

Sofia (capital) district



► Population (2021)	1,307,439
► Territory (sq. km)	1,341
► Number of settlements	54
► Share of urban population (%)	95.5

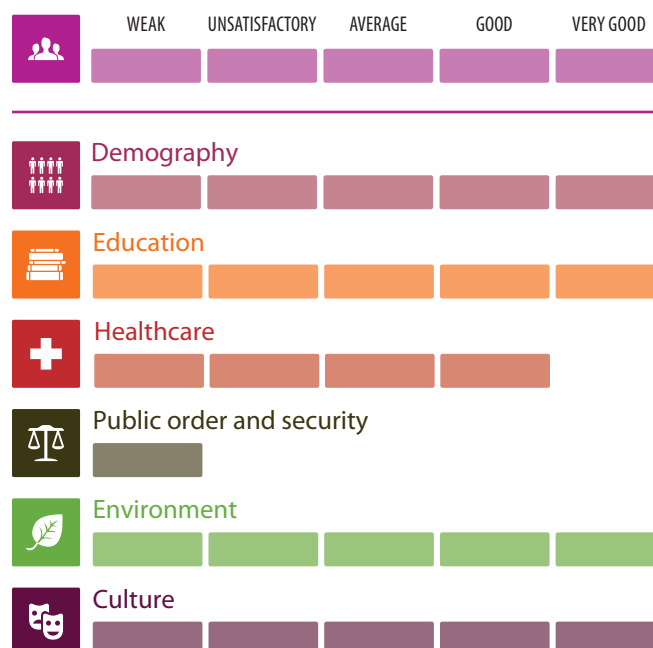
Sofia (capital) has the highest GDP per capita, with a value of more than double the national average and that of the district ranking second in this indicator – Sofia district. Its labor market is well developed. Sofia is also the undisputed leader in terms of investment activity. The share of households with access to broadband internet continues to increase. The capital is the district with the highest local taxes in the country. It has the highest scores in the municipal administration's self-assessment on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop administrative services.

Sofia is the district with the most favorable demographic picture. The capital is once again the leader in the field of education, with a high enrolment rate, a low share of repeaters and dropouts, good student performance and a high number of university students. The number of specialist physicians is among the highest in the country. Delivery of justice is relatively slow, and the crime detection rate is the lowest in the country. The district's high level of urbanization accounts for the large share of the population with access to public sewerage networks. Sofia remains the district with the most intensive cultural life.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■■■

Income and living standard ■■■■■

The capital is the district with the highest GDP per capita, with a volume more than twice larger than both the national average and that of Sofia district which ranks second in this category. In 2020, GDP per capita in Sofia reached 38,900 BGN, against 17,300 BGN in the country.

Salaries and incomes are growing and their amounts are significantly higher. The average annual gross salary reached 23,000 BGN in 2020, against 16,700 BGN in the country.

The capital is also the district with the lowest poverty level. The share of the population living with material deprivation amounts to 9.6%, versus 19.4% nationally in 2020, while that of people living below the national poverty line is 11.3%, compared to 22.1% nationally in 2021.

Labor market ■■■■■

The capital's good performance in the indicators for economic development is again manifested in the favorable dynamics of the local labor market in 2021. Economic activity decreased, but remained relatively high – 75.8%, compared to 72.0% nationally. Parallel to this decline was an increase in employment and a decrease in unemployment. The employment rate reached 74.8%, against 68.1% nationally, and the unemployment rate – 2.7%, versus 5.3% nationally.

The capital remains the district with the best educational structure of its workforce, which in 2021 continued to improve. The share of the population aged 25–64 with a university degree reached 57.7%, against 29.6% in the country, while employed people with primary or lower education made up 4.2%, compared to 16.6% nationally.

Sofia has the second highest (after Sliven) population replacement ratio as a ratio of people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 – 83.2%, compared to 69.4% nationwide. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there will be 83 young people joining the workforce.

Investment and economy ■■■■■

In 2020, Sofia remained the undisputed leader in investment activity. The district has the largest number of enterprises relative to its population – 93 per 1,000 persons, compared to an average of 60 per 1,000 persons in the country. The growth rate of FTA acquisition expenditures is five times the national average and the capital has now moved even further ahead of the country's average and the district ranked second in this category. Production value in the district has also grown at a higher rate to reach 57,800 BGN/person, compared to 27,200 BGN/person in the country. Significantly higher than the average

national figures is also cumulative FDI – 10,600 EUR/person, against 3,900 EUR/person in the country.

By 30 June 2022, the capital again occupied the top place as regards utilization of EU funds, even though its rate of increase was relatively low compared to the previous year. Payments made in Sofia (capital) district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 3,972 BGN/person.

Infrastructure ■■■■■

There are no roads from the national road network within Sofia (capital) district, but its territory is bordered directly by several highways. In addition, Sofia Central Railway Station is one of the main railway hubs in the country and the density of the railway network of 12.7 km/100 sq. km territory in the capital district significantly exceeds the national average of 3.6 km/100 sq. km. The share of households with access to high-speed internet is again very high – 90.3%, compared to 83.5% in the country. The share of households connected to a gas supply is rising and exceeds the national average.

Local taxes ■■■

The level of local taxation in Sofia (capital) district again remained the highest in the whole country in 2022. The biggest differences in comparison to the national figures were recorded in the retail trade tax (20.00 BGN/sq. m, compared to 12.99 BGN/sq. m in the country), the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property (3.00% versus 2.75% in the country), and on taxi transportation (850 BGN annually against 478 BGN in the country).

