

Razgrad

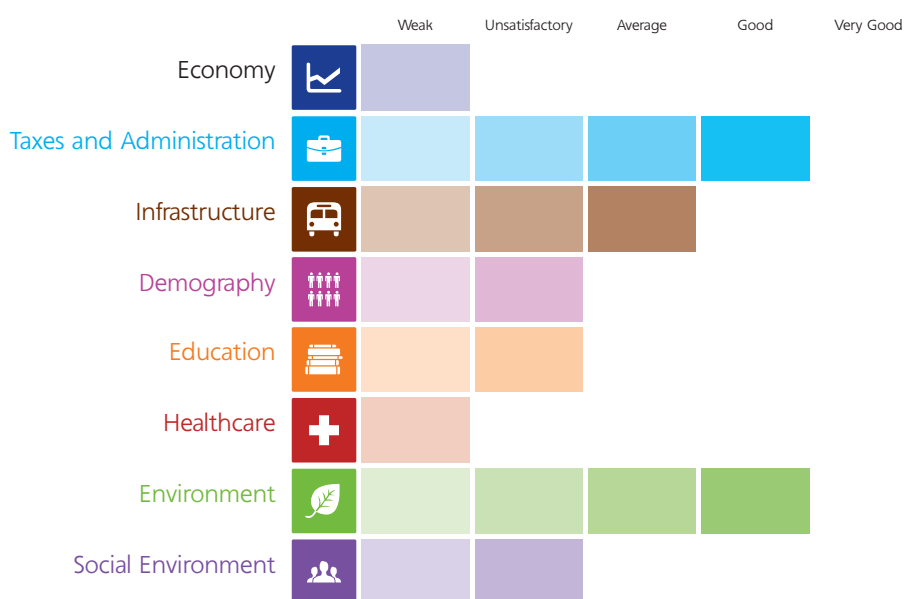
Population (2013)	121 380
Area (sq. km.)	2 639.7
Number of settlements	119
Share of urban population (%)	47.2



Overview

Razgrad District has been seriously impacted by the world financial and economic crisis but started to recover in 2010 even faster than the country's average rates. The economy's structure has continued to differ from the national – agriculture plays a significant role in the local economy compared to most districts in Bulgaria. Razgrad is one of the districts with the most disbursed EU funds to municipalities as beneficiaries under operational programmes, but the high unemployment rate and the low employment rate have remained a challenge.

The district stands out with the following fact: 100% of first-class roads are in good condition, although the quality of second- and third-class roads has not been classified as good. In the field of education, low results of pupils at state matriculation exams and the relatively low share of people with tertiary education could be noted. The sharp shortage of staff poses a serious problem for the district.



Economy

The GDP per capita in Razgrad District was 6,307 BGN in 2011. Following the initial economic downturn, the district started to get out of the crisis's negative consequences and the GDP started to increase again in 2009. Expenditure on acquisition of fixed tangible assets has also grown reaching 1,363 BGN per capita in 2012 compared to the nationwide average of 2,614 per capita. Following the increase in foreign direct investments till 2010, a slight outflow of investments was observed in 2011. Investment activities were again higher in 2012 and cumulative foreign direct investments in non-financial enterprises reached 2,017.9 euro in Razgrad District as at the end of the year (the nationwide average being 3,005 euro per capita). The structure of the economy is considerably different compared to the rest of the country. Services amounted to slightly less than half of the gross value added in the district in 2011 (48.8%), industry – about one third (32.8%), and agriculture amounted to 18.9%.

The unemployment rate has continued to be a challenge in the district. In 2013, only the districts of Shumen and Silistra featured higher unemployment rate. The annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ was 20.7%, Bulgaria's average being 12.9%. The employment rate has also shown the problems that the labour market of the district had faced – it was 39.9% in 2013 (the country's average being 46.9%). It is embarrassing that the employment rate has continued to decrease for the past year while the national average of the employment rate has slowly increased.

