

Plovdiv district

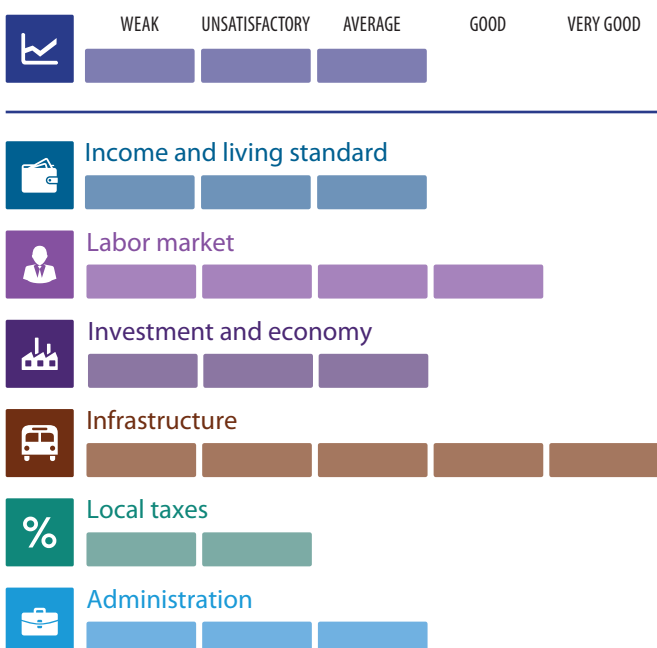
► Population (2021)	662,907
► Territory (sq. km)	5,973
► Number of settlements	212
► Share of urban population (%)	75.1



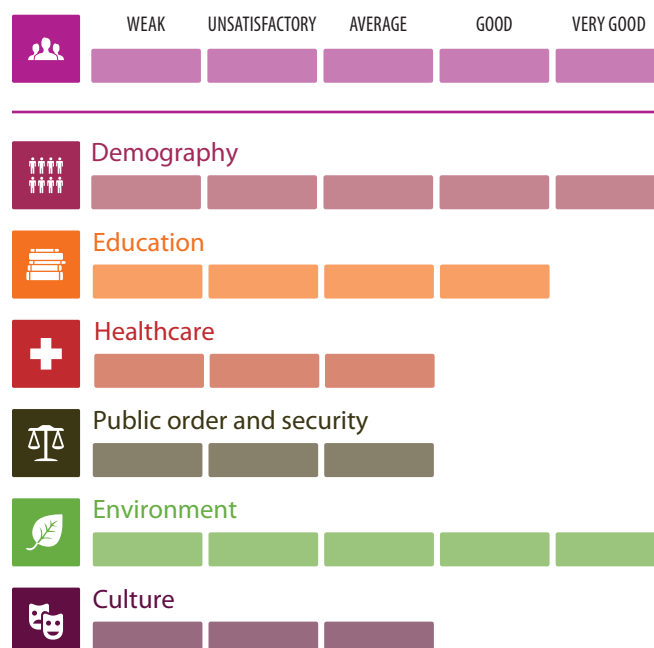
GDP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow at a rate similar to the national average. Salaries and incomes in the district are also increasing. The decline in labor market activity is accompanied by a decline in employment and a rise in unemployment. FTA acquisition expenditures are largely lagging behind the national average. The infrastructural development in the district can be assessed as very good. The level of local taxation in Plovdiv district is relatively high. The AIP active transparency rating of the local administration is above the country's average.

Despite the general trend towards population ageing in the country, Plovdiv performs relatively well. The age dependency ratios are favorable. Students' results are high. Plovdiv is also among the districts with the largest relative numbers of doctors and hospital beds. The relative number of patients treated in the local hospitals is the highest in the country. The workloads of the criminal judges in Plovdiv district are among the heaviest in the country but the speed of delivery of justice is relatively high. The share of forest areas is close to the country's average, but that of disturbed areas is considerably lower. Cultural life in the district is intensifying.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Income and living standard ■■■

GDP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow at a rate similar to the national average. In 2020, it reached 14,600 BGN, but has dropped two places in the ranking (after those of Gabrovo and Vratsa) and is now the seventh highest in the country. Salaries and incomes in the district are also increasing. In 2020, the average annual gross salary of employed people reached 14,200 BGN per year, compared to 16,700 BGN in the country.

