

Haskovo District



▶ Population (2015)	237,024
▶ Area (sq. km)	5,533.3
▶ Number of settlements	261
▶ Share of urban population (%)	72.0

Overview

Haskovo has remained among the less developed districts in the country. In 2015, the positive trends in the labor market were retained: employment rose and unemployment fell considerably. Salaries, however, have remained among the lowest in the country. Local investment increased, though Haskovo continued to suffer from a lack of foreign capital. EU fund utilization intensified, including the district center. Administrative services improved but there were still challenges with regard to transparency and integrity ratings of local administrations.

Demographic tendencies in the district of Haskovo continued to be determined by the strongly negative natural increase of the population. The share of children enrolled in the school system dropped and results at matriculation exams got worse in 2016. The share of health-insured people rose. The district was relatively safe compared to the rest of the country, while the work of law enforcement was relatively speedy and efficient. Cultural activities grew more popular, and visits to the cinemas, theaters, and museums increased in 2015.

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

In 2014, GDP per capita was 6,386 BGN in Haskovo, placing the district in the 23rd position among the 28 districts in the country. Incomes in the district have gradually been recovering; a relatively higher contribution from pensions and self-employment is noticeable. The annual average gross salary reached 6,947 BGN in 2014, though it remained among the lowest in the country.

In 2013, the share of people living below the national poverty line declined to reach 19.8%, its lowest level since 2008. The share of people living in material deprivation stayed at levels lower than the national average: 27.4% in 2013. The ratio between the incomes of the richest and the poorest 20% of households was about 5 times.

Labor Market

The labor market in the district of Haskovo was moving towards a stable recovery in 2015, when the employment rate of the population over 15 reached 63.1%. Unemployment also experienced a stable decline in the last four years: from 15.9% in 2011 to 8.6% in 2015. The demographic replacement ratio remained about 60 to 61% between 2013 and 2015, which means there were 60–61 people aged 15 to 19 joining the workforce for every 100 people between 60 and 64 leaving it.

The share of people with higher education in the district has declined. In 2015, 18.7% of the population aged between 25 and 64 had higher education. At the same time, the share of people with primary or lower education between 25 and 64 slightly decreased, reaching 22.6% in 2015, yet staying below the national average.

Investment

Haskovo was one of the districts which attracted the least foreign capital in the country. In 2014, the cumulative investment in non-financial enterprises in the district amounted to 259 euro per person. However, expenditure on the acquisition of FTA grew and reached 321 m BGN in 2014.

EU fund utilization by the district's municipalities increased in the last few years, though it continued to lag behind the country average levels. As of 31 May 2016, EU fund payments to municipalities in Haskovo district reached 129 m BGN. Relative to the population, the best performance was registered by the municipality of Svilengrad with 45 m BGN utilized. An improvement was noticeable in Haskovo, the district center, where payments reached 52 m BGN.

Infrastructure

The density of the road network in the district remained above national average levels. The completion of the “Maritsa” motorway in 2015, which provided connectivity to the “Trakia” motorway, was an important factor in the district's development, and it raised the share of motorways and first class roads in it. Road surface quality also increased (33.1% of it was in good condition in 2015), though it remained below national average levels.

Internet access and its usage remained below the country typical values. In 2015, 54.2% of households in the district of Haskovo had internet access and the relative share of people between 16 and 74, who had used the internet in the last 12 months, dropped to 56%.

Taxes and Fees

Local taxes and fees in the municipalities of the district of Haskovo have stayed close to national average levels. The municipalities with high taxes were Madzharovo, Stambolovo, and Mineralni Bani. Local taxes in the district center also remained relatively high: a 2‰ rate on the immovable property tax for legal entities and a 2.6‰ rate on property sale tax. The municipalities of Lyubimets and Harmanli had lower tax rates.

The waste collection fee for immovable property of legal entities has remained high in the district's municipalities in recent years. The highest rates of that fee have been registered in the municipalities of Simeonovgrad (15.00‰), Ivaylovgrad (12.13‰), and Haskovo (12.00‰), and the lowest ones were registered in Mineralni Bani (7.00‰), Stambolovo (7.00‰), and Dimitrovgrad (8.00‰).

Administration

The level of provided electronic services in most municipalities of the district of Haskovo is “third degree”, which suggests the possibility of the so-called two-way interaction. One-stop shop services in most municipalities have reached the level of “working stage”. Cadastral map coverage is among the lowest in the country, spanning only 3.8% of the district's territory; only the municipalities of Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, and Harmanli have partial coverage above that rate.