2013 was a particularly good year in respect of funds disbursed to the municipalities of Razgrad District under operational programmes. As at 31 January 2014, the district's municipalities have received 558.1 BGN per capita, which has been much higher than the country's average of 379.8 BGN per capita. This has ranked Razgrad District sixth in terms of disbursed funds to municipalities as beneficiaries under operational programmes as at the beginning of 2014. The municipalities of Loznitsa and Kubrat have best utilised these funds – 1,758.5 BGN per capita or a total of 16 m BGN and 1,094.5 BGN per capita or a total of 20 m BGN respectively.

Taxes and administration

The assessment of Razgrad District is good in the Taxes and Administration category. The businesses' assessment of the performance of local administration was average in 2014 – 3.3 points (from 1 to 5), which was slightly higher than the national average of 3.1. Businesses have assessed responsiveness, fast servicing and staff qualification higher than the other districts. This is also valid for the clear requirements when working with the administration. The levels of corruption and the quality of rendered e-services have also been assessed better than the country's average. Every one out of three companies (33.4%) considers that investments will increase in the following 12 months (June 2014–May 2015), and 41.7% are of the opinion that their company revenues will rise. Expectancies of businesses on the number of employed persons are less optimistic. While a nationwide average of 30% of the surveyed people forecast an increase in the number of employed people for the next 12 months, this percentage is far less for Razgrad District – 8.4%. The rates of local taxes and charges are about the national average.

2014 Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies by the 'Access to Information Program' Foundation is 47.3 points for Razgrad District, out of 82.4 points. Nonetheless, this result is above the country's average of 44.1 points.

Infrastructure

The road network density in Razgrad District is slightly better than the country's average, though the proportion of roads in good condition is lower – 34.5% compared to 39.6%. The lower quality of roads is due to the poor state of second-class roads and especially the third-class ones while first-class road (a total of 56.2 km) are in a good state. It should be noted that this is the only district in Bulgaria featuring 100% of first-class roads in good condition.

The relative share of households with internet access is 51.2%, and the relative share of people (aged 16 to 74) that have used the internet in the past 12 months has been 51.5%. The average values for Bulgaria are higher – 53.7% and 56.2% respectively.

Demographics

The state of the demographic situation in Razgrad District is generally assessed as unsatisfactory. The reasons for the negative state are the low share of urban population (47.2% compared to the country's average of 73%) and the lower density of the population respectively (917.2 people per sq. km in settlements in comparison with 1,578.2 people per sq. km for Bulgaria), and also the quick decrease of the population. The district's population has dropped by more than 25% for the period 2000–2013 or more than 40,000 people. The rate of natural increase is minus 7‰ compared to the national average of minus 5.2‰, and the net migration rate is minus 5.9‰. Nonetheless, the rate of population decrease has slowed for the past three years.

Razgrad District has continued to perform below the average level for Bulgaria in respect of the age dependency ratio, though rates have worsened in recent years together with the ageing of the population throughout the country. The coefficient of demographic replacement, represented as the population aged 15-19 in proportion to the population aged 60-64, has shown a considerably better result compared to the national average – 69.8% and 55.6% respectively. That means that 70 youngsters per hundred retired people will be joining the labour market in next several years. In terms of this indicator, Razgrad ranks the fourth best district in Bulgaria following Pazardzhik, Sliven and Targovishte.

Education

The assessment of Razgrad District in the Education category is unsatisfactory. Although the net enrolment rate of the population (grades 5th through 8th) is 86% and is above the country's average of 79.7%, the relative share of dropouts from primary and secondary education is 3.3% compared to the nationwide average of 2.3%. Pupils' grades also bring about the low ranking of the district compared to the country's average. In 2014, the number of poorest grades from the state matriculation exams was the highest exactly in Razgrad – 10.8% of grades were below Satisfactory (3) while the share thereof in the other districts was 4.8%. Pupils' average grade from the state matriculation exams is 4.3 for Bulgaria and 3.9 for Razgrad. 25.6% of the entire population of Bulgaria, aged 25–64, have tertiary education while this share regarding Razgrad is 13.7%. This ensures the last rank of the district in respect of this indicator. No improvement of these indicators has been noted throughout the years. The district's performance in terms of the number of teachers at primary and secondary schools (77 per thousand pupils compared to the nationwide average of 72 per thousand) and the number of population per school (1,927 pupils in comparison with the national average of 2,848 pupils) are positive.

