

Razgrad District

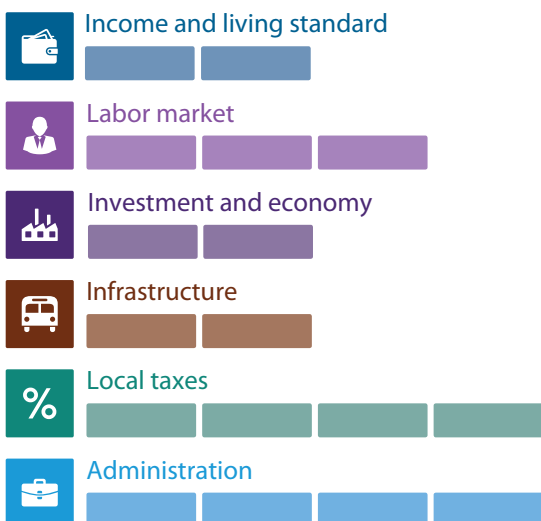
| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| ▶ Population (2020) | 110,300 |
| ▶ Territory (sq. km) | 2,639.7 |
| ▶ Number of settlements | 103 |
| ▶ Share of urban population (%) | 46.6 |



The lagging behind of both the economic development and the incomes in Razgrad has left its impact on the poverty levels in the district. Employment has been declining and unemployment has risen, with both remaining significantly more unfavorable than the national average. The local labor market continues to face the challenge posed by the educational structure of the workforce. Investment activity in the district remains low. The density of the road network is relatively high, but the shares of highways and first-class roads, as well as that of road surfaces in good condition, are extremely low. The average level of local taxes levied by the local municipalities is lower than the national average. The self-assessments of the local administrations on the development of e-government and the provision

of one-stop shop administrative services are improving. The natural population growth rate has fallen considerably, but the net migration rate has increased. Razgrad is among the districts with the smallest share of urban population. The district's performance in the field of education is unsatisfactory. Students' results again remained relatively low in 2021. Razgrad is among the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors. The number of crimes in the district is relatively low and their detection rate is high. Razgrad ranks last among the districts in terms of the environmental indicators. The share of the population in settlements with a public sewerage network remains low. The pandemic and the country-wide restrictions on cultural events in 2020 have had a strong impact on cultural life in Razgrad district as well.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Income and living standard ■■■

Despite the low starting point, GDP per capita in Razgrad district has been growing at a slower pace than in the country on average and in 2019 it reached 10,400 BGN, against 17,200 BGN nationally. Gross salaries in the district rose at the country's average rate, but remained relatively low – 12,800 BGN per year, compared to 15,200 BGN per year in the country. In 2019, household incomes rose significantly (by 23%, versus 8% in the country) and reached 5,400 BGN/household member, though still remaining below the national average of 6,000 BGN.

The slow growth rate of the local economy, as well as of incomes, has also left its impact on the poverty levels in Razgrad district. 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 ■■■■

After a steep rise in 2019, in 2020 economic activity in the district retained its level of 71.4%, compared to 73.7% in the country. At the same time, however, employment rates declined and unemployment rates went up, both remaining considerably less favorable than the respective national averages. The employment rate reached 60.8%, compared to 68.5% in the country, while the unemployment rate also rose to reach 10.6%, against the average of 5.2% nationwide.

A major challenge still facing the local labor market is the educational structure of the workforce. In 2020 the share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education was 30.7%, compared to 16.9% nationally, and of those with a university degree – 19.5%, against 29.2% in the country on average. It should be noted, however, that in recent years the educational level of the district's workforce has been improving.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 65.3%, compared to the national average of 67.1%. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 65 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and economy ■■■

Investment activity in Razgrad district remained low in 2019. Razgrad is among the districts with the lowest relative number of enterprises – 39 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 61 per 1,000 persons. Production value reached 16,700 BGN/person, compared to 28,000 BGN/person in the country. FDI registered a drop and remained among the lowest in the country – 182 EUR/person, versus 3,655 EUR/person nationally. At the same time, there was a considerable rise in FTA acquisition expenditures which reached 2,415 BGN/person, compared to the average of 3,155 BGN/person in the country.

Utilization of European funds has been lagging behind. By 15 June 2021, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,739 BGN/person, compared to 2,217 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by the municipalities of Ispernih and Kubrat.

Infrastructure ■■■

The density of the district's railroad network is close to, though slightly below the country's average. The road network density is higher, but the share of highways and first-class roads is extremely low – 11.1%, compared to 18.5% countrywide, and so is the share of road surfaces in good condition – 17.6%, versus 41.1% nationally.

The relative share of households with internet access went further up in 2020 to reach 73.4%, though it still remained lower than the average of 78.9% nationwide. The installed RES capacity is negligible – 0.005 kW/person. The share of households connected to a gas supply is relatively high – 4.9%, compared to the national average of 3.1%.

Local taxes ■■■■■

In 2021, the average level of local taxes in Razgrad district's municipalities remained lower than the national average. Among the five monitored local taxes, only the tax on non-residential real estate of legal entities was higher in Razgrad district than the average one in the country.

Significantly lower than the national average were the local taxes on motor vehicles, on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, taxi transportation and retail trade.

Administration ■■■■■

After several years of stagnation, in 2019 cadastral map coverage in Razgrad district rose sharply from 35.6% to 96.2% of its territory, and even exceeded the country's average of 91.4%.

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop services went up in 2021 but remained considerably below the national average.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration reached 73.8% in 2021 and exceeded the national average of 73.2%. Within the district, the municipalities of Razgrad city and Tzar Kaloyan performed best as regards the transparency indicator.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■

Demography ■■■■

While for five years in a row the natural population growth rate in Razgrad district had fluctuated between -8% and -9% , in 2020 it fell considerably to -14.2% . The net migration rate went up and for the first time in at least twenty years it recorded a positive value, thus joining the trend in almost all of the country's districts.

