

# Shumen district

▶ Population (2023)	149,699
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,390
▶ Number of settlements	151
▶ Share of urban population (%)	62.0



GDP, incomes and pensions in Shumen district are continuing to grow. The increase in the employment rate in the district is significant and for the first time it is ahead of the national average. Investment activity remains relatively low. Shumen is the district with the highest share of first-class roads and highways in the country. Municipalities in Shumen district have relatively low levels of local taxes. The transparency rating of local government administrations remains significantly higher than average. The natural population increase rate is less favorable

than average, but the district has managed to attract new residents. Students' results continue to be among the poorest in the country. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of hospital beds, but hospital bed occupancy is the highest in the country. The workloads of the local criminal judges remain low and this has a favorable effect on the speed of delivery of justice. The number of crimes in the district is low and the detection rate is high. The share of degraded territory is limited. Tourism in the district also has a relatively limited presence.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Income and living conditions

The growth of GDP per capita in Shumen district has continued, reaching 15,600 BGN/person and placing the district just below the middle of the 2022 ranking scale for this indicator. The trend towards rising incomes and pensions is also maintained. The average gross annual salary of people employed under labor contract is 16,700 BGN, versus 21,200 BGN in the country, and the average monthly pension – 688 BGN, versus 784 BGN nationally.

The share of the population living below the national poverty line has gone down significantly but remains below the national average – 15.1% in the district, compared to 20.6% in the country for 2022. The Gini coefficient for income inequality is also declining and has steadied below the national average.

### Labor market

In 2023, the share of the working-age population was close to, but below the national average – 57.7% in the district, compared to 58.5% in the country. Employment and unemployment went up simultaneously in 2023. The employment rate recorded a significant increase – by over 5 p.p. to 76.4%, and for the first time it exceeded the national average of 76.2%. The unemployment rate, however, also went up, reaching 10.1%, which is almost double the national average of 5.3%.

A challenge still facing the labor market in Shumen district is the educational structure of the workforce, although in 2023 there was a considerable increase. The share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education decreased to 24%, against the national average of 15%. At the same time, the share of those with a university degree increased to 29%, compared to 31% in the country.

### Investment and business

Investment activity in Shumen district again remained relatively slack in 2022. The number of enterprises in Shumen district is small – 54 per 1,000 population, against 70 per 1,000 population nationally. TFA acquisition expenditures have gone up significantly to reach 2,800 BGN/person but remain below the national average. FDI relative to the population has also increased – almost double – though it too remains relatively low. By the end of 2022, FDI reached 1,400 EUR/person in the district, compared to 4,500 EUR/person in the country. The share of export earnings in net sales revenues is also growing and is relatively high – 35% in the district, compared to 29% in the country. Production value reached 112,200 BGN per employee, against 122,400 BGN per employee in the country.

The relative volume of research and development expenditure has increased to 105 BGN per capita and ranks the district fourth in the country in this indicator.

### Infrastructure

Shumen district is among the good performers in the category assessing infrastructure. The density of the road and railway networks is higher than the national average. In 2023, Shumen remained the district with the highest share of first-class roads and highways in the country – 37%, compared to 19% in the country. However, road quality is deteriorating and remains below the national average, with road surfaces in good condition making up 30%, versus 40% in the country.

Household access to the internet has increased to 88% but remains slightly lower than the country's average of 89%.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network and it remains low – 58% in 2022, against 75% in the country. The share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant is 54%, compared to 67% countrywide.

### Local taxes

The municipalities in Shumen district again kept the levels of local taxes relatively low in 2024. For all monitored local taxes, the average rates were lower than the respective national averages. The biggest margin is in the taxes on non-gratuitous acquisition of property and retail trade.

Within the district, the highest local taxes are levied by the municipality of Novi Pazar, and the lowest – by that of Hitrino.

### Administration

The self-assessments of the local administrations of the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services went down in 2024 and equaled the national average. The AIP active transparency rating of the municipalities in the district also registered a decrease, though it remained significantly above the country's average – 75.8% in the district, compared to 69.3% nationally.

The share of own revenues of the district's municipalities remained low in 2023 at 19%, versus 27% nationally, while the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues was limited – 53%, against 74% nationally.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Demography

The natural population increase rate is less favorable than the country's average but Shumen district manages to attract new residents. In 2023, the natural population increase rate was -9.1‰, compared to -6.8‰ nationally. The net migration rate was positive and relatively high at 9.6‰.

The share of children under 4 years is 4.0%, compared to 4.5% in the country, and that of the population aged 65 years and over – 25.2%, versus 23.8% nationally.

Population density again remained low in 2023 – 854 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,221 persons/sq. km on average countrywide.

### Education

The coverage of children attending kindergartens in the district again recorded a significant increase in 2023. Their share reached 91%, compared to 88% nationwide. The net enrolment in 5th–7th grade was 89%, against 90% nationally. The share of school year repeaters equals the national average. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy has improved and is relatively high, mainly due to the alignment between the numbers of students attending courses in the transport and hospitality sectors and people employed with those professional qualification.

