Ruse district

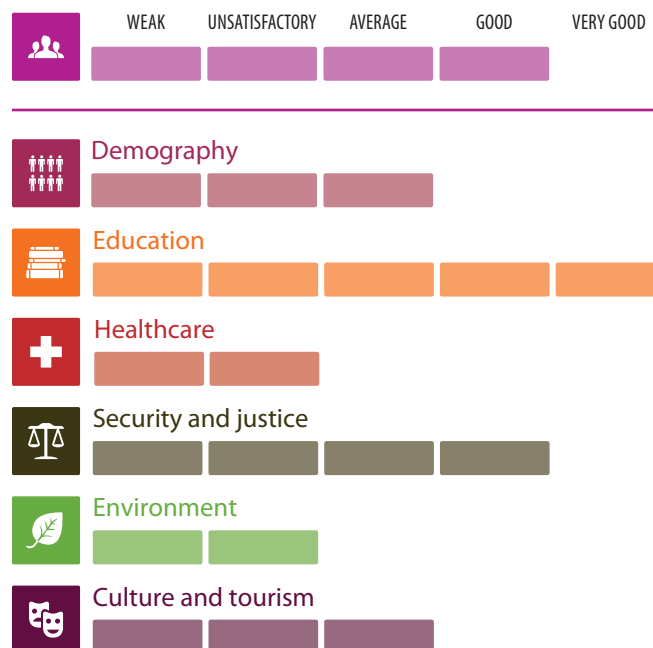|	
▶ Population (2021)	193,483
▶ Territory (sq. km)	2,803
▶ Number of settlements	83
▶ Share of urban population (%)	77.8

GDP per capita in the district has increased and is now the ninth highest in the country. Both employment and unemployment figures remain relatively favorable. Production value per capita in the district has risen and remains relatively high. Ruse is the district with the highest railway network density in the country. The average level of the tax rates levied by the municipalities in Ruse district is close to the national average. The local authorities' self-assessments on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services achieved high scores.

The age dependency ratios in the district remain above the country's average. Students' performance in the district is close to the average one in the country. The healthcare system continues to suffer from a shortage of GPs. The number of crimes is increasing but remains relatively low, and crime detection is above the national average. The share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling remains low. Ruse is among the districts with an intensive cultural life, but the tourism sector is not particularly active.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Income and living conditions

Labor market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

GDP per capita in Ruse district has increased to 15,100 BGN, which was the ninth highest in the country in 2021. Salaries and pensions have also been rising. The average annual gross salary of people employed in a labor and service contract has reached 15,400 BGN, and the average monthly pension – 505 BGN.

The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, was below the national average in 2022. Poverty is declining and the share of the population living below the national poverty line stands at 18.5%, compared to 22.9% nationally.

Labor market

The share of the working-age population in the district has decreased to 57.2%, versus 58.5% in the country.

Economic activity in the district has registered a slight increase and continues to be higher than the national average, reaching in 2022 75%, compared to 73.6% in the country. This increase has been driven by a rise in both employment and unemployment, though their figures remain relatively favorable. The employment rate is 72.3%, higher than the national average of 70.4%, while the unemployment rate is 5.6%, compared to 5.2% nationwide.

Ruse is also among the districts with the most highly educated workforce. The share of university graduates among the population aged 25–64 is the third highest in the country (after the capital and Varna district), even though in 2022 it shrank slightly to 29.0%. The share of people with primary or lower education is only 11.1%, versus 16.0% in the country.

The local labor market continues to face the challenge of population aging. In 2022, the replacement ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 was 57.3%, compared to 65.7% in the country. 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

In 2021, investment activity in Ruse district came close to the national average. The number of enterprises reached 55 per 1,000 people, compared to 60 per 1,000 people in the country. FTA acquisition expenditures continue to rise and have reached 2,700 BGN/person. FDI flows have gone up to 2,200 EUR/person. Production value per capita in the district has also grown and remains relatively high – 32,100 BGN/person.

Utilization of European funds in Ruse has registered a significant increase and for the first time exceeds the average level in the country. By 30 June 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 2,862 BGN/person, against 2,836 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the leader in utilization of EU funding is Byala municipality.

Infrastructure

Ruse is the district with the highest railway network density in the country. The density of the road network and the share of highways and first-class roads are also higher than average. Road quality has improved dramatically and in 2022 47.2% of road surfaces were in good condition, against 41.1% nationwide.

The share of households in the district with internet access has also continued to increase and remains higher than the national average – 88.8% compared to 87.3% in the country.

Local taxes

In 2022, the average level of the tax rates in Ruse district was close to the country's average. Among all monitored taxes, the only one where there was a significant margin with the national average was the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, which in Ruse district's municipalities was lower. For its part, the local tax on retail trade was higher, but it did not differ much from the average levels.

Within the district, the municipality of Ruse city levies the highest local taxes, while the lowest rates are in the municipalities of Tsenovo, Slivo Pole and Vetovo.

Administration

In 2022, the local authorities' self-assessments on the development of e-government showed no change and again failed to reach the national average. However, the self-assessments on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services again achieved high scores.

The AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies rose slightly and again exceeded the country's average.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities has been decreasing and is below average (26.5% in the district versus 29.0% in the country), but the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is high – 101.7% in the district versus 84.2% in the country.

⚏ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪▪

⚎ Demography ▪▪▪

Natural population growth in Ruse district is in serious decline, with a rate of −15.1‰ in 2022, against the national average of −9.7‰. However, Ruse manages to attract new residents, although its net migration rate is low – 0.9‰.

The age dependency ratios in the district remain higher than the national average. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years has reached 215.3%, compared to 165.9% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 43.8%, versus 37.7% nationwide.

Ruse is among the districts with a high level of urbanization – in 2022 77.8% of the population were living in urban settlements, compared to 73.6% nationally, while the population density was 1,467 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,404 persons/sq. km in the country.

▦ Education ▪▪▪▪▪

The proportion of children in the district attending kindergarten is increasing and is higher than average. The enrolment ratio in 5th–7th grade in 2022 was also relatively high, having increased to 92.4%, against 90.7% nationally. The share of school year repeaters, on the other hand, is less than half the national average. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy is relatively good, mainly because of the high number of students and employees in the manufacturing and transport sectors

Students' results for 2023 again remained close to the average ones in the country. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade dropped, albeit slightly, to 35.6 points, compared to 35.3 points nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.82, whereas the national average was 3.93. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 17.5%, against the national average of 17.9%.

The number of university students is 28.2 per 1,000 people, compared to 33.2 per 1,000 people nationally.

✚ Healthcare ▪▪

In 2022, the healthcare system in Ruse district continued to suffer from a shortage of GPs. One local GP was caring for an average of 2,178 people, compared to 1,674 people per doctor in the country. The number of specialist physicians, however, was close to the national average.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the relative number of beds in the local general hospitals, and in 2021, which reached 6.2 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 per 1,000 people in the country. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals was higher than the national average – 269 per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people in the country.

The average life expectancy in the district is close to the national average, though the infant mortality rate in the district rose in 2022 to become relatively high. The share of people with health insurance is above the national average.

⚖ Security and justice ▪▪▪▪▪

Although the workloads of the criminal judges in Ruse district are close to the national average, the speed of delivery of justice is higher than in the country. One local judge hears an average of 10.2 cases a month, compared to 10.1 cases per judge countrywide. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months is 90%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide, and that of pending cases – 8%, versus 12% nationally.

The crime rate in Ruse district has increased but remains relatively low, and the detection rate is above the average one in the country. In 2022, the registered crimes against the person and property in the district constituted 9.3 per 1,000 people, versus the average of 11.6 per 1,000 people nationwide. The detection rate, for its part, increased to 53%, against 49% for the country on average.

🌿 Environment ▪▪

The amounts of household waste generated in the district are close to the national average – 442 kg/person in the district per year, versus 445 kg/person in the country. At the same time, the share handed over for treatment and recycling is growing, though remaining low – 68%, compared to the national average of 74% for 2021.

The share of population with access to a public sewerage system remains relatively low – 67.3%, versus 74.8% in the country on average. Nevertheless, in 2021 the whole sewerage network was already connected to wastewater treatment plants, compared to the national average of 66.8%.

The share of forest areas in Ruse district is relatively small – 15%, versus 33% countrywide. The share of degraded land, however, is higher – 0.53 %, against 0.43% in the country.

The installed RES capacities are extremely small – 0.16 kW/person, compared to 0.85 kW/person countrywide.

🎭 Culture and tourism ▪▪▪

In 2022, Ruse remained among the districts with relatively active cultural life. Cinema visits reached 688 per 1,000 people, against 590 per 1,000 people nationally. Visits to the local theatres and museums also recorded a significant increase. Local libraries attracted 440 visits per 1,000 people, against 589 per 1,000 people nationally.

The tourism sector does not have a strong presence in the district. The number of beds in accommodation facilities is 13 per 1,000 people, compared to 55 per 1,000 people in the country. Overnight stays are also relatively few in number, at 909 per 1,000 people in the district, versus 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country), although they increased by 46% compared to the previous year. The share of people employed in the culture, sports and entertainment sector is half the national average.

Key indicators for the district of Ruse

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	12,592	15,075	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	13,591	15,443	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	22.8	24.0	18.5	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	59.3	59.6	57.2	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	71.4	71.4	72.3	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	7.6	5.4	5.6	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	11.7	11.6	11.1	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	31.2	30.9	29.0	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	24,562	32,084	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	2,101	2,723	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	2,079	2,243	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	80.0	87.9	88.8	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	20.0	40.5	47.2	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	93.2	98.4	101.7	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	74.9	72.2	72.4	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	−15.1	−9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	0.9	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.19	3.88	3.82	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	39.1	35.9	35.6	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	84.5	83.8	92.4	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	74.0	72.9	72.0	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	87.7	88.2	95.5	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	2,254	2,248	2,170	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	8.8	8.5	9.3	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.2	8.3	8.4	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	68.0	67.3	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	426	442	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	59.0	68.4	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	224	395	688	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	422	622	909	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.