

Kardzhali District

▶ Population (2015)	151,686
▶ Area (sq. km)	3,209.1
▶ Number of settlements	472
▶ Share of urban population (%)	41.1



Overview

After a hard recovery from the crisis, GDP in the district of Kardzhali was again declining in 2013–2014, placing it among the five districts with the lowest rate of GDP per capita. The low unemployment rate is not related to high employment but to low economic activity. The probable cause for this fact is the exceptionally unfavorable educational structure of the population. Investment activity is low but local administrations in the district have utilized considerable EU funds. Infrastructure is not well developed and administration is not sufficiently modernized or transparent in its operation. The demographic picture in

the district is still more favorable than it is in the country but the population is ageing rapidly. The shares of high school dropouts and repeaters are still among the lowest but performance at state matriculation exams has deteriorated abruptly. Healthcare in the district suffers from insufficient number of doctors and hospital beds. Kardzhali is one of the most secure districts to live in, judging by the number of registered crimes. A great part of the population still has no access to public sewerage systems, and the share of those connected to waste water treatment plants is insignificant. Kardzhali is the district with the least developed cultural life.

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 ●

After a hard post-crisis recovery, GDP in the district of Kardzhali shrank again in 2013 and 2014. This is why Kardzhali was among the five districts with the lowest GDP per capita in Bulgaria in 2014 – almost half the national average level (6,041 BGN and 11,574 BGN, respectively).

Having declined for years on end, in 2015 the average annual income in the district reached 3,393 BGN per household member, thus taking the last but one place in the country. Salaries in the district are also much lower than the national average level despite their rise in the last few years. In 2014, the average annual gross salary of employed people in the district of Kardzhali reached 7,222 BGN vs. 9,860 BGN for the country.

The problems in the economy and incomes account for the high share of the population living in material deprivation: 41.6% for the district vs. 33.1% for the country.

Labor Market ●●

After four years of growth, in 2015, employment rate decreased again in Kardzhali to 58.8% while the national average was 62.9%. Parallel to that, the economic activity of working age population dropped abruptly, the district joining the three districts with lowest economic activity in 2015: 60.3%, which is lower by 9 pp than the general indicator for the country (69.3%). The unemployment rate was very low: 2.3% for the district vs. 9.0% for the country in 2015. However, that was due to the fact that a great part of the population was not economically active, i.e., not actively looking for work.

The high share of inactive people is related to the population's exceptionally bad educational structure. 17.2% of people aged between 25 and 64 have higher education (vs. 27.5% nationally) and 35.1% have primary or lower education (vs. 18.1% nationally).

Investment ●

In 2014, for the fourth successive year, Kardzhali was the district with the smallest number of non-financial enterprises – 30 per 1,000 people (compared to 53 per 1,000 people nationally). FTA acquisition expenditure was also more than twice lower than the national average level, though it rose in 2014 to 1,240 BGN (vs. 2,786 BGN for the country). Since 2010 the district has enjoyed a stable influx of foreign investment but levels remain low. The cumulative foreign direct investment was 949 euro per capita or three times lower than the national average.

The municipalities in the district have utilized more EU funds than the national average figure. As of 31 May 2016, the sums paid to municipal beneficiaries from EU operational programs reached 729.8 BGN per capita (vs. 688.8 BGN on average in the country). The municipalities

of Kardzhali and Momchilgrad utilized most funds (over 1,000 BGN per capita) while the municipality of Kirkovo utilized least (44.5 BGN per capita).

Infrastructure ●●

Having in mind the peripheral location of Kardzhali in the country and the district's mostly mountainous relief, it has one of the lowest railroad densities (2.1 km per 100 sq. km territory vs. 3.6 km per 100 sq. km nationally) and one of the lowest shares of first class roads from the national road network (11.1% in Kardzhali vs. 18.1% in the country) in 2014. The quality of roads is not good either. In 2015, the share of road surfaces in good condition declined to reach 27.5%, while the national average was 40.7%.

Access to internet and its usage by the population are more limited than the national average levels as well.

Taxes and Fees ●●●

Contrary to nationwide tendencies, none of the municipalities in the district raised local taxes and fees in 2016. What is more, three municipalities lowered their rates compared to 2015. The municipality of Ardino lowered the immovable property tax for legal entities; the municipality of Kardzhali lowered the annual waste collection charge for properties of legal entities, and the municipality of Momchilgrad lowered the vehicle tax (from 74 to 110 kW).

On the whole, the municipalities in the district have maintained relatively low rates for immovable property tax and vehicle tax, as well as the annual license tax for retailers. The only rate higher than the average is that of the waste collection fee.

Administration ●

Kardzhali has been lagging behind in all indicators included in this category. The development of electronic government and that of one-stop shop services in the municipalities has been slow and uneven. In 2016, the local administration transparency had again a low rating: 42.6% while the national average was 61.6%. The most transparent municipality in the district was that of Kardzhali with 45.5%, but even that rating was below the national average level. The least transparent administration was the municipality of Ardino, rated at 27.7% in 2016.

