Veliko Tarnovo district

- ▶ Population (2021) — 225,674
- ▶ Territory (sq. km) — 4,662
- ▶ Number of settlements — 336
- ▶ Share of urban population (%) — 69.9

SVISHTOV
POLSKI TRAMBESH
PAVLIKENI
STRAZHITSA
GORNA ORYAHOVITSA
SUHINDOL
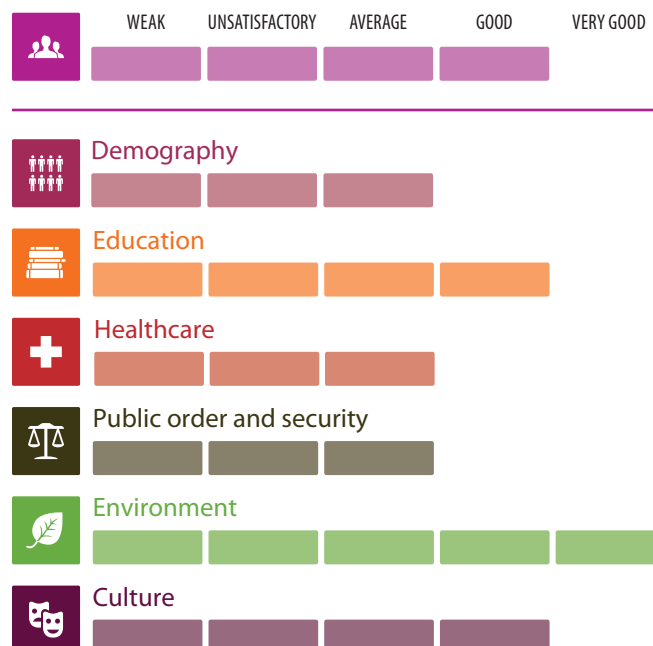LYASKOVETS
VELIKO TARNOVO ◉
ZLATARITSA
ELENA

GDP per capita in Veliko Tarnovo district has been growing at a rate higher than the national average relative to the population but its value remains low. The indicators for the labor market and the trends in it give the district a top place in the country. Investment and business activity in Veliko Tarnovo district are unsatisfactory. The share of highways and first-class roads road remains low. The rates of the monitored local taxes in the district remain relatively high. The active transparency ratings of the local administration lag behind the national average. The general trend towards population ageing is particularly conspicuous in Veliko Tarnovo district. The indicators in the area of education give it a relatively good ranking. The number of university students is among the highest in the country. The number of hospital beds is still extremely low. The registered crimes against the person and property have been on the rise, and detection rates continue to fall. The share of household waste handed over for recycling and treatment is close to 100%. The district has performed quite well in the indicators for the environment. Veliko Tarnovo district's cultural life is quite intensive.

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 in Veliko Tarnovo district has been growing at a rate faster than the national average relative to the population but it still remains low at 15,000 BGN per capita, against the national average of 17,300 BGN. A similar trend has been in evidence as regards salaries and incomes – a relatively large increase but relatively low levels. In 2020, the average annual gross salary of employed people rose by 12%, compared to 10% nationwide, and reached 13,000 BGN, compared to 16,700 BGN in the country.

The relative share of people living in material deprivation rose slightly and remained considerably above the national average – 25.5% in the district, versus 19.4% on a national scale. The share of the population living under the national poverty line decreased sharply in 2021 – by 8 p.p., but at 22.5%, it still remained above the national average of 22.1%.

Labor market ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬

The indicator values and the labor market trends give Veliko Tarnovo district a top ranking in the country for 2021, where it takesthird place after Sofia (capital city) and Varna district. Economic activity has continued to fall, though it still retains its relatively high level – 75.0% against 72.0% in the country on average. Employment has also continued to decline and unemployment has gone up, yet they both remain far more favorable than in the country on average. In 2021, the employment rate was 72.2%, compared to the national average of 68.1%, and the unemployment rate was 3.7%, against 5.3% nationally.

