REGIONAL PROFILES

INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT

2025

IME

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIP	Access to information programme Foundation
APIA	Access to Public Information Act
AC	Administrative court
BLL	Bulgarian language and literature
DC	District court
EA	Employment agency
FDI	Foreign direct investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
GVA	Gross value added
ISMM	Information System for Management and Monitoring of EU Funds
IES	Institute for Educational Studies
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MF	Ministry of Finance
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MHAT	Multidisciplinary hospital for active treatment
NCIPD	National Centre for Infectious and Parasitic Diseases
NEA	National external assessment
NME	National matriculation exam
NSSI	National Social Security Institute
NSI	National Statistical Institute
p.p.	Percentage point
RES	Renewable energy sources
RIA	Road infrastructure agency
SJC	Supreme Judicial Council
SEDA	Sustainable energy development agency
TFA	Tangible fixed assets
VET	Vocational education and training

PREFACE

For over a decade now, the Institute for Market Economics has presented the annual issue of Regional Profiles: Indicators of Development, the only almanac of regional development in Bulgaria of its kind. The book, better known as the Regional Profiles, has now become an established trademark of the IME.

The study is based on 75 indicators evaluating the economic and social environment in the country's 28 districts. All data presented in it is also available at www.regionalprofiles.bg – the Institute's specialized web page. Being organized around specific indicators allows data to be observed in its dynamics, as well as to make comparisons between individual districts. Thus, access to the most complete recent mass of statistical data at the regional level is facilitated.

Thanks to the work of the institutions collecting and providing statistics, with each successive year, we have been able to include more relevant and wide-ranging statistics for each district's socio-economic environment. In the present edition, most of the data refers to 2024. Exceptions are few in number and are limited to several indicators which get published with a delay of over a year: data on GDP per capita per district, those on salaries, as well as some indicators in investment, the environment, and infrastructure. Where possible, in fields such as administration, education and local taxes, for example, the analysis is also based on figures for 2025.

This study can benefit national and local government, business and the media, as well as academics, experts and people in the non-governmental sector, in their work regarding regional development. We also believe that the general public could find it interesting to read the information regarding the performance of their own district in comparison with other districts in various spheres of economic and social life.

The IME team wishes to express their gratitude to the America for Bulgaria Foundation for their partnership and lasting support in preparing and publishing the Regional Profiles.

We hope this year's edition will be once again interesting and beneficial to all readers. We wish all a pleasant reading!

The IME team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Economic and social development remain at 'two speeds'. Economic activity, investment, and human resources are concentrated in a limited number of strong urban centers that create higher added value, rely on better functioning labour markets, and have better infrastructure. This concentration provides a stable foundation for growth among the leaders, but leaves a large group of districts with systemic constraints – lower earnings, weaker business dynamics and high unemployment, low employment and skill gaps in the workforce.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Assessment of Districts, IME - Regional Profiles 2025

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	RUSE	SHUMEN	PAZARDZHIK	KARDZHALI
VARNA	SOFIA	VRATSA	HASKOVO	MONTANA
PLOVDIV		PERNIK	SLIVEN	VIDIN
GABROVO		BLAGOEVGRAD	KYUSTENDIL	SILISTRA
BURGAS		VELIKO TARNOVO	DOBRICH	
		STARA ZAGORA	PLEVEN	
		LOVECH	SMOLYAN	
		YAMBOL	RAZGRAD	
			TARGOVISHTE	

The comprehensive assessment of economic development shows a clear division. The 'very good' group includes districts with a high share of industry and services and strong investment activity; Gabrovo is among the standouts, with its concentrated industrial base supporting a high standard of living. Ruse and Sofia achieve 'good' economic development, remaining close behind the leaders, while nine districts are in the 'unsatisfactory' group – a sign of a limited economic base and lower quality of jobs.

Investment geography continues to be a leading factor in divergence. This edition reports extremely uneven investment activity: half of the districts are rated 'weak" in the Investment and Business' category, and another seven are rated 'unsatisfactory'. There are also large differences in links with external markets: the share of export revenues reaches about half of the turnover in the most export-oriented districts (Sofia district, Ruse), while in the weaker regions it remains at about one-eighth – a gap that reinforces differences in productivity and income.

The labour market confirms this asymmetry. Vidin and Montana remain at the bottom with a fragile employment structure and a distinctly less favourable educational profile of the workforce. In several districts, the share of people with primary and lower education reaches one-third, which limits the ability to fill new, more skilled jobs. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the capital and Varna stand out with a high proportion of the population with higher education, higher employment, and therefore higher earnings.

As expected, there has been no major change in infrastructure over the year, but it remains varied in terms of quality and access. In 2025, only Montana receives a 'weak' rating, while the capital and Varna receive a 'very good' rating. The density of the road network remains almost unchanged; the railway network is most developed in the capital, while Smolyan remains without railway lines. This reinforces the differences in access to services and markets, which are particularly visible in the indicators for Northern Bulgaria.

In terms of local finances, the data show limited fiscal autonomy for a large part of the municipalities: own revenues cover only a quarter of total expenditures. At the same time, the absorption of funds under operational programs remains an important source of investment in public infrastructure and services, which contributes to reducing some of the territorial disparities, but without targeted efforts to attract private investment, the trajectory of the lagging districts is not improving.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social Development Assessment of Districts, IME - Regional Profiles 2025

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital) VARNA BURGAS PLOVDIV SMOLYAN BLAGOEVGRAD	VELIKO TARNOVO TARGOVISHTE GABROVO SHUMEN	RUSE PAZARDZHIK KARDZHALI STARA ZAGORA PLEVEN HASKOVO SLIVEN DOBRICH SOFIA	YAMBOL VRATSA PERNIK	KYUSTENDIL SILISTRA LOVECH VIDIN MONTANA RAZGRAD

Social development is even more polarized: six districts receive a 'Very Good' rating, with Sofia (capital), Varna, Burgas, and Plovdiv among the leaders in almost all components—from demographics and healthcare to education and tourism. A high overall score can also be achieved through strong performance in several key areas – examples include Smolyan (education and environment) and Blagoevgrad (education and demographics).

At the bottom are districts with an unfavourable demographic trajectory and weaker results in education and healthcare. Demographics remain a decisive factor. After a temporary easing in 2023, natural growth deteriorates in 24 of the 28 districts in 2024, with large differences between regions: Sofia (capital) is close to a balance between birth and death rates, while in Vidin the difference is many times higher. The positive migration that began in 2020 continues but is concentrated in the more developed areas – Kardzhali, Varna, Burgas, and Sofia – while in most other areas the net inflow is weakening, suggesting a lasting shift of people towards the leading centres.

Differences in human capital and access to services are also clearly visible in education and healthcare. The results of national external assessments and national matriculation exams vary significantly between districts, and access to primary healthcare and life expectancy also show considerable differences. This suggests that policies for quality education and health services in weaker districts are key to limiting social polarization.

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Regional Profiles 2025 is a practical tool for public policy and business decisions. It systematizes comparable data and comprehensive assessments that clearly show the strengths and weaknesses of each district and where targeted measures – from the quality of human capital and the environment for starting a business to infrastructure and more efficient municipal finances – can accelerate convergence and limit the severe lagging behind.

REGIONAL PROFILES BY CATEGORY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This year's economic development ranking highlights the deepening disparities between the leading regional economies and all others. The group with 'very good' development includes the leaders in added value and investment, which account for a significant part of the country's economy – Sofia (capital), Plovdiv, Varna, and Burgas. Gabrovo is also among them – this compact region has managed to achieve a high standard of living thanks to its highly developed industry. More generally, these regions are characterized by some of the highest wages and pensions in Bulgaria, labour markets with high employment and very low joblessness, attract the most investment, and have the best infrastructure.

Only two districts – Ruse and Sofia – have a 'good' economic development rating. They are closer to the leaders but fall just short of the top category. In the case of Ruse, this is mainly due to significantly lower earnings and living standard, while in the case of Sofia, its ranking reflects the lack of a distinct economic centre – a role played by the capital itself – that focuses on services, as well as the very large disparities in the development of the individual municipalities within it.

Districts with an average level of economic development perform well in one aspect or another, but overall lag significantly behind the leaders. For example, Vratsa and Stara Zagora have a highly developed energy sector, but the wealth it generates is far from evenly distributed among their populations. Shumen, Yambol, and Veliko Tarnovo are home to leading manufacturing industries, while Blagoevgrad offers an increasing range of services, but this is not enough to bring the standard of living closer to that of the leaders. An interesting example in this category is Pernik, which, despite lagging behind in development, benefits from its proximity to the capital.

A total of 9 out of the country's 28 districts fall into the group with unsatisfactory development. This group mainly includes lagging regional economies, where leading businesses are rarely found. Earnings are significantly lower – often half those in the capital – and the labour market offers fewer quality jobs.

At the bottom of the ranking, with weak economic development, are four districts – Kardzhali, Montana, Vidin, and Silistra. They are characterized by low employment and high joblessness, low labour productivity and standard of living, poor infrastructure, and little entrepreneurship.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	RUSE	SHUMEN	PAZARDZHIK	KARDZHALI
VARNA	SOFIA	VRATSA	HASKOVO	MONTANA
PLOVDIV		PERNIK	SLIVEN	VIDIN
GABROVO		BLAGOEVGRAD	KYUSTENDIL	SILISTRA
BURGAS		VELIKO TARNOVO	DOBRICH	
		STARA ZAGORA	PLEVEN	
		LOVECH	SMOLYAN	
		YAMBOL	RAZGRAD	
			TARGOVISHTE	

INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS

In the 2025 edition, more than half of the districts receive a rating of 'unsatisfactory' and 'weak' in the standard of living index. The reason for this is mainly the significantly faster recovery of the capital and the region around it from the pandemic, as well as the strong performance of the districts where energy is the leading sector since the start of the war in Ukraine.

While Sofia (capital) already exceeds 60 thousand BGN **GDP per capita**, in 18 districts the indicator is below 20 thousand BGN per capita, and in three – Targovishte, Silistra, and Sliven – it is below 15 thousand BGN, which highlights the divergence between the most and least developed regions of the country. It is encouraging that all districts (with the exception of Stara Zagora due to the dynamics of the energy markets) are reporting growth, but it is highly uneven – from just 2-3% to 20% in nominal terms, and this during a period of high inflation, which means that the slowest-growing regions are experiencing a real decline in GDP.

Wages' growth among workers is relatively even at 12-17%, with one exception – Targovishte, where wages are growing by just 7%. The difference in wage levels between the capital and the regions at the bottom of the list is more than double – over 34 thousand BGN per year in Sofia and around 16 thousand BGN in the districts with the lowest wages. Surprisingly, according to the data for 2023, Blagoevgrad is in last place.

The differences in **pensions** are significantly smaller, with an increase of 12-13% in all districts in 2024. According to data from the social security institution, only in the capital average pensions are above 1,000 BGN per month, with Pernik and Burgas coming closest. As pensions in only three regions are below 800 BGN, the regional differences in the standard of living of retirees are significantly smaller than those of working people.

A worrying trend is the almost universal widening of **income inequality** in most regions – the Gini coefficient is shrinking in 10 districts in 2024, but increasing in 18, in line with national dynamics. This development is largely expected, given that the previous decline was mainly due to the uniform increase in pensions in 2022. However, inequality is growing fastest in economically underdeveloped districts – Pleven, Silistra, Sliven – pointing to widening differences in living standards in poorer regions.

The growth in inequality is accompanied by a sharp increase in **poverty**, to 22% at the national level, but over 30% of households in as many as seven districts. In some places, the increase is in the double digits, with the share of poor people rising by 12 p.p. in Sliven and 10 p.p. in Silistra. It is striking that, despite the very good performance of the labour market, there has also been a slight increase of 2 p.p. in the capital.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	BURGAS	PLOVDIV	PLEVEN	KARDZHALI
VARNA	PERNIK	RUSE	SHUMEN	MONTANA
STARA ZAGORA	VRATSA	VELIKO TARNOVO	SMOLYAN	VIDIN
SOFIA	GABROVO	YAMBOL	PAZARDZHIK	SILISTRA
		KYUSTENDIL	LOVECH	
			SLIVEN	
			TARGOVISHTE	
			HASKOVO	
			DOBRICH	
			BLAGOEVGRAD	
			RAZGRAD	

LABOUR MARKET

Very few districts receive the best and worst ratings in the " Labour market" category – Sofia (capital) and Varna are the strongest performers, while the northwestern districts of Vidin and Montana have the weakest results in the country. The remaining districts are distributed relatively evenly across the other three groups.

After the turbulent dynamics of the pandemic, **unemployment** in the regions does not undergo any significant changes in 2024; in no district does its growth or decline exceed ½ percentage point. However, the large differences in the proportion of job seekers remain; while in the capital, according to data from the Employment Agency, the unemployed account for only 1.7% of the labour force, in Varna they account for 3.3%, in Montana they remain at 12%, and in Vidin they account for 15%. However, there is cause for concern that the districts with a negative trend are precisely those with the highest registered unemployment, which is likely to widen the disparities.

Against this backdrop, **employment** is growing in 16 of the 28 districts, with declines of more than 2 p.p. only in Shumen, Kardzhali, Kyustendil, and Veliko Tarnovo. The share of the working population aged 20-64 remains very uneven across regions, exceeding 80% in some of the leading districts (the capital, Varna, Ruse), it exceeds 80%. In the economically weakest regions it remains below 65%, despite the significant shortage of workers at the national level, which points to problems with labour supply and skills.

One of the key positive trends over the past year has been the increase in **the share of people with higher education** among those aged 25-64. At the national level, the increase is 3.3 p.p. to 34%, with only two districts – Vidin and Sofia – registering a decline. At the same time, in Pazardzhik, the number of people with higher education increased by 8.4 p.p. in just one year, and in Vidin – by 8 p.p., which most likely reflects the positive migration since 2020. However, the differences between districts remain significant – while 55% of the population in Sofia (capital) has a higher education degree, this is true for only 16% in Sofia and 20% in Targovishte, Montana, and Vidin, which poses a serious challenge to the development of high-tech services and manufacturing. In contrast, almost all districts are experiencing a decline in the population with **primary and lower education**, who are finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs. However, as this group is growing precisely in Vidin and Montana – the weakest regional labour markets – this points to a deepening of their problems in the future. As of 2024, people with a seventh-grade education or less make up 33% of the workforce in Sliven and 27% in Silistra.

The shares of the working-age population – the entire potential labour force – also vary greatly, ranging from 63% in the capital and 61% in Varna to only 54% in Yambol, Gabrovo and Vidin, the fastest ageing parts of the country. In these districts, employers face particular challenges in finding workers.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	RUSE	PERNIK	TARGOVISHTE	VIDIN
VARNA	VELIKO TARNOVO	SMOLYAN	LOVECH	MONTANA
	PLOVDIV	PLEVEN	KARDZHALI	
	BURGAS	YAMBOL	RAZGRAD	
	SOFIA	VRATSA	SLIVEN	
	STARA ZAGORA	SHUMEN	SILISTRA	
	GABROVO	PAZARDZHIK		
	BLAGOEVGRAD	HASKOVO		
	KYUSTENDIL	DOBRICH		

INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS

The extremely uneven investment activity between districts and its concentration in Sofia and its immediate periphery leads to half of the districts in the country being classified as "Weak" in this edition. Another seven are rated as having "unsatisfactory" investment.

The concentration of investment is particularly evident in **expenditure on fixed tangible assets**, where the only districts with values above the national average are Sofia (capital) and Sofia, with 10.9 thousand BGN and 5.3 thousand BGN per capita, compared to an average of 5.2 thousand BGN. There is cause for optimism in the almost universal upward trend, with declines in investment expenditure, albeit not particularly high, in only five regions. However, the distribution largely predetermines the persistence and even increase of development disparities.

A similar positive trend is observed in **cumulative foreign investment**, although there are still eight regions where the amount does not exceed 1,000 EUR per capita, and in Montana it remains below 500 EUR per capita. Second after the Sofia (capital) (13.5 thousand euros per person) is Sofia with 9.4 thousand euros per person and Burgas (5.8 thousand euros per person). Inequalities in the **use of European funds** are smaller, ranging between 2 thousand BGN and 5 thousand BGN per capita. Here, too, the capital is the leader, but Gabrovo and Blagoevgrad achieve similar results.

Equally concentrated are the **expenditures for research and development**, which are key to the future competitiveness of the districts. While Sofia (capital) is the undisputed leader with 884 BGN per capita, the second region, Gabrovo, is far behind with 134 BGN per capita, followed closely by Shumen, Varna, Plovdiv, and Stara Zagora. In the other regions, R&D is not very well represented.

Due to the peculiarities of the economic structure, the leader in **labour productivity**, measured by the output per employee, is Sofia with 255 thousand BGN per worker, followed by Burgas with 165 thousand BGN. The capital ranks third with 142 thousand BGN per person. The difference between the leader and the least productive district of Vidin is more than fivefold, but 13 districts have productivity below 100 thousand BGN per person.

One of the important indicators that determine the economic trajectory of the regions is their **exposure to foreign markets**. While in Sofia the share of export revenues in the total revenues of enterprises is as high as 52%, and in Ruse it is 48%, in Dobrich it is just 13%, and in Vidin it is 14%. The differences are smaller in terms of **registered enterprises** per 1,000 people, where Sofia is the leader with 102, which is to be expected given that it concentrates a significant part of the small and medium-sized businesses in the country.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	GABROVO	PLOVDIV	VARNA	LOVECH
SOFIA	BURGAS		SMOLYAN	PAZARDZHIK
	RUSE		SHUMEN	PLEVEN
	BLAGOEVGRAD		STARA ZAGORA	VRATSA
			YAMBOL	DOBRICH
			PERNIK	KARDZHALI
			RAZGRAD	KYUSTENDIL
				MONTANA
				VELIKO TARNOVO
				TARGOVISHTE
				SLIVEN
				HASKOVO
				SILISTRA
				VIDIN

INFRASTRUCTURE

In the Infrastructure category for 2025, only one district receives a weak rating – Montana, while Varna and Sofia (capital) receive a very good rating. The remaining districts are evenly distributed among the other categories. Due to the nature of the indicators, this is the category with the fewest changes.

The density of the road network in the regions remains virtually unchanged in 2024, ranging from 11.3 km/100 sq. km in Blagoevgrad to 25.6 km in Gabrovo. The most important factors are the terrain and the proximity of motorways. In general, the districts in Northern Bulgaria rank lower.

The density of the railway network also remains unchanged, with the capital remaining the absolute leader with 12.1 km/100 sq. km, while most districts have between 2 and 5 km of railway. The only region without any railway network remains Smolyan.

There is also insignificant change in **the share of motorways and first-class roads** in local road networks, which is to be expected given the slow pace of infrastructure development. The most significant growth is in Vidin – 1.8 p.p. for 2024, while Burgas and Varna show a slight decline. The indicator remains the highest in Shumen – 37%, followed by Sofia (capital) (32%) and Sofia with 31%.

However, in 2024, there was a significant deterioration in road quality. According to RIA estimates at the national level, **the share of roads with surface in good condition** decreased by 4.4 p.p. to 36% – the lowest value in the last 10 years. In several regions, the declines are very significant – in Sliven, the share of roads assessed as being in good condition decreased by 37 p. p. within a year, and in Stara Zagora – by 32 points. There are still a number of districts with very poor road surface quality – in Pernik and Dobrich, only 5% of all roads are classified as good.

There has been a gradual improvement in the **population's access to the Internet**, with 92% of households now connected. This share remains lowest in Yambol with 71% and Sofia with 81%. In Sofia (capital), coverage is now nearly universal, with 99% of households connected.

Moderate progress has also been observed in **the share of the population connected to public sewerage systems**, which now exceeds three-quarters of residents. This share is significantly higher in districts with a predominantly urban population – Sofia (capital) (96%), Varna (87%), Gabrovo (83%) – and lowest where more people live in remote villages – Kardzhali (44%), Razgrad (43%). The distribution of **the share of the population connected to a sewage treatment plant** is similar, with some districts showing a significant decline in this indicator – in Kardzhali by almost 3 p. p. and in Sofia by over 4.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	PLOVDIV	HASKOVO	TARGOVISHTE	MONTANA
VARNA	RUSE	BURGAS	SILISTRA	
	STARA ZAGORA	PAZARDZHIK	YAMBOL	
	GABROVO	SLIVEN	VIDIN	
	SHUMEN	BLAGOEVGRAD	SMOLYAN	
	VELIKO TARNOVO	SOFIA	VRATSA	
	KYUSTENDIL	LOVECH	DOBRICH	
	PERNIK	PLEVEN	KARDZHALI	
			RAZGRAD	

LOCAL TAXES

A long period of increases in local taxes has placed half of the districts in the categories with unsatisfactory and poor performance in the assessment of the tax burden. Taxation remains low mainly in the Northwest – Montana, Lovech, and Vratsa.

The average **tax rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities** has increased to 2.32‰ according to the IME survey of municipalities in 2025. This tax is increasing most rapidly in the municipalities in Dobrich and Silistra districts, with an average annual increase of 0.76 points. The average values were highest in Pleven – 3.25‰, and below 2‰ only in Sofia (capital), Montana, and Pazardzhik.

