

Razgrad District

▶ Population (2015)	118,145
▶ Area (sq. km)	2,639.7
▶ Number of settlements	119
▶ Share of urban population (%)	47.1



Overview

In recent years, incomes and salaries in the district have been growing; still, living standards have stayed below the national average. Indicators for living conditions and social inclusion have followed the national trends; the poor constitute about 1/5 of the population, while those living in material deprivation are about 1/3. The labor market, however, is faced with a number of challenges: the district registered one of the lowest employment rates – the fourth highest unemployment rate in the country, and poor economic activity of the population. The labor market problems come as a consequence of the relatively limited influx of foreign and domestic investment. FTA acquisition expenditure is approaching its pre-crisis levels though still nearly twice

lower than the national average. The municipalities in the district are among the best in EU fund utilization, yet, this has failed to compensate for insufficient private investment. The population's age structure remains relatively favorable. Natural growth rates are negative and further deteriorating. Net migration rates follow similar trends. These processes entail a rapid deterioration of the population's age structure. The district is characterized by a high coverage of the educational system, but also considerable numbers of dropouts and poor performance of students at matriculation exams. Doctors remain insufficient in number and specialist qualification. The cultural life is poorly developed compared with the other regions in the country.

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

Indicators characterizing living standards in the district of Razgrad have been improving gradually in recent years. Salaries have been growing fast since 2011 to reach 4,164 BGN in 2014. In 2015, annual household incomes rose by 4.1%; 54.0% of them were generated by salaries vs. 57.0% for the country. Between 2008 and 2014, GDP per capita grew from 56.1 to 70.4% of the national average, amounting to 8,152 BGN per capita in the last year.

In spite of these positive trends, the levels of incomes, salaries, and GDP per capita have stayed below national average levels. The relative share of people living in material deprivation – about 1/3 of the population, and that of people living below the poverty line (20.8% in the district vs. 21.8% in the country) have been close to national average levels.

Labor Market

Though in recent years Razgrad's state of labor market has gradually improved, it has been unsatisfactory on the whole. In 2015 economic activity (65.6%) was lower than that in the country (69.3%). Employment followed a line of gradual increase (55.6% in 2015), though remaining relatively low. Unemployment gradually declined from 21.4% in 2012 to 15.0% in 2015. Nevertheless, it is still above the national level of 9.1% and that allots Razgrad the fourth place among the districts with the highest unemployment. The only indicator where the district has been performing better than the national average levels is the demographic replacement rate. In 2015, for every 100 people aged 60 to 64 about to leave the workforce there were about 66 people aged 15 to 19 about to join it (vs. the national average rate of 63.5%).

Investment

Since 2010 Razgrad continues to be one of the six districts with the smallest number of companies relative to the population. FTA acquisition expenses have already surpassed their pre-crisis levels, reaching 1,518 BGN per capita in 2014 vs. 1,428 BGN per capita in 2008, but are still almost half the national average.

After a certain influx of foreign investment in 2012 and 2013, in 2014 there was a drop in its cumulative size to 969 euro per capita, a level similar to that of 2009. As of 31 May 2016 municipalities in the district of Razgrad had utilized 118 m BGN of EU funds, one of the highest rates of utilization in the country (997 euro per capita). Most funds were utilized in the municipality of Kubrat (1,974 BGN per capita)

and least – in the municipalities of Tsar Kaloyan (39.9 BGN per capita) and Zavet (71.7 BGN per capita).

Infrastructure

The density of the road network in the district is higher than the national average though only 11% of it consists of motorways and first class roads. In 2015, the share of roads in good condition dropped abruptly compared to the previous year to 22.7% vs. the national average of 40.7%.

In 2015, 58.1% of households in the district had internet access and 59.8% of people aged 16 to 74 used the internet. Both indicators are close to national average levels.

Taxes and Fees

Taxes and fees in the municipalities of Razgrad district are close to national average rates; the only significant variance is with the license tax for retailers, which is lower in Razgrad: 9.16 BGN/sq. m vs. 12.74 BGN on average in the country. The rate of the immovable property tax of legal entities is a little higher than the country average rate: 2.02‰ in the district vs. 1.86‰ in the country in 2016.

Local taxes and fees in the district's municipalities have generally remained unchanged in the last five years. The only exception is the waste collection fee in the municipality of Loznitsa, which rose from 5.2‰ in 2013 to 6.18‰ in 2014 and 6.85‰ in 2015.

Administration

In 2015, 18.9% of the district's territory was included in cadastral maps (vs. 19.8% in Bulgaria). Cadastral coverage has been increasing nationally, but it has stayed unchanged in the district of Razgrad since 2009.

In the local administrations' self-rating for providing electronic and one-stop shop services the district registered a decline in 2016. In comparison to the previous year, when electronic services were rated higher than the national average (rating of 2.9 out of a maximum of 4 – vs. the national average rating of 2.8), they dropped to 2.5 or below the national average level. One-stop shop services on their part dropped from a rating of 3.5 out of a maximum of 4 for the previous year to 2.7 in 2016. Local administrations' transparency, however, was higher than the national level, though it was rated lower than the previous year.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●

Until 2008, the natural growth rate in Razgrad district was similar to the national average rate. However, since 2009, it has been declining rapidly to reach -8.3% in 2015 when the national average rate was -6.2% . Intensive migration out of the district in recent years has probably contributed to this trend. Age dependence ratio has remained relatively favorable, but the difference from the national average rates has been gradually abolished in the last 15 years. In 2015, Razgrad ranked second because of its worst net migration rate for that year (-7.0%), which was outdone only by the district of Smolyan.