The above processes are reflected in the age dependency ratios as well. The ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 reached 164.2%, compared to 150.6% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 34.7%, versus the national average of 34.1%.

Razgrad is one of the three districts, along with those of Kardzhali and Silistra, where less than 50% of the population lives in cities. In 2020, 46.6% of the population was urban, compared to 72.9% in the country. Its density was also relatively low – 834 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,506 people/sq. km countrywide.

Education ■■

The district's performance as regards the education indicators is unsatisfactory. The rate of enrolment of schoolchildren in 5th–8th grade in 2020 was 85.5%, against 86.5% nationally. 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 has reached the national average.

Students' results for 2021 again remained relatively low. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 31.2 points, versus 37.9 points nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 3.96, compared to 4.21 in the country, and "fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 10%, against the national average of 7%.

The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary education remains close to the national average.

The single provider of higher education in Razgrad is a branch of Ruse University. This accounts for the small number of university students in the district – the 2020 data show just 2 students per 1,000 persons, compared to 32 students per 1,000 persons nationally.

Healthcare ■■■■

The share of people with health insurance in Razgrad district remains extremely high – 95.4%, compared to 88.7% nationally.

At the same time, Razgrad is among the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. In 2020 one local GP cared for 2,298 persons on average, compared to 1,727 persons per doctor in the country.

The relative number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals is also relatively small – 5.01 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 per 1,000 persons in the country. At the

same time, the relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is high, with 162 hospitalizations per 1,000 persons, compared to 138 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

The infant mortality rate has decreased to equal the national average.

Public order and security ■■■■

The workloads of the criminal judges and the speed of delivery of justice in Razgrad district are close to the average ones in the country. In 2020 one local judge heard an average of 8.9 criminal cases a month, compared to 8.6 cases per judge nationally, while the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 91%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide. Pending cases constituted 8%, against 11% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Razgrad district is relatively low, and crime detection is high. In 2020 the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 8 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 10 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate dropped to 65.7%, which was again considerably above the national average of 52.1%.

Environment ■

Among all of Bulgaria's districts, Razgrad ranks last as regards the environmental indicators. 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 systems connected to wastewater treatment plants – in 2019 it was 41.9%, versus 64.6% nationally, as well as in terms of the share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network – again 41.9%, compared to the national figure of 76.4%.

Razgrad district generates greater amounts of household waste than any other district in Bulgaria. Its average 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%.

Razgrad is among the districts with relatively small volumes of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere.

Culture ■■■

The pandemic and the restrictions on cultural events in 2020 affected Razgrad district's cultural life no less than the rest of the country. The number of visits to the local museums and libraries decreased by more than the national average – the former by 69% to 173 per 1,000 persons, versus 58% and 322 per 1,000 persons nationwide, and the latter by 44% to 233 per 1,000 persons, compared to 30% and 480 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Visits to the cinema shrank by 66%, compared to 71% in the country, and numbered 36 per 1,000 persons, compared to 190 per 1,000 persons nationally.

Key indicators for the district of Razgrad

| Indicators of economic development | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | National average |
|--|--------|--------|------|------------------|
| GDP per capita (BGN, current prices) | 9,709 | 10,416 | n.a. | 17,170 |
| Average annual income per household member (BGN) | 4,408 | 5,420 | n.a. | 6,013 |
| Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN) | 11,569 | 12,814 | n.a. | 15,209 |
| Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%) | 24.2 | 28.0 | n.a. | 22.6 |
| Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%) | 56.2 | 61.8 | 60.8 | 68.5 |
| Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%) | 11.1 | 9.6 | 10.6 | 5.2 |
| Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%) | 36.6 | 31.6 | 30.7 | 16.9 |
| Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%) | 20.0 | 18.8 | 19.5 | 29.2 |
| Production value (BGN/person) | 15,560 | 16,650 | n.a. | 28,027 |
| Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person) | 1,780 | 2,415 | n.a. | 3,155 |
| Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person) | 1,564 | (182) | n.a. | 3,655 |
| Share of households with Internet (%) | 63.3 | 69.5 | 73.4 | 78.9 |
| Share of roads in good condition (%) | 21.2 | 17.6 | n.a. | 41.4 |
| Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory) | 19.2 | 19.2 | 19.2 | 17.9 |
| AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)* | 76.0 | 73.2 | 73.8 | 73.2 |

| Indicators of social development | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | National average |
|---|-------|-------|-------|------------------|
| Rate of natural increase (‰) | –8.7 | –9.0 | –14.2 | –9.5 |
| Net migration rate (‰) | –4.5 | –3.9 | 5.3 | 4.4 |
| Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature** | 3.80 | 4.02 | 3.96 | 4.21 |
| Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)** | 30.1 | 31.1 | 31.2 | 37.9 |
| Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%) | 88.2 | 85.4 | 85.5 | 86.5 |
| Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students | 88 | 92 | 88 | 87 |
| Share of population with health insurance (%) | 94.3 | 96.5 | 95.4 | 88.7 |
| Population per one GP (number of people) | 2,306 | 2,172 | 2,298 | 1,727 |
| Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people | 10.6 | 9.9 | 8.0 | 9.9 |
| Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month) | 9.4 | 9.2 | 8.9 | 8.6 |
| Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%) | 41.9 | 41.9 | n.a. | 76.4 |
| Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year) | 529 | n.a. | n.a. | 409 |
| Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%) | 8.5 | n.a. | n.a. | 70.9 |
| Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons | 98 | 106 | 36 | 190 |
| Visits to museums per 1,000 persons | 521 | 563 | 173 | 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.