There is a more moderate upward trend in **the local tax on vehicles**, with an average value of BGN 1.63/kW after taking into account the environmental component. The differences between regions are not so great for this tax, with the lowest values in Lovech (BGN 1.27/kW) and Pleven (BGN 1.31/kW) and the highest in Dobrich (BGN 1.86/kW) and Gabrovo (BGN 1.84/kW). Dobrich and Blagoevgrad are increasing this tax at the fastest rate, with an average increase of 29 stotinki per year in these two districts.

The only district registering a significant decrease in **retail trade patent tax** is Shumen, where the value has fallen by an average of BGN 4.22/sq. m. On the other hand, most areas saw an increase, most notably in Smolyan, where the average tax rate rose by BGN 5.79/sq. m. In this tax category, areas where tourism plays a significant role in the regional economy, as well as in Sofia (capital), maintain high rates.

The average **property transfer tax rates** are also gradually increasing, reaching 2.88% at the national level, close to the maximum 3% allowed by law. The average taxes of the municipalities in Blagoevgrad (2.54%) and Lovech (2.58%) districts remain lower, but they too have seen significant growth in recent years against the backdrop of declining local government revenues.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
MONTANA	PAZARDZHIK	YAMBOL	PLEVEN	HASKOVO
LOVECH	BLAGOEVGRAD	KARDZHALI	DOBRICH	KYUSTENDIL
VRATSA	VIDIN	TARGOVISHTE	SOFIA	RUSE
	PERNIK	GABROVO	SILISTRA	VARNA
	SHUMEN	RAZGRAD	PLOVIDV	SOFIA (capital)
		SMOLYAN	SLIVEN	VELIKO TARNOVO
			STARA ZAGORA	BURGAS

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

The distribution of districts in the 'Administration and governance' category is relatively even, with the exception of a small number of 'average' ratings. It is notable that some economically developed districts, Stara Zagora, for example, achieve low scores.

With a few exceptions – most notably Kardzhali – **the share of own revenues in municipal budgets** is declining in almost all districts, reaching exactly 25% in 2024, according to data from the Ministry of Finance, compared to over 40% ten years earlier. The indicator is deteriorating most rapidly in Sofia (capital), by 4 p.p., and in Haskovo, by 3.1 p.p. within a year. Economic development is directly linked to the fiscal independence of local authorities, with own revenues accounting for only 13% of municipal budgets in Montana and 14% in Silistra districts.

There is also a rapid deterioration in **the coverage of municipal expenditures with own revenues** to just over two-thirds at the national level. The fastest decline, by 20 p.p. per year, is in the municipalities in Montana district, but there are also double-digit decreases in Ruse, Sofia, Varna, Burgas, and Pleven. Tourist areas perform well on this indicator, with the fastest improvement – 14 p.p. compared to the previous year – in the municipalities in Shumen district.

In most districts, municipalities' **self-assessment** of their **ability to provide e-services** is improving as a result of the digitalization of an increasing proportion of interactions between local authorities and citizens. The municipalities in Vidin, Kardzhali, and Stara Zagora districts rate their e-services the lowest, while all municipalities in the Sliven district believe that they have reached the highest level of maturity in their e-government tools.

The dynamics of municipalities' **self-assessment** of their **one-stop shop services** are the opposite. In this indicator, the municipalities in Lovech and Gabrovo districts are the most confident in their capacity, while those in Pleven and Stara Zagora districts are the least confident.

The trends are also mixed in the Access to Information Program (AIP) rating of **active transparency of municipalities**, with the most visible deterioration in the municipalities in Varna and Targovishte districts. According to the AIP methodology, the most transparent municipalities are those in Sliven district (84/100 points), and the least transparent are those in Pernik and Kyustendil districts (56/100 points).

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	SHUMEN	VELIKO TARNOVO	SOFIA	SMOLYAN
PLOVIDV	VRATSA	RAZGRAD	PERNIK	MONTANA
BURGAS	HASKOVO		TARGOVISHTE	KYUSTENDIL
GABROVO	RUSE		PLEVEN	KARDZHALI
SLIVEN	LOVECH		PAZARDZHIK	BLAGOEVGRAD
VARNA	DOBRICH			SILISTRA
	YAMBOL			STARA ZAGORA
				VIDIN

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The 2025 edition shows strong polarization in social development. Clusters of districts are at the highest and lowest ratings, with a small number of districts falling in the middle, in the 'good' and 'unsatisfactory' categories.

Six regions receive the highest rating. The first four – Sofia (capital), Varna, Burgas, and Plovdiv – rank first in almost all categories, from demography and healthcare to education and tourism (although they perform less well in the area of justice due to low efficiency and heavy workloads). It is striking, however, that very good performance in several categories – in Smolyan, these are education and the environment, and in Blagoevgrad, education and demography – may be enough to place a district among the leaders.

Several districts located in a compact region in the centre of Northern Bulgaria have 'good' social development. These districts perform well in most categories, especially in education, justice, and culture. However, their weak point is the markedly negative demographic dynamics – these are among the most ageing regions, with very low natural growth and a shrinking working-age population. Shumen, for its part, has some of the lowest results in the local education system.

Nine of the country's 28 districts are in the 'average' social development group. These regions often have very contrasting results in the various categories studied – Sliven, for example, has some of the most favourable demographic indicators in the country, but combined with the weakest education system; Dobrich, on the other hand, is in the top 3 in terms of culture and tourism, but with extremely poor local healthcare system.

Only three districts have 'unsatisfactory' social development – Yambol, Vratsa, and Pernik. In Pernik, the main reason is the severe deficits in social infrastructure, which are often compensated for by the proximity to the capital. The other two districts do not show acute deficits in any of the indicator groups, but their below-average performance in almost all areas gives them a low ranking in the overall assessment.

At the bottom, with a rating of 'weak' social development, are six districts – almost the entire northwestern part of Bulgaria, together with Silistra and only one southern district – Kyustendil. These districts have a markedly negative demographic trajectory and very weak public education and healthcare systems. Most perform well in the assessment of regional order and security, but this is not enough to mitigate the effect of the low scores in the other categories.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital) VARNA BURGAS PLOVDIV SMOLYAN BLAGOEVGRAD	VELIKO TARNOVO TARGOVISHTE GABROVO SHUMEN	RUSE PAZARDZHIK KARDZHALI STARA ZAGORA PLEVEN HASKOVO SLIVEN DOBRICH SOFIA	YAMBOL VRATSA PERNIK	KYUSTENDIL SILISTRA LOVECH VIDIN MONTANA RAZGRAD

DEMOGRAPHY

In the " Demography" category, there is a clear division between districts in Northern and Southern Bulgaria, with almost exclusively Northern districts at the bottom of the ranking. Given their significantly lower natural growth, weaker migration, and more visible aging, this is largely expected.

After a slight improvement in 2023, 2024 brings a further deterioration in **natural growth** in 24 of the 28 districts, with the indicator falling most rapidly, by more than 2 p.p., in Kardzhali, Dobrich, and Gabrovo. Although there is not a single district with positive natural growth, the differences between regions are significant – while the capital is approaching a balance between mortality and birth rates at -2‰, in Vidin it is -17.2‰ and in Gabrovo -14.6‰.

The trend of **positive migration** that began in 2020 continues, with only Montana and Smolyan remaining with significant negative net migration. In contrast, the population of Kardzhali is growing by 2.9% per year as a result of migration, with Varna (1.7%) and Burgas (1.3%) also attractive, as well as Sofia (capital) (1%). It is important to note, however, that in most districts the positive migration balance will decline in 2024, which means that in the future the trend may slow down and the focus will remain on the most developed areas.

The distribution of districts is relatively uniform in terms of **the proportion of young children** (aged 0-4), with most districts ranging between 3.5% and 5% of the total population. There are only two exceptions: Smolyan, where this share is only 2.9%, and Sliven, where it is 6.2%—which is to be expected, given that the region's demography is characterized by a relatively low average age and high fertility.

In all regions except the capital, **the share of the population above retirement age** (65+) is growing. The districts with the most ageing population in the country, with over 30% of people above retirement age, are Vidin, Gabrovo, and Smolyan, but a number of others—Lovech, Montana, Kyustendil, Silistra, and Pleven—will join this group in the coming years. Only Sofia (capital) retains a share of older people below 20% due to its large working-age population.

Significant differences can be observed in **the population density of urbanized areas**, with Sofia (capital) already exceeding 5,000 people per square kilometer, and Blagoevgrad concentrating nearly 2,000. At the other end of the ranking are less densely populated districts such as Vidin (540 people/square kilometer) and Dobrich (568 people/square kilometer).

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	PAZARDZHIK	SHUMEN	RAZGRAD	GABROVO
VARNA	STARA ZAGORA	YAMBOL	RUSE	SMOLYAN
SLIVEN	HASKOVO	VRATSA	VELIKO TARNOVO	VIDIN
PLOVDIV	SOFIA	TARGOVISHTE	PLEVEN	
BURGAS			LOVECH	
KARDZHALI			PERNIK	
BLAGOEVGRAD			DOBRICH	
			SILISTRA	
			MONTANA	
			KYUSTENDIL	

EDUCATION

Due to the specific nature of the calculation of the indices, there is not a single district rated as 'weak' in the 'Education' category for 2025. However, the differences in the results of the regional education leaders – Sofia (capital), Varna, Smolyan – and all other districts not only remain very large, but are also deepening.

Kindergarten enrolment is gradually improving, with the indicator reaching 99% of children of the appropriate age in Smolyan and 95% of those in Blagoevgrad. Kardzhali and Sliven perform poorly on this indicator, with less than ¾ of children enrolled. It is important to note that in several districts, most notably in the capital, the number of places in kindergartens remains below the number of children, which limits the potential for improvement.

After improvements at the beginning of the decade, most districts saw a gradual decline in **school enrolment** in 2024. This trend is most visible in Sliven (-1.4 p.p.), Ruse (-1.1 p.p.), and Haskovo (-1 p.p.) among students in grades 5-7. Although most regions achieve relatively good coverage of 88-92% of students, some are visibly lagging behind - in Sliven, only 77% of children of the appropriate age are enrolled, and in Kardzhali, 83%.

In 2024/25, the capital city had the highest **average score on the national matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature** (4.58), while Smolyan (4.33) and Varna (4.31) maintained their leading positions; a cluster with poor results emerged in the Northeast. More indicative is the share of poor exam scores, which exceeds 20% or one in five high school graduates in Shumen and Razgrad. These districts also account for a significant proportion of the poorest schools in the country.

The disparity in **the national external assessment exam in Mathematics after 7th grade** is significantly greater, with students in Sofia achieving an average of 55 points out of 100, those in Varna 50, but in Vidin only 31, and in Vratsa and Montana 32 each. The inequality in achievements is clearly visible even at this stage.

The index of correspondence between vocational education and employment developed by the IME shows that in some areas – Dobrich, Yambol, Silistra – supply and demand overlap to a significant extent. However, there are also regions – Vidin, Kardzhali, and Kyustendil, for example – where only about one-third of students in vocational classes find employment in the labour market.

The distribution of higher education institutions and their branches largely determines the concentration of university students in several districts. The highest number of **enrolled university students** is in Veliko Tarnovo – 76 per 1,000 people, as well as in Sofia (capital) (66) and Pleven (53). Targovishte, Kardzhali, Montana, and Pazardzhik remain without universities.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SOFIA (capital)	GABROVO	PLEVEN	MONTANA	
VARNA	YAMBOL	SOFIA	RAZGRAD	
SMOLYAN	BURGAS	VRATSA	VIDIN	
VELIKO TARNOVO	STARA ZAGORA	DOBRICH	KARDZHALI	
PLOVDIV	PERNIK	SILISTRA	SLIVEN	
RUSE		TARGOVISHTE		
BLAGOEVGRAD		HASKOVO		
		SHUMEN		
		PAZARDZHIK		
		LOVECH		
		KYUSTENDIL		

HEALTHCARE

In the 2025 edition, healthcare is rated as 'good' or 'very good' in only three districts: Pleven, Sofia (capital), and Shumen. On the other hand, 12 of the 28 districts are directly rated as 'weak'.

Despite the significant decline in population, **access to general practitioners** in most districts is gradually deteriorating. While in 2015 one GP served an average of 1,619 people, in 2024 the number is 1,718. However, there are significant differences between districts – while in Pleven there are 1,188 people per GP, in Veliko Tarnovo – 1,318, in Kardzhali the number is 3,218, and in Razgrad – 2,441. Access is deteriorating most rapidly in regions where it is already more challenging.

There is also a gradual deterioration in the IME's **index of access to medical specialists** in the districts, most notably in Silistra, Varna, and Kyustendil. The provision of specialists to regional healthcare systems is uneven. Compared to Pleven, where it is best, access is 7-8 times worse in the worst-performing districts (Kardzhali, Dobrich, Silistra, Sliven).

Improvements have been recorded in the scope of **health insurance coverage**, which, according to data from the National Revenue Agency, covers 100% of the average annual population in several districts and over 95% at the national level. The big exceptions are Sofia, where coverage is 86%, and Burgas, where it is 90%, but this is due to some extent to the specific characteristics of the local labour markets.

The number of **hospital beds** is gradually increasing in relation to the population, with most districts having between 4 and 7 beds per 1,000 people. The exceptions are Pernik and Dobrich (3 each) due to the influence of the developed healthcare system in Varna and Sofia, as well as Pleven, where there are as many as 13 beds per 1,000 people. Bed utilization is gradually increasing but remains very uneven – in Lovech in 2024, it was only 43%, in Shumen – 69%, but in no district did it exceed 70%.

Access to pharmacies remains a significant problem, with one pharmacy serving 1,406 people in Burgas in 2024, 3,336 in Razgrad, and 3,030 in Sliven. In most regions of the country, access to pharmacies is gradually deteriorating.

After the decline during the Covid-19 pandemic, **the average life expectancy** continues to increase in 2024. However, the gap between the capital (77.3 years) and the district with the lowest value, Vidin (71.9 years), remains very large, illustrating the significant differences in quality of life. Several districts – Montana, Dobrich, Razgrad – report an increase in infant mortality of over 1%, which points to significant problems with the functioning of local healthcare systems.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
PLEVEN SOFIA (capital)	SHUMEN	PLOVDIV SMOLYAN BLAGOEVGRAD STARA ZAGORA KARDZHALI VARNA RUSE	VELIKO TARNOVO KYUSTENDIL TARGOVISHTE GABROVO HASKOVO SILISTRA	SOFIA VIDIN VRATSA SLIVEN PAZARDZHIK LOVECH MONTANA PERNIK YAMBOL RAZGRAD DOBRICH BURGAS

SECURITY AND JUSTICE

The heavy workload of the courts and the relatively high crime rates result in poor performance by the most economically developed parts of the country in this category. Conversely, the best results are achieved by small, less densely populated districts such as Vidin and Targovishte.

Courts in small districts manage to close almost all **criminal cases within three months**. According to data from the Supreme Judicial Council, this figure is 98% of all cases in Shumen and Silistra, and 97% in Targovishte. In most districts, this share is already over 90%, with the lowest value in 2024 recorded in Sofia (district) – 85%. The leaders in the rapid closure of **administrative cases** are Montana (92% within three months), Smolyan, and Targovishte (91% each), while in the closure of the slower **civil cases** the leaders are Vidin and Targovishte (89%). The fewest administrative cases completed within three months are in Lovech (60%), and civil cases in the capital (48%).

The IME measures the deviation from the **average workload** of judges in both district and administrative courts, assuming that both heavily and lightly loaded courts represent an anomaly. In district courts, the largest deviation is in Sofia (capital), with a deviation of over 9 p.p. due to the heavy workload, while Smolyan, Kardzhali, and Dobrich are in the range of 5-6 p.p. due to the small number of cases. In the administrative courts, the largest deviation, at 7.6 points, is in Razgrad.

Two groups – districts with active tourism (Varna, Burgas) and those in the Northwest – have significantly higher crime rates, with **registered crimes against persons and property** exceeding 13 per 1,000 people in 2024, according to police statistics. Conversely, the Rhodope districts of Kardzhali and Smolyan have almost three times fewer crimes.

No district performs particularly well in terms of **the clearance rate for crimes against persons and property**, with Kardzhali and Targovishte approaching 2/3 of reported crimes solved. Conversely, less than 37% of crimes are solved in Sofia (capital), and just over 39% in Varna. In most districts, there is a decline in the clearance rate in 2024.

Smaller districts also have a significantly higher number of police officers – while in Plovdiv and Varna there are only 3.2 **police officers per 1,000 people**, in Vratsa there are 6.5, and in Vidin – 5.7. Most districts have between 4 and 5 police officers per 1,000 people.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
TARGOVISHTE	KARDZHALI	VRATSA	YAMBOL	MONTANA
VIDIN	GABROVO	SMOLYAN	STARA ZAGORA	KYUSTENDIL
	PERNIK	VELIKO TARNOVO	PLOVDIV	BLAGOEVGRAD
	SILISTRA	SHUMEN	LOVECH	DOBRICH
		RUSE	PLEVEN	BURGAS
		SOFIA		VARNA
		HASKOVO		SOFIA (capital)
		SLIVEN		
		RAZGRAD		
		PAZARDZHIK		

ENVIRONMENT

In 2025, only two districts – Smolyan and Pazardzhik – receive a rating of 'very good' in the environment category. On the other hand, more than half of the districts achieve low results.

Pernik with 678 kg per person per year is way ahead of the other districts in the negative ranking of **generated household waste**, followed by Varna (584 kg), Gabrovo (575 kg), and Burgas (571 kg). The least waste is generated in Kardzhali (256 kg), but most districts fall between 350-500 kg per person. Although there is a clear increase in the amount of waste at the national level, trends in the districts vary.

There are even greater differences in **the proportion of household waste sent for treatment and recycling**. While in Pernik and Veliko Tarnovo this is over 99% of all waste, and in Dobrich 97%, some districts – Razgrad, Kardzhali, Lovech, and Vidin fail to reach 20%. Although most districts manage to increase the share of recycled waste, in 2023 there are also significant declines, with 23 percentage points in Kyustendil and 11 percentage points in Yambol.

The share of forest area is largely determined by the geographical features of the districts. Smolyan is the undisputed leader here, with forests covering almost 71% of the district's territory, while Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, and Blagoevgrad also perform well, with over 50%. The district of Pleven has the least amount of forests, with only 7%. In recent years, the most significant increase in forest cover has been observed in Gabrovo. Stara Zagora has the highest **share of degraded land** (3.2%) as a result of mining and electricity production.

Pazardzhik has a significant lead in **installed RES capacities** with 5.93 kW/person, most of which is in pumped-storage hydroelectricity power plant, as well as Dobrich (3.83 kW/person), which focuses on wind energy. According to SEDA data, almost all regions are registering an expansion of RES capacity, most notably in Yambol (0.78 kW/person compared to the previous year) and Ruse (0.47 kW/person).

Households in Sofia (capital) consume the largest **amount of drinking water** – 126 liters/person/day in 2023, with Blagoevgrad close to this figure at 125 liters. On the other hand, Targovishte and Sliven consume 74 and 75 liters of water per day, respectively. Almost universally, the trend is toward an increase in household water consumption.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
SMOLYAN		TARGOVISHTE	KYUSTENDIL	PLEVEN
PAZARDZHIK		KARDZHALI	SOFIA	VIDIN
		DOBRICH	PERNIK	RUSE
		MONTANA	BURGAS	RAZGRAD
		SHUMEN	PLOVDIV	SILISTRA
		GABROVO	YAMBOL	STARA ZAGORA
		HASKOVO	VRATSA	
		SLIVEN	VELIKO TARNOVO	
		BLAGOEVGRAD	LOVECH	
			SOFIA (capital)	
			VARNA	

CULTURE AND TOURISM

The recovery of tourism after the pandemic puts Burgas at the top of the ranking in this category, while Varna and Dobrich – the other two coastal districts – also achieve good results. More than one-third of the districts, on the other hand, register low cultural activity and attract few tourists.

Cinema visits in 2024 has almost tripled from its low point in 2020 to 696 per 1,000 people. Sofia (capital) is the absolute leader in this indicator with over 1,500 visits compared to just 80 in Sliven. The fastest growth over the past year has been observed in Dobrich – 116 new visits per 1,000 people, which is almost double.

There is a similar trend in **theatre visits**, where Sofia (capital) again leads with 787 visits per 1,000 people. Sofia continues to be at the bottom of the ranking with 0. Significant declines in this indicator are observed in Pazardzhik and Smolyan, which lost more than half of their visits within a year.

In terms of **museum visits**, Gabrovo ranks first, far ahead of the other districts, with 3.7 thousand visits per 1,000 people, compared to 2.4 thousand visits in second-ranked Veliko Tarnovo and 787 on average for the country. The largest increase over the past year was observed in Vidin (+273 per 1,000 people), and the most significant decline was in Pernik (-898 people).

When it comes to **libraries visits**, Targovishte has a big lead with over 2,000 visits per 1,000 people, followed by Shumen with 1,700. Interest in libraries is lowest in Pernik, with just 93 visits per 1,000 people.

Burgas ranks first in terms of **beds in accommodation establishments** with 368/1,000 people, compared to 56 on average for the country, followed by Dobrich (194), Varna (148), and Smolyan (127). There is almost no bed capacity in Pernik, Targovishte, and Yambol. The southern Black Sea region has an even greater lead in terms of **overnight stays**, which in 2024 reach 25.6 thousand per 1,000 people – about two and a half times more than in Varna and Dobrich. Unsurprisingly, given the lack of facilities, tourist activity is weakest in Pernik, Yambol, and Targovishte.

