

Sofia (capital city)

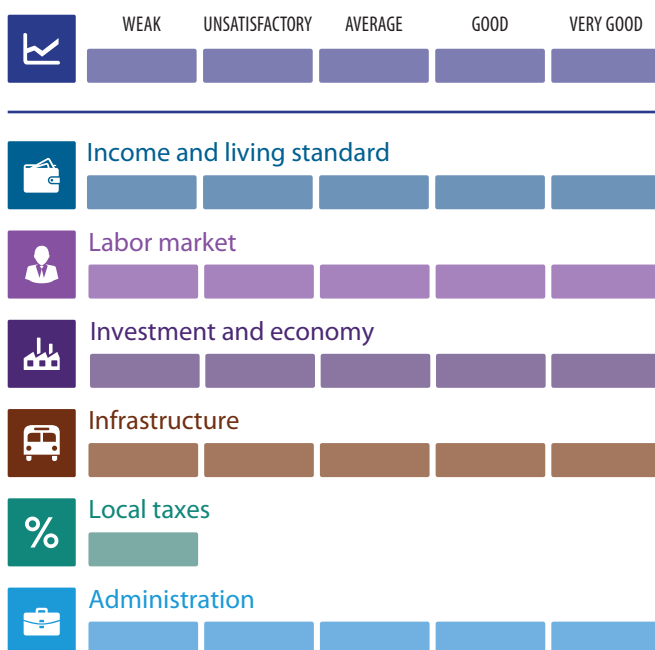


▶ Population (2019)	1,328,790
▶ Territory (sq. km)	1,348.9
▶ Number of settlements	54
▶ Share of urban population (%)	95.6

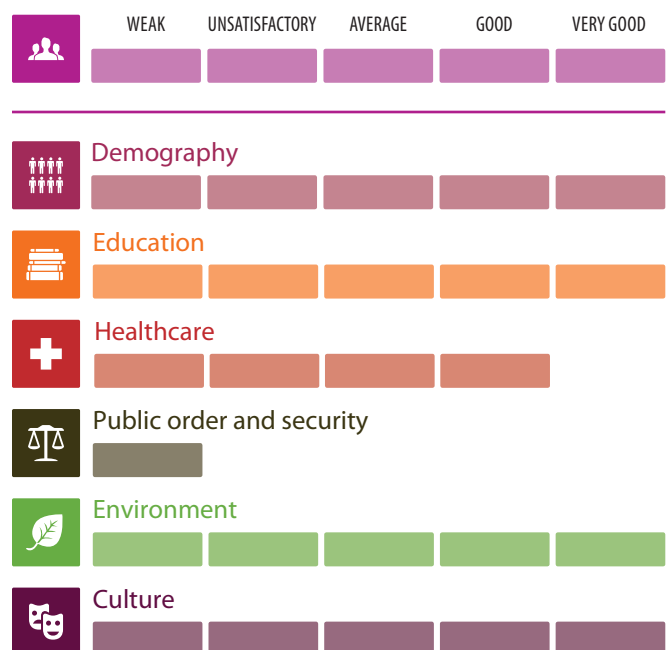
Sofia (capital city) is the district with the highest GDP per capita, as well as the highest salaries and incomes. This accounts for the low levels of poverty in the district. Its economic development is also interrelated with the favorable trends in the local labor market. Employment and unemployment rates have reached record levels for the capital. Sofia is a leader in investment activity. Sofia Central Railway Station is a major railway hub in the country. In 2020, the capital was once again the district with the highest local taxes in the country. The work of Sofia city's local administration is assessed as the most transparent in the country. Sofia is also the district whose administration received the highest assessment ratings for the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services.

Sofia is the district presenting the most favorable demographic picture in the country. The capital is a leader in the field of education, with a high enrolment rate, a low share of repeaters and dropouts, good student performance and a high number of university students. Its healthcare is characterized by easy access to specialist physicians, low infant mortality and a small relative number of patients admitted for treatment to the local general hospitals. The capital's poor result and its last place in the country in public order and security is a consequence of the large workloads of the local judges and the relatively high number of crimes. Almost all waste in the area is handed over for treatment and recycling. Sofia is the district with the most intensive cultural life.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

The capital is the district with the highest GDP per capita, with a value twice that of Stara Zagora, the district ranking second in this category. In 2018, GDP per capita in Sofia rose at a rate faster than the national average and reached 33,400 BGN, against 15,600 BGN nationally.

