

Plovdiv District

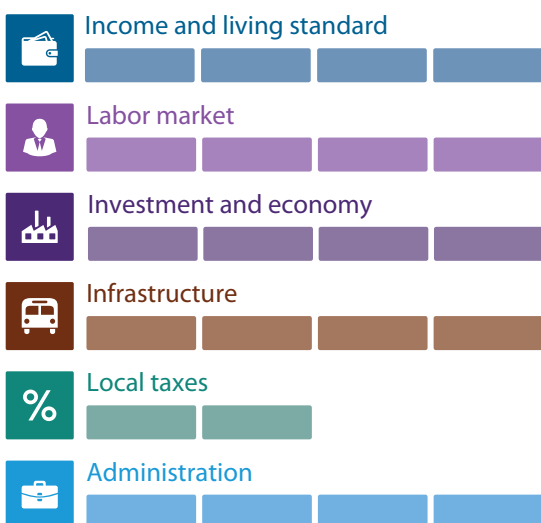
▶ Population (2020)	666,600
▶ Territory (sq. km)	5,972.9
▶ Number of settlements	212
▶ Share of urban population (%)	74.8



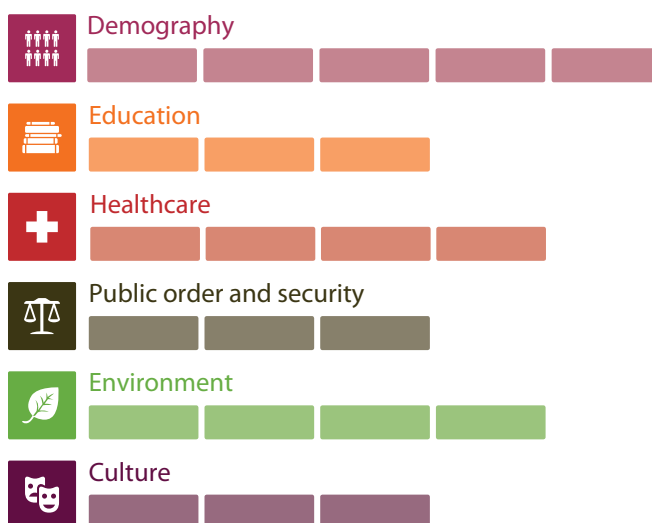
GDP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow at a rate similar to the national average, and in 2019 it was the fifth highest in the country. The decline in the labor market activity compared to the previous year was accompanied by a decline in employment and a rise in unemployment, but both remained relatively favorable. However, there has been a decline in FDI stock. The infrastructural development in the district can be assessed as good. The density of the railroad network remains high. The level of local taxation in Plovdiv district is relatively high. The 2021 self-assessments of the local administrations for the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services exceeded the national average.

Despite the general trend towards population ageing in the country, Plovdiv performs relatively well. Higher education has well established traditions in the district. Students' results in 2021 were high. Plovdiv is also among the districts with the largest numbers of doctors and hospital beds. These indicators may be the reason for the extremely high number of patients treated in the local hospitals. The number of crimes remains low and their detection rate is relatively high. The generated household waste in the district has decreased for the second consecutive year, but its volume remains relatively high. The pandemic and the countrywide restrictions on cultural events affected Plovdiv to a lesser extent than other districts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

GDP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow at a rate similar to the national average. In 2019, it reached 14,500 BGN and was the fifth highest in the country whose average was 17,200 BGN. Gross salaries of employed people in the district have also been growing steadily, reaching 13,000 BGN per year, compared to 15,200 BGN in the country. Faster growth was observed in household incomes and in 2019, for the first time in ten years, they exceeded the national average – an annual amount of 6,200 BGN per household member, compared to 6,000 BGN in the country.

Poverty levels in 2019 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 2020 its growth rate of 71.7% again fell below the average level of 73.7% in the country. The decline in economic activity compared to the previous year was accompanied by a drop in employment and a rise in unemployment rates; however, they both remained more favorable than the respective national averages. The employment rate was 68.7%, against 68.5% in the country, and the unemployment rate – 3.0%, against 5.2% nationwide.

A major challenge facing the local labor market continues to be the educational structure of the workforce. It improved somewhat in 2020 but still remained slightly less favorable than the country's average figures. The share of working age population with a university degree reached 26.4%, against 29.2% in the country on average, while the share of those with primary or lower education reached 19.7%, compared to 16.9% nationally. The population replacement ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 was 68.2% – slightly more favorable than the national average of 67.1%.

Investment and economy

The relative number of enterprises in Plovdiv district continued to grow in 2019, but with 60 non-financial enterprises per 1,000 persons, it fell slightly below the national average of 61 per 1,000 persons.

Almost equal to the average level for the country were FTA acquisition expenditures – 3,100 BGN/person, versus 3,200 BGN/person nationally. The same was valid for production value, which was equal to the national average of about 28,000 BGN/person.

FDI stock registered a drop of 7% and its volume began to lag behind the national average. By the end of 2019 its value reached 2,668 EUR/person, versus the national average of 3,655 EUR/person.

Plovdiv district has also been lagging behind in the utilization of European funds. By 15 June 2021, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,674 BGN/person, compared to 2,217 BGN/person nationally. 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 is evaluated as good. 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 2020 was 17.5%, compared to the national average of 18.5%. The quality of the roads is relatively good – in 2019 roads with surfaces in good condition constituted 48.7%, against the average of 41.4% countrywide.