The workforce in Veliko Tarnovo district is among the most highly educated in the country. The share of people aged 25–64 with primary education or less has continued to decrease, falling to 6.7%, compared to the national average of 16.6%. Those with a university degree make up 28.6%, against the national average of 29.6%.

One major challenge still facing the labor market in Veliko Tarnovo district is population ageing. The population replacement rate as a ratio of the people aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 64.6%, versus 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 Veliko Tarnovo district remained unsatisfactory in 2020. The district is among the few with no reduction in the number of enterprises relative to the population, but this number still remains low – 46 per 1,000 persons, compared to 60 per 1,000 persons in the country on average. At the same time, the district has witnessed a drop in investment flows. FTA acquisition expenditures have decreased slightly to 2,000 BGN/person, against 3,300 BGN/person in the country. FDI has even suffered a reduction by over 1/4 to 401 EUR/person compared to 3,900 EUR/person in the country. Production value has increased slightly (by 1.4%), reaching 16,100 BGN/person against 27,200 BGN/person nationwide.

By 30 June 2022, payments made in Veliko Tarnovo district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 1,900 BGN/person. The top place in the district was held by the Svishtov municipality (2,400 BGN/person), though it too failed to reach the national average.

Infrastructure ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬

Veliko Tarnovo's central position in northern Bulgaria accounts for the great density of its road and railroad networks. Nevertheless, the share of highways and first-class roads in the total network is low – 16.3% in 2021, against 18.5% as the country's average. Road quality continues to rise and the share of road surfaces in good condition has outstripped the national average – 44% in the district, compared to 42% countrywide. In 2021, the relative share of households with internet access registered a slight increase but remained relatively limited – 81.7%, against the national average of 83.5%.

The share of households connected to a gas supply is 4.9%, compared to 5.3% in the country, and in 2020 the installed RES capacity remained half the national average level.

Local taxes ▬ ▬

The average tax rates in the Veliko Tarnovo municipalities remained high in 2022. The greatest margin is in the non-residential immovable property tax for legal entities – 2.45‰, compared to 2.06‰ in the country, and the tax on non-gratuitous transfer of property – 2.90‰, compared to 2.75‰ in the country. The rates of the taxes on motor vehicles and retail trade are also relatively high. The taxi transportation rate has been on the decrease and is relatively low.

Within the district, Veliko Turnovo city is the municipality levying the highest local taxes, while the municipalities of Suhindol and Elena have the lowest.

Administration ▬ ▬ ▬

In 2021, almost the entire territory of Veliko Tarnovo district was already covered by the cadastral map. In 2022, the district municipalities' self-assessments on the development of their e-services were lower than the national averages, while those on the provision of one-stop-shop administrative services have risen to levels above the average. At the same time, the AIP active transparency rating of the local administrations is lagging behind and is 68.3% in the district, compared to 70.2% nationally.

👥 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪▪

🏛 Demography ▪▪▪

The trend towards fast population ageing again remained particularly conspicuous in Veliko Tarnovo in 2021. The natural population growth rate continued to be markedly negative at –17.6‰, compared to the national average of –13.2‰, and has been going down by the year. The district still fails to attract people and the net migration rate remains negative (–0.6‰).

These are trends that affect the district's age dependency ratios. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 reached 186.5%, compared to 149.3% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it was 38.2%, versus 34.0% nationwide.

A relatively small share of the population lives in urban territories – 69.9%, against the national average of 73.1%. At the same time, the population density of the district's urban settlements remains low at 1,024 persons/sq. km, versus 1,489 persons/sq. km on average for the country.

📖 Education ▪▪▪▪▪

Veliko Tarnovo is among the districts with a relatively good performance in the field of education, though in 2021 the net enrolment rate in 5th–7th grade fell to 83.9%, compared to 85.9% countrywide. The percentage of school year repeaters went up to 0.85%, versus the national average of 0.94%. The number of teachers in primary and secondary schools still remains relatively high – 112 per 1,000 students, versus the national average of 97 per 1,000 students.

