Silistra District

▶ Population (2016)		112,603
▶ Area (sq. km)		2,846.3
▶ Number of settlements		118
▶ Share of urban population (%)		44.3

Overview

Salaries and incomes increased during the last few years but remained considerably below the national average figure. The indicators of the district's labor market placed it last in the country. Investment activity in the district continued to be relatively low. Road quality was relatively high. The average rates of local taxes and fees in the municipalities of the Silistra district were bel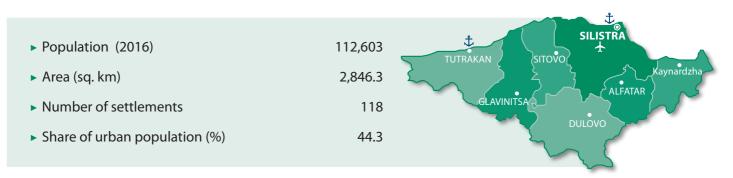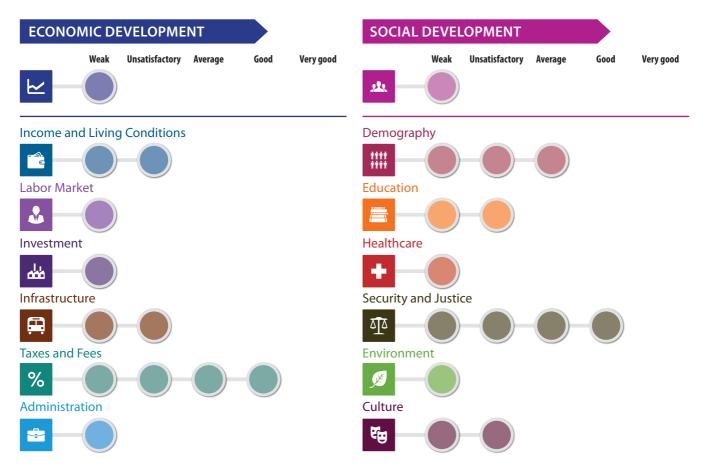ow the national average rates. The work of municipal administrations got low ratings. Population ageing in Silistra district has been faster and more clearly expressed than the general processes in the country. Matriculation exam results rose in 2017, while remaining considerably below national average figures. Healthcare in the district suffered from doctor shortages and a limited hospital capacity. Silistra was among the districts with relatively low court workloads, low crime rates and high clearance rates. The low urbanization level in the district comes as an explanation for the exceptionally low sewerage connectivity of the population. The intensity of cultural life in Silistra has been relatively low.

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

GDP per capita in the district rose for the third successive year in 2015 but its growth was insignificant in view of its low base. That year it remained over two times lower than the country average: 5,933 BGN/person vs. 12,339 BGN/person in the country.

In recent years, salaries and incomes in the district have increased as well, though staying considerably below national average levels. The annual average income per household member in 2016 reached 3,922 BGN while the national average was 5,167 BGN/person.

The relatively low incomes have been the reason behind the relatively high share of the population living in material deprivation in the district – though it was above average levels, in 2015 the difference was not big. The share of the local population living below the national poverty line was also close to the national average level.

Labor Market

Once again, the indicators of the labor market placed the district last in the country.

Employment was still exceptionally low in 2016, though it rose by 3 p.p. to 52.2% – thus overtaking the district of Vratsa as the district with the lowest employment. By way of comparison, the national level of employment was 63.4%. In 2016, when unemployment in Silistra also shrank dramatically (by 4.9 p.p.), Silistra lost the first place in unemployment to Shumen. Still, unemployment in Silistra at 16.9% remained over twice the national average of 7.7%.

One of the explanations behind the high unemployment in the district is the exceptionally unfavorable educational structure of the population. Among people aged 25–64 in the district 19% had university degrees in 2016 while the national average rate was 28%; 35% had primary or lower education (vs. 18% nationally).

Investment

Investment activity in the district remained relatively low though in 2015 a certain recovery was registered in it. FTA acquisition expenditures increased by over 50% compared with 2014 to reach 2,244 BGN/person and came close to the national average levels of 2,973 BGN/person. Silistra has been the district with the lowest FDI inflow so far, 2015 being the second year in a row with a net outflow. As of the end of 2015, FDI in the district was 256 euro/person while the national average rate was 3,250 euro/person.

Silistra was also slow in EU fund utilization. As of 30th June 2017 the sums paid from operational programs were

929 BGN/person compared with the national average of 1,344 BGN/person. The municipality with most utilized funds was Silistra and that with least utilized funds was Dulovo.

Infrastructure

In view of the district's location in Bulgaria's periphery, the road and railroad density in Silistra district is below average. So is the share of highways and first class roads. Yet, road quality remains high. In 2016 the share of road surfaces in good condition was 53% (vs. 42% nationally).

The share of households with Internet access as well as that of people who used it remained considerably below average in 2016 once again.

Taxes and Fees

The average local taxes and fees in the district of Silistra were once again below national average levels in 2017. This difference was particularly conspicuous in the rate of the annual license tax for retailers. Even in the municipalities where this rate was highest, Tutrakan and Dulovo, each with 12 BGN/sq. m, it was below the national average of almost 13 BGN/sq. m.

In 2017 not a single one of the Silistra municipalities changed its rates for the basic local taxes and fees.

Administration

The overall evaluation of the local administration's work was not good and the district took the last but one place in this category.

The administration's self-evaluation for the development of electronic government and one-stop shop services in the district's municipalities continued to be below average in 2017 once again. Local government transparency was also relatively low, the poorest results being those in Dulovo and Kainardzha, while the best were those in the municipality of Alfatar.

