

# Targovishte District

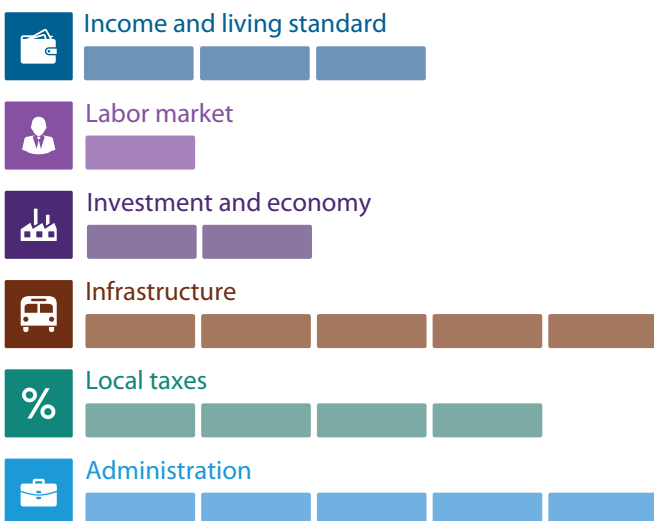
▶ Population (2020)	110,471
▶ Territory (sq. km)	2,558.5
▶ Number of settlements	194
▶ Share of urban population (%)	54.2



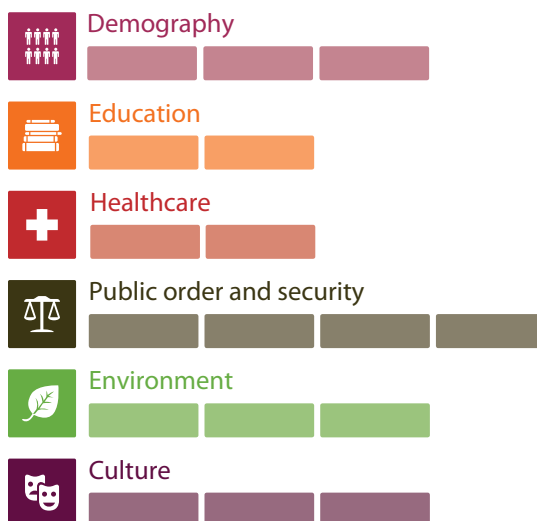
In 2019, the growth of GDP in Targovishte district slowed down, leaving the district to lag even further behind the national average. Targovishte is the district with the weakest performance for 2020 as regards the labor market indicators. A huge challenge for the labor market in the district is the deteriorating educational structure of the workforce. The FTA acquisition expenditures and FDI are relatively stable, although they stand significantly below the national average. The quality of the road surfaces is good. Local taxes in the district are low. The self-assessments of the local administrations on e-government development and the provision of one-stop-shop services are improving.

The degree of urbanization in the district has not changed significantly in recent years, remaining among the lowest in the country. Targovishte is among the districts with the lowest coverage of the education system. Student performance continues to be unsatisfactory. Access to GPs in the district is very limited. Morbidity, measured by the number of people treated in the local general hospitals, is relatively high. Criminal judgements in the district are among the least busy in the country, but this does not greatly benefit the speed of delivery of justice. The crime rate is relatively low and detection is high. Cinemas and museums in the area have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic-induced restrictions on cultural events.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Income and living standard

In 2019, the growth of GDP in Targovishte district slowed down, leaving the district to lag even further behind the national average. GDP per capita reached 10,500 BGN, compared to 17,200 BGN in the country. However, incomes and salaries grew relatively fast, although they also remained relatively low. In 2019, the annual gross salary of employed people was 12,000 BGN, against 15,200 BGN in the country, and the income per household member was 4,600 BGN, versus 6,000 BGN nationally.

Although a relatively small share of the population lives with material deprivation – 17.7%, compared to 19.9% in the country, the share of those living below the poverty line remains high – 30.2%, versus 22.6% nationally in 2019.

### Labor market

Targovishte is the district with the worst performance as regards the labor market indicators for 2020. Economic activity shrank dramatically to 67.4%, compared to 73.7% in the country. This decline was accompanied by falling employment and rising unemployment. The employment rate went down to 56.5%, compared to 68.5% in the country, and the unemployment rate went up to 10.9%, versus 5.2% countrywide.