Overnight stays booked through online platforms are becoming increasingly popular – 690 per 1,000 people on average for the country, compared to 235 in 2020. Here, too, Burgas has the upper hand with 2.9 thousand overnight stays per 1,000 people, while Smolyan, Blagoevgrad, and Varna achieve similar results with 1.3-1.4 thousand.

VERY GOOD	GOOD	AVERAGE	UNSATISFACTORY	WEAK
BURGAS	VARNA	VELIKO TARNOVO	PLOVDIV	VRATSA
SOFIA (capital)	GABROVO	RUSE	VIDIN	SLIVEN
DOBRICH		BLAGOEVGRAD	KYUSTENDIL	SILISTRA
		TARGOVISHTE	PLEVEN	HASKOVO
		STARA ZAGORA	LOVECH	SOFIA
		SHUMEN	PAZARDZHIK	RAZGRAD
		SMOLYAN	YAMBOL	PERNIK
				KARDZHALI
				MONTANA

REGIONAL PROFILES BY DISTRICT

BLAGOEVGRAD DISTRICT

The gross domestic product per capita is slowing down and remains below the national average. Wages and pensions are growing relatively quickly and, although they remain relatively low, poverty in the district is declining. Employment continues to rise. There has also been significant growth in foreign investment in the region, and the absorption of European funds remains high. In terms of infrastructure, Blagoevgrad is both the district with the highest share of roads in good condition (64% compared to 36% for the country as a whole) and the district with the lowest connection of the sewerage system to treatment plants (35% compared to 67% for the country as a whole). The average levels of local taxes on real estate and property transfers are relatively low, but those on vehicles and trade are high. Municipal revenues are insufficient.

Natural population growth is relatively high, although negative, while mechanical growth is increasing significantly. The district performs relatively well in educational indicators, with the exception of the alignment of vocational education with the profile of the economy. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors, and law enforcement suffers from a shortage of police officers. Blagoevgrad has a relatively low proportion of degraded land, but the proportion of waste sent for treatment and recycling is high. Theatre attendance is relatively low, while overnight stays in the region are above average.
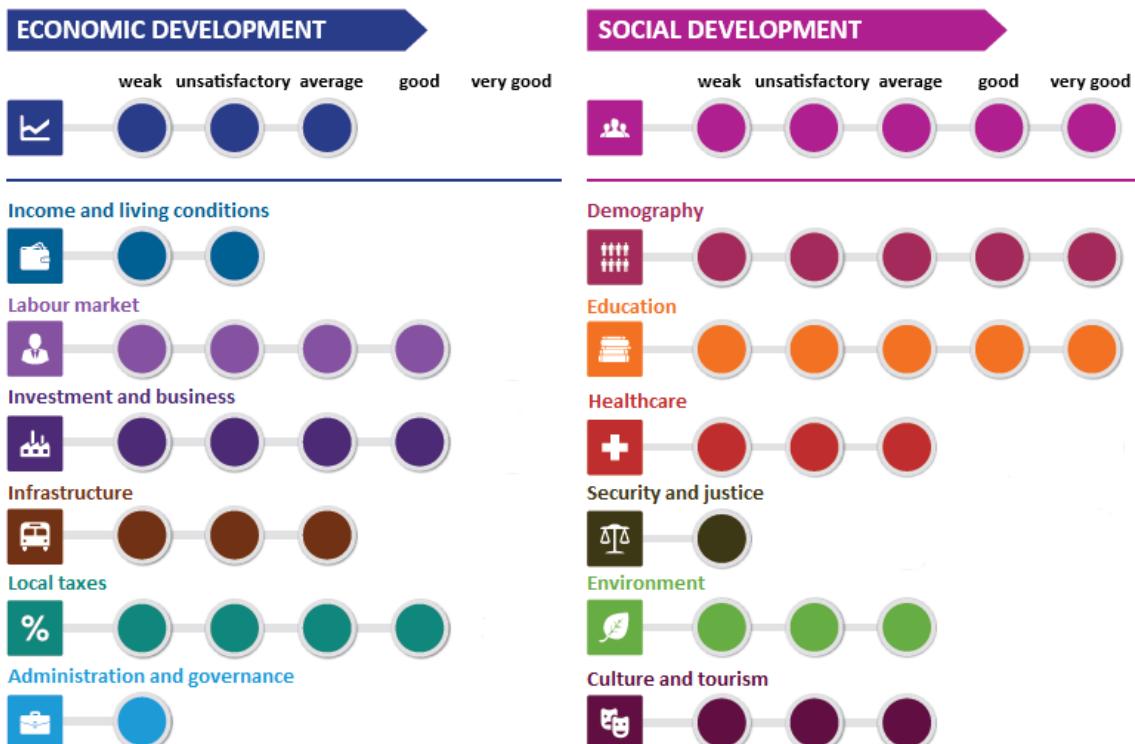
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR BLAGOEVGRAD DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	16,449	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	15,999	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	19.5	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	78.9	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	10.4	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,789	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,246	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	63.9	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	77.9	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	12.20	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	17.5	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-5.1	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	2.5	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	22.8	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	42.4	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	12.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,727	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	76.6	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	70.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	54.0	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.05	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	143	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	6,230	4,292

BURGAS DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions are growing relatively quickly and are above those in most districts. However, the poverty level in the district remains relatively high. Employment and unemployment are both rising, with both indicators being more favourable than the national average. Investment activity in the region remains high, as reflected in the continued growth of domestic and foreign investment and the huge increase in output. The share of motorways and first-class roads is high, but the quality of the road surface remains relatively low. Burgas is the district with the highest local taxes. The district maintains stable financial independence.

Natural growth is high, although negative, and the region continues to attract people. The region performs relatively well in educational indicators. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. There are many registered crimes and the courts are overloaded. Large amounts of waste are generated, but most of it is sent for treatment and recycling. Burgas is the district with the highest ratings for tourism, and most cultural indicators are also above the national average.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Income and living conditions	●	●	●	●	●
Labour market	●	●	●	●	
Investment and business	●	●	●	●	
Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	
Local taxes	●	●	●		
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	●

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Demography	●	●	●	●	●
Education	●	●	●	●	
Healthcare	●				
Security and justice	●				
Environment	●	●			
Culture and tourism	●	●	●	●	●
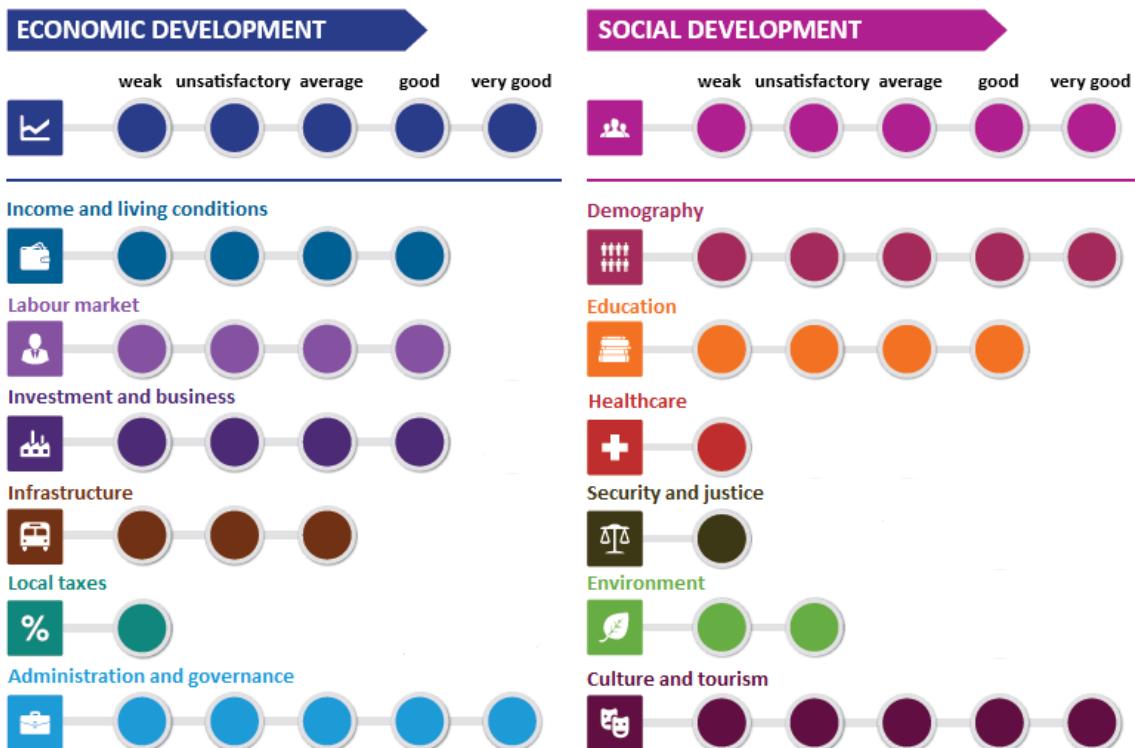
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR BURGAS DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	22,169	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,805	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	23.0	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	77.4	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.4	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,148	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	5,831	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	39	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	24.9	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	78.8	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	15.52	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	32.5	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-5.4	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	17.0	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	23.0	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	43.5	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	13.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,113	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	75.5	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	72.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	49.0	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.60	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	283	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	25,616	4,292

DOBRICH DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions are growing at the average rate for the country and are unable to compensate for the district's lag in these indicators, but they are significantly reducing the level of poverty, although it remains relatively high. Although it remains low, employment in the region is increasing. The growth of domestic and foreign investment, as well as of manufactured output, are slowing down and the district lags behind the average relative values for the country. The share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of road surfaces, remain low. Local taxes on vehicles are relatively high. The local administration continues to be rated as the most transparent in the country.

The demographic picture is unfavourable, and natural growth continues to decline rapidly. In the education category, Dobrich receives good ratings for the high correlation between vocational education and the profile of the economy, but poor ratings for the relatively low performance of students. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical specialists and a small number of hospital beds. Administrative cases are resolved relatively slowly. A lot of waste is generated, but most of it is sent for treatment and recycling. Tourism is intense, but cultural life is relatively weak.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●			
Income and living conditions	●	●			
Labour market	●	●	●		
Investment and business	●				
Infrastructure	●	●			
Local taxes	●	●			
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●		
Demography	●	●			
Education	●	●	●		
Healthcare	●				
Security and justice	●				
Environment	●	●	●		
Culture and tourism	●	●	●	●	●
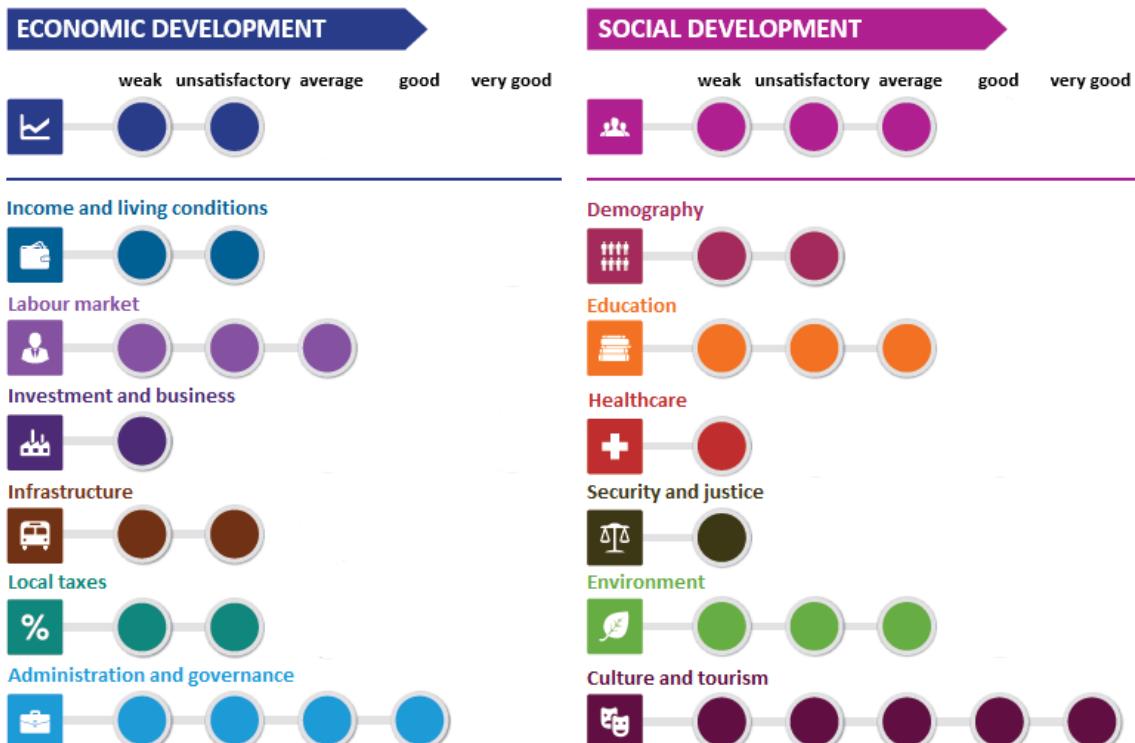
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR DOBRICH DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,075	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,200	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	26.8	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	70.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.9	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,063	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,345	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	33	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	5.4	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	72.2	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	8.76	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	23.1	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-13.1	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	3.3	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	27.1	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	33.0	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	15.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,474	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.3	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	79.2	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	54.7	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	3.83	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	365	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	11,988	4,292

GABROVO DISTRICT

Gross domestic product continues to grow steadily and rapidly, but wages lag behind the national average. Nevertheless, poverty in the district remains relatively low. Employment is rising significantly and is above the national average, but the proportion of the population of working age remains extremely limited. Gabrovo is among the top three districts in terms of investment, and although the growth of domestic and foreign investment, as well as the absorption of funds under European programs, are slowing down, these indicators remain relatively high. Despite the well-developed road network, the share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of the road surface, remain low. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on vehicles is high. The administration demonstrates good development in e-governance.

Gabrovo continues to be among the three districts with the most unfavourable demographic picture. The shares of children enrolled in kindergartens and lower secondary education are high. Overall, the entire population has health insurance. The crime clearance rate is high. The share of degraded land is small, but the installed renewable energy capacity is also limited. The district leads in terms of the relative number of museum visits.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
(overall)	●	●	●	●	●
Income and living conditions	●	●	●	●	
Labour market	●	●	●	●	
Investment and business	●	●	●	●	
Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	
Local taxes	●	●	●		
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	●

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
(overall)	●	●	●	●	
Demography	●				
Education	●	●	●	●	
Healthcare	●	●			
Security and justice	●	●	●	●	
Environment	●	●	●		
Culture and tourism	●	●	●	●	
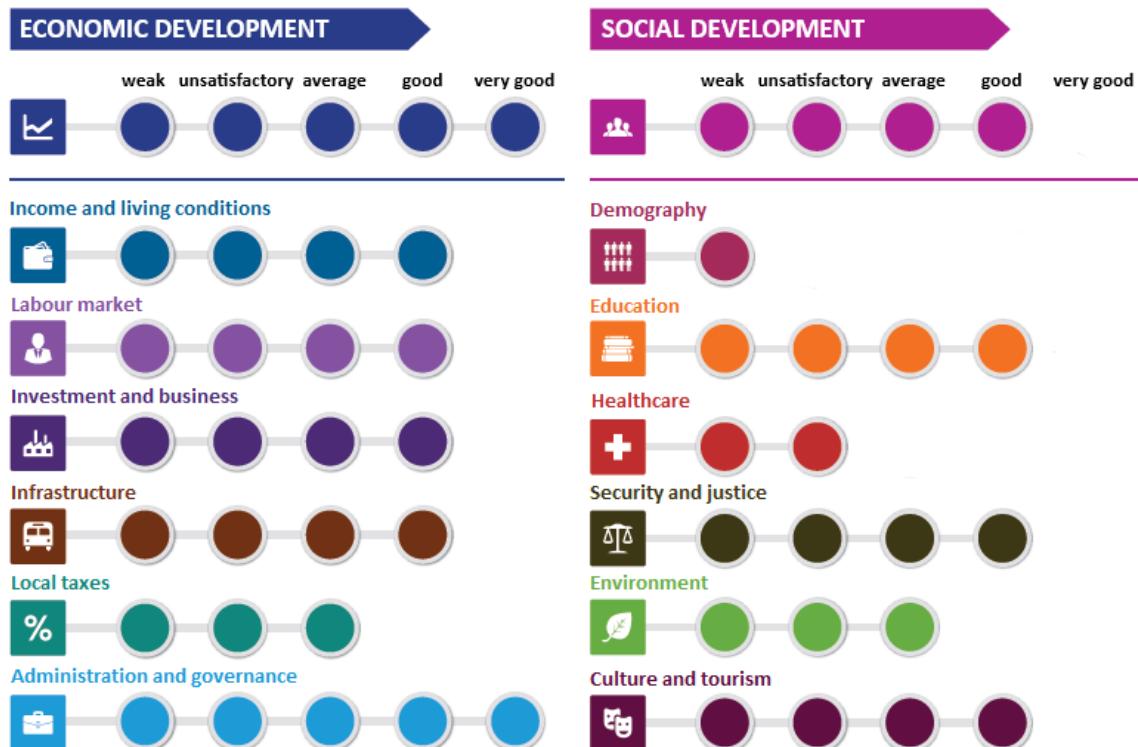
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR GABROVO DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	24,297	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,377	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	16.7	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	79.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.1	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,234	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	4,815	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	134	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	22.0	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	82.9	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	8.87	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	20.3	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-14.6	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	3.4	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	30.5	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	38.1	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	12.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,572	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.7	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	85.3	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	64.0	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.15	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	498	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	2,083	4,292

HASKOVO DISTRICT

The gross domestic product and wages in the district are among the lowest in the country, which determines the relatively high level of poverty among the population. Employment is rising slightly and the educational structure of the workforce is improving, but remains relatively poor. Despite the growth in investment (domestic and foreign), business activity in the district remains weak and the relative value of production remains limited. The share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of the road surface, remain high. However, the connection of the public sewerage system to wastewater treatment plants remains limited. Local taxes are high. The administration is showing good progress in e-governance.

The demographic picture is favourable, although the population continues to age. The shares of children enrolled in kindergartens and lower secondary education are relatively low. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The relative number of police officers is high. The need for cooling is highest in Haskovo. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.
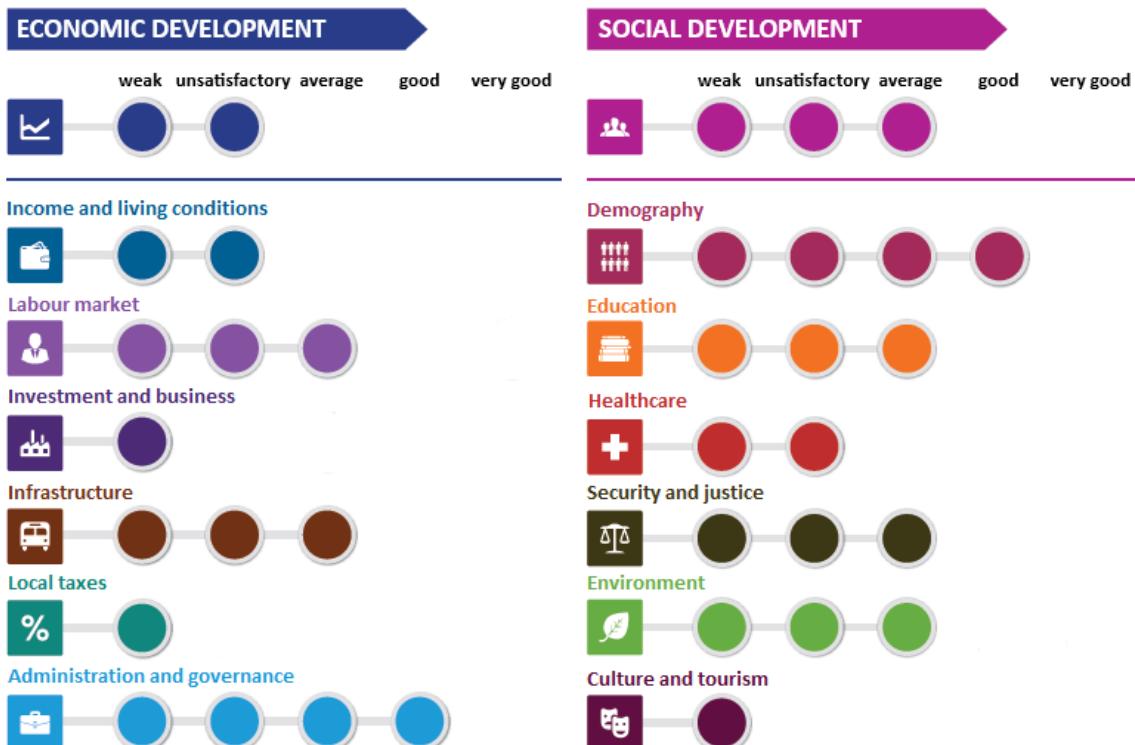
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR HASKOVO DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	13,012	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	16,344	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	26.7	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	73.4	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	6.6	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,690	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	756	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	8	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	42.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	71.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	12.85	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	21.0	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-9.0	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	10.2	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	26.0	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	37.3	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	13.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,032	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	75.0	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	79.8	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	56.0	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.28	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	262	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	1,241	4,292

KARDZHALI DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions are growing at a relatively slow pace, and the district continues to lag behind in these indicators, which has a negative impact on poverty levels. Despite its relatively low level, employment in the region is declining further, which is probably linked to the poor educational status of the workforce. The value of production is increasing significantly, but cannot compensate for the low base and weak growth of domestic and foreign investment in the region. Kardzhali is among the districts with the weakest infrastructure development, with an extremely low share of the population having access to public sewerage. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on property transfers is high. E-governance is relatively underdeveloped.

