

Veliko Tarnovo District

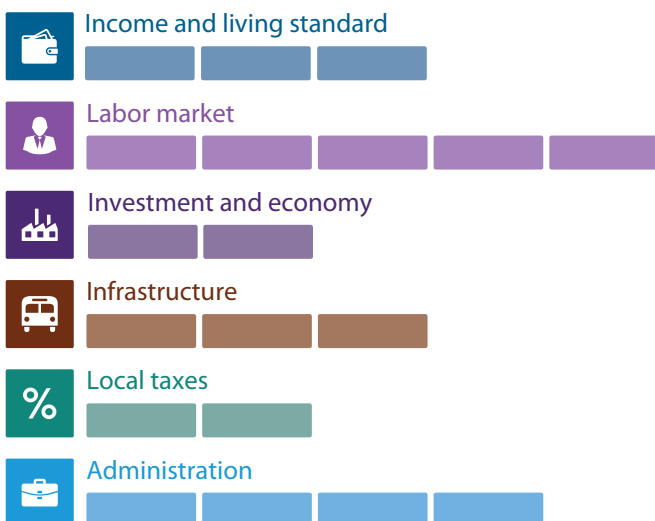
▶ Population (2020)	231,143
▶ Territory (sq. km)	4,661.6
▶ Number of settlements	336
▶ Share of urban population (%)	69.7



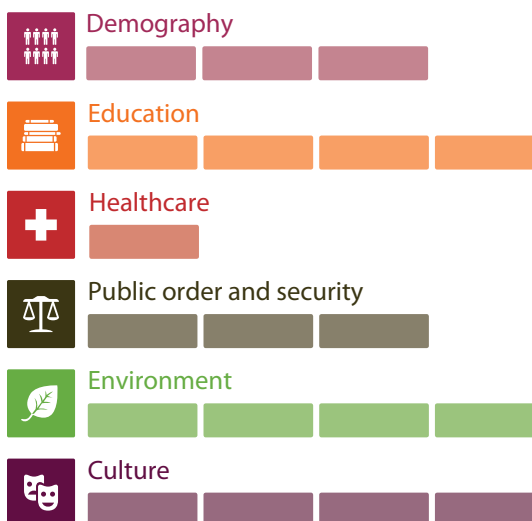
GDP per capita in Veliko Tarnovo district has been growing, but at a rate below the national average and over the past ten years the gap has been on the increase. A similar trend has been in evidence as regards the salaries of employed persons. Investment and business activity is unsatisfactory. However, in 2020 the indicators for the labor market and the trends in it give the district a top place in the country, where it comes second only after Sofia (capital). The density of the road and railway networks is high, but the share of highways and first-class roads remains low. Local taxes are relatively high. The Active transparency ratings of the local administration remain above the national average.

The general trend towards population ageing is particularly conspicuous in Veliko Tarnovo district. The indicators in the area of education give it a relatively good ranking. The number of university students is among the highest in the country. The number of specialist physicians, as well as of hospital beds, is considerably below the national average. Registered crimes against the person and property have been on the rise. The share of household waste handed over for recycling and treatment is close to 100%. The relatively low share of population living in urban areas reflects on the figures for connectivity to public sewer networks. Veliko Tarnovo district's cultural life is quite intense.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

GDP in Veliko Tarnovo district has been growing, though at a rate below the national average and in the past ten years the gap between the values of GDP per capita in the district and the national ones has increased. In 2019 GDP per capita reached 11,000 BGN, against the national average of 17,000 BGN. A similar trend has been in evidence as regards the salaries of employed persons. In 2019 the average annual gross salary of employed people was 11,600 BGN, compared to 15,200 BGN in the country. The average annual income per household member shrank to 5,700 BGN, compared to 6,000 BGN nationally.

These figures and processes have their impact on the poverty levels, which remain relatively high. In 2019, the relative share of people living under the national poverty line was 25.8%, versus 22.6% on a national scale, while those living in material deprivation made up 24.9%, compared to the national average of 19.9%.

