

Dobrich District

▶ Population (2020)	171,054
▶ Territory (sq. km)	4,719.7
▶ Number of settlements	215
▶ Share of urban population (%)	68.7



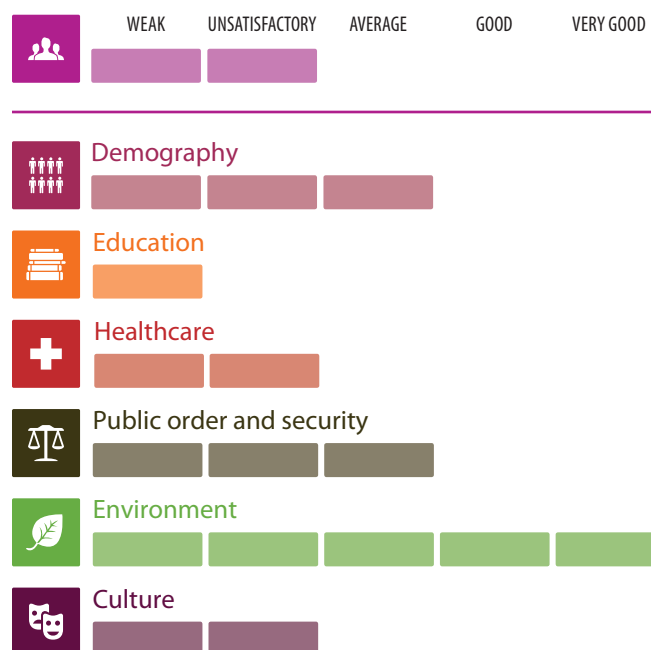
GDP per capita in Dobrich district has continued to grow but its growth rate and volume has fallen below the respective national averages. The decrease in economic activity has been accompanied by a shrinkage of employment and a rise in unemployment. Investment activity remained relatively unfavorable in 2019. The utilization of European funds has continued to grow, but relative to the population in the district it remains lower than the national average. Dobrich is among the districts with the highest share of households with access to a gas supply. The level of local taxation in the municipalities remained relatively low in 2021. The rating of the local governments improved considerably in 2021, thus ranking Dobrich in the top place in the whole country.

The net migration rate has gone up and for the first time in almost 15 years it is positive. Dobrich remains the district with the lowest population density in the country. Its performance in terms of the education indicators is poor. Student examination scores in 2021 remained relatively low. The shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds can probably explain the relatively low number of patients treated in the local general hospitals. The workloads of criminal judges remained relatively low in 2020, which affected the speed of delivery of justice. Dobrich is among the districts with the lowest levels of carbon dioxide pollution of the atmosphere. Notable of its cultural life in 2020 was again its low intensity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

GDP per capita in Dobrich district has continued to grow but at a rate and with a volume lower than the respective national averages. In 2019 it reached 10,000 BGN. Salaries and incomes have registered growth. The gross annual salary in the district reached 11,400 BGN, whereas the national average was 15,200 BGN, and the annual income per household member was 5,500 BGN, compared to 6,000 BGN as the country's average.

Still, in spite of the lag in incomes and salaries, in 2019 poverty levels in Dobrich district were close to the national average. The proportion of people living in material deprivation was 19.5%, versus 19.9% on average nationwide, while the share of those living below the poverty line was 22.8%, compared to the national average of 22.6%.

Labor market

After a decade of fluctuations in the past few years' economic activity in Dobrich district settled below the national average. In 2020, the rate of economic activity dropped to 72.8%, against 73.7% in the country. This decrease was accompanied by a decline in employment and an increase in unemployment rates in the district. Employment rates reached 63.2%, compared to 68.5% in the country on average, and unemployment reached 9.6%, whereas the national average was 5.2%.

In 2020, the relatively low educational status of the workforce continued to be a major challenge before the labor market in the district. The share of employed people aged 25–64 with a university degree was 22.3%, against the national average of 29.2%. The proportion of people in the workforce with primary or lower education was 25.6%, versus 16.9% nationally.

