

# Razgrad District

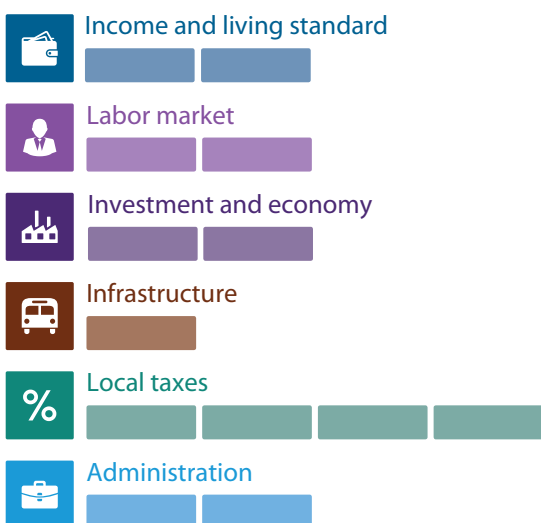
▶ Population (2019)	110,789
▶ Territory (sq. km)	2,639.7
▶ Number of settlements	103
▶ Share of urban population (%)	47.1



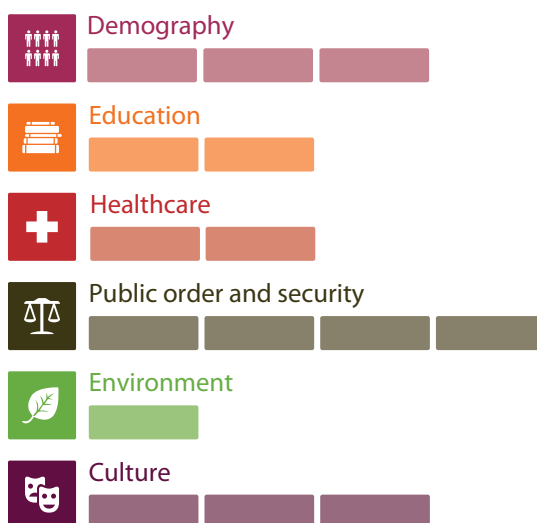
Despite the low base, GDP per capita in Razgrad district has been growing at a slower pace than in the country on average. Poverty levels in the district also suffer the effect of the insufficiently fast growth rate of the local economy and incomes. In 2019, the labor market picked up considerable speed, although the district still failed to bridge the significant lag. Investment activity remained low. The development of the district's infrastructure is assessed as poor. The share of road surfaces in good condition is the lowest in the country. In 2020, the average local tax rates in the municipalities of Razgrad district again remained lower than the national average. The ratings for the transparency of the local administration remained relatively high.

Razgrad is one of the three districts with less than 50% of the population living in urban areas. The district's performance in education is unsatisfactory. The students' educational results remained relatively low in 2020. Razgrad is among the districts with the greatest shortages of doctors. Although the workloads of the local criminal judges are close to the national average, delivery of justice is speedier. Razgrad ranks last in the whole of Bulgaria as regards the environmental indicators. It is the district with the highest relative volume of generated household waste, while the share submitted for treatment and recycling is extremely low. Interest in the local theaters continues to be relatively high.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■

### Income and living standard ■■■

Despite the low base, GDP per capita in Razgrad district has been growing at a slower pace than in the country on average and in 2018 it reached 9,700 BGN, against 15,600 BGN nationally. Gross salaries in the district were rising at the country's average rate, but remained relatively low – 11,600 BGN per year compared to 13,800 BGN in the country. In 2019 household incomes rose significantly and reached 5,420 BGN/household member, compared to 6,013 BGN/household member in the country.

Poverty levels in the district also suffer the effect of the insufficiently fast growth rate of the local economy and incomes. The share of the population living with material deprivation in 2019 was 35.8%, compared to 19.9% in the country, and the population living below the national poverty line made up 28.0%, versus 22.6% nationwide

### Labor market ■■■

In 2019, the labor market picked up considerable speed, although it still failed to bridge the district's significant lag. Investment activity rose by 8.2 p.p. to reach 71.4%, compared to 74.3% in the country, and its progress was accompanied both by a rise in employment and a decline in unemployment. The employment rate reached at least a twenty-year record of 61.8%, which, however, is still well below the national average of 70.1% for that year. The unemployment rate also dropped to record levels – 9.6%, which is nevertheless more than double the average of 4.2% nationwide.