A huge challenge for the labor market in the district is the deteriorating educational structure of the workforce. The share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education has been increasing in recent years and in 2020 it was the highest in the country – 38.3%, compared to the national average of 16.9%. The share of university graduates decreased to 15.8%, against 29.2% nationally.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of those aged 15–19 to the 60–64 age group has gone up to 69.8%, compared to 67.1% in the country. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 70 young people joining the work force.

### Investment and economy

Due to the markedly industrial profile of the local economy and the significant role played by big business, Targovishte has a relatively small number of enterprises – 37 per 1,000 people in 2019, with an upward trend. Despite the steady growth, production value in the district remains low – 16,500 BGN per capita, compared to the national average of 28,000 BGN. At the same time, however, FTA acquisition expenditures in the district have reached 2,236 BGN/person, compared to 3,155 BGN/person in the country. FDI amounts to 2,760 EUR/person, against 3,655 EUR/person nationally.

Utilization of European funds in the district remains low. By 15 June 2021, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 1,321 BGN/person, compared to 2,217 BGN/person nationally, and there is not a single municipality in the district that has managed to reach the national average.

### Infrastructure

The density of the railway network remained relatively low in 2020. The average density of the road network was generally above the country's average, but the share of highways and first-class roads was relatively low – 14.7%, compared to the national average of 18.5%. Nevertheless, the quality of road surfaces was among the best in the country. In 2019, 60.8% of the roads in the district were in good condition, compared to only 41.4% in the country.

There has been a significant improvement in the population's access to the internet, which within the past two years has exceeded the national average, reaching 82.4% in 2020, compared to 78.9% in the country. For its part, the share of households connected to a gas supply is twice as high as the national average – 6.2%, versus 3.1% in the country.

### Local taxes

Local taxes in the municipalities of Targovishte district again remained at relatively low levels in 2020. None of the monitored taxes was higher than the respective national average. Relatively the lowest tax rates were those on the immovable non-residential property of legal entities and on taxi transportation.

### Administration

The cadastral map of the district already covers 95.3% of the territory. The municipalities' average self-assessments on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services went up in 2021 to reach figures above the respective national averages. However, the AIP active transparency rating of the local administrations went down, though still remaining above the country's average. In 2021, the highest rating was achieved by the city municipality of Targovishte, and the lowest rating was given to Opaka municipality.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

In 2020, there was visible deterioration in the natural population growth and the net migration rates. The natural population growth dropped to  $-12.5\%$ , compared to  $-9.5\%$  nationally. The net migration rate went up in almost the entire country and for the first time in a number of districts it reached a positive value. Targovishte district was no exception, though its migration rate remained relatively low  $-4.5\%$ .

The population ageing rate has been on the increase but remains close to the national average. In 2020, the population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 was 151.6%, compared to 150.6% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 34.8%, against 34.1% in the country.

The degree of urbanization in the district has not changed significantly in recent years and remains among the lowest in the country – 54.2% in Targovishte, compared to 72.9% in the country. Population density in the urban settlements is also relatively low – 1,069 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,506 people for the country on average.

### Education

Targovishte is among the districts with the lowest coverage of the education system. In 2020, the net enrolment in 5th–8th grade was the second lowest in the country, after that in Dobrich district, and it even deteriorated compared to the previous year, with 75.7%, against 86.5% nationally. The shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education have been on the decrease but remain higher than in the country as a whole. The proportion of teachers is 101 per 1,000 students, compared to 87 teachers per 1,000 students on average. Students' results, however, remained unsatisfactory in 2021. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 34.5 points, versus 37.9 points on in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 3.96, compared to 4.21 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was 8%, against 7% nationally.

### Healthcare

After Kardzhali district, Targovishte is the district with the most difficult access to GPs, with an average of 2,402 people per doctor in 2020, compared to 1,727 people per doctor nationally. The index of access to specialist physicians also has an unfavorable value. For seven years in a row, the number of beds in the district's general hospitals has been gradually increasing and in 2020 it drew nearer to the national average, with 5.39 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 beds per 1,000 people in the country.

