

# Gabrovo District

- ▶ Population (2019)
- ▶ Territory (sq. km)
- ▶ Number of settlements
- ▶ Share of urban population (%)

106,598  
2,023.0  
349  
81.9



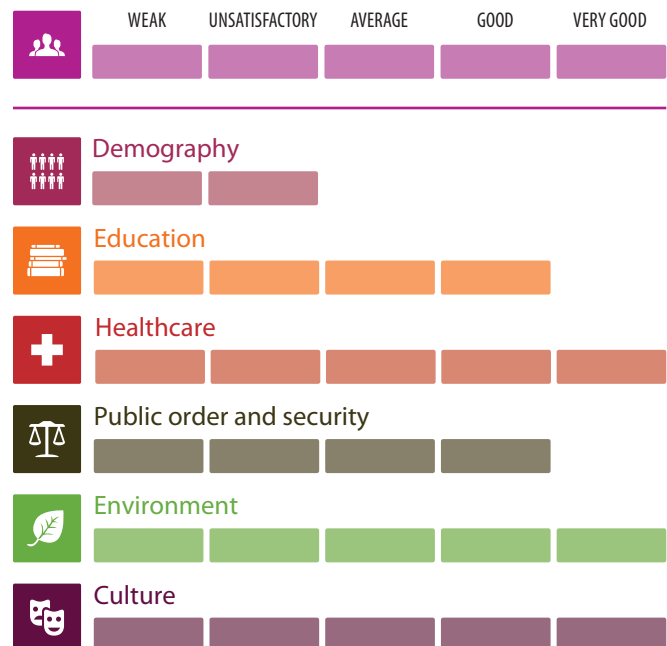
The growth of the economy and the rise in incomes explain the relatively low poverty levels in Gabrovo district. Its economic activity has been intensifying, reaching levels higher than the country's average, and this growth has been accompanied by an increase in employment rates. Expectedly for the district's economic profile, a majority of the workforce has secondary education. Investment activity figures place Gabrovo among the leaders in the country. The district also occupies one of the top places in terms of the utilization of EU funds, where it is outranked only by Sofia (capital city). Although it has a relatively well developed economy, local taxes in Gabrovo remain comparatively low, as is evident from the 2020 figures. The transparency ratings

of the local administration have been traditionally good. The problem of population ageing is particularly acute in Gabrovo district. The low rates of natural growth and net migration explain the fast deteriorating age dependencies there. The majority of the population lives in urban areas. The district's performance in the Education category is relatively good. It has kept its high ranking as regards the relative proportion of university students and holds one of the top places in the sphere of healthcare. Although criminal judges have small workloads, delivery of justice is sluggish. Crime rates are relatively low and detection is high. Gabrovo is among the districts with the best indicators for the state of its environment. Its cultural life is particularly active.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Income and living standard

In 2018 the annual GDP per capita grew at rates close to the average ones in the country and brought it to levels close to those nationwide – 13,500 BGN/person, with 15,600 BGN/person on average nationally. Salaries increased and also reached figures close to the average ones – their gross annual amount per capita in the district was 11,800 BGN, against 13,800 BGN for the country as a whole. The average annual income per household member also grew in 2019 and reached 7,406 BGN/household member, against the national average of 6,013 BGN/household member.

The growth of the economy in Gabrovo district and the rise in incomes explain the relatively low poverty levels, which were maintained in 2019. The relative share of people living in material deprivation was 14.1%, versus the national average of 19.9%. The relative share of those living below the poverty line was 17.8%, compared to 22.6% on a national scale, though over the past two years both indicators have taken a downward turn.

### Labor market

In 2019, after a three-year decline, economic activity in Gabrovo district resumed an upward trend to reach levels higher than the national average, though by a small margin. This growth was accompanied by a respective rise in employment figures, with a rate equal to that in the country on average – 70.1% in 2019. Unemployment rates were kept at 4.5%, versus the national average of 4.2%.

Expectedly for the district's economic profile, a majority of the workforce has secondary education – 58.4%, against 54.4% on average nationwide. The share of those with primary or lower education dropped to 12.6% in 2019, against the national average of 17.6%

The labor market in Gabrovo district continues to be affected by population ageing. In 2019, the population replacement of people aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 was 51.6%, with the national average at 65.9%. Thus for every 100 people who will leave the workforce in the next few years, there are 52 people who could enter the labor market.

