

Gabrovo district

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

98,387
2,023
349
79.6



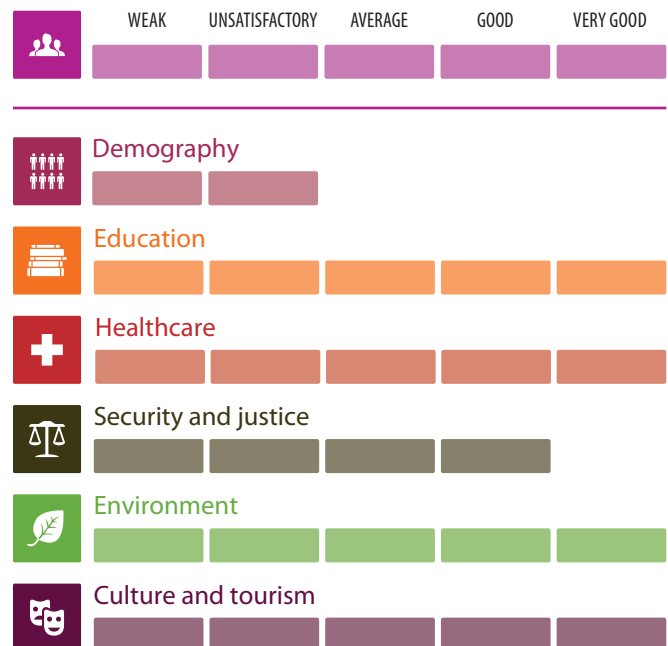
GDP, salaries and incomes in Gabrovo district have continued to grow and the poverty level remains relatively low. The share of the working-age population has declined for yet another year. Business and investment activity in the area is high. Gabrovo has overtaken the capital and is now the district with the highest amount of utilized EU funds per person. Despite the high density of the road network, the share of highways and first-class roads is relatively small. In 2023, the level of local taxes was again relatively low. The coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is low.

Gabrovo is one of the districts with the most unfavorable demographic pictures. Results in the field of education are good. The indicators evaluating health-care place the district among the top performers in the country. Gabrovo is among the districts with the highest share of health-insured persons. The district continues to be the leader as regards the share of cleared crimes. The considerable number of urban residents accounts for the large share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network. Cultural life and tourism in Gabrovo district remain among the most active in the country.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

In 2021, GDP in Gabrovo district continued to grow, reaching 16,500 BGN per capita and was the sixth highest in the country. Salaries and incomes have also gone up. The average gross annual salary of employed people reached 15,800 BGN, and the average monthly pension – 510 BGN.

The Gini coefficient of income inequality remains low at 30.8, versus 38.4 nationally. Poverty increased in 2022 but is still below average. The share of the population living below the national poverty line is 21.9%, against 22.9% in the country.

Labor market

The share of the working-age population continues to decline and in 2022 it was the third lowest in the country (after Vidin and Yambol). The economic activity rate has grown considerably and now stands consistently above the national average – 77.0% in the district, against 73.6% in the country. This growth is accompanied by both a large increase in employment and a slight rise in unemployment. The employment rate has reached 70.9%, compared to 70.4% in the country, and the unemployment rate – 4.1%, compared to 5.2% in the country.

Gabrovo is among the districts with the highest share of employed people with secondary education – 63.0%, compared to 54.2% in the country – which corresponds to its industrial profile. At the same time, the shares of both university graduates and people with primary or lower education are relatively low – 23.5%, compared to 29.8% in the country, and 13.5%, compared to 16.0% in the country, respectively.

A persisting challenge facing the labor market is the aging of the population. In 2022, the demographic replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 was 55.9%, versus 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 56 young people joining the work force.

Investment and business

Business and investment activity in the district again remained high in 2021, ranking the district third in the country in this category (after the capital and Sofia district). The number of non-financial enterprises relative to the population was 56 per 1,000 people, against the national average of 60 per 1,000 people. FTA acquisition expenditures went considerably up to reach 2,500 BGN/person. FDI also increased and reached 3,400 EUR/person, thus placing the district among the top five in the country. Production value also increased to 30,200 BGN/person.

Gabrovo outstripped the capital district in the utilization of EU funds per capita and now ranks first in this category. By

30 June 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs reached 4,333 BGN/person, versus 2,836 BGN per capita nationally. The top place in the district was held by Gabrovo city municipality with 4,900 BGN/person.

Infrastructure

The infrastructural development of Gabrovo district is very good. Gabrovo is the district with the highest road network density in the country – 25.6 km/100 sq. km of territory, compared to 18.0 km/100 sq. km in the country, although in 2022 the share of highways and first-class roads was lower than the national average – 16.6%, compared to 18.5% in the country. The quality of the road surfaces was also lower, though in 2022 it increased to 33.7%, versus 41.1% in the country. Households' access to the internet continues to increase and now exceeds the national average.

Local taxes

Although Gabrovo is among the districts with a relatively highly developed economy, in 2023 the level of local taxes again remained relatively low. The margin is especially big as regards the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, where the rate is 2.53% on average across all the municipalities in Gabrovo district, versus 2.76% nationally. The retail trade tax rate is also considerably lower in the district compared to that in the country.

Within the district, Gabrovo city municipality levies the highest local taxes, while the lowest rates are those of Tryavna municipality.

