Razgrad district

- ▶ Population (2021) — 107,764
- ▶ Territory (sq. km) — 2,488
- ▶ Number of settlements — 103
- ▶ Share of urban population (%) — 46.5

KUBRAT
ZAVET
ISPERIH
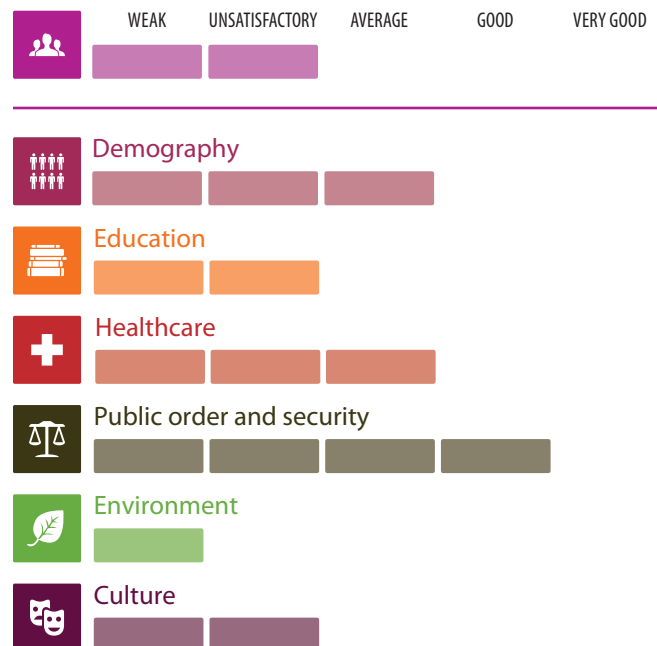Tsar Kaloyan
RAZGRAD
SAMUIL
LOZNITSA

GDP in Razgrad district continues to grow at an increasing rate, but its value remains relatively low. The performance of the labor market in the district is traditionally relatively weak. Investment activity remains low. The density of the road network is relatively high, but the share of highways and first-class roads, as well as that of road surfaces in good condition, is extremely low. The average level of local taxes levied by the local municipalities is lower than the national average. The AIP transparency rating of the local administration is falling.

Razgrad is among the districts with under 50% of the population living in urbanized areas. Students' results are extremely low. Razgrad is one of the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. The number of crimes in the district is relatively low and their detection rate is high. Razgrad ranks last among all the districts in terms of environmental indicators. The share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network is the lowest in the whole country. Cultural life in Razgrad district is intensifying.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Income and living standard

Labor market

Investment and economy

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Public order and security

Environment

Culture

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living standard

GDP per capita in Razgrad district has continued to grow at a rising rate, but its value remains relatively low – 10,600 BGN/person, against 17,300 BGN nationally. Salaries and incomes in the district are also rising. The average annual gross salary of employed people has reached 13,900 BGN, compared to 16,700 BGN in the country.

The effect of these processes is that poverty levels in Razgrad district have fallen. The share of the population living with material deprivation has decreased to 30.9%, but remains high when compared to the average of 19.4% in the country, while that of the population living below the national poverty line dropped to 16.7% in 2021 and is already significantly below the national average (22.1%).

Labor market

The performance of the labor market in Razgrad district is traditionally relatively weak, and in 2021 the indicators further deteriorated. Economic activity and employment each suffered a decline that set a record on a national scale. The rate of economic activity collapsed by more than 6 p.p. to 61.9%, against 72.0% in the country. The decrease in the employment rate also exceeded 6 p.p. – it went down to 54.5%, compared to 68.1% in the country, making Razgrad the district (after Montana) with the second lowest employment rate in the country. Unemployment also increased and its rate in 2021 was 12.0%, versus 5.3% in the country.

A major challenge still facing the local labor market is the seriously worsening educational structure of the workforce. The share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education has increased to 34.1%, compared to 16.69% nationally, and is the second highest in the country, after that in Sliven district. The share of those with a university degree has also gone up, but remains relatively low – 21.1% in Razgrad, against 29.6% in the country on average.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 64.6%, compared to the national average of 69.4%. 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 activity in Razgrad district again remained low in 2020. Razgrad is among the districts with the lowest relative number of enterprises – 39 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 60 per 1,000 persons. FTA acquisition expenditures have shrunk to 2,300 BGN/person, compared to the average of 3,300 BGN/person in the country. FDI registered an increase, yet remains relatively low – 1,900 EUR/person, versus 3,900 EUR/person nationally. Production value has shrunk to 15,600 BGN/person, compared to 27,200 BGN/person in the country.

Utilization of European funds has been lagging behind. By 30 June 2022, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,912 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were recorded by the municipalities in Isperih and Kubrat.

Infrastructure

The density of the district's railroad network is close to, though slightly below the country's average. The road network density is higher, but the share of highways and first-class roads is extremely low – 11.1%, compared to 18.5% countrywide, and so is the share of road surfaces in good condition –17%, versus 42% nationally in 2021.

The relative share of households with internet access went further up in 2021 to reach 76.6%, though it again remained lower than the average of 83.5% nationwide. The installed RES capacities are negligible – 0.006 kW/person. The share of households connected to a gas supply is relatively high – 6.1%, compared to the national average of 5.3%.

Local taxes

In 2022, the average level of local taxes in Razgrad district's municipalities again remained lower than the national average. Among the five monitored local taxes, only the tax rate on non-residential real estate of legal entities was higher in Razgrad district than the average one in the country.

