

Sliven District

► Population (2016)	190,487
► Area (sq. km)	3,544.1
► Number of settlements	120
► Share of urban population (%)	65.8



Overview

Sliven was the district with the lowest GDP per capita in 2015. Incomes shrank in the district once again in 2016. Increased economic activity in it was accompanied by a stable increase in employment and shrinking unemployment, though both indicators failed to reach national average levels. Sliven continues to be the district with the lowest investment activity. In 2016 the district once again had the highest share of road surfaces in good condition. On the whole, the average tax load in the district was comparable to the rest of the country. The development of administrative services

is likely to lose its better ranking from the previous period. Sliven remains one of the districts with the most favorable population age structure but also with the worst education profile in the whole country. Administration of justice in the district can be characterized as fast and crime clearance rates are high. Sliven is still one of the districts with relatively low air pollution and small amounts of generated waste. Cultural life in the district is not particularly intensive except for the rate of theater visits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Income and Living Conditions



Labor Market



Investment



Infrastructure



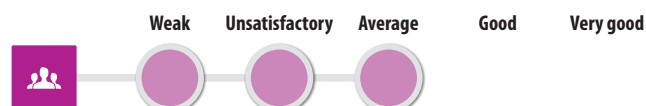
Taxes and Fees



Administration



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Demography



Education



Healthcare



Security and Justice



Environment



Culture



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●

Income and Living Conditions ●

Sliven was the district with the lowest GDP per capita in 2015. It was also one of few districts where it shrank, though slightly (while it rose by 7% nationally) to reach 5,921 BGN/person with the national average level at 12,339 BGN/person. Incomes also shrank: in 2016, the average income per household member in Sliven was 3,685 BGN (vs. 5,167 BGN nationally).

That comes as an explanation for the considerably lower living standard in the district. Both the share of population living in material deprivation and that living below the national poverty line remained above the national average levels in 2015.

A positive tendency was noticeable in annual average gross salaries in the district. They went on growing, though staying considerably below average: 7,830 BGN compared with 10,535 BGN nationally in 2015.

Labor Market ●●●●

Economic activity in the district grew considerably in 2016 for the second successive year but was still below national average. There was a positive trend of rising economic activity accompanied by a simultaneous rise in employment and drop in unemployment though neither indicator managed to reach the national average level. In 2016 the district's employment rate reached 58.9% while it was 63.4% in the country as a whole, while the unemployment rate dropped to 9.2% (vs. 7.7% nationally).

The district's labor market suffered from the unfavorable educational structure of the population. In 2016 the share of people aged 25–64 with primary or lower education rose to 20% (vs. 18% nationally) while the share of university graduates dropped to 21% (vs. 28% nationally).

Sliven has remained the district with the highest demographic replacement ratio. It went on rising in 2016 and reached its highest level since 2011 – 81.4%.

Investment ●

Sliven was still the district with the lowest investment activity in 2015. It was one of the districts with the lowest relative number of enterprises (36 per 1,000 people vs. 55 per 1,000 people nationally); it was also the district with the lowest FTA expenditures – 1,202 BGN/person vs. 2,973 BGN/person nationally. An outflow of FDI has been observed for the fourth year in a row; it reached a cumulative 474 euro/person as of the end of 2015 when the national average level was about 7 times higher: 3,250 euro/person.

Sliven went on being one of the districts with the lowest EU fund utilization. Sums from operational programs paid in

the district reached 623 BGN/person as of 30th June 2017 when the national average was 1,344 BGN/person. The municipality of Tvarditsa utilized least funds in the district while that of the city of Sliven utilized most.

Infrastructure ●●

The road and railroad density in the district was comparable to the national average rates in 2015 while the share of highways and first class roads (22.0%) was above the national average (18.6%). That fact also affected road quality. In 2016 the district of Sliven was once again the one with the highest share of road surfaces in good quality: 71.9% vs. 41.5% in the country as a whole.

Both Internet access and the share of people using it were considerably below average rates. In 2016 the share of users was almost half the national average.

Taxes and Fees ●●●

In 2017 Tvarditsa municipality raised some of the local taxes, whereas the municipality of Sliven lowered the property transfer tax. On the whole, the overall tax burden in the district was comparable to the national average level but there were some substantial differences in certain taxes. The average level of the tax on immovable property of legal entities in Sliven municipalities was considerably higher than its national counterpart. This was mainly due to the relatively high rates in the Sliven and Nova Zagora municipalities, which were raised in 2016. On the other hand, the annual license tax for retailers in the district was lower than the national average, being lowest in the Tvarditsa municipality. The average rate on taxi transport was lower in the district as well.

Administration ●●●

The development of administrative services in the district has been lagging and at risk of losing its better placement so far. Cadastral coverage remained at 23.0% in 2016 while it rose to 22.5% in the country. The transparency rating of local authorities in the district for 2017 dropped slightly from 65 to 62% but the national average rose from 49 to 59%. The best performer in the district was once again the city municipality of Sliven though it registered some deterioration compared with the previous year.

