

# **The Director General's report**

## **Goals and results 2020**

The Norwegian Safety Investigation Authority (NSIA) prevents accidents and serious incidents through independent investigations. In 2020, the NSIA completed 46 investigations and submitted 38 safety recommendations, in addition to the many safety findings identified in the reports. The reports and safety recommendations are sent to operators, supervisory authorities and ministries for follow-up. In general, collaboration with the parties involved and the authorities is important and works well. The NSIA receives a lot of positive feedback. The follow-up of the safety recommendations is also good, although some recommendations remain to be closed.

The coronavirus pandemic has affected the NSIA's work in 2020. Carrying out call-outs, interviews and handling classified information has been demanding in a situation characterised by extensive national and local mobility restrictions. It has also been challenging to employ a flexible, interdisciplinary work method during the pandemic. Compensatory measures within the framework of national infection control regulations have to a certain extent offset the disadvantages.

Together with other actors, we contribute to a high level of safety and there are relatively few accidents in our areas of investigation. When accidents do occur, however, the consequences and costs are potentially great, and there are still major challenges relating to transport safety. The overall impression is that public confidence in the NSIA is strong, and that this is also reflected in the media. It is my assessment that the NSIA has achieved its primary goal also in 2020.

## **Investigations and reports**

The NSIA initiated 37 new investigations in 2020. In addition, we conducted a number of preliminary investigations that improve our knowledge base and serve as a basis for subsequent investigations into special topics. Reports and recommendations are published on our website and many of our reports are translated into English. The use of video and animation is well received, and our investigations and reports have received much attention in the media and in scientific journals. The reports have also been used for training purposes by educational institutions and expert groups.

The NSIA has had ongoing investigations of major accidents since 2016. This situation requires extensive resources, and the organisation is not dimensioned for that in the long term. The workload has therefore been high, especially in some departments. A heavy workload over time poses a risk and may put strain on the organisation. The NSIA is therefore focusing on measures to reduce the workload of individual employees, among other things through clear management and prioritisation in its investigative work. Resources and expertise have been utilised across departments as much as possible, and we saw a decrease in the backlog of ongoing investigations in 2020.

## **New tasks**

On 1 July 2020, the NSIA took over as the investigative authority for the defence sector, a new, challenging task the NSIA gives high priority to. Investigations have been initiated in different areas of the defence sector, providing the organisation with important experience.

The NSIA expects the defence sector to come up with good systems for notification, access to information and follow-up of safety recommendations. A good dialogue between the defence sector and the NSIA has formed the basis for work on joint guidelines in these areas in 2020.

### **Joint reporting**

The debureaucratisation and efficiency reform has continued in 2020. Improved methods and ICT tools are making the NSIA's work more efficient, but the repeated realisation of efficiency gains and tighter budgets in a situation where the number of investigations is high make the situation demanding in a normal year. The investigation budget must be flexible in order to allow for independent investigation.

There have been no changes in the NSIA's management in 2020, but the number of new recruits in the organisation has been relatively high. The organisation was allocated more resources in connection with taking over as the investigative authority for the defence sector, which explains some of the recruitment. The NSIA is a small knowledge-based organisation, and is vulnerable to absence, sickness and personnel turnover. Focus has therefore been devoted to health, safety and a good working environment, and a working environment survey was conducted in spring 2020. The follow-up work is carried out in cooperation with the corporate health service.

The overall resource consumption in 2020 did not exceed the approved allocation. The pandemic and delayed clarification of new positions led to less spending than budgeted for. The NSIA considers that its management and control systems work well and can be documented in accordance with the Regulations on Financial Management in Central Government etc. This is confirmed by the Office of the Auditor General of Norway and our own internal audits.