Shumen district

- ▶ Population (2021) — 151,465
- ▶ Territory (sq. km) — 3,390
- ▶ Number of settlements — 151
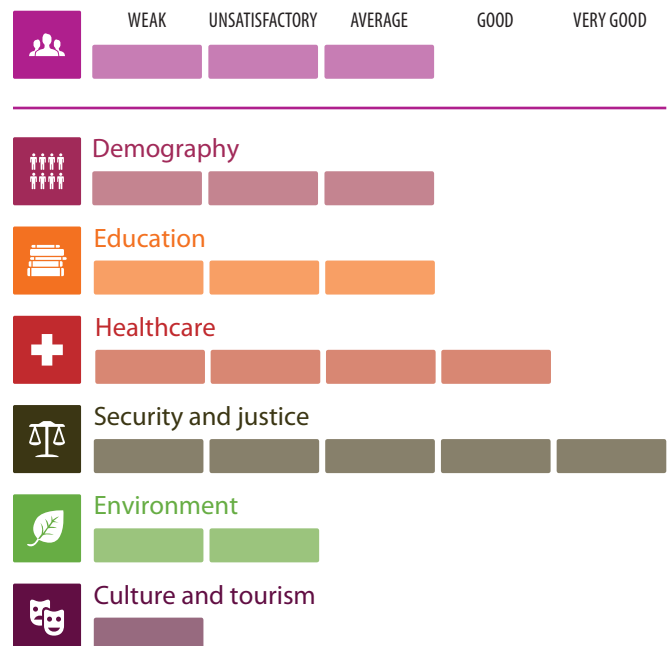- ▶ Share of urban population (%) — 62.5

GDP, incomes and pensions in Shumen district are continuing to grow. Economic activity is traditionally high and has been increasing further. This increase has been accompanied by a rise in both employment and unemployment. Investment activity remains relatively slack. Shumen is among the best performing districts in the category assessing infrastructure. The municipalities in the district have kept local taxes relatively low. The self-assessments of the local administrations on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services have gone up.

The natural population growth rate is less favorable than average, but the district has managed to attract new residents. Students' results continue to be among the poorest in the country. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. The workloads of the local criminal judges remain low and this has a favorable effect on the speed of delivery of justice. The number of crimes in the district is low and the detection rate is high. The share of degraded territory is limited. Tourism in the district also has a relatively limited presence.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Income and living conditions

Labor market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪▪

Income and living conditions ▪▪

The growth of GDP per capita in Shumen district has continued, reaching 12,000 BGN/person and placing the district around the middle but still in the lower half of the 2021 ranking scale for this indicator. The trend towards rising incomes and pensions is also maintained. The average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract is 15,100 BGN, versus 18,700 BGN in the country, and the average monthly pension – 473 BGN, versus 537 BGN nationally.

The share of the population living below the national poverty line has gone up but remains below the national average – 22.5% in the district, compared to 22.9% in the country for 2022.

Labor market ▪▪▪

In 2022, the share of the working-age population was close to, but below the national average – 57.8% in the district, compared to 58.5% in the country. Economic activity in the district is traditionally high and in 2022 it rose further to reach 76.4%, compared to 73.6% in the country. This increase has been accompanied by a rise in both employment and unemployment, with both rates remaining less favorable than the country's average. The employment rate has reached 65.8, against 70.4% in the country, and the unemployment rate – 9.4%, versus 5.2% nationally.

A challenge still facing the labor market in Shumen district is the educational structure of the workforce. The share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education has decreased slightly to 26.8%, against the national average of 16.0%. The share of those with a university degree has increased slightly, reaching 24.8%, compared to 29.8% in the country.

In 2021, the population replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 was 61.8%, compared to 65.7% in the country. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market, there are 62 young people who will join the workforce.

Investment and business ▪▪

Investment activity in Shumen district again remained relatively slack in 2021. The number of enterprises in Shumen district is small – 40 per 1,000 people, against 60 per 1,000 people nationally. FTA acquisition expenditures have gone up but remain considerably low – 1,897 BGN/person, versus 3,097 BGN countrywide. The volume of attracted FDI has stagnated and remains significantly lower than the national average – 708 EUR/person in the district, compared to 4,100 EUR/person in the country. Production has grown significantly (by 27%) to 21,100 BGN/person.

Research and development expenditure has generally remained at a level higher than in most other districts.

Shumen is also among the districts with relatively low utilization of European funds. By 30 June 2023, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 2,285 BGN/person, against 2,836 BGN/person nationwide. Within the district, the highest amounts were utilized by the municipality of Novi Pazar, which is also the only one in Shumen district where the utilized funds exceed the national average.

Infrastructure ▪▪▪▪▪▪

Shumen is among the best performing districts in the category assessing infrastructure, where it is preceded only by Varna district. The density of the road and railway networks is higher than the national average. Shumen was also once again the district with the largest share of first-class roads and highways in the country in 2022 – 36.4%, compared to 18.5% in the country. Road quality has also improved but remains below the national average, with road surfaces in good condition making up 37.8% in 2022, versus 41.1% in the country.

Household access to the internet has increased to 86.8% but remains lower than the country's average of 87.3%.

Local taxes ▪▪▪▪▪

The municipalities in Shumen district again kept the levels of local taxes relatively low in 2023. The average rates were slightly higher than the respective national averages for immovable non-residential property for legal entities and for motor vehicles. At the same time, the taxes on taxi transportation, on non-gratuitous acquisition of property and retail trade were significantly lower.

