

Kardzhali District

▶ Population (2014)	151,329
▶ Area (sq. km)	3,209.1
▶ Number of settlements	472
▶ Share of urban population (%)	41.4

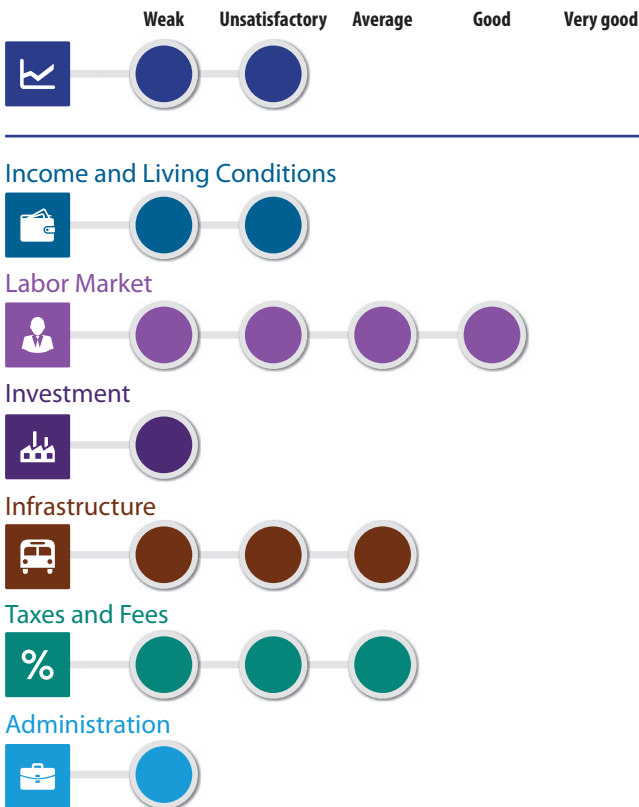


Overview

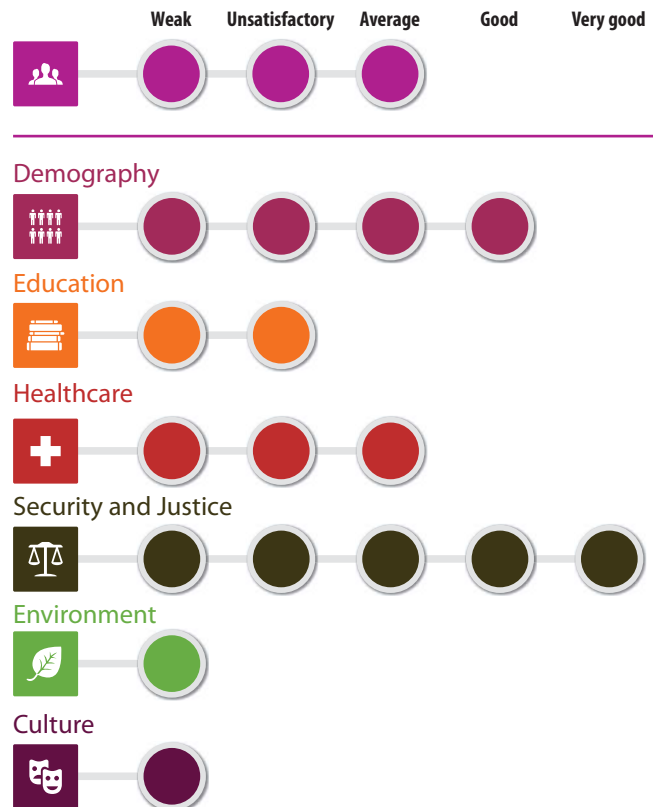
Kardzhali District is relatively underdeveloped in economic terms, but its recovery from the crisis has been steady in recent years. The district's employment rate has soared, but incomes have remained among the lowest in Bulgaria. There have been no significant domestic or foreign investments in the district. Some municipalities have featured good utilisation of EU funds. Municipal taxes in Kardzhali District have been relatively low, but the development of administrative services has seriously lagged behind. Kardzhali is among the smaller districts of Bulgaria. A

predominantly rural population characterises the district. The age dependency ratios have deteriorated but are relatively better than the country average. Education is definitely faced with challenges – performance at state matriculation exams keeps getting worse and the number of college graduates in the workforce is insufficient. With regard to the number of crimes against the personality and property, Kardzhali is the second most secure district in Bulgaria. The indicators pertaining to the district's cultural life have demonstrated relatively limited cultural activities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ●●

Income and Living Conditions ●●

The economy has steadily recovered in recent years and Kardzhali District is no longer among the five poorest districts of Bulgaria. GDP per capita was 6,139 BGN in 2012. Incomes have remained among the lowest in the country, with pension incomes standing out as the lowest. Nonetheless, salaries grew steadily at the rate of 16% in 2012 and 2013.

