

Silistra District

▶ Population (2015)	113,959
▶ Area (sq. km)	2,846.3
▶ Number of settlements	118
▶ Share of urban population (%)	44.4



Overview

During the last two years GDP growth in the district of Silistra has been above national average levels, although, in 2014, again, GDP value in the district remained almost twice lower than the national average. The relatively poor economic development of the district is related to its limited business activities and low domestic and foreign investment. Household incomes and salary levels in the district have also been among the lowest in the country: in 2015, Silistra remained the single district where employment was below 50% and unemployment was over 20%. In 2016, local taxes and fees in the municipalities of Silistra remained below national average.

Silistra is one of the districts with the lowest share of urban population. The negative natural growth rate has been exacerbating in the last two years and the negative demographic processes can be expected to go deeper. Education and healthcare in the district suffer from significant weaknesses. In 2016, the district's school leavers got the lowest grades in the country at the state matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature. The shortage of doctors in the district has become chronic. Silistra is one of the districts with the smallest number of registered crimes and the highest clearance crime rate.

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 ●●

Before 2008 the district of Silistra was among those with the poorest economic development but as the crisis set in, its economic condition worsened even more, and it remained the district with the smallest GDP per capita until 2012. During the last two years, GDP per capita has been growing at rates faster than the average for the country but in 2014 it was still almost half the national average value: 5,826 BGN per capita in Silistra when the national average was 11,574 BGN per capita. Household incomes and salaries are also among the lowest in Bulgaria. The breakdown of households' gross incomes shows that while 57% of incomes in Bulgaria come from salaries, in Silistra this share is 45% – a consequence of low employment rates and relatively small salaries in the district. Pensions, however, make up 37% of incomes (vs. 27% nationally). In 2014, the average annual gross salary was 7,215 BGN while it was 9,860 BGN in Bulgaria.

Labor Market ●

The district's results in the category assessing the labor market ranked the district last of the 28 districts in the country. In 2015, it remained the only district with an employment rate below 50% and an unemployment rate over 20%. The employment rate was 49.2% in Silistra vs. 62.7% in the country; unemployment was 21.8% (vs. 9.1% in the country).

There was a considerable improvement in the population's economic activity after 2010. Until 2014 it grew from 57.2 to 64.7%, one of the highest growth rates (having in mind the low start level) in the country for that period, but in 2015 it went slightly down to 63.1%.

The relatively low education of the local population has also been a standing problem, which makes finding a job difficult. Among people aged 25 to 64 in the district, 16.4% have higher education (vs. 27.5% in the country) and 33.3% have primary or lower education (vs. 18.1% nationally).

Investment ●

The relatively poor economic development of the district is related to its limited business activity and the low levels of domestic and foreign investment. The cumulative FDI in the district is 10 times less than the national average: 277.9 euro per capita at the end of 2014 vs. the national average of 3,006.6 euro per capita.

Nevertheless, municipalities in the district have utilized more EU funds as beneficiaries of operational programs compared to national average levels. As of 31 May 2016, payments to municipalities in Silistra amounted to a total of 87 m BGN or 766.3 BGN per capita compared to 688.8 BGN

per capita in the country. Municipalities with most utilized funds included Silistra and Glavinitsa, while those that utilized least were Alfatar and Dulovo.

Infrastructure ●●●

The density of the road network in the district is similar to the average density in the country. Road surface quality continues to be relatively good: in 2015, 46.8% of the roads were in good condition (vs. 40.7% in the country). The railway network density and the share of first class roads and motorways are considerably below average levels but this is understandable in view of the peripheral location of Silistra in the country.

In the last two years, there has been a visible increase in the share of people using the internet.

Taxes and Fees ●●●●

In 2016, the rates of major local taxes and fees in the municipalities of the district of Silistra continued to be below country average levels. The most significant variance between the local municipalities and the average level for Bulgaria was in the annual license tax for retailers. Its average rate in the district was 7.95 BGN/sq. m, while the national average rate was 12.74 BGN/sq. m.

The rate of the vehicle tax went down compared to 2015 – after the Glavinitsa municipality reduced it by over 15% – from 1.65 BGN to 1.40 BGN/kW (for vehicles from 74 to 110 kW). The only annual tax to be raised in 2016 was that on immovable property of legal entities in the municipality of Tutrakan.

Administration ●●

The rating of the district's municipalities for development of electronic government was raised in 2016; it even surpassed the national average. The offering of one-stop shop services, however, was rated much lower in the district.

The administration's transparency in the district also remained below average levels in 2016: 41.8% vs. the national average level of 54.2%. The highest transparency rate was given to the municipality of Alfatar (73.5%), and the lowest was given to the municipality of Dulovo (26.8%). In 2015, Alfatar was also the municipality with the highest rate of cadastral map coverage (42.4%) in the district. Still, the district has been lagging behind the rates of cadastral map coverage in the country: 16.2% in Silistra vs. 19.8% in Bulgaria.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●

Demography ●●

Silistra is one of the districts with the lowest share of urban population (it is lower only in Kardzhali) – 44.4% vs. 73.1% in the country.