The labor market continues to be affected by population ageing as well. Still, the demographic replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 in the district has been rising in recent years, reaching 68.9%, compared to 67.1% in the country. This means that for every 100 people who will have to leave the labor market in the next few years, there are 65 young people who will join the workforce.

Investment and economy

Investment activity in Dobrich district remained relatively unfavorable in 2019. The relative number of enterprises decreased slightly to 55/1,000 persons, against 61/1,000 as the national average. A considerable shrinkage of over 10% was registered in FTA acquisition expenditures, and they fell to 1,811 BGN/person, versus the national figure of 3,155 BGN/person. There was also a decrease in accumulated FDI flows, which shrank to 1,707 EUR/person, compared to 3,655 EUR/person in the country, and in production value, which also fell to 14,500 BGN/person, versus the national average of 28,000 BGN/person.

Utilization of European funds in the district has continued to grow but remains below the national average per capita. By 15 June 2021, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 1,722 BGN/person, while the national average was 2,217 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded in the municipality Dobrich (city), while the lowest ones were in Dobrich municipality (rural)

Infrastructure

The density of the infrastructure in Dobrich district, and especially that of its railroad network, remains quite low. In 2020, the share of highways and first-class roads remained lower than the national average – 10%, against 19% respectively. At the same time, road quality is relatively good, with 46.7% of road surfaces in good condition, compared to the national average of 41.4%.

The relative share of households with internet access in Dobrich district remains low – 70.4%, against the average of 78.9% nationwide.

Dobrich is among the districts with the highest share of households connected to a gas supply – 8.0%, versus the national average of 3.1%. The installed RES capacity is also relatively large – 3.1 kW/person, compared to 0.6 kW/person countrywide.

Local taxes

In 2021, local tax rates in Dobrich district remained relatively low. The margin with the national average rates was especially significant as regards the average local rates on immovable non-residential property for legal entities and on taxi transportation.

Within the district, tax rates as a whole are lowest in Tervel municipality, and highest in the municipalities of Dobrich (city), Balchik and Shabla.

Administration

Cadastral coverage in Dobrich district is traditionally higher than the national average and in 2019 it included almost all of its territory – 97.7%, versus 91.4% countrywide. The development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services in the district's municipalities improved in 2021, though one-stop shop services remained below the national average.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration increased considerably in 2021, thus ranking Dobrich at the top place in the whole country, with 83.6%, against 73.2% nationwide. Within the district, particularly high ratings were achieved by the municipalities of Dobrich city and Balchik.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The natural population growth rate decreased to -11.9‰ in 2020, compared to -9.5‰ as the national average. At the same time, the net migration rate increased to 3.1‰ , a positive value for the first time in almost 15 years. However, the trend towards population ageing is still ongoing. The age dependency rate as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to that aged 0–14 years increased to 161.6%, compared to 150.6% in the country, and to that aged 15–64 – to 35.7%, with 34.1% nationally.

The share of urban population remains relatively low – 68.7%, versus 72.9% in the country, and Dobrich continues to be the district with the lowest population density in its urban parts – 663 persons/sq. km, versus 1,506 persons/sq. km in the country.

Education

The performance of Dobrich district in terms of the education indicators is poor. In 2020, the enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade decreased to 73.4% and remained the lowest one in the country. At the same time, the shares of repeaters and drop-outs from primary and secondary education remained high. The numbers of primary and secondary school teachers went down to 96 teachers per 1,000 students, but remained higher than the national average of 87 teachers per 1,000 students.

In 2021, students' results for the district remained low. The average score in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was 30.5 p., compared to 37.9 p. in the country on average. The average score in the State matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.08, compared to the national average of 4.21. In addition, the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) went up to reach 9%, versus 7% nationwide.

