

Silistra district

- ▶ Population (2021)
- ▶ Territory (sq. km)
- ▶ Number of settlements
- ▶ Share of urban population (%)

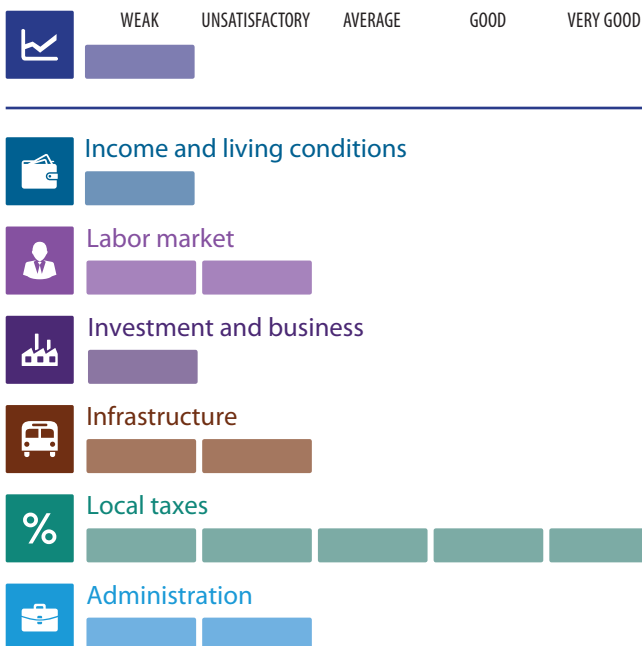
97,770
2,846
118
44.8



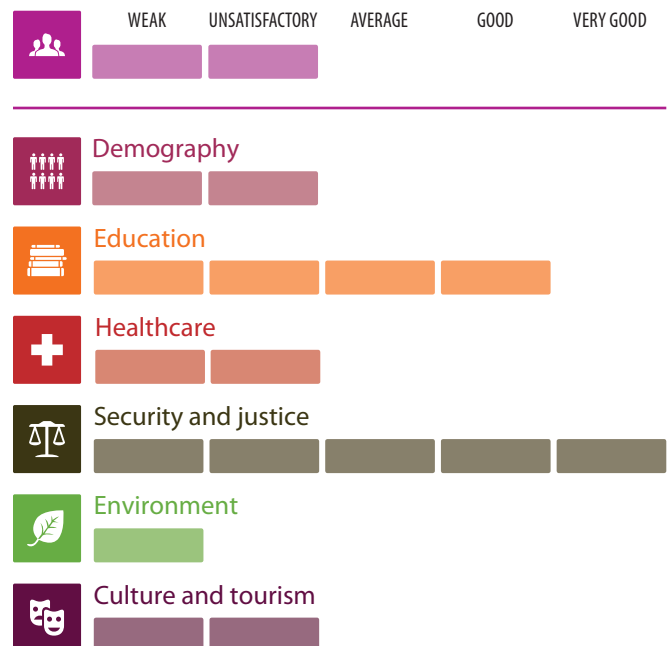
Silistra is once again the district with the lowest GDP per capita, despite its relatively high growth rate. The local labor market is still facing the challenge of a disadvantageous educational structure of the workforce and population aging. Silistra is among the regions with very low investment activity. The quality of the road surface is relatively high. All monitored local taxes are lower than the respective national averages. The local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government has registered a considerable increase and is relatively high. The average rating for the trans-

parency of the local government is lagging behind. Silistra is among the districts with the worst demographic profile. Students' results are relatively low. Healthcare in Silistra district suffers from a shortage of both doctors and hospital beds. The workloads of the criminal judges in Silistra district are close to the national average, but the speed of delivery of justice is considerably higher. Silistra is among the districts with the worst performance as regards the environment indicators. Cultural life in the district is intensifying. The number of library visits is above the national average. Tourism in the district is poorly developed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■

Income and living conditions ■■

Silistra is the district with the lowest rating in this category. Although in 2021 GDP per capita continued to grow relatively fast, Silistra is among the districts with the lowest GDP per capita – 10,000 BGN/person, compared to the national average of 20,200 BGN/person. Salaries and pensions continue to increase, but are still relatively low. The average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract has reached 13,300 BGN, compared to 18,700 BGN in the country. The average monthly pension is growing at a record rate for the country, but is among the three lowest nationwide (before those in the districts of Kardzhali and Razgrad).

