Yambol district

▶ Population (2021)	114,361
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,355
▶ Number of settlements	109
▶ Share of urban population (%)	69.1

Straldzha

YAMBOL

ELHOVO
Bolyarovo

Incomes and salaries in Yambol district have continued to grow. The poverty level in the district has decreased dramatically. Employment remains low and unemployment is above the average countrywide. Investment activity is shrinking. Yambol is characterized by a highly dense road network, but the railway network is among the least developed in the country. The average levels of local taxes are close to the national averages. The self-assessments of the local administrations in Yambol district for the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop services have gone up but remain below the national average. Both natural population growth and the net migration rate are falling. The performance of the students in the district is poor. Although the number of GPs in the district relative to the population is close to the national average, the numbers of specialist physicians and of beds in the local general hospitals are low. The infant mortality rate is decreasing. Delivery of justice is relatively slow. Crime detection is relatively high. The share of disturbed areas is limited. Cultural life in Yambol district is of relatively low intensity.

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 Yambol district has continued to grow and has reached 10,400 BGN per capita, placing the district in the lower half of the country's ranking on this indicator for 2020. Salaries and incomes in the district have also continued to rise. The average gross annual salary of employed people reached 13,100 BGN, compared to 16,700 BGN nationally

The poverty level has fallen dramatically but remains above the national average. The share of the population living with material deprivation was 28.0% in 2021, compared to 19.4% in the country. The share of population living below the poverty line was 24.0%, versus 22.1% nationally.

Labor market

The economic activity in the labor market declined slightly in 2021 and settled below the national average, with a rate of 67.7%, compared to 72.0% in the country. The employment rate retained its value from the previous several years, remaining relatively low – 63.2%, versus 68.1% nationally. Unemployment continues to exceed the national average.

A challenge still facing the labor market in Yambol district is the educational structure of the workforce, although the past few years are marked by more favorable trends. In 2021, the share of university graduates among the population aged 25–64 was 23.0%, compared to 29.6% in the country, and that of people with primary or lower education – 20.6%, against the national average of 16.6%.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that of the 60–64 age group has been improving but remains below the country's average – 67.0% in the district, compared to 69.4% in the country in 2021. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there are 67 young people who will join the workforce.

Investment and economy

In 2020, investment activity in the Yambol region went down. Due to the relative dominance of the processing industry, Yambol is among the districts with a relatively small number of enterprises – only 46 per 1,000 persons, compared to 60 per 1,000 persons nationally. FTA acquisition expenditures have decreased and remain relatively low – 1,600 BGN/person, compared to the national average of 3,300 BGN/person. There has also been an outflow of FDI and it remains among the lowest in the country at 339 EUR/person, versus 3,900 EUR/person nationally. These indicators also account for the decrease in production value, which in 2020 was 15,200 BGN/person, compared to 27,200 BGN/person in the country.

There has been an increase in the utilization of European funds, though it still remains below the national average. By 30 June 2022, the payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 2,400 BGN/person. Within the district, the largest amounts were utilized EU by Yambol city municipality.

Infrastructure

Yambol district is characterized by a high density of the road network. However, the railway network is among the least developed in the country, after that of Dobrich district. In 2021, the share of first-class roads and highways exceeded the national average – 20.6%, compared to 18.5% nationally. The quality of the road surface in the district is traditionally close to or above the country's average, but in 2021 the share of roads in good condition dropped to 36% and was well behind the national average of 42%.

The share of households connected to high-speed internet has been rising and in 2020 it was equal to the national average –83.5%.

The share of households connected to a gas supply is relatively large. The figures for installed RES capacities are also relatively high.

Local taxes

The average rates of local taxes in Yambol district in 2022 again remained close to the average ones in the country. Among the monitored taxes, relatively high were those on the immovable non-residential property for legal entities and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property. At the same time, the rates for retail trade and taxi transportation remained well below average. The tax rate for retail trade in Yambol district was 8.13 BGN/sq. m on average, compared to 12.99 BGN/sq. m in the country.

Within the district, the highest local taxes are levied by the municipality of Yambol city, and the lowest – by that of Elhovo.

Administration

The average self-assessments of the local administrations in Yambol district regarding the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop-shop administrative services went up in 2022, though remaining below the average ones in the country. The AIP active transparency rating achieved by the local administration fell slightly, but since the decrease in the national average was higher, Yambol district exceeded it with a rating of 72.5%, compared to 70.2% in the country.

⚌ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▬▬

⚏ Demography ▬▬▬

Both the natural population growth and the net migration rate in Yambol district have decreased. The natural population growth rate has dropped to –14.6‰, compared to –13.2‰ nationally. The net migration rate is also negative at –3.9‰.

