

Haskovo district

- Population (2021)
- Territory (sq. km)
- Number of settlements
- Share of urban population (%)

220,269
5,533
261
71.7



Household incomes in Haskovo district have been gradually rising, yet the problems of high poverty levels and material deprivation persist. Unemployment remains at low levels, but employment is decreasing. Investment activity remains slack. The density of the road and railway networks in the district is above the national average. Local tax rates in the district's municipalities are close to but below the country's average. The self-assessments of local administrations for the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop

administrative services have improved considerably. The district's population continues to age. Students' results are low. Healthcare in Haskovo district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. The crime rate is commensurable with the country's average while the detection rate is considerably higher. The high assessment of Haskovo district in the environment category is mainly due to the relatively low volumes of generated household waste and the limited share of disturbed areas. Cultural life in the district is of relatively low intensity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Income and living standard



Labor market



Investment and economy



Infrastructure



Local taxes



Administration



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Demography



Education



Healthcare



Public order and security



Environment



Culture



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Income and living standard ■■

Haskovo is the district with the lowest GDP per capita in southern Bulgaria after Sliven, with only 9,100 BGN per capita in 2020, compared to the national average of 17,300 BGN, and has been growing at a rate lower than the average one in the country. Salaries and incomes are also rising, but remain relatively low. The average annual gross salary of employed people was 11,600 BGN in 2020, versus 16,700 BGN in the country. These indicators are the main factor for the relatively high poverty levels in the district. 27.4% of the population is living with material deprivation, compared to 19.4% on average nationally, and the share of the population living below the national poverty line is 32.9%, versus 22.1% on average countrywide.

Labor market ■■■

In 2021, economic activity in Haskovo district maintained its level from the previous year and its rate remained relatively low – 67.5%, compared to 72.0% in the country. Unemployment remained low, but employment decreased as well. The employment rate reached 66.3%, compared to the national average of 68.1%.

The local labor market continues to face the challenges posed by the educational structure of the workforce and the ageing population, although the indicators improved considerably in 2021. The share of university graduates among the 25–64 age group went up to 18.5%, compared to 29.6% in the country. Also, the share of people with primary or lower education decreased to 19.9%, compared to the national average of 16.6%. The population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 reached 64.0%, compared to 69.4% 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 64 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and economy ■

Investment activity in Haskovo district again remained slack in 2020. The number of non-financial enterprises in the district is 53 per 1,000 persons, compared to 60 per 1,000 persons in the country. FTA acquisition expenditures went up but remained low nevertheless – 1,200 BGN/person, compared to 3,300 BGN/person nationally. FDI decreased to 794 EUR/person and also remained considerably below the national average of 3,900 EUR/person. These indicator values are also a factor for the relatively low production value, which went down to 11,800 BGN/person, compared to 27,200 BGN/person nationally.

Utilization of EU funds is also relatively poor. By 30 June 2022, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 1,649 BGN/person, which is half

the national average. Within the district, the highest amounts were utilized by the municipality of Svilengrad.

Infrastructure ■■■■

The density of the road and railway network in Haskovo district is above the national average. The share of first-class roads and highways is also higher than the national average – 21.5% in 2021, compared to 18.5% in the country. The quality of the roads has been improving, yet remains relatively low. The share of road surfaces in good condition was 39% in 2021, compared to 42% countrywide.

Households' access to the internet improved in 2021, reaching 81.1% in the district, versus 83.5% in the country. The share of households with access to a gas supply is low – 1.1%, against 5.3% nationally.

Installed RES capacities are 0.9 kW/person, against 0.6 kW/person in the country.

Local taxes ■■■■

In 2022, the levels of the monitored local taxes in the municipalities on the district's territory again remained close to, though below the national average. The taxes on the immovable non-residential property for legal entities and motor vehicles were practically equal to the respective national averages. Lower than average were the tax rates on retail trade (12.75 BGN/sq. m, versus 12.99 BGN/sq. m in the country), on non-gratuitous acquisition of property (2.61%, against 2.75% nationally) and on taxi transportation (305 BGN, compared to 478 BGN countrywide). Within the district, the lowest local taxes are levied by the municipalities of Simeonovgrad and Ivaylovgrad, and the highest – by those of Madzharovo and Haskovo city.

Administration ■■■■

In recent years, in line with the nationwide trend, cadastral map coverage in Haskovo district went up considerably and in 2021 it included 97.2% of the territory, compared to 97.4% in the country.

