

Varna District

▶ Population (2016)	472,790
▶ Area (sq. km)	3,819.5
▶ Number of settlements	159
▶ Share of urban population (%)	83.6

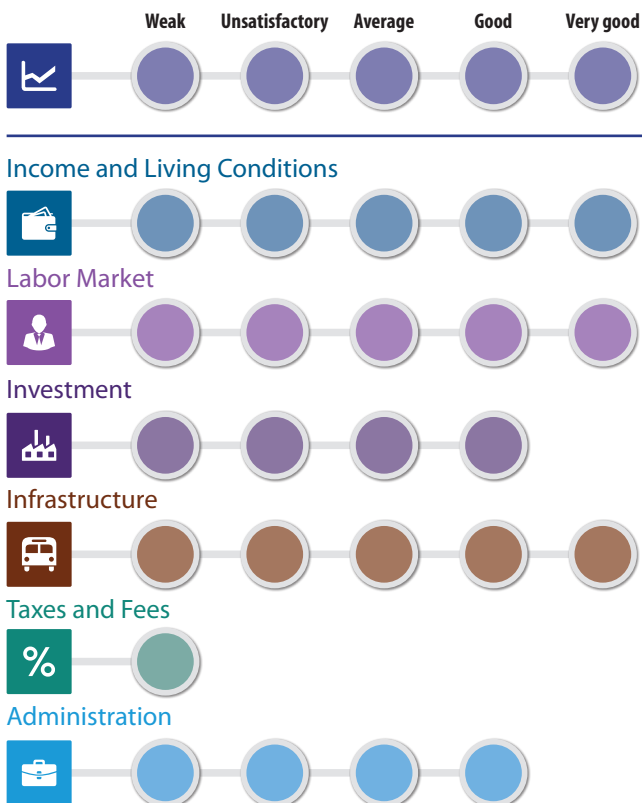


Overview

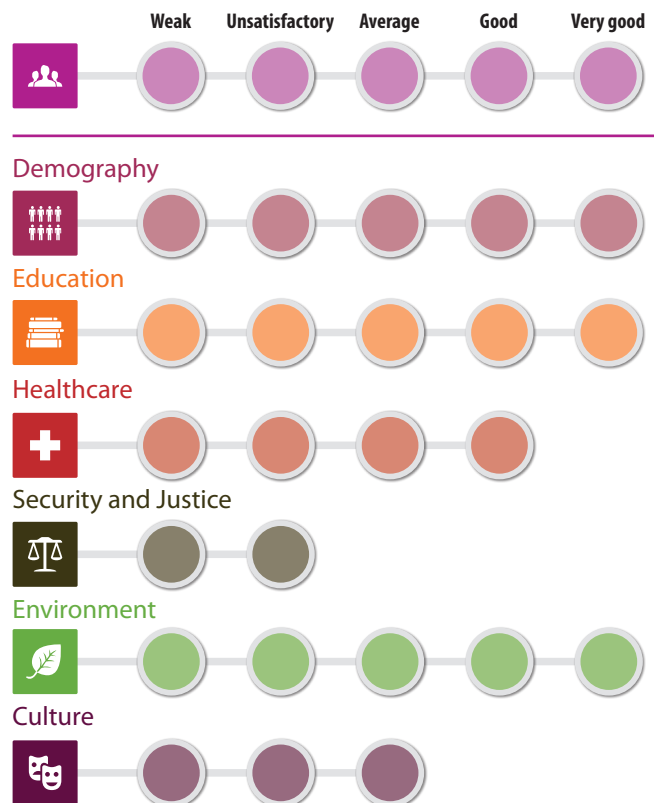
The growth of GDP per capita in the district of Varna was lower in 2016 than the national average though in size it was above average values. Salaries in the district have also been on the rise. The main indicators concerning the labor market deteriorated in 2016, nevertheless Varna has been performing better than most districts. Investment activity in the district was relatively good. In terms of infrastructural indicator values the district ranked first in the country. The average rates of the monitored local taxes and fees in the district's municipalities gave Varna the second place after the capital for highest rates.

Though population ageing has been exasperating in the district, the process is slower and age dependency is considerably more favorable than elsewhere in the country. With the single exception of the capital district, Varna is the most highly urbanized district in the country, which entails both high connectivity with sewerage systems and relatively high air pollution. Some of the leading universities are located there and it ranks among the top districts in number of university students. Traditionally Varna has performed well in justice administration and poorly in security.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●●●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●●●●

GDP growth per capita in the district was below the national average rate in 2015, though its value of 12,589 BGN/person was above the national average of 12,339 BGN/person. Gross salaries in the country also increased to over 10,000 BGN annually, keeping Varna in the fifth place in 2015 as well. That also brought about income growth per household member that year. In 2016, however, incomes per household member dropped alongside a considerable drop in the size of salaries. Thus Varna went below the national average income for the first time since 2013.

