

Dobrich District

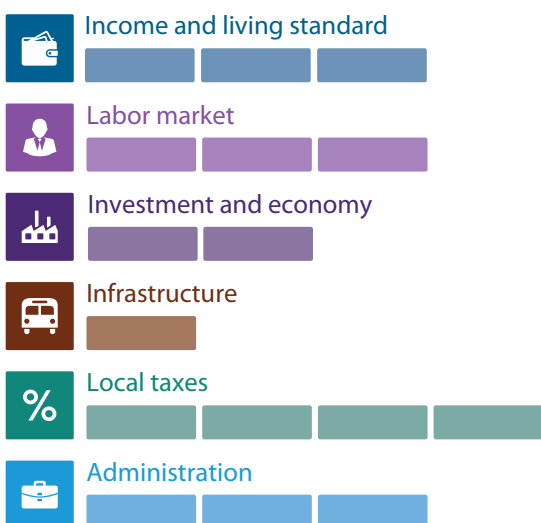
▶ Population (2019)	171,809
▶ Territory (sq. km)	4,719.7
▶ Number of settlements	216
▶ Share of urban population (%)	69.0



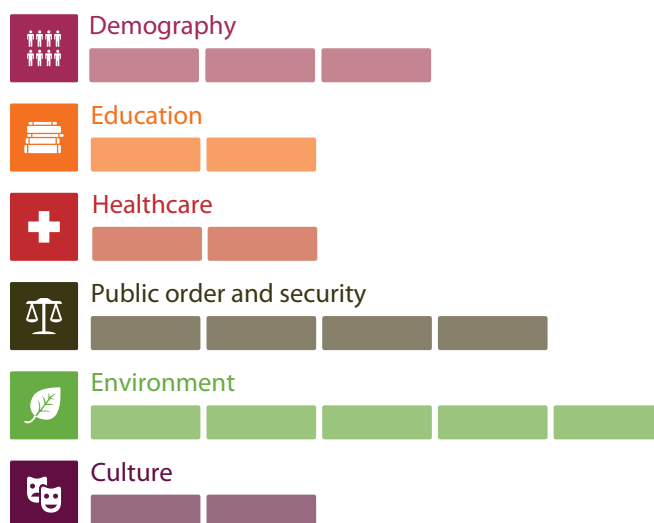
In 2018, GDP per capita in Dobrich district registered one of the lowest growth rates in the country. The situation regarding the growth in household incomes was not much different. Still, in spite of the lag in incomes and salaries, poverty levels in Dobrich district were close to the national average. Economic activity rose, accompanied by a growth in employment rates and a decline in unemployment, yet those indicators still remained unfavorable. The local labor market continues to face the problem of the low educational status of the workforce. Investment activity in Dobrich district is not sufficiently high. There has been a serious lag in production value and FDI. Local tax rates are among the lowest in the country. The transparency ratings for the district administration are on the decline

but remain considerably above the national average. The tendency towards population ageing in Dobrich district follows a country-wide trend, which results in constantly deteriorating age dependency ratios. Higher education has little presence in the district. The health-care system is sufficiently saturated with GPs, but there is a shortage of specialist physicians. The district is among those facing the problem of acute shortages of hospital beds. The workloads of local criminal judges are lower and delivery of justice is speedier than the average national levels. Crime rates are slightly lower than the average national figures, and detection rates are slightly higher. The indicators for the state of the environment point to the district's very good performance in that area. The district's cultural life is characterized by its relatively low intensity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

Compared to the other regions, in 2018 the growth rate of GDP per capita in Dobrich district remained extremely low. GDP per capita reached only 9,200 BGN, against the national average of 15,600 BGN. Salaries and incomes also rose at a much slower pace. The gross annual salary in the district reached 10,400 BGN, whereas the national average was 13,800 BGN. In 2019 the annual income per household member went up to 5,500 BGN, compared to 6,013 BGN as the country's average.

Still, in spite of the lag in incomes and salaries, in 2019 poverty levels in Dobrich district were close to the national average. The proportion of people living in material deprivation was 19.5%, versus 19.9% on average nationwide, while the share of those living below the poverty line was 22.8%, compared to the national average of 22.6%.