Municipalities in the district have been lagging behind in the Active Transparency Rating of local government by the AIP Foundation. The best performance in this indicator was that of Dimitrovgrad, Svilengrad, and Lyubimets, whereas the worst was that of Madzharovo and Mineralni Bani. The rating of Haskovo (the district center) itself was very low in the Local Integrity System Index of Transparency International.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●●

Haskovo district is the 11th largest in population number. In 2015, the population was 237,024 people, about 72% of which living in towns in the last few years. The stable tendency for population decline in the district is determined by the high negative growth of the population (around -8.0‰ in 2014 and 2015). In the last two years the net migration rate turned around, now being slightly positive (2.5‰ in 2015), which can be explained by the acceptance of refugees in the district.

Age dependence ratios have been deteriorating in comparison to the average national figures. In 2014, the population aged 65 and over was about 1.5 times more numerous than that aged 0 to 14, constituting about 1/3 of the working age (15 to 64) population.

Education ●●

The number of students in primary and secondary education in Haskovo was 24,370 in 2015. The number of children enrolled in the school system has been observed to decline in recent years. The net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade dropped to 77.8%. The relative share of dropouts from primary and secondary education rose to 2.8% in 2014, while the share of repeaters dropped to 1.0% in 2015.

The district's average grade at the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature dropped and for the first time stayed below the "good" 4.00 line, reaching "good" 3.98 in 2016. The share of failing grades increased. In 2016, 12.6% of students got grades below "average" 3.00 in Bulgarian language and literature. There is no higher education institution in the district but there are affiliates of the Trakiyski University and the University of National and World Economy. The number of students in the Haskovo district was barely 257 in 2015.

Healthcare ●●

Haskovo has been lagging behind the rest of the country in capacity of healthcare institutions. The number of beds in general hospitals in the district remained close to 781 in 2015, which makes 3.3 hospital beds per 1,000 people (vs. 4.8 in the country). The number of hospitalizations increased to almost 47,000 people or 198 per 1,000 people.

The share of health-insured people rose to reach 89.1% in 2015. The infant mortality rate dropped to 6‰ in 2015, a record low in the district for the last ten years. There was a

considerable shortage of doctors in the district. Specialized medical services were concentrated in the district center Haskovo.

Security and Justice ●●●●

12.1 crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people were registered in the district in 2015. Though the crime rate slightly increased in recent years, it still remained below the national average levels. The clearance rate of crimes against the person and property went up to reach 48.4% (vs. 39.2% on average in the country).

In 2015, the share of criminal cases in the district court that were closed within three months rose to reach 94.0%, and the share of pending criminal cases as of the end of 2015 was about 7.1% (vs. 9.4% on average in the country). The workloads of judges in the district of Haskovo remained relatively higher: in 2015, it reached 9.8 cases per judge per month (vs. 8.3 cases a month on average for the country).

Environment ●●●

Haskovo remained among the districts with relatively high levels of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, 183.2 t/sq. km in 2014. Generated household waste increased to reach 392 kg per capita in 2014, which was still below national average levels.

Almost 72% of the district's population lived in areas with public sewerage in 2014. After 2011 almost half of it (46.7% in 2014) had access to sewerage connected to WWTPs. The WWTP of Dimitrovgrad was launched at the end of 2010 and that of Haskovo was launched in mid-2011, which has considerably reduced the pollution of the Maritsa river.

Culture ●

In 2015, the intensity of cultural activities in Haskovo increased, but the district continued to lag behind the national average levels. Visits to cinemas and museums considerably increased in 2015 as the cinema visits reached 25,000 and museum visits reached 41,000. In 2015, visits to theaters rose to reach 72,000. Library visits stayed close to established levels of 76,000 annually.

Key Indicators for the District of Haskovo

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,306	6,095	6,311	6,136	6,386	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,634	3,708	3,855	4,130	4,157	4,321
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,638	5,999	6,267	6,581	6,947	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	21.1	21.1	22.0	19.8	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	70.8	64.6	64.7	68.2	69.2	69.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	61.4	54.3	55.0	58.4	61.9	63.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	13.2	15.9	14.9	14.3	10.4	8.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	19.4	17.1	18.5	20.3	19.3	18.7
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	46	46	46	47	47	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	666	784	1,612	867	1,347	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	262	420	388	311	259	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	26.4	41.3	47.5	54.2	57.5	54.2
Share of roads in good condition (%)	51.5	42.0	44.0	33.6	30.0	33.1
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-6.4	-6.6	-6.7	-6.8	-8.0	-7.9
Net migration rate (‰)	-6.6	-4.0	-2.8	-3.1	1.0	2.5
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	7.1	7.2	8.4	7.3	7.5	9.2
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	80.8	82.3	82.9	81.6	80.5	77.8
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	86.3	88.3	87.5	86.2	87.3	89.1
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	140	147	180	198	188	198
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	13.3	11.8	10.4	11.0	11.2	12.1
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	49.3	40.8	42.8	36.3	41.9	48.4
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	8.0	8.4	8.2	7.2	13.3	7.1
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	0.0	46.7	46.7	46.9	46.7	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	227.2	196.3	150.3	203.5	183.2	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	23	23	69	53	46	105
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	139	203	211	238	221	302