The share of local population living below the national poverty line rose to 26.9% in 2015 while the national average was 22.9%.

Labor Market ●●●●●

In 2016 the main indicators on the labor market in the district deteriorated; still, the district went on performing well compared to other districts. Employment registered a drop after three years of growth but its rate stayed above the national average: 65.9% vs. 63.4% nationally. Unemployment rose after a three-year long drop but has also remained favorable compared to the national average figures: 7.1% (from 5.7% in 2015) vs. the national average of 7.7%. Economic activity in the district maintained relatively high levels, too, though it declined in 2016.

The population's (aged 25–64) educational structure in the district is similar to but slightly more favorable than the national average. There are 30% university graduates in the district (vs. 28% in the country). People with primary or lower education are 17% vs. 18% nationally.

Varna remains among the districts with the highest demographic replacement rate: the ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 is 68.6%.

Investment ●●●●●

Investment activity in Varna has been relatively good. The number of non-financial enterprises kept growing all the time since the crisis to reach 69 per 1,000 people in 2015 (vs. 55 people per 1,000 nationally). FTA expenditure stayed close to 400 ml BGN but the cumulative FDI as of the end of that year registered additional growth to reach 3,725 euro/person vs. the national average of 3,250 euro/person in 2015.

EU fund utilization per capita remained below the national average. As of 30th June 2017, sums paid to beneficiaries in the district from EU operational programs amounted to 936 BGN/person while the national average was 1,344 BGN/per-

son. The municipality which utilized most funds in the district was that of Byala with 4,509.6 BGN/person.

Infrastructure ●●●●●

Infrastructure indicator values place Varna first among the districts in the country. As an important transport hub, the density of its road and railroad networks is considerably higher than the national average. The district is one of the highest ranking ones in terms of the share of highways and first class roads in its road network: 27.4% in 2015 (vs. 18.6% nationally). That fact also determined the relatively good road surface quality in it.

In 2016 Varna had the highest share of households with Internet access – 73.8% vs. 63.5% nationally. It occupied the second place after the capital in the share of people who had used the Internet during the previous year – 73.2% vs. 62.6% nationally and 75.8% for the capital.

Taxes and Fees ●

The average rates of the main local taxes and fees in the district's municipalities placed Varna second after the capital for highest rates in 2017. Taxes in the district were above the national average; only the waste collection fee for non-residential property of legal entities was lower. Among the municipalities in the district, those of the city of Varna and Beloslav had generally higher tax rates. The Varna municipality also stood out as one of the municipalities with the highest tax rate on taxi services.

Administration ●●●●●

Municipal administrations' evaluations for development of electronic government and availability of one-stop shop services in 2017 were relatively favorable in the district of Varna. The active transparency rating of local government in the district rose slightly but the much greater rise in the country as a whole left Varna below average rates.

In 2016 there was a serious increase in the share of territory covered by cadastral maps. From 17.5% in 2015, the district cadastral coverage in 2016 reached 36.8% vs. the national average of 22.5%. The reason was the rapid increase of cadastral map coverage in the municipalities of Vulchi dol and Suvorovo. The only municipalities left with 0% coverage are Vetrino and Provadiya.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●●●●

Demography ●●●●●

Although population ageing in the district is exasperating, the process is relatively slow and age dependency is considerably more favorable compared with national average figures. In 2016, the ratio of the population aged 65+ to that aged 0–14 was 121.8% (vs. 147.1% nationally), while its ratio to the population aged 15–64 was 27.4% (vs. 31.8% nationally). The natural growth rate remained almost twice higher than the national average, albeit with a negative value. In 2016 the district attracted migrants from other parts of the country and was one of four districts with a positive net migration rate.

The district of Varna is the second most urbanized district after the capital. The share of people living in towns reached 83.6% (vs. 73.3% nationally) in 2016. Population density was also higher than the national average.

Education ●●●●●

In 2016 student enrolment in 5th–8th grade stayed below the national average again but the shares of repeaters and dropouts were comparable to average national figures, whereas matriculation exam results were considerably better than those in the other districts. The average grade at the exam in BLL in the district stayed high for another successive year and was the third highest in the country (after the capital and the district of Smolyan), while the share of poor grades was among the lowest in the country. In 2016, schools in the district managed to attract a great number of new teachers and the value of the indicator student – teacher ratio in primary and secondary education was higher than the national average.