Administration

In 2023, the self-assessments of the local authorities on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services went up but while the self-assessment on e-government continues to be relatively high, that on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services still lags considerably behind the average ones in the country.

In 2023, the AIP active transparency ratings of the local administration in Gabrovo district remained the same as in the previous year and was relatively high at 72.9%, compared to the national average of 70.3%.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the municipalities in the district is relatively low – 23.3%, compared to 29.0% in the country. The coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is also low at 61.0%, versus 84.2% nationally.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

Gabrovo is among the districts whose demographic condition in 2022 was once again among the most unfavorable ones in the country, ranking immediately above the bottom three (Vidin, Smolyan and Silistra). The natural population growth rate of -18.0% is the second worst in the country, after that of Vidin, against the national average of -9.7% . The net migration rate is positive (2.8%) but it cannot compensate for the low rate of natural population growth.

The trend towards population aging is clearly discernible in the age dependency ratios. The age dependency of the population aged 65+ to that aged 0–14 is 255.3%, compared to 165.9% nationally, and is the third highest in the country, after those in the districts of Vidin and Smolyan. At the same time, the age dependency of the population aged 65+ to that aged 15–64 is 51.6%, versus 37.7% nationally, and is the second highest in the country, after that in Vidin district.

Most of the population of the district is urban – 79.6%, compared to a national average of 73.6%, but its density is relatively low, with 1,105 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,404 persons/sq. km countywide.

Education

The performance of Gabrovo district in the education category is good. In 2022, it was once again one of the districts with a very high rate of enrolment in 5th–7th grade. The percentage of school year repeaters has gone up but remains relatively low. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy is 44.7%, against 53.6% in the country for 2023.

In 2023, the district's average score in the NEA in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was 31.3 points, compared to 35.3 points in the country. The average result in the State matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature was below the national average – “Good” 3.80, versus 3.93 nationally, but the share of “fail” (below 3.00) grades continues to be below the national average – 17.3%, against 17.9% countrywide.

Gabrovo remains among the districts with the highest number of university students – 43.9 per 1,000 people, against 33.2 per 1,000 people in the country.

Healthcare

The indicators evaluating healthcare place the district among the top performers in the country, where it is preceded only by the districts of Smolyan and Pleven.

The average life expectancy of the district's residents continues to decline, but is still higher than the national average. In 2022, Gabrovo remained among the districts with the highest share of health-insured persons. The relative number of GPs is higher than the national average, but specialist physicians are scarce. The number of beds in the local general hospitals has continued to rise but it still stands below the national average.

The number of patients treated in the local hospitals remains relatively low – 217 per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people countrywide. The infant mortality rate in the district has been decreasing and is below the national average.

Security and justice

Although court workloads in Gabrovo district are relatively low, in 2022 this again had little significant effect on the speed of delivery of justice. One local judge heard an average of 8.2 criminal cases per month, compared to 10.1 cases per judge in the country, while the share of cases closed within 3 months was 88%, versus 89% nationally.

In 2022, the number of registered crimes against the person and property decreased and fell below the national average, with 9.6 crimes per 1,000 people in the district, compared to 11.6 per 1,000 people in the country. At the same time, however, Gabrovo continues to be the country's leader in the crime detection rate, with 72% of detected crimes, versus 49% on average for the whole country.

Environment

The relatively high share of urban population in Gabrovo district accounts for the high number of households living in settlements with access to a public sewerage network – 83.3%, compared to 74.8% in the country, and to a sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 72.8%, versus 66.8% nationwide.

The volume of generated household waste in the district remains relatively high – an annual of 427 kg/person, against 445 kg/person in the country. At the same time, however, the share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling is also high at 87%, compared to 74% in the country.

The share of forest areas is above the national average, but that of degraded land is considerably smaller. The installed RES capacities, however, remain limited.

Culture and tourism

Gabrovo district's cultural life remains among the most active in the country and ranks fourth, below Burgas, the capital district and Varna. The main reason for this is the extremely high number of visits to museums – 3,340 per 1,000 people in 2022, against the national average of 619 per 1,000 people. The number of theatre visits is also relatively high. The numbers of visits to libraries and cinemas have increased but have not yet reached the respective national averages.

The number of beds in accommodation facilities in the district is 38 per 1,000 people, against 55 per 1,000 people in the country, and the number of overnight stays is 2,152 per 1,000 people, against 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country in 2022. The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector remains high.

Key indicators for the district of Gabrovo

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	14,651	16,549	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	13,902	15,771	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	22.3	12.3	21.9	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	55.2	55.4	54.3	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	67.7	67.3	70.9	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	5.4	3.9	4.1	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	10.6	11.7	13.5	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	23.1	24.6	23.5	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	24,891	30,226	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,892	2,460	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	3,273	3,382	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	77.5	83.7	88.8	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	26.5	26.5	33.7	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	62.8	57.4	61.0	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	78.9	72.9	72.9	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-18.0	-9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	2.8	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.19	3.87	3.80	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	33.4	30.9	31.3	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	100.0	90.5	92.9	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	74.4	73.2	72.1	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	96.3	96.9	(100.0)	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	1,609	1,567	1,535	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	9.6	10.1	9.6	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	9.1	11.4	8.1	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	84.1	83.3	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	419	427	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	73.7	87.3	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	109	209	336	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	1,044	1,406	2,152	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.