Labor market

After several years of fluctuations, in 2019 economic activity in Dobrich district rose by 2.5 p.p., reaching a rate of 73.9%, versus the national average of 74.3%. This increase was accompanied by a growth of employment rates and a decline of unemployment, yet both still remained unfavorable. Employment rates went up to 66.9%, compared to 70.1% in the country on average, and unemployment figures reached 7.0%, whereas the national average was 4.2%.

The low educational status of the workforce continued to be a major challenge before the labor market in the district. The share of people with a university degree went up to reach 21.1%, still below the national average of 28.0%. The proportion of people in the workforce with primary or lower education grew for the second year in a row, yet at 24.8% it was considerably worse than the national average of 17.6%.

The population replacement ratio of people aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 has been decreasing in Dobrich district at a slower pace than in the country on average over the past ten years and in 2019 it was 67.9% against the national average of 65.9%.

Investment and economy

Investment activity in Dobrich district remained relatively weak in 2018. The relative number of enterprises went on the rise and reached figures close to but still lower than the national average. FTA expenditures increased to 2,023 BGN/person, versus the national figure of 2,750 BGN/person.

There was a serious lag in production value and foreign investment. Though production value had been going up, due to the low starting point it only managed to reach 14,800 BGN/person, versus 25,900 BGN/person. Cumulative FDI also recorded an increase for four years in a row and in 2018 it reached 1,793 EUR/person, though that was only about half the national average of 3,560 EUR/person.

By 15 June 2020 the payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 1,525 BGN/person, while the national average was 1,976 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded in the municipality of the city of Dobrich, while in all of the rest they were below 1,000 BGN/person.

Infrastructure

The state of the infrastructure in Dobrich district is far from the average one in the country. Its density, especially of the railroad network, remains quite low. In 2019 the share of highways and first-class roads was almost half the national average – 10%, against 19% respectively. At the same time, road quality is relatively good, with 46.7% of road surfaces in good condition, compared to the national average of 41.4%.

The relative share of households with internet access in Dobrich district has registered a considerable increase over the past ten years, yet in 2019 it fell to 70.0%, against the average of 75.1% nationwide.

Local taxes

In 2020, local tax rates in Dobrich district remained low. Out of the five monitored rates, only the one on the non-gratuitous acquisition of property was higher than the average in the country. The average tax rate on motor vehicles in the district municipalities equaled the national average.

Considerably lower rates were registered for the taxes on retail trade, immovable property and taxi transportation. The average figure for the retail trade tax in the municipalities of Dobrich district remained unchanged at 8.71 BGN/sq.m, against 12.93 BGN/sq.m in the country as a whole. The average rate of the tax on non-residential immovable property of legal entities was 1.55‰, with 2.01‰ nationally, and the one for taxi transportation – 300 BGN, versus the national average of 498 BGN.

Administration

Over the past few years, cadastral coverage in Dobrich district has been rising fast and in 2019 it included almost all of its territory – 97.6%, versus 91.4% countrywide.

The local authorities' self-evaluation on the development of e-administration and on the provision of one-stop shop services registered worse results in 2020, falling below national averages.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration also fell in 2020, but they remained considerably above the national average – 76.2%, compared to 70.7% for the country as a whole. Within the district, the highest ratings were achieved by the municipalities in the city of Dobrich and Krushari.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The natural population growth rate and net migration improved slightly in 2019, even though they still remained negative. The rate of natural increase reached -9.0% , against -6.7% for the country as a whole, and the net migration figure was -2.7% .

The tendency towards population ageing is similar to that in the country as a whole and results in constantly deteriorating age dependency ratios in the district. In 2019 the age dependency ratio between people aged 65+ and those aged 0-14 years was 158.5%, against 150.1% for the country on average, and the ratio between people aged 65+ and those aged 15-64 – 35.3%, with 33.8% as the national average.

A relatively low share of population in Dobrich district lives in urban areas – 69%, versus the national average of 74%. In 2019 the district also still had the lowest population density – 667 persons/sq.km, compared to 1,510 persons/sq.km on a national scale.

Education

In 2019, the enrolment rate in 5th-8th grade was 74.7%, the lowest one in the country for that year. At the same time, the shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education were higher than the national averages. The numbers of primary and secondary school teachers continued their increase in 2019 and at 96 teachers per 1,000 students were once again higher than the national average of 89 teachers per 1,000 students.