The district continues to lead in terms of population attraction, but aging is clearly evident. Kardzhali is among the districts with the worst educational scores, mainly due to poor student performance and extremely low enrollment rates in kindergartens and lower secondary schools. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The number of registered crimes is relatively low, and the clearance rate is high. The amount of waste generated is low, but the proportion sent for treatment and recycling is low. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

weak · unsatisfactory · average · good · very good

Income and living conditions

Labour market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

weak · unsatisfactory · average · good · very good

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
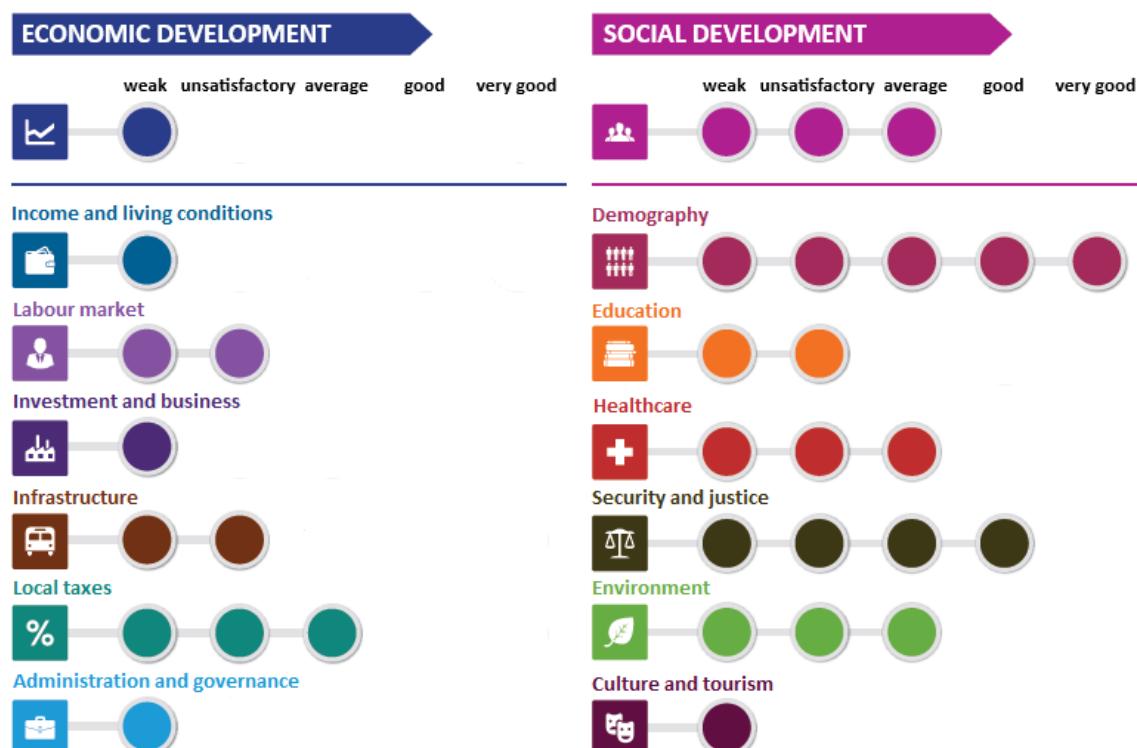
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR KARDZHALI DISTRICT

| Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	15,593	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,079	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	33.2	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	67.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	10.0	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	1,776	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	3,159	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	36.5	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	44.0	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	8.16	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	19.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-8.9	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	28.6	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	27.1	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	35.2	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	16.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	3,218	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	76.7	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	76.9	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	65.6	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.56	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	156	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	827	4,292

KYUSTENDIL DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages are growing relatively quickly but remain below the national average. Poverty levels are rising but remain relatively low. The employment rate has fallen significantly and remains below the national average. Domestic and foreign investment in the district are increasing but remains low. The road network is relatively well developed, and the share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of the road surface, remain higher than the national average. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities is high. The development of e-governance and the transparency of the local administration are low.

The demographic picture in the region is unfavourable. Performance on educational indicators is also weak, mainly due to the relatively low results of students and the mismatch between vocational education and the profile of the economy. Overall, the entire population has health insurance. The administration of justice is relatively slow. Waste generation is low, but the share of waste sent for treatment and recycling is low. Cultural life in the region is relatively weak.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Income and living conditions					
Labour market					
Investment and business					
Infrastructure					
Local taxes					
Administration and governance					

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Demography					
Education					
Healthcare					
Security and justice					
Environment					
Culture and tourism					
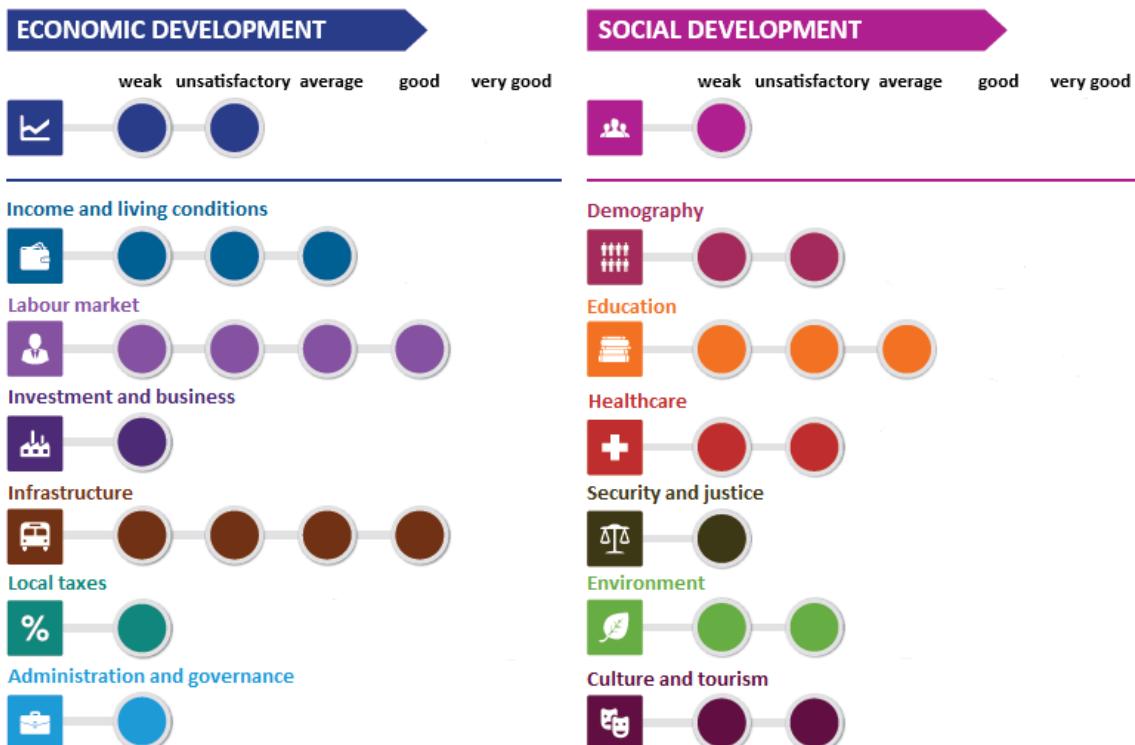
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR KYUSTENDIL DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	15,030	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	16,205	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	20.4	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	74.3	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	7.9	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,245	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	541	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	42	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	38.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	68.8	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	13.09	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	19.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-14.4	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	0.0	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	28.7	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	35.3	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	16.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,464	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.6	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	59.1	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	48.1	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.53	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	179	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	2,256	4,292

LOVECH DISTRICT

The gross domestic product per capita has seen the highest growth in the country and has managed to exceed the median value of the other districts. However, wage growth is slowing down and the poverty level in the region is increasing and remains above average. Unemployment is decreasing significantly, but the rate remains above the national average. The share of the working-age population is relatively low. Domestic investment is relatively high and increasing, but foreign investment is lagging behind. The connectivity of settlements to public sewerage systems remains low. Lovech is among the three regions with the lowest local taxes. The administration demonstrates good development in e-governance.

The demographic picture in the district is unfavourable. The performance on educational indicators is also poor, mainly due to the relatively low results of students. Healthcare suffers from a small number of hospital beds, but their utilisation is also the lowest in the country. The administration of justice is among the fastest in the country in civil cases and, at the same time, among the slowest in administrative cases. Waste generation is low, but the share of waste sent for treatment and recycling is low. Cultural life is not very intense, but tourism is relatively well developed.
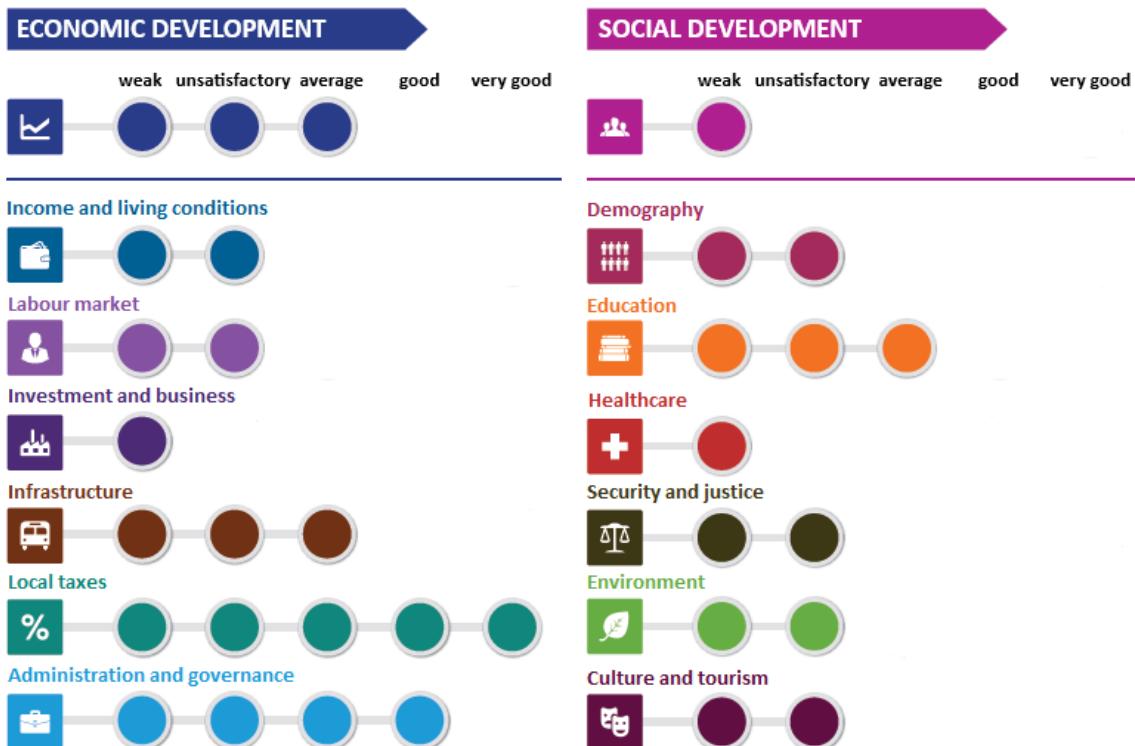
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR LOVECH DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	18,024	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	17,963	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	31.0	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	69.7	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	9.0	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,660	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	1,328	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	74	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	39.5	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	60.1	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	10.35	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	15.7	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-12.2	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.3	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	28.3	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	35.1	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	17.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,507	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.7	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	88.1	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	50.2	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.71	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	160	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	2,652	4,292

MONTANA DISTRICT

The gross domestic product per capita is increasing significantly, but its value, as well as that of salaries and pensions, remains below the national average. Montana is the district with the weakest performance in terms of labour market indicators, mainly due to the extremely low employment rate and the very limited share of the working-age population. The district also ranks last in terms of relative investment volume (domestic and foreign). Montana is also the least developed region in terms of infrastructure, with extremely poor road quality and limited access to sewerage. At the same time, Montana ranks first in terms of lowest local taxes. Local revenues remain insufficient.

The demographic picture in the region is unfavourable, with a pronounced ageing population. Performance on educational indicators is also unsatisfactory, mainly due to low student results and the mismatch between vocational education and the profile of the economy. Life expectancy is relatively low. There are many reported crimes, but the clearance rate is low. The amount of household waste generated and the proportion of degraded land are relatively low. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.
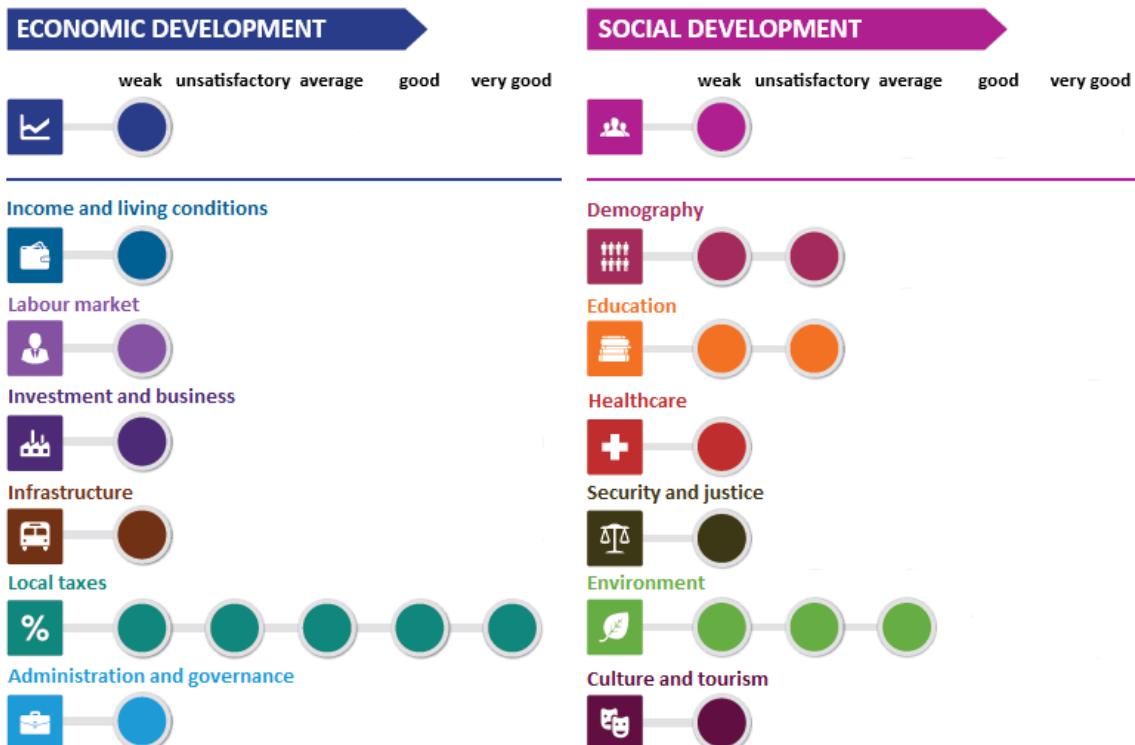
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR MONTANA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	15,127	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	17,702	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	29.1	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	61.3	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	12.0	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	1,665	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	477	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	16	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	8.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	59.4	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	5.69	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	12.7	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-13.8	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-1.9	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	28.5	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	32.6	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	14.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,557	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	72.7	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	81.4	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	46.4	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.77	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	67	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	950	4,292

PAZARDZHIK DISTRICT

The gross domestic product per capita is growing slowly and lags behind the average, while the poverty level is rising and remains among the highest in the country. The educational structure of the labour force in the region remains relatively unfavourable. Domestic investment in the district is growing, but foreign investment is declining. The quality of the road network remains relatively high, but the district receives a low rating for infrastructure in terms of the limited connectivity of the public sewerage system to wastewater treatment plants. The average level of all local taxes considered is relatively low. E-governance and the transparency of local administration are underdeveloped.

Natural population growth is relatively favourable, although the rate remains negative. The region performs poorly on educational indicators, mainly due to the relatively low results of students. The infant mortality rate is relatively high. The crime clearance rate is high. Pazardzhik is among the districts with the highest environmental rating, mainly due to its leading position in terms of installed renewable energy capacity. Cultural life is not very intense, but tourism is well developed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good

- Income and living conditions
- Labour market
- Investment and business
- Infrastructure
- Local taxes
- Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good

- Demography
- Education
- Healthcare
- Security and justice
- Environment
- Culture and tourism
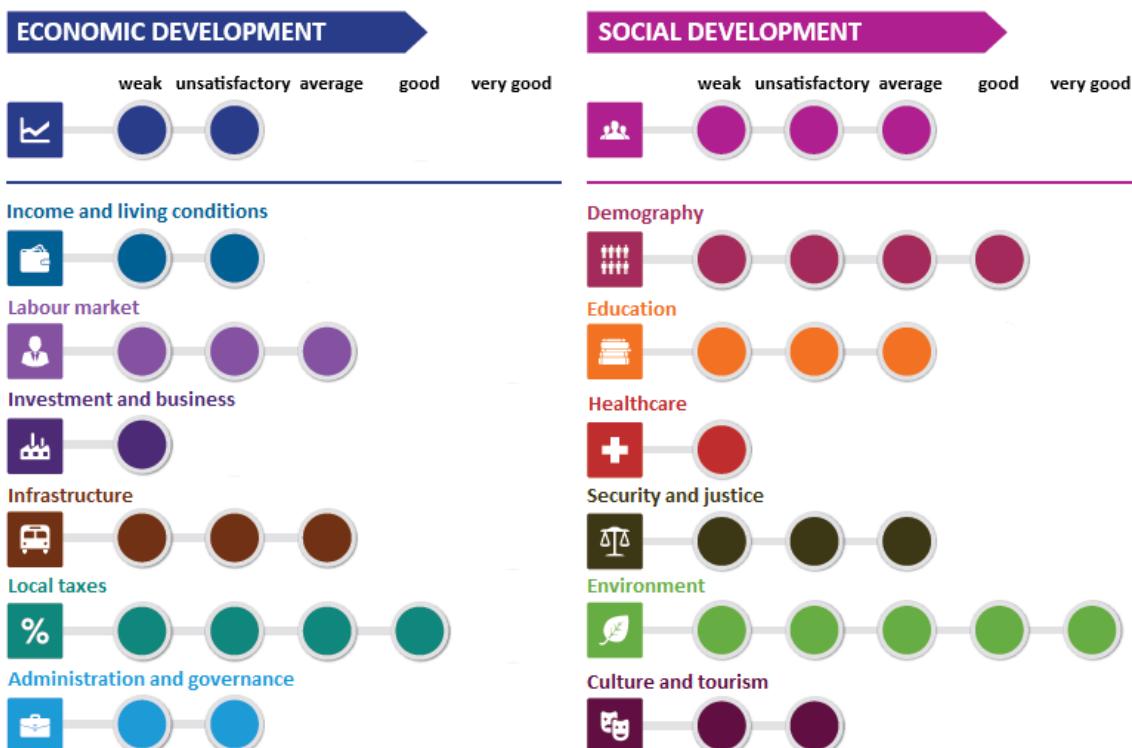
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR PAZARDZHIK DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	16,057	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,073	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	35.4	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	75.1	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	8.3	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,400	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,472	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	102	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	58.6	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	70.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.13	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	18.1	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-8.4	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	0.6	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	24.8	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	38.0	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	17.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,650	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.0	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	81.3	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	60.3	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	5.93	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	204	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	4,907	4,292

PERNIK DISTRICT

Salaries are growing relatively quickly, but the gross domestic product per capita is lagging behind. The poverty level in the district is rising, but remains below the national average. Employment and unemployment rates are lower than average. Domestic investment in the region is growing, but foreign investment is declining. The road network is well developed, but the quality of the surface is below average. Most of the settlements in the district are connected to public sewerage systems and wastewater treatment plants. The average level of all local taxes considered is relatively low. The district maintains stable financial independence.

