

# Pleven district

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

228,300  
4,653  
123  
66.2



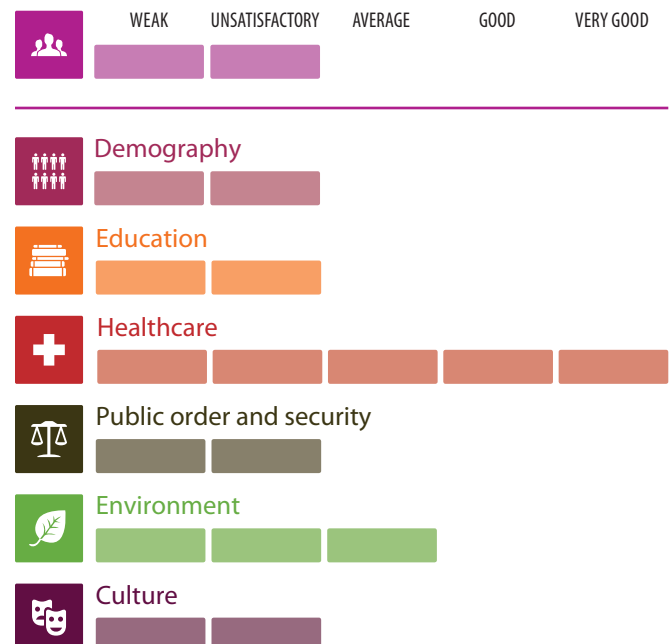
Salaries and incomes in Pleven district have been growing relatively fast. The economic activity rate has decreased slightly and this is accompanied by a slight increase in employment and a more noticeable decrease in unemployment. Investment and business activity in the area remain relatively unfavorable. Road quality is improving. The rates of local taxes in the municipalities of Pleven district are close to the national averages. Pleven ranks among the districts with the highest ratings for the indicators measuring the work of the administration.

The process of population ageing is deepening. The district does not perform well in the indicators assessing education. Pleven is a district with strong traditions in the field of healthcare and is once again the leader in the indicators for this category. The number of registered crimes is traditionally higher than the national average. Pleven is the district with the lowest share of forest areas. The share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling continues to be extremely high. Cultural life is characterized by relatively low intensity.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■■

### Income and living standard ■■■■

Although in 2020 GDP per capita in Pleven district again recorded a considerable growth rate (by 4.1%, compared to the national average of 0.2%), it still remained relatively low – 10,300 BGN/person, against 17,300 BGN/person in the country. Salaries and incomes are also rising relatively fast. The average annual salary of employed people has reached 12,700 BGN, compared to 16,700 BGN nationwide.

These trends account for the falling poverty level of the local population, although it remains close to and just below the national average. The share of the population living with material deprivation was 24.7% in 2021, compared to the national average of 19.4%. For its part, in 2021 the share of those living below the poverty line shrank more considerably and fell below the national average – 21.6% in the district, versus 22.1% nationally.

### Labor market ■■■■

The rate of economic activity in Pleven district dropped slightly in 2021, reaching 69.0%, compared to the national average of 72.0%. This decrease was accompanied by a slight increase in employment and a more tangible drop in unemployment. However, both rates remained unfavorable. The employment rate went up to 62.0%, against 68.1% nationwide. The unemployment rate, for its part, was 10.0%, versus the national average of 5.3%.

In 2021, the share of the population aged 25–64 with a university degree dropped slightly to 24.7%, against 29.6% in the country, while the share of those with primary or lower education rose to 19.9%, compared to 16.6% nationally.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 has been rising but it still remains relatively low – 65.3% in Pleven district, against 69.4% countrywide. 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 Pleven district again remained relatively unfavorable in 2020. The relative number of non-financial enterprises was 42 per 1,000 persons, versus 60 per 1,000 persons nationally. FTA acquisition expenditures dropped to 1,800 BGN/person, compared to 3,300 BGN/person. FDI has been rising but continues to be relatively low – 1,300 EUR/person in the district, compared to the national average of 3,900 EUR/person.

Production value in the district has risen considerably (by 7.1%), reaching 15,500 BGN/person, compared to 27,200 BGN/person nationwide.

Utilization of European funds in Pleven district remains close to the national average. By 30 June 2022, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 2,363 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by Belene municipality.

### Infrastructure ■■■■

Pleven district is characterized by a higher than average density of the road and railroad network. However, highways and first-class roads as a share of all roads remain relatively limited – 12.2% in 2021, versus 18.5 in the country. Nevertheless, road quality has been improving and is already commensurable with the national average – 41% of the roads are in good condition, compared to the national average of 42%.

The share of households with internet access is rising but remains relatively low – 76.3%, against the average of 83.5% nationally. The share of households connected to a gas supply has gone up to 2.8%, which is nevertheless nearly half the national average of 5.3%. The installed RES capacities relative to the population are also twice as low as in the country on average.

### Local taxes ■■■■

In 2022, Pleven district again kept local taxes at levels comparable to the national average rates, though the local rates were significantly higher than the average ones in northwestern Bulgaria.

Two of the monitored rates in the district were considerably higher than the respective national averages – the tax on non-residential real estate for legal entities and the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property. Within the district, Pleven city municipality levies the highest local taxes, while the lowest rates are in the municipalities of Dolni Dubnik and Pordim.

### Administration ■■■■

Pleven is among the districts with the highest ratings for the work of the local administration. The local administrations' self-assessments on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop-shop services have been rising and in 2022 they exceeded the respective national averages.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration have been lagging behind and they are again lower than the national average – 69.8% on average in Pleven district, versus 70.2% nationally.