Labor market

The labor market trends give Veliko Tarnovo district a top ranking position in the country for 2020, where it is second only to Sofia (capital city). Economic activity fell, though it still remained among the highest in the country – 78.4%, against 73.7% in the country on average, and was outperformed only by Blagoevgrad and Sofia. Employment declined and unemployment went up, yet they both remained far more favorable than the country's average. In 2020 the employment rate was 75.9%, compared to the national average of 68.5%, and the unemployment rate was 2.5%, against 5.2% nationally.

The workforce in Veliko Tarnovo district is among the most highly educated in the country. The share of people aged 25–64 with primary or lower education was 10.19%, compared to the national average of 16.9%. Those with a university degree made up 29.7%, against the national average of 29.2%.

One major challenge still facing the labor market in Veliko Tarnovo district is population ageing. The population replacement rate of the people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 63%, versus 67% countrywide. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 63 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and economy

Investment and business activity in Veliko Tarnovo district remained unsatisfactory in 2019. The number of non-financial enterprises grew but remained below the national average – 46 per 1,000 persons, compared to 61 per 1,000 persons in the country on average. FDI acquisition expenditures increased by 16%, compared to 15% countrywide, but remained significantly below the national average – 2,100 BGN/person in

the district, compared to 3,200 BGN/person in the country. A similar trend was noticeable as regards production volumes – they increased relatively fast, by 10%, compared to a rise of 8% in the country. Nevertheless its value remained low – 15,900 BGN/person, against 28,000 BGN/person nationwide. FDI even registered an outflow and it went down to 551 EUR/person, compared to 3,700 EUR/person in the country.

By 15 June 2021, payments made in Veliko Tarnovo district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,800 BGN/person, compared to the national average of 2,200 BGN/person. The top place in the district was held by Svishtov municipality (2,100 BGN/person), though it too failed to reach the national average.

Infrastructure

Veliko Tarnovo's central position in northern Bulgaria accounts for the great density of its road and railroad networks. Nevertheless, the share of highways and first-class roads in the total network is low – 16.3% in 2020, against 18.5% as the country's average. The share of road surfaces in good condition remains small – 38.2% in 2019, compared to 41.4% countrywide. In 2020 the relative share of households with internet access remained relatively limited – 67.3%, against the national average of 78.9%.

The share of households connected to a gas supply is relatively high.

Local taxes

The average tax rates in the Veliko Tarnovo municipalities remained high in 2021. The greatest margin was in the non-residential immovable property tax for legal entities, which was 2.45‰, compared to 2.01‰ in the country. Relatively high were also the rates of the taxes on motor vehicles and retail trade. The taxi transportation tax rate has been on the decrease and is relatively low.

Administration

In 2019, almost the entire territory of Veliko Tarnovo district was already covered by the cadastral map. The 2021 the local authorities' self-assessments on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services were lower than the national averages. Higher than the national average was the AIP active transparency rating of the local administrations – 75.1%, compared to 73.2% as the national average. The highest transparency ratings in the district of Veliko Tarnovo were achieved by the Svishtov municipality.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The trend towards fast population ageing remained particularly conspicuous in Veliko Tarnovo in 2020. The natural population growth rate continued to be markedly negative at -7.6‰ , compared to the national average of -9.5‰ , and has been going down by the year. There has been an increase in the net migration rate, but even that value (-0.1‰) continues to be negative.

These are trends that affect the district's age dependency ratios. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 reached 189.2%, compared to 150.6% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 38.3%, versus 34.1% nationwide.

A relatively small share of the population lives in urban areas – 69.7%, against the national average of 72.9%. At the same time, the population density of the district's urban parts remains low at 1,042 persons/sq. km, versus 1,506 persons/sq. km on average for the country.

Education

The education indicators of Veliko Tarnovo district rank it relatively high in the country. The net enrollment ratio of schoolchildren in 5th–8th grade is 85.1%, compared to 86.5% in the country, which is close to the national average, though slightly less favorable. The same is true of the share of repeaters (0.59% compared to 0.55%) and of dropouts from primary and secondary education (2.9% against 2.5% nationwide). The number of teachers in primary and secondary education remains high – 98 per 1,000 students, compared to 87 per 1,000 students in the country.