The demographic picture is unfavourable. The performance on educational indicators is also poor, mainly due to the relatively low results of students, although the district receives relatively good ratings for the high enrolment rate in kindergartens and lower secondary education. Performance in healthcare is weak, but this is mainly due to the region's proximity to the capital and the demand for healthcare there. The administration of justice is relatively swift. The volume of household waste generated is high, but much of it is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●		
Income and living conditions	●	●	●	●	
Labour market	●	●	●		
Investment and business	●	●			
Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	
Local taxes	●	●	●	●	
Administration and governance	●	●			

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●			
Demography	●	●			
Education	●	●	●	●	
Healthcare	●				
Security and justice	●	●	●	●	
Environment	●	●			
Culture and tourism	●				
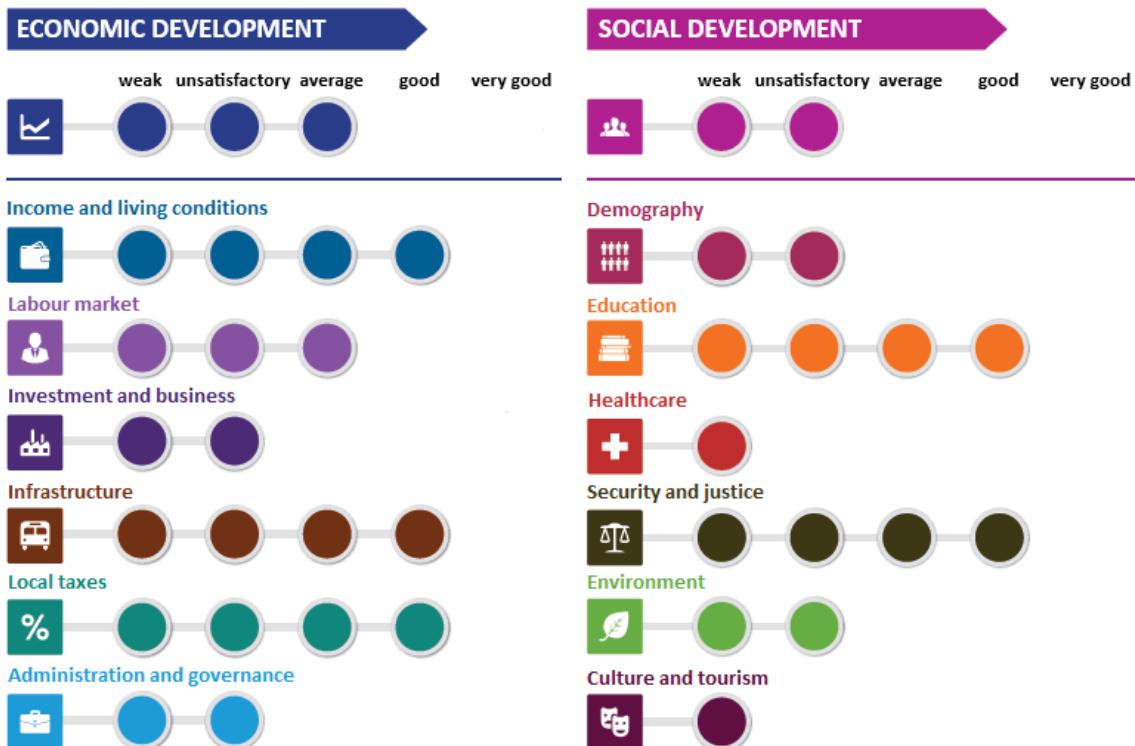
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR PERNIK DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	15,608	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,866	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	20.3	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	72.4	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.2	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,597	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,398	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	14	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	5.2	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	79.7	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.89	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	23.9	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-14.8	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	4.4	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	26.5	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	35.2	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	12.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,578	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.5	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	76.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	49.2	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.24	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	6	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	349	4,292

PLEVEN DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions in the district are growing at a rate close to the national average and remain relatively low. The poverty level is declining slightly but remains above average. The share of the working-age population remains low. There has been an outflow of investment in the region, which is also reflected in the value of output. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities is high. E-governance is underdeveloped.

The demographic picture is unfavourable. The performance on educational indicators is also poor, mainly due to the relatively low results of students. At the same time, however, Pleven continues to be the leading district in the healthcare category with the highest relative number of medical doctors and hospital beds. The administration of justice is relatively fast, but the clearance rate for crimes is low. The district ranks last in terms of forest cover, but there is not much degraded land. Cultural life is relatively intense, but tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

| | weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good |

Income and living conditions

Labour market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

| | weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good |

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
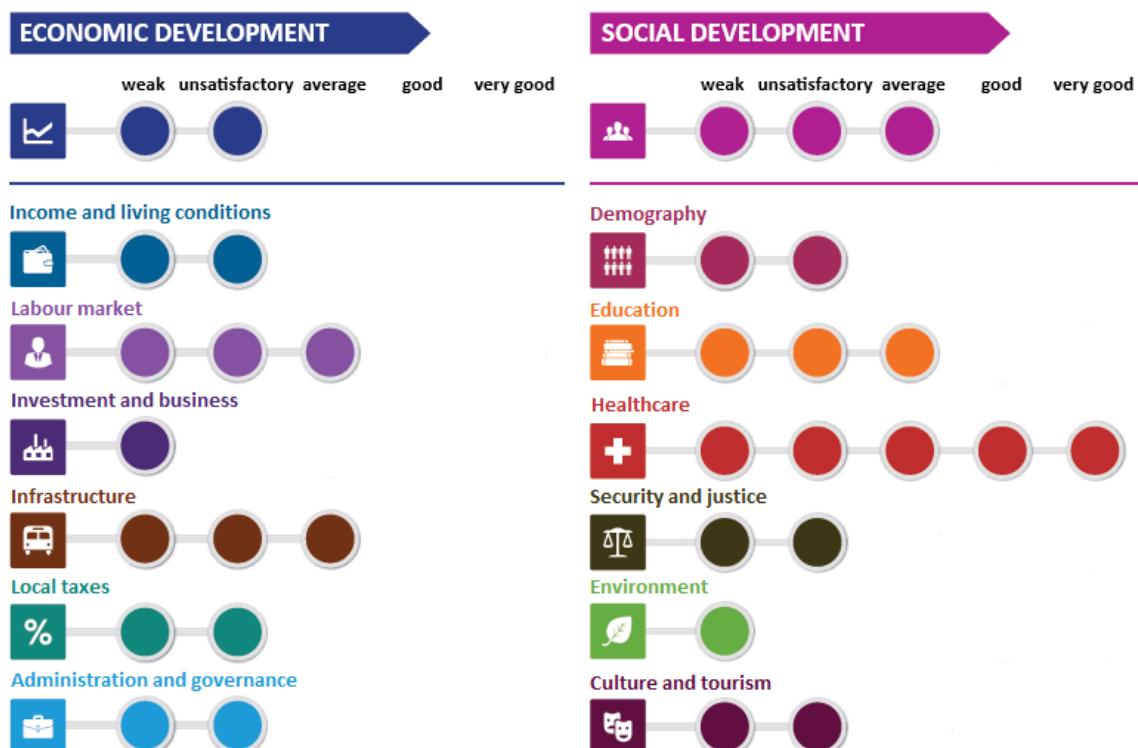
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR PLEVEN DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,703	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,062	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	25.4	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	76.5	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	7.6	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,549	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	1,449	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	76	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	28.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	60.5	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.54	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	17.6	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-11.0	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.8	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	28.6	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	37.1	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	17.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,177	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.3	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	74.6	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	45.6	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.97	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	425	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	634	4,292

PLOVDIV DISTRICT

Gross domestic product growth is slowing down but remains above that in most districts. Wages and pensions are rising in line with the national average and remain relatively high, although poverty levels remain above average. Employment but also unemployment are below average. The level of domestic investment in the region remains high and growing, but the weak growth of foreign investment is reflected in the limited increase in the value of production. Plovdiv is among the best-developed districts in terms of infrastructure. The local tax burden is relatively high. The region maintains stable financial independence.

Plovdiv remains among the districts with a favourable demographic picture, despite the continuing aging of the population. The region's performance in educational indicators is also relatively good, with high student results and a large number of university students. The share of people with health insurance is relatively low. The volume of household waste generated is high, and a small proportion is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good

Income and living conditions

Labour market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

weak | unsatisfactory | average | good | very good

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
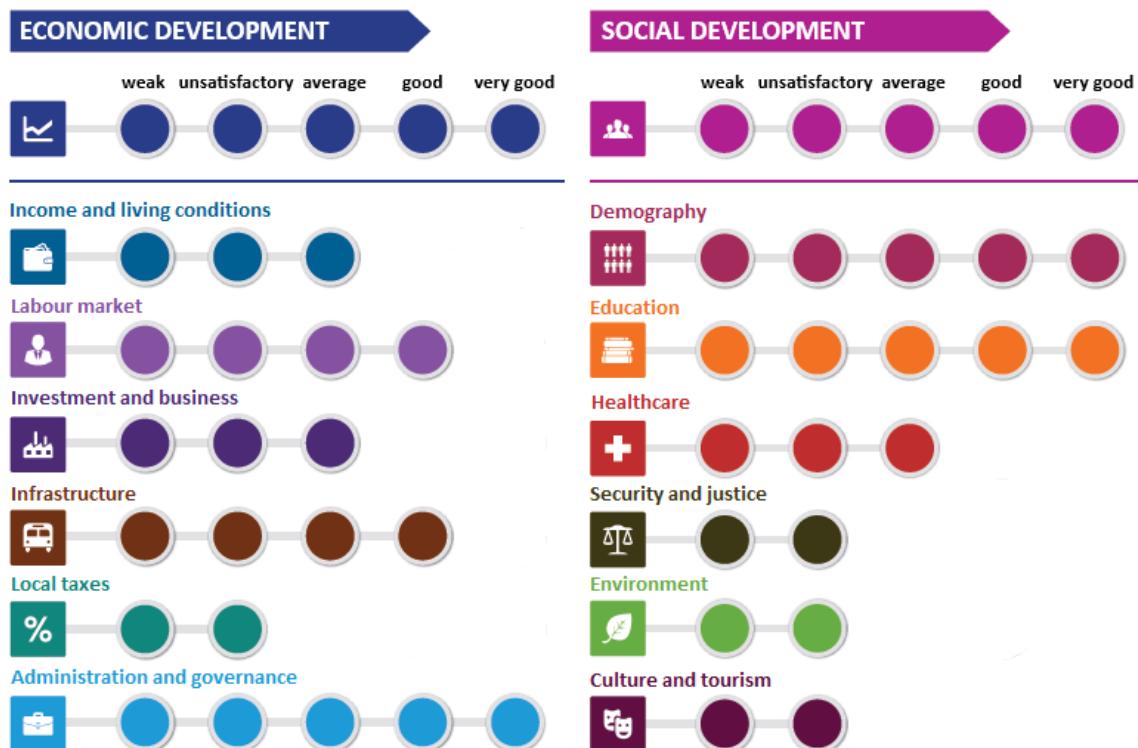
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR PLOVDIV DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	22,209	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	20,551	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	27.0	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	74.9	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.5	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	5,865	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	4,189	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	114	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	54.7	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	75.4	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	13.16	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	25.9	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-5.3	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	8.5	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	22.7	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	42.3	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	11.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,623	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	75.9	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	72.6	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	52.3	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.36	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	255	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	2,229	4,292

RAZGRAD DISTRICT

Although wages for workers in the district are relatively high, the poverty rate is among the three highest in the country, with nearly 35% of the population living below the poverty line. Employment is growing slowly and cannot compensate for the large lag in the coefficient, and the educational structure of the workforce is relatively unfavourable. Domestic and foreign investment are increasing but remain relatively low. Razgrad is among the districts with the weakest infrastructure development, with the lowest share of the population with access to public sewerage in the country (43% compared to 75% nationally). Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities is high. Local financial revenues remain insufficient.

The demographic picture is unfavourable, with Razgrad being the district that loses the most population in 2024, with a sharp decline in mechanical growth. Performance on educational indicators is also unsatisfactory, mainly due to the relatively low results of students. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The administration of justice is relatively fast, and the clearance rate for crimes is high. An extremely low proportion of household waste is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
		average			
Income and living conditions	unsatisfactory	average			
Labour market	unsatisfactory	average			
Investment and business	unsatisfactory	average			
Infrastructure	weak	unsatisfactory			
Local taxes	unsatisfactory	average	good		
Administration and governance	unsatisfactory	average	good		

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	unsatisfactory				
Demography	weak	unsatisfactory			
Education	unsatisfactory	average			
Healthcare	weak				
Security and justice	unsatisfactory	average	good		
Environment	average	good			
Culture and tourism	unsatisfactory				

SELECTED INDICATORS FOR RAZGRAD DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,081	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,228	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	34.6	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	66.4	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	9.8	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,520	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,735	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita		227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	27.5	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	42.6	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.25	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	18.5	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-11.5	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.8	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	25.7	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	32.4	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	22.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,441	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.1	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	84.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	58.1	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.58	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	220	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	494	4,292

RUSE DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions continue to grow relatively rapidly, which is reflected in a reduction in the level of poverty in the district. Employment continues to grow and is significantly above average, while the educational structure of the workforce remains good. Domestic and foreign investment are growing slowly but remain relatively high. The share of first-class roads and the quality of road surfaces remain above average. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on motor vehicles is low. The region maintains relatively stable financial independence.

The aging of the population is pronounced. The region performs relatively well in educational indicators, with relatively high student results. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors, especially general practitioners. The number of registered crimes is relatively high, but the clearance rate is high. The main reasons for the region's poor environmental rating are the large volume of household waste generated and the small forest area. Cultural life is intense, but tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●	●	
Income and living conditions	●	●	●		
Labour market	●	●	●	●	
Investment and business	●	●	●	●	
Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	
Local taxes	●				
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●		
Demography	●	●			
Education	●	●	●	●	●
Healthcare	●	●	●		
Security and justice	●	●	●		
Environment	●				
Culture and tourism	●	●	●		
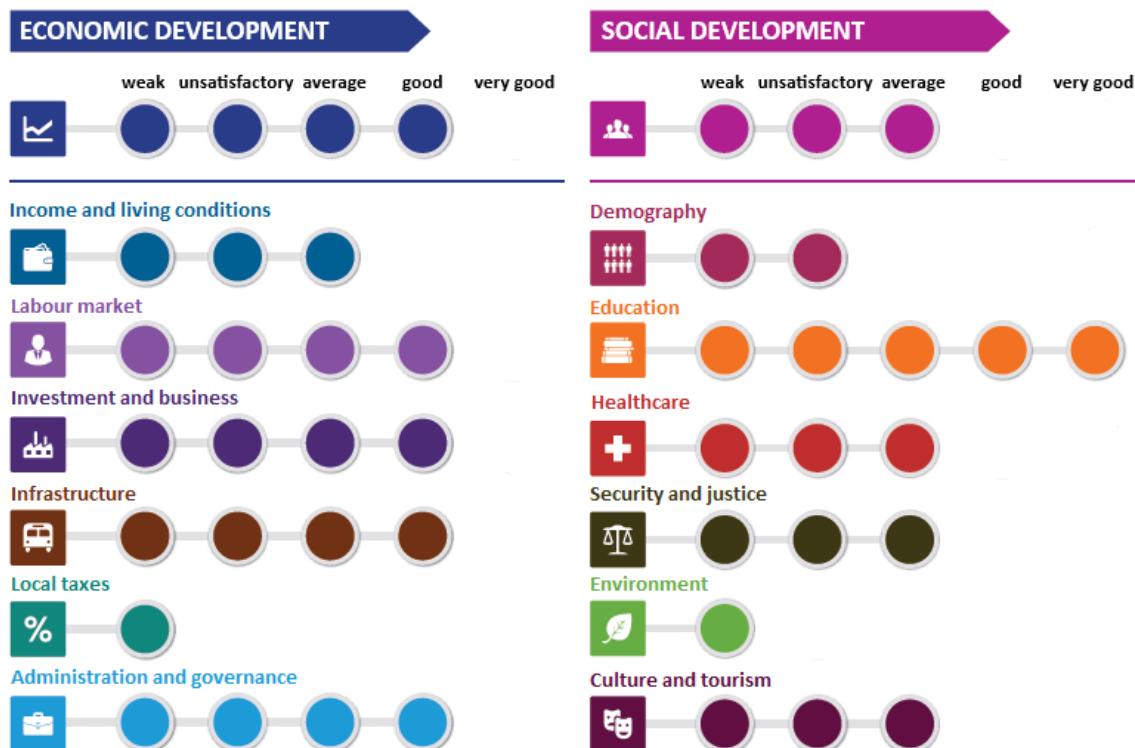
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR RUSE DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	21,678	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,662	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	16.1	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	81.1	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	5.9	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,906	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	3,021	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	127	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	43.2	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	68.4	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	13.64	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	24.2	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-11.7	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	2.4	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	27.2	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	41.2	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	8.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,226	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.4	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	82.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	61.9	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.73	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	526	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	926	4,292

SHUMEN DISTRICT

The poverty level in the district is rising but remains below the national average. Employment is declining and unemployment is rising, with both rates remaining relatively unfavourable compared to the averages. The growth of domestic and foreign investment is very limited and remains low. Shumen is the region with the highest share of motorways and first-class roads (37% compared to 19% for the country). The connectivity of settlements to public sewerage systems remains limited. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on property transfers is high. The administration demonstrates good development in e-governance.

The demographic picture is relatively favourable, although the population continues to age. Student results are low. The region's performance in healthcare is not so good, except that Shumen has the highest hospital bed utilization rate and almost the entire population has health insurance. The administration of justice is relatively fast. A large part of household waste is sent for treatment and recycling. Visits to museums and libraries are relatively high, but tourism is not particularly intense.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●		
Income and living conditions	●	●			
Labour market	●	●	●		
Investment and business	●	●			
Infrastructure	●	●	●	●	
Local taxes	●	●	●	●	
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●	●	
Demography	●	●	●		
Education	●	●	●		
Healthcare	●	●	●	●	
Security and justice	●	●	●		
Environment	●	●	●		
Culture and tourism	●	●	●		
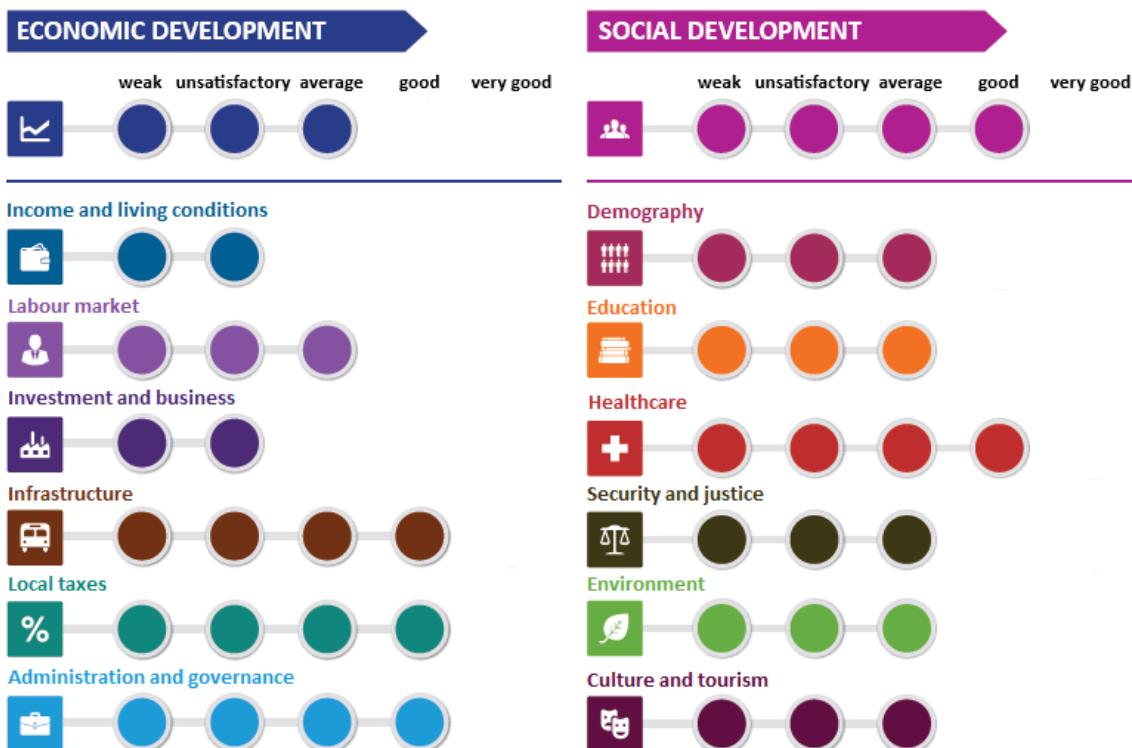
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SHUMEN DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,129	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	19,168	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	19.4	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	74.0	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	10.6	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,121	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	1,399	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	130	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	30.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	59.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	4.96	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	19.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-9.4	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	6.6	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	25.7	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	33.1	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	21.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,625	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.5	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	79.8	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	58.3	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.35	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	196	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	562	4,292

SILISTRA DISTRICT

Silistra is the district with the worst performance in the category 'Income and living conditions' with lagging growth in gross domestic product and wages and the highest level of poverty in the country - over 1/3 of the population lives below the poverty line. Employment is growing slowly and cannot compensate for the large lag in the coefficient, and the educational structure of the workforce is relatively unfavourable. Silistra has the highest growth in foreign investment, but it remains the lowest in the country. Although the share of first-class roads is limited, the quality of the surface is relatively high. A large part of the settlements are not connected to public sewerage. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on vehicles is high. Silistra is also among the three districts with the lowest assessment of the administration.

