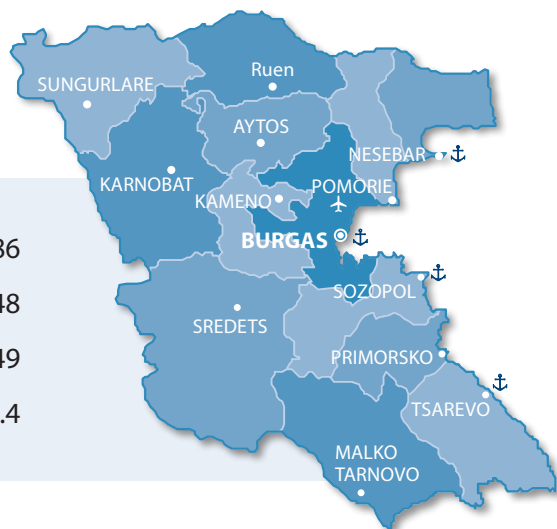# Burgas District

- ▶ Population (2021) **380,286**
- ▶ Territory (sq. km) **7,748**
- ▶ Number of settlements **249**
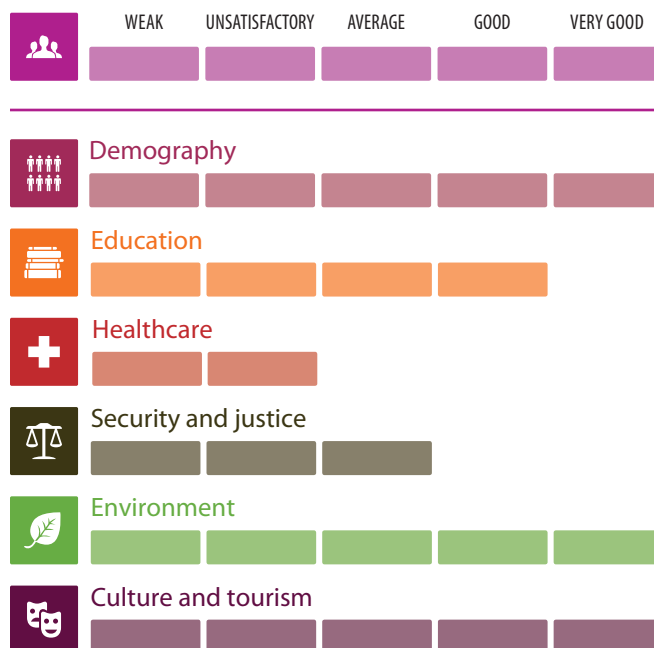- ▶ Share of urban population (%) **76.4**

GDP per capita in the district of Burgas registered a considerable increase in 2021. Levels of income inequality and poverty remain relatively low. In 2022, employment went up and unemployment went down. Investment and business activity in Burgas district is once again among the highest in the country. The share of highways and first-class roads is high, but the quality of the road surface remains low. In 2022, Burgas again ranked among the districts with the highest local tax rates in the country. The demographic indicators place Burgas district among the top four in the country. In 2023, the results of the students in the district in the NEA in mathematics at the end of 7th grade were relatively high. However, the average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature continues to be relatively low. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. Crime rates are rising and remain at levels above the national average. The share of forest areas is high. Burgas is the district with the highest rating in the culture and tourism sector.

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

After a momentary decrease in the volume of GDP per capita in 2020, in 2021 it registered a record growth of 41%, compared to 17% in the country, and reached 15,000 BGN/person. However, salaries have continued to grow relatively slowly and remain below the national average. The growth of pensions in the district is also relatively weak, although their average amount is high – 600 BGN, versus 537 BGN in the country.

Levels of income inequality and poverty remained relatively low in 2022. The Gini coefficient for Burgas district is 38.0, against 38.4 in the country. The relative share of the population living below the national poverty line is 22.1%, against 22.9% nationally, and for the second consecutive year has continued to decline.

Labor market

The share of the working-age population in Burgas district has decreased to 58.9%, but remains above the national average of 58.5%. Economic activity grew in 2022, although it remained relatively low – 71.0% in the district, compared to 73.6% in the country. This increase has been accompanied by a rise in employment and a fall in unemployment. The employment rate has reached 67.5%, versus 70.4% nationally, and the unemployment rate – 4.0%, against 5.2% countrywide.

