

Pleven District

- ▶ Population (2016) 250,062
- ▶ Area (sq. km) 4,653.3
- ▶ Number of settlements 123
- ▶ Share of urban population (%) 66.5



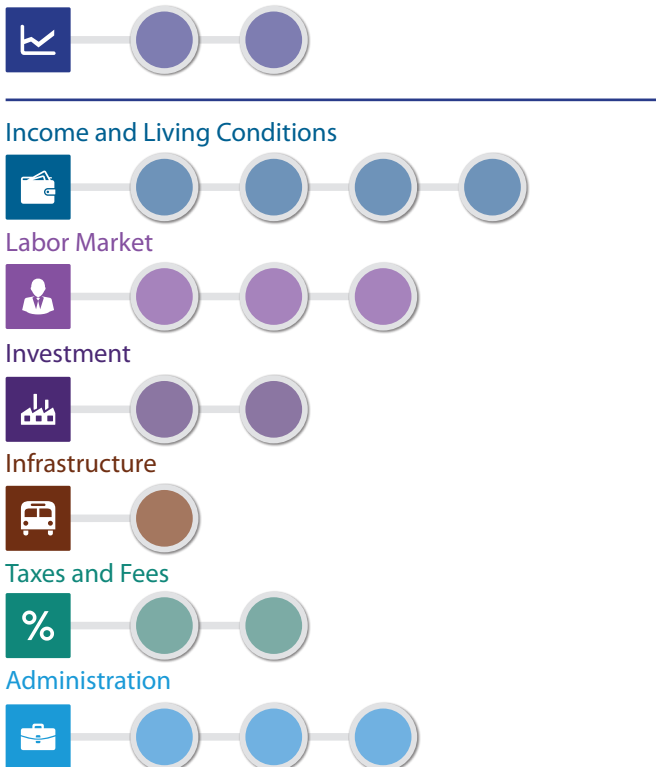
Overview

Both GDP per capita and salaries grew at a slower pace in the district of Pleven than they did in the country as a whole, and the district is lagging further behind. In 2016 the decline in employment and the rise in unemployment were in contrast to the positive general trends in the country. Investment activity in the district was relatively low. Access to the Internet and its usage by the local population remained considerably lower than the respective national levels. The evaluations of the administration for the development of electronic government and the availability of one-stop shop services in Pleven's

municipalities were comparable with the national average levels. The district of Pleven was among those districts with the lowest natural increase in 2016. The net migration rate dropped as well and reached its lowest level in the last ten years. Matriculation exam results in the district were relatively poor. Pleven is one of the districts with the best ratings for the state of healthcare. Judges' workloads are relatively low and the administration of justice is relatively fast. Though interest in museums is traditionally high, cultural life in the district lacks intensity.

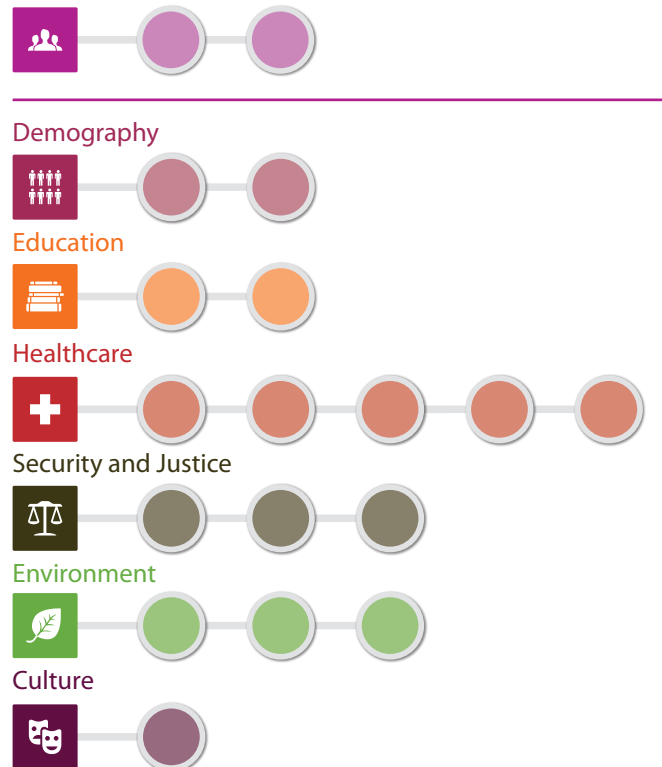
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Weak Unsatisfactory Average Good Very good



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Weak Unsatisfactory Average Good Very good



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●●●

GDP per capita kept growing in 2015 but the rate of its growth in the district was below the national average: it reached 7,039 BGN while the national average was 12,339 BGN. Salaries presented a similar picture. While the size of the gross average annual salary in the district was over 80% of the national average before the crisis, in 2015, it was below 75%: 7,892 BGN in the district vs. the national average of 10,535 BGN.