Cadastral map coverage in Pleven district has continued to increase and has reached 97.7%, against the national average of 97.4%.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■■

### Demography ■■■

For the second year in a row, in 2021 the natural population growth rate dropped considerably to reach  $-18.9\%$ , against the national average of  $-13.2\%$ . Pleven district also fails to attract new residents and the net migration rate is negative ( $-3.4\%$ ).

These processes are the main prerequisite for the high level of population ageing in the district. In 2021, the age dependency rate as a ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years reached 186.1%, compared to 149.3% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 44.1%, versus 34.0% nationwide.

The urban population remains relatively small – 66.2%, compared to 73.1% in the country, and population density in the urban settlements is also relatively low – 1,489 persons/sq. km.

### Education ■■■

The district does not perform well as regards the indicators assessing education. The enrolment ratio in 5th–7th grades dropped in 2021 to 85.6% and is now below the national average of 85.9%. The percentage of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school remains relatively high. The relative number of teachers has settled at a level above the national average – 100 teachers per 1,000 students, against 97 teachers per 1,000 students nationally.

Students' performance in Pleven district again remained low in 2022. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 28.0 p., compared to 35.3 p. nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was among the lowest in the country – "Good" 3.61, versus 3.97 in the country, and "fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 25.7%, against the national average of 17.0%.

Pleven is one of the few districts in Bulgaria registering a steady increase in the number of university students over the past few years, though relative to the population it remains half the national average

### Healthcare ■■■■■■

Pleven district has strong traditions in the sphere of healthcare and in 2021 it again held the top place in the country in this category. The share of people with health insurance in the region remains at levels above the national average – 92% in the district, compared to 89% in the country. Pleven is also the district with the highest proportion of both GPs and specialist physicians. One local GP cares for 1,214 persons on average, compared to 1,734 persons per doctor in the country.

Pleven is also the district best provided with hospital beds. In 2021, their number even went up to reach the unprecedented 11.10 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.62 beds per 1,000 persons in the country.

The relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals remains considerably higher than in the country –

386.4 per 1,000 persons, compared to 222.6 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

### Public order and security ■■■

The workloads of the criminal judges in Pleven district are relatively small, which, however, has little effect on the speed of justice delivery. In 2021, one local judge heard an average of 6.8 cases a month, compared to 9.0 cases nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 89%, which equals the national average.

The total number of crimes against the person and property registered in Pleven district is traditionally higher than the national average and in 2021 it reached 11.2 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 9.8 per 1,000 persons nationwide. At the same time, the detection rate continues to exceed the national average and has increased to 55.3%, against 51.7% in the country.

### Environment ■■■■

The share of the population living in settlements with access to a public sewerage network amounts to 60.2% in Pleven district, compared to 76.3% countrywide. Connectivity to wastewater treatment plants is available to 55.6% of the households, against 66.7% in the country. Both indicators place Pleven district behind the respective national averages, which is also an effect of the relatively low urban population.

For the second year in a row, in 2020 the amounts of household waste generated in the district exceeded the national average – 461 kg/person, compared to 409 kg/person in the country. At the same time, the share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling also remained extremely high – 90.5%, versus 69.3% nationally.

Pleven is the district with the lowest share of forest areas – 7.3%, compared to 33.1% nationally. However, the share of disturbed areas is also low – 0.18%, versus 0.42% nationally.

### Culture ■■■

In 2021, Pleven district's cultural life again remained characterized by relatively low intensity, even though visits to the monitored events went up relative to 2020, when their number had fallen drastically due to the pandemic and the resulting restrictions. The greatest rise was in the number of cinema visits in the district, though they remained relatively low – 247 per 1,000 persons, versus 351 per 1,000 persons nationwide. Also considerably below the national average were theatre visits – 57 per 1,000 persons in the district, compared to 129 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to libraries numbered 236 per 1,000 persons in the district, compared to 449 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Visits to local museums have been on the increase and remain relatively high in number – 443 per 1,000 persons, versus 426 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

## Key indicators for the district of Pleven

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,864	10,268	n.a.	<b>17,299</b>
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	11,567	12,660	n.a.	<b>16,687</b>
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	20.4	28.3	21.6	<b>22.1</b>
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	68.8	69.4	69.0	<b>72.0</b>
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	63.2	61.6	62.0	<b>68.1</b>
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	7.9	11.3	10.0	<b>5.3</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.8	19.1	19.9	<b>16.6</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	23.1	25.4	24.7	<b>29.6</b>
Production value (BGN/person)	14,472	15,499	n.a.	<b>27,213</b>
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	2,049	1,799	n.a.	<b>3,348</b>
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	1,171	1,285	n.a.	<b>3,877</b>
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	71.7	68.9	76.3	<b>83.5</b>
Share of roads in good condition (%)	36.5	37.2	41.3	<b>42.0</b>
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	17.1	17.1	18.3	<b>18.0</b>
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	71.8	71.7	69.8	<b>70.2</b>

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-11.0	-13.5	-18.9	<b>-13.2</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	-6.1	1.3	-3.4	<b>1.9</b>
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.00	3.97	3.61	<b>3.97</b>
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	28.8	31.8	28.0	<b>35.3</b>
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	87.0	87.3	85.6	<b>85.9</b>
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	94	99	100	<b>97</b>
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	91.9	91.0	92.0	<b>88.7</b>
Number of people per general practitioner	1,212	1,243	1,214	<b>1,734</b>
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	11.7	10.9	11.2	<b>9.8</b>
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	7.7	6.4	6.8	<b>9.0</b>
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	57.0	60.2	n.a.	<b>76.3</b>
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	463	461	n.a.	<b>409</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	90.6	90.5	n.a.	<b>69.3</b>
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	452	93	247	<b>351</b>
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	854	345	443	<b>426</b>

\* 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.