The educational status of the workforce in the district is relatively low. The share of people aged 25–64 with higher education has dropped to 22.3%, against 29.8% on a national level, but the share of people with primary or lower education has also dropped to 19.1%, compared to the national average of 16.0%.

The population replacement rate as a ratio of those aged 15–19 to those aged 60–64 is decreasing and is among the most favorable ones in the country – 72.0%, versus 65.7% countrywide. Thus, for every 100 people who will leave the workforce in the next few years, there are 72 young people who will enter the labor market.

Investment and business

In 2021, investment and business activity in Burgas district again remained relatively high. The number of non-financial enterprises relative to the population remained at 71 per 1,000 people, second only to the capital district. Burgas continues to be among the districts with the highest relative volume of FDI, again ranking third (after the capital and Sofia district) with 5,600 EUR/person. There has been an increase in FTA acquisition expenditure per capita, but the output per capita has shrunk to 22,600 BGN.

Payments made to beneficiaries of EU projects have grown as well, albeit by 30 June 2023 they still remained below the national average levels. Within the district, the largest sums were utilized by the municipalities of Primorsko, Sozopol and Malko Tarnovo – over 5,000 BGN/person.

Infrastructure

The density of the road and railroad networks in the district of Burgas again remained relatively low in 2022. The share of highways and first-class roads is high (26%) but the quality of the road surfaces remains low. The share of good quality road surfaces is 29.4%, against the national average of 41.1%.

The share of households with internet access has risen to 90.8%, versus the national average of 87.3%.

Local taxes

In 2023, Burgas remained one of the districts with the highest level of local taxation. The margin is particularly large in the taxation on motor vehicles, retail trade and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property. Burgas is indeed the district with the highest motor vehicle taxation rates – 1.82 BGN/kW on average, versus the national average of 1.56 BGN/kW. The average annual tax for taxi transportation is also among the highest – 547 BGN, compared to 471 BGN in the country.

Sozopol is the municipality levying the highest local taxes not only in the district but also in the whole of the country. Municipalities with relatively higher tax rates also include the tourist towns of Pomorie, Primorsko and the city of Burgas. Karnobat and Aitos impose the lowest rates within the district.

Administration

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of municipalities in the district is the second highest in the country, after that of the capital – 38%, compared to the national average of 29% in 2022. The district is also among the leaders in covering municipal expenditures with local revenues, probably due to good tourism and property market development.

The local authorities' self-assessment ratings on the development of e-government went up in 2023 and are also among the highest in the country. At the same time, however, the self-assessments on their provision of one-stop shop administrative services lag behind the national average.

The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration rose slightly in 2023 and remains relatively high at 72.7%, versus the national average of 70.3%.

👥 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪▪▪

🏛 Demography ▪▪▪▪▪

The demographic indicators place Burgas district among the top four in the country, after Sofia (capital city), Varna and Plovdiv. The rate of natural population growth is still negative, though at −8.2‰ in 2022 it is still among the highest in the country, against the national average of −9.7‰. Burgas district also attracts many new residents and its net migration rate of 7.1‰ is the third highest in the country, after Kurdzhali district and the capital. This also reflects on the age dependency ratios in the district. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 is 145.6%, compared to 165.9% in the country, and to those aged 15–64 it is 35.1%, versus 37.7% nationwide.

The share of urban population and the population density in urban areas in Burgas district remain above the respective national averages.

📖 Education ▪▪▪▪

The share of children enrolled in local kindergartens has been increasing and in 2022 it was above the national average – 88.4% in the district, compared to 87.3% in the country.

The enrolment rate in 5th–7th grade has continued to rise, though in 2022 it still remained below the national average. The share of school year repeaters also rose to 0.9%, against the national average of 1.2%. The index for the alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy is rising, but it still remains below the national average.

In 2023, the results in the NEA in mathematics at the end of 7th grade were relatively high – 37.2 points on average, compared to the national average of 35.3 points. However, the average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature remained relatively low. The average grade in 2023 was "Good" 3.68, compared to 3.93 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was 21.9%, against 17.9% on average in the country.

The number of university students in the district relative to the population decreased in 2022 to 6.5 per 1,000 people, versus 33.2 per 1,000 people in the country.

