinating committee. (Kindergarten Act, section 4.)

3.4.2 Are the for-profit providers eligible for public funding in your country? If yes, besides the financial incentives, what other incentives do you give to stimulate them to provide more and better ECEC services (e.g. regulation or deregulation on the minimum standards)?

All approved barnehager (kindergartens) must comply with the regulations and quality standards irrespective of being run by public, non-profit or for-profit providers. The municipalities are the local authorities for kindergartens, and shall provide guidance and ensure that kindergartens are operated in accordance with the rules.

Norway is on the verge of attaining full kindergarten coverage. The incentive to provide more and better ECEC will therefore be to be able to attract the parents to apply for a kindergarten place in the institution.

3.4.3 If your country has any case studies of a provider failure, inspectorate reports, and/or research on low quality of the private ECEC services, please list references and attach relevant documents, if available.

Financial crisis and ECEC

3.4.4 Please share your country experience with an increase/ decrease on the budget on ECEC services as a result of, or in response to, the economic crisis. Was there a budget cut on ECEC as a result of the crisis; if yes, how much? Has ECEC been included in the stimulus package; if yes, what was the rationale/policy thinking behind the decision?

The financial crisis has not effected the budget on ECEC services in Norway.