Healthcare

The sharp shortage of medical staff determine the low grade of Razgrad District in the Healthcare category. While there are 1,589 people per general practitioner in Bulgaria, there are 2,528 people per general practitioner in respect of Razgrad. This is the worst shortage of general practitioners in Bulgaria. The staff shortage problem confirms this situation in respect of specialists. One Internal Medicine specialist treats 7,586 people (the country's average being 5,775 people), and a cardiologist treats 20,230 people (5,945 people on average for Bulgaria).

The survey showed that 36.5% of the surveyed people from Razgrad District have had to travel out of the district to get healthcare. Citizens have states the lack of specialists in the district as the main reason thereof (60.2%)

Environment

The state of the environment could be regarded as good in comparison with the nationwide situation. Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere were 39 tonnes per sq. km, the country's average being 346.2 tonnes per sq. km in 2012. The unregulated landfills for household waste in villages have also been specified as pollutants of the air in Razgrad District in the Development of the North Central Region plan.

The share of the population with access to sewage, connected to waste water treatment plants, has continued to be low – 41.9%, just like the share of the population in settlements with public sewerage system – 41.9%. For comparison, the nationwide average values of these two indicators are 56.1% and 74.3%. In addition, Razgrad is the district with the lowest access of the population to public sewerage system. The entire population of Razgrad District had access to water supplies in 2010.

The share of the population served by organised waste collection systems has increased from 62.7% to 100% from 2005 to 2009.

Social environment

In 2011, 23.3% of Razgrad District's population lived in households with low work intensity (this share was higher only in the districts of Pazardzhik and Vidin) while in 2008, the share thereof was 3.4%. For comparison, the national average was 11.2% in 2011, which once again showed the intensity of the crisis in Razgrad. More than half of the population lives in material deprivation (50.9%) in comparison to 44.1% throughout the rest of the country. The conducted survey showed that people living in Razgrad District are more susceptible to relocate permanently to any other district – 35.2% have responded with YES and RATHER YES compared to 32.8% for the entire country.

In 2014, citizens assessed the performance of public institutions with 2.4 points or exactly as the nationwide average. It has been observed that this assessment has dropped for the past three years. The life satisfaction grade was exactly the same as Bulgaria's average of 3.4.

Key indicators for the district of Razgrad

Indicators / year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	4 960	5 549	6307	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	39.7	36.8	40.8	40.6	39.9
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	18.1	22.6	20.3	21.4	20.7
Relative share of people living below the district's poverty line (%)	19.8	22.8	19.20	n.a.	n.a.
Age dependency ratio, 65+ to 15-64 (%)	23.3	24.2	26.4	27.2	28.4
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-4.4	-6.0	-6.4	-6.2	-7.0
Net migration rate (‰)	-8.7	-13.2	-7.9	-5.4	-5.9
Relative share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	15.2	12.1	12.9	14.0	13.7
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams (%)	11.1	11.1	7.6	12.1	10.8
Average grade at state matriculation exams	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.8	3.9
Share of roads in good condition (%)	n.a.	34.9	34.6	32.0	34.50
Relative share of households with Internet access (%)	24.7	27.9	42.2	58.1	51.2
Share of the population with access to public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	40.8	40.8	41.9	41.90	n.a.
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	92.3	87.6	91.1	90.0	89.3
Cases of hospitalization per 1,000 people	217.7	196.0	202.4	210.5	232.0
Average annual income per household member, BGN	2 985	2 621	2 753	3 131	3 264