

# Plovdiv district

▶ Population (2021)	634,497
▶ Territory (sq. km)	5,973
▶ Number of settlements	212
▶ Share of urban population (%)	74.4



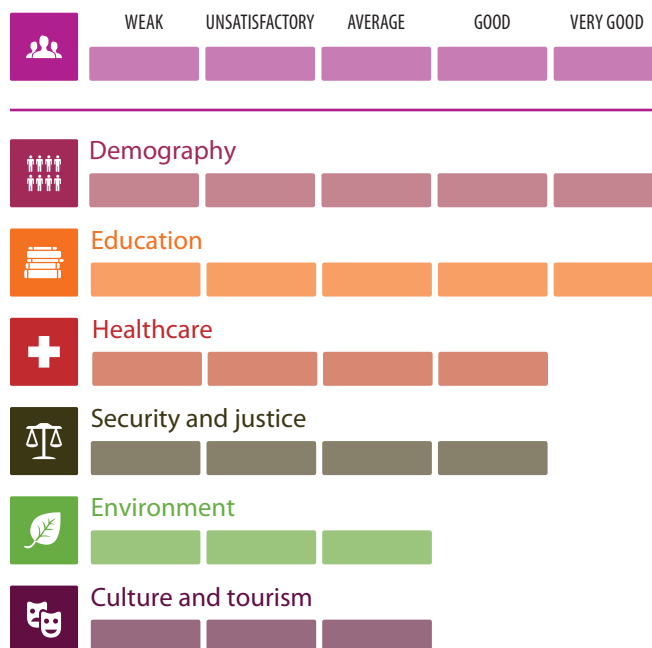
**G**DP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow. The share of the working-age population is relatively high, but while the unemployment rate is significantly more favorable than the national average, the employment rate is lagging behind. Investment and business activity has registered a significant growth. The infrastructural development in the district can be assessed as very good. The level of the taxes on retail trade and taxi transportation in Plovdiv district is below the national average. The AIP active transparency rating of the local administration is above the country's average.

Against the general trend towards population aging 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 equal to the country's average, but that of degraded land is considerably lower. Cultural life in the district is relatively active.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Income and living conditions

GDP per capita in Plovdiv district has continued to grow, though at a slower rate than the national average for 2021. It reached 15,500 BGN, but dropped a place in the ranking (outripped by Burgas) and is now the eighth highest in the country. Salaries and pensions in the district are also increasing. In 2021, the average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract reached 15,900 BGN per year, compared to 18,700 BGN in the country, and the average monthly pension – 525 BGN, versus 537 nationally.

The poverty level remains above the national average. The share of the population living below the national poverty line is 29.4%, versus 22.9% countrywide.

### Labor market

In 2022, the share of the working-age population in Plovdiv district was relatively high – 59.2%, compared to 58.5% countrywide. Economic activity in Plovdiv district went up but with a rate of 69.1%, it remained below the average level of 73.6% in the country. The increase in economic activity was accompanied by a rise in employment and a drop in unemployment, but while the unemployment rate was considerably more favorable than the national average – 4.1 in the district, versus 5.2% in the country, the employment rate is lagging behind – 67.3% in the district, against 70.4% in the country.

The educational structure of the workforce continues to be a major challenge facing the local labor market. It improved in 2022 but again remained slightly less favorable than the country's average. The share of population with a university degree was 26.9%, against 29.8% in the country on average, while the share of those with primary or lower education was 17.8%, compared to 16.0% nationally. The population replacement ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is 66.9%, compared to 65.7% 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 67 young people joining the workforce.

### Investment and business

In 2021, economic and business activity in Plovdiv district registered a considerable rise. The number of non-financial enterprises increased to equal to the national average – 60 per 1,000 people in 2021. FTA acquisition expenditures grew considerably to reach 3,400 BGN/person, which is the second highest figure in the country, below only that of the capital. FDI stock also registered an increase, reaching 3,200 EUR/person. Production value has gone up to 32,300 BGN/person, ranking Plovdiv district fourth in the country in this indicator (below the capital, Sofia district and Stara Zagora). Research and development expenditure per capita in the district has registered a slight decline, but remains second only to that in the capital.

However, Plovdiv district has been lagging behind in the utilization of European funds. By June 30th 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 2,165 BGN/person, compared to 2,836 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest figures for utilization of EU funding were registered in the municipalities of Hissarya and Krichim.

### Infrastructure

The level of development of the district's infrastructure can be assessed as very 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 and is improving – in 2022, 54.7% of the road surface was in good condition, compared to the average of 41.1% countrywide.

The relative share of households with internet access went up in 2022 and remained above the average one nationwide – 89.1%, versus 87.3% respectively.

### Local taxes

In 2023, the local tax burden in Plovdiv district displayed wide variations between the different taxes. The average rates of the taxes on non-residential immovable property for legal entities and on motor vehicles were higher than the respective national averages, though the margin was not large. The local tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property also remained high. At the same time, the tax rates on retail trade and taxi transportation were lower than the country's averages.

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

### Administration

The local authorities' self-assessments on the development of e-government and on the provision of one-stop shop services for 2023 went up and exceeded the respective national averages.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration has retained its relatively high level – 72.4% in the district, versus 70.3% in the country.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities decreased slightly, but remains high at 30.2%, compared to 29.0% nationally. The coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is also higher than average – 85.4%, versus 84.2% nationally.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

Contrary to the nationwide trend towards population ageing, Plovdiv district has been performing relatively well and the data for 2022 place the district among the top three (after the capital and Varna district). The natural growth rate of the population still exceeds the national average with  $-7.4\%$  in the district, versus  $-9.7\%$  in the country. In 2022, Plovdiv continued to attract new residents and its net migration rate of  $7.0\%$  is among the highest in the country.