In 2022, the self-assessments of the district's municipalities on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop administrative services also went up considerably and exceeded the respective national averages. A decline was registered in the AIP Active transparency rating of the local administrations, which nevertheless remained above the national average – 72.2% in the district, versus 70.2% in the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■

Demography ■■■■

In 2021, both the natural population growth and the net migration rate in Haskovo district registered a decrease. The natural population growth rate dropped to -15.5‰, compared to -13.2‰ nationally. The net migration rate went down but remained positive at 0.4‰.

The trend towards population ageing in the district is continuing. In 2021, the population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 reached 160.6%, compared to 149.3% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 37.5%, against 34.0% in the country.

The share of people living in cities is comparable to the country's average – 71.7%, versus 73.1% nationally. At the same time, population density is relatively low – 1,027 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,489 persons/sq. km nationally.

Education ■■

The district performs poorly as regards the education indicators. The coverage of the education system has improved and has come closer to the national average. In 2021, the net enrolment in 5th–7th grade was 85.6%, against 85.9% nationally. The number of teachers is increasing and has almost reached the country's average. However, the shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education remain high. Students' results again remained low in 2022. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 29.4 points, versus 35.3 points in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.62, compared to 3.97 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was the highest in the country – 28.0%, against 17.0% nationally.

Healthcare ■■

The healthcare system in Haskovo district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. The number of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians – is below the national average. In 2020, there was one GP per 1,932 people, compared to 1,734 people per doctor nationally. The number of beds in the district's general hospitals remains extremely low, with 3.64 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.62 beds per 1,000 people in the country.

Population morbidity and infant mortality in the district are relatively high. The number of hospitalizations is 156.7 people per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 222.6 per 1,000 persons, which suggests that the population may be seeking health care outside the district given the limited number of doctors and hospital beds. The infant mortality rate has gone down, reaching 4.8‰, compared to the national average of 5.6‰.

The number of people with health insurance increased slightly in 2021 and remains above the national average – 89.6% in the district, against 88.7% in the country.

Public order and security ■■■

The workloads of criminal judges in the district increased slightly in 2021, reaching an average of 8.8 a month per one local judge, but they remained below the national average of 9.0 cases per judge. At the same time, the relative share of criminal cases closed within 3 months remained 88%, against 89% nationally, and pending cases decreased to 9.0%, against 11.8% countrywide.

The crime rate in Haskovo district is comparable to that in the country on average, but the detection rate is considerably higher. The crimes against the person and property registered in 2021 amounted to 9.3 per 1,000 persons, compared to 9.8 per 1,000 persons nationally. The proportion of cleared crimes improved and reached 63.4%, against 51.7% nationally.

Environment ■■■■■■

The high assessment of Haskovo district in the environment category is mainly due to the relatively low volumes of generated household waste. In 2020, the annual amount of generated waste was 313 kg/person, compared to the national average of 409 kg/person. 71.2% of all generated household waste was handed over for recycling and treatment, compared to 69.3% in the country.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network, which in 2020 reached 72.3%, against 76.3% in the country. The share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant was 53.2%, compared to 66.7% countrywide.

The amount of forest areas is close to the national average – 32.4% in the district, compared to 33.1% in the country, but disturbed areas are significantly more limited – 0.15% in the district, compared to 0.42% in the country in 2021.

Culture ■

Cultural life in Haskovo district has shown little intensity. After the sharp decline in 2020, in 2021 it intensified, although none of the values of the monitored indicators managed to return to their pre-pandemic level. Cinema visits reached 91 per 1,000 persons, against 351 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local theatres and museums numbered 55 per 1,000 persons, against 129 per 1,000 persons in the country, and 109 per 1,000 persons, against 426 per 1,000 persons nationwide respectively. The local libraries attracted 215 visits per 1,000 persons, against 449 per 1,000 persons in the country on average.

Key indicators for the district of Haskovo

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,083	9,100	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,566	11,642	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	30.9	38.9	32.9	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	71.1	67.6	67.5	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	70.9	67.4	66.3	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	(0.4)	(0.3)	(1.6)	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	24.0	25.8	19.9	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	20.2	17.8	18.5	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	12,867	11,793	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	1,130	1,230	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	815	794	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	68.1	78.6	81.1	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	36.8	36.0	38.9	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	20.7	20.7	20.9	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	67.3	73.7	72.2	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-8.7	-12.3	-15.5	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	-3.8	4.7	0.4	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.07	4.00	3.62	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	32.0	32.4	29.4	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	82.6	84.9	85.6	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	85	90	96	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	90.1	89.2	89.6	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,847	1,871	1,932	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	10.1	10.0	9.3	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	8.0	7.8	8.8	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	72.6	72.3	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	314	313	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	71.1	71.2	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	98	13	91	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	251	73	109	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.