

Montana District

▶ Population (2016)	135,929
▶ Area (sq. km)	3,635.6
▶ Number of settlements	131
▶ Share of urban population (%)	63.7



Overview

GDP, salaries and income in Montana were still considerably below average in 2016 while there were no positive tendencies on the labor market. During 2016 the district had the lowest economic activity in the country; as of the end of 2015 it held the last place in the country for attracting foreign investment relative to the population. The local municipalities' average taxes and fees were also among the lowest in the country. Montana remained one of the districts with relatively low cadastral coverage.

Population ageing in Montana was considerably faster than elsewhere in the country. In 2017 students from the district once again got low grades in the matriculation exam in BLL: a decade-long tendency. The district is short of specialist doctors. Though court workloads are relatively low, justice administration is relatively slow. Montana is still among the districts with the lowest volume of generated household waste and among those with the cleanest air. The district is characterized by relatively low intensity of cultural life.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Weak Unsatisfactory Average Good Very good



Income and Living Conditions



Labor Market



Investment



Infrastructure



Taxes and Fees



Administration



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Weak Unsatisfactory Average Good Very good



Demography



Education



Healthcare



Security and Justice



Environment



Culture



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●

In 2015 GDP per capita started growing in the district of Montana after the decline from the previous year. Yet, it was still lagging considerably behind the national average level: 7,270 BGN/person vs. 12,339 BGN/person nationally. Salaries, on the other hand, kept rising but failed to reach the national average. Household member incomes also rose in 2016 but failed to compensate the decline in 2015 and the relatively low base, thus remaining below the national average by almost 1,000 BGN: 4,191 and 5,167 BGN respectively.

The slowly rising incomes in Montana determined the high share of population below the national poverty line (32.8% vs. 22.9% nationally) in 2015.

Labor Market ●●

Labor market tendencies have not been good in the district. Though unemployment continued shrinking in 2016 and remained below the national average rate, it was accompanied by a considerable decline of economic activity and employment for a second year in a row. Montana thus became the district with the lowest economic activity rate of 56.6%, (vs. 68.7% nationally). The implication is that a greater part of the local working age population had stopped looking for jobs. The employment rate also remained below the national average level by over 10 p.p.: 53.3% and 63.4% respectively.

Apart from the weak inflow of investment, the reason for the unfavorable picture on the labor market could be sought in the relatively poor educational structure of the population. In 2016 the rate of people with higher education in the district declined to 16.4% of those aged 25–64 (vs. 27.7% nationally) while those with primary or lower education remained above the national average level, despite getting fewer in 2016.

Investment ●

Montana became the district with the worst ratio between cumulative FDI and the local population as early as 2013. What is more, in the next two years there was an outflow of foreign investment and by the end of 2015 the cumulative figure was 201 euro/person while the national average was 3,250 euro/person.

Annual FTA expenditures almost doubled in 2015 to reach 1,772 BGN/person (vs. 2,973 BGN/person) while still lagging behind national average levels. Low investment activity was apparent in the relatively small number of working companies in the district: 4,542 or 33 per person (vs. 55 nationally).

The district was also lagging behind in utilization of EU funds from operational programs. Sums paid as of 30th June 2017 reached 1,181 BGN/person (vs. 1,344 BGN/person nationally). The municipality with the largest sum of utilized funds was that of Montana (over 2,000 BGN/person) while that with the smallest sum was that of Yakimovo (under 50 BGN/person).

Infrastructure ●

Road and railroad density in Montana are below national average. The share of highways and first class roads (8.6%) was considerably below the national average rate of 18.6% in 2015, which partly accounted for the poor condition of roads in the district. In 2016, 28% of road surfaces in Montana district were in good condition (vs. 42% nationally).

Household access to the internet increased in 2016 but was still below average.

% Taxes and Fees ●●●●●

The average rates of local taxes and fees in the districts' municipalities rank it among those with the lowest taxes: each of the monitored taxes and fees is far below national average levels. What is more, there was not a single raise in tax rates in the district in 2017. The Yakimovo municipality even lowered by 21% the rate of the tax for vehicles and cars from 74 to 110 kW.

The annual tax on transportation by taxi was also significantly lower than the national average rate: the municipality of Montana was the single exception with a rate of 400 BGN –all other municipalities had rates of 300 BGN, while the national average rate was 525 BGN.

Administration ●●●

The administration's ratings for development of electronic government and availability of one-stop shop services in Montana district have been comparable with the average ratings in the country. Local governments' transparency evaluation was also close to the national average level after a significant improvement in transparency practices in 2017. The highest evaluation was given to the municipalities of Boichinovtsi and Lom (about 70%) while the municipality of Yakimovo was given the lowest of about 21%.

Montana remained among the districts with relatively low cadastral coverage in 2016 with 12.7% of its territory covered by cadastral maps compared to 22% on average in the country. Three of the district's municipalities had 0% coverage (Boichinovtsi, Vulchedrum and Yakimovo).

