Haskovo District

▸ Population (2016)	234,899
▸ Area (sq. km)	5,533.3
▸ Number of settlements	261
▸ Share of urban population (%)	72.2

Overview

After hesitant growth in GDP per capita in the district of Haskovo, in 2015 it grew considerably to overtake the national average rate. Employment was on the rise and unemployment dropped. Haskovo was still one of the districts to attract least investment. A considerable rise in Internet access and usage was also registered in the district. In 2017 the average rates of local taxes and fees in the district's municipalities remained close to national average rates.

Natural increase in the district has traditionally been lower than the national average; in 2016 there was a new wave of emigration from the district which was a setback on the population's age structure. Student performance at matriculation exams has remained poor. Healthcare is characterized by relatively low capacity of medical facilities and doctor shortages. Administration of justice in the district is relatively speedy with above-average crime clearance rates. The intensity of cultural life in the district is relatively low.

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	●	●	●	●	
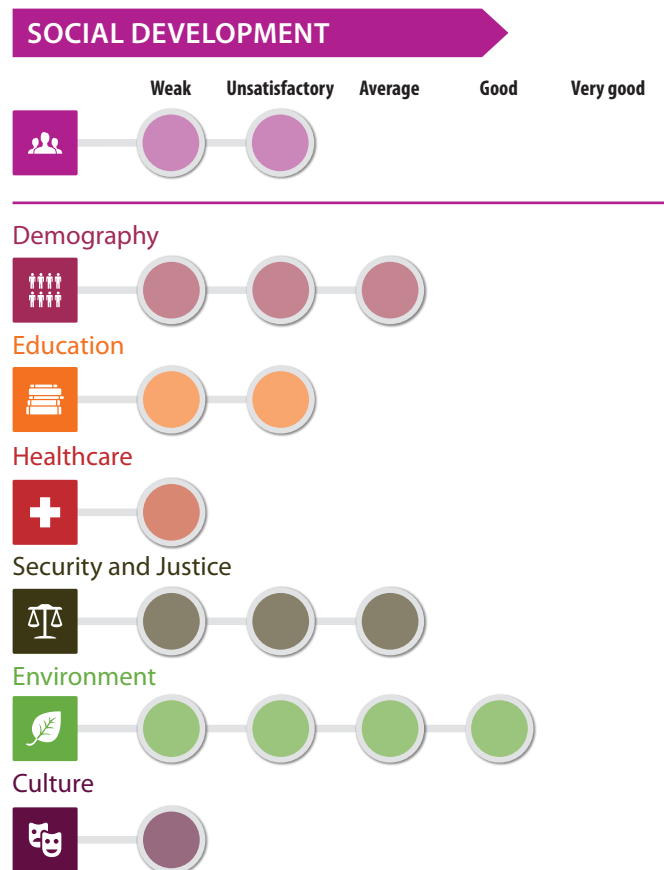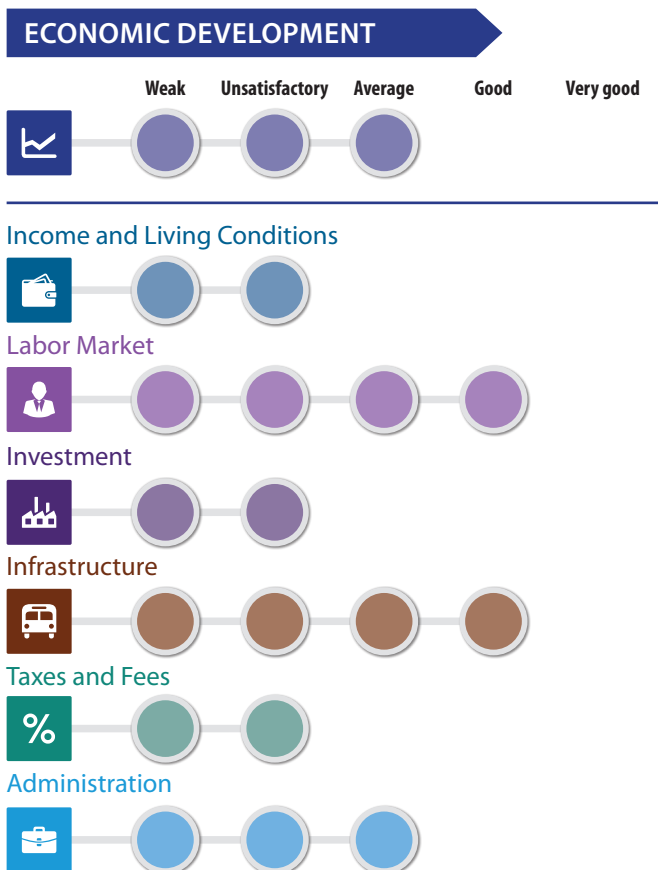
⬢ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●●

