

Ruse district

- ▶ Population (2023)
- ▶ Territory (sq. km)
- ▶ Number of settlements
- ▶ Share of urban population (%)

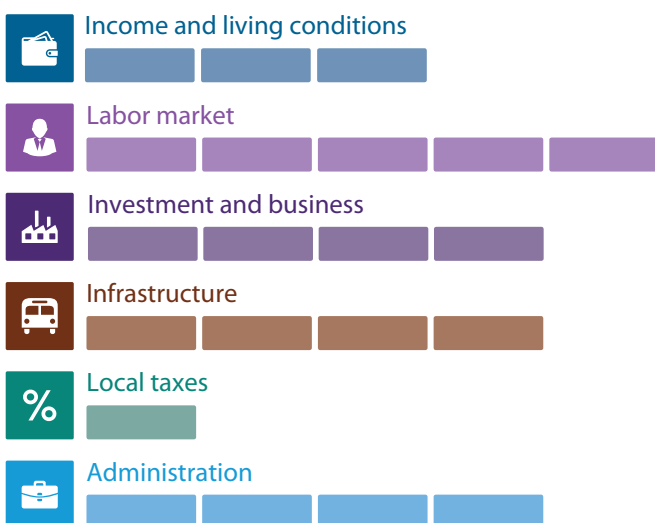
187,830
2,803
83
77.9



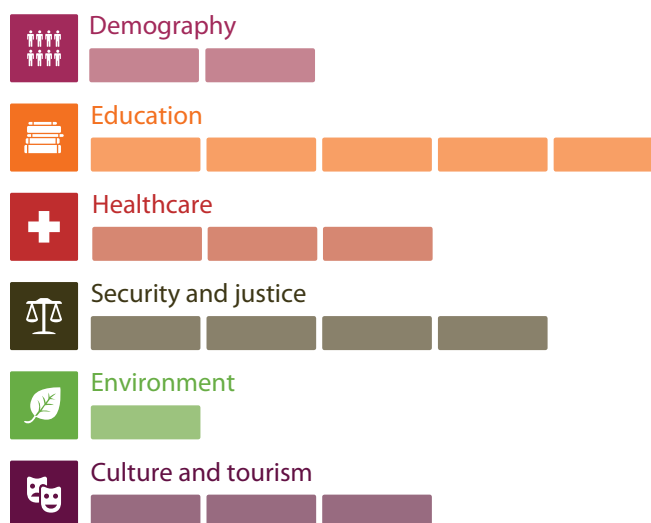
GDP per capita in the district is increasing and is now the ninth highest in the country. Both employment and unemployment figures remain relatively favorable. A significant increase is observed in the share of export earnings in net sales revenues, raising Ruse to the first place. Ruse is the district with the highest railway network density in the country. The average level of the tax rates levied by the municipalities in Ruse district is above the national average. The AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies has declined slightly but again exceeds the country's average.

Natural population increase has severely deteriorated. Students' performance in the district is close to the average one in the country. The number of university students relative to the population ranks the district among the leaders in this indicator. The healthcare system continues to suffer from a shortage of GPs. The number of crimes is increasing but remains relatively low, and crime detection is above the national average. The installed RES capacities are extremely small. Ruse is among the districts with an intensive cultural life, but the tourism sector is not strongly represented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

GDP per capita in Ruse district has increased to 18,700 BGN and in 2022 it remained the ninth highest in the country. Salaries and pensions have also been rising, though their rate of increase is lower than the country's average. The average annual gross salary of people employed under labor contract reached 17,200 BGN in 2023, and the average monthly pension – 736 BGN.

The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, was again below the national average in 2023. Poverty has increased slightly, but the share of the population living below the national poverty line remains relatively low – 20%, compared to 20.6% nationally.

Labor market

The labor market indicators for Ruse district rank it among the top five in this category.

The share of the working-age population in the district has decreased slightly to 57.0%, versus 58.5% in the country. In 2023, employment went up and unemployment went down. The employment rate was 78.6%, compared to 76.2% in the country, and the unemployment rate was 5.5%, compared to 5.3% in the country.