Within the district, the highest local taxes are levied by the municipalities of Novi Pazar and Kaolinovo, and the lowest – by those of Hitrino and Nikola Kozlevo.

Administration ▪▪▪▪

The self-assessments of the local administrations on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services went up in 2023 and for the first time exceeded the national average. The AIP active transparency rating of the municipalities in the district also recorded a rise and remained above the country's average – 76.5% in the district, compared to 70.3% nationally.

The share of own revenues of the district's municipalities remained low in 2022 at 20.9%, versus 29.0% nationally, while the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues was 71.7%, against 84.2% nationally.

⚙ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▀▀▀

⚏ Demography ▀▀▀

The natural population growth is less favorable than the country's average but Shumen district manages to attract new residents. In 2022, the natural population growth rate was –11.7‰, compared to –9.7‰ nationally. The net migration rate was positive and relatively high at 6.4‰.

The age dependency rate as a ratio between the population aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 186.7%, compared to the national average of 165.9%, and to the 15–19 age group – 40.3%, versus 37.7% in the country.

The share of urban population, as well as population density, again remained low in 2022. The share of the population living in urban settlements was 62.5%, versus the national average of 73.6%; population density was 771 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,404 people/sq. km on average countrywide.

▤ Education ▀▀▀

Kindergarten and school coverage in the district went significantly up in 2022. The share of children attending kindergarten reached 88.7%, compared to 87.3% nationwide. The net enrolment in 5th–7th grade was 90.3%, against 90.7% nationally. The share of school year repeaters equals the national average. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is relatively weak, mainly due to the inflated enrolment in ICT courses unmatched by the local job opportunities.

In 2022, students' results again remained among the lowest in the country. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 26.2 points, versus 35.3 points in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was the lowest in the country – "Good" 3.43, compared to 3.93 in the country, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was the highest – 30.6%, against 17.9% nationally.

The number of university students has gone up to 45 per 1,000 people, remaining higher than the national average of 33 students per 1,000 people.

✚ Healthcare ▀▀▀▀

The healthcare system in Shumen district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. The number of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians – is below the national average. In 2022, there was one GP per 1,705 persons, compared to 1,678 persons per doctor nationally. The number of beds in the district's general hospitals remains extremely low, with 3.0 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 beds per 1,000 people in the country. The number of hospitalizations is half the national average – 115 persons per 1,000 people, compared to the national average of 235 persons per 1,000 people. This suggests that the residents may be seeking medical care outside the district.

Infant mortality registered a significant decline in 2022. However, the average life expectancy is below the national average. The share of population with health insurance again went up in 2022 to exceed the national average.

⚖ Security and justice ▀▀▀▀▀▀

The workloads of criminal judges in the district remained low in 2022, with a favorable effect on the speed of delivery of justice. One criminal judge heard an average of 7.3 cases per month, compared to an average of 10.1 cases per judge in the country. The share of criminal cases closed within 3 months reached 97%, against 89% nationally, while that of pending cases was among the lowest in the country – 5%, against 12% nationwide.

The number of crimes in Shumen district is low, and the detection rate is high. The crimes against the person and property registered in 2022 amount to 9.0 per 1,000 people, compared to 11.6 per 1,000 people nationally. The proportion of cleared crimes is 64% against 49% nationally.

❦ Environment ▀▀

The volumes of household waste in Shumen district have been rising but remain relatively low, while its management is deteriorating. In 2021, the amount of household waste generated in the district was 370 kg/person, compared to the national average of 445 kg/person; however, a relatively low share was handed over for treatment and recycling.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network and it remains low – 56.7% in 2021, against 74.8% in the country. The share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant is 53.0%, compared to 66.8% countrywide. The installed RES capacities are relatively small.

The share of forest areas is close to the national average, but that of degraded land is rather more limited.

⦿ Culture and tourism ▀

Visits to the local museums and libraries rose considerably in 2022 to exceed the respective national averages. Museums attracted 966 persons per 1,000 people, versus 619 per 1,000 people in the country. Visits to libraries reached 1,307 per 1,000 people, which is the highest number for the whole country, where the average is 584 per 1,000 people. The number of cinema visits has registered a slight decline and remains exceptionally low – 66 per 1,000 people, compared to 590 per 1,000 people nationally.

Tourism in the district also has a relatively weak presence. The number of beds in accommodation facilities in 2022 was 12 per 1,000 people, compared to 55 per 1,000 people in the country, and the number of overnight stays – 506 per 1,000 people, compared to 3,739 per 1000 people in the country. Shumen is also the district with the lowest share of people employed in the culture, sports and entertainment sector – 0.07%, compared to 1.02% in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Shumen

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,475	11,989	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	13,345	15,105	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	21.5	15.4	22.5	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	60.0	60.0	57.8	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	66.5	64.1	65.8	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	11.0	9.2	9.4	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	27.1	27.8	26.8	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	24.6	24.2	24.8	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	16,613	21,145	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,777	1,897	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	686	708	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	82.5	84.6	86.8	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	34.6	37.6	37.8	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	80.5	78.1	71.7	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	66.4	76.1	76.5	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	−11.7	−9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	6.4	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.98	3.58	3.43	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	30.4	27.0	26.2	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	82.4	79.6	90.3	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	73.7	72.4	71.3	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	87.9	88.1	98.9	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	1,911	1,862	1,705	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	7.9	8.6	9.0	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	4.7	2.7	4.9	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	57.3	56.7	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	303	370	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	94.4	45.4	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	22	68	66	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	356	372	506	3,739

* 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.