These indicators are a prerequisite for a high poverty level in the district. In 2022, the relative share of the population living below the national poverty line was the third highest (after that in the districts of Montana and Vidin) – 34.4%, versus 22.9% nationwide.

Labor market ■■■

In 2022, the development of the local labor market remained unsatisfactory, ranking Silistra in the second lowest place (only before Montana). The share of the working-age population has dropped to 55.6%, against 58.5% in the country.

Economic activity is declining and is the second lowest in the country, with a rate of 64.0% (compared to 73.6% in the country). This decrease has been accompanied by a parallel rise in both employment and unemployment. The employment rate reaches 56.3%, against the national average of 70.4. Unemployment is up to 10.4%, which is double the national average. The educational structure of the workforce continues to be a major challenge facing the labor market. In 2022, the share of the population aged 25-64 with primary or lower education decreased to 26.5% of the workforce, compared to 16.0% nationwide, while the share of those with a university degree went down to 21.6%, versus 29.8% countrywide,

Population ageing is another negative factor for the local labor market.

Investment and business ■■

Silistra is among the country's districts with low investment activity. In 2021, the number of nonfinancial enterprises was 38 per 1,000 population in 2020, compared to 60 per 1,000 population countrywide. Foreign and domestic investment also remains relatively low. FTA expenditures have increased to 2,100 BGN/person (versus 3,100 BGN/person nationally), and FDI stock – to 400 EUR/person, compared to the national average of 4,100 EUR/person. Silistra is also one of the districts with the lowest production value – 12,500 BGN/person, against 31,200 BGN/person respectively.

The municipalities in Silistra district are also lagging behind as regards the utilization of European funds. By June 30th 2023,

payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 2,557 BGN/person, versus 2,836 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the highest amounts were utilized by the municipality of Tutrakan.

Spending on research and development is extremely low – 6 BGN per capita (compared to 156 BGN per capita in the country).

Infrastructure ■■■

The density of the road network in Silistra district is almost identical to the average one in the country – 18 km/100 sq. m of territory. At the same time, the share of first-class roads is considerably below average – 11.3% in 2021, against 18.5% countrywide. Nevertheless, the quality of the road surface is relatively high – 44% of the roads are in good condition, versus 41% in the country.

In most northern Bulgarian districts, railroad density is typically lower, and in Silistra district it is 2.5 km/100 sq. km of territory, compared to 3.6 km/100 sq. km in the country.

Access to the internet is available to 70.6% of the households in the district, compared to the average of 87.3% nationwide in 2022, which is the second lowest figure (only before Sliven) in this category for 2022.

Local taxes ■■■■■■

As is typical of the less economically developed districts, the average level of local taxes in Silistra is relatively low. In 2023, all monitored local taxes were lower than the respective national averages. The biggest margin occurred in the rates for retail trade, motor vehicles and taxi transportation.

Within the district, the municipalities of Kainardzha, Alfatar and Sitovo levy the lowest local taxes, while the highest rates are in Dulovo municipality.

Administration ■■■

In 2023, the local authorities' self-assessment on the development of e-government registered a considerable increase and was relatively high. The local authorities' self-assessment on the provision of one-stop shop services, was again equal to the national average.

The average AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration is lagging considerably behind the national average – 58.8% in Silistra district, versus 70.3% in the country.

In 2022, the share of own revenues in the district's municipalities was 17.5%, against 29.0% nationally, and the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues was 74.2%, versus 84.2% nationally.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Demography ■■■

Silistra is among the districts (alongside Vidin and Smolyan) with the worst demographic profile for 2022. The natural population growth rate in Silistra district was -14.0% , compared to -9.7% in the country. The net migration rate was positive but relatively low -1.3% .

These developments affect the age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 210.6%, compared to 165.9% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 – 45.9%, versus the national average of 37.7%.

Silistra is one of the districts with the smallest share of urban population, after Kardzhali district. In 2022, 44.8% of the population were living in urban settlements, against 73.6% countrywide. Population density is twice as low as the national average – 700 persons/sq. km, against 1,404 persons/sq. km countrywide.

