

Pernik District

► Population (2015)	126,252
► Area (sq. km)	2,394.2
► Number of settlements	172
► Share of urban population (%)	78.4

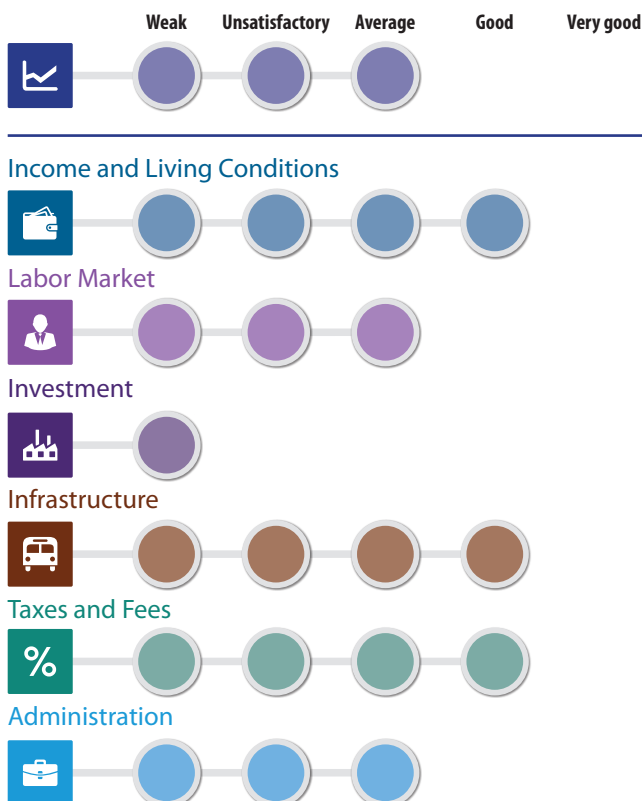


Overview

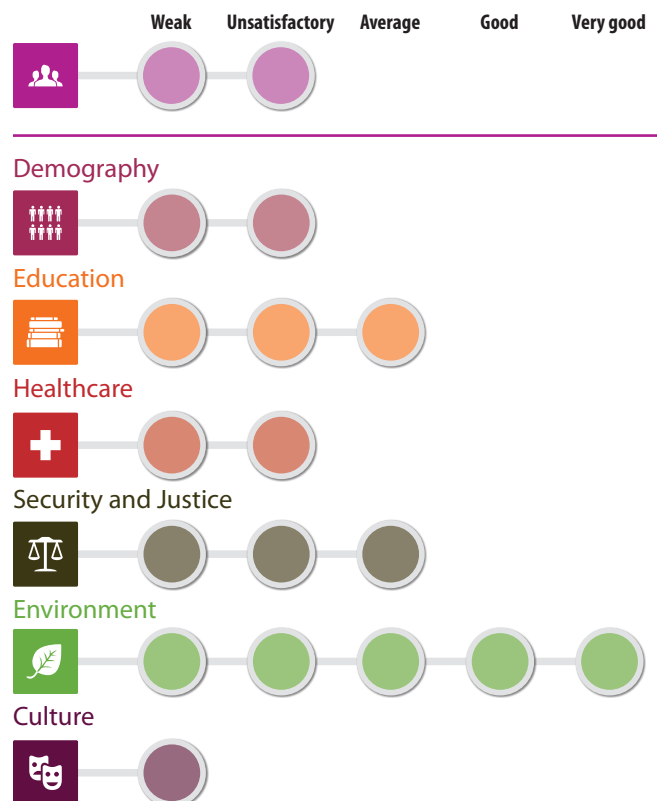
Income levels are relatively high in the district of Pernik due to daily labor migration to the capital as well as the higher average pension in the district. The labor market is on its way to recovery though as employment goes up more people start actively looking for jobs, thus joining the ranks of the unemployed. A certain outflow of foreign investment has been noticeable in recent years, while EU fund utilization has been relatively low. The district is characterized by a relatively well maintained infrastructure and a favorable taxing environment, but it lags behind in other spheres such as the local administration's transparency and the enlargement of cadastral coverage. Pernik is one of the

districts where the number of people aged 65+ is twice the people aged 0 to 14. Indicators for the quality and coverage of the educational system are close to the respective national average figures. The district is characterized by a limited number of hospital beds and an insufficient number of specialist doctors. Crime rates are relatively high, while the clearance crime rate is relatively low. There are, however, signs of improvement in the efficiency of the judicial system. The good rating for environment quality is due mostly to the high connectivity of the population to WWTPs. In the sphere of culture, there have been some favorable tendencies only in terms of visits to local museums.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●●●

In 2014, the average annual gross salary of employed persons in the district amounted to 7,063 BGN or 71.6% of the national average salary. At the same time, because of the intense daily labor migration to the capital, household incomes are higher than the average ones for the country. In 2015, the average annual income per household member was 6,093 BGN and Pernik ranked second after the capital for this indicator. The average pension size played a role here, too, as pension incomes were higher by 40% than those in the country. The share of people living in material deprivation has remained high. In 2013, these were 37.3% of the population vs. the national average rate of 33.1%.

