

Dobrich District

► Population (2015)	181,705
► Area (sq. km)	4,719.7
► Number of settlements	215
► Share of urban population (%)	68.8

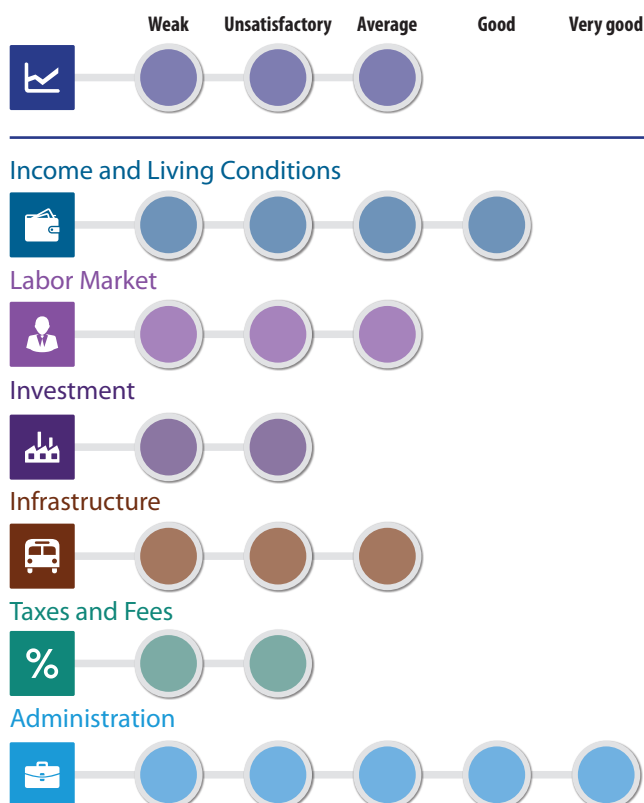


Overview

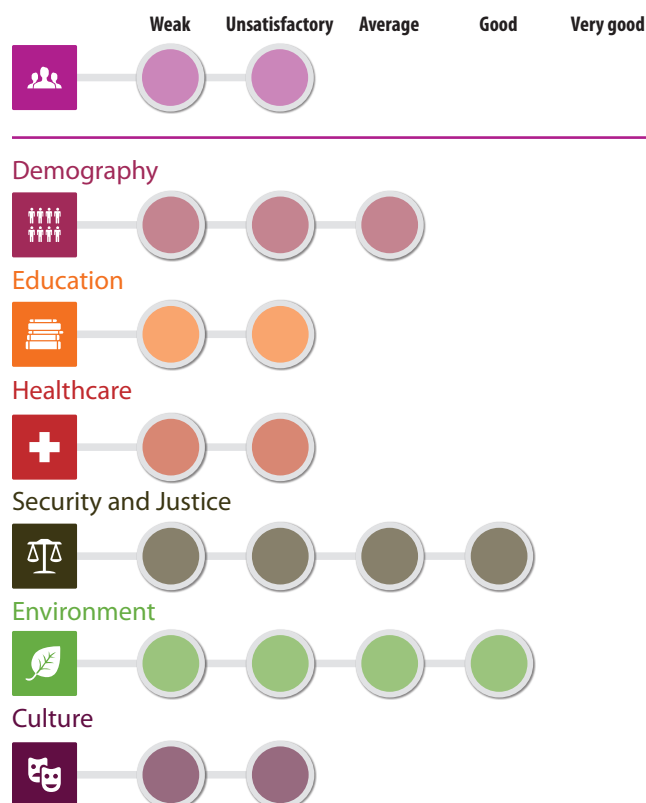
GDP, incomes, and salaries in the district of Dobrich are still lagging behind the national average figures. The labor market is recovering slowly despite the initial low levels, and the educational structure of the workforce has deteriorated considerably. This situation is related both to the business activity in the district and the decline of foreign investment in 2014. The district is among the leaders in the category measuring administration efficiency. Electronic government and one-stop shop services are relatively well developed, the administration is relatively transparent, and

a large part of the territory is covered by cadastral maps. The low rate of natural growth and the growing migration of the population are not favorable for the district's demographic picture. Dobrich has the highest share of high school dropouts and repeaters compared to the national average number, while school leavers get high grades at state matriculation exams. Healthcare continues to suffer from a shortage of specialist doctors and hospital beds. Criminal judges in the district are not overloaded, which contributes to the relatively speedy closing of cases.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and Living Conditions

After shrinking in 2009, the local economy of Dobrich started recovering, but GDP per capita is still much lower than the national average figures. In 2014, it was 7,802 BGN per capita while the national average was 11,574 BGN. Incomes and salaries in the district are also lagging behind national figures. In 2014, the average annual gross salary in the district was 7,802 BGN vs. 9,860 BGN in the country.