💼 Income and Living Conditions ●●

After a period of hesitant GDP growth since 2009, in 2015 it grew considerably to overtake the national average rate. Still, its value remained below average: 7,001 BGN/person (vs. 12,339 BGN/person nationally). Salaries and incomes in the district also kept growing without reaching national average levels: the difference was significant in the average salary. In 2015 its annual size in Haskovo reached 7,422 BGN (vs. 10,535 BGN nationally).

Increasing incomes and salaries in the district led to improving conditions and living standards. In 2015 the relative share of the population living in material deprivation declined to 27% (vs. 32% in the country). At the same time, however, the share of population living below the national poverty line (30%) remained above the national average rate of 23%.

👤 Labor Market ●●●●

In 2016 once again the population's economic activity in the district – 69.2% – remained close to the national average of 68.7%; this rate went through little change in the last few years. In the meantime, employment kept growing while unemployment declined reaching levels more favorable than the national average. In 2016 the employment rate in the district was 64.2% (vs. 63.4% nationally) while the unemployment rate was 7.1% (vs. 7.7% nationally).

Further improvement of the labor market indicators is likely to be hampered by the worsened educational structure of the population aged 25–64. In 2016 the share of university graduates in the district shrank to 17% (vs. 28% nationally) and the share of people with primary or lower education rose slightly to 23% (vs. 18% in the country).

🏭 Investment ●●

Haskovo remains among the districts that attract least investment. As of the end of 2015 FDI in the district increased to reach a cumulative 100 m or 448 euro/person – far from the national average rate of 3,250 euro/person.

FTA expenditures and absorbed EU funds have also lagged behind national average rates. As of 30th June 2017 sums paid in the district from operational programs amounted to 896 BGN/person (vs. 1,344 BGN/person nationally). The municipality with most utilized funds in the district was once again that of Svilengrad while the ones with least funds were those of Simeonovgrad and Topolovgrad.

🚌 Infrastructure ●●●●

The density of the road network in the district of Haskovo was above average in 2015. The launching that year of the "Maritsa" highway, which is connected with the "Trakiya" highway, increased the share of highways and first class roads in the district to 22% (vs. 19% nationally). That led to increased road quality in the district. In 2016 the share of road surfaces in good condition reached 34% which was far from the national average of 42%.

In 2016 a considerable increase was registered in Internet access and usage and the levels of both indicators overtook the national average rates.

% Taxes and Fees ●●

In 2017 the average rates of local taxes and fees in the district's municipalities remained close to the national average figures except for the waste collection fee which was relatively high. No municipality raised local taxes and fees from 2016 levels.

The annual license tax for retailers and the tax on immovable property of legal entities were slightly below average, whereas the local vehicle tax was higher. The rate of the tax on property transfer in the district reached the national average level in 2017. The tax on taxi transport (340 BGN) was considerably lower than the national average rate of 525 BGN.

💼 Administration ●●●

The administration's self-evaluation for development of electronic government and provided one-stop shop services were close to national average ones in 2017. The transparency rating of municipal authorities was also close to average. In 2017 the average grade for the district was 58% while the national average was 59%. The most transparent municipalities in the district were Dimitrovgrad, Svilengrad and Haskovo (over 60%), whereas the least transparent were Madzharovo, Mineralni Bani and Stambolovo (under 40%).

In 2016 cadastral map coverage in the district increased with the inclusion of part of the territory of the Svilengrad municipality but Haskovo remained among the three districts (alongside Kardzhali and Pernik) with the lowest share of its territory included in cadastral maps: 5.9% vs. 22.5% nationally). Six of all eleven municipalities have no coverage at all yet.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●

Demography ●●●

In the last three years the natural growth rate in the district has stayed below the national average level fluctuating somewhere around –8‰ with the national average rate at around –6‰. In 2016 a new wave of outmigration from the district was also registered which made the net migration rate negative once again despite having maintained positive values in the previous two years. Those processes affected the population age structure in 2016 and the age dependency ratio as a ratio of people aged 15–64 to those aged 0–14 reached 154% (vs. 147% nationally). The age dependency ratio as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to that aged 15–64 reached 34% (vs. 32% nationally).

The share of urban population in the district is close to the average in the country though population density remains considerably lower.