A major challenge still facing the local labor market is the educational structure of the workforce, which has seriously deteriorated. The 2019 figures point to 31.6% of the population with primary or lower education, compared to 17.6% nationally, and to only 18.8% with a university degree, against 28.0% in the country on average.

The population replacement ratio of people aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 has dropped to 64.2%, compared to the national average of 65.9%.

### Investment and economy ■■■

Investment activity in Razgrad district remained low in 2018. Razgrad was among the districts with the lowest number of enterprises – 38 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 59 per 1,000 persons. FTA expenditures recorded some increase to 1,780 BGN/person but they nevertheless remained significantly lower than the average of 2,750 BGN/person nationally. FDI remained twice as low as the national average – 1,564 EUR/person, versus 3,560 EUR/person respectively. After a three-year growth, in 2018 production value per capita in Razgrad district dropped to 15,600 BGN/person, compared to 25,900 BGN/person in the country.

Some improvement was noticeable in the utilization of European funds. By 15 June 2020, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,568 BGN/person, compared to 1,976 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by the municipalities of Isperih and Kubrat.

### Infrastructure ■■

The development of the district's infrastructure was once again assessed as poor in 2019. The density of its railroad network was similar to the average one in the country, while the density of its roads was higher. At the same time, the share of highways and first-class roads was only 11.1%. In 2019, the share of road surfaces in good condition was 17.6% – an all-time low for the district and significantly below the average of 41.1% countrywide.

The relative share of households with internet access rose to reach 69.5%, though it still remained lower than the average of 75.1% nationwide.

### Local taxes ■■■■■

In 2020, the average level of local taxes in Razgrad district's municipalities again remained lower than the national average. Among the five monitored local taxes, only the tax on the non-residential immovable property of legal entities was higher in Razgrad district, albeit slightly, than the national average.

Significantly lower – by about 30-35% – than the national average were the local taxes on retail trade and on taxi transportation. The local taxes on motor vehicles and on the acquisition of property were 5 to 10% lower.

### Administration ■■■

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop services has remained considerably below the national average and in 2020 it deteriorated even further.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration also fell but at 73.2% in 2020 it still remained above the national average of 70.7%. Within the district, the municipality of the city of Razgrad performed best as regards this indicator and achieved a rating of 84%.

Similar to the progress in the other districts in Bulgaria, in 2019 cadastral map coverage in Razgrad district grew considerably to include a whole 96% of its territory, compared to an average of 91% in the country.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

In the last five years, the natural population growth rate in Razgrad district has been relatively steady at about -8 to -9%. In 2019, it was exactly -9%, compared to -6.7% in the country. The district has also been losing population due to out-migration. Although for the third consecutive year the net migration rate had been rising, in 2019 it remained relatively high at a value of -3.9%. These processes are also reflected in the constant deterioration of the age dependency ratios. The ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0-14 years reached 162% that year, compared to 150% in the country, and to those aged 15-64 it was 34.2%, versus the national average of 33.8%. Razgrad is one of the three districts, along with those of Kardzhali and Silistra, where less than 50% of the population lives in urban areas. In 2019, 47.1% of the population was urban. Its density was also relatively low – 837 persons/sq.km, compared to 1,510 people/sq.km countrywide.

### Education

The district's performance as regards the indicators in the sphere of education is unsatisfactory. The percentages of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school have been decreasing, but while the number of repeaters is comparatively small, that of dropouts remains relatively high.

Students' results for 2020 again remained relatively low. The average score in the external assessment in mathematics after 7<sup>th</sup> grade was 31.1 p., versus 36.3 p. nationally. The average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.02, compared to 4.20 in the country, and the share of "failed" grades (below 3.00) made up 12%, against the national average of 8%.

The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary education continued to rise in 2019 and remained higher than the national average.

The only provider of higher education in Razgrad district is a branch of Ruse University. This accounts for the small number of university students in the district – just 2 students per 1,000 persons in 2019, compared to 32 students per 1,000 persons nationally.