The age dependency rates retain their levels, yet remain relatively low. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 160.8%, compared to 149.3% nationally, and to the 15–64 age group – 41.0%, versus 34.0% countrywide.

The urban population in Yambol district is lower than in the country – 69.1%, against 73.1% nationally, and so is population density – 1,069 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,489 persons/ sq. km countrywide.

⚖ Public order and security ▬▬

The workloads of the local criminal judges are considerably lower than in the country, but the delivery of justice is relatively slow. In 2021, one local criminal judge heard an average of 5.6 cases per month, compared to 9.0 per judge in the country. The share of pending cases was 12.6%, versus the national average of 11.8%. The share of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 82%, versus the national average of 89%.

The crime rate in the district is close to, though above the country's average, and the detection rate is relatively high. In 2021, crimes against the person and property amounted to 10.2 per 1,000 persons, versus 9.8 per 1,000 persons nationally. The detection rate was 65.2%, compared to 51.7% nationwide.

▤ Education ▬▬

In 2021, the net enrolment in 5th–7th grade went down but remained above the national average, with 89.1% in the district, versus 85.9% in the country. The share of repeaters is considerably above the national average. However, the relative amount of dropouts from primary and secondary education is relatively low. Yambol is among the districts with the lowest number of teachers in the country – 89 per 1,000 students, compared to 97 teachers per 1,000 students nationally.

Students' results again remained low in 2022. The average score in the external examination in mathematics after 7th grade was 30.7 points, versus 35.3 points in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.79, compared to 3.97 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) – 21.1%, against 17.0% nationally.

The number of university students is 6 per 1,000 people, against 32 per 1,000 people nationwide.

▨ Environment ▬▬▬▬▬

The relatively good assessment of Yambol district in the environment category is mainly due to the small volumes of generated household waste and its management. In 2020, the amounts of household waste generated in the district were 359 kg/person, against the national average of 409 kg/person. 79.7% of the generated waste was handed over for treatment and recycling, compared to 69.3% on average countrywide.

The carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere remain low.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network, which in 2020 remained close to, though below the national average – 71.3%, against 76.3% in the country. The share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant rose considerably, reaching 69.2%, compared to 64.6% countrywide.

Forest areas are limited – 15.2%, versus 33.1% in the country, and so is the share of disturbed areas – 0.17% against 0.42% countrywide in 2021.

✚ Healthcare ▬▬

Although the number of GPs relative to the population in Yambol district is close to the national average, the number of specialist physicians is among the lowest in the country, followed only by that in the districts of Dobrich and Kardzhali. The number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals is also extremely low – 3.62 beds per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 5.62 beds per 1,000 persons.

These figures probably account for the low number of hospitalizations in 2021 – 121.7 per 1,000 persons, versus 222.6 per 1,000 persons countrywide. It can be assumed, therefore, that the residents seek medical care outside the district.

The share of people with health insurance remains close to the national average. The infant mortality rate has fallen but remains high.

▨ Culture ▬▬

Cultural life in Yambol district is characterized by relatively low activity. After the sharp decline in 2020, in 2021 its intensity went up. Cinema visits are one of the indicators that exceeded their pre-pandemic value – they reached 130 per 1,000 persons, against 351 per 1,000 persons nationally. Visits to the local theatres and museums numbered 128 per 1,000 persons, against 129 per 1,000 persons in the country, and 145 per 1,000 persons, against 426 per 1,000 persons nationwide respectively. The local libraries attracted 333 visits per 1,000 persons, against 449 per 1,000 persons in the country on average.

Key indicators for the district of Yambol

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,195	10,410	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	12,048	13,055	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	33.2	31.4	24.0	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	69.6	68.3	67.7	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	63.1	63.2	63.2	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	9.0	(7.5)	(6.7)	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	23.3	21.3	20.6	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	19.8	23.5	23.0	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	16,153	15,177	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	1,777	1,639	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	352	339	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	53.4	63.1	83.5	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	43.9	41.0	36.3	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	19.0	19.0	19.1	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	70.4	72.7	72.5	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−8.7	−11.5	−14.6	−13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	−4.6	4.3	−3.9	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.04	3.94	3.79	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	31.2	35.0	30.7	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	87.0	89.8	89.1	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	78	90	89	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	89.8	88.4	88.6	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,701	1,771	1,733	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	9.6	9.0	10.2	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	5.4	7.2	5.6	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	71.9	71.3	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	362	359	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	79.5	79.7	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	114	8	130	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	329	143	145	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.