The administration's self-evaluation for the development of electronic government in the district remained close to national average and did not change significantly in 2017 but the evaluation for providing one-stop shop services dropped considerably, still lagging behind the national average level.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●●

Demography ●●●●●

Sliven has remained the district with one of the most favorable population age structures. The age dependency ratio as the ratio between people aged 65+ and those aged 0–14 was 105% in 2016 when the national average rate was 147%. Tendencies were also good in view of the considerably higher birth rate in the district. The natural growth rate in 2016 was –2.4‰ while it was –6.0‰ in the country as a whole. During the last few years, however, outmigration from the district increased and the same year the net migration rate dropped to –5.0‰.

The share of urban population in Sliven district was below the national average. In 2016, 66% of the local population lived in towns (vs. 73.3% nationally). However, population density in the district remained considerably higher at 2,719 people/sq. km (vs. 1,548 people/sq. km nationally), which ranked Sliven second after the capital in this indicator.

Education ●

Sliven is still the district where education is in the worst condition in all of Bulgaria. The number of dropouts from primary and secondary education continued to rise for the fourth year in a row to reach 5.3% in 2015 when the national average rate was 2.9%. The share of repeaters also rose and in 2016 it was twice the national average.

At the same time, matriculation exam grades in the district improved and for the first time in a number of years, were slightly better than the national average grade. At the exam in BLL in 2017 students from the district got an average grade of 4.24 while the national average grade was 4.22. However, the share of poor grades also increased, though it remained below average for the third year in a row.

Sliven was also one of the districts with an acute shortage of teachers in 2016. Their number in primary and secondary education was 65 per 1,000 students while the national average was 75 per 1,000 students.

Healthcare ●●

The district has managed to attract GPs and their number rose from 108 in 2015 to 151 in 2016. This allowed Sliven to move its placement – from being in the group of districts with the greatest shortage to those with a relatively high number of doctors relative to the population. On the other hand, the shortage of specialist doctors continued in the district. In 2016 there were 818 people per specialist (vs. 530 per specialist nationally). The only districts with higher rates were Pernik and Dobrich.

The number of beds in local general hospitals was also below average: in 2016 it stayed at 4.5 beds per 1,000 people (vs. 5.1 per 1,000 people nationally). In 2016 a consider-

able drop in infant mortality was registered in the district, though its rate remained above average.

Security and Justice ●●●●

Administration of justice in Sliven was characterized by relatively speedy justice once again in 2016 though judges' workloads were identical with the national average rate: local judges saw an average of 9.4 cases a month which was the exact national average rate. At the same time, the share of cases closed within 3 months rose to 96% (vs. 89% nationally), while pending cases remained below the national average rate.

Sliven was one of the districts with relatively few registered crimes and a considerably higher clearance rate in 2016. Registered crimes against the person and property were 11 per 1,000 people (vs. 13 per 1,000 people in the country) and cleared crimes reached 62% (vs. 48% in the country).

Environment ●●●●

The relatively low urbanization of the district accounted for the low connectivity of the population with sewerage: in 2015, 65% had access to public sewerage (vs. 76% was the national average) and 57% were connected with wastewater treatment plants (vs. 62% nationally).

Sliven remained one of the districts with relatively low air pollution and small amounts of waste produced. In 2015, carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere remained two times lower than the average volume for the nation relative to the territory while the volume of generated household waste dropped to 311 kg/person annually (vs. 422 kg/person annually in the country).

Culture ●●

Cultural life was not particularly intensive in the district of Sliven. Only theaters attracted more interest in 2016 with 339 visits per 1,000 people compared to the national average of 322 per 1,000 people nationally.

Cinema visits in the district (101 per 1,000 people) remained way below the national average rate of 778 per 1,000 people in 2016. Library visits were also considerably fewer: 293 per 1,000 people (vs. 605 per 1,000 people in the country). Local museums attracted 515 visits per 1,000 people while the national average rate was 734 per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Sliven

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,621	5,994	5,689	5,961	5,921	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,605	3,226	3,014	4,017	4,236	3,685
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,191	6,589	6,999	7,265	7,830	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	40.8	35.4	32.7	38.0	38.7	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	64.6	64.5	61.7	60.7	62.9	64.8
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	53.7	51.8	51.8	52.4	55.9	58.9
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	16.6	19.4	15.9	13.6	10.9	9.2
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	18.7	18.7	20.5	22.5	21.8	21.4
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	35	35	35	35	36	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,491	1,636	1,132	1,152	1,202	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	2,561	548	500	480	474	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	36.5	37.0	41.1	49.8	44.6	54.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	82.0	82.0	79.3	80.3	72.4	71.9
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-2.0	-2.3	-2.2	-2.5	-2.7	-2.4
Net migration rate (‰)	-2.8	-4.5	-5.1	-4.1	-4.9	-5.0
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.51	4.17	4.15	4.19	4.18	4.15
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	4.45	6.49	7.01	9.01	5.95	6.94
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	75.5	73.6	74.4	75.0	75.2	76.4
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	86.1	85.0	84.4	85.6	87.4	87.5
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	148.2	218.4	220.6	153.8	217.1	221.8
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	14.2	14.4	12.6	12.5	11.6	11.1
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	42.4	41.6	45.6	47.8	51.8	62.4
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.2	7.0	9.3	13.7	5.2	6.7
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	57.7	57.6	57.6	57.6	57.4	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	78.5	198.0	161.0	161.0	161.0	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	36	20	152	93	84	101
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	273	310	357	350	314	339