

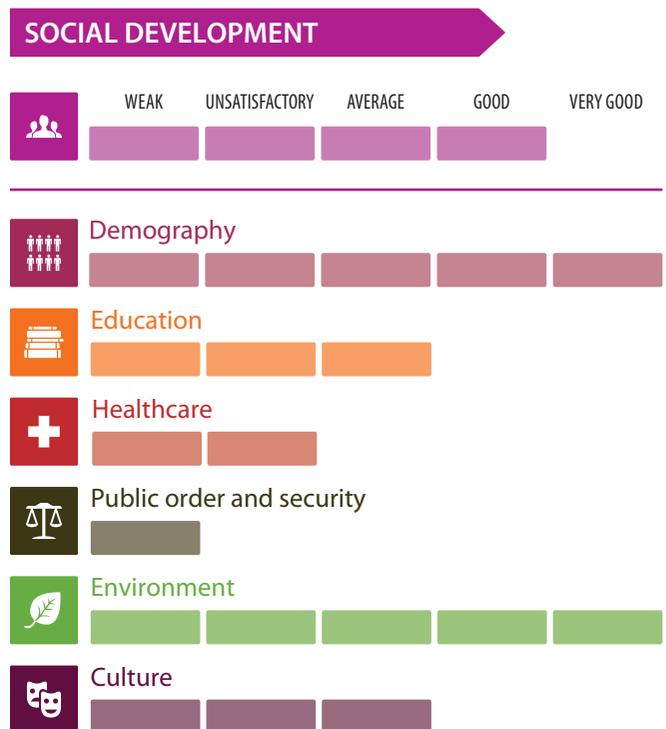
Burgas District



▶ Population (2021)	408,704
▶ Territory (sq. km)	7,748
▶ Number of settlements	250
▶ Share of urban population (%)	76.1

GDP per capita in the district of Burgas has registered a sharp drop. Nevertheless, salaries and income levels have continued to rise, though remaining below the average ones in the country. Like elsewhere in the country, there has been a slight drop in employment accompanied by a rise in unemployment, though the values of both indicators are less favorable in the district than in the country. In 2020, investment and business activity in Burgas district again remained among the highest in the country. The share of highways and first-class roads is high, but the quality of the road surface remains low. In 2022, Burgas remained one of the dis-

tricts with the highest local tax rates in the country. The demographic indicators place Burgas district among the top three in the country. In 2022, the results of the students in the district in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade were relatively high. However, the average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature showed a decline. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. Crime rates are falling but remain above the national average. The share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling is relatively high. Visits to various cultural events have shown an increase.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

After a steady rise over the previous five years at least, in 2020 GDP per capita in Burgas district decreased sharply by 17%, which is the biggest drop in the whole country. In 2020, GDP in the district was 11,200 BGN per capita, compared to 17,300 BGN countrywide. Salaries and incomes in the district have continued to grow, though without reaching the average nationwide levels. The average annual gross salary of employed people in the district was 13,500 BGN in 2020, compared to 16,700 BGN as the national average, while the average annual income per household member in 2021 rose to 7,400 BGN/person, against the national average of 7,700 BGN/person. These indicators determine the decreasing yet relatively high level of poverty in the district. The share of the population living with material deprivation in 2021 was 21.9% (compared to 19.4% in the country), and of those living below the national poverty line – 24.6% (compared to 22.1% countrywide).

Labor market

In 2021, economic activity in Burgas district registered a negligible rise and remained relatively low – 68.2%, compared to the national average of 72.0%. At the same time and alongside the nationwide trend, Burgas district experienced a slight drop in employment and a rise in unemployment, with both indicators having more unfavorable values than in the country on average. The employment rate was 64.3%, compared to the national average of 68.1%, and the unemployment rate – 5.8%, versus 5.3% nationwide.

The educational status of the workforce in the district is relatively low but 2021 again marked some positive tendencies. The share of people aged 25–64 with higher education reached 24.4%, against 29.6% on a national level, while the share of people with primary or lower education was 19.5%, compared to the national average of 16.6%.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 had been rising for five years in a row and in 2021 registered a considerable increase, reaching 74.1%, versus 69.4% countrywide. Thus, for every 100 people who will leave the workforce in the next few years, there are 74 people who will enter the labor market.

Investment and economy

In 2020, investment and business activity in Burgas district remained relatively high, unlike in the rest of the country, where the economic indicators worsened. The number of non-financial enterprises relative to the population was the second highest in the country, after only the capital district, even though it registered the largest decline (by 5 enterprises) to 71 per 1,000 persons, against the national average of 60 per 1,000 persons. Burgas was also the district with the greatest shrinkage regarding production value – by 32%, compared to

3% nationwide, and for the first time it fell to a level below the national average – 24,400 BGN/person in the district, versus 27,200 BGN/person nationally.

In 2020, FTA acquisition expenditures continued to fall but remained relatively high at 2,400 BGN/person. FDI retained its upward trend and its volume relative to the population was the third highest in the country, after Sofia (capital city) and Sofia district – 5,900 EUR/person, against 3,900 EUR/person on a national level.

Payments made to beneficiaries of EU projects have grown as well, albeit by 30 June 2022 they still remained below the national average levels. Within the district, the largest sums were utilized by the municipalities of Primorsko and Sozopol – over 5,000 BGN/person.

Infrastructure

The density of the road and railroad networks in the district of Burgas again remained relatively low in 2021. The share of highways and first-class roads was high (26%) but the quality of the road surfaces remained low. The share of good quality road surfaces was 31%, against the national average of 42%.