Education ■■■■

The share of children in the district attending kindergarten increased in 2022 and is now close to the national average. The rate of enrolment in 5th to 7th grade also went up but remained below the national average – 88.8% in Silistra district, compared to 90.7% nationally. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is relatively high due to the relatively high share of agriculture in the economy, which is also linked to the higher share of admissions to agricultural courses in vocational education. At the same time, the ICT sector is not represented in either employment or education.

Students' results in Silistra district were again relatively poor in 2023.

The only provider of higher education in the district is a branch of Ruse University, with a very small number of university students – just 3 students per 1,000 persons, compared to 33 students per 1,000 people nationally.

Healthcare ■■■

Life expectancy in the district is the second lowest in the country (after Vidin district).

The healthcare system in Silistra district continues to suffer from a shortage of specialist physicians, while in 2022 the number of beds in the local general hospitals was again below the national average. One local GP cares for 1,964 persons on average, compared to 1,678 persons per doctor in the country. The number of beds in the local general hospitals has consistently increased in the past few years, but their proportion to the population remains relatively low – 5.0 beds per 1,000 people, compared to 5.9 beds per 1,000 people in the country. The relative number of patients treated in the local general hospitals is 198 per 1,000 people, compared to 235 per 1,000 people nationwide. The infant mortality rate has fallen considerably.

Security and justice ■■■■■■

Silistra is among the top performers in the indicators assessing security and justice. The workloads of the local criminal judges in the district are close to the national average, but the speed of delivery of justice was considerably higher in 2022. One local judge hears an average of 9.8 criminal cases a month, compared to 10.1 cases per judge nationally. The share of criminal cases closed within 3 months is 96%, against the national average of 89%, and the share of pending cases – 19%, versus 12% in the country.

The crime rate has been going up but remains relatively low, while the detection rate is high. In 2022, registered crimes against the person and property in the district amounted to 8.5 per 1,000 population, versus the average of 11.6 per 1,000 population nationwide. The detection rate stood at 62.0%, compared to the national average of 49%.

Environment ■■

Silistra is also among the worst performing districts as regards the environmental indicators. One major factor for the low figures is the extremely small amount of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling – a bare 19%, versus 74% nationally. At the same time, the amount of generated household waste is similar to the national average – an annual of 413 kg/person in the district, versus 445 kg/person in the country for 2021.

Due to the low level of urbanization, a relatively small share of the population lives in settlements with a public sewerage network – 51.0%, compared to 74.8% in the country. Nevertheless, the whole public sewerage network is connected to wastewater treatment plants.

The share of forest areas in Silistra district is low – 15%, versus 33% countrywide. The share of degraded land, however, is close to the national average – 0.41%, against 0.43% in the country. The installed RES capacities are small – 0.40 kW per person, compared to 0.85 kW per person in the country.

Culture and tourism ■■■

Cinema visits have gone up but remain low – 100 per 1,000 people, against 5901 per 1,000 people nationally. Visits to the local museums number 336 per 1,000 people, against 619 per 1,000 people in the country. Visits to the local theatres are also relatively few. Only visits to the local libraries exceed the national average.

Tourism in the district is not well developed. The number of beds in accommodation facilities is 8 per 1,000 people, versus 55 per 1,000 people, and the number of overnight stays is 495 per 1,000 people, against 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country in 2022. The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector is five times lower than in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Silistra

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	8,307	9,975	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	11,727	13,272	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	32.4	23.4	34.4	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	57.5	57.6	55.6	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	54.1	55.8	56.3	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	12.3	9.4	10.4	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	30.7	28.2	26.5	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	20.8	22.6	21.6	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	9,979	12,523	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	1,388	2,078	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	385	400	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	80.7	79.0	70.6	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	67.4	59.6	44.0	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	62.4	63.2	74.2	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	66.4	58.6	58.8	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	-14.0	-9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	1.3	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.94	3.65	3.69	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	30.3	26.9	26.8	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	80.2	77.8	88.8	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	72.9	71.0	70.2	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	87.6	88.3	95.4	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	2,193	2,097	1,964	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	8.1	7.4	8.5	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	9.3	5.4	9.8	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	51.2	51.0	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	420	413	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	18.2	19.5	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	25	80	110	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	243	297	495	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.