

Pleven district

- ▶ Population (2021)
- ▶ Territory (sq. km)
- ▶ Number of settlements
- ▶ Share of urban population (%)

226,120
4,653
123
67.5



In 2022, GDP per capita in Pleven district continued its significant growth. Salaries and pensions have been rising relatively fast. Economic activity in the district is extremely slack. Investment is rising. The density of the road and rail network is higher than the national average. The rates of local taxes in the municipalities of Pleven district are close to the national averages. Pleven ranks among the districts with relatively high ratings in the indicators measuring the performance of the administration. The process of population aging is worsening. The

district does not perform well in the indicators assessing education. Pleven is a district with strong traditions in the field of healthcare and is among the leaders in this category. The workloads of the local criminal judges are relatively low, but this does not reflect on the speed of delivery of justice. Pleven is the district with the lowest share of forest area. The share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling continues to be relatively high. Cultural life and tourism are characterized by a relatively low intensity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Income and living conditions



Labor market



Investment and business



Infrastructure



Local taxes



Administration



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Demography



Education



Healthcare



Security and justice



Environment



Culture and tourism



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

In 2022, GDP per capita in Pleven district continued its significant growth, reaching 12,900 BGN and outstripping that in most other districts.

Salaries and pensions are also rising relatively fast, though they lag behind the respective national averages. The average annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract has reached 14,600 BGN, and the average monthly pension – 499 BGN.

The Gini coefficient for income inequality is relatively low. An increase is visible in the poverty level in the district. In 2022, the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line reached 31.4%, compared to 22.9% nationally.

Labor market

The share of the working-age population in Pleven district has continued to decline and remains relatively low – 54.9%, compared to 58.5% in the country in 2022. Economic activity is also extremely sluggish (65.8% in the district versus 73.6% in the country) and has declined for the second year in a row. At the same time, employment has increased slightly but remains low, while unemployment has declined slightly but remains high. The employment rate has reached 62.5%, st 70.4% nationally, and the unemployment rate – 7.6%, compared to 5.2% countrywide.

In 2022, the share of the population aged 25–64 with a university degree dropped to 22.8%, st 29.8% in the country, though the share of those with primary or lower education also decreased to 19.7%, compared to 16.0% nationally.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 remains relatively low – 59.2% in Pleven district, st 65.7% countrywide. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 59 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and business

In 2021, the relative number of non-financial enterprises remained unchanged at 42 per 1,000 people, versus 60 per 1,000 people nationally. Investment has registered a considerable rise. FTA acquisition expenditures have reached 2,200 BGN/person, and FDI stocks – 1,500 EUR/person.

Production value in the district has continued to rise considerably, reaching 19,200 BGN/person.

Expenditure on research and development is 94 BGN per capita, higher than that in most districts.

Utilization of European funds in Pleven district remains below the national average. By 30 June 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs

amounted to 2,562 BGN/person, compared to 2,836 BGN/person in the country. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by Belene municipality.

Infrastructure

Pleven district is characterized by a higher than average density of the road and railroad network. However, the share of highways and first-class roads remains relatively limited – 12.2% in 2022, versus 18.5 in the country. Nevertheless, road quality is commensurable with the national average – 40% of the roads are in good condition, compared to the national average of 41%.

The share of households with internet access is rising but remains relatively low – 80.8%, st the average of 87.3% nationally.

Local taxes

In 2022, Pleven district kept local taxes at levels comparable to the national average rates, though the local rates were significantly higher than the average ones in northwestern Bulgaria.

Two of the monitored rates in the district were on average considerably higher than the respective national averages – the tax on non-residential immovable property for legal entities and the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property. For their part, the average taxes on motor vehicles and retail trade are relatively low. Within the district, Pleven city municipality levies the highest local taxes, while the lowest rates are in the municipalities of Dolni Dubnik and Pordim.

Administration

Pleven is among the districts with relatively high ratings in the indicators assessing the work of the local administration. In 2023, the local administrations' self-assessments on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop services continued to exceed the respective national averages.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration has been lagging behind and it is lower, albeit slightly, than the national average – 70.0% in Pleven district, versus 70.3% nationally.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities is relatively low – 22.7%, compared to 29.0% in the country, but the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is higher than average – 84.9%, compared to 84.2% in the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

In 2022, the natural population growth rate remained strongly negative at -13.9% , against the national average of -9.7% . Pleven district also fails to attract new residents and the net migration rate is also negative (-0.5%).

These processes are the main prerequisite for the high level of population aging in the district. In 2022, the age dependency rate as a ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years reached 211.1%, compared to 165.9% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 47.4%, versus 37.7% nationwide.