Some of the leading universities are located in the district. Although the number of students dropped considerably relative to the population in 2016, the district of Varna was among the leaders in numbers of enrolled university students.

Healthcare ●●●●●

The availability of general practices to the local population was close to the national average: there were almost 1,600 people for every GP. Varna was also one of the districts with the greatest number of medical specialists – 427 people per specialist (vs. 530 per specialist nationally). At the same time the share of health-insured people in the district remained lower than the national average and even dropped in 2016 to 83.8% (vs. 88.1% nationally).

The number of beds in general hospitals as well as the number of hospitalizations dropped in 2016 to below average rates. The number of beds reached 3.9 per 1,000 people vs. the national average of 5.1, and hospitalizations

dropped to 172 per 1,000 people with the national average at 235 per 1,000 people.

Security and Justice ●●

Traditionally, the district of Varna has performed well in justice administration and poorly in security. In 2016 the share of criminal cases in the district court closed within 3 months stayed at 93% vs. the national average share of 89%. The share of pending cases dropped to less than 6% and was also below national average figures. An explanation for the relatively speedy justice administration can be sought in the small workloads of local judges. A criminal judge in the district of Varna saw an average of 7 cases a month while the country average workload was over 9 cases a month

Crimes against the person and property registered in the district dropped for the third successive year but the rate was still above the national average number: 14.8 per 1,000 people in the district and 12.6 per 1,000 people in the country as whole. The crime clearance rates rose to 39% in 2016 though still lagging behind the national average of 48%.

Environment ●●●●●

Strongly urbanized areas in the district determine the high share of population in areas with public sewerage systems (86.3% vs. 75.5% nationally). Connectivity with wastewater treatment plants was also very good: 86.3% vs. 62.3% nationally in 2015.

On the other hand, Varna remained one of the districts with the most polluted air. Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere dropped but stayed way above average: 750.1 t/sq. km (vs. 323.8 t/sq. km nationally). Generated household waste also dropped, but in 2015 it was still above average: 472 kg/person vs. 422 kg/person nationally.

Culture ●●●●

The high interest in cinemas and theaters was retained in the district in 2016. Cinema visits rose to 1,281 per 1,000 people (vs. 778 per 1,000 people nationally) and those to theaters went up to 363 per 1,000 people (vs. 322 nationally).

In 2016 museum visits also rose in the district though they stayed below average: 490 per 1,000 people (vs. 743 per 1,000 people nationally). Libraries in the district have been attracting fewer and fewer readers. Library visits dropped to 269 per 1,000 people in 2016 with the national average being 605 per 1,000.

Key Indicators for the District of Varna

Indicators of economic development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,006	11,468	11,272	12,113	12,589	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,739	4,306	4,912	5,008	5,168	5,117
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	8,144	8,562	8,922	9,272	10,000	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	20.1	23.1	21.9	22.6	26.9	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	63.1	64.8	67.0	67.8	72.6	70.9
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	56.6	54.1	57.8	61.8	68.4	65.9
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	10.3	16.4	13.7	8.7	5.7	7.1
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education (%)	25.4	26.0	31.4	33.8	30.6	29.9
Number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	65	66	66	67	69	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	2,299	2,137	2,385	2,323	2,094	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	3,162	3,105	3,006	3,543	3,725	n.a.
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	40.1	51.3	57.1	58.9	57.8	73.8
Share of roads in good condition (%)	36.7	39.0	42.6	43.5	44.4	44.5
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	11.1	11.1	11.4	11.9	17.5	36.8

Indicators of social development	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-1.5	-2.1	-2.4	-2.7	-3.5	-3.3
Net migration rate (‰)	0.5	-0.2	3.8	2.1	1.6	2.8
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.50	4.22	4.38	4.30	4.37	4.38
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams ("average" 3.00)	3.53	5.07	4.73	5.09	5.21	5.39
Net enrolment rate of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	80.5	78.9	76.9	73.5	75.5	74.8
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	85.2	84.4	83.2	83.8	85.1	83.8
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals per 1,000 people	155.2	170.2	177.7	169.8	174.7	172.0
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	17.6	18.4	18.5	17.5	15.9	14.8
Clearance rates for crimes against the person and property registered during the year (%)	27.0	26.8	27.0	25.8	30.4	38.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	5.7	5.8	8.3	11.3	7.2	5.9
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	85.1	86.1	86.2	86.2	86.3	n.a.
Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere (t/sq. km)	1,742.6	1,284.1	974.3	1,106.3	750.1	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	1,159	1,108	1,157	1,193	1,185	1,281
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	171	179	218	234	283	363