At the same time, the share of people living in material deprivation as well as the share of the people living below the national poverty line continued to be lower in 2013.

Labor Market

In 2015, there were no significant changes in the labor market and little dynamics in indicators. After a three-year growth of economic activity in the district, it dropped by 0.7 pp in 2015, but remaining above the national average – 70.8 and 69.3%, respectively. Employment also shrank slightly in 2015 to 60.9% vs. the national rate of 62.9%. Unemployment shrank to 13.8% (vs. 9.1% for the country) but was still far from its pre-crisis level of 9.7%.

Possibilities for a serious improvement on the labor market in the next few years are limited, having in mind the population's educational structure and the abrupt decrease in investment. The share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education is considerably below the national average rate (19.4% vs. 27.5%, respectively), while the share of persons with primary or lower level education, who are often least qualified, is considerably above the national average rate (24.8% in Dobrich vs. 18.1% in the country).

Investment

Dobrich is among those districts where FTA acquisition expenditure dropped abruptly after the crisis in the sector of construction. Compared to their peak in 2009, expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita were almost 2.5 times lower in 2014: 2,026 BGN per capita. There was a serious net outflow of FDI in 2014, amounting to approximately 188 m euro.

Local administrations in the district utilized less EU funds than the national average relative to the population. As of 31 May 2016 the sums paid to municipality beneficiaries of EU operational programs in Dobrich district amounted to 601.6 BGN per capita while the country average was 688.8 BGN per capita. Relative to the population, the largest sums were utilized by the municipalities of the city of

Dobrich and Kavarna, and the smallest – by the municipalities of Krushari, Shabla, and General Toshevo.

Infrastructure

The density of the railway network in the district is almost three times lower than that in the country, which can be explained by the location of the district, bordering on water on two sides. The road network density is close to the national average but the share of motorways and first class roads is low. Still, road surface quality is close to the country average: 40.0% of roads in the district vs. 40.7% in Bulgaria in 2015.

Taxes and Fees

Municipalities in the district maintain relatively low rates of the annual license tax for retailers, which is good for the development of small businesses. In 2016, no municipality in the district raised this type of tax, while the municipalities of Dobrich, General Toshevo, and Krushari maintained the lowest rates.

The rates of immovable property tax for legal entities were also lower than the national average levels; within the district this tax was lowest in the city of Dobrich. In 2016, the municipality of Shabla was the only one to raise its immovable property tax from 1.6 to 2.6‰. Waste collection charges were also lower in the district: in 2016, the municipality of Kavarna lowered its rate and together with Shabla they have maintained the lowest level of this fee in the district.

The district's levels of the local tax on the sale of immovable property and vehicle tax have been higher than the average levels in the country.

Administration

The district of Dobrich is rated second after the capital for its high indicators in this category. As usual, the development of electronic government and one-stop shop services have been rated higher than the national average rate – 2016 was no exception in this respect. The active transparency rating of the local government institutions by the AIP Foundation is also relatively high for the district: 58.4% (vs. the national average rate of 54.2%). The most “transparent” municipalities in the district are the city of Dobrich, Krushari, and Balchik (all rated above 65%), whereas the least transparent one is Kavarna (under 30%).

In addition, the district of Dobrich is still among the best achievers in cadastral map coverage: 32.1% vs. the national average of 19.8%.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●●

The natural growth rate of the district continued to drop, reaching -8.5‰ in 2015 vs. the national average of -6.2‰. The age dependency ratio has been similar to the national average figures but less favorable prospects can be predicted because of the low natural growth and the number of people moving out of the district. In 2015, the net migration rate dropped to -3.7‰.

68.8% of the district's population lives in urban areas (vs. 73.1% nationally). In addition to that, population density is decreasing and Dobrich remains the district with the lowest density – less than half of the country's average.

Education ●●

In 2015, Dobrich remained one of the districts with the lowest enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade: 74.6% vs. the national average rate of 78.3%. Furthermore, Dobrich was the district with the highest share of high school repeaters (2.1% in 2015 vs. the national average of 1.0%) and the highest share of high school dropouts (5.0% vs. 2.8%, respectively in 2014).

