

Plovdiv District

► Population (2015)	674,435
► Area (sq. km)	5,972.9
► Number of settlements	224
► Share of urban population (%)	74.9



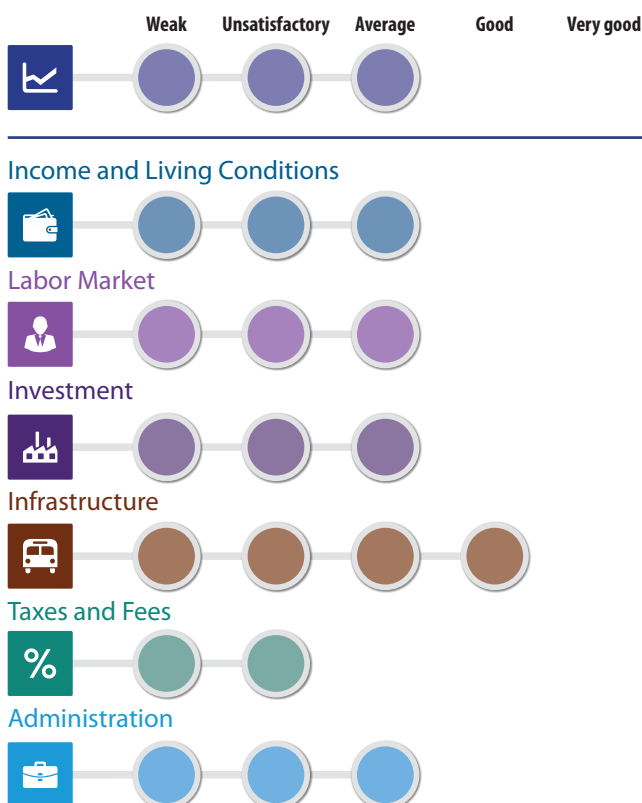
Overview

In 2014, the district economy registered a certain slowdown. The labor market did not improve seriously, either, though unemployment went down in 2015. In 2014, FTA acquisition expenditure rose in Plovdiv district while foreign investment registered an outflow after a four-year steady influx of capital. Road quality was still higher than the average for the country; it went up in the last two years.

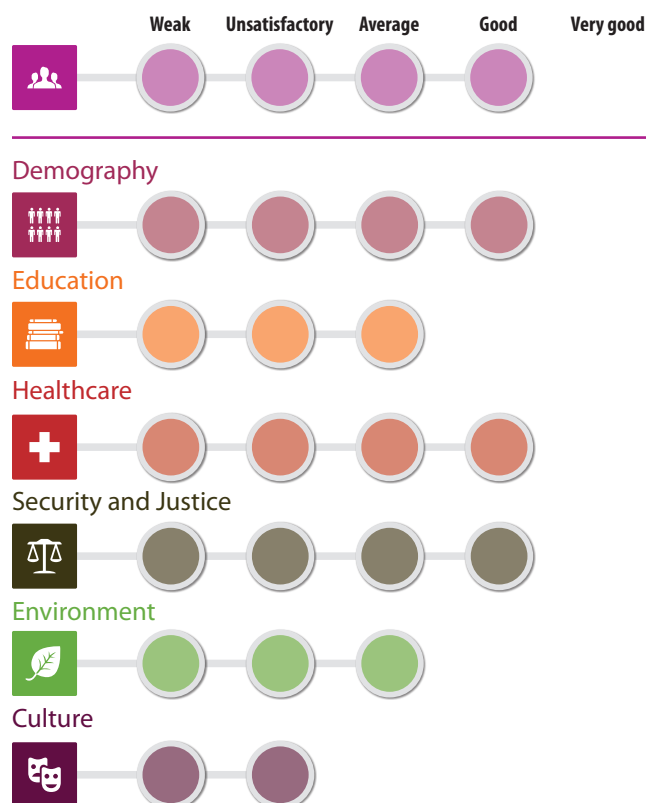
Population ageing is slower in the district of Plovdiv than it is in the country as a whole. Plovdiv has remained one of

the few districts with a positive net migration rate. In education, the district has registered some of the highest shares of repeaters and dropouts, though high school graduates performed relatively well at matriculation exams. Plovdiv is among the districts with the greatest numbers of doctors, hospital beds, and hospitalizations relative to the population. Though court workloads are relatively high in the district, this does not affect the speedy work of the court. Visits to theaters, museums, and libraries are fewer compared to the average numbers for the country.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●●

GDP per capita in the district of Plovdiv was 9,268 BGN in 2014, which makes it the eighth largest in the country. In 2014, the economy registered a slowdown, and the annual average income per household member in 2014 and 2015 slightly declined, mostly because of lower pension, unemployment, and welfare incomes. However, the average annual gross salary of employed people registered a steady growth: in 2014, it reached 8,504 BGN.