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●

Demography ●●

The district is well ahead of the rest of the country in population ageing. In 2016 once again the age dependency ratio as a ratio between the population aged 65+ and that aged 0–14 increased to reach 192% (vs. 147% nationally). In other words, old people in the district were almost twice the number of children. The reason was in pronounced negative rates of natural growth and net migration. The natural growth rate retained a level two times lower than the national average rate: -13‰ and -6‰ respectively. That was the second lowest natural increase after Vidin's. The net migration rate dropped sharply from -2.4‰ in 2015 to -5.4‰ in 2016.

Though somewhat increased, the share of urban population in the district (63.7%) remained way below the national average of 73.3%, which explains the relatively low density of the local population.

Education ●●

In 2016 the enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade dropped below the national average level for the first time since 2009. That drop was accompanied by an increased share of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school to levels way above the national average.

In 2017 Montana students got lower than average grades at the matriculation exam in BLL, continuing a ten-year-old tendency. The district's average grade was 4.04 (vs. 4.22 nationally). However, those results were better than the previous year's. Another fact on the positive side was that fail grades shrank to 7% (vs. 8% nationally). In 2015–2016 their share was 11–12% but in 2017 they dropped to 7% vs. 8% average in the country.

Montana is still among the few districts with no universities or university branches located in it.

Healthcare ●●

In 2016 once again the share of insured people in the district was above the national average because of the increasing number of retired people among the local population. The number of GPs was still higher relative to the population than the average in the country but there was still a shortage of specialist doctors. There were 701 local people per specialist (vs. 530 nationally).

Despite the shortage of medical specialists, the number of beds in general hospitals was maintained at a comparatively high level in the district in 2016: 6.4 beds per 1,000 people (vs. 5.1 per 1,000 people nationally). The number of hospitalizations was also above average: 277 per 1,000 people (vs. 235 per 1,000 people nationally).

Infant mortality increased in 2016 to a level almost twice the national average.

Security and Justice ●●

Courts in Montana district still had relatively low workloads in 2016 again. A criminal judge in the district court saw an average of 6.3 cases a month (vs. 9.4 cases a month on average in the country). Despite the low workloads, however, administration of justice in the district was relatively slower. 85% of criminal cases were closed within 3 months (vs. 89% nationally) and the share of pending cases was 10% (vs. 8% nationally).

The relative number of registered crimes against the person and property in the district (12.0 per 1,000 people) remained low, though close to the national average of 12.6 per 1,000 people. The share of cleared crimes (51%) was higher, though also close to the national average of 48%.

Environment ●●●

The relatively low urbanization in the district comes to explain the limited access of the population to sewerage systems: 60% in Montana district vs. 76% nationally in 2015. Connectivity to wastewater treatment plants at 35% was even more limited compared with the national average of 62%.

At the same time, Montana remained one of the districts with the smallest amount of generated household waste relative to the population and the cleanest air. Generated household waste was 276 kg/person annually (vs. 422 kg/person in the country). Carbon dioxide emissions – 5 t/sq. km – were dozens of times lower than the average of 324 t/sq. km in the country.

Culture ●

The district was characterized by a relatively unintensive cultural life once again in 2016. The only noticeable positive tendency was the interest in local theaters. During the last few years, theater visits rapidly increased: from 50 per 1,000 people in 2012 to 301 per 1,000 people in 2016, which was almost equal to the national average rate of 322 visits per 1,000 people. At the same time, however, interest in museums dropped for the second consecutive year to reach 206 visits per 1,000 people (vs. 734 per 1,000 people nationally).

In 2016 Montana was still among the few districts without a single cinema.

Key Indicators for the District of Montana

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	6,150	6,278	6,813	6,642	7,270	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,961	2,994	3,276	4,117	3,021	4,191
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,289	6,572	6,995	7,449	7,971	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	30.6	27.2	41.6	31.5	32.8	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	61.6	62.7	63.8	67.1	58.5	56.6
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	52.9	53.3	53.0	55.9	53.7	53.3
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	14.1	14.9	16.7	16.3	8.2	5.8
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	15.8	18.1	18.4	17.1	17.3	16.4
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	31	31	31	32	33	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,128	997	1,077	999	1,772	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	173	217	267	244	201	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	29.0	37.5	36.4	47.9	36.8	58.7
Share of roads in good condition (%)	25.8	22.0	29.1	31.4	31.4	28.2
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.3	12.7

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-12.3	-12.8	-11.7	-12.8	-13.2	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	-3.2	-3.4	-2.7	-3.2	-2.4	-5.4
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.38	4.10	4.17	4.19	4.04	3.88
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	3.16	9.41	6.40	6.91	10.75	12.44
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	81.9	81.1	81.7	80.5	80.6	77.5
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	87.9	87.1	86.1	87.4	89.0	88.6
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	245.1	255.3	260.4	261.5	267.7	276.6
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	14.3	14.1	13.3	11.9	13.4	12.0
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	46.3	38.4	38.7	43.2	41.5	51.2
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	10.0	12.5	10.3	11.3	14.5	10.0
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	33.9	34.0	34.2	34.3	35.1	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	5.4	5.8	6.5	7.9	5.0	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	66	50	67	81	118	301