

# Norwegian sugar tax sends sweet-lovers over border to Sweden

Jon Henley 23 November, 2019

1 In the shopping centre north of Charlottenberg in south-western Sweden, just four miles from Norway and less than 90 minutes' drive from Oslo, is a sweet superstore. The shop is as big as half a football pitch and contains aisle after aisle of sugary treats, more than 4,000 products in total.

2 The shop is one of around 30 similar confectionery and soft-drink shops along the Swedish side of the border from south to far north. It is, according to Matts Idbratt, operations manager for Gottebitten – which runs half of them – “the biggest sweet shop in the world. We think”.

3 These shops **turn over**<sup>1</sup> about SEK2bn (£160m) a year – and they exist only because the prices of the sweets and soft drinks they sell are, on average, less than half those in neighbouring Norway. “It’s crazy,” said Eirik Bergland, from Oslo. With three children under 12, he **made**<sup>2</sup> three cross-border shopping trips in 2019 – although not just for sweets. “A lot of products are cheaper in Sweden than in Norway,” Bergland said. “Alcohol, tobacco, plenty of stuff. Cross-border shopping **has happened**<sup>3</sup> for decades. But sweets and soft drinks are a lot cheaper.”

4 Matilda Nordholm, 24, **drove**<sup>4</sup> two hours from her home in Norway and spent around £150 – “Not all for me, though”. She was critical. “It’s not right, what these products cost in Norway,” she said. “It’s not normal, and every year it seems the price goes up again, and there’s more tax. People are unhappy they have to pay so much for a little bit of pleasure.” In January, 2018, the levy on chocolate and confectionery was raised by 83% to 36.92 kroner (£3.12) per kilo, while sugary drinks are taxed at about 43p a litre.

5 People may be unhappy, but experts say the exorbitant cost of sweets and soft drinks in Norway may be part of the reason why sugar consumption in the Scandinavian country **has fallen**<sup>5</sup> to a historic low of 24kg per person per year – down from 43kg in 2000 and by 27% in the past decade.

6 In Britain, sugar consumption **rose**<sup>6</sup> 2.6% between 2015 and 2018, an increase blamed on people eating more very sugary products – of which there are more and more in the shops. Roughly one in six children and young people are obese in Norway, compared with one in three in the UK.

7 Linda Granlund, of the Norwegian health directorate in Oslo, said the country’s sugar tax – first introduced in 1922 to raise revenue for the state, rather than improve the health of the nation – was one of many reasons behind the fall.

8 “For several years now, we’ve also had a very successful voluntary partnership with 98 Norwegian and international food and drinks manufacturers who have agreed to improve the diet of Norway’s population, including a commitment to sugar reduction,” Granlund said. “**That’s helped**<sup>7</sup> us cut the sugar in added-sugar soft drinks by 30%, for example.”

9 Finally, Granlund said, Norwegian authorities have “communicated continuously, for many years now, about the need for a healthy diet. As a result, 80% of Norwegians now say they want to avoid consuming too much sugar.” The dramatic rise in the sugar tax on confectionery and sweetened drinks may well have contributed in the past year, she added.

10 Across the border, retailers **were certainly smiling**<sup>8</sup>. The tax increase had “quite an impact on our sales”, said Idbratt, whose sweet superstore is part of a booming cross-border trade that earned Swedish businesses – some owned by Norwegian

investors – SEK16.6bn (£1.3bn) in 2018, 10% more than in 2017. Norwegian shoppers **made**<sup>9</sup> 9.2m trips across the border in 2018, according to Statistics Norway.

11 It is not just Norway's consumers, however, who are unhappy at the ever-increasing cost of having a sweet tooth. Confectionery producers are angry, too, arguing that they **have already cut**<sup>10</sup> sugar content and the higher tax rate represents a double punishment. One major manufacturer, Hval, said in 2019 that the sugar tax increase **had led**<sup>11</sup> to a 27% reduction in sales.

12 The food and drink branch of the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise wants an end to the sugar tax, arguing it is outmoded, harmful to Norwegian industry, a boon for Swedish businesses across the border and – with sugar content and consumption both sharply down – no longer necessary.