The share of the population living in material deprivation was almost 40% in 2012, but this indicator has greatly varied over the years. The levels of relative poverty have risen – 26% of the population was below the district's poverty line in 2012. The inequality in the allocation of incomes has also surged – the ratio of the incomes of the poorest to the incomes of the richest 20% of households is now seven times.

Labour Market ●●●●

The employment rate in Kardzhali District steadily recovered from 2011 to 2014. It reached 49% in 2014, a figure above the average for the country, for the first time in ten years. The unemployment rate has slightly dropped for the past two years. The district's economic activity has risen though still counting as relatively low – the economic activity rate of the population 15+ was 51.5% in 2014.

The demographic replacement rate plummeted in recent years to almost 61% in 2014, which means that there were 61 youngsters aged 15–19 about to join the workforce, per 100 people aged 60–64 about to leave it.

Investment ●

FDI levels in Kardzhali District went up from 2010 to 2013 but were relatively low compared to Bulgaria. The district still had the smallest number of non-financial companies in Bulgaria weighed against the population in 2013. It has seriously lagged behind in expenditure on the acquisition of FTAs as well (106 m BGN in 2013). The municipalities in Kardzhali District have managed to utilise EU funds relatively well – they were paid more than 97 m BGN as beneficiaries under operational programmes as of 31 January 2015. A large portion of the utilised funds were concentrated in the regional centre of Kardzhali (66 m BGN) and also in the municipalities of Momchilgrad (21 m BGN) and Ardino (6 m BGN).

Infrastructure ●●●

The road network density in Kardzhali District is above the country average, but no highway goes through it. The quality of roads has improved slightly but is still very low compared to the country – 31.3% of roads were in good condition in 2014 compared to 40.5% in Bulgaria as a whole. The railway network density is one of the lowest in Bulgaria; there are territories too far removed from the railway lines which are therefore exclusively serviced by automobile transport.

The households' connectivity to the Internet has bettered in Kardzhali District. Almost 66% of households already had Internet access in 2014. Use has remained low, however, compared to the country, and barely 40% of the population aged 16–74 used the Internet in 2014.

Taxes and Fees ●●●●

Local taxes are about the same or below their national counterparts in the municipalities of Kardzhali District. The district centre of Kardzhali has low taxes: 1.3‰ on non-residential properties of companies, 2.2‰ on the sale of property and low taxes on vehicles. Ardino, Dzhebel and Momchilgrad are among the municipalities that impose comparatively higher taxes.

Charges for household waste are relatively high throughout the municipalities in Kardzhali District, over 10‰ for properties of legal entities, in almost all municipalities: only Chernoochene Municipality lowered it to 9‰ in 2015. The highest rate is in Dzhebel, 14‰, while it is 10‰ in the district centre of Kardzhali.

Administration ●

The municipalities of Kardzhali District are seriously lagging behind in e-services and the provision of one-stop shop services. With regard to e-services, only Momchilgrad Municipality is performing well in 2015, and Ardino Municipality provides the good example in provision of one-stop services. Cadastral map coverage is among the lowest in the country, encompassing barely 3.4% of the district's territory as of 2014: the municipalities of Dzhebel, Kardzhali, Kirkovo and Krumovgrad were partly covered.

Kardzhali District has drastically lagged behind in the 2015 Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies by the AIP Foundation. Nonetheless, the municipalities of Ardino, Dzhebel and Momchilgrad considerably raised their ratings in 2015 in comparison with the previous year. The municipalities of Chernoochene, Kardzhali and Kirkovo still have very low ratings.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ●●●●

Demography ●●●●

With a population of 151,329, Kardzhali was among the smaller districts in Bulgaria in 2014. The district traditionally has a very negative net migration rate of the population. An exceptionally high (probably one-off) positive net migration rate of 12.1‰ was observed in 2014, which made Kardzhali one of the few districts with a real increase in the population for the past year. There was a natural decrease but its rate was comparatively low in comparison with Bulgaria.

Kardzhali is one of the three districts with a chiefly rural population – only 41.4% live in towns and cities. The district's age structure has deteriorated, but the age dependency ratios have remained among the best in Bulgaria. Nevertheless, there are 1.3 times more people aged 65+ than people aged 0–14 and those aged 65+ equal slightly more than a quarter of the working population aged 15–64.

Education ●●

Kardzhali District ranked second in Bulgaria in the number of teachers in primary and secondary schools in 2014 – 12 students per teacher. The relative share of dropouts from schools remained below 2% in 2013. The share of repeaters was still exceptionally low (0.5% in 2014). The grades from state matriculation exams were much worse in 2015 compared to previous years – the average grade fell to 4.06; the share of failures soared to 11.4%, and is now among the highest in the country.