The cadastral map coverage of the district's territory was also slow. In 2016 coverage remained at 16.2% (vs. 22.5% national average). The municipality of Kainardzha still has 0% coverage.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●

Demography ● ● ●

Population ageing in the district is faster and more clearly expressed than in the rest of the country. In 2016 the age dependency ratio as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to that aged 0–14 reached 169.8% while the national average rate was 147.1%. Low birthrates as well as outmigration were the reasons for this result. In 2016 the natural increase rate rose but remained below the national average. However, in the last few years a shrinking net migration rate became noticeable.

Silistra was among the districts with the lowest share of urban population (it is lower only in the district of Kardzhali) of 44.3% (vs. 73.3% nationally). The population density of 867 people/sq. km is also two times lower than the national average rate of 1,548 people/sq. km.

Education ● ●

In 2016 the share of children enrolled in 5th–8th grade dropped to 76.6% compared to 78.2% nationwide. The shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education, however, continued to be lower than the national average.

Matriculation exam results improved in 2017, and Silistra was no longer the district with the lowest grades. The average grade at the exam in BLL in the district was 3.95 (vs. 4.22 nationally). The share of fail grades was almost twice the national average: 13.25% in the district compared to 7.98% in the country.

The number of teachers in the district has been on the increase but also without reaching over the national average line. The number of university students on its part has been declining in tune with the national tendency.

Healthcare ●

As previously, healthcare in the district suffered from shortages of medical personnel and insufficient hospital capacity. In 2016 there were 1,964 people per GP (vs. 1,611 people per GP in the country) and 751 people per specialist (vs. 530 nationally). Hospital beds increased in 2016 but stayed below the national average level: 4.4 per 1,000 people vs. 5.1 per 1,000 people nationally.

Doctor shortages and the relatively small number of hospital beds are possible explanations for the small number of hospitalizations in the district: 217 per 1,000 people (vs. 235 per 1,000 people nationally).

There was a positive tendency in infant mortality in 2016: for the second successive year the rate kept dropping to reach a level below the national average.

Security and Justice ● ● ● ●

In 2016 once again Silistra was among the districts with relatively low workloads for judges: a criminal judge at the district court saw an average of 6.2 cases a month while the national average number was 9.4 cases a month. Despite the low workloads, however, the speed of justice in Silistra did not differ much from that in the rest of Bulgaria. The share of cases closed within 3 months was 91% while the national average rate was 89%, and the share of pending cases was over 10% (vs. 8% nationally).

Silistra was one of the districts with relatively few registered crimes against the person and property and a crime clearance rate considerably above average. Registered crimes numbered 9.1 per 1,000 people (vs. 12.6 per 1,000 people nationally), whereas cleared crimes reached 71% (vs. 48% nationally).

Environment ●

Indicators in the category place the district last in the country. Low urbanization is the explanation for the exceptionally low connectivity of the population with sewerage: in 2015, 52.5% of it had access to public sewerage compared with 75.5% on average in the country and 7.6% had access to sewerage connected with wastewater treatment plants (vs. 62.3% nationally).

In 2015 the quantity of generated waste in the district rose to overtake the national average figures. Generated household waste per person in Silistra reached 458 kg annually vs. 422 kg nationally.

Silistra is still among the districts with relatively clean air: carbon dioxide emissions in the district are over 20 times lower than the national average relative to the territory.

Culture ● ●

The intensity of cultural life in Silistra was relatively low, the only exception being the interest in local libraries which rose once again in 2016 to reach 1,663 visits per 1,000 people while the national average rate was 605 per 1,000 people.

Museum visits remained three times lower: 219 per 1,000 people compared with 734 nationally. The greatest difference was registered in cinema visits – 76 visits per 1,000 people in the district vs. 778 per 1,000 people nationally.

Interest in local theaters was also lower. In 2016, 225 visits per 1,000 people were registered while the national average rate was 322 per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Silistra

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,621	5,410	5,618	5,852	5,933	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,589	3,337	3,249	3,289	3,521	3,922
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,059	6,390	6,880	7,215	7,494	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	18.7	17.8	20.2	19.8	20.4	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	57.3	60.7	61.4	64.7	63.1	62.8
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	50.1	50.9	48.2	50.0	49.2	52.2
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	12.5	16.0	21.3	22.4	21.8	16.9
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	15.4	15.8	15.1	14.4	16.4	18.5
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	32	33	33	33	35	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,259	1,442	1,511	1,436	2,244	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	65	111	287	275	256	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	40.0	56.5	37.6	60.2	56.4	55.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	40.0	39.0	44.8	46.7	46.8	53.1
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	16.2	16.2

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−7.7	−8.1	−6.8	−8.4	−9.0	−7.1
Net migration rate (‰)	−2.0	−2.4	−3.2	−3.4	−3.5	−4.3
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.27	4.13	4.13	4.15	3.88	3.80
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	4.52	5.14	3.96	3.55	8.97	13.93
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	81.6	81.5	80.1	78.7	78.7	76.6
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	86.8	85.6	84.9	86.0	87.6	87.4
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	165.0	181.5	202.4	204.8	208.6	217.4
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	9.3	8.7	8.3	8.0	9.6	9.1
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	62.1	60.3	62.4	62.1	62.0	70.8
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.7	7.8	6.4	12.4	5.4	10.8
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	0.6	0.6	0.6	6.2	7.6	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	23.9	17.5	13.1	14.7	15.0	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	10	0	0	69	115	76
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	131	145	192	188	188	225