The share of households with internet connectivity has risen to 82.9%, versus the national average of 83.5%. The share of households connected to a gas supply is lower than average – 0.6%, against 5.3% nationally. The installed RES capacities are also more limited – 0.3 KW/person, which is twice as low as the national average.

Local taxes

In 2022, Burgas remains one of the districts with the highest level of local taxation. The margin is particularly large in the taxation on motor vehicles, retail trade, and non-gratuitous acquisition of property. Sozopol is the municipality levying the highest local taxes not only in the district but also in the whole of the country. Municipalities with relatively higher tax rates also include the tourist towns of Pomorie, Primorsko, and the city of Burgas. Karnobat and Aitos impose the lowest rates.

Administration

The cadastral map of the district of Burgas now covers practically the whole of its territory. The local authorities' self-assessment ratings on the development of e-government went up in 2022 to relatively high levels. At the same time, the self-assessment ratings on their provision of one-stop-shop administrative services have gone down to below the national average.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration fell slightly in 2022 but remain relatively high at 72.4%, versus the national average of 70.2%.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The demographic indicators place Burgas district among the top three in the country, after only Sofia (capital city) and Varna. The rate of natural population growth is still negative and continues to decline but at -9.9% in 2021 it was still among the highest in the country, while the national average was -13.2% . Burgas district continues to attract new residents as well, with the net migration rate reaching 7.4% , which is the second highest in the country. This also reflects in the age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 133.4%, compared to 149.3% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it is 31.8%, versus 34.0% nationwide. For the first time in at least ten years, the share of the urban population in Burgas district is declining, although it remains above the national average – 76%, compared to 73% in the country. The population density in urban areas is also relatively high – 2,240 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,506 persons/sq. km in the country.

Education

The enrolment rate in 5th–7th grade continued to decline in 2021 and again remained below the national average. At the same time, the shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education rose to 0.77%, though remaining relatively low against the national average of 0.94%. The number of teachers relative to the population has risen slightly but again remains relatively low – 92 per 1,000 students, compared to 97 teachers per 1,000 students nationwide.

In 2022, the results in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade were relatively high – 36.9 points, compared to the national average of 35.3 points. However, the average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature remained relatively low. The average grade in 2022 was “Good” 3.85, compared to 3.97 in the country, and the share of “fail” grades (below 3.00) was 20%, against 17% on average in the country.

The number of university students in the district relative to the population increased in 2021, but remained lower than the national average.

Healthcare

In 2021, the share of people with health insurance in Burgas district again remained among the lowest in the country – 83.9%, compared to 88.7% nationwide. Healthcare in the district also suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. There are 2,129 people per one GP, compared to 1,734 people per one GP in the country. The number of hospital beds is 4.3 per 1,000 persons, against 5.6 hospital beds per 1,000 persons countrywide. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals also remains significantly lower than the national average.

The infant mortality rate fell in 2021 to 6.8% , which was still above the national average of 5.6% .

Public order and security

Court workloads in Burgas district were close to but above the national average in 2021. There were on average 9.7 cases a month per one criminal judge, compared to 9.0 nationally. The speed of justice delivery was also close to the national average. The share of cases closed within 3 months was 88%, compared to 89% as the national average, and the share of pending cases was 12.2%, against 11.8% in the country.

The crime rate in the district has been falling but remains above the national average. In 2021, the registered crimes against the person and property in Burgas district amounted to 11.3 per 1,000 persons, with 9.8 per 1,000 persons as the national figure. Detection rates went up to reach 50.8%, which is still below the national average of 51.7%.

Environment

In 2020, Burgas was once again among the districts with the greatest amounts of waste generated by the households – an annual of 440 kg/person, against 409 kg/person on a national scale. At the same time, however, a large share of this waste was handed over for treatment and recycling – 88.7%, against 69.3% as the national average.

With its high urban population, a relatively large part of them live in settlements with public sewerage networks – 79.2%, versus 76.3% countrywide, and in settlements with a sewerage system connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 71.0%, against the national average of 66.7%.

The share of forest areas is high at 41%, compared to the national average of 33%, and the share of disturbed areas is low – 0.25%, versus 0.42% nationally.

Culture

The pandemic and the restrictions on visits to public places in 2020 and 2021 had a strongly negative impact on cultural life in the country, Burgas district making no exception. Still, in 2021 the number of visits to various cultural events marked an increase. The number of cinema visits doubled to 402 per 1,000 persons, which once again was above the national average. Museum and theatre visits also went up compared to 2020 but they still remained below the national averages. There was a huge rise in the number of library visits – over 4 times – to 420 per 1,000 persons, which may be due to the opening of the new building of Burgas Regional Library “Peyo Yavorov”.

Key indicators for the district of Burgas

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	13,507	11,181	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	12,301	13,473	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	20.0	26.5	24.6	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	72.0	67.9	68.2	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	69.4	64.6	64.3	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	3.6	4.9	5.8	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.4	19.6	19.5	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	22.5	24.2	24.4	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	35,826	24,365	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	2,543	2,381	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	5,219	5,888	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	77.7	79.8	82.9	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	32.5	26.4	31.0	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	15.2	15.3	15.3	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	66.9	73.8	72.4	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-4.7	-6.6	-9.9	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	2.1	7.8	7.4	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.18	4.12	3.85	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	38.1	39.3	36.9	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	85.9	85.5	84.8	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	83	86	92	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	84.8	84.3	83.9	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	2,006	2,058	2,129	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	14.2	11.5	11.3	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	8.9	9.7	9.7	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	79.1	79.2	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	437	440	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	88.8	88.7	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	843	193	402	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	598	198	321	426

* The 2021 data are included in the 2022 study.

** The data refer to the 2021-22 academic year, while the State matriculation exams took place in 2022. The same is valid of the previous years.