

Pleven District

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

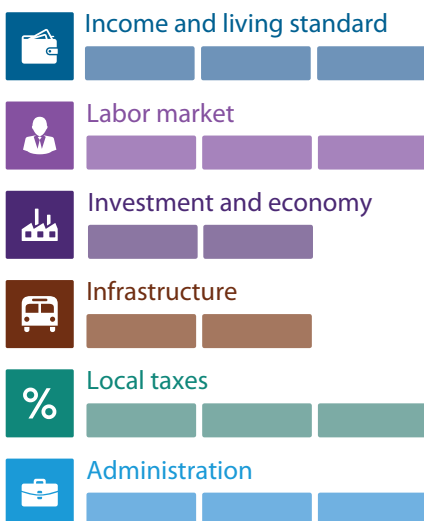
236,305
4,653.3
123
66.9



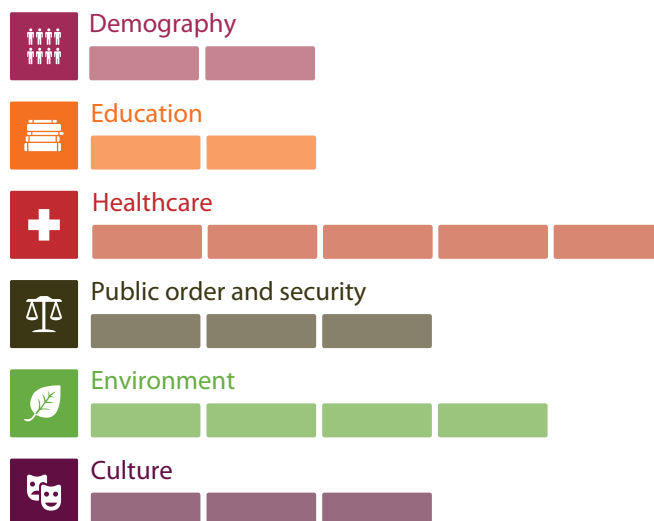
Although in 2018 GDP per capita in Pleven district again recorded considerable growth, it has still remained relatively low. The labor market has not picked up appreciably. Investment activity in the district is relatively weak. Pleven is among the districts with the least FDI, but it performs well in terms of the utilization of European funds. Against the background of its relatively weak economic development, Pleven district maintains rates of local taxation that are close to the national averages but are also significantly higher than the average ones in north-western Bulgaria. The ratings for the transparency of the local administration are declining, but they still remain higher than the national average.

The process of population ageing is accelerating at a faster pace in Pleven district than in the rest of the country. The district does not perform well in terms of the indicators assessing education. Pleven is one of the few districts in the country where in recent years there has been a steady increase in the number of university students. In the area of healthcare, Pleven ranks first in the whole of Bulgaria. It is indeed the district with the highest relative number of doctors and beds in its general hospitals. The workloads of local criminal judges are relatively small, which has a positive effect on the speedy delivery of justice. The share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling is growing. Cultural life in Pleven district is characterized by relatively low activity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Income and living standard ■■■■

Although in 2018 GDP per capita in Pleven district again recorded a considerable growth rate – 11.6%, compared to the national average of 9.3%, it has remained relatively low – 8,800 BGN against 15,600 BGN respectively. Salaries were also rising relatively fast and reached 10,500 BGN, compared to 13,800 BGN on average nationwide. Incomes per household member remained generally stable, with a rate of increase for 2019 of a bare 2%, compared to 8% in the country. Their average annual amount reached 5,893 BGN per household member, which for the first time in ten years fell below the national average (6,013 BGN).

The share of the population living with material deprivation again remained above the national average in 2019. At the same time, the share of people living below the poverty line shrank to a level below the national average – 20.4% in the district versus 22.6% nationally.