Significantly lower than the national average were the local taxes on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, taxi transportation, and retail trade.

Within the district, the lowest taxes are levied by the municipalities in Samuil and Tsar Kaloyan, and the highest – by those in Isperih and Loznitsa.

Administration

Cadastral map coverage in Razgrad district has continued to rise and in 2021 it reached 98.1%, compared to the country's average of 97.4%.

The local authorities' self-assessments on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop-shop services went up in 2022 but while that on e-government remains below the national average, the assessment on the provision of one-stop-shop services is now considerably higher.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration has dropped to 68.1% and is now below the national average of 70.2%.

👥 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

🏛 Demography

The natural population growth rate in Razgrad district has been dropping rapidly and in 2021 it was down to –17.3‰, versus the national average of –13.32‰. At the same time, the district fails to attract new residents and the net migration rate is also negative (–1.5‰).

Population ageing in the district is reflected in the age dependency ratios as well. The ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 has reached 163.0%, compared to 149.3% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it is 35.0%, versus the national average of 34.0% in 2021.

Razgrad is one of the three districts, along with those of Kardzhali and Silistra, where less than 50% of the population lives in urban settlements. In 2021, 46.5% of the population was urban, compared to 73.1% in the country. Its density is also among the lowest in the country – 818 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,489 persons/sq. km in the country.

📖 Education

The district's performance as regards the education indicators is unsatisfactory. The rate of enrolment of schoolchildren in 5th–7th grade in 2021 was 85.5%, against 85.9% nationally.

Students' results for 2022 were extremely low in Razgrad district. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 29.1 points, versus 35.3 points nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was the lowest in the country – "Good" 3.53, compared to 3.97 in the country, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was one of the highest, after the districts of Shumen and Haskovo – 26.9%, against the national average of 17.0%.

The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary education has gone up and exceeds the national average.

The single provider of higher education in Razgrad district is a branch of Ruse University. This accounts for the small number of university students in the district – the 2021 data show just 2 students per 1,000 persons, compared to 32 students per 1,000 persons nationally.

➕ Healthcare

The share of people with health insurance in Razgrad district remains extremely high – 96.3%, compared to 88.7% nationally. At the same time, Razgrad is among the districts with the most acute shortage of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians. In 2021, one local GP cared for 2,293 persons on average, compared to 1,734 persons per doctor in the country.

The relative number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals is also relatively small – 5.13 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.62 per 1,000 persons in the country. At the same time, the relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is low – 129.8 hospitalizations per 1,000 persons, compared to 222.6 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

⚖ Public order and security

The workloads of the criminal judges and the speed of delivery of justice in Razgrad district are close to the average ones in the country. In 2021, one local judge heard an average of 8.2 criminal cases a month, compared to 9.0 cases per judge nationally, while the proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 91%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide. Pending cases constituted 7.2%, against 11.8% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Razgrad district is relatively low, and crime detection is 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 dropped slightly to 65.5%, which was again considerably above the national average of 51.7%.

🍃 Environment

Among all of Bulgaria's districts, Razgrad ranks last as regards environmental indicators. Due to the low concentration of people in urbanized areas, it is one of the districts with the worst results for the share of the population with access to sewerage systems connected to wastewater treatment plants – in 2020 it was 41.6%, versus 66.7% nationally, as well as in terms of the share of population living in settlements with a public sewerage network – again 41.96%, compared to the national figure of 76.34%.

Razgrad is also among the districts generating very high amounts of household waste. Its average volume reached 471 kg/person annually, compared to 409 kg/person in the country on average. At the same time, the amounts handed over for treatment and recycling were a mere 9.5%, versus the national average of 69.3%.

Forest areas are relatively small – 22.4%, against 33.1% in the country, but the share of disturbed areas is also small – 0.16%, against 0.42% countrywide in 2021.

🎭 Culture

After the sharp decline in 2020, the intensity of cultural life in Razgrad district grew in 2021. Visits to cinemas reached 85 per 1,000 persons, compared to 351 per 1,000 persons in the country. Visits to local theaters are traditionally more than the average ones in the country, and in 2021, Razgrad's theaters recorded 164 visits per 1,000 persons, compared to 129 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to museums remained lower – 351 per 1,000 persons in the district, versus 426 per 1,000 persons countrywide. The relative number of visits to libraries remained almost unchanged compared to the previous year, and in 2021 their number was twice as low as the national average – 232 per 1,000 persons, against 449 per 1,000 persons in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Razgrad

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,470	10,634	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	12,814	13,902	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	28.0	23.1	16.7	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	68.5	68.0	61.9	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	61.8	60.8	54.5	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	9.6	10.6	12.0	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	31.6	30.7	34.1	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	18.8	19.5	21.1	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	16,650	15,552	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	2,415	2,294	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	(182)	1,901	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	69.5	73.4	76.6	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	17.6	15.6	16.9	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	19.2	19.2	19.2	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	73.2	73.8	68.1	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−9.0	−14.2	−17.3	−13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	−3.9	5.3	−1.5	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.02	3.96	3.53	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	31.1	31.2	29.1	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	85.4	85.5	85.5	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	94	99	107	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	96.5	95.4	96.3	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	2,172	2,298	2,293	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	9.9	8.0	7.5	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	9.2	8.9	8.2	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	41.9	41.6	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	472	471	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	9.5	9.5	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	106	36	85	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	563	173	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.