Yambol District

- ▶ Population (2019) — 117,335
- ▶ Territory (sq. km) — 3,355.5
- ▶ Number of settlements — 109
- ▶ Share of urban population (%) — 70.8

Straldzha

YAMBOL

ELHOVO

Bolyarovo

Yambol remains among the districts with a low level of economic development. Both GDP per capita and salary levels have remained significantly below the national average, but in 2018 they underwent rapid improvement. Unemployment rates remained more than twice as high as the national average, and employment shrank. Low economic activity inevitably leads to very high levels of poverty and material deprivation. FDI has remained quite low, but on the other hand the district has been doing relatively well in the utilization of European funds. Yambol has a well-developed road network, but almost no railroads. Despite some increases in 2020, local taxes in Yambol district remain low, and the assessment of the municipalities' administrative capacity has also been improving. The district has markedly negative and steadily deteriorating demographic indicators and accelerating population ageing. Despite the gradually improving results in the matriculation exams, school education continues to face problems with student retention. Characteristic of Yambol district's healthcare is the most difficult access to specialist physicians in the country and alarmingly high infant mortality. Due to the low workloads, the judiciary is relatively efficient and crime rates are following a declining trend. The population in the district generates relatively little waste, but the problems with access to wastewater treatment plants are still serious. Theaters are the most popular form of cultural life.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Income and living standard

Labor market

Investment and economy

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Public order and security

Environment

Culture

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▬▬

Income and living standard ▬

In 2018, GDP gradually approached the threshold of 10,000 BGN per capita. Employees' salaries remained low, compared to the national average – in 2019 the average annual gross salary in Yambol district was 10,800 BGN, against the national average of 13,800 BGN, but the growth of 13.5% was the fastest one reported for the whole country during the year.

Still, the problems with employment and the large share of inactive people of working age are a precondition for relatively low household incomes, which in 2019 were 5,600 BGN on average per household member, although the indicator has been improving. Yambol ranks last in terms of the share of population living in material deprivation, which reached nearly 40% in 2019. The share of the population living below the national poverty line increased by 9% in just one year, and in 2019 it was already 33.2%, bringing Yambol closer to the most severely affected areas.

Labor market ▬▬▬

Yambol sustains a relatively high unemployment rate – in 2019 it was 9% for the population aged 15+ compared to 4.2% for the country as a whole. At the same time, there has been a rapid decline in the employment rate and while in 2017 it was 68% for the working age population, in 2019 it shrank to 63%. Both indicators come together to show a relatively low economic activity of the population, which in turn points to a large share of inactive working age people.

The more unfavorable indicators for the local labor market can partly be explained with the educational structure of the population. With only 20% of university graduates among the population aged 25-64 and steady deterioration after 2015, the district takes one of the last places in the country. Also, the share of people with primary or lower education is above average and is gradually increasing.

Investment and economy ▬▬

Due to the relative dominance of the processing industry, Yambol is among the districts with a relatively small number of enterprises – only 46 per 1,000 persons in 2018, but the tendency is towards an increase in their number. The district attracts little foreign investment, and by the end of 2018 FDI amounted to only 445 EUR/person. The annual expenditure on the acquisition of FTA of 1,683 BGN/person was also far from the average for the country, but on this indicator Yambol is not among the districts with the lowest investment activity.

The district is doing well in terms of the utilization of European funds, which by mid-2020 reached 1,796 BGN/person, without any significant differences between the municipalities on this indicator. Labor productivity in Yambol has been growing rapidly but at this stage still remains low – in 2018 production value per capita was 15,000 BGN, compared to the national average of 25,900 BGN.

Infrastructure ▬

Yambol district is characterized by a high density of the road network, with 19 km/100 sq.km territory. However, the railway network is among the least developed in the country, with 1.5 km/100 sq.km. With the Trakia highway passing through the territory of the district, the share of first-class roads and highways (21%) is above the national average. In recent years, there have been fluctuations in the figures indicating the quality of the road surface, with about 44% of the roads in good condition by 2019. The poor assessment for Yambol district in the Infrastructure category is also based on the figure for the share of households connected to high-speed internet – only 53% in 2019, which was the lowest share in the country.

% Local taxes ▬▬▬▬

In 2020, the average tax rate on the non-residential property of legal entities in Yambol increased to 1.92‰. The average patent tax for retail trade in the district's municipalities remained almost unchanged in 2020 at 8.21 BGN/sq.m of retail space. The property acquisition tax also increased that year to reach 2.5%. A decrease was recorded for the tax on taxi transportation, which fell to an average of 348 BGN per year. Local taxes in Yambol district are significantly below the national average, with the exception of the motor vehicle tax, which in 2020 was 1.53 BGN/kW after taking into account the environmental component.

Administration ▬▬▬

Yambol is among the districts where the coverage of the cadastral map is not yet completed, with only 82.5% of its territory included by 2019, compared to over 90% on average for the country. The average self-assessment result regarding the introduction of e-government by the municipal administrations in the district remained unchanged in 2020 at 2.87 out of 5 possible points. There was no change either in their self-assessment on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services – 3.39 points on average for the district. The average AIP rating for active transparency improved to reach 70.4% in 2020.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

In 2019, the natural growth rate in Yambol district was –8.7‰, below the national average of –6.7‰ for that year and is the value around which the indicator has fluctuated for a decade. The district is also among those that are losing population relatively quickly, as the net migration rate is –4.6‰ compared to –0.3‰ for the country; negative migration processes, however, have been subsiding in recent years. The unfavorable natural growth and net migration indicators also affect the age dependency ratios in the district: they are above the national average and have been deteriorating in recent years.

