

Vidin District

▶ Population (2020)	82,024
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,032.9
▶ Number of settlements	140
▶ Share of urban population (%)	64.6



Vidin is the district with the worst indicators for incomes and quality of life in the country. The decline in employment and the increase in unemployment in 2020 were not as high as in the rest of the country, but overall labor market indicators remained significantly less favorable. Investment and business activity is relatively weak. The infrastructure indicators are the lowest in the country. Vidin is the district with the lowest average rates of the monitored local taxes for 2021, and Gramada is the municipality with the lowest taxes not only in Vidin district, but also in the whole country. The 2021 self-assessments of the administration on the development of their e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop services are among the lowest in the country. The transparency

ratings of local administrations also remain extremely low. In 2020, Vidin remained the district with the most unfavorable demographic trends in the country. The number of teachers in primary and secondary education increased in 2020 and for the first time in three years was higher than the national average. The number of GPs remains relatively high, but healthcare suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds. Despite the low and still decreasing workload of criminal judges, the speed of delivery of justice is low. The relatively low share of the population living in cities is a factor for the relatively limited share of households with a connection to a public sewerage network. The performance of Vidin district in the field of culture is good.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Income and living standard



Labor market



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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■

Income and living standard ■

Vidin is the district with the worst indicators for incomes and quality of life. GDP per capita in the district of Vidin went on rising in 2019, reaching 8,700 BGN, but in the last two decades its difference with the national average has kept increasing. Employed people's salaries have been increasing faster than the national average rate, but remain among the lowest in the country, after only those in Blagoevgrad district. The average annual income per household member in 2019 was 3,400 BGN, compared to 6,000 BGN nationwide, and was the lowest in the country.

These trends affect the poverty levels in the district, which remain quite high. In 2019, the share of population living below the national poverty line was 35.0%, against 22.6% in the country, and of the population living with material deprivation – 31.0%, versus 19.9% countrywide.

Labor market ■■■■

Economic activity in the district decreased slightly in 2020 to 75.0%, compared to 73.7% in the country, but for the third consecutive year remained at a relatively high level. The decline in employment and the increase in unemployment in 2020 were not as high as in the rest of the country, but those indicators remain significantly less favorable. The employment rate was 55.7%, compared to 68.5% in the country, and the unemployment rate was 19.3%, against 5.2% in the country.

The educational structure of the workforce has continued to deteriorate in recent years. The share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education fell to 18% in 2020, compared to 29% in the country, and the share of people with primary or lower education increased to 19%, versus 17% nationwide.

One of the major challenges facing the local labor market is population ageing. The demographic replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 rose significantly after 2013, but in 2020 it remained lower than the national average – 65%, compared to 67% nationwide. 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 and business activity in Vidin district remained relatively low in 2019. The number of non-financial enterprises relative to the population grew, but again remained among the lowest in the country. Vidin recorded the lowest values (almost four times lower than the average ones) for the volumes of FTA acquisition expenditures – 839 BGN/person, compared to 3,155 BGN/person in the country, and production value –

7,600 BGN/person, against 28,000 BGN/person nationwide. FDI in the district was in a similar situation. After a three-year steady increase, by the end of 2019 it had reached 1,052 EUR/person, but still remained considerably lower than the national average of 3,655 EUR/person.

By 15 June 2021, payments made to beneficiaries of EU operational programs were close to the national average, with the municipalities of Belogradchik and Vidin taking the top places within the district.

Infrastructure ■■

Vidin is the district with the worst infrastructure indicators in the country. The density of the road and railway networks is close to the national average. However, the share of first-class roads and highways (11.6%, compared to 18.5% in the country in 2020), and that of the road surfaces in good condition (28.4%, compared to 41.4% in the country in 2019) are considerably lower than the national averages.

Household access to the Internet remains low and in 2020 it even dropped to 44.8%, compared to 78.9% nationwide. Vidin is one of the two districts (along with Smolyan) without any household gas supply infrastructure.

Local taxes ■■■■■■

In 2021, Vidin was the district with the lowest rates for the monitored local taxes. In general, the averaged total rate of the taxes in the district was lower than the national average. The difference was especially big as regards the taxation on retail trade – 4.46 BGN/sq. m on average for the district, against 12.99 BGN/sq. m in the country. The level of taxation on motor vehicles was also extremely low.

Gramada is the municipality with the lowest taxes not only in Vidin district, but also in the whole country.

Administration ■■

Vidin is also the district with the worst performance of the local administrations. In 2021 the district municipalities' self-assessments on the development of their e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop services were among the lowest in the country. The AIP active transparency rating of the local administrations also remains extremely low and has even decreased in the past two years, moving down to 60% versus 73% in the country. Within the district, the highest result was recorded by Belogradchik municipality (93%), and the lowest – by the municipalities of Boynitsa and Gramada (44%).

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■

Demography ■■

Vidin remains the district with the most unfavorable demographic picture in the country for 2020. The natural population growth rate fell rapidly and reached its lowest value of -21.9‰, compared to -9.5‰ in the country. At the same time, however, 2020 was the first year in at least two decades in which the district managed to attract population. The net migration rate was 2.1‰.