### Investment and economy

Investment activity figures place Gabrovo district among the leaders in the country. The relative number of enterprises in the district continued to rise. In 2018, local and foreign investment also grew, almost reaching the national averages. FTA expenditures in the district were 2,133 BGN/person, 2,750 BGN/person countrywide. FDI was 3,120 EUR/person, against 3,560 EUR/person on a national level.

Production value per capita in the district grew at a rate faster than that in the country on average and in 2018 it

reached 23,000 BGN/person, against the national average of 25,900 BGN/person.

The district also occupied one of the top places in terms of utilization of EU funds, where it was outranked only by Sofia (capital city). By 15 June 2020 payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs reached an average of 3,290 BGN/person, with 1,976 BGN/person on a national level. The amounts were highest in the city of Gabrovo but in all municipalities they were at levels of over 1,500 BGN/person.

### Infrastructure

The density of the road and railroad networks in Gabrovo district remained relatively high in 2019. It has 25 km of roads per 100 sq.km of territory, versus 18 km in the country on average. Nevertheless, the share of highways and first-class roads remains lower than the national average – 17%, versus 19% respectively. This partly accounts for the lower road quality in the district. In 2019, 37% of the road surface in the district was in good condition, against the average of 41% for the whole country.

The digital infrastructure of Gabrovo district has continued to improve. The relative share of households with internet access was 75%, exactly the same as the national average.

### Local taxes

Although compared to other similar districts Gabrovo has a relatively well developed economy, its local taxes remain lower than the national averages, as evident from the 2020 figures. The margin is especially wide in the retail trade tax. Its average for the municipalities in the region was 8.88 BGN/sq.m, against 12.93 BGN/sq.m for the country as a whole. The district's tax rates for non-gratuitous acquisition of property and taxi transportation were also lower than the average ones nationwide.

Conversely, higher rates were recorded for the local taxes on the non-residential immovable property of legal entities and on motor vehicles.

### Administration

Cadastral map coverage in Gabrovo district has been making slow progress and in 2019, for the first time, its rate fell below the national average. The self-assessment figures for the performance of the local e-administration and one-stop shop services were also relatively low in 2020.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration have been traditionally good and remained so in the period under observation. In 2020 they reached 74.8%, against the national average of 70.7%. Expectedly, the highest ratings were achieved by the municipality of Gabrovo.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

The problem of population ageing is particularly acute in Gabrovo district and this is again confirmed by the data for 2019. The natural population growth rate in the district reached  $-12.7\%$ , and although it registered a slight improvement, it still remained half the national average of  $-6.7\%$ . Out-migration figures still outnumbered those for in-migration, resulting in a net migration rate of  $-4.2\%$ .

The district's unfavorable rates of natural increase and net migration explain the fast worsening values of the district's age dependency ratios, with only those in Vidin district falling below them. In 2019, the age dependency ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-14 reached 248.2%, compared to the national average of 150.1%, and that to people aged 15-64 was 49.0%, whereas in the country as a whole it was 33.8% on average.

The share of population living in urban areas in the district is relatively large – 81.9%, against the national average figure of 73.7%. At the same time, the density of the urban population is relatively low at 1,224 persons/sq.km, versus 1,510 persons/sq.km for the country on average.

### Education

The district's performance in education is relatively good. The rate of enrolment of schoolchildren in 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the district has continued to be relatively higher than the national averages, although in 2019 it declined to 93.4%, against the national figure of 86.6%. The percentage of school year repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education also remained below the national average. The number of teachers in primary and secondary education rose further in 2019 to reach 81 per 1,000 students, though it was still below the national average of 89 teachers per 1,000 students.

The students' average score in the 2020 external evaluation at the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade again remained lower in Gabrovo district than in the country – 33.9 p., against 36.3 p. respectively. The average results in the 2020 matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature were, however, higher than the national averages – 4.31 versus 4.20 nationally, with a share of 7.9% "fail" (below 3.00) grades, against 8.2% nationwide.

Gabrovo district remains one of the leaders in terms of university students as a share of the total population – 44 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 32 per 1,000 persons. Still, in line with the trend typical of the country as a whole, in Gabrovo district it too has been on the decline.