Salaries and incomes are growing at a rate similar to the national average, but their values are significantly higher. The average annual gross salary reached 19,000 BGN in 2018 and exceeded the national average by over 38%, while the average annual income per household member reached 8,224 BGN in 2019, with a similar difference to the average income for the whole country.

The capital also remained the district with the lowest poverty level in 2019. The share of the population living with material deprivation amounted to less than 11%, versus 20% nationally, while that of people living below the national poverty line was 10%, compared to 23% in the country.

Labor market

The good indicators for the economic development of Sofia (capital city) are also manifested in the favorable dynamics of the local labor market. Economic activity continued to grow in 2019 and reached 78%, compared to 74.3% in the country. Parallel to this growth was a decrease in unemployment and increase in employment. The employment rate reached 76.4%, against 70.1% nationally, and marked a record for the capital. The unemployment rate also recorded the lowest figure in the modern economic history of Bulgaria – 1.6%, versus 4.2% nationally.

The capital remains the district with the best educational structure of the workforce. In 2019 the share of the population aged 25-64 with a university degree reached 53%, against 28% in the country, while employed people with primary or lower education made up less than 5%, compared to 18% nationally.

Sofia is the district with the third highest population replacement ratio of people aged 15-19 to those aged 60-64 – 74.3%, compared to 65.9% nationwide, and is outranked only by Sliven and Varna on this indicator.

Investment and economy

Sofia is the undisputed leader in investment activity. The district has the largest number of enterprises relative to its population – 91 per 1,000 persons, compared to an average of 59 per 1,000 persons in the country in 2018. The growth rate of FTA acquisition expenditures by 8.5% in 2018 reversed the downward trend from the previous three years, though the annual investment figures were still below the level of 2015. The capital is the district with the highest nominal FTA expenditure – 5,568 BGN/person, compared to 2,750 BGN/person nationally. Cumulative FDI is also

significantly higher than the average national values and in 2018 it reached 9,361 EUR/person.

These indicators also account for the exceptionally high production value in the district, which at 50,400 BGN/person is double the national average of 25,900 BGN/person.

By 15 June 2020, the capital regained its first place as regards utilization of EU funds, after being outranked by Gabrovo district the previous year. Payments made in Sofia (capital) district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 3,369 BGN/person, compared to 1,976 BGN/person nationally.

Infrastructure

There are no roads from the national road network within Sofia (capital), but its territory is bordered directly by several highways. Sofia Central Railway Station is one of the main railway hubs in the country and the density of the railway network of 12.8 km/100 sq.km territory in the capital district significantly exceeds the national average of 3.6 km/100 sq.km. The share of households with access to high-speed internet has continued to increase and in 2019 it reached 83%, compared to 75% in the country.

Local taxes

The level of local taxation in Sofia (capital) district again remained the highest in the whole country in 2020. The biggest difference in comparison to the national figures was recorded in the rate on taxi transportation – 850 BGN per year, compared to 498 BGN in the country, and the retail trade tax – 20 BGN/sq.m, versus less than 13 BGN/sq.m in the country.

From the other monitored taxes, the only one that remained below the average rates nationwide was the tax on immovable property for legal entities – 1,88‰ against 2,01‰ nationally.

Administration

In 2020 the work of Sofia's municipal administration achieved the highest transparency ratings in the country, thus displacing Gabrovo and Dobrich from their top positions the previous year. The AIP Active transparency rating reached 78.8%, against the national average of 70.7%. Sofia is also the district with the highest results in the self-assessment of its local administration for the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services – 4 points out of 5, which confirms its leading position in the whole of Bulgaria.

Almost the whole of the capital's territory – 99.2% – was already included in the cadastral map in 2019.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

In 2019, Sofia (capital city) remained the district presenting the most favorable demographic picture. Although here, as elsewhere in Bulgaria, the natural growth rate was negative, it was still the highest in the country at -2.0% , compared to the national average of -6.7% . Sofia (capital city) is also one of the few districts that manage to attract population and has a positive net migration rate at 2.4% .

The age dependency ratios in the district remained considerably more favourable than in the country on average. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-14 years reached 119.9% , compared to 150.1% nationally, and to those aged 15-64 years – 26.2% , versus 33.8% nationwide.

The district's specificity is a prerequisite for the extremely high level of urbanization – 95.6% of its territory is urban, and the population density reaches $4,963$ persons/sq.km, compared to $1,510$ persons/sq.km in the country.

Education

The capital is the country's leader in education, with a high rate of enrolment, low shares of repeaters and dropouts, good performance of the students and a high number of university students.