Education ●●

In 2016 the share of children enrolled in 5th–8th grade in the district rose again after a decline the previous year and managed to overtake the national average rates. However, a considerable rise in the share of repeaters was registered at the same time. The share of dropouts from primary and secondary education kept rising for the third successive year reaching 3.5% (vs. 2.9% nationally) in 2015. Haskovo remains one of the districts with the fewest teachers relative to the number of students.

The performance of students at matriculation exams continued to be relatively poor. In 2017 the district's average grade for the exam in BLL was 4.0 (vs. 4.22 nationally), while the share of poor grades was almost two times higher.

In 2016 the branches in the district of two universities had 266 students.

Healthcare ●

Haskovo has continued to be one of the districts with relatively limited capacity of medical facilities. The relative shortage of doctors, specialists in particular, also affected the district's rating. In 2016 there were 1,704 people per GP (vs. 1,611 per GP in the country) and 714 people per specialist (vs. 530 in the country). The number of hospital beds has also been on the increase though it is still considerably below average: in 2016 in the district's general hospitals there were 3.4 beds per 1,000 people while there were 5.1 beds per 1,000 people in the country.

The limited hospital capacity as well as the limited number of medical specialists determined the relatively small number of patients in general hospitals: 203 per 1,000 people (vs. 235 per 1,000 people in the country).

Security and Justice ●●●

In 2016 once again the local court's workload kept increasing and was above the national average level. A criminal judge from the district court in Haskovo saw an average of 11.4 cases a month while the national average rate was 9.4 cases a month. Nevertheless, the speed of justice administration in the district was still above the national average: the share of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 92% (vs. 89% in the country) and the share of pending cases was below 7% (vs. over 8% nationally).

The relative share of registered crimes in the district retained its level in the last 4 years while it was dropping steadily in the country. Registered crimes in Haskovo, however, stayed below average: 11.1 per 1,000 people vs. 12.6 per 1,000 people in the country in 2016. Clearance rates continued to rise meanwhile, reaching 57% in Haskovo and 48% in the country.

Environment ●●●●

Between 2011 and 2015 three wastewater treatment plants were launched in the district (in Dimitrovgrad, Haskovo, and Svilengrad) and the population's access to sewerage connected with wastewater treatment plants increased to 54.5% in 2015 though it was still below the national average rate of 62.3%. The share of people living in areas with public sewerage systems was also below average: 72.2% – 75.5% nationally.

Air pollution kept decreasing in 2015. Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere relative to the territory were almost three times lower than the national average rate. Generated household waste was also considerably below average.

Culture ●

The intensity of cultural life in the district was relatively poor. The rates of cinema, theater, museum and library visits were below national average figures in 2016 once again. What is more, interest in theaters, museums and libraries in the district registered a certain decline in comparison to 2015.

The only indicator which kept rising was that on cinema visits and they reached 34,000 but their relative number of 145 visits per 1,000 people remained considerably below the national average of 778 per 1,000 people.

Key Indicators for the District of Haskovo

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	6,158	6,366	6,169	6,412	7,001	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,708	3,855	4,130	4,157	4,321	4,861
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,999	6,267	6,581	6,947	7,422	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	21.1	22.0	19.8	31.3	29.8	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	64.6	64.7	68.2	69.2	69.0	69.2
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	54.3	55.0	58.4	61.9	63.1	64.2
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	15.9	14.9	14.3	10.4	8.6	7.1
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	17.1	18.5	20.3	19.3	18.7	17.2
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	46	46	47	47	48	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	784	1,612	867	1,347	1,227	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	420	388	309	257	448	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	41.3	47.5	54.2	57.5	54.2	66.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	42.0	44.0	33.6	30.0	33.1	34.2
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	5.9

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−6.6	−6.7	−6.8	−8.0	−7.9	−7.7
Net migration rate (‰)	−4.0	−2.8	−3.1	1.0	2.5	−4.9
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.31	4.08	4.14	4.13	4.14	3.98
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	7.22	8.36	7.29	7.45	9.16	12.61
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	82.3	82.9	81.6	80.5	77.8	79.0
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	88.3	87.5	86.2	87.3	89.1	88.8
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	147.4	180.4	197.9	188.1	198.0	202.5
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	11.8	10.4	11.0	11.2	12.1	11.1
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	40.8	42.8	36.3	41.9	48.4	56.9
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	8.4	8.2	7.2	13.3	7.1	6.8
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	46.7	46.7	46.9	46.7	54.5	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	196.3	150.3	203.5	183.2	125.8	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	23	69	53	46	105	145
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	203	211	238	221	302	228