The district has the largest decline in natural population growth. The correspondence between vocational education and the profile of the economy is relatively high, but student results are relatively poor. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The crime clearance rate is high. The volume of household waste generated is relatively large, but only a small proportion is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good

Income and living conditions

Labour market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
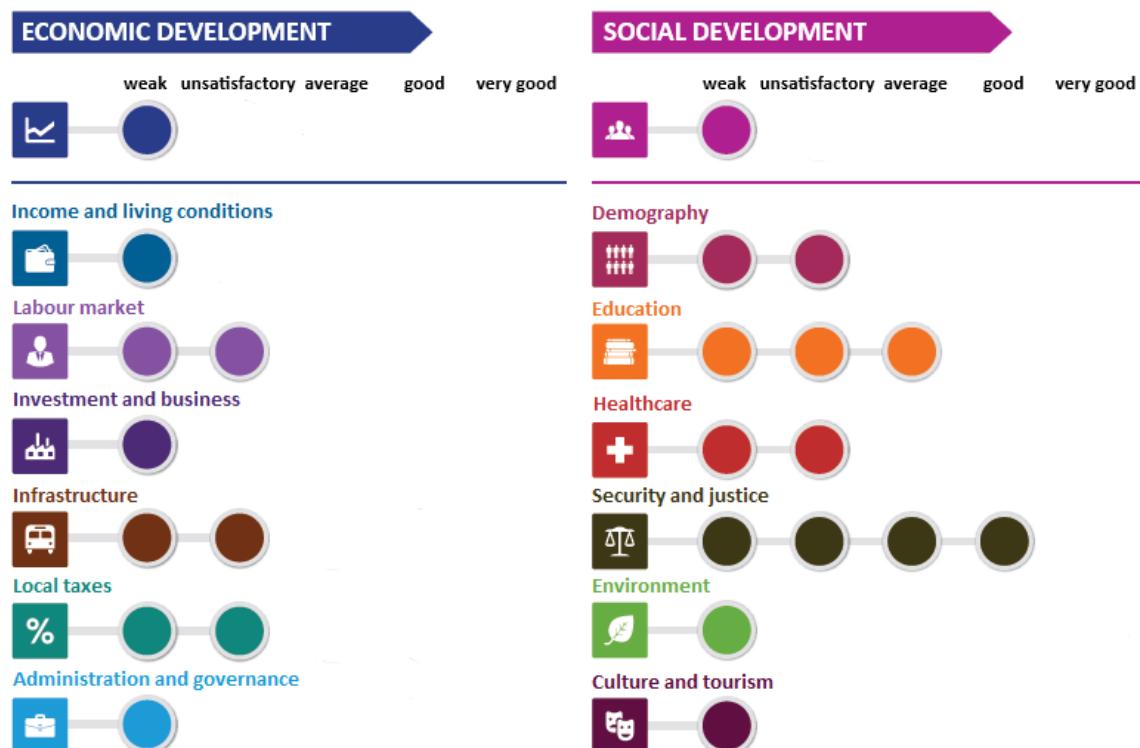
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SILISTRA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	13,114	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	16,796	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	35.9	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	64.9	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	11.2	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,456	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	408	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita		227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	40.7	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	52.2	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	10.09	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	14.3	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-12.7	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	0.1	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	28.1	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	36.4	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	17.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,047	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.3	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	80.0	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	62.9	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.51	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	190	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	429	4,292

SLIVEN DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages are growing relatively quickly, but remain well below the national average. Sliven is among the districts with the highest poverty levels. Employment is growing and unemployment is falling slightly, but Sliven remains the region with the highest proportion of the workforce with primary and lower education. Domestic and foreign investment are growing significantly. The share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of road surfaces, remain high. However, the connectivity of settlements to public sewerage systems remains limited. The local tax burden is relatively high. The transparency of the local administration is highly rated.

Sliven remains among the three districts with the most favourable demographic picture despite the continuing ageing of the population. At the other end of the spectrum, the district ranks at the bottom in terms of educational indicators, with poor student performance and extremely low enrollment rates in kindergartens and lower secondary schools. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The administration of justice is relatively swift. The proportion of forest area is relatively large. Drinking water consumption is among the lowest in the country. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.
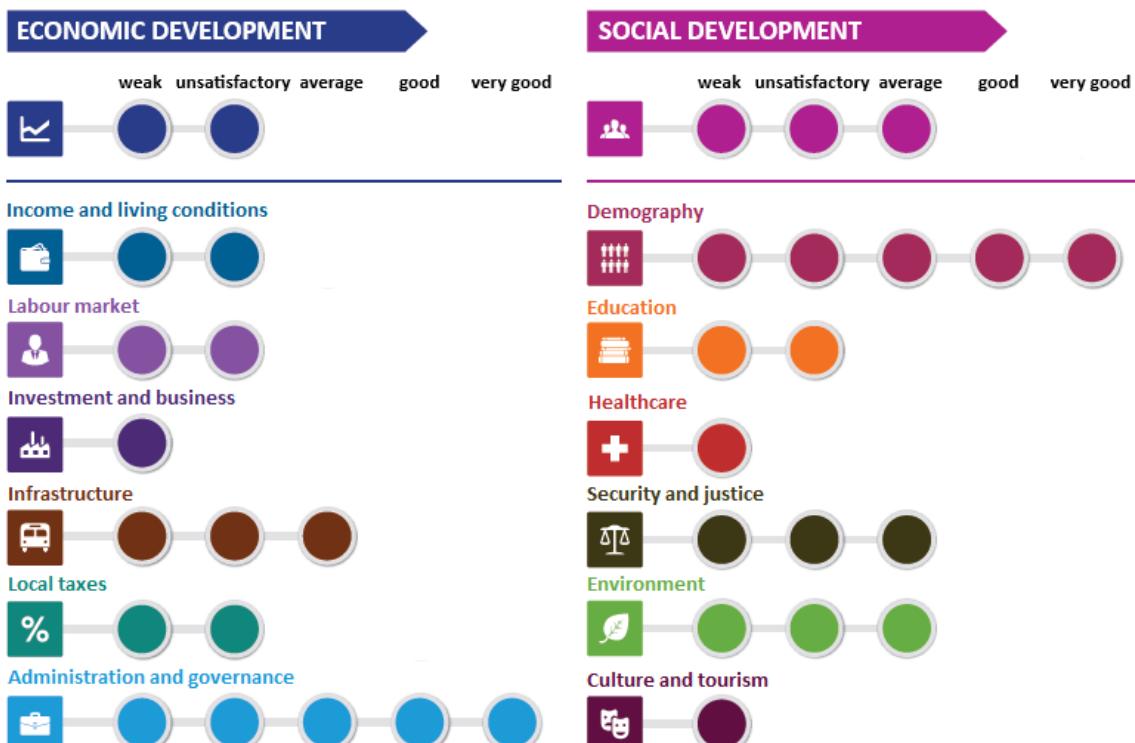
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SLIVEN DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	13,493	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	17,848	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	33.6	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	72.8	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	8.0	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,285	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	918	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	43	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	51.2	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	62.4	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.89	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	17.0	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-2.8	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-1.6	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	22.5	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	31.9	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	16.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,865	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.6	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	84.5	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	54.4	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	1.53	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	255	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	562	4,292

SMOLYAN DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages are growing, but remain below the national average, and poverty in the district remains relatively high. Employment is growing and unemployment is falling slightly. Domestic and foreign investment are increasing significantly. Despite the low grade of roads in the region, the quality of the road surface is relatively high. The connection of the public sewerage system to wastewater treatment plants remains limited. Local taxes on vehicles and trade are relatively high. Local revenues remain extremely insufficient to cover expenses.

Smolyan continues to be among the three regions with the most unfavourable demographic picture. The region is also traditionally among the top three in terms of educational indicators, with good student results and a high proportion of children enrolled in kindergarten and lower secondary school. Overall, the entire population has health insurance. Smolyan is the region with the lowest relative number of registered crimes. The region leads in the category assessing the environment, with the highest share of forest area and the lowest need for cooling. Cultural life is not particularly intense, but tourism is strongly represented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●			
Income and living conditions	●	●			
Labour market	●	●	●		
Investment and business	●	●			
Infrastructure	●	●			
Local taxes	●	●	●		
Administration and governance	●				

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●	●	●
Demography	●				
Education	●	●	●	●	●
Healthcare	●	●	●		
Security and justice	●	●	●		
Environment	●	●	●	●	●
Culture and tourism	●	●	●		
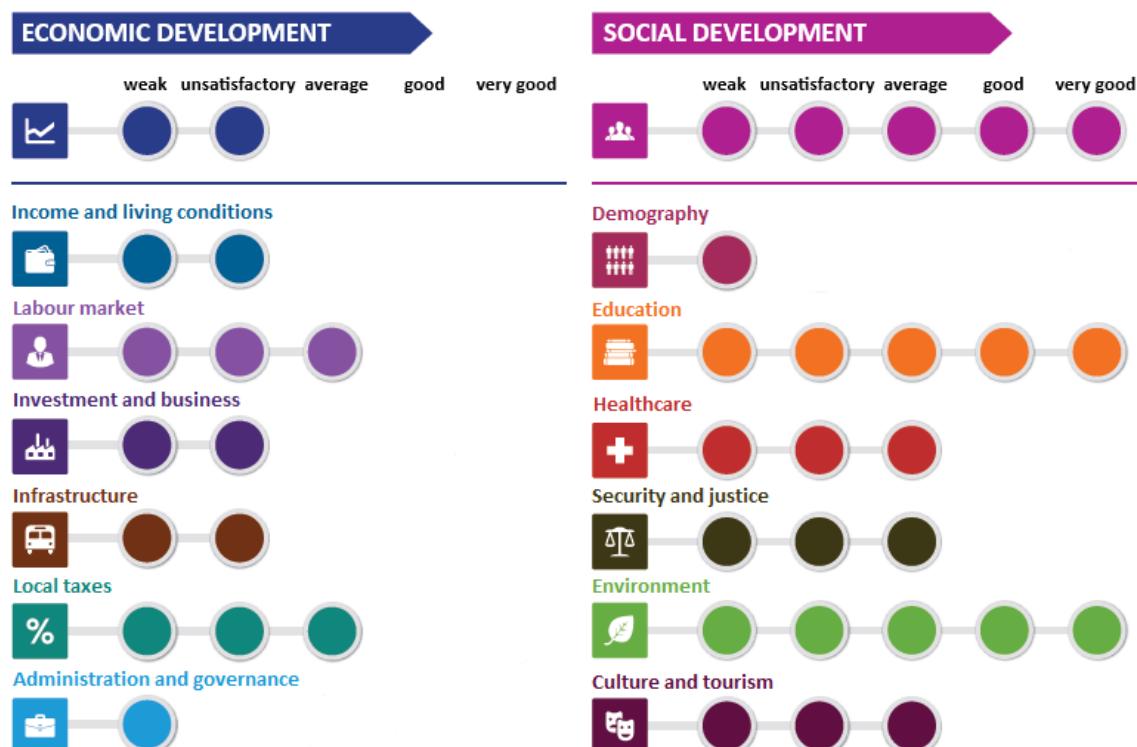
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SMOLYAN DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,016	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	16,682	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	22.4	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	78.7	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	9.7	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,753	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	1,117	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	37	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	58.5	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	71.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	13.81	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	15.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-12.3	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-5.0	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	30.0	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	46.0	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	8.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,522	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	75.5	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	77.6	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	52.6	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	2.89	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	65	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	9,049	4,292

SOFIA DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages continue to grow, and the poverty level in the region is declining, although it remains above the national average. Employment is growing and unemployment is declining slightly, with both rates remaining more favourable than the national average. Sofia is among the three districts with the best performance in terms of investment activity and is the district with the highest relative value of output and the largest share of export revenues. Despite the high share of motorways and first-class roads, the quality of the road surface remains relatively low. The connection of the public sewerage system to wastewater treatment plants is also very limited (38% compared to 67% for the country as a whole). Local taxes on vehicles and property transfers are relatively high. The development of e-governance and the transparency of the local administration are lagging behind.

The demographic picture is relatively favourable. Population density remains low. Student performance is below average. The proportion of people with health insurance in the district remains extremely low. The crime clearance rate is relatively high. Only a small proportion of household waste is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is poorly represented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●	●	
Income and living conditions	●	●	●	●	●
Labour market	●	●	●	●	
Investment and business	●	●	●	●	●
Infrastructure	●	●	●		
Local taxes	●	●			
Administration and governance	●	●			

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
	●	●	●		
Demography	●	●	●	●	
Education	●	●	●		
Healthcare	●				
Security and justice	●	●	●		
Environment	●	●	●		
Culture and tourism	●				
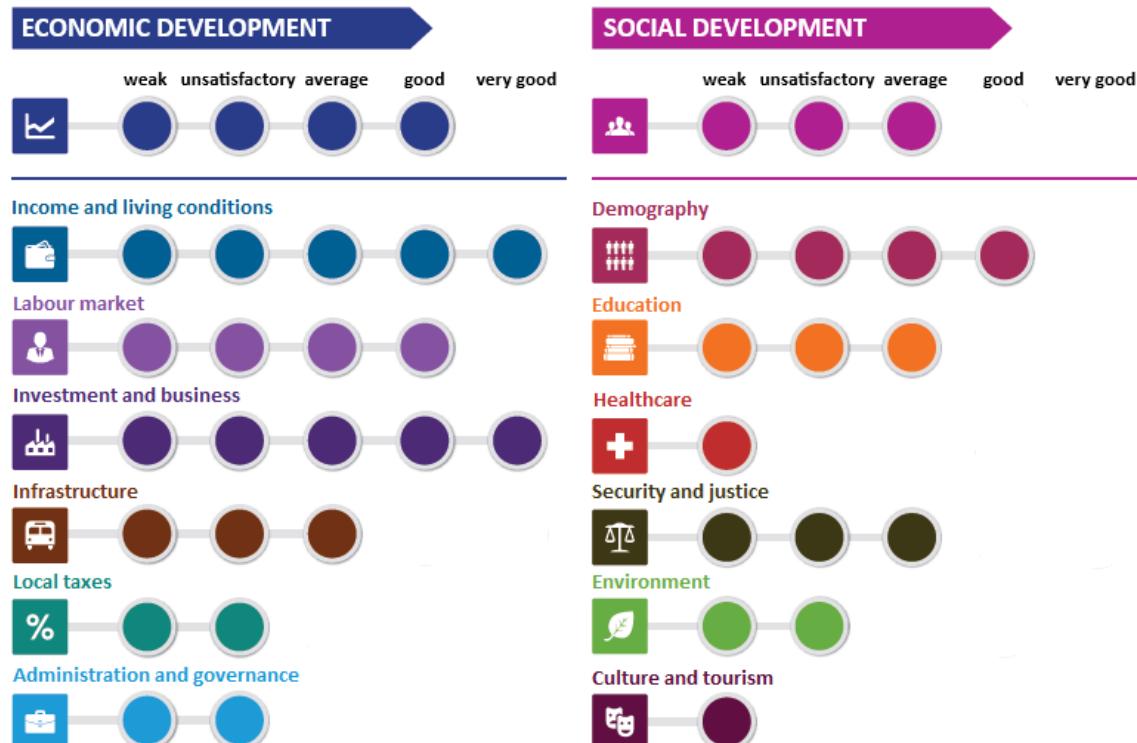
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SOFIA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	24,251	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	22,207	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	22.1	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	79.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.5	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	5,375	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	9,419	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	37	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	28.1	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	77.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	11.60	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	27.2	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-9.0	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	1.3	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	24.2	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	35.7	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	12.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,864	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.9	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	85.4	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	56.5	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.46	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	0	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	3,135	4,292

SOFIA (CAPITAL) DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions are growing rapidly, and the capital city leads in these indicators, which is reflected in the low level of poverty in the district. Employment is declining slightly, and unemployment is rising, but remains the lowest in the country. Sofia (capital) is also the district with the highest share of working-age population. The capital traditionally ranks first in terms of investment and continues to record significant growth in domestic and foreign investment, as well as in the relative value of output. The capital is the most developed region in terms of infrastructure and is among the three with the highest local taxes. The district maintains relatively stable financial independence.

The demographic picture is favourable. The capital continues to lead in educational indicators with high scores in Mathematics and Bulgarian Language and Literature, a large number of university students and students enrolled in lower secondary education. In healthcare, it is second only to the Pleven district, but it has the highest life expectancy and the lowest infant mortality rate. The courts in Sofia are heavily overloaded, and crime is relatively high. Water utilisation is high. The cultural life is well developed.
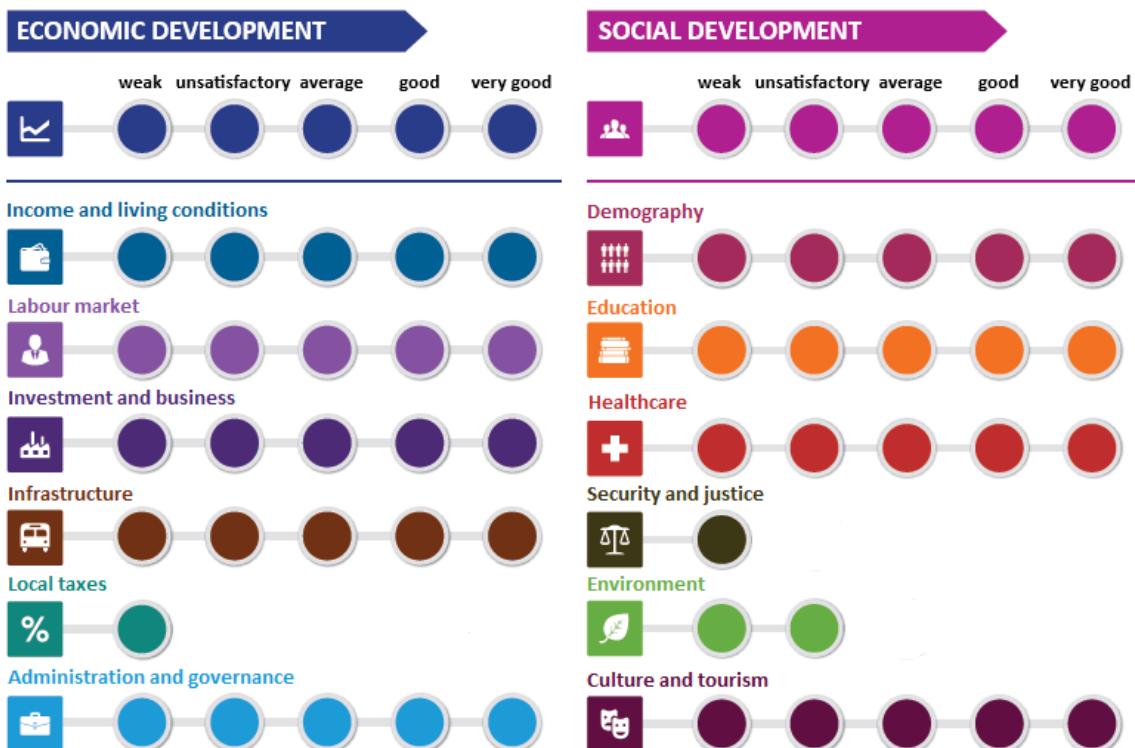
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR SOFIA (CAPITAL) DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	61,833	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	34,262	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	10.0	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	81.1	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	1.7	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	10,890	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	13,502	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	884	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	53.4	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	95.9	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	20.00	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	38.3	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-2.0	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	8.9	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	19.2	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	54.9	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	5.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,822	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	77.3	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	47.8	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	36.8	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.06	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	787	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	1,756	4,292

STARA ZAGORA DISTRICT

Earnings in the region remain relatively high. Employment is growing and unemployment is falling slightly. The workforce consists mainly of people with lower secondary education, which is linked to the industrial nature of the region. Domestic investment continues to grow rapidly, but there is a slight decline in foreign investment, which has a negative impact on the relative value of production. Despite the high proportion of motorways and first-class roads, the quality of the road surface remains relatively low. Stara Zagora is among the three districts with the highest local taxes, particularly in terms of vehicle and trade taxes. E-governance is relatively weak.