Labor Market ●●●

Pernik is one of two districts in Bulgaria where the unemployment rate rose in 2015, reaching 14.0% vs. the national level of 9.1%. The main driving force behind the process was not the loss of jobs but rather the rising economic activity of the population. Probably, with growing employment, a greater number of people began to actively look for jobs and joined the ranks of the unemployed. In 2015, employment grew to 62.5%, which is close to the average levels of the national economy.

The educational profile of the workforce shows a growing share of people with higher education among the local population, though their share stays 5 pp. below the national average – 27.5%. On the other hand, the share of people with primary or lower education is 10.3% (vs. 18.1% nationally).

Investment ●

In 2014, Pernik was one of three districts in the country where the ratio between companies' FTA investment and the number of the local population was below 1,000 BGN per capita. The other two districts with similar ratios were Montana and Vidin. Although the ratio of FDI relative to the local population is the ninth most favorable in the country (because of the high investment in the construction sector before the crisis), 2014 was the third consecutive year in which cumulative investment dropped. By the end of 2014 foreign direct investment amounted to 219 m euro, whereas their peak was 284 m euro as of the end of 2008.

The municipalities in the district of Pernik have utilized less EU funds than the national average level. Relative to the population, they have absorbed 505 BGN per capita vs. 689 BGN per capita for the country as of the end of May

2016. The best performance was achieved by Pernik municipality – 56 m BGN or 583 BGN per capita; the municipality that performed worst was that of Kovachevtzi (126.1 m BGN or 76 BGN per capita).

Infrastructure ●●●●

The district of Pernik is characterized by a relative high density of the road (24.1 km per 100 sq. km) and railway network (4.8 km per 100 sq. km) compared to the respective national average figures of 17.8 km per 100 sq. km and 3.6 km per 100 sq. km. The share of motorways and first class roads is 16.7% (vs. 18.1 nationally) but the road surface quality is better than the rest of the country. In 2015, 53.0% of households had access to the internet (vs. 59.1% nationally).

Taxes and Fees ●●●●

The level of local taxes and fees in the municipalities of Pernik district has been relatively favorable; changes have been rather in the direction of lowering taxes since 2012. The annual license tax for retailers, the waste collection fee, and the immovable property sale tax have been below the national average level. The vehicle tax and the tax on immovable property for legal entities were comparable to national average levels. The only change in 2016 was the raised waste collection fee in the municipality of Kovachevtzi – from 8 to 10‰.

Administration ●●●

Municipal administrations' self-rating shows that the development of electronic services and the level of preparedness to offer one-stop shop services for businesses and individuals are comparable to national figures. Cadastral map coverage has stayed at the same very low level since 2009. In 2015, it included only 4.5% of the district's territory (vs. 19.8% on average in the country).

According to the AIP Foundation's data the transparency of local government has been going up slightly in 2016 to reach 40.1%, but still remaining far below the national index figure of 54.2%. The only districts with lower transparency are Vidin and Shumen. The district center also got a low rating in the Local Transparency Index of Transparency International: 3.04/5.00 points vs. the national average of 3.14/5.00 points.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●

Since 2014, Pernik has been one of the four districts where for each person aged 0 to 14 there are corresponding 2 persons aged 65+. The other districts with such pronounced ageing population are Vidin, Gabrovo, and Kyustendil. The unfavorable age structure of the population strongly influences its natural growth rate. In 2015 it was -12.5%, which is almost twice less favorable than the national average rates. The population's migration rate is comparatively more favorable. Since 2010 a greater number of people have left the district than settling in, yet in 2015 the net migration level was almost zero. Because of the proximity of Pernik to the capital and the great number of local inhabitants working in it, almost 50% of the people permanently leaving the district of Pernik between 2007 and 2015 went to the capital.

In 2015, Pernik was one of the most strongly urbanized districts in the country, as 78.4% of the population lived in towns, while the national average rate was 73.1%.