In 2024, students' results again remained among the lowest in the country. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 35.2 p., versus 42.9 p. in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was again the lowest in the country – "Good" 3.89, compared to "Good" 4.30 in the country, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was the second highest, below that of Pleven district – 17.7%, against 8.7% nationally.

The number of university students has gone down to 42 per 1,000 population, though remaining higher than the national average of 30 students per 1,000 population.

### Healthcare

The healthcare system in Shumen district suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds. However, the number of GPs relative to the population is increasing and is now above the national average. In 2023, there was one GP per 1,627 persons, compared to 1,701 persons per doctor nationally. The number of beds in the district's general hospitals remains extremely low, with 3.0 beds per 1,000 population, compared to 6.1 beds per 1,000 population in the country. At the same time, hospital bed occupancy is the highest in the country – 67%, against 56% nationally. The pharmacy network in the district is relatively limited.

Infant mortality registered an increase in 2023, though remaining below the country's average, albeit by a small margin. However, the average life expectancy is below the national average. The share of population with health insurance is among the highest nationally.

### Security and justice

The workloads of local judges in the district remain low, which in 2023 again had a favorable effect on the speed of delivery of justice. One Administrative Court judge heard an average of 9.9 cases per month, compared to an average of 14.8 cases per judge in the country, and the monthly workload of one District Court judge was 10.2 cases, versus 14.4 cases nationally. The share of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 97%, against 91% nationally, of administrative cases it was 84%, compared to 72% nationally, and of civil cases – 68%, against 65% nationwide.

The number of crimes in Shumen district is low, and the detection rate is high. Registered crimes against the person and property amounted to 9.5 per 1,000 population in 2023, compared to 11.3 per 1,000 population nationally. The detection rate was 65% against 53% in the country. However, the number of police officers relative to the population is relatively low.

### Environment

The volumes of household waste in Shumen district have been rising but remain relatively low, while its management is improving, though it still is not good. In 2022, the amount of household waste generated in the district was 452 kg/person, compared to the national average of 488 kg/person; however, a relatively low share was handed over for treatment and recycling – 52%, against 76% nationally.

The share of forest area is close to the national average, but that of disturbed area is rather more limited.

The installed RES capacities relative to the population are relatively small.

Shumen is one of the districts with a low volume of drinking water consumption by the households.

### Culture and tourism

Visits to the local museums and libraries continued to increase in 2023 and again exceeded the respective national averages. Museums attracted 1,139 persons per 1,000 population, versus 770 per 1,000 population in the country. Visits to libraries reached 1,626 per 1,000 population, which is the among highest numbers for the whole country, where the average was 679 per 1,000 population. The number of cinema visits has also registered an increase, though remaining exceptionally low – 149 per 1,000 population, compared to 684 per 1,000 population nationally. Theater visits follow much the same trend.

Tourism in the district also has a relatively weak presence. The number of beds in accommodation establishments in 2023 was 12 per 1,000 population, compared to 56 per 1,000 population in the country, and the number of overnight stays – 515 per 1,000 population, compared to 4,167 per 1,000 population in the country. The number of guest nights booked via online sharing economy platforms is also low.

## Key indicators for the district of Shumen

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,989	15,614	n.a.	<b>25,956</b>
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	15,105	16,702	n.a.	<b>21,242</b>
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	15.4	22.5	15.1	<b>20.6</b>
Share of the working-age population (%)	60.0	57.8	57.7	<b>58.5</b>
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	69.9	71.3	76.4	<b>76.2</b>
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	9.2	9.4	10.1	<b>5.3</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	27.8	26.8	23.5	<b>14.8</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	24.2	24.8	29.2	<b>30.5</b>
Production value (BGN/employed person)	85,114	112,201	n.a.	<b>122,377</b>
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	1,897	2,794	n.a.	<b>4,257</b>
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	708	1,363	n.a.	<b>4,544</b>
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	56.7	58.0	n.a.	<b>75.0</b>
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	37.6	37.8	30.1	<b>40.4</b>
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	78.1	71.7	52.6	<b>74.1</b>
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	76.1	76.5	75.8	<b>69.3</b>

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	-11.7	-9.1	<b>-6.8</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	6.4	9.6	<b>6.4</b>
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.58	3.43	3.84	<b>4.30</b>
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	27.0	26.2	35.2	<b>42.9</b>
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	79.6	90.3	88.9	<b>89.9</b>
Average life expectancy (years)***	72.4	71.3	72.6	<b>73.5</b>
Share of people with health insurance (%)	88.1	98.9	99.4	<b>95.0</b>
Population per one GP (persons)	1,862	1,705	1,627	<b>1,701</b>
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	8.6	9.0	9.5	<b>11.3</b>
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	95	97	97	<b>91</b>
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	79	83	n.a.	<b>103</b>
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	370	452	n.a.	<b>488</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	45	52	n.a.	<b>76</b>
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	68	66	149	<b>684</b>
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	372	506	515	<b>4,167</b>

\* 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.