Age dependence ratios in the district, though not among the worst in the country yet, have risen twice and thrice faster than the national average rates in the last ten years. In 2015, the rate of natural increase dropped to –9.0‰ (vs. –6.2‰ nationally). After steady decline since 2012, the net migration rate in the district reached –3.5‰, which shows that the process of migrating out of the district has been intensifying.

Education ●●

In 2015, the net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade in the district was slightly above the national rate. The share of dropouts from primary and secondary education however continued to be higher in 2014, undergoing some deterioration between 2013 and 2014.

The worst performance of the district in the “Education” category was in the grades at matriculation exams. At the exam in Bulgarian language and literature in 2016, students from the district of Silistra received the lowest grades in the country (“good” 3.80) below the national average of “good” 4.17. The share of high school students with poor grades was also substantially higher – 14% vs. the average for the country 9%.

Healthcare ●●

Healthcare in the district has been suffering from a chronic lack of doctors and insufficient hospital capacity. In 2015, there was one general practitioner for 1,965 people (vs. one for 1,619 in Bulgaria); there was one medical specialist for 781 people in Silistra (vs. one for 544 people in the country). In addition, there were 4.0 beds in the general hospitals per 1,000 people (vs. 4.6 per 1,000 people in the country).

Hospitalization data shows that the number of hospitalizations in the district of Silistra (209 per 1,000 people) is below the national average level of 232 per 1,000 people. The reason behind this variance is probably not the low morbidity rate in the district, but rather the fact that people seek medical services and specialists outside the district. The district registered some of the highest infant mortality rates in the last two years.

Security and Justice ●●●●●●

The relatively low workloads of criminal judges in the district (6.8 cases a month per judge vs. the national average workload of 8.3 cases) explain the relatively low share of pending cases (5.4 cases in Silistra vs. 9.4 in the country in 2015). At the same time, the share of cases that were closed within 3 months was not higher in the district than it was in the country.

Silistra is one of the districts with the lowest number of registered crimes against the person and property. In 2015, 9.6 crimes were registered per 1,000 people (vs. 13.6 per 1,000 people in the country). Though there was an increase in the number of registered crimes compared to 2014, their rate has not exceeded 10 per 1,000 people since 2004. Silistra is also one of the districts with the highest clearance crime rate. In 2015, 62% of the crimes registered in that year were solved (vs. 39% on average in Bulgaria).

Environment ●

In 2014, 51.5% of the population in the district of Silistra had access to public sewerage systems (vs. 74.9 in the country), while only 6.2% of the population had access to sewerage systems connected to WWTPs (vs. 56.8% in the country). The regional wastewater treatment plant started operating early in 2016, so some improvement can be expected for this indicator.

Air pollution in the district is almost 20 times lower than the national average level, which can be explained by the low share of industry in the local economy and the low population density. In 2014, the level of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere was below 15 t/sq. km, while the average level in the country was 315 t/sq. km.

Culture ●

When a cinema opened in the district in 2014, visits reached 115 per 1,000 people. That rate continues to be below the national average of 744 visits per 1,000 people.

The district of Silistra performed poorly in the other indicators of this category. In 2015, visits to theater performances in it amounted to 188 per 1,000 people vs. the national average of 302 per 1,000 people; there were 194 visits to museums per 1,000 people (vs. 664 nationally) and 447 visits per 1,000 people to libraries (vs. 583 nationally).

Key Indicators for the District of Silistra

Indicators of economic development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	4,785	5,553	5,338	5,582	5,826	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,629	2,589	3,337	3,249	3,289	3,521
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,771	6,059	6,390	6,880	7,215	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	38.9	18.7	17.8	20.2	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	57.2	57.3	60.7	61.4	64.7	63.1
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	50.7	50.1	50.9	48.2	50.0	49.2
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	11.4	12.5	16.0	21.3	22.4	21.8
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	13.1	15.4	15.8	15.1	14.4	16.4
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	32	32	33	33	33	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	737	1,259	1,442	1,511	1,436	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	117	65	111	290	278	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	20.8	40.0	56.5	37.6	60.2	56.4
Share of roads in good condition (%)	24.8	40.0	39.0	44.8	46.7	46.8
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	14.2	16.2

Indicators of social development	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-6.8	-7.7	-8.1	-6.8	-8.4	-9.0
Net migration rate (‰)	-7.7	-2.0	-2.4	-3.2	-3.4	-3.5
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.9
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	6.7	4.5	5.1	4.0	3.5	9.0
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	74.7	81.6	81.5	80.1	78.7	78.7
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	82.7	86.8	85.6	84.9	86.0	87.6
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	146	165	182	202	205	209
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	10.0	9.3	8.7	8.3	8.0	9.6
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	64.9	62.1	60.3	62.4	62.1	62.0
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	6.3	7.7	7.8	6.4	12.4	5.4
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTP (%)	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.6	6.2	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/km ²)	15.4	23.9	17.5	13.1	14.7	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	18	10	0	0	69	115
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	167	131	145	192	188	188