Labor market ■■■■

No serious rally in the labor market was observed in 2019 in Pleven district. Economic activity intensified slightly but remained relatively weak at 71.1%, compared to the national average of 74.3%. This growth was accompanied by a parallel decline both in employment and unemployment rates. The employment rate shrank by 1 p.p. to 63.2%, and so further increased its distance from the average of 70.1% nationwide. The unemployment rate, for its part, remained relatively high – 7.9%, versus the national average of 4.2%.

Over the past few years the educational structure of the workforce in Pleven district has remained relatively unfavorable and has even been characterized by a slight deterioration of its indicators. In 2019 the share of the population holding a university degree dropped to 23%, against 28% in the country, while the share of those with primary education or less rose to 21%, compared to 18% nationally.

A major challenge facing the local labor market continues to be the problem of population ageing. The population replacement ratio of those aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 is 61.5%, against 65.9% countrywide.

Investment and economy ■■■

The relative number of enterprises in Pleven district has been growing but although placed against the other regions in north-western Bulgaria it is relatively high, it remains considerably lower than the national average, with 41 enterprises per 1,000 persons, versus 59 per 1,000 persons nationally.

Investment activity in Pleven district remained relatively weak in 2018. Pleven is among the districts with the smallest amounts of FDI and in that same year it even registered a decline, falling to 524 EUR/person, which is nearly seven times lower than the national average of 3,564 EUR/person. FTA expenditures grew but

they, too, remained relatively low – 1,722 BGN/person, compared to 2,750 BGN/person in the country.

Production value in the district has made a considerable increase, reaching 13,000 BGN/person, which, however is twice as low as the average of 25,900 BGN/person nationwide.

As regards the utilization of European funds, Pleven district has been performing relatively well. By 15 June 2020 payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,930 BGN/person, compared to 1,976 BGN/person on a national level. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by the Belene municipality.

Infrastructure ■■■

Pleven district is characterized by a low density of its road network but with a higher density of its railroads. There is still no highway passing through the district, and first-class roads make up as little as 12.2%. The quality of the roads improved in 2019, with the share of road surfaces in good condition reaching 36.5% but remaining relatively small when compared to the national average of 41.1%.

There has also been an increase in the share of households with internet access, which in 2019 went up to 71.7%, so still lagging behind the average of 75.1% nationally.

Local taxes ■■■■

Against the background of its relatively weak economic development, Pleven district maintains local taxes at levels comparable to the national averages, though the local rates in the region are significantly higher than the average ones for north-western Bulgaria.

In 2020, two of the monitored rates in the district were even higher than their respective national averages. The average level of the tax on non-residential real estate for legal entities was almost 50% higher, and the tax on the non-gratuitous acquisition of property was 5% higher. For their part, taxes on retail trade and taxi transportation were about 1/4 lower.

Administration ■■■■

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-administration and on the provision of one-stop shop services for 2020 produced ratings considerably below those in the country on average.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration have deteriorated but at 71.8% they still remain higher than the national average of 70.7%. Within the district, the highest ratings of over 80% were achieved by the municipalities of Dolna Mitropoliya and Cherven bryag.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

In 2019 the process of population ageing accelerated at a faster pace in Pleven district than in the rest of the country. For the third year in a row, the natural growth rate continued to fall, reaching -11.0% , against the national average of -6.7% . Out-migration from the district also went up, bringing the net migration rate down to -6.1% .

These two processes have had an extremely negative impact on the age dependency ratios in the district. In 2019, the ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-14 years reached 188%, compared to 150% in the country on average, and to those aged 15-64 years – 43.9%, versus 33.8% nationwide.

The share of the district's population living in urban areas remains relatively small – 66.9%, compared to 73.7% in the country, and so does the population density of urban areas – 1,077 persons/sq.km, while nationally it is 1,510 persons/sq.km.

Education

The district does not perform well in terms of the indicators assessing education. The enrolment ratio in 5th-8th grades continued to decline in 2019, although it remained slightly above the national average. The percentage of repeaters continued to shrink and for the first time in the last seven years fell below the average one for the country. At the same time, in 2018 the share of dropouts from primary and secondary school increased for the second consecutive year to reach a figure well above the average – 3.6%, against 2.9% in the country. The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary schools continued to increase and for the third consecutive year exceeded the national average by a considerable margin.

