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OSLO MUNICIPALITY BROUGHT TO COURT ON PROPERTY TAX 1
MAJORITY SAYS NO TO PROPERTY TAX 1

Oslo municipality brought to court on property tax

If the municipality requires a property tax, it must apply to most homeowners, not just a few, according to the home owners' association.

The association has filed a group complaint against the municipality of Oslo on behalf of more than 3,500 homeowners. The case is scheduled in the District Court from Monday to Wednesday next week.

– The property tax is construed such that between 70 to 80 percent of homes are exempt.

– We believe it is not legal to have a property tax that exempt such a large proportion of properties, says, head of the judicial department, Anders Leisner.

Oslo municipality introduced a property tax in 2016. The tax exemption limit was set at NOK 4 million, thereby targeting a mere 20 percent of the households.

Leisner says no other municipalities have such a high limit. The so-called 'Red-Green' city council in Oslo uses the property tax to carry out a redistribution policy, but it is only the Parliament that is allowed to do that, according to the lawyer.

A political question

It is the Assistant County Attorney, Trine Riiber, who will settle the case on behalf of the municipality.

– The municipality of Oslo believes that the property tax is legally enforced, as municipalities have a great deal of discretion in the design of property tax, and that the size of the tax exemption limit is a political issue where the courts can not overrule the municipalities, Riiber told NTB.

Majority says no to property tax

Property tax is debated and disputed. In a new poll 56 percent said they oppose the tax. Six out of seven municipalities are taxing their inhabitants this way.

Both of the Government parties are against the municipal tax, but the Conservatives have no resolution to remove it, and the Progress Party has prioritized other issues, according to VG.

Under the so-called blue-blue Government an additional 41 municipalities have introduced property tax, so that it now required in 365 of the country's 426 municipalities.

International Property Tax Institute

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In connection with VG's party polls, Infact asked people whether they are for or against the property tax. 56 percent say they are against, half as many against leaving 16 percent undecided.

Eight out of ten percent of Conservative voters have little sympathy to the tax, slightly outnumbered by the Progress Party voters, where 83.7 percent said no.

Labour voters are almost split down the middle: 42.8 percent are against, while 40.3 percent is for – leaving 17 percent of Labour voters with no stated opinion.

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