At the same time, Dobrich was among the districts which had the highest number of teachers in primary and secondary schools relative to the number of students. The district's school graduates performed well at state matriculation exams. In 2015, there were 83 teachers for every 1,000 students, which was the second largest number after that of Smolyan district (91 per 1,000 students).

In 2016, the average grade of the district's high school graduates at the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "good" 4.25, which ranked it in the fifth place after Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, and Smolyan. Poor grades were few: 3.78% while the national average rate was 8.73%.

Healthcare ●●

Despite the relatively high number of general practitioners in the district per person, in 2015 the shortage of specialists placed Dobrich among the districts with the fewest medical specialists: one of them was responsible for 834 people (vs. 544 nationally). Besides, Dobrich was one of the few districts where the number of beds in general hospitals decreased in 2015 to half the average number relative to the population nationally.

This explains the relatively low number of hospitalizations in the district's hospitals. In 2015, they were 128 per 1,000 people, while the national average rate was 232 per 1,000 people.

Security and Justice ●●●●

The relatively low workload of criminal judges in the district court of Dobrich in 2015 (5.5 cases per month per judge at 8.3 in the country) may explain the speedy administration of justice. Of all the cases that were taken to court in the district 94% were solved within three months (vs. 88.1% for the country), and in 2015 the share of pending cases dropped to 7.0% (vs. 9.4% nationwide).

As for the security rating of the district, it stayed close to the country average figures in 2015. The rate of registered crimes fell to 13.1 per 1,000 people (vs. 13.6 per 1,000 people in Bulgaria), whereas the clearance crime rate rose to 36.5% (vs. 39.2% in the country).

Environment ●●●●

Dobrich is among the districts with the lowest level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. In 2014, harmful emissions were over 50 times lower than the average figures for the country. The district's rating in this category has been positively affected by the high share of the population with public access to sewerage systems connected to WTP – 70.9% vs. 56.8% in the country in 2014. Though all wastewater from the sewerage network in the district is treated in treatment plants, the sewerage system itself has not been renovated.

Culture ●●

In 2014 and 2015, visits to the cinema in the district increased more than 4 times to reach over 20,000 annually, but that number was still considerably below the national average. In 2015, there were 120 visits per 1,000 people registered in the district vs. 744 per 1,000 people in the country.

Visits to theatres and libraries in the district of Dobrich continued to maintain relatively low levels. In 2015, theatre visits dropped compared to those in 2014. Yet, on the whole, they were above the figures of 2009–2010. Registered library visits also increased in the last few years but not sufficiently to reach the national figures relative to the population.

The number of museum visits was above the average number for the country, but it has been declining steadily in recent years.

Key Indicators for the District of Dobrich

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	6,748	7,201	7,440	7,747	7,802	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,013	2,994	3,856	4,166	4,091	4,049
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,130	6,394	6,738	7,164	7,581	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	28.7	23.0	20.0	19.9	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	67.5	66.0	69.0	70.7	71.5	70.8
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	56.3	54.4	58.3	59.4	61.2	60.9
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	16.4	17.3	15.4	15.8	14.3	13.8
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	17.9	18.4	18.3	18.4	18.4	19.4
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	47	48	48	51	51	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,941	1,975	1,756	2,052	2,026	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	1,520	1,236	1,398	1,632	614	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	24.1	36.2	49.7	54.1	49.6	58.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	47.9	45.2	46.0	45.8	39.3	40.0
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	32.1	32.1	32.1	32.1	32.1	32.1

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-5.9	-5.7	-6.8	-6.7	-7.4	-8.5
Net migration rate (‰)	-5.6	-3.7	-2.5	-2.8	-2.8	-3.7
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	3.9	2.6	3.2	4.1	2.9	2.9
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	84.9	83.4	81.8	79.2	76.4	74.6
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	83.9	86.6	85.4	84.0	84.6	85.9
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	127	132	136	134	135	128
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	14.5	13.0	12.6	13.5	13.7	13.1
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	49.4	39.4	38.4	35.2	32.8	36.5
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	6.3	7.4	7.3	7.2	11.2	7.0
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	67.7	69.4	70.7	70.8	70.9	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	7.5	20.2	4.3	5.2	5.9	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	58	65	24	28	125	120
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	77	214	205	245	261	240