Students' results for 2020 again remained poor. The average score at the external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade was 28.8 p., compared to 36.3 p. nationally. The average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.00, versus 4.20 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 13%, against the national average of 8%.

Pleven is one of the few districts in Bulgaria registering a steady increase in the number of university students over the past few years. In 2019 it reached 15 per 1,000 persons, yet it still remained half the national average.

Healthcare

Pleven district has strong traditions in the sphere of healthcare. The share of people with health insurance in the region has continued to increase to levels above the national average. Indeed, Pleven is the district with the highest proportion both of GPs and specialist physicians. One local GP cares for 1,212 persons on average, compared to 1,688 persons per doctor in the country.

Pleven is also the district best provided with hospital beds. In 2019 their number even went up to reach around 931 beds per

100,000 persons, compared to 550 beds per 100,000 persons in the country.

The relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is high. In 2019, it was 269 per 1,000 persons, compared to 254 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Public order and security

The workloads of the criminal judges in Pleven district are relatively small, which has a favorable impact on the speed of delivery of justice. In 2019, one judge heard an average of 7.7 cases a month, compared to 9.1 cases nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 94%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide.

The total number of crimes registered in Pleven district in the past ten years is on the whole higher than the national average but after two years of considerable decline, it went down almost to the average one in the country. In 2019 registered crimes against the person and property in the district constituted 11.7 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 11.1 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate rose to 55.5%, against 52.1% for the country on average.

Environment

In 2018 the relative volumes of carbon dioxide emissions in the district again remained many times smaller than in the country on average. The share of the population living in areas with access to public sewerage network systems amounted to 56.8%, with 53.1% of households connected to waste water treatment plants. Both indicators place Pleven district considerably lower than the respective national averages of 76.2% and 63.9%.

The amounts of household waste generated in the district increased for three years in a row, but in 2018 they still remained below the national average. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling also rose and reached 90%, compared to the national average of 71%.

Culture

In 2019 Pleven district's cultural life still remained characterized by relatively low intensity. Only the number of museum visits reached a level above the national average – 854 visits per 1,000 persons, against 770 per 1,000 persons nationally.

Figures indicating interest in the local libraries are twice as low as the average ones in the country – 310 visits per 1,000 persons, versus 683 per 1,000 persons nationally. The proportions for visits to the local theaters and cinemas are around 1/3 smaller than countrywide.

Key indicators for the district of Pleven

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	7,884	8,795	n.a.	15,615
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,774	5,774	5,893	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	9,401	10,461	n.a.	13,775
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	30.3	20.4	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	61.7	64.4	63.2	70.1
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	10.5	8.2	7.9	4.2
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	19.4	18.8	20.8	17.6
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	24.5	24.1	23.1	28.0
Production value (BGN/person)	11,553	13,009	n.a.	25,855
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	1,388	1,722	n.a.	2,750
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	920	524	n.a.	3,560
Share of households with Internet (%)	56.9	63.6	71.7	75.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	36.7	33.6	36.5	41.4
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	71.6	75.0	71.8	70.7

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-10.2	-10.8	-11.0	-6.7
Net migration rate (‰)	-5.8	-5.0	-6.1	-0.3
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.71	3.94	4.00	4.20
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 th grade (points)**	26.4	26.8	28.8	36.3
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	92	93	97	89
Net enrolment of the population in 5 th -8 th grade (%)	89.2	88.6	87.0	86.6
Share of people with health insurance (%)	90.0	90.3	91.9	88.8
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,129	1,205	1,212	1,688
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	16.3	13.0	11.7	11.1
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	9.4	9.4	7.7	9.1
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	56.6	56.8	n.a.	76.2
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	344	391	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	87.1	89.7	n.a.	70.9
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	509	434	452	659
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	157	206	258	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.