### Healthcare

In 2019, Gabrovo district again occupied one of the top places in the country in the sphere of healthcare. Almost the entire population – 97.5% – had health insurance, compared to 88.8% nationwide. The relative percentage of doctors was higher than the country's average, both in terms of GPs and specialist phy-

sicians. The provision of hospital beds remained limited – 464 beds per 100,000 persons, with 550 beds per 100,000 persons as the national average.

Infant mortality was reduced to 0‰, an achievement unique among all of Bulgaria's districts. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals was 199 per 1,000 persons, against the average of 254 per 1,000 persons in the country.

### Public order and security

In 2019, criminal judges in Gabrovo district had smaller workloads compared to the national average. The figures show an average of 6.4 cases a month per judge, compared to 9.1 nationally. Still, in spite of the smaller workloads, the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months is on the decline, while that of pending cases has been rising.

The crime rate in the district remains lower compared to the country's average figures, and detection rates are high. In 2019, registered crimes against the person and property in Gabrovo district amounted to 10.5 per 1,000 persons, with 11.1 per 1,000 persons as the national figure. 73.2% of those crimes were cleared, against 52.1% for the whole country on average.

### Environment

The indicators for 2018 place Gabrovo very high as regards the state of the environment. Carbon dioxide emissions were over 10 times lower than the average relative volumes countrywide. A relatively high percentage of the population – 85.1% – had access to a public sewerage network, compared to 76.2% countrywide, and 74.5% were connected to waste water treatment plants, against the national average of 63.9%.

The amount of household waste generated in the district was relatively high – an annual of 433 kg/person, against 409 kg/person on a national scale. However, the part of it handed over for treatment and recycling – 91% – was also very high, compared to the national average of 71%.

### Culture

Cultural life in Gabrovo district remained particularly active in 2019. Gabrovo took top ranking for visits to the local museums, with 3,812 visits per 1,000 persons, against the national figure of 770 per 1,000 persons. The relative number of theater visits was also high – 440 per 1,000 persons, compared to 362 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Cinema and library visits remained lower than the national averages. In 2019 cinema visits numbered 402 per 1,000 persons, versus 659 per 1,000 persons on average nationwide, and library visits were 546 per 1,000 persons, against 683 on a national level.

## Key indicators for the district of Gabrovo

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	12,363	13,510	n.a.	<b>15,615</b>
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	6,937	6,937	7,406	<b>6,013</b>
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,522	11,796	n.a.	<b>13,775</b>
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	14.6	17.8	<b>22.6</b>
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	67.1	67.2	70.1	<b>70.1</b>
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	5.1	4.5	4.5	<b>4.2</b>
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	11.2	14.5	12.6	<b>17.6</b>
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	26.5	27.9	29.0	<b>28.0</b>
Production value (BGN/person)	20,928	22,999	n.a.	<b>25,855</b>
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	1,965	2,133	n.a.	<b>2,750</b>
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	2,932	3,120	n.a.	<b>3,560</b>
Share of households with Internet (%)	66.9	70.6	74.9	<b>75.1</b>
Share of roads in good condition (%)	34.4	39.0	36.7	<b>41.4</b>
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	24.9	24.9	24.9	<b>17.9</b>
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	79.2	80.0	74.8	<b>70.7</b>

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-14.4	-13.2	-12.7	<b>-6.7</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	-4.4	-3.7	-4.2	<b>-0.3</b>
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.11	4.10	4.31	<b>4.20</b>
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade (points)**	30.2	31.3	33.9	<b>36.3</b>
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	75	80	81	<b>89</b>
Net enrolment of the population in 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade (%)	91.9	95.5	93.4	<b>86.6</b>
Share of people with health insurance (%)	95.4	95.9	97.5	<b>88.8</b>
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,504	1,518	1,501	<b>1,688</b>
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	12.6	11.4	10.5	<b>11.1</b>
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	6.8	6.1	6.4	<b>9.1</b>
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	85.1	85.1	n.a.	<b>76.2</b>
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	580	433	n.a.	<b>409</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	51.8	91.1	n.a.	<b>70.9</b>
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	351	339	402	<b>659</b>
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	442	405	440	<b>362</b>

\* 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.