

Plovdiv District

▶ Population (2019)	666,801
▶ Territory (sq. km)	5,972.9
▶ Number of settlements	212
▶ Share of urban population (%)	75.8



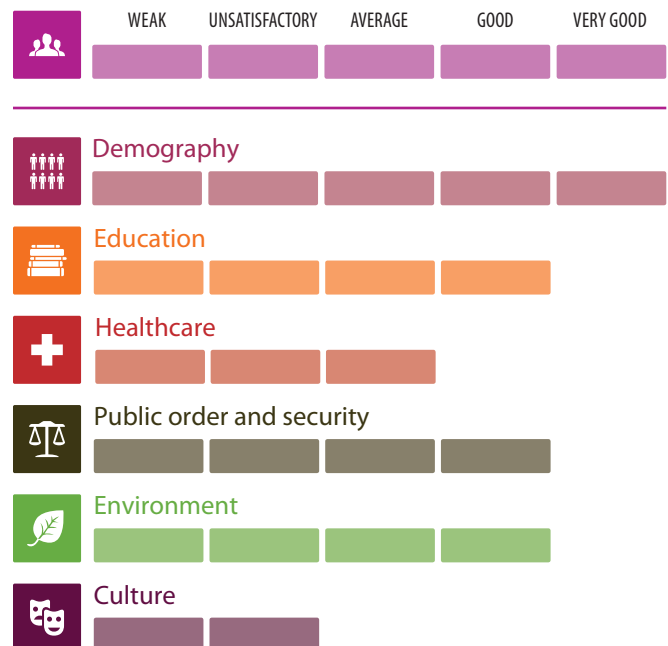
GDP per capita in Plovdiv district is the seventh highest in the country. Household incomes are growing relatively fast. Employment rates remain relatively high and unemployment rates low. The number of enterprises, FTA expenditures and production value all equal the national average. Infrastructural development in the district has achieved very good ratings. As in most districts with better developed economy, the level of local taxation in Plovdiv district remained relatively high in 2020. The development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services remain significantly lower than the national average.

Plovdiv is also one of the country's seven districts that manage to attract population. In 2020 Plovdiv's students again achieved good educational results. Plovdiv is among the districts with the largest relative number of doctors and hospital beds. The workloads of criminal judges in the district are high, but this does not impede the speedy delivery of justice. The number of crimes is relatively low and their detection rate is relatively high. The concentration of the population in urban areas is a prerequisite for a relatively high share of population with access to public sewerage networks. The number of visits to local theatres and museums remains relatively small.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

GDP per capita in Plovdiv district continues to grow at a rate similar to the national average. In 2018, it reached 13,100 BGN and was the seventh highest in the country whose average was 15,600 BGN. Gross salaries in the district have also been growing steadily, reaching 11,800 BGN per year compared to 13,800 BGN in the country as a whole. Faster growth was observed in household incomes and in 2019 they again achieved levels higher than the national average – an annual amount of 6,163 BGN per household member, compared to 6,013 BGN in the country.

Poverty levels continued to rise in the district and in 2019 they exceeded the national average. The share of population living with material deprivation amounted to 24.9%, versus 19.9% nationally, and that of people living below the national poverty line – 22.7%, versus 22.6% countrywide.

Labor market

In the last few years, economic activity in Plovdiv district has been making hesitant progress and in 2019 its growth rate of 72.7% already fell below the average level of 74.3% in the country. However, employment rates remained relatively high and unemployment rates low. The employment rate reached 70.3%, against 70.1% for the country, and the unemployment rate – 2.4%, against 4.2% nationwide.

A major challenge facing the local labor market continues to be the educational structure of the workforce. In 2019 it improved somewhat but still remained slightly less favorable than the country's average figures. The share of the population holding a university degree reached 26% against 28% in the country on average, while the share of those with primary education or less reached 20%, compared to 18% nationally. The population replacement ratio of those aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 was 68% – slightly more favorable than the national average of 66%.

Investment and economy

The relative number of enterprises in Plovdiv district has been growing and in 2018 it equaled the national average of 59 per 1,000 persons. Almost equal to the average level for the country were FTA expenditures – nearly 2,800 BGN/person, and production value – about 25,800 BGN/person.

FDI has been rising slowly and in 2018 it reached 2,861 EUR/person, versus the national average of 3,564 EUR/person. Nevertheless, Plovdiv district ranks seventh in the country with the largest relative volume of foreign investment.

Plovdiv district has also been lagging behind in the utilization of European funds. By 15 June 2020 payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,494 BGN/person, compared to 1,976 BGN/person na-

tionally. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were registered in the municipalities of Hissarya and Krichim.

Infrastructure

The development of the district's infrastructure receives very high ratings. The density of its road network is close to the average one in the country, but the density of its railroads is considerably higher, with 5.4 km/100 sq.km of territory versus 3.6 km/100 sq.km nationally. The share of highways and first-class roads in 2019 was 17.5%, compared to the national average of 18.6%. The quality of the roads is relatively good – roads with surfaces in good condition constitute 48.7%, against the average of 41.4% countrywide.

The relative share of households with internet access has been rising and is again well above the average one nationwide – 80.7%, versus 75.1% respectively.

Local taxes

As in most districts with better developed economy, in 2020 the level of local taxation in Plovdiv district was again relatively high. The biggest difference remained in the rate on taxi transportation. Its average level in the municipalities of the district was 548 BGN per year, compared to 498 BGN in the country.

For the other monitored taxes, taxation in Plovdiv district was 2-3% in excess of the average rates nationwide.