Ruse is also among the districts with a highly educated workforce. The share of the people aged 25–64 with primary or lower education is 11%, versus 15% in the country, and that of university graduates – 29%, versus 31% nationally. Those with a secondary education make up 60% of the population aged 25–64, against 55% countrywide.

Investment and business

Investment and business activity in Ruse district is growing and is relatively good. The number of enterprises reached 65 per 1,000 population in 2022, compared to 70 per 1,000 population in the country. TFA acquisition expenditures continue to rise and have reached 3,700 BGN/person. FDI flows have gone up to 2,800 EUR/person. Production value per employed person has also grown and remains relatively high – 135,000 BGN.

A significant increase, which puts Ruse in the first place in this category, is observed in the share of export earnings in net sales revenue – 58%, versus 29% nationally.

Spending on research and development has risen to 99 BGN per capita and is higher than in most districts.

Utilization of European funds in Ruse has also increased rapidly and exceeds the average level in the country per capita. By 30 June 2024, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs amounted to 3,275 BGN/person, against 3,175 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the leader in utilization of EU funding is Byala municipality.

Infrastructure

Ruse is the district with the highest railway network density in the country. The density of the road network is slightly lower, but the share of highways and first-class roads exceeds the national average – 22% in the district, versus 19% in the country. Road quality has deteriorated slightly, though in 2023 it again exceeded the national average, with 43% of road surfaces in good condition, against 40% nationwide.

The percentage of households in the district with internet access has gone down and remains below the national average.

The share of the population with access to a public sewerage system remains relatively low – 68%, versus 75% in the country on average. Nevertheless, in 2022 the whole sewerage network was already connected to wastewater treatment plants, compared to the national average of 67%.

Local taxes

In 2024, the average level of the tax rates in Ruse district was above the country's average. Among all monitored taxes, the only one where there was a significant margin with the national average was the tax on non-gratuitous acquisition of property, which in Ruse district's municipalities was lower. For its part, the local tax on retail trade was higher, but it did not differ much from the average levels. As for the tax on non-residential property of legal entities, Ruse municipalities have one of the highest rates – the average for the district is 2.75‰, compared to 2.15‰ in the country.

Within the district, the municipality of Ruse city levies on average the highest local taxes, while the lowest rates are in the municipalities of Slivo Pole and Vetovo.

Administration

In 2024, the local authorities' self-assessments of the development of e-government showed no change and remained slightly below the national average. However, the self-assessments of the provision of one-stop shop administrative services again achieved high scores.

The AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies decreased slightly but remained above the country's average – 71.5% in the district, compared to 69.3% nationally.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities has been decreasing and is slightly below average – 26% in the district, versus 27% in the country, but the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues is high – 80% in the district, versus 74% in the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The serious decline of the natural population increase in Ruse district continued in 2023, with a rate of -10.7% , against the national average of -6.8% . However, Ruse manages to attract new residents, although its net migration rate is low -1.2% .

The trend toward population aging in the district is clearly visible in the age structure. The share of children under 4 years is 3.8%, compared to 4.5% in the country, and of people aged 65 and over -26.9% , versus 23.8% nationally.

Population density is close to, though below the national average.

Education

The proportion of children in the district attending kindergarten remains higher than the country's average. The enrolment ratio in 5th–7th grade is also relatively high, though in 2023 it registered a slight decline. The share of school year repeaters, on the other hand, is the third lowest in the country, below that of the districts of Smolyan and the capital. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the economy is relatively good, mainly owing to the high number of students in manufacturing and transport-related programs and of employees in those sectors.

Students' results for 2024 again remained close to the average ones in the country. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 42.3 p., compared to 42.9 p. nationally. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.28, whereas the national average was "Good" 4.30. "Fail" grades (below 3.00) made up 8.1%, against the national average of 8.7%.

The number of university students relative to the population ranks the district among the leaders in this indicator.