The relative share of households with internet access has been declining but remains above the average one nationwide – 79.9%, versus 78.9% respectively. The installed RES capacity is close to but above the national average. The share of households connected to a gas supply remains relatively low at 1.4%, against 3.1% in the country.

Local taxes

As in most districts with better developed economy, in 2021 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 521 BGN per year, compared to 453 BGN in the country. A higher tax was also levied on non-residential real estate for legal entities – 2.21‰ in Plovdiv, compared to 2.04‰ nationwide.

Administration

After several years of stagnation, in 2019 the coverage of the cadastral map in Plovdiv district increased sharply from 33.6% to 95.3% and even surpassed the average value of 91.4% for the country.

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop services for 2021 also went up and even exceeded the national average, albeit by a small margin.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration marked a slight improvement but at 71.1% remained below the national average of 73.2%. Within the district, the highest ratings were achieved by the municipalities of Parvomai and Hissarya (nearly 90%), and the lowest by the municipalities of Stamboliyski and Kaloyanovo (slightly above 40%).

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

Despite the nationwide process of population ageing in Bulgaria, Plovdiv district has been performing relatively well. While in the past few years the natural growth rate of the population had continued to decline a little, in 2020 it registered a considerable decrease by 3‰, though at -8.3‰ it still exceeded the national average of -9.5‰. Plovdiv continued to attract new residents in 2020 and its net migration rate rose to 7.7‰. These are processes that have had a relatively beneficial impact on the age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years reached 140.8%, compared to 150.6% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 32.5%, versus 34.1% nationwide.

A relatively large share of the district's population lives in urban areas, and in 2020 it reached 74.8%, compared to 72.9% in the country. Plovdiv ranks third after the capital and Sliven as regards population density in its settlements – 2,503 persons/sq. km, while nationally it is 1,506 persons/sq. km.

Education

The enrolment rate in 5th–8th grade in Plovdiv district fell slightly in 2020 but remained above the national average. Worse figures, however, were recorded for the shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school.

The number of teachers remained relatively small – 82 teachers per 1,000 students, compared to 87 teachers per 1,000 students countrywide.

In 2021, students' results remained good. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 38.7 points, against the national average of 37.9 points. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.30, versus the average of 4.21 in the country. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 6.0%, against the national average of 7.0%.

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 that of the capital and Veliko Tarnovo.

Healthcare

Plovdiv is among the districts with the largest number of doctors and hospital beds. In 2020, one local GP cared for 1,618 persons on average, compared to 1,727 persons per doctor in the country. The index for access to specialist physicians is also more favourable than the national average. The local general hospitals provide 8.11 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 per 1,000 persons in the country, which ranks Plovdiv second in the country after Pleven district. These figures probably account for the extremely high relative number of patients

treated in the local general hospitals – 197 per 1,000 persons, compared to 138 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Public order and security

The workloads of the criminal judges in Plovdiv district are among the heaviest in the country and in 2020 they continued to increase, reaching an average of 11.5 cases a month per judge, compared to 8.6 cases a month per judge nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 93%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide, and pending cases made up 8%, against 11% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Plovdiv district remains low, and crime detection relatively high. In 2020 the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 8.1 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 9.9 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate reached 60.6%, against 52.1% for the country on average.

Environment

Carbon dioxide emissions in Plovdiv district remain below the country average. The concentration of the district's population in the cities is a prerequisite for a relatively high share of households with access to a sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 67%, versus 64.6% nationally, and equally, for a high share of people living in areas with access to public sewerage networks – 82.7%, against the national average of 76.4% in 2019.

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

The pandemic-induced restrictions on cultural activities in 2020 affected Plovdiv to a lesser extent than the other districts. Cinema visits dropped by 37%, compared to 71% in the country, and numbered 234 per 1,000 persons, against 190 per 1,000 persons nationally. Museum visits shrank by 48%, versus 58% countrywide, and were down to 299 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local libraries decreased by 24%, compared to 30% in the country, and numbered 223 per 1,000 persons, against 480 per 1,000 persons nationally.

Key indicators for the district of Plovdiv

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	13,141	14,460	n.a.	17,170
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	5,093	6,163	n.a.	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	11,780	12,996	n.a.	15,209
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	19.9	22.7	n.a.	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	69.9	70.3	68.7	68.5
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	3.6	2.4	3.0	5.2
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.3	20.2	19.7	16.9
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	27.0	26.0	26.4	29.2
Production value (BGN/person)	25,792	27,998	n.a.	28,027
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	2,790	3,103	n.a.	3,155
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	2,861	2,668	n.a.	3,655
Share of households with Internet (%)	74.4	80.7	79.9	78.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	50.3	48.7	n.a.	41.4
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	75.0	70.1	71.1	73.2

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-5.2	-5.3	-8.3	-9.5
Net migration rate (‰)	3.1	3.1	7.7	4.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.25	4.33	4.30	4.21
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	34.7	36.7	38.7	37.9
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	88.6	87.8	87.4	86.5
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	78	84	82	87
Share of population with health insurance (%)	87.1	87.6	87.4	88.7
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,571	1,588	1,618	1,727
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	8.6	8.3	8.1	9.9
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	11.0	11.4	11.5	8.6
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	81.6	82.7	n.a.	76.4
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	446	n.a.	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	66.8	n.a.	n.a.	70.9
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	874	373	234	190
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	448	575	299	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.