

# Razgrad district

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

103,223  
2,488  
103  
47.8



**G**DP in Razgrad district continues to grow. The average monthly pension is the lowest in the country. The performance of the labor market in the district is poor, though in the past year there have been some positive trends. Investment activity remains low. The density of the road network is relatively high, but the share of highways and first-class roads, as well as that of road surfaces in good condition, is extremely low. The average level of local taxes levied by the local municipalities is lower than the national average. The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities is decreasing and remains low.

Razgrad is among the three districts with under 50% of the population living in urban areas. Students' results are extremely low. Razgrad is one of the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. The number of crimes in the district is relatively low and their detection rate is high. Razgrad ranks last among all the districts in terms of the indicators for the environment. The share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network is the lowest in the whole country. Cultural life and tourism in Razgrad district retain their 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

GDP per capita in Razgrad district has continued to grow at an increasing rate, reaching 12,900 BGN/person in 2021. Salaries and pensions in the district are also rising. The average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor and service contract has reached 15,500 BGN. The average monthly pension in Razgrad district has recorded the highest growth rate but remains the lowest in the country – 441 BGN, versus 537 BGN countrywide.

In 2022, the Gini coefficient for income inequality in the district continued to decline and became the lowest in the country. Poverty, on the other hand, has been rising. The share of the population living below the national poverty line is 27.7%, compared to 22.9% nationally.

### Labor market

The performance of the labor market in Razgrad district is traditionally relatively poor, though in 2022 the indicators show some improvement. The share of the working-age population is decreasing but is still close to the national average. The economic activity rate has recorded a significant increase, although it remains among the lowest in the country with a rate of 67.5%, compared to 73.6% nationally. This increase has been accompanied by growth in both employment and unemployment. The employment rate has gone up to 60.2%, and although it remains relatively low (compared to 70.4% nationally), it has managed to eliminate the huge drop of the previous year. The unemployment rate has risen to 9.4%, versus 5.2% nationally.

The educational structure of the workforce has also shown some improvement, though it remains a challenge still facing the local labor market. The share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education continues to be the second highest in the country, after that in Sliven district, though it has decreased to 31.3%, against 16.0% in the country on average. At the same time, the share of those with a university degree has gone up, but remains relatively low – 24.9% in Razgrad, against 29.8% in the country.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 57.4%, compared to the national average of 65.7%. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 57 young people joining the workforce.

### Investment and business

Investment activity in Razgrad district remained low in 2021. Razgrad is among the districts with the lowest relative number of enterprises – 39 per 1,000 people, compared to the national average of 60 per 1,000 people. FTA acquisition expenditures amount to 2,000 BGN/person, compared to the average of 3,100 BGN/person in the country, and FDI stock – to 1,900 EUR/

person, versus 4,100 EUR/person nationally. Production value, however, has risen to 19,200 BGN/person, compared to 31,200 BGN/person in the country.

Utilization of European funds has been lagging behind. By June 30th 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 2,165 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 the municipalities in Isparih and Kubrat.

### Infrastructure

The density of the district's railroad network is close to, though slightly below the country's average. The road network density is higher, but the share of highways and first-class roads is extremely low – 11.1%, compared to 18.5% countrywide, and so is the share of road surfaces in good condition – 26%, versus 41% nationally in 2022.

The relative share of households with internet access went further up in 2022 to reach 86.1%, though it remained lower than the average of 87.3% nationwide.

### Local taxes

In 2023, the average level of local taxes in Razgrad district's municipalities again remained lower than the national average. Among the five monitored local taxes, only the tax rate on non-residential immovable property of legal entities was higher in Razgrad district than the average one in the country. Significantly lower than the national average were the local taxes on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, taxi transportation and retail trade.

Within the district, the lowest taxes are levied by the municipalities in Samuil and Tsar Kaloyan, and the highest – by those in Isparih and Loznitsa.

### Administration

The local authorities' self-assessments on the development of e-government went down in 2023 and continue to lag behind the national average. However, the assessments on the provision of one-stop shop services have gone up and now exceed the country's average.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration is 68.2% and is again below the national average of 70.3%.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities is decreasing and in 2022 it remained low at 21.3%, compared to 29.0% nationally. The coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is 75.3%, compared to 84.2% in the country.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

The natural population growth rate in Razgrad district is relatively low and in 2021 it was  $-13.5\%$ , versus the national average of  $-9.7\%$ . At the same time, the district has managed to attract new residents and the net migration rate is also positive ( $4.4\%$ ), but it cannot compensate for the population decrease.

Population aging in the district is reflected in the age dependency ratios as well. The ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 has reached 186.3%, compared to 165.9% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it is 39.4%, versus the national average of 37.7% in 2022.

Razgrad is one of the three districts, along with those of Kardzhali and Silistra, where less than 50% of the residents live in urban areas. In 2022, 47.8% of the population was urban, compared to 73.6% in the country. Its density is also among the lowest in the country – 768 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,404 persons/sq. km in the country.

### Education

The share of children in the district attending kindergarten is relatively high – 90.3%, compared to 87.3% in the country. The enrolment rate in 5th–7th grades increased in 2022 and outpaced the national average, reaching 92.7%, against 90.7% nationally. The share of school year repeaters is growing but remains below the national average. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy is close to, but below the national average.

Students' results for 2023 were extremely low in Razgrad district. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 25.9 points, versus 35.3 points nationally, and was the third lowest in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was the second lowest in the country – “Good” 3.50, compared to 3.93 in the country, while the share of “fail” grades (below 3.00) was one of the highest – 27.5%, against the national average of 17.9%.