In 2013, the share of the population living in material deprivation in the district of Plovdiv was 30.4%, which is below the national average. The relative share of the people living below the national poverty line, however, reached 23.1% – the highest level in the district for the last seven years, probably caused by the falling incomes. The relative poverty among men rose faster between 2011 and 2013.

Labor Market ●●●

The population's economic activity rose considerably in 2013 and 2014, reaching 71 to 72%. As the labor market was unable to respond to this trend with a similar growth in employment, unemployment in Plovdiv surpassed the national average. In 2015, economic activity went down again to 68.8%, which was still above the 2008 level by nearly 3 pp. In 2015, unemployment dropped to 9.6%, thus coming close to the national average of 9.1%.

In 2015, employment remained relatively unchanged: 62.1% (vs. 62.2% in 2014), thus ending a three-year long upward tendency, yet, failing to reach the country average level of 62.9%.

The educational structure of the workforce stayed below the national average level in spite of improving in recent years. In 2015, the population aged between 25 and 64 with higher education reached 25.4% (vs. 27.5% for the country), while that with primary or lower education reached 19.7% (vs. 18.1% nationally).

Investment ●●●

In 2014, FTA acquisition expenditure went up in the district to almost reach the country average level relative to the population: 2,422 BGN per capita vs. 2,786 BGN per capita in the country. However, foreign investment lagged behind, and even declined in 2014 after a steady four-year-long growth: it reached 2,292.8 euro per capita vs. the average rate of 3,006.6 euro per capita in the country.

EU fund utilization by municipal administrations in the district continued to lag behind the average rate in the country, though it grew steadily in recent years. Payments to municipal beneficiaries from operational programs in the district of Plovdiv as of 31 May 2016 amounted to 529.6 BGN

per capita (vs. 688.8 BGN per capita in the country). The highest figures of utilized funds were in the municipalities of Sopot and Hisarya (almost 4,000 BGN per capita) while the lowest were those of Saedinenie and Brezovo (about 100 BGN per capita).

Infrastructure ●●●●

Due to its natural location and the numerous settlements and municipalities in it, Plovdiv is one of the districts with the highest railway network density. The density of roads, as well as the share of motorways and first class roads in Plovdiv, is close to, though lower than the average levels for the country. Road quality in the district continues to be high; it rose even further in the last two years. In 2015, 47.1% of road surfaces were in good condition while the national average rate was 40.7%.

In 2015, Internet access and usage in the district registered levels similar to those in the country as a whole.

Taxes and Fees ●●

The rates of local taxes and fees in the municipalities of Plovdiv district were close to the respective national average rates in all five monitored categories. In 2016, the rates of the license tax for retailers and vehicle tax were higher, whereas those of immovable property tax for legal entities, the property transfer tax, and the waste collection fee were a little lower.

In comparison with 2015, the rate of vehicle tax in the municipality of Plovdiv went down (from 74 to 110 kW), while the municipalities of Perushtitsa and Rodopi raised the rate of the waste collection fee for immovable property of legal entities.

Administration ●●●●

The development of electronic government and one-stop shop administrative services in the district of Plovdiv were comparable to processes in the country.

At the same time, municipal administrations' transparency was rated much lower in 2016 than in 2015. The average rating for the district's municipalities reached 47.8% vs. the national average of 54.2% in 2016. The most transparent municipalities in the district were those of Asenovgrad and Plovdiv (rated above 50%), whereas the least transparent ones were those of Brezovo, Parvomay, Maritsa, Perushtitsa, Rakovski, and Hisarya (rated below 40%). In the Local Transparency Index of Transparency International, the municipalities in the district of Plovdiv were rated close to, but higher than the average rating for the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●●●●

Demography ●●●●●

Population ageing is slower in the district than nationwide, and the age dependence ratio stayed more favorable in 2015 as well.

The natural growth rate in the district grew to -4.9‰ in 2015, but retained a negative value considerably lower than the national average (-6.2‰). Plovdiv also remained one of the few districts with a positive net migration rate of 1.4‰ in 2015.

Similar to national trends, an increasing part of the district's population (74.9%) lives in towns vs. the national rate of 73.1%. Yet, in 2015, population density in towns and villages remained considerably above that in the country, 2,532.3 people/sq. km vs. 1,559.3 people/sq. km, respectively.

Education ●●●●●

In 2015, the net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade in the district was 78.0%, close to the national average of 78.3%. It should be noted, though, that both values have been declining in recent years in Plovdiv and the country.