Cadastral map coverage of the district's territory has remained problematically low in Kardzhali. In 2015, it was 3.4% for the sixth successive year. Three of the seven municipalities have not been covered by cadastral maps at all (Ardino, Momchilgrad, and Tchernoochene), whereas coverage in the remaining four municipalities is about 4 to 5%.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●●

The demographic situation in the district is still more favorable than that in the country, though the population has been ageing faster than the national average rate during the last ten years. In 2015, the age dependency ratio as a ratio between the population aged 65 and older and that aged 0 to 14 in the district was 133.7% vs. the national average of 146.4%. Kardzhali is also one of the five districts with the lowest negative natural growth rate. In 2015, the natural growth rate in the district was -3.4‰ vs. the national average rate of -6.2‰ . The migration processes in the district were relatively weak in 2015, when net migration rate reached -1.4‰ .

In 2015, Kardzhali remained the district with the lowest share of urban population: 41.1% vs. the national average of 73.1%. At the same time, population density was higher than the national average.

Education ●●●

The net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade in the district of Kardzhali declined to reach 77.6%, while the national average rate was 78.3%.

In 2015, the shares of high school dropouts (1.9% in Kardzhali vs. 2.8% nationally) and repeaters (0.3% in Kardzhali vs. 1.0% nationally) in primary and secondary education were still among the lowest in the country. After a relatively good performance at matriculation exams in 2014, the grades of the district's high school graduates deteriorated abruptly in the last two years. At the matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature in 2016 their average grade was "good" 3.85: the third lowest result in the country. In addition, Kardzhali was the district with the highest share of poor grades: 16.89% vs. the national average of 8.73%.

Kardzhali remains one of the districts with the highest teacher-student ratio in primary and secondary education.

Healthcare ●●●

Kardzhali is one of the districts in the country with severe shortage of doctors. There are 2,298 people for each general practitioner, while in the country as a whole there are 1,619 people per GP; there are 811 people per specialist doctor while the national average number is 544 people.

The number of beds in general hospitals in the district is also smaller than the average for Bulgaria (3.9 per 1,000 people vs. 4.6 per 1,000), which is probably one of the reasons behind the relatively small number of hospitalizations (177 per 1,000 people vs. 232 per 1,000 people, respectively) in 2015. This data suggests that part of the local population seeks medical care outside the district.

Infant mortality rates in the district rose in 2015 to reach 7.2‰.

Security and Justice ●●●●●

Criminal judges in the district are among the least overloaded in Bulgaria, which is due to the low crime rate in the district among other factors. In 2015, for the second successive year, their workload fell to reach 5.8 cases a month per judge, while the national average figure was 8.3 cases a month. At the same time, the number of pending cases (10.0%) was higher than the country average (9.4%) in spite of the fact that a high share of cases were solved within 3 months (95.0%).

Kardzhali was the district with the smallest number of registered crimes relative to the population. In 2015, following a tendency of four successive years, the number of registered crimes against the person and property dropped to 5.6 per 1,000 inhabitants vs. 13.6 per 1,000 people average for Bulgaria.

The percentage of solved crimes is relatively high. In 2015, the clearance crime rate rose to 56.6% of those that were registered, while the country average was 39.2%.

Environment ●●

Kardzhali is one of the districts with the lowest share of the population having access to public sewerage systems and the lowest connectivity with WWTPs. In 2014, 3.9% of the district's population with access to sewerage systems was connected to WWTPs (the national average rate was 56.8%), while 44.0% had access to public sewerage (vs. 74.9% nationwide).

The district of Kardzhali ranked second in the country (after Smolyan) among the districts with the least polluted atmosphere. In 2014, carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere in the district were 5.9 t/sq. km, which is over 50 times lower than the national average figure.

The district's population produced the smallest amount of household waste compared with the other districts: 256 kg annually vs. 442 kg per person in Bulgaria in 2014.

Culture ●

In 2015, Kardzhali was again the district with the least intensive cultural life in the country. There was still no cinema house in the district. Visits to the theatre were half the national average numbers: 150 per 1,000 people in Kardzhali and 302 per 1,000 people in Bulgaria. The number of visits to libraries was also considerably lower: 236 per 1,000 people in Kardzhali and 583 per 1,000 in the country.

The difference in museum visits between the district and the national average number was even greater in 2015: 88 per 1,000 people visited a local museum in the district while the average number for the country was 664 per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Kardzhali

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,422	5,602	6,285	6,151	6,041	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,734	3,002	3,483	3,333	3,762	3,393
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,643	5,895	6,266	6,842	7,222	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	32.8	31.9	44.7	60.1	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	48.9	54.3	60.6	63.4	64.3	60.3
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	46.5	51.5	55.1	59.0	61.1	58.8
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	4.9	5.1	9.0	7.0	4.9	2.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	10.3	8.9	11.2	15.6	19.8	17.2
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	31	29	29	29	30	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	458	613	738	705	1,240	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	440	500	604	746	949	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	11.5	29.7	54.0	45.8	65.8	51.2
Share of roads in good condition (%)	23.8	24.6	27.0	25.5	31.3	27.5
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-0.7	-2.6	-2.1	-1.8	-2.6	-3.4
Net migration rate (‰)	-6.8	-3.5	-2.4	-3.0	12.1	-1.4
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.1
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	6.2	3.0	4.2	4.7	3.0	11.4
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	82.7	83.0	82.0	80.2	78.3	77.6
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	101.7	101.6	100.6	100.4	101.5	103.5
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	140	144	166	176	165	177
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	7.3	6.9	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.6
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	58.2	57.3	56.2	53.4	49.4	56.5
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	4.2	4.8	4.7	3.8	8.7	10.0
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	17.8	10.9	3.5	5.1	5.8	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	11	0	0	0	0	0
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	152	170	191	159	131	150