### Healthcare

The share of people with health insurance in Razgrad district continued to grow and in 2019 it reached a level considerably above the national average. At the same time, Razgrad is the district with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. The data for 2019 show one local GP caring for 2,172 persons on average, compared to 1,688 persons per doctor in the country.

The relative number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals continued to increase in 2019 but it still remained relatively small – 505 beds per 100,000 persons, compared to 550 per 100,000 persons in the country.

The relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals also remained low, with 206.5 hospitalizations per 1,000 persons, compared to 253.7 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

The infant mortality rate continues to be relatively high.

### Public order and security

Although the workloads of the criminal judges in Razgrad district are close to the average ones in the country, the speed of delivery of justice is higher than the national average. In 2019 one judge heard an average of 9.2 criminal cases a month, compared to 9.1 cases per judge nationally, while the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 95%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide.

The number of crimes registered in Razgrad district is relatively low, and crime detection is high. In 2019 the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 9.9 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 11.1 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate dropped to 70%, which is still considerably above the national average of 52%.

### Environment

Among all of Bulgaria's districts, Razgrad ranks last as regards the environmental indicators for 2018. Due to the low concentration of people in urban areas, it is one of the districts with the worst results for the share of population with access to sewerage connected to waste water treatment plants – 42% versus 64% nationally, as well as in terms of the share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network – again 42%, compared to the national figure of 76%.

Razgrad district generates greater amounts of household waste than any other district in Bulgaria. Its volume reached 529 kg/person annually, compared to 409 kg/person in the country on average. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling were a mere 9%, versus the national average of 71%.

Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere amounted to 50 t/sq.km, compared to 275 t/sq.km in the country.

### Culture

Interest in the local theaters in Razgrad district continues to be relatively strong. In 2019, the number of visits to the local theaters again showed an increase, reaching 434 per 1,000 persons, compared to 362 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Figures for the other indicators in this category also show a rise in the number of visits, though their numbers per 1,000 persons remain below the respective national averages. Visits to museums numbered 563 per 1,000 persons, against 770 per 1,000 persons nationally, visits to libraries – 415 per 1,000 persons, compared to 683 per 1,000 persons, and cinema visits – 106 per 1,000 persons, against 659 per 1,000 persons nationally.

## Key indicators for the district of Razgrad

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	8,985	9,709	n.a.	<b>15,615</b>
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	4,408	4,408	5,420	<b>6,013</b>
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,453	11,569	n.a.	<b>13,775</b>
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	24.2	28.0	<b>22.6</b>
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	58.8	56.2	61.8	<b>70.1</b>
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	11.0	11.1	9.6	<b>4.2</b>
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	38.8	36.6	31.6	<b>17.6</b>
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	17.5	20.0	18.8	<b>28.0</b>
Production value (BGN/person)	16,992	15,560	n.a.	<b>25,855</b>
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	1,606	1,780	n.a.	<b>2,750</b>
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	1,331	1,564	n.a.	<b>3,560</b>
Share of households with Internet (%)	57.6	63.3	69.5	<b>75.1</b>
Share of roads in good condition (%)	32.4	21.2	17.6	<b>41.4</b>
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	19.2	19.2	19.2	<b>17.9</b>
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	67.4	76.0	73.2	<b>70.7</b>

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-9.3	-8.7	-9.0	<b>-6.7</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	-5.5	-4.5	-3.9	<b>-0.3</b>
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.74	3.80	4.02	<b>4.20</b>
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade (points)**	25.7	30.1	31.1	<b>36.3</b>
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	84	88	92	<b>89</b>
Net enrolment of the population in 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade (%)	88.8	88.2	85.4	<b>86.6</b>
Share of people with health insurance (%)	93.0	94.3	96.5	<b>88.8</b>
Population per one GP (number of people)	2,121	2,306	2,172	<b>1,688</b>
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	10.9	10.6	9.9	<b>11.1</b>
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	7.9	9.4	9.2	<b>9.1</b>
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	41.9	41.9	n.a.	<b>76.2</b>
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	459	529	n.a.	<b>409</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	4.9	8.5	n.a.	<b>70.9</b>
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	5	98	106	<b>659</b>
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	366	416	434	<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.