The single provider of higher education in Razgrad district is a branch of Ruse University. This accounts for the small number of university students in the district – the 2022 data show just 2 students per 1,000 people, compared to 33 students per 1,000 people nationally.

### Healthcare

The share of people with health insurance in Razgrad district remains extremely high, covering practically the whole population. At the same time, Razgrad is among the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. In 2022, one local GP cared for 2,362 persons on average, compared to 1,678 persons per doctor in the country. The relative number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals is also relatively small – 5.2 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 per 1,000 people in the country. The relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is low

– 138 hospitalizations per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people nationwide.

The average life expectancy in the district is relatively low and the infant mortality rate – high.

### Security and justice

The workloads of criminal judges in Razgrad district are below the average ones in the country and the speed of delivery of justice – higher. In 2022, one local judge heard an average of 8.0 criminal cases a month, compared to 10.1 cases per judge nationally, while the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 90%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide. Pending cases constituted 7%, against 12% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Razgrad district is relatively low, and crime detection is high. In 2022, the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 9.2 per 1,000 people, versus the average of 11.6 per 1,000 people nationwide. The detection rate dropped slightly to 65%, which was again considerably above the national average of 49%.

### Environment

Among all of Bulgaria's districts, Razgrad ranks last as regards the environmental indicators. Due to the low concentration of people in urbanized areas, it is one of the districts with the worst results for the share of population with access to a sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant, while it held the bottom place as regards the share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network – 41.5%, compared to the national figure of 74.8% in 2021.

Razgrad is also among the districts generating very high amounts of household waste. Its average volume reached 481 kg/person annually, compared to 445 kg/person in the country on average. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling were a mere 10%, versus the national average of 74%.

The share of forest areas is relatively low – 22%, against 33% in the country, but the share of degraded land is also small – 0.16%, against 0.43% countrywide.

### Culture and tourism

Cultural life in the district was not particularly active in 2022. Visits to cinemas and museums relative to the population increased, but remained relatively small in number. For its part, the number of visits to libraries went down.

Razgrad is among the districts with the lowest number of beds in accommodation facilities – 6 per 1,000 people, compared to 55 per 1,000 people in the country. Overnight stays are also limited – 497 per 1,000 people, versus 3,739 per 1,000 people nationally in 2022. The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector of all people employed is four times lower than the national average.

## Key indicators for the district of Razgrad

| Economic Development Indicators  | 2020   | 2021   | 2022 | National average |
|--|--------|--------|------|------------------|
| Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)                        | 10,634 | 12,942 | n.a. | <b>20,212</b>    |
| Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)  | 13,902 | 15,517 | n.a. | <b>18,733</b>    |
| Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)                           | 23.1   | 16.7   | 27.7 | <b>22.9</b>      |
| Share of the working-age population (%)  | 59.8   | 59.9   | 58.2 | <b>58.5</b>      |
| Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)                      | 60.8   | 54.5   | 60.2 | <b>70.4</b>      |
| Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)                      | 10.8   | 8.8    | 9.4  | <b>5.2</b>       |
| Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)      | 30.7   | 34.1   | 31.3 | <b>16.0</b>      |
| Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)                | 19.5   | 21.1   | 24.9 | <b>29.8</b>      |
| Production value per capita (BGN)  | 15,552 | 19,195 | n.a. | <b>31,242</b>    |
| Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)            | 2,294  | 2,046  | n.a. | <b>3,097</b>     |
| Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR) | 1,901  | 1,917  | n.a. | <b>4,098</b>     |
| Share of households with broadband internet access (%)                               | 73.4   | 76.6   | 86.1 | <b>87.3</b>      |
| Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)   | 15.6   | 16.9   | 26.2 | <b>41.1</b>      |
| Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)                           | 74.0   | 78.1   | 75.3 | <b>84.2</b>      |
| Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*                           | 73.8   | 68.1   | 68.2 | <b>70.3</b>      |

| Social Development Indicators   | 2020  | 2021  | 2022    | National average |
|---|-------|-------|---------|------------------|
| Natural population growth rate (‰)  | n.a.  | n.a.  | –13.5   | <b>–9.7</b>      |
| Net migration rate (‰)  | n.a.  | n.a.  | 4.4     | <b>4.2</b>       |
| Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**        | 3.96  | 3.53  | 3.50    | <b>3.93</b>      |
| Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)** | 31.2  | 29.1  | 25.9    | <b>35.3</b>      |
| Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)                                 | 85.5  | 85.5  | 92.7    | <b>90.7</b>      |
| Average life expectancy (years)***  | 72.4  | 71.3  | 70.7    | <b>71.9</b>      |
| Share of people with health insurance (%)   | 95.4  | 96.3  | (100.0) | <b>93.5</b>      |
| Population per one GP (persons)   | 2,298 | 2,293 | 2,362   | <b>1,678</b>     |
| Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population                                 | 8.0   | 7.3   | 9.2     | <b>11.6</b>      |
| Share of pending criminal cases (%)   | 7.8   | 7.2   | 7.3     | <b>11.6</b>      |
| Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)            | 41.6  | 41.5  | n.a.    | <b>74.8</b>      |
| Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)                | 425   | 481   | n.a.    | <b>445</b>       |
| Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)                        | 12.0  | 10.1  | n.a.    | <b>74.0</b>      |
| Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)   | 36    | 85    | 215     | <b>590</b>       |
| Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)                       | 578   | 468   | 497     | <b>3,739</b>     |

\* 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.