Poverty levels exceed the national average. The share of the population living with material deprivation amounts to 24.3%, versus 19.4% nationally, and that of people living below the national poverty line – 26.8%, versus 22.1% countrywide.

Labor market ■■■■

In 2021, economic activity in Plovdiv district went down and at a rate of 68.5% remained below the average level of 72.0% in the country. The decline in economic activity was accompanied by a drop in employment and a rise in unemployment. The employment rate decreased significantly for the second year in a row and in 2021 it fell for the first time below the national average, with a value of 66.3%, against 68.1% in the country. However, the increase in unemployment continues to be relatively low and the rate remains below the country's average – 3.3% in the district, compared to 5.3% in the country.

A major challenge facing the local labor market continues to be the educational structure of the workforce. It improved somewhat in 2021 but again remained slightly less favorable than the country's average figures. The share of the population with a university degree was 26.0%, against 29.6% in the country on average, while the share of those with primary or lower education was 19.2%, compared to 16.6% nationally. The population replacement ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 69.8%, 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 70 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and economy ■■■■

In 2020, the relative number of enterprises in Plovdiv district continued to lag slightly behind the national average, with 59 non-financial enterprises per 1,000 persons, against 60 per 1,000 persons in the country.

FTA acquisition expenditures shrank considerably in 2020 (by 17%) and fell considerably below the national average – 2,600 BGN/person in the district, versus 3,300 BGN/person nationally. There was also a drop in production value, but it was identical to the national average and in this indicator Plovdiv equals the country's average – 27,200 BGN/person in the district and in the country. At the same time, FDI registered an

increase and reached 3,000 EUR/person, versus the national average of 3,900 EUR/person.

Plovdiv district has also been lagging behind in the utilization of European funds. By 30 June 2022, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,874 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were registered in the municipalities of Hissarya and Krichim.

Infrastructure ■■■■■

The development of the district's infrastructure can be assessed as good. The density of its road network is close to the average one in the country, but the density of its railroads is considerably higher, with 5.4 km/100 sq. km of territory, versus 3.6 km/100 sq. km nationally. The share of highways and first-class roads is 17.5%, compared to the national average of 18.5%. The quality of the roads in the district is relatively good – in 2021 roads with surfaces in good condition constituted 47%, against the average of 42% countrywide.

The relative share of households with internet access went up in 2021 and remained above the average one nationwide – 88.9%, versus 83.5% respectively. The installed RES capacities are close to but above the national average. The share of households connected to a gas supply remains relatively low at 1.7%, against 5.3% in the country.

Local taxes ■■

As in most districts with a better developed economy, in 2022 the level of local taxation in Plovdiv district again remained relatively high. The biggest margin was in the rate on taxi transportation. Its average level in the municipalities of the district was 535 BGN per year, compared to 478 BGN in the country. A higher tax was also levied on non-residential real estate for legal entities – 2.11‰ in Plovdiv, compared to 2.06‰ nationwide.

Within the district, the municipalities of Kaloyanovo and Maritsa levy the lowest local taxes, while the highest rates are in Plovdiv city and Karlovo.

Administration ■■■■

Cadastral map coverage in Plovdiv district has slowed down in the past few years, reaching 95.3% compared to 97.4% for the country.

The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop-shop services for 2022 is below the national average.

The AIP Active transparency ratings of the local administration have marked a slight increase and now exceed the national average, with 72.4% in the district, versus 70.2% in the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■■■■

Demography ■■■■■

Contrary to the nationwide trend towards population ageing, Plovdiv district has been performing relatively well. In the past two years the natural growth rate of the population declined considerably (by 3‰), however, it still exceeds the national average with –11.3‰ in the district, versus –13.2‰ in the country. Plovdiv continued to attract new residents in 2021 and achieved a net migration rate of 6.0‰.

These processes once again left their relatively beneficial impact on the age dependency ratios in the district for 2021. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years was 137.9%, compared to 149.3% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 32.2%, versus 34.0% nationwide.