The demographic picture is favourable, although the population continues to age. The alignment of vocational education with the profile of the economy remains low. Healthcare is characterised by a relatively high number of medical doctors and high hospital bed utilisation. The relative number of police officers is low. The proportion of degraded land remains extremely high. Cultural life and tourism are around the national average.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

weak · unsatisfactory · average · good · very good

Income and living conditions

Labour market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration and governance

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

weak · unsatisfactory · average · good · very good

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
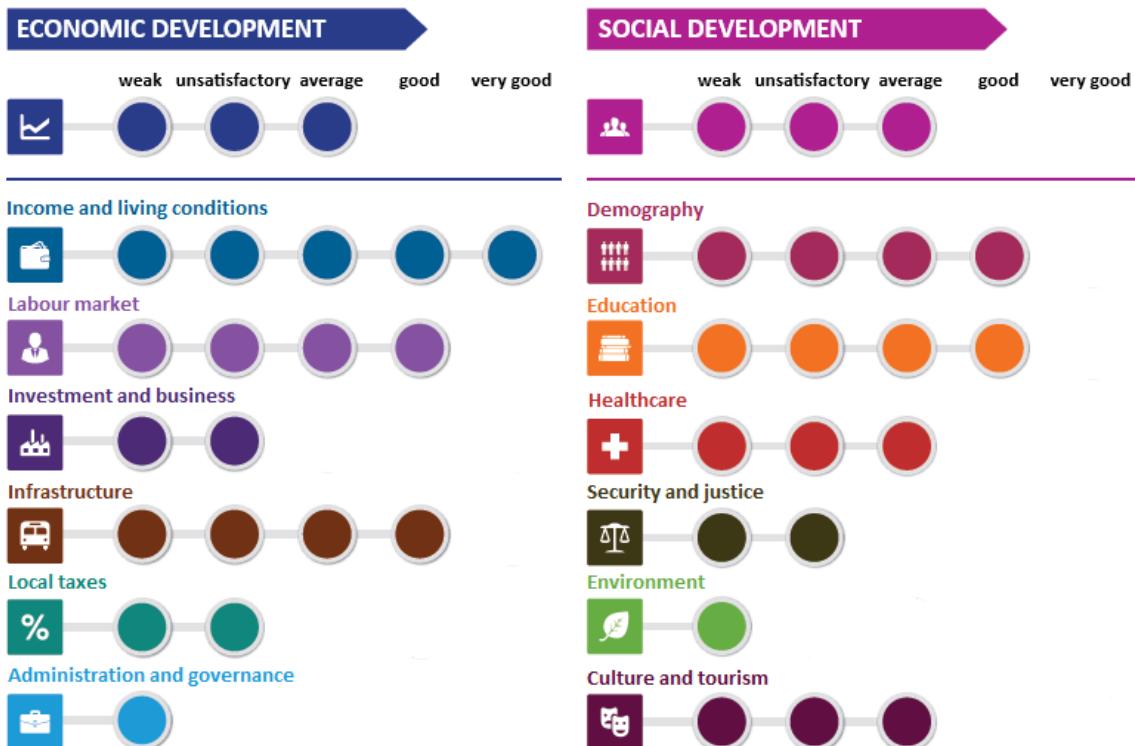
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR STARA ZAGORA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	36,470	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	22,234	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	25.2	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	77.3	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	4.3	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,154	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	2,810	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	129	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	31.6	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	68.5	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	15.89	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	20.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-7.5	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	1.9	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	24.8	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	38.9	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	12.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,470	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.8	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	72.2	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	50.1	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	2.06	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	390	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	2,269	4,292

TARGOVISHTE DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages are growing slowly, leading to a reduction in poverty levels in the district, although these remain relatively high. Employment and unemployment are both rising, with both rates being worse than average. In addition to traditionally low investment activity, recent data show a decline in investment (both domestic and foreign), which also has a negative impact on the relative value of production. Despite the low share of first-class roads, the quality of the surface is relatively high. The connectivity of settlements to public sewerage remains very limited. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities is high. Local revenues are insufficient to cover expenses.

The population continues to age, and population density remains low. The shares of children enrolled in kindergartens and lower secondary education are relatively small. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The crime clearance rate is high and justice is served relatively quickly. Targovishte ranks among the leaders in environmental assessment, mainly due to the low proportion of degraded land and lower consumption of drinking water. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
weak — unsatisfactory — average — good — very good

- **Income and living conditions**
- **Labour market**
- **Investment and business**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Local taxes**
- **Administration and governance**

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
weak — unsatisfactory — average — good — very good

- **Demography**
- **Education**
- **Healthcare**
- **Security and justice**
- **Environment**
- **Culture and tourism**
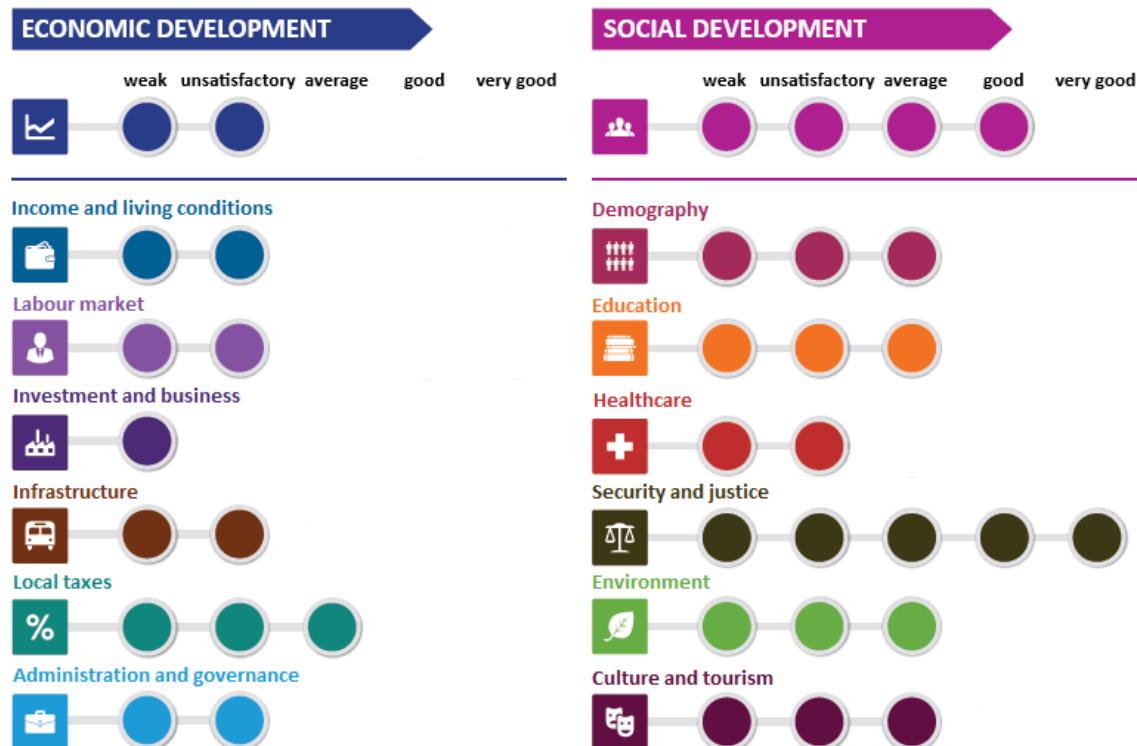
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR TARGOVISHTE DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	18,802	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,562	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	32.3	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	72.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	9.9	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,361	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	3,035	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	8	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	50.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	54.7	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	9.06	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	16.3	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-10.3	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	1.1	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	25.8	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	40.5	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	14.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	2,260	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.3	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	89.1	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	65.5	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.22	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	473	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	384	4,292

VARNA DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions in the district are growing moderately but remain above the national average, which helps keep poverty levels in the district relatively low. Employment is rising significantly and is the highest in the country at 86.2% (compared to an average of 76.8%). Growth in investment (domestic and foreign) and output are slowing, but remain relatively high. In terms of infrastructure, Varna is among the best-developed regions. Local taxes are relatively high, with the only exception being the tax on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities, which is lower than the national average. The district maintains stable financial independence.

Varna remains among the three districts with the most favourable demographic picture despite the continuing aging of the population. Educational indicators also place the region at the top of the ranking with good performance by Varna students, a high number of students enrolled in lower secondary education, and many university students. The share of people with health insurance is relatively low. The administration of justice is slow. A lot of waste is generated, but most of it is sent for treatment and recycling. Varna is among the districts with the highest ratings for tourism, but most cultural indicators are below the national average.
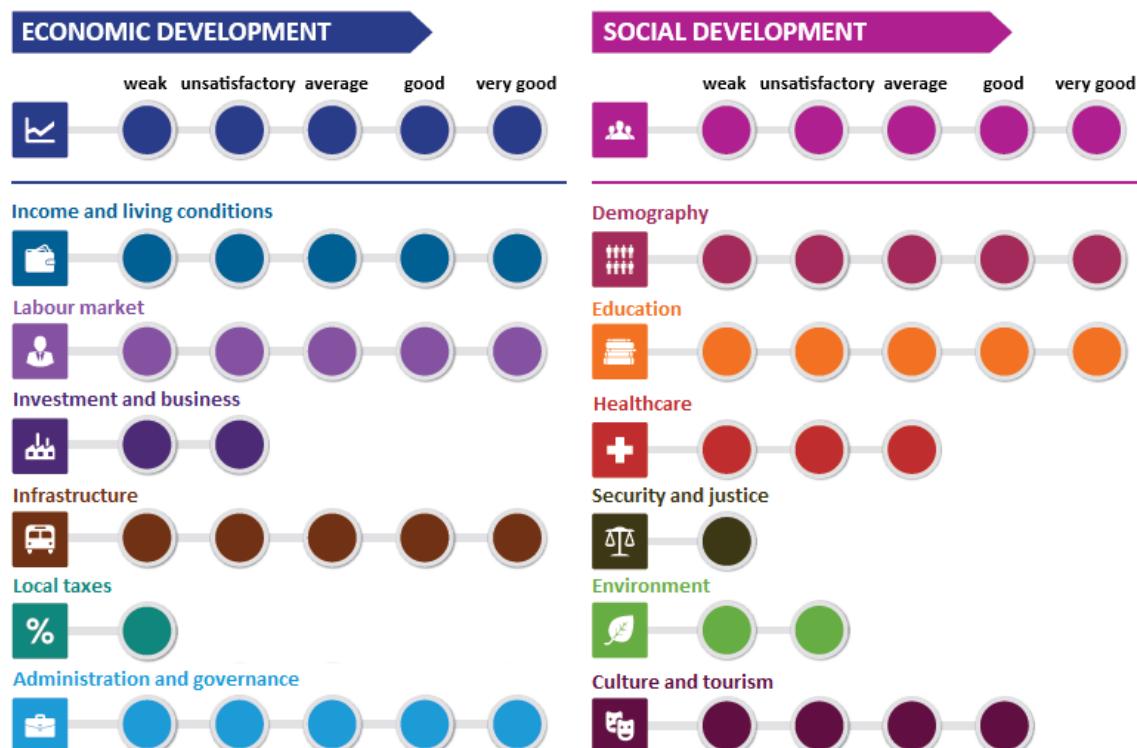
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR VARNA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	26,946	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	22,587	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	15.2	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	86.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	3.3	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,557	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	4,286	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	108	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	56.9	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	87.1	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	16.82	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	29.9	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-5.2	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	12.8	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	21.6	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	49.5	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	10.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,602	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	75.9	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	76.8	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	39.4	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.19	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	257	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	10,904	4,292

VELIKO TARNOVO DISTRICT

Gross domestic product, wages, and pensions in the district are growing but are unable to compensate for the gap with the national average, while poverty levels are declining but remain above average. The share of the working-age population remains relatively limited, but its educational level is exceptionally high. Employment is declining slightly, but remains above average. Foreign investment continues to grow rapidly, but its relative volume is still below the national average. The quality of road surfaces in the region is deteriorating, but remains relatively high. Veliko Tarnovo is among the three districts with the highest local taxes. The transparency of the local administration is high and has been increasing in recent years.

Aging continues to be pronounced, although the district manages to attract population. Veliko Tarnovo is the leader in terms of relative number of university students and among those with the highest shares of children enrolled in kindergartens and lower secondary schools. The infant mortality rate remains among the lowest in the country. The administration of justice is relatively swift. A lot of waste is generated, but most of it is sent for treatment and recycling. Cultural life is intense, with the region ranking among the leaders in terms of the relative number of museum visits.
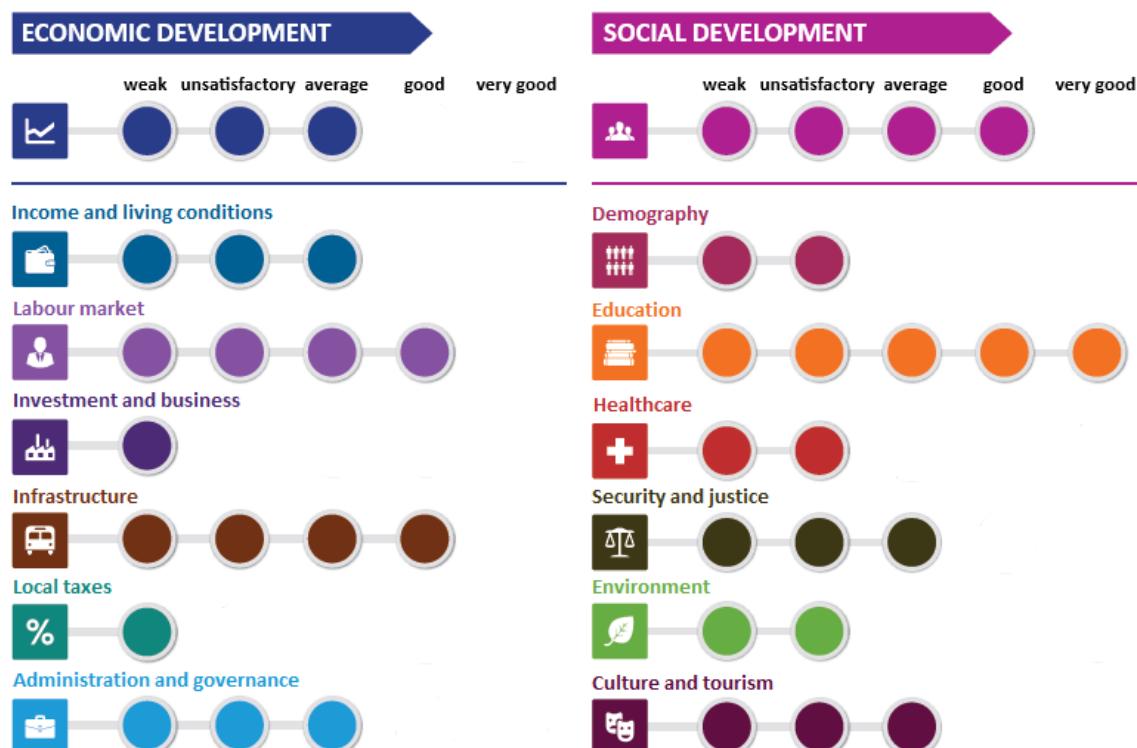
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR VELIKO TARNOVO DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	20,187	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,473	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	25.7	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	77.8	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	5.4	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,488	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	1,729	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	29	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	39.6	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	68.1	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	12.16	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	21.3	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-11.8	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	2.7	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	27.6	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	39.0	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	11.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,624	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	74.6	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	71.9	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	61.2	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.72	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	192	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	1,749	4,292

VIDIN DISTRICT

Salaries and pensions in the district are growing relatively slowly and remain significantly below the national average, which is reflected in the high level of poverty among the population. Vidin is the region with the lowest share of people of working age and the highest unemployment rate – 14.7% compared to 5.5% for the country as a whole. The district also remains at the bottom in terms of both domestic and foreign investment, which is linked to the extremely low level of production. The share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of the road surface, remain low. The connectivity of settlements to public sewerage systems is also extremely limited. Local tax levels remain relatively low, and local revenues are insufficient to cover expenses.

Vidin continues to be the district with the most unfavourable demographic picture. Students' educational results remain poor. Vidin is also the district with the lowest life expectancy. The administration of justice is relatively fast, but there are many registered crimes. An extremely small proportion of household waste is sent for treatment and recycling. Tourism is not very developed, but visits to theatres and museums are relatively high.
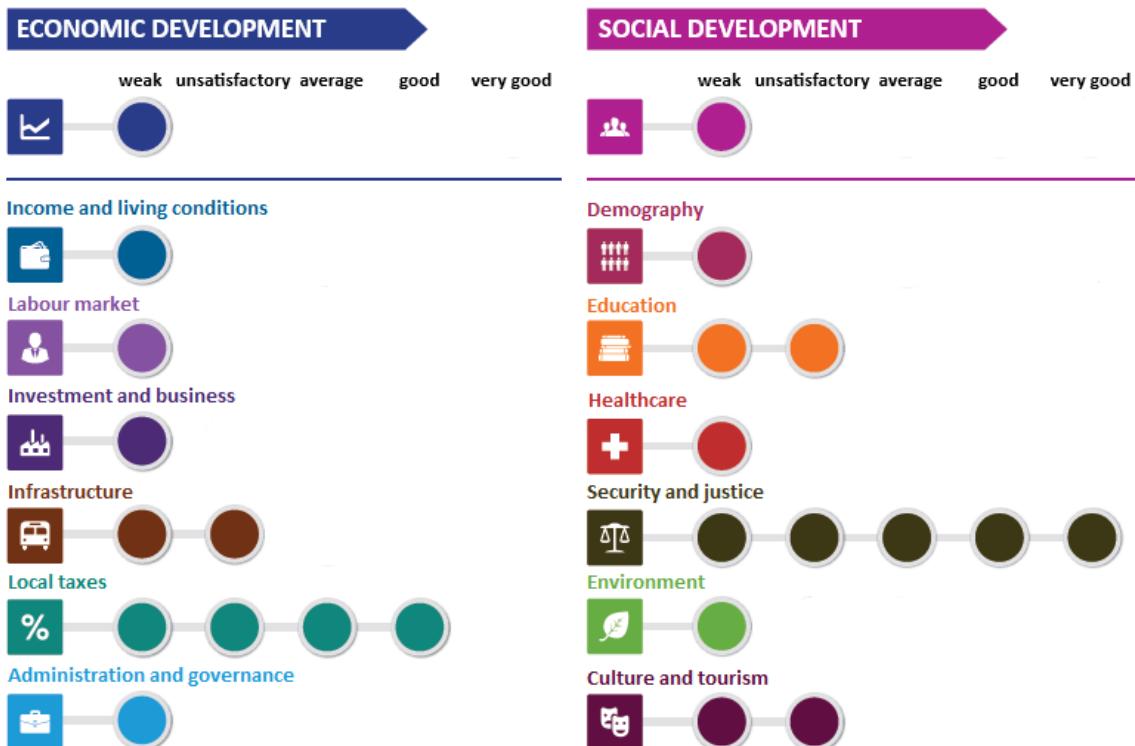
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR VIDIN DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	15,071	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	16,402	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	34.9	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	64.1	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	14.7	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	2,181	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	578	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	8	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	18.3	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	53.3	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	4.68	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	16.5	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-17.2	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.1	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	31.4	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	30.5	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	15.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,318	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	71.9	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	89.3	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	50.2	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.76	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	439	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	1,061	4,292

VRATSA DISTRICT

Gross domestic product and wages are growing relatively slowly but remain above those in other districts, while poverty levels are declining and remain relatively low. Vratsa is the district with the highest employment growth, although it remains below the national average. Foreign investment and the share of export revenues in sales are growing, but remain significantly below average. The number of enterprises per capita is the lowest in the country. The share of motorways and first-class roads, as well as the quality of road surfaces, remain low. The connectivity of settlements to public sewerage systems is also limited. Vratsa is among the three districts with the lowest local taxes. The administration demonstrates good development in e-governance.

The demographic picture is relatively unfavourable. The assessment of educational indicators has also deteriorated, mainly due to poor student performance. Life expectancy is low. Vratsa is the district with the highest number of police officers per capita and the highest number of registered crimes. The share of forest area is small. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.


ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Economic development	●	●	●		
Income and living conditions	●	●	●	●	
Labour market	●	●	●		
Investment and business	●				
Infrastructure	●	●			
Local taxes	●	●	●	●	●
Administration and governance	●	●	●	●	

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	weak	unsatisfactory	average	good	very good
Social development	●	●			
Demography	●	●	●		
Education	●	●	●		
Healthcare	●				
Security and justice	●	●	●		
Environment	●	●			
Culture and tourism	●				
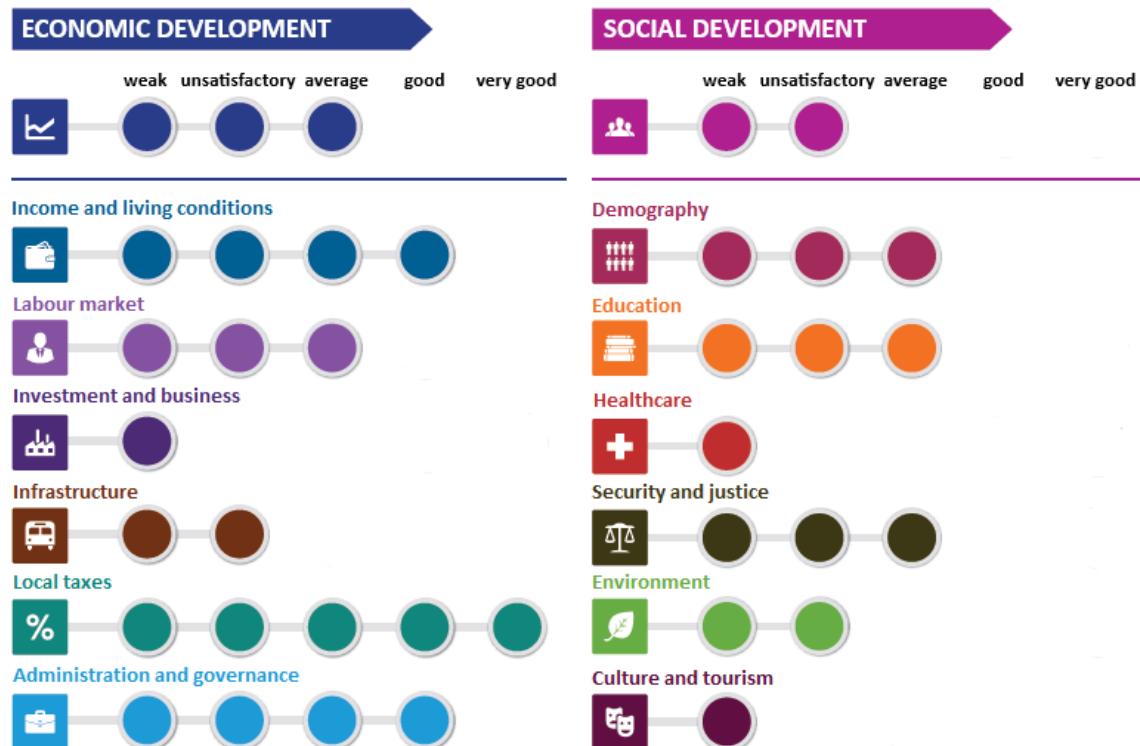
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR VRATSA DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	27,113	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	21,781	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	18.0	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	67.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	10.4	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	3,541	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	905	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	35	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	29.6	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	57.0	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	6.84	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	17.8	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-10.6	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.4	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	25.3	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	31.6	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	14.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,769	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	72.6	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	71.1	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	58.4	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	0.84	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	150	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	915	4,292

YAMBOL DISTRICT

Despite relatively limited growth in gross domestic product and wages in the region, poverty levels are declining. Employment is rising and unemployment is falling, with both rates now more favourable than the average. Investment (domestic and foreign) is growing significantly, but while expenditure on tangible fixed assets is relatively high, foreign investment remains very limited. Despite the high share of motorways and first-class roads, the quality of the road surface is below average. The share of households with Internet access also remains limited. Of the local taxes considered, only the average rate on non-residential real estate owned by legal entities is high. The administration has demonstrated good progress in e-governance.