Razgrad is the least urbanized district in the country after Kardzhali. In 2015, the share of urban population was 47.1% vs. 73.1% in Bulgaria.

Education ●●

For the fourth successive year Razgrad has kept the first place in Bulgaria for the highest rate of the population's net enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade, though the district makes no exception from the general tendency for an ever shrinking coverage of the educational system in the last two years. Despite the high number of enrolled students, schools fail to keep them and the share of dropouts remains high. It even rose in 2014 compared to 2013 to become one of the highest in the country: 4.3%.

The district's high school students have performed considerably worse at state matriculation exams compared with their peers in the country as a whole. The share of failing grades at the exam in Bulgarian language and literature kept rising to reach 15.43% in 2016 (vs. the national rate of 8.73%). The only districts with worse results were Kardzhali, Sofia, and Yambol. In the last five years the average grade of the district's high school graduates was between 3.82 and 3.91 while the national average grades were between 4.17 and 4.32.

The number of students enrolled in the Ruse University affiliate in Razgrad (the single higher education establishment in the district) declined in the last academic year: enrolment was only 319.

Healthcare ●

The key factor for the low rating of the district in healthcare is the shortage of doctors. One general practitioner is responsible for an average of 2,461 people – the least favorable ratio in all of Bulgaria (the average being 1,619 people). As for specialist doctors, only the districts of Pernik, Dobrich, and Sliven have worse ratios to the local population. The infant mortality rate in Razgrad has traditionally remained higher than that in Bulgaria.

The rate of both beds in general hospitals (4.6 per 1,000 people) and hospitalizations to the local population (225 per 1,000 people) is comparable to the national average rates. In 2015, 92.4% of the population had health insurance when the national average rate was 88.5%.

Security and Justice ●●●●●

The rating of Razgrad district in this category is “very good” as a consequence of both the small number of registered crimes against the person and property and the efficient work of law enforcement institutions. The clearance crime rate in the district (61.4%) is considerably higher than the national average of 39.2%.

In 2015, the workloads of criminal judges in the district court were close to their national average rate: 8.1 cases per month per judge vs. 8.3 in the country. Still, the share of criminal cases which were closed within 3 months that year was higher (93.0%) than the average rate of 88.1% in the country, while the share of pending cases dropped to half its value, reaching 4.5%.

Environment ●●●

The air in the district is relatively clean but the construction of public sewerage networks and WWTPs has been lagging behind. The level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere was on the decrease in 2014, now being over 6 times lower than national average emissions. The low share of the population living in areas with public sewerage (41.8% vs. 74.9% in the country in 2014) has been preserved. The same holds true of the limited coverage with WWTPs, which remained at its 2013 level of 41.8% vs. the national average of 56.8%. Only one WWTP is in operation in the district of Razgrad, one of the key reasons for that being the low level of urbanization.

Culture ●●

2015 witnessed a growing interest in local theaters. The ratio between registered visits to theaters and the local population rose to 312 visits per 1,000 people, a figure above the national average of 302 visits per 1,000 people. Though the first cinema in the district was opened in 2014, visits remained limited. Visits to libraries declined in 2015 compared with the previous year, and interest in local museums remained low despite the fact that some of them were reconstructed within the framework of Operational Program “Regional Development” in the last years.

Key Indicators for the District of Razgrad

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,880	6,708	7,584	7,846	8,152	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,621	2,753	3,131	3,264	4,000	4,164
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	6,071	6,488	7,065	7,533	8,351	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	33.7	37.5	16.4	20.8	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	61.2	63.1	64.7	63.4	64.2	65.6
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	47.4	50.2	50.7	50.2	52.8	55.6
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	22.6	20.3	21.4	20.7	17.7	15.0
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	12.1	12.9	14.0	13.7	16.2	18.7
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	33	33	33	33	33	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	663	1,020	1,363	1,314	1,518	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	1,106	962	1,028	1,079	969	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	27.9	42.2	58.1	51.2	59.4	58.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	34.9	34.6	32.0	34.5	33.1	22.7
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	18.9	18.9	18.9	18.9	18.9	18.9

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-6.0	-6.4	-6.2	-7.0	-7.6	-8.3
Net migration rate (‰)	-13.2	-7.9	-5.4	-5.9	-5.3	-7.0
Average grades at state matriculation exams	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	11.1	7.6	12.1	12.1	10.8	12.9
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	80.2	84.9	85.3	86.0	85.2	84.7
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	87.6	91.1	90.0	89.3	90.3	92.4
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	196	202	211	232	227	225
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	11.6	10.3	9.2	9.7	8.7	9.4
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	66.3	61.8	62.7	63.4	64.3	61.4
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	5.3	8.2	9.1	8.7	9.0	4.5
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	40.8	41.9	41.9	41.8	41.8	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	30.7	41.2	39.0	54.6	47.4	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	0	0	0	0	25	29
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	280	149	196	258	288	312