From the other monitored taxes, the only one that remained below the average nationwide rate was the tax on immovable non-residential property for legal entities (1.88‰, against 2.06‰ in the country).

Administration ■■■■■

Sofia is the district with the highest results in the assessment of the work of its local administration. The whole territory of the capital is now included in the cadastral map, against 97.4% nationally. The development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop administrative services again received the maximum points in 2022. The AIP active transparency rating of the district's local administration bodies has decreased, but remains higher than the national average – 74.8%, against the national average of 70.2%.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■■■■■

Demography ■■■■■■

In 2021, Sofia (capital) remained the district presenting the most favorable demographic picture in the country. Although the natural population growth rate is negative and is decreasing like elsewhere in the country, it still occupies the top place nationwide with a value of -6.8% , compared to the national average of -13.2% . Sofia (capital) continues to attract new residents and the net migration rate is 6.0% .

The age dependency ratios in Sofia remain significantly more favorable than the average ones for the country. The ratio of the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 was 114.2% , compared to 149.3% nationally, with the capital being surpassed only by Sliven district. At the same time, Sofia is the leader in attracting people of working age, and the ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 15–64 is 25.7% , compared to 34.0% in the country.

The district's specificity accounts for the extremely high level of urbanization – 95.5% of its territory – and the population density is three times the country average – $4,761$ persons/sq. km, compared to $1,486$ persons/sq. km nationally.

Education ■■■■■■

The capital remains the country's leader in the education category, with a high rate of enrolment, low shares of repeaters and dropouts, good student performance, and a high number of university students.

The only less favorable figure pertains to the teacher-student ratios, which can be explained by the large-size schools and classes.

The shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary education are considerably smaller than the country's averages. In 2022, the students in the capital achieved an average score of 47.3 points in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade, which is far above the national average of 35.3 points. Also, the average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.42 , compared to the average of "Good" 3.97 countrywide, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was only 6.8% , against the national average of 17.0% .

The number of university students in Sofia remains considerably above the national average – 72 per $1,000$ persons, versus 32 per $1,000$ persons nationwide.

Healthcare ■■■■■■

In 2021, the capital remained among the country's districts with good healthcare, characterized by easy access to specialist physicians and low infant mortality.

The indicator for access to GPs is similar to the national average – one doctor cares for an average of $1,755$ persons, compared to $1,734$ persons on average in the country. The hospital bed capacity is also similar to the national average – 5.69 beds in general hospitals per $1,000$ persons, compared to 5.62 beds

nationally. The number of hospitalizations is 300.6 per $1,000$ persons, against 222.6 per $1,000$ persons countrywide. The infant mortality rate is almost half the national average.

Public order and security ■■■■■■

The capital's poor results and its last place in the whole country in the indicator of security and justice are a consequence of the heavy workloads of the local judges and the low detection rates.

In 2021, one criminal judge in Sofia (capital) heard an average of 11.3 cases a month, compared to 9.0 cases per judge nationally. These heavy workloads had a negative impact on the speed of delivery of justice. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 84% , compared to the average of 89% nationwide, and pending cases constituted 20.7% , versus 11.8% countrywide.

The number of crimes against the person and property registered in the capital district dropped in 2021 to 10.4 per $1,000$ persons but it still remained high compared to the national average of 9.8 per $1,000$ persons. These are all factors contributing to the exceptionally low share of cleared crimes – a bare 33.7% , versus 51.7% for the country.

Environment ■■■■■■

The capital remained among the districts with the highest annual volume of generated household waste in 2020, with 480 kg/person, compared to 409 kg for the country. However, almost all waste was handed over for treatment and recycling – 98.4% , compared to 69.3% on average in the country.

The high degree of urbanization in the district is the determining factor for the high share of the population with access to public sewerage systems – 96.3% of the population, versus 76.3% nationally, while the whole sewerage network is connected to wastewater treatment plants, compared to 66.7% on average countrywide.

The share of disturbed areas is high – 1.43% , versus 0.42% nationally in 2021.

Culture ■■■■■■

In 2021, the capital was once again the district with the most active cultural life. After the sharp decline in 2020, the intensity of cultural life in the district increased in 2021, although the value of none of the considered indicators could return to its pre-pandemic level. Visits to cinemas reached 814 per $1,000$ persons (compared to 351 per $1,000$ persons in the country). Visits to local theaters and museums were respectively 274 per $1,000$ persons (versus 129 per $1,000$ persons in the country) and 290 per $1,000$ persons (against 426 per $1,000$ persons in the country). Libraries in the district attracted 748 visits per $1,000$ persons (compared to 449 per $1,000$ persons in the country).

Key indicators for the district of Sofia (capital city)

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	38,803	38,891	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	21,040	22,950	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	10.0	9.2	11.3	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	78.0	79.4	75.8	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	76.4	74.4	74.8	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	1.6	2.8	2.7	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	4.9	3.9	4.2	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	52.8	56.8	57.7	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	56,667	57,800	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	7,147	9,214	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	9,626	10,604	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	83.0	90.8	90.3	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	78.8	78.3	74.8	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-2.0	-3.5	-6.8	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	2.4	-12.0	6.0	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.63	4.58	4.42	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	48.1	50.1	47.3	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	89.4	88.8	89.1	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	85	93	87	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	87.1	87.1	89.0	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,712	1,728	1,755	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	13.3	11.4	10.4	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	12.0	10.6	11.3	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	96.3	96.3	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	476	480	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	98.4	98.4	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	1,756	473	814	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	652	207	290	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.