The health system coverage in the district has decreased and 86.9% of people have health insurance, compared to the national average of 88.7%. Population morbidity, measured by

the number of hospitalizations, is relatively high – 164 people per 1,000 persons on average have been treated in the local general hospitals, compared to the national average of 138 per 1,000 persons. Infant mortality, however, went down in 2020 and at 3.8‰ fell below the national average of 5.1‰.

### Public order and security

Criminal judges in the district are among the least busy in the country, preceded in this category only by those in Smolyan, but this has little effect on the speed of delivery of justice. One criminal judge heard an average of 4.3 cases per month, compared to an average of 8.6 cases per judge in the country. The relative share of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 92%, against 90% nationally, and pending cases made up 9%, against 11% countrywide.

The crime rate in Targovishte is relatively low and the detection rate is high. The crimes against the person and property registered in 2020 amounted to 8.9 per 1,000 persons, compared to 9.9 per 1,000 persons nationally. The detection rate was among the highest in the country, after that in Gabrovo – 70.6%, against 52.1% nationally.

### Environment

Carbon emissions in Targovishte district have remained relatively low in recent years. In 2019, the amounts of carbon dioxide emissions reached 87t/100 sq. km.

Households have been generating relatively small volumes of waste – 302 kg/person per year, compared to the national average of 409 kg/person. The share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling increased from 8.6% in 2017 to 68.3% in 2018, when the national average was 70.9%. Little change and even a worsening trend have been registered in the share of households connected to a public sewerage network – a bare 54.1% in 2019, compared to 76.4% in the country. Only 44.3% of the sewerage networks are connected to a wastewater treatment plant, which is considerably below the national average of 64.6%.

### Culture

The pandemic and the countrywide limitations on visits to public places in 2020 have had a powerful negative impact on cultural life in the district. Cinemas and museums were particularly hard hit. Cinema visits dropped by 94% to 12 per 1,000 persons, compared to a reduction by 71% and 190 per 1,000 persons nationally. Museum visits decreased by 72% to 49 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons in the country. The fall in the numbers of library visits is less drastic, as they remained nearly twice the national average – 863 per 1,000 persons, against 480 per 1,000 persons in the country.

## Key indicators for the district of Targovishte

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,981	10,470	n.a.	<b>17,170</b>
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,879	4,576	n.a.	<b>6,013</b>
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,833	12,035	n.a.	<b>15,209</b>
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	28.1	30.2	n.a.	<b>22.6</b>
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	63.0	60.1	56.5	<b>68.5</b>
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	11.2	10.5	10.9	<b>5.2</b>
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	33.7	36.0	38.3	<b>16.9</b>
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	16.8	16.8	15.8	<b>29.2</b>
Production value (BGN/person)	15,518	16,536	n.a.	<b>28,027</b>
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	2,071	2,236	n.a.	<b>3,155</b>
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	2,514	2,760	n.a.	<b>3,655</b>
Share of households with Internet (%)	65.7	77.1	82.4	<b>78.9</b>
Share of roads in good condition (%)	51.3	60.8	n.a.	<b>41.4</b>
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	20.4	20.4	20.4	<b>17.9</b>
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	77.0	78.4	76.0	<b>73.2</b>

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-7.8	-8.9	-12.5	<b>-9.5</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	0.0	2.7	4.5	<b>4.4</b>
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.88	3.85	3.96	<b>4.21</b>
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	31.9	35.2	34.5	<b>37.9</b>
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	76.4	76.8	75.7	<b>86.5</b>
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	92	104	101	<b>87</b>
Share of population with health insurance (%)	87.9	88.3	86.9	<b>88.7</b>
Population per one GP (number of people)	2,334	2,311	2,402	<b>1,727</b>
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	10.8	9.5	8.9	<b>9.9</b>
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	3.5	3.5	4.3	<b>8.6</b>
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	56.2	54.1	n.a.	<b>76.4</b>
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	302	n.a.	n.a.	<b>409</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	68.3	n.a.	n.a.	<b>70.9</b>
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	214	185	12	<b>190</b>
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	161	175	49	<b>322</b>

\* 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.