A relatively large share of the district's population lives in urban areas, and in 2021 it reached 75.1%, compared to 73.1% in the country. Plovdiv ranks third after the capital and Sliven as regards population density in its settlements – 2,490 persons/sq. km, while nationally it is 1,489 persons/sq. km.

Education ■■■■■

The net enrolment rate in 5th–7th grade in Plovdiv district rose slightly in 2021 and remained above the national average. Worse figures, however, were recorded for the shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school.

The number of teachers remains relatively small – 92 teachers per 1,000 students, compared to 97 teachers per 1,000 students countrywide.

In 2022, students' results again remained good. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 35.0 points, against the national average of 35.3 points. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.10, versus the average of 3.97 in the country. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 15.5%, against the national average of 17.0%.

Plovdiv is a district with long and stable traditions in higher education. The number of university students is the third largest in the country, outranked only by that in the capital and Veliko Tarnovo.

Healthcare ■■■■

Plovdiv is among the districts with the largest number of doctors and hospital beds. In 2021, one local GP cared for 1,637 persons on average, compared to 1,734 persons per doctor in the country. The index for access to specialist physicians is also more favourable than the national average. The local general hospitals provide 8.12 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.62 per 1,000 persons in the country, which ranks Plovdiv second in the country after Pleven district. Plovdiv is also the district with the highest relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals – 399.1 per 1,000 persons, compared to 222.6 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

Public order and security ■■■■

The workloads of the criminal judges in Plovdiv district are among the heaviest in the country and in 2021 they continued to increase, reaching an average of 11.8 cases a month per judge, compared to 9.0 cases a month per judge nationally. Nevertheless, this high intensity does not impede the speedy delivery of justice. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months is 93%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide, and pending cases make up 7.6%, against 11.8% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Plovdiv district remains low, and crime detection is relatively high. In 2021, the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 7.5 per 1,000 persons, versus the average of 9.8 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The detection rate was 58.2%, against 51.7% for the country on average.

Environment ■■■■■

The concentration of the district's population in towns and cities is a prerequisite for a relatively high share of households with access to a sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 74.0%, versus 66.7% nationally, and similarly, for a high share of people living in areas with accessibility to public sewerage networks – 82.4%, against the national average of 76.3% in 2020.

The amounts of household waste generated in the district remain high – 469 kg/person per annum, against an average of 409 kg/person nationally. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling have dropped slightly to 62.0%, remaining below the national average of 69.3%.

Forest areas in Plovdiv district are close to the national average – 32.7%, versus 33.1% countrywide. The share of disturbed areas, however, is considerably lower – 0.17%, against 0.42% in the country for 2021.

Culture ■■■■

After the severe pandemic-induced restrictions on cultural activities in 2020, cultural life in Plovdiv district intensified in 2021. Cinema visits reached 438 per 1,000 persons, against 351 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local theatres and museums increased to 118 per 1,000 persons, against 129 per 1,000 persons in the country, and 351 per 1,000 persons, against 426 per 1,000 persons nationwide respectively. Visits to the local libraries recorded a slight drop compared to the year before and numbered 220 per 1,000 persons, against 449 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local libraries decreased by 24%, compared to 30% in the country, and numbered 223 per 1,000 persons, against 480 per 1,000 persons nationally.

Key indicators for the district of Plovdiv

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	14,535	14,648	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	12,996	14,171	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	22.7	25.8	26.8	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	72.0	70.8	68.5	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	70.3	68.7	66.3	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	2.4	3.0	3.3	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.2	19.7	19.2	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	26.0	26.4	26.0	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	27,998	27,188	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	3,103	2,560	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	2,668	2,986	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	80.7	79.9	88.9	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	48.7	40.9	46.5	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	17.1	17.1	17.1	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	70.1	71.1	72.4	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-5.3	-8.3	-11.3	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	3.1	7.7	6.0	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.33	4.30	4.10	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	36.7	38.7	35.0	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	87.8	87.4	87.6	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	84	92	92	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	87.6	87.4	87.1	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,588	1,618	1,637	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	8.3	8.1	7.5	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	11.4	11.5	11.8	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	82.7	82.4	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	469	469	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	62.1	62.0	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	373	234	438	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	575	299	351	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.