In 2020, students' results for the district once again showed a mixed picture. The average score in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was relatively low – 29.8 p., compared to 36.3 p. in the country on average. The average score in the matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature equaled the national average of 4.20. However, the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) remained considerably lower than the average countrywide – 5.3%, versus 8.2% respectively.

Higher education in the district is poorly represented, only through the branches of Shumen University and Varna Technical University. University students number 4 per 1,000 persons, against 32 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Healthcare

The share of people with health insurance has been on the rise but in 2019 it still remained lower than the national average. The healthcare system is relatively well provided with GPs but there is a shortage of specialist physicians.

Dobrich is still among the districts with an acute shortage of hospital beds. In 2019 there were 281 beds per 100,000 persons, while the national average was 550 beds per 100,000 persons.

The shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds can probably explain the relatively low number of hospitalizations in the district – 118.6 per 1,000 persons, compared to 253.7 per 1,000 persons across the country. This wide margin leads to the assumption that the population seeks medical services outside the district.

Public order and security

The workloads of criminal judges in Dobrich district are small, and delivery of justice – speedy. In 2019 there were on average 6.2 cases a month per one judge, compared to 9.1 cases nationally. At the same time, the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months reached 95%, against the national average of 90%.

The number of crimes is slightly lower than the national average, and detection rates – slightly higher. In 2019, the registered crimes against the person and property were 10.4 per 1,000 persons, versus 11.1 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate rose to 54.5 %, versus the national figure of 52.1%.

Environment

The indicators for the state of the environment point to the district's continuing very good performance in 2018. Carbon dioxide emissions rose to 18.9 t/sq.km, though they remained nearly 14 times lower than the national average of 274.8 t/sq.km.

In 2018, the share of the population with access to public sewerage systems was slightly below the national average – 70.9%, versus 76.2% respectively. However, the whole sewerage system in the district is connected to wastewater treatment plants.

The amount of waste generated by households annually – 399 kg/person – is relatively smaller than the national average of 409 kg/person. A considerable part of that waste is handed over for treatment and recycling – 84%, versus 71% for the country on average.

Culture

Cultural life in Dobrich district was still characterized by low intensity in 2019. The only exception are museum visits, which amounted to 1,119 per 1,000 persons, versus 770 per 1,000 persons in the country on average. The smallest numbers were recorded for visits to the local cinemas – 202 per 1,000 persons, against the average of 659 per 1,000 persons for the country.

The average number of theater visits was 211 per 1,000 persons, versus 362 per 1,000 persons nationwide, and visits to libraries amounted to 549 per 1,000 persons, against the national average of 683 per 1,000 persons.

Key indicators for the district of Dobrich

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	8,925	9,176	n.a.	15,615
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,234	5,234	5,500	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	9,539	10,429	n.a.	13,775
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	19.9	22.8	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	69.8	65.3	66.9	70.1
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	6.4	8.6	7.0	4.2
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.1	23.4	24.8	17.6
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	20.9	20.8	21.1	28.0
Production value (BGN/person)	13,392	14,750	n.a.	25,855
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	1,984	2,023	n.a.	2,750
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	1,524	1,793	n.a.	3,560
Share of households with Internet (%)	62.3	75.2	70.0	75.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	43.0	46.9	46.7	41.4
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	74.0	80.0	76.2	70.7

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-8.8	-9.2	-9.0	-6.7
Net migration rate (‰)	-4.2	-4.0	-2.7	-0.3
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.98	4.12	4.20	4.20
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 th grade (points)**	27.1	27.3	29.8	36.3
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	86	90	96	89
Net enrolment of the population in 5 th -8 th grade (%)	76.8	76.4	74.7	86.6
Share of people with health insurance (%)	84.8	85.2	86.5	88.8
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,333	1,496	1,494	1,688
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	12.5	12.5	10.4	11.1
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	5.6	6.1	6.2	9.1
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	70.8	70.9	n.a.	76.2
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	386	399	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	36.8	84.3	n.a.	70.9
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	255	187	202	659
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	251	227	211	362

* The data for 2019 are included in the 2020 study. The same also applies for the previous years.

** The data refer to the 2019-2020 academic year while the matriculation exam was held in 2020. The same also applies for the previous years.