Plovdiv is still among the districts with the highest shares of repeaters (1.8% vs. 1.0% in the country in 2015) and drop-outs in primary and secondary education (3.9% vs. 2.8% in the country in 2014).

However, high school graduates in the district performed relatively well at the matriculation exams in 2016. The average grade at the exam in Bulgarian language and literature in the district was “good” 4.27 (vs. “good” 4.17 in the country), while the share of failing grades was 8.61% (vs. 8.73% in the country).

Though declining in comparison to 2014, the number of people with higher education in the district of Plovdiv – almost 39,000 – allotted it the second place after the capital in terms of number of college and university students.

Healthcare ●●●●●

After the opening of several new hospitals and the enlargement of existing ones, in 2015, the number of beds in general hospitals in the district reached almost 5,000 – the second largest number after that in the capital. Relative to the population, Plovdiv also comes second after the district of Pleven with 7.2 beds per 1,000 people while the national average rate is 4.6 per 1,000 people. This also explains the abrupt rise in the number of hospitalizations in 2015.

The number of doctors also increased in 2015, and there were 435 people per specialist doctor (vs. 544 in the country). The ratio of general practitioners to the population in

the district of Plovdiv also remained more favorable than that in the country.

Security and Justice ●●●●●

Despite the relatively high workloads of the district's courts, court efficiency was not affected in terms of speedy administration of justice. In 2015, the workloads of criminal judges in the district (10.6 cases per month per judge) were the second highest after those in the capital, but unlike Sofia (capital city) cases in Plovdiv were solved relatively faster. Almost 93% of criminal cases were closed within 3 months (vs. 88.1% in the country and 76.0% in the capital), and 5.4% of cases pending (vs. 9.4% in the country and 15.4% in the capital).

Relative to the population, the number of registered crimes in Plovdiv district is still lower than that in Bulgaria. In 2015, little below 7,000 crimes against the person and property were registered – the lowest figure for Plovdiv in the last 15 years. Relative to the population, there were 10.3 registered crimes per 1,000 people (vs. 13.6 per 1,000 people in the country). Nevertheless, the clearance crime rate (37.8%) remained below the national average of 39.2%.

Environment ●●●●●

Air pollution levels continue to be lower in the district than the national average rate. In 2014, carbon dioxide emissions in Plovdiv were 131.7 t/sq. km vs. 314.5 t/sq. km in the country. In 2014, the figures of household waste were bigger: 485 kg of household waste generated per person in the district vs. the national average of 442 kg per person.

The population's access to public sewerage, as well as its connectivity to WWTPs, was commensurate with national average rates.

Culture ●●●●●

In 2015, visits to cinemas in Plovdiv district rose to reach 869 per 1,000 people (vs. 744 per 1,000 people nationally). Visits to theaters, museums, and libraries were fewer compared to national average numbers. The largest variance was registered in the number of visits to libraries: Plovdiv's rate of 234 visits per 1,000 people was almost 2.5 times lower than the national average of 583 visits per 1,000 people.

In 2015 the average annual number of visits to museums in the district of Plovdiv rose to reach 493 per 1,000 people, though it was still below the national average number of 664 visits per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Plovdiv

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	7,924	8,888	9,087	9,394	9,268	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,745	3,657	3,988	4,514	4,410	4,300
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,462	6,889	7,418	7,922	8,504	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	20.9	20.3	19.3	23.1	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	64.6	64.2	67.7	70.7	71.7	68.8
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	59.0	58.4	60.0	61.2	62.2	62.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	8.5	8.8	11.2	13.4	13.1	9.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	22.5	23.6	22.6	23.4	25.1	25.4
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	51	50	51	51	52	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,724	2,144	2,514	2,291	2,422	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	1,600	1,847	1,972	2,436	2,293	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	35.3	47.5	55.1	60.7	45.0	61.7
Share of roads in good condition (%)	49.8	47.5	48.0	43.7	44.5	47.1
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	20.8	24.4	24.4	24.4	24.4	24.4

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-3.6	-3.8	-4.5	-4.0	-4.3	-4.9
Net migration rate (‰)	-4.1	0.2	1.4	3.1	0.5	1.4
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	3.9	3.2	5.0	4.9	4.6	7.0
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	81.9	82.3	80.7	79.5	78.8	78.0
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	87.2	88.4	87.7	86.5	87.2	88.4
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	228	228	328	353	242	412
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	13.9	11.9	10.9	11.3	10.6	10.3
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	38.9	35.3	33.6	32.1	34.4	37.8
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	3.7	5.9	5.3	5.4	14.6	5.4
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	50.8	54.1	54.3	54.6	54.9	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	95.8	141.6	151.0	127.6	131.7	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	772	799	703	769	808	869
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	151	204	190	250	299	259