In 2021, the performance of students in the district remained below the national average. The average score in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was 35.4 points, compared to 37.9 points in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.19, versus 4.21 nationally.

The number of university students in the district has been declining in line with its overall decline in the country in recent years, but remains among the highest in the country and second only to that in the capital – 68 per 1,000 persons, compared to 32 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Healthcare

Veliko Tarnovo is among the worst performing districts in the country as regards healthcare, with only Silistra and Sliven registering poorer results. In 2020, the share of people with health insurance was among the lowest in the country – 84.7%, compared to the national average of 88.7%. The number of GPs is close to the average one in the country, but that of specialist physicians is significantly lower.

The number of beds in the general hospitals remains extremely low – 3.33 per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 per 1,000 persons in the country, and its growth over the past few years has been very slow. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is close to the national average – 133 per

1,000 persons, compared to 138 per 1,000 persons country-wide. The infant mortality rate increased considerably for the second consecutive year to reach 9.0‰ in 2020, compared to 5.1‰ in the country.

Public order and security

In 2020, criminal court workloads in Veliko Tarnovo district were again relatively lower than the national average – 6.8 cases a month per one judge on average, compared to 8.6 cases nationally. This affected the speed of delivery of justice. Thus, the share of cases closed within 3 months reached 92%, compared to 90% as the national average.

The number of registered crimes against the person and property in Veliko Tarnovo district rose in 2020 and amounted to 10.1 per 1,000 persons, for the first time exceeding the national average. At the same time, the share of cleared crimes continued to fall and was down to 60.6%, though remaining above the national average of 52.1%

Environment

The amount of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere in the district has been rising but in 2019 it still remained considerably below the national average. The amount of household waste generated in the district was relatively low in 2018 – an annual of 425 kg/person, against 409 kg/person on a national scale. However, the amount of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling reached almost 100%, against 71% as the national average.

The relatively low share of population living in urban areas affects the data on households' access to public sewerage networks. In 2019, 69.4% of the population lived in settlements with public sewerage, compared to 76.4% nationwide, and 62.3% of the networks were connected to wastewater treatment plants, versus 64.6% in the country.

Culture

Cultural life in the district of Veliko Tarnovo shows a markedly good performance, even though it too was particularly hard hit by the pandemic and the restrictions imposed in 2020 on cultural events in the country. Visits to museums in the district decreased by 64%, compared to 58% in the country, but remained significantly higher than the national average – 851 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons in the country. The number of visits to libraries shrank twice as much – 62%, compared to 30% in the country, though it still remained relatively high, with 996 per 1,000 persons, versus 480 per 1,000 persons nationwide. At the same time, the drop in the number of cinema visits in the district was much smaller – 39%, compared to 71% in the country, and for the first time their number exceeded the national average – 195 per 1,000 persons, compared to 190 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Veliko Tarnovo

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,434	11,071	n.a.	17,170
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	6,024	5,707	n.a.	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,529	11,619	n.a.	15,209
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	28.8	25.8	n.a.	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	66.6	78.7	75.9	68.5
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	5.4	(2.0)	(2.5)	5.2
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	13.0	8.9	10.1	16.9
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	26.8	29.6	29.7	29.2
Production value (BGN/person)	14,517	15,918	n.a.	28,027
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	1,816	2,100	n.a.	3,155
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	597	551	n.a.	3,655
Share of households with Internet (%)	66.6	63.0	67.3	78.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	29.7	38.2	n.a.	41.4
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	20.1	20.1	20.1	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	73.0	70.8	75.1	73.2

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	–9.4	–10.1	–12.3	–9.5
Net migration rate (‰)	–5.0	–3.4	–0.1	4.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.05	4.28	4.12	4.21
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	30.1	33.4	35.4	37.9
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	84.0	85.7	85.1	86.5
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	93	98	98	87
Share of population with health insurance (%)	83.9	85.3	84.7	88.7
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,746	1,736	1,738	1,727
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	10.1	9.2	10.1	9.9
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	7.2	6.6	6.8	8.6
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	68.4	69.4	n.a.	76.4
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	425	n.a.	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	99.9	n.a.	n.a.	70.9
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	408	319	195	190
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	2,139	2,346	851	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.