However, the average annual income per household member remained relatively high in 2015. That was the reason why the district of Pleven was close to the national average levels in share of population living in material deprivation (27% vs. 32% nationally) and of population living below the national poverty line (24% vs. 23% nationally).

Labor Market ●●●

In 2016, economic activity in the district went down in tune with the national tendencies reaching 66.5% (vs. 68.7% nationally). But while in the country as a whole this process was accompanied by rising employment and decline in unemployment, precisely the opposite happened in the district of Pleven. Employment dropped to its pre-crisis level, which it had managed to surpass in 2015 and reached 59.5% when the national average level was 63.4%. Pleven was also one of the few districts in which unemployment was on the rise in 2016. While unemployment in the country dropped by 1.4 p.p., in Pleven it grew by 1.4 p.p. to reach 10.6%.

The educational structure of the population aged 25–64 was another indicator which deteriorated. The share of people with tertiary education registered a slight drop to 24.1% while that of people with primary or lower education grew to 19.3%. Yet, differences from the respective national average figures were relatively small.

Investment ●●

Investment activity was relatively low in the district in 2015. The number of enterprises increased to 39 per 1,000 people but remained below the national average of 55 per 1,000 people. FTA acquisition expenses also grew that year to reach almost 2,000 BGN/person when the national average was about 3,000 BGN/person.

Attracted foreign investment in the district was relatively low. In 2015 there was even a small drop and its size as of the end of that year reached 1,230 euro/person while the national average was 3,250 euro/person.

The district of Pleven utilized relatively small amounts of EU funds. As of 30th June 2017 the sums paid from operational programs to beneficiaries in the district of Pleven amounted to 228 m BGN or 914 BGN/person (vs. 1,344 BGN/person

nationally). The municipality with most utilized funds was once again that of Belene with almost 4,000 BGN/person while none of the remaining ten municipalities in the district went over the 1,000 BGN/person mark.

Infrastructure ●

The density of the road and railroad networks in the district was comparable with the national average figures but the share of highways and first class roads was lower: 12% in 2015 when the national average rate was 19%. The quality of roads in Pleven was similar to that in the country as a whole: in 2016, 41% of road surfaces were in good state (vs. 42% nationally).

Access to and usage of the Internet remained considerably below national average rates in 2016: both the share of households with Internet access and that of people who had used the Internet the previous year shrank to 50% (vs. 64% and 63% on average in the country respectively).

% Taxes and Fees ●●

The tax on immovable property of legal entities in the district was considerably above average; it even rose further because of raised rates in the municipalities of Belene and Nikopol. The property transfer tax was also above average: its rates in most of the district's municipalities were higher than national average rates.

The average rate of the annual license tax for retailers, on the other hand, was considerably below the national average and remained unchanged in 2017. Even its highest rate, that of the city municipality of Pleven, was lower than the national average. The vehicle tax remained lower, too; as it was lowered further in the municipality of Dolna Mitropoliya the difference increased. The taxi transport tax in the district's municipalities was also lower than the national average.

Administration ●●●●

In 2017 the municipal administrations' self-evaluations on the development of electronic government and the availability of one-stop shop services in the district's municipalities were comparable to national average levels. Administration transparency in the district increased in 2017 and remained above average but the difference was dwindling. The municipalities of Dolna Mitropoliya and the city of Pleven were evaluated as the most transparent, while the least transparent municipality was once again that of Levski.

The district's cadastral coverage grew in 2016 though it remained below average. There were still four municipalities in the district without any cadastral coverage at all.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●

Since 2011 the natural increase rate in the district has retained the same level of about –10‰, which is considerably below the national average level. Once again the district of Pleven had one of the lowest natural growth rates in 2016. The net migration rate also declined in 2016 to reach its lowest level in ten years.

These processes predetermined the fast population ageing in the district. In 2016 the ratio of age dependency as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to that aged 0–14 was 186% while the national average rate was 147%.

Pleven is one of the relatively poorly urbanized districts: 67% of the local population lives in towns compared to 73% nationally, which is reflected in the lower population density in the district as well.

Education ●●

The net enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade in Pleven has been above average in the last 5–6 years. In 2016 it reached 83% in the district while the national average was 78%. Despite the wider enrolment in educational structures in the district the shares of repeaters and those of dropouts from primary and secondary education were considerably above national average shares.