Yambol is among the districts with a relatively high degree of urbanization – the share of urban population in 2019 was 71%, with a clear trend towards gradual increase. At the same time, the population density in the urban settlements is relatively low – 1,074 persons/sq.km, compared to 1,510 persons/sq.km countrywide.

Education

Over the last two years, the average results in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature rose from 3.55 to 4.04, though still remaining below the achievements of the students in most other districts. One positive trend can be seen in the decline in the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) in the same exam, since within that same period they decreased to 13%, though still remaining above the national average of 8%. The students from Yambol district have also been performing less well in the exams in mathematics after 7th grade – in 2020 they scored an average of 31 points, compared to an average of 36 points nationwide. There are too few teachers in the district – an average of 77 per 1,000 students, but the ratio is gradually improving. The share of dropouts from primary and secondary education is high – 3.90% of all schoolchildren, or 1 p.p. above average. The share of repeaters is also slightly higher – 1% of all students, and in the last three years the coverage of school education, measured as the share of students enrolled in 5th to 8th grade, is slightly above the national average.

Healthcare

Yambol is the district in Bulgaria with the second most acute problems with access to specialist physicians after Dobrich. Access to GPs has also deteriorated in recent years, with an average of 1,701 people per doctor; nevertheless, the number is not much higher than the national average. The number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals per 100,000 people from the district is 353 – well below the national average of 550 beds per 100,000 people. The coverage of the health system in the district is relatively good, as 90% of the population has health insurance. A cause for concern is the high infant mortality rate – 8.2 per 1,000 in 2019, but the indicator has gradually been improving. The limited capacity of the hospitals also affects the number of patients admitted to them, which is extremely low – in 2019 it was only 144 per 1,000 persons.

Public order and security

In the last five years, the share of criminal cases in Yambol district closed within 3 months has been similar to the national average – 89% in 2019. The share of pending cases, on the other hand, is below average – 8.5% of all. The relatively good efficiency of the district's judiciary can be explained with its small workloads – in 2019 a criminal judge heard an average of 5.4 cases per month, compared to 9.1 on average for the country and over 11 in the districts with the busiest courts. Crimes against the person and property are on a downward trend, with 9.6 per 1,000 persons in 2019, versus 11.1 nationally and 18.0 per 1,000 people in 2010 in the district. The detection rate for this type of crime has been gradually increasing, reaching 69% in 2019.

Environment

The amounts of household waste generated in Yambol district have remained relatively unchanged in recent years, with 317 kg/person in 2018, which is significantly below the national average of 409 kg. In 2018, nearly 90% of the generated waste was handed over for treatment and recycling, compared to 71% on average countrywide. In 2018, about 72% of the population were living in settlements with access to public sewerage. However, waste water treatment remains a significant problem, as only 5% of the population have access to sewerage connected to a waste water treatment plant. The district also has very low carbon emissions – 7.4 t/sq.km of carbon dioxide, versus 275 t/sq.km on average for the country.

Culture

In 2019, theaters remained the most popular form of cultural life in Yambol district, with 494 visits per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 362. Cinemas held the least interest, with 114 out of every 1,000 persons visiting them – most likely because access to them is more difficult. Library attendance was well below average – 446 per 1,000 persons, and visits to museums amounted to 329 per 1,000 persons.

Key indicators for the district of Yambol

Indicators of economic development	2017	2018	2019	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	8,881	9,694	n.a.	**15,615**
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,357	5,357	5,638	**6,013**
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	9,530	10,815	n.a.	**13,775**
Share of the poor relative to the national poverty line (%)	n.a.	24.3	33.2	**22.6**
Employment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	67.9	62.3	63.1	**70.1**
Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 (%)	7.6	8.3	9.0	**4.2**
Share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education (%)	18.2	23.4	23.3	**17.6**
Share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	22.0	21.0	19.8	**28.0**
Production value (BGN/person)	13,493	15,014	n.a.	**25,855**
Expenditure on fixed tangible asset acquisition (BGN/person)	1,973	1,683	n.a.	**2,750**
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	418	445	n.a.	**3,560**
Share of households with Internet (%)	62.0	62.1	53.4	**75.1**
Share of roads in good condition (%)	42.5	39.8	43.9	**41.4**
Density of the road network (km/100 sq.km territory)	19.0	19.0	19.0	**17.9**
AIP active transparency rating of the local self-government (%)*	67.8	67.0	70.4	**70.7**

Indicators of social development	2017	2018	2019	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	−8.4	−8.9	−8.7	**−6.7**
Net migration rate (‰)	−6.5	−4.3	−4.6	**−0.3**
Average grade in the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.55	3.80	4.04	**4.20**
Average grade in the external exam in mathematics at the end of 7th grade (points)**	29.0	29.4	31.2	**36.3**
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	73	71	77	**89**
Net enrolment of the population in 5th-8th grade (%)	89.4	90.6	87.0	**86.6**
Share of people with health insurance (%)	89.9	89.3	89.8	**88.8**
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,364	1,575	1,701	**1,688**
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	11.3	10.5	9.6	**11.1**
Workload of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	6.0	6.0	5.4	**9.1**
Share of the population with access to public sewerage networks (%)	71.6	71.8	n.a.	**76.2**
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	340	317	n.a.	**409**
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	80.4	89.8	n.a.	**70.9**
Visits to the cinema per 1,000 persons	139	97	114	**659**
Visits to the theater per 1,000 persons	437	407	494	**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.