The only less favorable figures pertain to the teacher-student ratios, in spite of the improvement over the past few years.

The shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education are almost three times smaller than the country's averages. The students in the capital achieved an average score of 48.1 p. at the 2020 external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade, which is far above the national average of 36.3 p. Also, the average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.63 , compared to the average of 4.20 countrywide, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was only 2.4% , against the national average of 8.2% .

The number of university students in Sofia continued to fall in 2019, in parallel with the general tendency of declining student numbers in the country, but it still remains considerably above the national average.

Healthcare

In 2019, the capital remained among the districts with the best healthcare in the country, characterized by easy access to specialist physicians, low infant mortality and a small number of patients treated in local general hospitals.

The indicator for access to GPs is similar to the national average – one doctor cares for an average of $1,712$ persons, compared to $1,688$ persons on average for the country. The hospital bed capacity is also similar to the national average – 552 beds in general hospitals per $100,000$ persons. The number of hospitalizations is 182 per $1,000$ persons and is significantly lower than the average number in the country of 254 per $1,000$ persons. However, it should be borne in mind that the capital's medical institutions

also attract many patients from outside the district who are not included in the calculation of this indicator.

Public order and security

The capital's poor results and its last place in the whole country in the indicator of public order and security is a consequence of the large workloads of the local judges and the relatively high number of crimes.

In 2019 one criminal judge in Sofia (capital city) heard an average of 12 cases a month, compared to 9 cases nationally. These heavy workloads had a negative impact on the speedy delivery of justice. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 86% , compared to the average of 90% nationwide, and pending cases constituted 14.4% , versus less than 10% countrywide. The number of crimes against the person and property registered in the capital district dropped in 2019 to 13.3 per $1,000$ persons but still remained high compared to the national average of 11.1 per $1,000$ persons. These are all factors contributing to the exceptionally low share of cleared crimes – a bare 35% , versus 52% for the country in 2019.

Environment

The capital remained the district with the highest annual volume of generated household waste, with 499 kg/person in 2018, compared to 409 kg for the country. However, almost all waste was handed over for treatment and recycling – 97% compared to only 71% on average for the country.

The high degree of urbanization in the district accounts for the high figures for accessibility to public sewerage systems – 96% , versus 76% nationally, while over 96% of the sewerage network is connected to waste water treatment plants, compared to as little as 64% on average countrywide.

Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere remain at the second highest level in the country (after the district of Stara Zagora) and are four times higher than the national average.

Culture

In 2019 Sofia was the district with the most intensive cultural life. It had the highest number of visits to cinemas and theaters – $1,756$ cinema visits per $1,000$ persons, compared to 659 per $1,000$ persons nationwide, and 708 theater visits per $1,000$ persons, versus 362 per $1,000$ persons in the country. Visits to libraries also significantly exceeded those reported in the country as a whole – $1,114$ per $1,000$ persons, compared to 683 per $1,000$ persons nationally.

Out of the indicators included in this category, the only one where the capital came second was the number of visits to museums – 652 visits per $1,000$ persons were reported in 2019, compared to the national average of 770 per $1,000$ persons.

Key indicators for the district of Sofia (capital city)

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	30,295	33,437	n.a.	15,615
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	7,603	7,603	8,224	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	17,199	19,026	n.a.	13,775
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	8.8	10.0	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	74.6	75.6	76.4	70.1
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	2.8	2.1	1.6	4.2
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	3.0	4.2	4.9	17.6
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	50.8	51.4	52.8	28.0
Production value (BGN/person)	46,070	50,416	n.a.	25,855
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	5,134	5,568	n.a.	2,750
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	9,294	9,361	n.a.	3,560
Share of households with Internet (%)	75.6	81.9	83.0	75.1
Share of roads in good condition (%)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	41.4
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	78.3	77.0	78.8	70.7

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	-1.3	-1.9	-2.0	-6.7
Net migration rate (‰)	2.7	3.9	2.4	-0.3
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.45	4.53	4.63	4.20
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7 th grade (points)**	37.6	44.6	48.1	36.3
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	76	82	87	89
Net enrolment of the population in 5 th -8 th grade (%)	90.1	89.4	89.4	86.6
Share of people with health insurance (%)	86.3	86.6	87.1	88.8
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,633	1,665	1,712	1,688
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	16.8	15.1	13.3	11.1
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	14.6	14.2	12.0	9.1
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	96.4	96.3	n.a.	76.2
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	565	499	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	96.5	96.8	n.a.	70.9
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	2,101	1,884	1,756	659
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	584	684	708	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.