

Yambol district

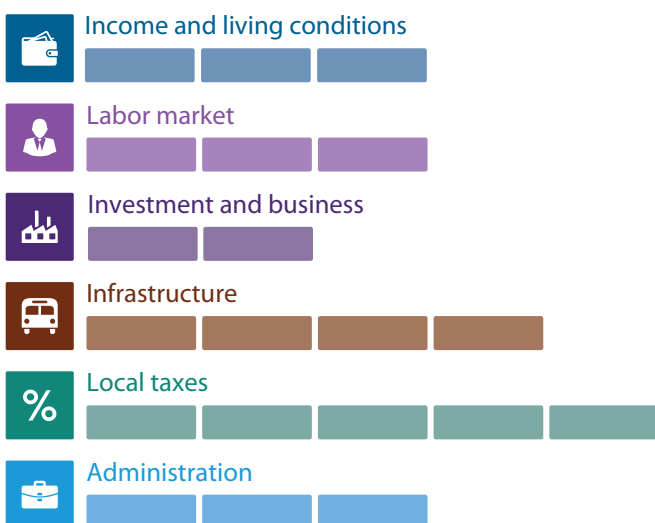
▶ Population (2021)	109,693
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,355
▶ Number of settlements	109
▶ Share of urban population (%)	70.1



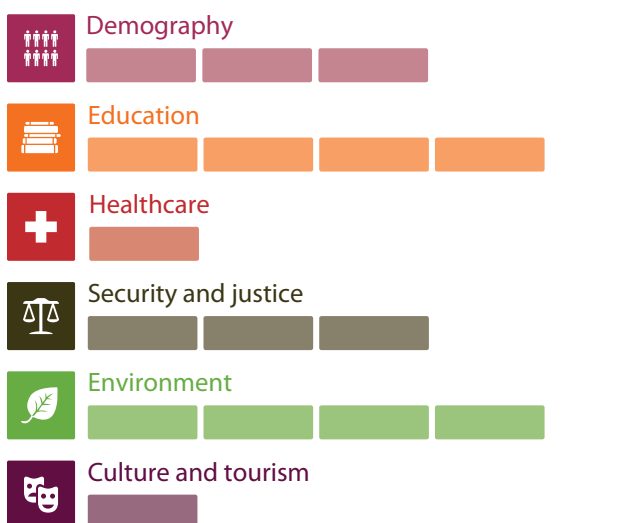
GDP in Yambol district continues to grow at a fast pace. The rate of increase in incomes and pensions also remains stable. The share of the working-age population in the district is one of the lowest in the country. Investment activity remains slack. Yambol is characterized by a high density of the road network, but the railway network is among the least developed in the country. The average levels of local taxes are close to the national averages. The self-assessments of the local administrations on the development of e-government have gone up and now exceed the national average.

Both natural population growth and the net migration rates are unfavorable. The district's students are not among the good performers but their results indicate an improvement compared to the rest of the districts and last year's results. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and high infant mortality. The workloads of the local criminal judges are considerably below the national average, but delivery of justice is relatively slow. The volume of household waste is low. Tourism in Yambol district has an exceptionally weak presence.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

GDP in Yambol district has continued to grow at a fast pace, reaching 12,600 BGN per capita in 2021. The rate of increase in incomes and pensions also remains stable. The average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract has gone up to 14,800 BGN, compared to 18,700 BGN nationally. The average monthly pension is 521 BGN, versus 537 BGN nationally.

The poverty level in the district continues to fall. The share of population living below the poverty line is 20.2% and for the first time has fallen below the national average of 22.9%. Income inequality also remains below the national average.

Labor market

In 2022, the share of the working-age population in the district was one of the lowest in the country (only above that in Vidin district). The economic activity on the labor market has risen considerably and with a rate of 73.3%, it almost equals the national average of 73.6%. This increase has been accompanied by a big surge in employment and a decrease in unemployment. The employment rate has reached 68.1% and for the first time in five years has come so close to the national average of 70.4%.

A challenge still facing the labor market in Yambol district is the educational structure of the workforce. In 2022 it deteriorated once again, reversing the more favorable trend of the preceding few years. The share of university graduates among the population aged 25–64 is 19.7%, compared to 29.8% in the country, and that of people with primary or lower education – 21.8%, against the national average of 16.0%.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that of the 60–64 age group remains below the country's average – 63.9% in the district, compared to 65.7% in the country for 2022. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there are 64 young people who will join the workforce.

Investment and business

In 2021, investment activity in the Yambol district remained low. Due to the relative dominance of the process industry, Yambol is among the districts with a relatively small number of enterprises – only 47 per 1,000 population, compared to 60 per 1,000 population nationally. FTA acquisition expenditures have gone up considerably, reaching 2,200 BGN/person. FDI, however, has registered a negligible increase and remains among the lowest in the country at 396 EUR/person, versus 4,100 EUR/person nationally. At the same time, production value has increased rapidly to reach 18,100 BGN/person.

Research and development expenditure relative to the population is comparatively low.

There has been an increase in the utilization of European funds and their amounts are getting much closer to the national average. By 30 June 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs reached 2,765 BGN/person, compared to 2,836 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the largest amounts were utilized by Yambol city municipality.

Infrastructure

Yambol district is characterized by a high density of the road network. However, its railway network is among the least developed in the country, after that of Dobrich district. In 2022, the share of first-class roads and highways again exceeded the national average – 20.6%, compared to 18.5% nationally. The quality of the road surface in the district is traditionally close to or above the country's average, but in 2022 and for the second year in a row, the share of roads in good condition decreased to reach 30.4%, thus lagging well behind the national average of 41.1%.