These processes have once again left their relatively beneficial impact on the age dependency ratios in the district for 2022. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 years is 151.4%, compared to 165.4% in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 years – 35.5%, versus 37.7% nationwide.

A relatively large share of the district's population lives in urban areas – 74.4% in 2022, compared to 73.6% in the country. Plovdiv ranks third after the capital and Sliven as regards population density in its settlements – 2,372 persons/sq. km, against 1,404 persons/sq. km nationally.

### Education

The net enrolment rate in 5th–7th grade in Plovdiv district rose in 2022 and remained above the national average. The share of children attending kindergarten is close to but above the national average. Worse figures, however, have been recorded for the shares of school year repeaters, and the alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is lower than average.

In 2023, students' results in Plovdiv district remained good. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 35.3 points and equal to the national average. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.95, versus the average of 3.93 in the country. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 16.1%, against the national average of 17.9%.

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

### Healthcare

Plovdiv is among the districts with the largest relative number of doctors and hospital beds. In 2022, one local GP cared for 1,599 persons on average, compared to 1,678 persons per doctor in the country. The index for access to specialist physicians is also more favorable than the national average. The local general hospitals provide 8.4 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 per 1,000 people in the country, which ranks Plovdiv second in the country after Pleven district. Plovdiv also retains its top place as regards the relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals – 419 per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people nationwide.

Life expectancy is significantly higher than the national average – 73.6 years, compared to 71.9 years in the country, and the infant mortality rate is around the national average.

### Security and justice

The workloads of the criminal judges in Plovdiv district are among the heaviest in the country; however, this does not impede the speedy delivery of justice. One local judge hears an average of 11.4 cases a month, compared to 10.1 cases a month per judge nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months is 90%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide, and pending cases make up 7%, against 12% in the country.

The number of crimes registered in Plovdiv district remains low, and crime detection relatively high. In 2022, the registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 8.1 per 1,000 people, versus the average of 11.6 per 1,000 people nationwide, thus ranking Plovdiv district third in the country in this indicator. The detection rate has decreased to 51%, but it remains above the national average of 49%.

### 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 public sewerage network – 75.9%, versus 74.8% nationally for 2021, and equally, for a high share of people with accessibility to a public sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 73.8%, against the national average of 66.8%.

The amounts of household waste generated in the district remain high – 495 kg/person per annum, against an average of 445 kg/person nationally. At the same time, the amounts of this waste handed over for treatment and recycling have dropped to 61%, which is below the national average of 74%.

The share of forest areas in Plovdiv district is comparable to the national average of 33%, though the share of degraded land, is considerably lower – 0.17%, against 0.43% in the country for 2022. The installed RES capacities are above the national average.

### Culture and tourism

Cultural life in Plovdiv district is relatively active. In 2022, cinema visits recorded a considerable increase, reaching 705 per 1,000 people, against 590 per 1,000 people nationally. Visits to the local libraries also recorded an increase, though they remained below the national average.

The number of beds in accommodation facilities in Plovdiv district was 22 per 1,000 people for 2022, and the number of overnight stays – 1,965 per 1,000 people, both of which values are relatively high, with the exception of those in the seaside districts.

## Key indicators for the district of Plovdiv

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	14,648	15,547	n.a.	<b>20,212</b>
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	14,171	15,937	n.a.	<b>18,733</b>
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	25.8	26.8	29.4	<b>22.9</b>
Share of the working-age population (%)	60.4	60.6	59.2	<b>58.5</b>
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	68.7	66.3	67.3	<b>70.4</b>
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	6.2	4.6	4.1	<b>5.2</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	19.7	19.2	17.8	<b>16.0</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	26.4	26.0	26.9	<b>29.8</b>
Production value per capita (BGN)	27,188	32,293	n.a.	<b>31,242</b>
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	2,560	3,379	n.a.	<b>3,097</b>
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	2,986	3,228	n.a.	<b>4,098</b>
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	79.9	88.9	89.1	<b>87.3</b>
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	40.9	46.5	54.7	<b>41.1</b>
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	99.0	103.1	85.4	<b>84.2</b>
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	71.1	72.4	72.4	<b>70.3</b>

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-7.4	<b>-9.7</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	7.0	<b>4.2</b>
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.30	4.10	3.95	<b>3.93</b>
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	38.7	35.0	35.3	<b>35.3</b>
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	87.4	87.6	91.8	<b>90.7</b>
Average life expectancy (years)***	75.0	73.9	73.6	<b>71.9</b>
Share of people with health insurance (%)	87.4	87.1	91.5	<b>93.5</b>
Population per one GP (persons)	1,618	1,637	1,599	<b>1,678</b>
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	8.1	7.5	8.1	<b>11.6</b>
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	7.7	7.6	7.3	<b>11.6</b>
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	82.4	75.9	n.a.	<b>74.8</b>
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	469	495	n.a.	<b>445</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	64.6	61.5	n.a.	<b>74.0</b>
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	234	438	705	<b>590</b>
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	1,003	1,385	1,965	<b>3,739</b>

\* The 2022 data are included in the 2023 study. The same is valid for the previous years.

\*\* The data refer to the 2022-23 academic year, while the State matriculation exams took place in 2023. The same is valid for the previous years.

\*\*\* Data are for three-year periods and are updated annually.