Education ●●●

School education in the district of Pernik is characterized by above-average indicators for coverage and retention of the population in the educational process. In the last two years, the net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade gradually rose to reach a figure above the national level in 2015 – 78.3%. The relative shares of repeaters (0.7%) and dropouts (2.3%) in primary and secondary education have traditionally stayed below average levels for the country. High-school graduates have achieved results slightly below average at state matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature. In 2016, the average grade was “good” 4.06 (vs. “good” 4.17 for Bulgaria). The share of failures at this exam, on the other hand, was 8.3% in Pernik vs. 8.3% in the country. In the 2015/2016 school year there were 216 college students in Pernik, the smallest number since 2012, and the smallest number among all districts offering higher education.

Healthcare ●●

The number of general practitioners in the district is sufficient but the ratio of specialists to the population is the least favorable in the country. There is one specialist doctor for 928 people (vs. 544 for the country). The number of hospital beds in the district is limited and the number of hospitalizations is exceptionally low. The ratio of beds in general hospitals to the population was 2.3 per 1,000 people or half the national average rate of 4.6 per 1,000 people in 2015; the number of hospitalizations was 98 per 1,000 people – a record low for the country. These figures can be explained with the proximity of the capital and the preference of many patients to seek health-care there.

Security and Justice ●●●

The workloads of judges in the district court, though lower than those nationwide, have been on the rise. While the average rate in 2013 was 4.4 cases per judge per month (vs. 8.3 cases per judge in the country), in 2015 it dropped to 6.9 while the national rate remained unchanged. The share of pending criminal cases, on the other hand, dropped to 6.5% in 2015 (vs. 9.4% in the country). The share of criminal cases closed within 3 months in the district court reached 94.0% (vs. 88.1% nationally), one more indication of local justice administration's growing efficiency.

A major problem in the district of Pernik continues to be the relative high crime rate, combined with a low clearance crime rate. In 2015, the only districts with a greater number of registered crimes against the person and property were Burgas, Varna, Vratsa, Kyustendil, Pleven, and Sofia (capital city). However, the clearance crime rate was lower only in the capital and in Varna (30.4%) vs. 31.1% in Pernik and 39.2% in the country.

Environment ●●●●●

The high level of urbanization in the district of Pernik is a prerequisite for easier connectivity of a great part of the population to public sewerage systems. In 2014, the share of people living in areas with public sewerage systems reached 79.1% (vs. 74.5% nationally). Connectivity to WWTPs in the district reached 74.1%: only the district of Varna and the capital city registered higher levels: 86.2% vs. 96.1% respectively.

In 2014, the level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere increased to reach 292.8 t/sq. km, still staying below the national average level of 314.5 t/sq. km.

Culture ●

Cultural life is not very intense in the district of Pernik. In 2015, relative to the local population, the district registered the second lowest annual average rate of visits to theaters (83 visits per 1,000 people) after Veliko Tarnovo (71 visits per 1,000 people), while the national average rate was 302 visits per 1,000 people. Visits to libraries went down – their number in the district was 2.2 times lower than the national average rate of 583 visits per 1,000 people in 2015.

There were positive tendencies in museum visits only; they reached 58,700 in 2015 or 466 visits per 1,000 people but that rate was still lower than the national average of 664 visits per 1,000 people. Pernik is one of the five districts in the country which still had no cinema house in 2015.

Key Indicators for the District of Pernik

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	6,275	6,616	5,950	5,745	5,914	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	4,194	4,473	5,021	5,764	5,941	6,093
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,890	6,080	6,392	6,719	7,063	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	10.2	9.5	11.6	11.9	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	66.5	66.4	68.6	69.6	71.0	72.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	62.0	61.1	61.7	60.4	61.6	62.5
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	6.9	8.0	9.9	13.0	13.1	14.0
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	16.3	16.7	16.6	16.9	17.8	22.5
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	38	37	38	39	40	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	941	707	853	983	992	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	1,777	1,945	1,865	1,796	1,735	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	15.4	35.0	42.3	48.4	52.8	53.0
Share of roads in good condition (%)	48.7	41.7	52.0	48.9	49.5	49.2
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-9.6	-11.3	-11.7	-11.1	-11.2	-12.5
Net migration rate (‰)	-1.9	-1.6	-1.7	-0.8	-1.7	-0.1
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.1
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	5.7	4.0	4.5	5.3	5.6	8.1
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	80.7	80.2	77.8	77.0	76.7	78.9
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	88.6	88.8	88.3	87.5	88.6	90.0
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	101	101	104	103	99	98
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	14.8	14.3	14.9	15.2	14.0	15.4
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	43.5	38.2	33.1	34.6	30.6	31.1
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	8.6	8.5	7.8	10.1	10.0	6.5
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	71.5	74.0	74.1	74.2	74.1	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	258.6	297.8	257.0	250.9	292.8	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	78	88	84	69	55	83