✚ Healthcare ▪▪

In 2022, the share of people with health insurance in Burgas district rose considerably to reach 90.3%, compared to the national average of 93.5%, but it still remained among the lowest in the country. Healthcare in the district also suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. There are 2,037 people per one GP, compared to 1,678 people per one GP in the country. The number of hospital beds is 4.7 per 1,000 people, against 5.9 hospital beds per 1,000 people countrywide. The number of patients treated in the local general hospitals also remains significantly lower than the national average.

The infant mortality rate has risen and in 2022 it still remained relatively high −7.5‰, compared to the national average of 4.8‰. At the same time, the average life expectancy of the lo-

cal population is decreasing, though it remains relatively high at 73.1 years, compared to 71.9 years in the country.

⚖ Security and justice ▪▪▪

Court workloads in Burgas district were close to but above the national average in 2022. There were on average 11.0 cases a month per one criminal judge, compared to 10.1 nationally. The speed of delivery of justice was also close to the national average. The share of cases closed within 3 months was 89% and equaled the national average, and the share of pending cases – 13%, against 12% in the country.

The crime rate in the district has been rising and remains above the national average. In 2022, the registered crimes against the person and property in Burgas district amounted to 12.5 per 1,000 people, with 11.6 per 1,000 people as the national figure. At the same time, detection rates have gone down to 48%, versus the national average of 49%.

🌿 Environment ▪▪▪▪▪

In 2021, Burgas was once again among the districts with high amounts of waste generated by the households – an annual of 481 kg/person, against 445 kg/person on a national scale. At the same time, however, a large share of this waste was handed over for treatment and recycling – 94%, against 74% as the national average.

With its high share of urban people, a relatively large part of them live in settlements with a public sewerage network – 78.5%, versus 74.8% countrywide, and in settlements with a sewerage system connected to a waste water treatment plant – 71.1%, against the national average of 66.8%.

By 30 June 2023, the relative volume of installed RES capacities in Blagoevgrad district was 0.43 kW/person, against the national average of 0.85 kW/person. The share of forest areas is high – 41%, compared to 33% nationally, and that of degraded land low – 0.25%, versus 0.43% nationally in 2022.

🎭 Culture and tourism ▪▪▪▪▪

Burgas is the district with the highest score in the culture and tourism indicator. Visits to cinemas and libraries increased in 2022 and are above the national average relative to the population. Visits to theatres and museums are also increasing but remain, albeit slightly, below the national average.

Burgas is actually the district with the highest relative number of beds in accommodation facilities (375 per 1,000 people, versus 55 per 1,000 people in the country), as well as the number of overnight stays (23,733 per 1,000 people, versus 3,739 per 1,000 people in the country) in 2022. The share of people employed in the culture, sport and entertainment sector in the district is also relatively high.

Key indicators for the district of Burgas

Economic Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,181	15,815	n.a.	20,212
Average gross annual salary of people employed in a labor or service contract (BGN)	13,473	14,852	n.a.	18,733
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	26.5	24.6	22.1	22.9
Share of the working-age population (%)	60.1	60.2	58.9	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	64.6	64.3	67.5	70.4
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	6.6	4.7	4.0	5.2
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	19.6	19.5	19.1	16.0
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	24.2	24.4	22.3	29.8
Production value per capita (BGN)	24,365	22,628	n.a.	31,242
Expenditures on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	2,381	2,893	n.a.	3,097
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises per capita (cumulative) (EUR)	5,888	5,643	n.a.	4,098
Share of households with broadband internet access (%)	79.8	82.9	90.8	87.3
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	26.4	31.0	29.4	41.1
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	87.9	101.3	101.8	84.2
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	73.8	72.4	72.7	70.3

Social Development Indicators	2020	2021	2022	National average
Natural population growth rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	−8.2	−9.7
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	n.a.	7.1	4.2
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.12	3.85	3.68	3.93
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	39.3	36.9	37.2	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	85.5	84.8	90.2	90.7
Average life expectancy (years)***	75.0	73.8	73.1	71.9
Share of people with health insurance (%)	84.3	83.9	90.3	93.5
Population per one GP (persons)	2,058	2,129	2,037	1,678
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	11.5	11.3	12.5	11.6
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	10.4	12.2	13.0	11.6
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network (%)	79.2	78.5	n.a.	74.8
Generated household waste per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	392	481	n.a.	445
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	91.9	93.6	n.a.	74.0
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	193	402	674	590
Overnight stays in accommodation facilities (number/1,000 population)	8,806	15,447	23,733	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.