13 But the health directorate **is instead promoting**<sup>12</sup> what it believes would be a more effective tax on the healthiness – or otherwise – of a food or drink product rather than just its sugar content, which experts argue treats some relatively healthy products unfairly and allows other junk foods to escape the tax.

Source: <http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/news-lessons/monthly-topical-news-lessons/monthly-news-lesson-norwegian-sugar-tax-sends-sweet-lovers-over-border-to-sweden/558123.article>

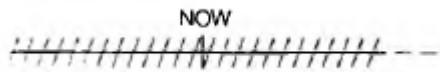
Original: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/23/norwegian-sugar-tax-confectionery-border-sweden>

State the tense and identify the timeline below:

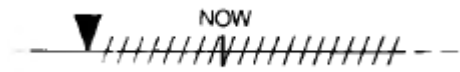
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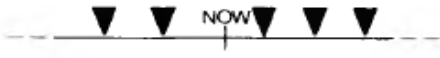
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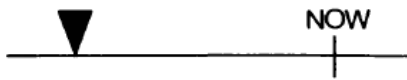
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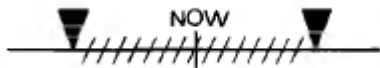
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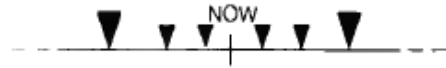
3.



4a.



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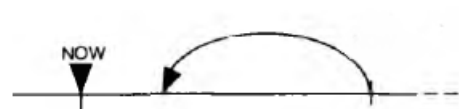
5a.



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5c.



<b>Robić</b>	<b>Do/Make</b>	<b>Zrobić</b>	<b>Do/Make</b>
<i>niedokonany</i>	<i>imperfective</i>	<i>dokanany</i>	<i>perfective</i>
	<b>Present continuous</b>		<b>Present simple</b>
ja robię	I am doing	-	I do
ty robisz	you are doing	-	you do
on robi	he is doing	-	he does
my robimy	we are doing	-	we do
wy robicie	you are doing	-	you do
oni/one robią	they are doing	-	they do
	<b>Past continuous</b>		<b>Past simple/Past perfect</b>
ja robiłem	I was doing	ja zrobiłem	I did / I had done
ty robiłeś	you were doing	ty zrobiłeś	you did / you had done
on robił	he was doing	on zrobił	he did / he had done
my robiliśmy	we were doing	my zrobiliśmy	we did / we had done
wy robiliście	you were doing	wy zrobiliście	you did / you had done
oni robili	they were doing	oni zrobili	they did / they had done
	<b>Future continuous</b>		<b>Future simple/Future perfect</b>
ja będę robił	I will be doing	ja zrobię	I will do / I will have done
ty będziesz robił	you will be doing	ty zrobisz	you will do / you will have done
on będzie robił	he will be doing	on zrobi	he will do / he will have done
my będziemy robili	we will be doing	my zrobimy	we will do / we will have done
wy będziecie robili	you will be doing	wy zrobicie	you will do / you will have done
oni będą robili	they will be doing	oni zrobią	they will do / they will have done
	<b>Conditional (continuous)</b>		<b>Conditional (simple/perfect)</b>
ja robiłbym	I would be doing	ja zrobiłbym	I would do / I would have done
ty robiłbyś	you would be doing	ty zrobiłbyś	you would do / you would have done
on robiłby	he would be doing	on zrobiłby	he would do / he would have done
my robilibyśmy	we would be doing	my zrobilibyśmy	we would do / we would have done
wy robilibyście	you would be doing	wy zrobilibyście	you would do / you would have done
oni robiliby	they would be doing	oni zrobiliby	they would do / they would have done
	<b>Imperative (keep doing)</b>		<b>Imperative (finish doing)</b>
rób	do/make	zrób	do/make
niech robi	let him/her do/make	niech zrobi	let him/her do/make
róbmy	let's do/make	zróbmy	let's do/make
róbcie	do/make	zróbcie	do/make
niech robią	let them do/make	niech zrobią	let them do/make
	<b>Active agent</b>		
robiący	(the) doer / maker		
	<b>Participles</b>		
robiony	(being) done / made	zrobiony	done / made
robiąc	while doing / while making		
	<b>Gerund</b>		
robienie	(the) making		