Matriculation exam results also remained lower. The students from Pleven got some of the poorest grades at the matriculation BLL exam in 2017: their average grade was 3.98 (vs. 4.22 nationally). The share of fail grades was also relatively high: almost 14% of people who sat the exam in the district got poor grades (vs. 8% nationally).

In 2016 the number of university students in the district was above 2,000 for the second year in a row which was a district record but compared to other districts in the country offering tertiary education, that was a relatively low number.

Healthcare ●●●●●

Pleven was one of the districts with the best ratings for healthcare in the country based on the monitored indicators in 2016. 98% of the population had health insurance (vs. 88% nationally). The availability of doctors was high as well. Pleven ranked first in the country for its relative number of GPs: 1 for 1,216 people (vs. 1 for 1,611 people in the country as a whole). The district ranked second (after the capital) in availability of medical specialists: one for 399 people (vs. one for 590 people on average nationally).

Traditionally Pleven has had the largest number of beds in general hospitals relative to the population. In 2016 there were 7.4 beds per 1,000 people (vs. 5.1 per 1,000 people na-

tionally): a prerequisite for a secure second place of Pleven (after Plovdiv) for the greatest number of hospitalizations: 325 per 1,000 people (vs. 235 per 1,000 people nationally).

Security and Justice ●●●

The administration of justice in the district was characterized by low workloads for judges and relatively speedy closing of cases. Criminal judges in the district court saw an average of 7.6 cases a month (vs. 9.4 cases a month per judge nationally) in 2016. The share of cases to be closed in three months remained 95% (vs. 89% nationally) while the share of pending cases remained below the national average.

Though the crimes against the person and property registered in the district declined in 2016, at the rate of 14.5 per 1,000 people, they were above the national average rate of 12.6 per 1,000 people. At the same time, the district's crime clearance rate (48.5% cleared crimes) was above, though slightly, the national average rate of 48.2%.

Environment ●●●

The district population's low connectivity to sewerage has been a consequence of the relatively low urbanization. In 2015, 57% of the local people lived in areas with public sewerage (vs. 76% nationally) while 50% had access to sewerage systems connected with wastewater treatment plants (vs. 62% nationally).

The air in the district of Pleven was relatively clean in 2015. Carbon dioxide emissions were seven times lower than national average levels. Pleven was also one of the districts with the smallest amount of generated household waste relative to the population.

Culture ●

Interest in museums has traditionally been higher in the district than the national average figure. In 2016, 891 visits per 1,000 people were registered in it while the national average rate was 734 per 1,000 people.

The remaining indicators in this category showed a relatively low intensity of cultural life in Pleven. Visits to the local theaters were more than two times fewer than the national average: 142 per 1,000 people vs. 322 per 1,000 people nationally; library visits were four times fewer (141 per 1,000 people vs. 605 per 1,000 people nationally). Cinema visits registered a considerable number (507 per 1,000 people), but they, too, were below the national average rate of 778 per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Pleven

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	6,392	6,369	6,676	6,734	7,039	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,902	5,091	5,431	5,043	5,645	5,666
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,308	6,646	7,046	7,400	7,892	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	21.4	19.6	10.0	22.9	23.6	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	61.6	61.9	66.1	63.7	67.5	66.5
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	54.1	55.5	58.1	58.0	61.2	59.5
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	12.0	10.3	12.1	9.0	9.2	10.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	18.5	21.7	22.9	23.6	24.5	24.1
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	35	35	36	37	39	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,079	1,833	1,618	1,473	1,992	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	652	736	1,191	1,191	1,130	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	35.8	37.3	47.6	43.8	54.5	50.3
Share of roads in good condition (%)	29.2	31.0	38.8	39.0	39.0	40.5
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.8	12.5

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-9.6	-10.1	-9.1	-10.0	-10.0	-9.8
Net migration rate (‰)	-2.5	-4.4	-4.7	-4.0	-4.9	-5.7
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.33	4.06	4.13	4.10	4.01	3.96
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	4.66	8.03	8.73	7.93	10.20	14.72
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	83.5	82.7	83.5	82.9	80.4	82.9
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	89.4	88.8	88.2	89.5	90.8	90.8
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	207.1	277.8	308.7	235.9	323.2	325.2
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	16.5	15.9	16.7	15.7	16.0	14.5
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	42.1	38.5	36.7	39.2	36.3	48.5
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.3	6.2	5.3	11.0	8.1	5.8
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	41.0	41.0	41.2	41.3	49.8	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	62.3	50.6	52.8	56.7	44.2	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	192	185	214	388	511	507
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	108	126	141	138	172	142