In 2022, the performance of students in the district again remained below the national average. The average score in the external examination in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was 32.7 points, compared to 35.3 points in the country. The average grade in the matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.83, versus 3.97 nationally. The share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was 19.5%, against 17.0% nationally.

The number of university students in the district remains among the highest in the country and second only to that in the capital – 70 per 1,000 persons, compared to 32 per 1,000 persons nationwide.

✚ Healthcare ▪▪▪

In 2021, the percentage of people with health insurance went up but remained among the lowest in the country – 85.3%, compared to the national average of 88.7%. The number of GPs is close to, though lower than the country's average, while that of specialist physicians is significantly lower.

The number of beds in general hospitals remains extremely low – 3.41 per 1,000 persons, compared to 5.52 per 1,000 persons in the country, and its growth over the past few years has been very slow. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is considerably below the national average – 124 per 1,000 persons, compared to 222.6 per 1,000 persons

countrywide. This may mean that the residents are seeking medical care outside the district (mostly in Pleven district).

The infant mortality rate has fallen and in 2021 it was 4.1‰, compared to 5.6‰ in the country.

⚖ Public order and security ▪▪▪

In 2021, court workloads in Veliko Tarnovo district again remained relatively low – 7.8 cases a month per one judge on average, compared to 9 cases per judge nationally. This affects the speed of justice delivery. Thus, the share of cases closed within 3 months reached 92%, compared to 89% as the national average.

The number of registered crimes against the person and property in Veliko Tarnovo district rose in 2021, reaching 10.3 per 1,000 persons and exceededing the national figure. At the same time, the share of cleared crimes continued to fall and went down to 57.9%, though remaining above the national average of 51.7%.

🌿 Environment ▪▪▪▪▪

The performance of Veliko Turnovo district in the environment indicators is very good. In 2020, the amount of household waste generated in the district was relatively low – an annual of 355 kg/person, against 409 kg/person on a national scale. However, the amount of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling reached almost 100%, against 69.3% as the national average.

The relatively low share of the population living in urban areas reflects on the households' access to public sewerage networks. In 2020, 69.5% of the population lived in settlements with public sewerage networks, compared to 76.3% nationwide, and 61.8% of the networks were connected to wastewater treatment plants, versus 64.6% in the country.

In 2021, the share of forest areas was lower than the national average – 23.4%, compared to 33.1% in the country, but the share of disturbed areas was also relatively low at 0.23%, versus 0.42 nationally.

🎭 Culture ▪▪▪▪

The cultural life in the district of Veliko Tarnovo is intensive, although it was particularly hard hit by the pandemic and the restrictions imposed in 2020 and 2021 on cultural events in the country. In 2021, from among the indicators under observation, visits to museums were the only ones to go up, compared to the year before, and though failing to reach their 2019 levels, they remained considerably above the national average – 1,176 per 1,000 persons, compared to 426 per 1,000 persons nationally. The number of visits to libraries also exceeded the national average, though they fell when compared to the previous year – 758 per 1,000 persons, versus 449 per 1,000 persons nationwide. The average yearly number of cinema and theatre visits relative to the population in the district continued its decrease in 2021, falling to half the national average.

Key indicators for the district of Veliko Tarnovo

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,129	11,492	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	11,619	13,008	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	25.8	30.8	22.5	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	80.4	77.9	75.0	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	78.7	75.9	72.2	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	(2.0)	(2.5)	3.7	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	8.9	10.1	6.7	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	29.6	29.7	28.6	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	15,918	16,145	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	2,100	2,022	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	551	401	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	63.0	67.3	81.7	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	38.2	40.0	44.1	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	20.1	20.1	20.1	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	70.8	75.1	68.3	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−10.1	−12.3	−17.2	−13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	−3.4	-0.1	−0.6	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.28	4.12	3.83	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	33.4	35.4	32.7	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	85.7	85.1	83.9	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	102	112	112	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	85.3	84.7	85.3	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,736	1,738	1,710	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	9.2	10.1	10.3	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	6.6	6.8	7.8	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	69.4	69.5	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	355	355	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	100.0	100.0	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	319	195	182	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	2,346	851	1,176	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.