Yambol is the district with the highest natural population growth, although it remains strongly negative. There is a relatively high degree of alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of medical doctors. The number of registered crimes is relatively low, and the clearance rate is high. The share of forest area is low, and the need for cooling is high. Cultural life is not particularly intense, and tourism is underdeveloped.
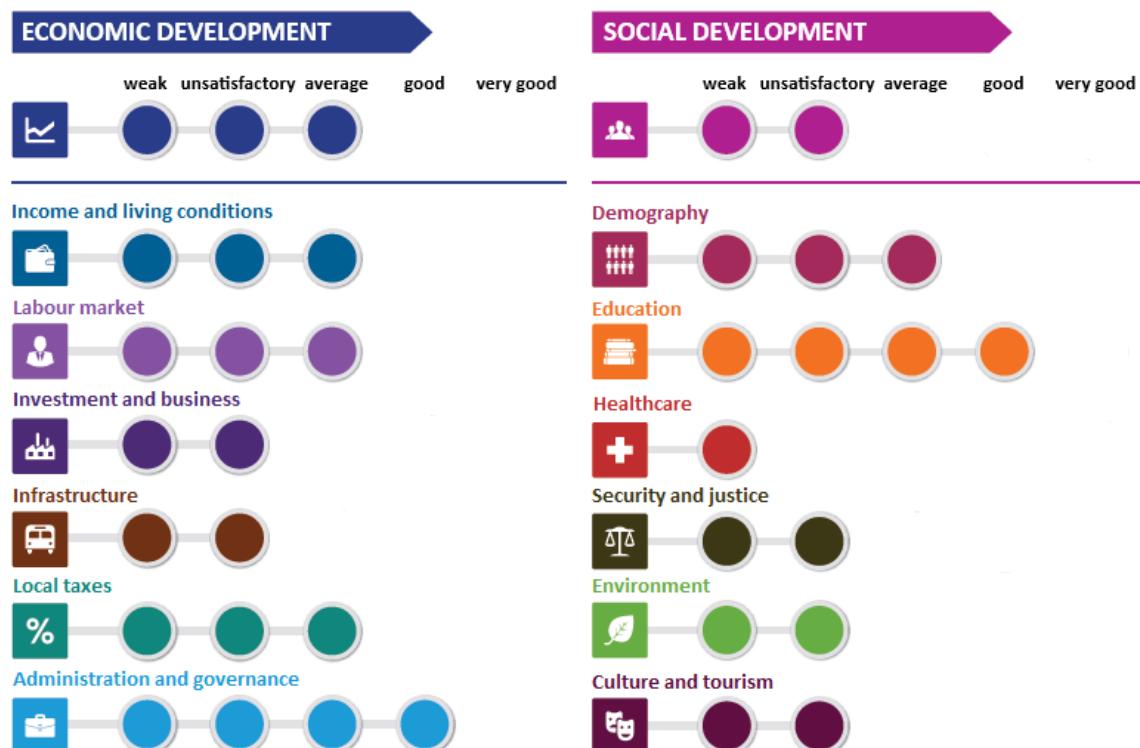
SELECTED INDICATORS FOR YAMBOL DISTRICT

Indicator	Source	Year	Unit	District level	Country level
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT					
Gross domestic product	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	17,865	28,733
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	NSI	2023	BGN	18,355	24,485
Population living below the national poverty line	NSI	2024	%	18.9	21.7
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 20–64	NSI	2024	%	78.2	76.8
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	EA	2024	%	5.4	5.5
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	4,778	5,197
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises, cumulative as of 31.12.	NSI	2023	EUR per capita	557	5,075
Expenditure for research and development	NSI	2023	BGN per capita	32	227
Road surfaces in good condition	RIA	2024	%	30.0	36.0
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	NSI	2023	%	71.9	75.2
Patent tax for retail trade up to 100 sq. m of commercial space	IME by APIA	2025	BGN per sq. m. per year	8.27	13.39
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	MF	2024	%	19.4	25.0
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT					
Natural population increase rate	NSI	2024	‰	-8.3	-7.3
Net migration rate	NSI	2024	‰	-0.2	6.1
Population over 65	NSI	2024	%	27.0	24.0
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	IME by MES	2025	points	42.2	42.7
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	IES	2025	%	13.0	11.4
Population per one GP	NSI	2024	number	1,736	1,718
Average life expectancy	NSI	2024	year	73.9	75.2
District court civil cases closed within 3 months	SJC	2024	%	66.3	66.2
Solved crimes against the person and property	MoI	2024	%	55.9	49.5
Installed RES capacities	SEDA	2025	kW per capita	2.18	1.05
Visits to theatres	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	342	358
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	NSI	2024	number per 1000 people	390	4,292

ATTACHMENT: CATEGORIES OF INDICATORS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita	The indicator measures the standard of living in the district and the level of development of the local economy. A higher GDP per capita in a district is indicative of a strong local economy and a higher standard of living for local residents.	2012-2023	BGN per capita	NSI
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract	Income earned from salaries and wages is one of the key factors determining the level of household income.	2012-2023	BGN	NSI
Average monthly pension	The indicator provides a broad measure of the well-being and standard of living of local retirees.	2014-2024	BGN	NSSI
Gini coefficient	The coefficient provides a measure of income inequality on a scale of 1 to 100 points, where 100 points indicates perfect inequality.	2012-2024	points	NSSI
Relative share of the people living below the national poverty line	A key poverty indicator. It shows the share of people with an equivalent disposable income below the so-called "poverty line" which is set at 60% of the national median equivalized disposable income.	2019-2024	%	NSSI

Labour market

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Share of the working-age population	The age limit for the distribution of the population in this category is determined in accordance with the retirement age in the relevant year, adopted by a Decree of the Council of Ministers. The indicator is closely related to the local labour market.	2012-2024	%	NSI
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15 and over	Low unemployment rates in a district are indicative of a vibrant and job-creating local economic environment.	2012-2024	%	EA
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15–64	The employment rate is a leading indicator of the labour market showing what proportion of the working-age population is actually employed.	2012-2024	%	NSI
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with an university degree	A large share of population with a university degree in a district creates prerequisites for increased	2012-2024	%	NSI

	competitiveness, labour productivity, and economic growth.			
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education	An indicator of the educational structure of the workforce. The higher the share of people with primary or lower education, the lower the potential of the local labour market to fill newly created jobs. A lower level of education is a precondition for lower economic activity, lower productivity, and thus lower earnings.	2012-2024	%	NSI

Investment and business

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Number of non-financial enterprises	The indicator shows entrepreneurial mindsets and investment activity in the local economy.	2012-2023	number of non-financial enterprises per 1,000 people	NSI
Expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA)	The level of expenditure on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (TFA) per capita in a district is the leading indicator of investment in the local economy.	2012-2023	BGN per capita	NSI
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (accumulated flows)	The indicator of foreign direct investment (FDI) in non-financial enterprises shows the cumulative investment flows to the district and its attractiveness to foreign investors.	2012-2023	EUR per capita	NSI
Utilization of EU funds by beneficiaries under operational programmes	A high level of utilization of EU funds under operational programs creates preconditions for improving a district's competitiveness. It is an indicator of the administration's good work and its ability and willingness to improve working and living conditions in the region with the help of European funds.	By 31.12.2024	BGN per capita	ISMM, ISMM 2020
Production value	Production value per employed person shows the relative productivity of the enterprises in the district.	2012-2023	BGN per employee	NSI
Share of export earnings in net sales revenues of non-financial enterprises	The share of export earnings in net sales revenues of non-financial enterprises indicates the extent to which domestic production is export-oriented.	2018-2023	%	NSI
Expenditure for research and development	Research and development includes all creative and systematic work carried out with the aim of expanding the body of knowledge, including knowledge about people, culture and society, and of developing new applications for existing knowledge.	2012-2023	BGN per capita	NSI

Infrastructure

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Road network density	The indicator measures the total length of highways and roads (first-, second-, and third-class) relative to the territory	2012-2024	length of the road network in	NSI

	of the respective district. The national road network is essential for the transportation of goods and passengers in the country. The indicator does not include streets in urban and rural settlements.		km/100 sq km territory	
Railway network density	The indicator represents all railway lines intended for the movement of trains between stations or places indicated as independent points of departure and arrival of trains carrying passengers and freight. It excludes urban railway lines. The greater the density of the railway network in a district, the easier the transportation of passengers and freight.	2012-2024	length of the railway network in km/100 sq km territory	NSI
Share of highways and first-class roads	The indicator provides additional information on the characteristics of the road infrastructure in a district. A larger share of highways and first-class roads points to a better developed local infrastructure.	2012-2024	%	NSI
Relative share of households with broadband internet access	Households' access to the internet is indicative of the spread of new information and communication technologies in the country's districts.	2012-2024	%	NSI
Share of road surfaces in good condition	In addition to the road network density, the quality of road surfaces is also of considerable importance for the infrastructural profile of the districts. This indicator shows the share of roads the condition of whose surface has been assessed as "good" by the Road Infrastructure Agency (RIA).	2012-2024	%	RIA
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network connected to a waste water treatment plant	The presence of municipal waste water treatment plants implies lower pollution of the environment by waste water and also higher utilization of the water resources in the area. The larger the part of the sewerage network connected to waste water treatment plants, the lower the negative effect of waste water on the environment.	2012-2023	%	NSI
Share of the population living in settlements with a public sewerage network	The indicator shows the percentage of a given district's residents living in settlements with a public sewerage network. The coverage of the public sewerage network affects both the social and environmental characteristics of the districts.	2012-2023	%	NSI

Local taxes

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Tax rate on immovable non-residential	Real estate taxes are the biggest source of own revenue for municipalities. Taxation on immovable	2012-2025	per thousand (‰)	Request for access to

property for legal entities	non-residential property for legal entities is indeed the major factor influencing the business environment and the burden on businesses.			information under APIA
Motor vehicle tax (commercial and passenger vehicles, 74 kW to 110 kW)	Taxation on vehicles is another major source of own revenue for municipalities. This type of tax is a burden mainly on small businesses, since the engine power basis has been chosen specifically for its relevance to such companies. After 2019, the indicator also takes into account the newly introduced environmental component in the total tax rate.	2012-2025	BGN/kW	Request for access to information under APIA
Annual patent tax for retail trade on up to 100 sq. m of commercial space at the most favourable business location	Patents taxes are a type of taxation different from those mentioned above. They are a tax burden on specific businesses. The retail trade patent tax has been selected as the most common and recognizable type.	2012-2025	BGN/sq m	Request for access to information under APIA
Tax rate on acquisition of property for a value	The tax rate on for value acquisition of property is relevant both to investors entering the local market and to local investors expanding their activities.	2012-2025	per thousand (‰)	Request for access to information under APIA

Administration and governance

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Active transparency rating of local government bodies	The active transparency ratings of local government bodies are assigned by the AIP Foundation based on the results of its annual studies of municipal web pages and electronic submission of requests to various administrative structures within the executive branch. The rating assigned to each district is the average of all the ratings given to the municipalities within it.	2016-2024	%	Access to information programme Foundation
Level of development of e-governance	The indicator shows the results of local governments' self-assessment regarding the degree and scope of the electronic services they provide. A low rating indicates a complete lack or rudimentary development of e-governance, while a high rating shows a capacity for carrying out two-way transactions between the local administration and citizens/businesses.	2013-2025	Rating from 1 to 4	Request for access to information under APIA
Level of development of one-stop shop services	The indicator shows the results from the local governments' self-assessment regarding the extent of their readiness to operate one-stop shop services.	2013-2025	Rating from 1 to 4	Request for access to information under APIA
Share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues	This ratio shows to what extent each municipality can meet its own needs without relying on the state budget.	2015-2024	%	MF
Coverage of municipal expenditures	The indicator shows the dependence of municipal budgets on transfers from the state budget.	2015-2024	%	MF

with local revenues				

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Population density relative to the area of the settlements and other urbanized areas	The population density indicator gives information on the number of people per unit area. Density is influenced by the rate of natural increase and net migration flows, as well as by urbanization processes.	2022-2024	number of persons/sq km	NSI
Natural population increase rate	The natural population increase rate is the difference between the number of registered live births and the number of deaths during the year. The indicator shows the increase or decrease of the population of the district per 1,000 of its average annual population; a positive value is considered a favourable demographic indicator.	2022-2024	per thousand (‰)	NSI
Net migration rate	The net migration rate shows an increase or decrease of the population per 1,000 of its average annual population due to migration. The ratios are calculated based on statistics for the number of persons who have changed their usual residence within a given period. Net migration is the difference between the numbers of immigrants to and emigrants from a given district.	2022-2024	per thousand (‰)	NSI
Share of children under 4 years of age	The indicator shows the degree of aging in the districts. A higher proportion means less ageing.	2012-2024	%	NSI
Share of the population aged 65 and over	The indicator shows the degree of aging in the districts. A higher proportion means that the age structure of the population has deteriorated.	2012-2024	%	NSI

Education

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Number of students at colleges and universities	The indicator includes students at universities, colleges, and specialized higher education institutions, excluding students in vocational training after high school. A large number of students in any district is a prerequisite for a better educated local workforce and increases the attractiveness of the respective district.	2012-2024	number of university students per 1,000 people	NSI
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade)	The net enrolment rate of the population is the ratio between the total number of enrolled students in	2018-2024	%	NSI

	the official school age range for a given level of education and the total population of the same age group. The rate is calculated as a percentage by 31 December of the respective year. The number of students in primary and secondary education is established by 1 October of the respective year. The selection of 5th to 7th grade is based on the fact that this is the lowest educational stage where a relatively low coverage of the education system is registered.			
Average grade in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	A high average grade in the annual NME in Bulgarian language and literature indicates a high quality of secondary education in the district. Despite differences in exam difficulty across years, results allow comparisons between the districts for each year.	2012-2025	Grade from 2 to 6	MES
Share of fail grades (below 3.00) in the NME in Bulgarian language and literature	A high percentage of students who have passed the matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and literature indicates high quality of secondary education in the district.	2012-2025	%	MES
Average grade in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade	A high result in the NEA in Mathematics after 7th grade indicates high quality of junior high school education in the district. The indicator is also used as a counterpoint to the matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature, as very few high-school students choose to sit the elective matriculation exam in mathematics.	2018-2025	average points/100	MES
Index of the alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy	The indicator shows the alignment between students in vocational education by specialization and employees with acquired vocational qualifications by sector. This alignment is also an important dimension for the labour market as it shows the link between education and employment at local level.	2022-2025	average points/100	IME based on MES and NSI
Share of children attending kindergarten	The indicator is in direct relation to the coverage of pre-school education offered in kindergartens.	2012-2024	%	IME

Healthcare

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Population per one GP	GPs are usually the first point of contact in the healthcare system. The indicator for the number of people cared for by one GP shows both the availability of medical staff in a district and medical doctors' workloads.	2012-2024	number of people per GP	NSI

Access to medical specialist index	The index measures access to medical specialists relative to the country's district with the best access. A lower index value points to better access. Medical specialists include internists, cardiologists, pediatricians, surgeons, orthopedists-traumatologists, urologists, infectionists, obstetricians-gynecologists, ophthalmologists, neurologists, psychiatrists, x-ray specialists, etc.	2018-2024	composite index	IME based on NSI
Share of people with health insurance	The relative share of people with health insurance indicates the accessibility of health services to the population in a given district; it can be used as an indirect indicator of the health status of the population.	2012-2024	%	National revenue agency (NRA) (Request for access to information under APIA)
Number of beds in MHATs	The indicator shows the number of beds in MHATs per 1,000 people. The availability of hospital beds serves as a relative indicator of the physical resources of the district's healthcare system.	2012-2024	number of hospital beds per 1,000 people	NSI
Bed occupancy in MHATs	The indicator provides information on the demand for services in the districts' MHATs.	2018-2024	%	NSI
Infant mortality rate	The infant mortality rate shows the number of deaths of infants under the age of 1 year for every 1,000 live births during the respective year. A high rate indicates both inadequate public healthcare and low health culture of the local population.	2012-2024	per thousand (‰)	NSI
Average life expectancy	The indicator shows the average life expectancy of the population and is used as a function of the quality of life.	2012-2024	years	NSI
Population per pharmacy	The number of persons per pharmacy indicator shows the population's access to medicines and pharmacists.	2022-2024	number of people per pharmacy	NSI

Security and justice

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	A higher share of criminal cases in a district's courts closed within 3 months indicates relatively faster delivery of justice (all else being equal).	2012-2024	%	SJC
Share of administrative court cases closed within 3 months	A higher share of administrative cases closed within 3 months indicates relatively faster delivery of justice (all else being equal).	2023-2024	%	SJC
Share of district court civil cases closed within 3 months	A higher share of civil cases closed within 3 months indicates relatively faster delivery of justice (all else being equal).	2023-2024	%	SJC

Real average workload of district court judges	The indicator shows the deviation from the actual average workloads of district court judges for the respective year. A high workload may be considered as impeding access to justice, while a low workload may indicate inefficiency.	2023-2024	composite index	SJC
Real average workload of Administrative court judges	The indicator shows the deviation from the actual average workloads of administrative court judges for the respective year. A high workload may be considered as impeding access to justice, while a low workload may indicate inefficiency.	2023-2024	composite index	SJC
Crimes against the person and property	Crimes against the person and property are an indicator of the crime rate in a given area. Officially registered crimes do not always faithfully represent the level of criminal activity in a district but provide a good basis for evaluation and comparison between districts.	2012-2024	number of crimes per 1,000 people	NSI, MoI
Share of solved crimes against the person and property out of all, registered throughout the respective year	The higher the share of solved crimes, the more effective is the work of law enforcement in the district. The indicator covers only the clearance rates of registered crimes and complements the overall security picture in each district.	2012-2024	%	NSI, MoI
Number of police officers	The indicator shows the number of police officers relative to the population and offers a measure of the provision of internal order and security to residents.	2023-2024	number of police officers per 1,000 people	MoI

Environment

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Generated household waste	The amount of generated household waste per person of the serviced population is a standard indicator of the cleanliness of the environment. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the higher the value of this indicator, the more at risk is the environment in a given district.	2012-2023	kg per person per year	NSI
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling	The share or recycled and treated household waste is important because the rest of the waste is sent to landfills which carry serious environmental and health risks. A higher share of recycled and treated waste means a cleaner environment.	2013-2023	%	NSI
Cooling degree days index	The index shows the excessive heat of the local climate by daily degrees above a certain temperature threshold. This index measures the cooling degree days, which is also directly related to energy consumption.	2012-2024	composite index	Eurostat

Drinking water consumption	The indicator shows the households' consumption drinking water delivered by water supply companies.	2012-2023	liter per person per day	NSI
Share of forest area relative to the total area of the district	The indicator measures the proportion of real estate – timber forests and non-timber forest areas.	2021-2024	%	NSI
Share of degraded land relative to the district's area	The indicator measures the proportion of real estate used for extractive activities and real estate used as landfills for industrial and household waste, degraded area.	2021-2024	%	NSI
Installed RES capacities	Provides information on the installed capacities of solar, wind, hydroelectric and other power plants.	as of 31.12.2024	kW per person	SEDA

Culture and tourism

Indicator	Description	Period	Unit	Source
Visits to theatres	An indicator of the intensity of cultural activities. It shows the average annual number of registered visits to the theatres on the territory of a given district.	2012-2024	number of visits per 1,000 people	NSI
Visits to cinemas	An indicator of the intensity of cultural activities. It shows the average annual number of registered visits to the cinemas on the territory of a given district.	2012-2024	number of visits per 1,000 people	NSI
Visits to museums	An indicator of the intensity of cultural activities. It shows the average annual number of registered visits to the museums on the territory of a given district.	2012-2024	number of visits per 1,000 people	NSI
Visits to libraries	An indicator of the intensity of cultural activities. It shows the average number of registered visits to libraries with a collection of a minimum 200,000 volumes on the territory of a given district.	2012-2024	number of visits per 1,000 people	NSI
Number of beds in accommodation establishments	The indicator shows the district's potential for the development of tourism.	2012-2024	number of beds per 1,000 people	NSI
Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments	The indicator shows the actual intensity of tourism in the district.	2012-2024	number of overnight stays per 1,000 people	NSI
Guest nights booked via online sharing economy platforms	The indicator shows the significance of the sharing economy in the tourism sector.	2019-2024	number of overnight stays per 1,000 people	NSI