In 2022, the share of households connected to high-speed internet continued to increase.

Local taxes

The average rates of local taxes in Yambol district in 2023 again remained close to the average ones in the country. Among the monitored taxes, relatively higher than average were those on the immovable non-residential property for legal entities and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property. At the same time, the rates on retail trade and taxi transportation remained well below average. The tax rate for retail trade in Yambol district was 8.17 BGN/sq. m on average, compared to 13.04 BGN/sq. m in the country.

Within the district, the highest local taxes are levied by the municipality of Yambol city, and the lowest – by that of Elhovo.

Administration

The self-assessment of the local administrations in Yambol district regarding the development of e-government went up in 2023 to exceed the national average. However, the self-assessment on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services went down and remained below average. The AIP active transparency rating achieved by the local administration fell slightly, but continued to exceed the country's average – 72.4% in the district, compared to 70.3% in the country.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities in 2022 was 25.1%, versus 29.0% nationally, and the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues – 87.2%, against 84.2% nationally.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

In 2022, both the natural population growth and the net migration rate in Yambol district again remained less favorable than nationally. The natural population growth rate was -11.5% , compared to -9.7% nationally. The net migration rate was negative at -0.4% .

The age dependency ratios remain relatively high. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 174.6%, compared to 165.9% nationally, and to the 15–64 age group – 45.4%, versus 37.7% countrywide.

The share of urban population in Yambol district is lower than in the country on average – 70.1%, against 73.6% nationally, and so is population density – 985 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,404 persons/sq. km countrywide.

Education

The share of children attending kindergarten again remained relatively low in 2022. The net enrolment in 5th–7th grade went up but for the first time remained below the national average, albeit slightly. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is relatively good, especially in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

The 2023 students' results again failed to place the district among the country's good performers, but they nevertheless indicate an improvement compared to the rest of the districts and to last year's results. The average score in the NAE in mathematics after 7th grade was 30.8 points, versus 35.3 points in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.79, compared to 3.93 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) – 16.2%, against 17.9% nationally.

The number of university students has gone up to 7 per 1,000 people, against 32 per 1,000 people nationwide.

Healthcare

The district's poor performance in the sphere of healthcare is due primarily to the low relative number of specialist physicians (where Yambol ranks only before Dobrich and Kardzhali), as well as to the high child mortality rate of 2022 (11.6%, against 4.8% in the country). At the same time, the number of GPs relative to the population in the district is close to the national average. The life expectancy of the district's residents is also close to the country's average. The number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals has increased, but remains relatively low – 3.8 beds per 1,000 people, compared to the national average of 5.9 beds per 1,000 people.

These figures probably account for the low number of hospitalizations in 2022 – 129 per 1,000 people, versus 235 per 1,000 people countrywide. It can be assumed, therefore, that the residents seek medical care outside the district.

The share of people with health insurance has gone up but remains below the national average.

Security and justice

The workloads of the local criminal judges are considerably lower than in the country, but the delivery of justice is relatively slow. In 2022, one local criminal judge heard an average of 8.4 cases per month, compared to 10.1 per judge in the country. The share of pending cases was 13%, versus the national average of 12%. 88% of criminal cases were closed within 3 months, versus the national average of 89%.

The number of crimes in the district is close to, though below the country's average but the detection rate is relatively high. In 2022, the registered crimes against the person and property amounted to 11.0 per 1,000 people, versus 11.6 per 1,000 people nationally. The detection rate was 61%, compared to 49% nationwide.

Environment

The relatively good results of Yambol district in the environment category are mainly due to the small volumes of generated household waste and its management. In 2021, the amount of household waste generated in the district was 371 kg/person, against the national average of 445 kg/person. 91% of the generated waste was handed over for treatment and recycling, compared to 74% on average countrywide.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network, which in 2021 again remained below the national average – 70.9%, against 74.8% in the country. At the same time, the share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant is above the national average – 68.7% compared to 66.8% countrywide.

The share of forest areas is low – 15%, versus 33% in the country, but that of degraded land is also limited – 0.18% against 0.43% countrywide. The installed RES capacities are above the national average relative to the population.

Culture and tourism

Visits to the local cinemas and libraries registered a considerable increase in 2022. Cinema visits were three times higher and reached 391 per 1,000 people. However, there has been a decrease in the number of museum visits and it is five times lower than the national average relative to the population.

Tourism has an extremely weak presence in Yambol district. In 2022, the number of beds in accommodation facilities increased to 7 per 1,000 people, versus 55 per 1,000 people in the country. Overnight stays, on the other hand, numbered 437 per 1,000 people, against 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country. The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector in the district is over five times lower than the national average.

Key indicators for the district of Yambol

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,410	12,617	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	13,055	14,779	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	31.4	24.0	20.2	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	56.1	56.1	54.2	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	63.2	63.2	68.1	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	7.0	5.5	5.4	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	21.3	20.6	21.8	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	23.5	23.0	19.7	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	15,177	18,105	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,639	2,165	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	339	396	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	63.1	83.5	86.3	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	41.0	36.3	30.4	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	92.5	93.2	87.2	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	72.7	72.5	72.4	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-11.5	-9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-0.4	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.94	3.79	3.79	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	35.0	30.7	30.8	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	89.8	89.1	90.0	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	73.1	72.3	71.5	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	88.4	88.6	92.6	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	1,771	1,733	1,662	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	9.0	10.0	11.0	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.7	12.6	13.2	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	71.3	70.9	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	305	371	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	94.6	90.8	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	8	130	391	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	195	240	437	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.