Higher education in the district is poorly represented, only by the branches of Shumen University and Varna Technical University. University students number 4 per 1,000 persons, against 32 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Healthcare

Dobrich remains among the districts with the lowest share of people with health insurance – 85.3% in 2020, versus 88.7% nationally. The healthcare system in the district suffers from an acute shortage of specialist physicians, although the number of GPs relative to the population is relatively high. With the exception of Pernik district, Dobrich has the lowest number of beds in the local general hospitals – 2.02 per 1,000 persons, against the national average of 5.52 per 1,000 persons.

The shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds can probably explain the relatively low number of hospitalizations in the district – 98 per 1,000 persons, compared to 138 per 1,000 persons across the country.

The infant mortality rate in the district decreased in 2020 to 5.7%, but still remained higher than the national average of 5.1%.

Public order and security

The workloads of criminal judges in Dobrich district remained low in 2020, which affects the speed of delivery of justice. There were on average 5.8 cases a month per judge, compared to 8.6 cases nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months decreased but was still higher than the national average – 92%, against 90% respectively.

The number of registered crimes against the person and property remained slightly lower than the national average – 9.4 per 1,000 persons, versus 9.9 per 1,000 persons nationwide, while detection rates were slightly higher – 55.4%, versus the national figure of 52.1%.

Environment

Dobrich is among the districts with the lowest levels of carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere. In 2019, carbon emissions amounted to 7.2 t/sq. m. The share of population with access to a public sewerage system was still slightly below the national average – 70.9%, versus 76.4% countrywide, though the share of sewerage systems in the district connected to wastewater treatment plants remained higher than in the country on average – 70.9%, versus 64.6% countrywide.

The average annual amount of waste generated by households was 399 kg/person, which was close to the national average of 409 kg/person. There was a considerable increase in the amounts of waste handed over for treatment and recycling – 84%, versus 71% for the country on average.

Culture

The intensity of cultural life in Dobrich district in 2020 was again low, while pandemic-related restrictions on cultural events affected the district no less than the rest of the country.

Visits to the cinema shrank by 80%, compared to 71% in the country, and numbered 40 per 1,000 persons, compared to 190 per 1,000 persons nationally. The number of visits to libraries decreased by 36%, versus 30% nationwide, to 352 per 1,000 persons, against 480 per 1,000 persons in the country.

The decrease in museum visits in Dobrich district was half that of the country as a whole – 29% in the district, compared to 58% nationwide, and their numbers remained considerably higher – 800 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Dobrich

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,176	10,009	n.a.	17,170
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,234	5,500	n.a.	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,429	11,440	n.a.	15,209
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	19.9	22.8	n.a.	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	65.3	66.9	63.2	68.5
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	8.6	7.0	9.6	5.2
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	23.4	24.8	25.6	16.9
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	20.8	21.1	22.3	29.2
Production value (BGN/person)	14,750	14,549	n.a.	28,027
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	2,023	1,811	n.a.	3,155
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	1,793	1,707	n.a.	3,655
Share of households with Internet (%)	75.2	70.0	70.4	78.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	46.9	46.7	n.a.	41.4
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	17.4	17.4	17.4	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	80.0	76.2	83.6	73.2

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	–9.2	–9.0	–11.9	–9.5
Net migration rate (‰)	–4.0	–2.7	3.1	4.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.12	4.20	4.08	4.21
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	27.3	29.8	30.5	37.9
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	76.4	74.7	73.4	86.5
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	90	96	93	87
Share of population with health insurance (%)	85.2	86.5	85.3	88.7
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,496	1,494	1,500	1,727
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	12.5	10.4	9.4	9.9
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	6.1	6.2	5.8	8.6
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	70.9	70.9	n.a.	76.4
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	399	n.a.	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	84.3	n.a.	n.a.	70.9
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	187	202	40	190
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	1,135	1,119	800	322

* The data for 2021 are included in the 2021 study. The same also applies for the previous years.

** The data refer to the 2020–2021 academic year while the matriculation exam was held in 2021. The same also applies for the previous years.