Healthcare

In 2023, the healthcare system in Ruse district continued to suffer from a shortage of GPs. One local GP was caring for an average of 2,220 people, compared to 1,701 people per doctor in the country. The number of specialist physicians, however, was close to the national average.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the relative number of beds in the local general hospitals, which in 2023 reached 6.3 per 1,000 population, compared to 6.1 per 1,000 population in the country. Hospital bed occupancy is also relatively high. The pharmacy network in the district is relatively dense.

The average life expectancy in the district is close to, though below the national average, while the infant mortality rate in the district is declining and remains low.

Security and justice

The workloads of the criminal judges in Ruse district again remained relatively low in 2023, which impacts the speed of delivery of justice. One local judge in the District Court heard an average of 11.1 cases a month, compared to 14.4 cases per judge countrywide, while in the Administrative Court the average workload was 13.8 cases a month per judge, versus 14.8 cases in the country. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 95%, compared to the average of 91% nationwide. For administrative cases, this share was 84%, against 72% nationally, and for civil cases in the District Court -83% , compared to 65% countrywide.

The crime rate in Ruse district is increasing but remains below average, and the detection rate is above the country's average. In 2023, registered crimes against the person and property in the district constituted 11.1 per 1,000 population, versus the average of 11.3 per 1,000 population nationwide. The detection rate, for its part, increased to 59%, against 53% in the country on average. The number of police officers relative to the population is below the national average.

Environment

The amounts of household waste generated in the district have risen significantly and are above the national average -574 kg/person in the district per year, versus 488 kg/person in the country. At the same time, the share handed over for treatment and recycling remains low -69% , compared to the national average of 76% in 2022.

The share of forest areas in Ruse district is relatively small -15% , versus 33% countrywide in 2023. The share of disturbed area, however, is higher -0.5% , against 0.4% in the country.

The installed RES capacities are extremely small -0.3 kW/person, compared to 1.0 kW/person countrywide in 2024. The cooling degree days index is relatively high.

Culture and tourism

In 2023, Ruse remained among the districts with relatively active cultural life. Cinema visits reached 817 per 1,000 population, against 684 per 1,000 population nationally. Visits to the local theatres and museums also recorded a significant increase. Local libraries attracted 734 visits per 1,000 population, against 679 per 1,000 population nationally.

The tourism sector does not have a strong presence in the district. The number of beds in accommodation establishments is 13 per 1,000 population, compared to 56 per 1,000 population in the country. Overnight stays are also relatively few in number $-1,063$ per 1,000 population in the district, versus 4,167 per 1,000 population in the country. Guest nights booked via online sharing economy platforms have doubled, though their number remains relatively limited.

Key indicators for the district of Ruse

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	15,075	18,658	n.a.	25,956
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	15,443	17,154	n.a.	21,242
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	24.0	18.5	20.0	20.6
Share of the working-age population (%)	59.6	57.2	57.0	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	76.5	77.2	78.6	76.2
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	11.6	11.1	11.0	14.8
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	30.9	29.0	28.9	30.5
Production value (BGN/employed person)	106,790	134,960	n.a.	122,377
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	2,723	3,669	n.a.	4,257
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	2,243	2,784	n.a.	4,544
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	67.3	67.8	n.a.	75.0
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	40.5	47.2	42.5	40.4
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	98.4	101.7	79.7	74.1
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	72.2	72.4	71.5	69.3

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	-15.1	-10.7	-6.8
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	0.9	1.2	6.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.88	3.82	4.28	4.30
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	35.9	35.6	42.3	42.9
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	83.8	92.4	90.8	89.9
Average life expectancy (years)***	72.9	72.0	72.8	73.5
Share of people with health insurance (%)	88.2	95.5	96.4	95.0
Population per one GP (persons)	2,248	2,170	2,220	1,701
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	8.5	9.3	11.1	11.3
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	92	90	95	91
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	102	104	n.a.	103
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	442	574	n.a.	488
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	68	69	n.a.	76
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	395	688	817	684
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	622	909	1063	4,167

* The 2023 data are included in the 2024 study. The same is valid for the previous years.

** The data refer to the 2023-24 academic year, while the State matriculation exams took place in 2024. The same is valid for the previous years.

*** Data are for three-year periods and are updated annually.