Kardzhali District has faced a serious challenge with university graduates. The relative share of graduates aged 25–64 in the population has increased in recent years and it reached 20% in 2014, still far behind the country average. The number of students has not changed significantly in recent years, there were 1,017 of them in the district in 2014.

Healthcare ●●●

The number of beds in MpHATs has remained unchanged in recent years and has continued to lag behind compared to the country – 598 beds in 2014. Simultaneously, morbidity rates have remained relatively low – there were 165 inpatients in MpHATs per 1,000 people in 2014. The number of physicians, weighed against the population, shows a marked lack of health professionals.

According to official data there have been more health-insured persons in Kardzhali District than its population

for the past six years. Such data distortions have not been observed elsewhere. The infant mortality rate has diminished in recent years to 6.3‰ in 2014.

Security and Justice ●●●●●

According to official data, Kardzhali has been the second most secure district in Bulgaria after Smolyan; 2 crimes against the personality and 30 crimes against property, per 10,000 people, were registered in 2014. This is three times less than the country average. It can also be concluded from the data that the court works relatively efficiently and quickly. The share of criminal cases decided by the District Court and closed in the first 3 months was 99% in 2013, constituting the highest share in Bulgaria. The share of pending criminal cases was low as at the end of 2013 – 3.8% compared to the country average of 8.5%. Judges' workloads were relatively low in Kardzhali District, reaching 6.6 cases per judge per month, compared to the national average of 8.3 cases per judge, per month.

Environment ●

Kardzhali District is characterized by exceptionally low emissions of pollutants (carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere – they were barely 6.5 t/sq. km in 2014. Collected household waste per capita soared in 2013.

Population access to public sewerage connected to waste water treatment plants is less than 5%, which is an extremely low share in comparison with the national average. Less than half the population (44%) live in settlements with public sewerage, the lowest share in Bulgaria. Several waste water treatment plants are being constructed, and the ones in Kardzhali and Momchilgrad are to be launched in 2015. The expenditure on environmental protection increased in 2013 totalling 26 m BGN.

Culture ●

The indicators for cultural activities in Kardzhali District show a number of weaknesses. Visits to museums plummeted in 2014 – from 55,000 in 2013 to barely 14,000 in 2014. Visits to the theatre dropped to 20,000 in 2014. There is no cinema in the district. Visits to libraries also fell to 44,000 in 2014, which was below the country average relative to the population.

Key Indicators for the District of Kardzhali

Economic Development	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	5,327	5,111	5,501	6,139	n.a.	n.a.
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	2,988	2,734	3,002	3,483	3,333	3,762
Average annual gross salary (BGN)	5,465	5,643	5,895	6,266	6,842	n.a.
Relative share of people living below the district's poverty line (%)	12.4	16.6	21.3	25.8	n.a.	n.a.
Annual average economic activity rate of the population 15+ (%)	42.5	38.3	43.8	48.6	50.6	51.5
Annual average employment rate of the population 15+ (%)	41.4	36.4	41.5	44.2	47.1	49.0
Annual average unemployment rate (%)	2.7	4.9	5.1	9.0	7.0	4.9
Number of non-financial companies per 1,000 people	31	31	29	29	29	n.a.
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN)	753	458	613	738	705	n.a.
Cumulative FDI to non-financial enterprises per capita (EUR)	391	440	500	604	746	n.a.
Relative share of households with Internet access (%)	9.1	11.5	29.7	54.0	45.8	65.8
Share of roads in good condition (%)	n.a.	23.8	24.6	27.0	25.5	31.3
Share of territory included in cadastral maps (%)	2.2	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4

Social Development	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-0.2	-0.7	-2.6	-2.1	-1.8	-2.6
Net migration rate (‰)	-8.1	-6.8	-3.5	-2.4	-3.0	12.1
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with tertiary education (%)	11.3	10.3	8.9	11.2	15.6	19.8
Average grades at state matriculation exams	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7
Percent of failed students at state matriculation exams	5.6	6.2	3.0	4.2	4.7	3.0
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	107.2	101.7	101.6	100.6	100.4	101.5
Cases of hospitalization in general hospitals	160.1	139.5	144.4	166.4	175.9	165.0
Crimes against the property per 10,000 people	35.0	38.7	39.6	31.5	29.7	30.3
Share of pending criminal cases (%)	3.9	4.2	4.8	4.7	3.8	n.a.
Expenditure on environmental protection per capita (BGN)	91.2	93.6	91.1	86.9	169.9	n.a.
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage systems, connected to WTPP (%)	0.4	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.9	n.a.
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people	22.0	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Number of visits to theatres per 1,000 people	186.7	151.6	169.6	190.8	159.3	131.0