

Silistra

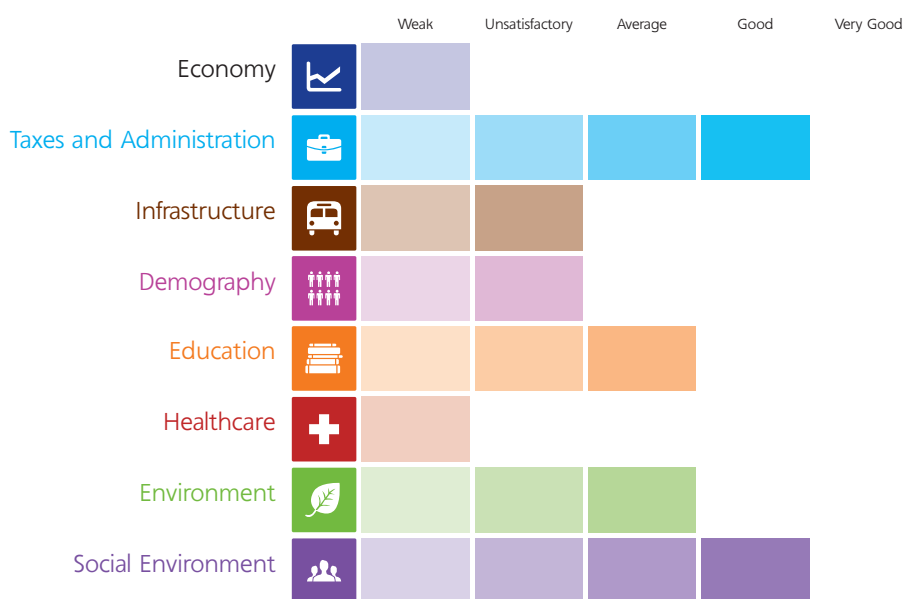


Population (2013)	116 626
Area (sq. km.)	2 846.3
Number of settlements	118
Share of urban population (%)	44.9

Overview

Silistra is one of the least developed districts in Bulgaria. The structure of the economy differs significantly from the national average, and the sectors of industry and agriculture continue to develop intensively. The district's economy has not managed to attract foreign investments and therefore, Silistra ranks last among all districts in the country in terms of this indicator related to the local population. The insufficient inflow of foreign capitals and the poor economic activity also reason the low employment rate of the workforce compared to the other districts in the country.

Poor urbanisation is the main cause for the extremely small share of people with access to sewage connected to waste water treatment plants. Carbon dioxide emissions are considerably lower than the country's average. Healthcare suffers from a sharp shortage of specialists. The share of accepted people at hospitals is lower than the national average, which could be explained with the mass treatment out of the district.



Economy

Silistra is one of the least developed districts in Bulgaria in economic terms. The gross domestic product per capita was 5,145 BGN in 2011, and only the districts of Kardzhali and Vidin have had lower GDP. This indicator is almost twice as little as the country's average. This big difference is due to the structure of the economy and the lack of foreign investments. The services sector creates only half of the gross value added (52.8%), and industry – one fifth, or 19.8%. Agriculture is very significant since it creates 27.4% of the gross value added in the district's economy. Silistra District ranks last in Bulgaria in terms of foreign direct investments in non-financial enterprises – 110.7 euro per capita (cumulative as at the end of 2012). Compared to the national average of 3,005 euro per capita, Silistra managed to attract 27 times less investments.

The data on employment and unemployment rates also demonstrate the poor economic development of the district. The employment rate of the population aged 15+ was 37.1% in 2013, which constituted the lowest percentage in Bulgaria – the average for the country was 46.9%. The unemployment rate was 21.3% in 2013 (the national average being 12.9%) – this rate was lower only in Shumen. The unemployment rate had reached 7.6% before the beginning of the crisis but has started to increase following the economic downturn, and a recovery of the labour market has not been visible yet.