The long period of rapid population ageing is also reflected in the extremely unfavorable age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of the population 65+ to those aged 0–14 reached 251.2%, compared to 150.6% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 51.5%, versus 34.1% in the country.

The share of urban population remained relatively low in 2020, while population density was almost twice as low as the national average.

Education ■■■

The performance of Vidin district in the field of education is unsatisfactory. In 2020, the district was once again among those with the lowest net enrollment rate in 5th–8th grade – 80.8%, compared to 86.5% in the country. The share of repeaters remained double the national average.

The performance of students in the 2021 national external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was again extremely poor. With an average score of 28.4 points (against 37.9 points in the country) the district occupied the second lowest place in the country, followed only by Sliven district. The performance of high school graduates was better but also below the national average. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.12, compared to 4.21 nationally, while the share of “fail” grades (below 3.00) was lower – 6%, against 7% nationwide.

The number of teachers in primary and secondary education relative to student numbers went up in 2020 and for the first time in three years was higher than the national average.

Positive trends can be observed in higher education. In the academic year 2020/2021, the branch of the University of Ruse, which opened in Vidin in 2017, already had an enrolment of nearly 450 students.

Healthcare ■■■■■■

The share of people with health insurance dropped in 2020 to 91.2% but still exceeded the national average of 88.7%. The proportion of GPs remains relatively high but healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds. The number of beds in the local general hospitals has been rising in the past few years but it still remains relatively low – 4.08 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 beds per 1,000 persons in the country. This probably explains

the relatively low hospitalization figures in 2020 – 105 per 1,000 persons, versus 138 per 1,000 persons countrywide.

The infant mortality rate in Vidin district dropped sharply in 2020, after a significant rise over the previous two years, and came down to 4.2‰, compared to 5.1‰ in the country. In 2019, infant mortality figures rose considerably for the second consecutive year, reaching 9.1‰, compared to 5.6‰ as the national average.

Public order and security ■■■■

Despite the low and still decreasing workload of the criminal judges in Vidin district, the speed of delivery of justice remained low in 2020, with the number of cases closed within 3 months at 88%, compared to 90% in the country.

Vidin is also among the districts with the highest crime rate. In 2020, the registered crimes against the person and property were 12.5 per 1,000 persons, against 9.9 per 1,000 persons in the country. At the same time, however, the detection rate was slightly higher than the national average – 54.5%, versus 52.1% countrywide.

Environment ■■

Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere in the district remained extremely low in 2019. The amount of generated household waste in 2018 was also low – 339 kg/person per year, compared to the national average of 409 kg/person. At the same time, however, the share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling remained very small – less than 10%, with over 70% countrywide.

The relatively low share of population living in urban areas is a factor for the relatively limited share of households connected to a public sewerage system in 2019 (57.9% of the population, compared to 76.4% in the country) and to wastewater treatment plants (49.5%, against 64.6% in the country). It should be noted, however, that great progress was recorded in the district after the opening of the new wastewater treatment plant in Vidin in October 2019 – previously the share of the treated sewage amounted to only 0.5%.

Culture ■■■■■■

In 2020 Vidin again performed well in the category of culture. The pandemic and restrictions on cultural events throughout the country affected the district as well. The drop in museum visits was less dramatic and their number remained significantly higher than the national average – 1,139 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Nevertheless, the decrease in visits to cinemas and libraries in the district was higher than the respective national averages, and their number remained considerably lower.

Key indicators for the district of Vidin

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	7,926	8,734	n.a.	17,170
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	3,470	3,437	n.a.	6,013
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	9,103	10,302	n.a.	15,209
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	39.0	35.0	n.a.	22.6
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	58.8	56.5	55.7	68.5
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	19.9	19.1	19.3	5.2
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	11.8	15.4	18.5	16.9
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	20.1	19.2	18.0	29.2
Production value (BGN/person)	6,954	7,649	n.a.	28,027
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	851	839	n.a.	3,155
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	953	1,052	n.a.	3,655
Share of households with Internet (%)	61.7	63.0	44.8	78.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	38.3	28.4	n.a.	41.4
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	20.2	20.2	20.2	17.9
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	63.0	61.9	60.2	73.2

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-16.4	-16.4	-21.9	-9.5
Net migration rate (‰)	-7.6	-7.9	2.1	4.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.18	4.21	4.12	4.21
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	24.6	28.7	28.4	37.9
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	82.9	78.9	80.8	86.5
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	80	88	90	87
Share of population with health insurance (%)	90.8	92.7	91.2	88.7
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,432	1,428	1,465	1,727
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	14.1	13.2	12.5	9.9
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	7.3	6.6	4.3	8.6
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	57.6	57.9	n.a.	76.4
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	339	n.a.	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	10.0	n.a.	n.a.	70.9
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	319	397	102	190
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	2,141	2,546	1,139	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.