Administration

After several years of stagnation, in 2019 the coverage of the cadastral map in Plovdiv district increased sharply from 34% to 95% and even surpassed the average value of 91% for the country.

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-administration and on the provision of one-stop shop services for 2020 remained at the level of the previous year, which was considerably below the national average. The ratings for the district e-government were 2.7 p. out of 5 p., compared to 3.2 p. nationally. The provision of one-stop shop services got exactly the same rating, versus 3.1 p. in the country.

For the first time in five years, the AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration fell and at 70.1% remained below the national average of 70.7%. Within the district, the highest ratings were achieved by the municipalities of Parvomai, Asenovgrad and Plovdiv, and the lowest by the municipalities of Stamboliyski and Kaloyanovo.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

Despite the nationwide process of population ageing in Bulgaria, Plovdiv district has been performing relative well. The natural growth rate of the population has continued to rise by a small margin, and at a value of -5.3% for 2019 it still remains above the national average of -6.7% . Plovdiv is also one of the country's seven districts that manage to attract population. In 2019 the net migration rate stayed unchanged at 3.1% , which is the highest value achieved by the district for at least two decades.

In 2019, these processes again left their relatively beneficial impact on the age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-14 years reached 142%, compared to 150% in the country on average, and to those aged 15-64 years – 33%, versus 34% nationwide.

A relatively large share of the district's population lives in urban areas, and in 2019 it reached a whole 76%, compared to 73.7% in the country. Plovdiv ranks third after the capital and Sliven as regards population density in its settlements – 2,054 persons/sq.km, while nationally it is 1,510 persons/sq.km.

Education

Plovdiv's performance in education is assessed as good. A challenge facing primary and secondary education in the district is the small relative number of teachers, even though in 2019 it continued to grow. An additional problem is posed by the relatively large shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school, though the latest data show some improvement in that aspect as well.

Students' results for 2020 again remained good. The average score at the external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade was slightly higher than the national average, while the average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.33 – considerably higher than the average of 4.20 in the country. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 7.4%, against the national average of 8.2%.

Plovdiv is a district with long and stable traditions in higher education. The number of university students is the third largest in the country, outranked only by the capital and Veliko Tarnovo.

Healthcare

Plovdiv is among the districts with the largest relative number of doctors and hospital beds. The data for 2019 show one local GP caring for 1,588 persons on average, compared to 1,688 persons per doctor in the country. The index for access to specialist physicians is also more favourable than the national average. The local hospitals provide 786 beds per 100,000 persons, compared to 550 per 100,000 persons in the country. In 2019, the relative number of patients treated in the local

general hospitals reached 338 per 1,000 persons, compared to 254 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

The infant mortality rate fell in 2019 to levels below the national average.

Public order and security

The workloads of the criminal judges in Plovdiv district are the second largest in the country, after those in the capital. This, however, does not impede the speedy delivery of justice, as it does in the capital. In 2019 one judge heard an average of 11.4 cases a month, compared to 9.1 cases nationally. At the same time, the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 94%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide.

The number of crimes registered in Plovdiv district is relatively low, and crime detection is relatively high. In 2019 the registered crimes against the person and property in the district dropped to 8.3 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 11.1 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate rose considerably (by 9 p.p.), reaching 57.3%, against 52.1% for the country on average.

Environment

Carbon dioxide emissions in Plovdiv district remain twice smaller than in the country on average. In 2018, greenhouse emissions amounted to 123 t/sq.km, compared to 275 t/sq.km in the country. The concentration of the population in urban areas is a prerequisite for a relatively high share of households with access to sewerage networks connected to waste water treatment plants – 67%, versus 64% nationally, and equally, for a high share of people living in areas with accessibility to public sewerage networks – 82%, against the national average of 76%.

The amounts of household waste generated in the district declined for the second year in a row, though they still remained relatively large. In 2018 they reached 446 kg/person per annum, against an average of 409 kg/person nationally. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling also showed an increase and reached 67%, though that was still below the national average of 71%.

Culture

In 2019, the numbers of visits to the local theaters, museums, cinemas and libraries in Plovdiv district still remained below the respective national averages. The highest rate of increase – by 28% – was observed in the number of museum visits, which reached 575 per 1,000 persons, against 770 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local libraries also increased, though by a small margin, and remained over two times lower than the average ones in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Plovdiv

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	12,112	13,141	n.a.	15,615
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,093	5,093	6,163	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,771	11,780	n.a.	13,775
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	19.9	22.7	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	70.1	69.9	70.3	70.1
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	4.7	3.6	2.4	4.2
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	18.9	20.3	20.2	17.6
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	26.7	27.0	26.0	28.0
Production value (BGN/person)	24,260	25,792	n.a.	25,855
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	2,511	2,790	n.a.	2,750
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	2,825	2,861	n.a.	3,560
Share of households with Internet (%)	76.2	74.4	80.7	75.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	48.7	50.3	48.7	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 (%)*	70.2	75.0	70.1	70.7

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-5.1	-5.2	-5.3	-6.7
Net migration rate (‰)	2.5	3.1	3.1	-0.3
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.19	4.25	4.33	4.20
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 th grade (points)**	29.7	34.7	36.7	36.3
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	77	78	84	89
Net enrolment of the population in 5 th -8 th grade (%)	89.3	88.6	87.8	86.6
Share of people with health insurance (%)	87.1	87.1	87.6	88.8
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,452	1,571	1,588	1,688
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	9.3	8.6	8.3	11.1
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	11.9	11.0	11.4	9.1
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	81.4	81.6	n.a.	76.2
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	526	446	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	41.7	66.8	n.a.	70.9
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	997	874	373	659
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	232	243	232	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.