Notwithstanding the increasing utilisation of EU funds, the total under contracts with municipalities as beneficiaries under operational programmes has been 266.1 BGN per capita as at 31 January 2014, which has been less than the country's average of 379.8 BGN per capita. The municipality of Glavinitsa has drawn the most funds (916.2 BGN per capita), and the municipalities of Dulovo and Alfatar – the least (19.4 and 2 BGN per capita respectively).

Taxes and administration

The assessment of Silistra District is good in the Taxes and Administration category. The rates of local taxes and charges, included in the survey, are comparable with the national average. The annual license tax for retailers (up to 100 sq. m. of retail space) constitutes an exception – it is 7.7 BGN per sq. m. while the nationwide average is 10.2 BGN per sq. m.

31.7% of businesses in Silistra District have used e-services, provided by local administration, for the past year. The bigger part of users (47.4%) have sent letters, have completed templates and forms by electronic means in addition to using the information and downloading templates and forms. 68.4% of businesses' representatives have assessed the quality of services rendered as 'average' and none of them has given neither 'very poor' nor 'very high'.

None of the surveyed people considered that the number of employed people, investments or revenues would significantly better next year. The predominant part of responses were that they would remain the same.

The Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies by the 'Access to Information Program' Foundation is 33.9 points for Silistra District in 2014 – much too low compared to the national average of 44.1 points, and also in comparison with the maximum of 82.4 points. The municipality of Alfatar has performed best (63.1 points) while the municipalities of Kaynardzha and Sitovo – the worst (28.3 and 22.7 points respectively).

Infrastructure

The road network density of Silistra District (17.8 km per hundred km of territory) is comparable to the national one (17.7 km per hundred km of territory). 44.8% of roads are in good condition, which is higher than the country's average of 39.6%. More than 97% of first-class roads and 73% of second-class roads are in good condition while more than half (52.5%) of third-class roads are in a poor state.

The unsatisfactory evaluation of Silistra District in the Infrastructure category is first and foremost due to the small share of the population accessing and using the internet. The relative share of households with internet access is 37.6% (Bulgaria's average being 53.7%), and the relative share of people (aged 16 to 74) that have used the internet for the past 12 months is 48.7% (56.2% for the country).

Demographics

The demographic state of Silistra District has continued to be a hindrance in terms of development. The district has undergone a process of decreasing and ageing of the population. In 2013, the rate of natural increase was minus 6.8‰ and the net migration rate was minus 3.2‰. For comparison, the national rate of natural increase

was 5.2%. The age dependency ratios have also clearly demonstrated the ageing. The age dependency ratio (65+ to 0–14) was 158.1% (average of 142.3% for the country), and the ratio 65+ to 15–64 was 32.6% (average of 29.3% for the country).

The coefficient of demographic replacement, represented as the population aged 15-19 in proportion to the population aged 60-64, was 57.1% in 2013. That means that 57 youngsters per hundred retired people will be joining the labour market next several years. This coefficient has generally decreased by 62.1 percentage points in Bulgaria for the period 2001–2013 and reached 61.5% in 2013. Silistra District has featured almost the same rate of decrease – from 109.5% in 2001 to 57.1% in 2013.

Low share of urban population is characteristic of the district – 44.9% of the population lived in towns and cities in 2013 compared to the country's average of 73%. Only the district of Kardzhali has featured a lower urban population (41.8%). Silistra is one of the districts featuring the lowest population density compared to settlements' territories – 849.8 people per sq. km in comparison with the nationwide average of 1,578.2 people per sq. km.

Education

There were 49 schools in Silistra District in 2013, which means 2,380 people per school or less than the country's average of 2,848 people per school). The net enrolment rate was 80.1% compared to the national average of 79.1%. The share of repeaters was half the one in Bulgaria (0.5%).