The share of urban population remains relatively small – 67.5%, compared to 73.6% in the country, and population density in urban areas is also relatively low – 1,010 persons/sq. km, versus 1,404 persons/sq. km nationwide.

Education

The enrolment ratio in 5th–7th grades went up to 90.4% in 2022, though it failed to reach the national average of 90.7%. The share of school year repeaters remains relatively high. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is close to the national average.

Students' performance in Pleven district remained poor in 2023. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 28.0 p., compared to 35.3 p. nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was among the lowest in the country – “Good” 3.51, versus 3.93 in the country, and “fail” grades (below 3.00) made up 27.8%, against the national average of 17.9%.

Pleven is one of the few districts in Bulgaria registering a steady increase in the number of university students over the past few years, though relative to the population it remains half the national average.

Healthcare

Pleven district has strong traditions in the sphere of healthcare and in 2022 it held one of the top places in the country in the indicators for this category. The share of people with health insurance in the region remains at levels above the national average – 93.8% in the district, compared to 93.5% in the country. Indeed, Pleven is the district with the highest number of both GPs and specialist physicians. One local GP cares for 1,233 persons on average, compared to 1,678 persons per doctor in the country. The presence of a medical university in the city of Pleven is one of the prerequisites for the large number of doctors and the well-developed network of medical institutions in the district.

Pleven is also the district best provided with hospital beds. In 2022, their number continued to increase, reaching the unprecedented 11.6 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 beds per 1,000 people in the country. The relative number of

patients treated in the local general hospitals remains considerably higher than in the country – 398 per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people nationwide.

Security and justice

The workloads of the criminal judges in Pleven district are relatively small, which, however, has little effect on the speed of delivery of justice. In 2022, one local judge heard an average of 7.5 cases a month, compared to 10.1 cases nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 93%, against the national average of 89%.

The number of crimes registered in Pleven district, as well as their detection rate, is comparable to the national average. The total number of crimes against the person and property is 11.5 per 1,000 people, versus the average of 11.6 per 1,000 people nationwide, while the detection rate is 50%, against 49% in the country.

Environment

The share of population living in settlements with access to a public sewerage network amounted to 57.3% in 2021, while connectivity to wastewater treatment plants was available to 53.3% of the households, against 66.8% in the country. Both indicators place Pleven district behind the respective national averages, which is also an effect of the relatively low share of urban population.

The average amount of household waste generated in the district is comparable to the national average, while the share of that waste handed over for treatment and recycling also remains relatively high – 83%, versus 74% nationally.

Pleven is the district with the lowest share of forest areas – 7%, compared to 33% nationally for 2022. However, the share of degraded land is also low – 0.18%, versus 0.43% nationally. The installed RES capacities relative to the population are close to the national average.

Culture and tourism

In 2022, Pleven district's cultural life remained characterized by relatively low intensity. There was a significant increase in the number of visits to the local cinemas and museums – 392 per 1,000 people, versus 590 per 1,000 people nationwide, and 612 per 1,000 people, versus 619 per 1,000 people nationwide respectively. Visits to libraries have decreased and their number remains relatively low.

The tourism sector has a weak presence in the district. The number of beds in accommodation facilities is 6 per 1,000 people (compared to 55 per 1,000 people in the country) and the number of overnight stays is 529 per 1,000 people (compared to 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country). The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector is also relatively low.

Key indicators for the district of Pleven

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,268	12,889	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	12,660	14,608	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	28.3	21.6	31.4	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	55.4	55.6	54.9	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	61.6	62.0	62.5	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	10.1	7.8	7.6	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	19.1	19.9	19.7	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	25.4	24.7	22.8	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	15,499	19,194	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,799	2,201	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	1,285	1,508	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	68.9	76.3	80.8	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	37.2	41.3	40.0	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	85.5	89.8	84.9	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	71.7	69.8	70.0	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-13.9	-9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-0.5	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.97	3.61	3.51	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	31.8	28.0	28.0	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	87.3	85.6	90.4	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	73.8	72.6	72.3	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	91.0	92.0	93.8	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	1,243	1,214	1,233	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	10.8	10.9	11.5	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	9.9	10.0	9.2	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	60.2	57.3	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	450	438	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	87.1	82.7	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	93	247	392	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	350	322	529	3,739

* The 2022 data are included in the 2023 study. The same is valid for the previous years.

** The data refer to the 2022-23 academic year, while the State matriculation exams took place in 2023. The same is valid for the previous years.

*** Data are for three-year periods and are updated annually.