A decrease in the share of unsatisfactory grades at state matriculation exams has been observed for the past three years in the district. In 2012, 5.1% of grades were failures, in 2013 – 4% and in 2014 - 3.5% (the country's average being 4.8%). The average grade from the state matriculation exams is 4.2 and 4.3 for Bulgaria. The relative share of the population with tertiary education, aged 25-64, remained small in 2013 – 15.1%, and the country's average was 25.6%.

Healthcare

The shortage of key specialists constitutes one of the main reasons for the poor assessment of the district in respect of healthcare. In 2013, one internist treated 10,602 people compared to the national average of 5,775 people per internist. This problem has been worsening for the past three years since one internist treated 7,438 people in 2011. The situation with cardiologists has been even worse. 23,325 people have been treated by one cardiologist compared to 5,945 people per cardiologist for Bulgaria. The results from the survey show that 37.8% of citizens that have used medical services for the past year had looked for them in another district and 57.8% of them have stated the lack of specialists in Silistra District as the reason thereof.

The number of beds in multi-profile hospitals for active medical treatment is rather smaller than Bulgaria's average – 3.9 beds per thousand people, the country's average being 4.6 beds per thousand people. The share of accepted people at hospitals is lower than the national average – 202.4, the country's average being 219.9 per thousand people, which could be explained with the mass treatment out of the district.

Environment

The pollution of the ambient air in Silistra District is mainly due to local heating, the road transport and the construction business. There are no large industrial polluting plants, which also determines the low level of air pollution. Carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere are 17.5 tonnes per sq. km, the country's average being 346.2 tonnes per sq. km.

All of the municipalities in Silistra District have implemented waste disposal management systems. Nevertheless, there is still wrongful dumping of waste, and illegal landfills have continued to appear.

The share of the population having access to sewage, connected to waste water treatment plants, remained low in 2012 – 0.6% compared to the national average of 56.1%; only the district of Vidin featured zero share. The share of the population residing in settlements with public sewerage systems is lower than the country's average – 51.7% compared to the nationwide average of 74.3%, which could be due to the relatively high share of the rural population.

Social environment

The district's citizens have given 3.4 points to the social environment (from 1 to 5) or exactly like the average assessment for Bulgaria. The data from the survey show that, regardless of the economic hardship, 21.8% would move to live in any other district, the national average being 23.2%. 55.8% of the population think quite the opposite – they would not move to live in any other district; the country's average is 53.1%.

The share of the population living in material deprivation was 36.9% in 2011, which was considerably less than the national average (44.1%). The share of the population living in material deprivation has increased from 40.6% in 2007 to more than 60% in 2008 and 2009 but decreased to less than 40% in 2010. The relative share of the population living below the district's poverty line was relatively small in 2011 – 19.5%, the average being 21.2%.

The number of visits to the theatre and cinema was not big in 2013 – 0.3 visits per person, the country's average being 1.0.

Key indicators for the district of Silistra

Indicators / year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	4 505	4 485	5145	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	43.6	39.3	39.3	39.4	37.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	7.6	11.4	12.5	16.0	21.3
Relative share of people living below the district's poverty line (%)	20.7	30.2	19.5	n.a.	n.a.
Age dependency ratio, 65+ to 15-64 (%)	26.5	27.6	30.6	31.5	32.6
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-5.3	-6.8	-7.7	-8.1	-6.8
Net migration rate (‰)	-6.1	-7.7	-2.0	-2.4	-3.2
Relative share of the population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (%)	14.2	13.1	15.4	15.8	15.1
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams (%)	6.5	6.7	4.5	5.1	3.5
Average grade at state matriculation exams	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.2
Share of roads in good condition (%)	n.a.	24.8	40.0	39.0	44.8
Relative share of households with Internet access (%)	20.7	20.8	40.0	56.5	37.6
Share of the population with access to public sewerage systems, connected to WWTP (%)	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.6	n.a.
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	84.9	82.7	86.8	85.6	84.9
Cases of hospitalization per 1,000 people	169.6	145.9	165.0	181.5	202.4
Average annual income per household member, BGN	2 494	2 629	2 589	3 337	3 249