

# Vidin district

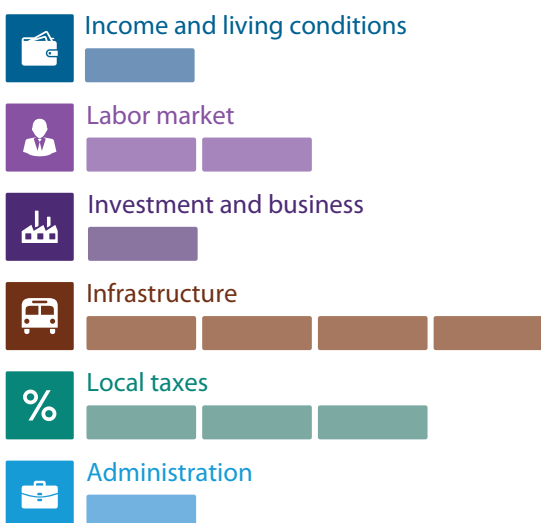
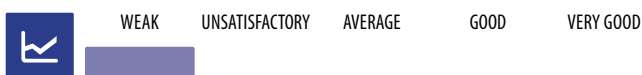
▶ Population (2023)	71,773
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,033
▶ Number of settlements	140
▶ Share of urban population (%)	63.0



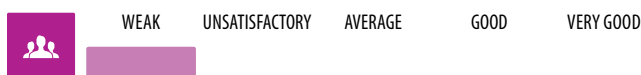
Vidin is among the districts with the worst indicators for incomes and quality of life. The educational structure of the workforce is improving, but unemployment remains extremely high. Investment and business activity is relatively weak, and the infrastructure is not sufficiently developed. Vidin is among the districts with the lowest average rates of the monitored local taxes. The indicators assessing the functioning of the local administration rank Vidin among the worst performers.

Vidin remains the district with the most unfavorable demographic picture in the country. Students' performance is relatively poor. Healthcare suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds. The workloads of criminal judges in the district are low, which impacts the speed of delivery of justice. The share of household waste remains relatively low. The relative number of visits to the local cinemas, museums and libraries is increasing but remains lower than the national average.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Income and living conditions

Vidin is among the districts with the worst indicators for incomes and quality of life. GDP per capita in the district of Vidin continued to increase in 2022, but its growth was relatively limited – by 16%, compared to 28% in the country, and its volume remained low – 13,300 BGN, which is a little over half the national average. Salaries and pensions have also been rising at almost the national average rate, but they too remain relatively low. The average annual salary of people employed under labor contract reached 14,600 BGN in 2022, compared to 21,200 BGN in the country, while the monthly pension is 695 BGN, versus 784 BGN nationally.

Income inequality is close to the national average, but the poverty level remains high, even though it has decreased over the past few years. In 2023, the share of the population living below the national poverty line was 33.7%, against 20.6% in the country, which is the second highest figure after that of Targovishte district.

### Labor market

In 2023, Vidin was again the district with the lowest share of working-age population – 53.5%, compared to 58.5% in the country. At the same time, the unemployment rate was the highest in the country – 14.7%, against 5.3% nationwide. The employment rate also remained among the lowest country-wide – 65.9%, versus the national average of 76.2%.

2023 marked a further improvement in the educational structure of the workforce. The share of the population with primary or lower education decreased to 12%, versus 15% nationwide. At the same time, the share of people aged 25–64 with university education also registered a slight decrease to 21%, compared to 31% in the country.

### Investment and business

Investment and business activity in Vidin district again remained relatively slack in 2022. The number of enterprises relative to the population continued to be among the lowest in the country – 44 per 1,000 population, compared to 70 per 1,000 population in the country.

TFA acquisition expenditures per person in Vidin district have continued to rise but they still remain among the lowest nationwide – 1,800 BGN/person, compared to 4,300 BGN/person in the country. For the third year in a row, the district has witnessed an outflow of FDI, which has fallen to 490 EUR/person. The relative volume of production value has increased but continues to be the lowest in the country – 53,200 BGN per employed person, compared to the national average of 122,400 BGN. The share of export earnings in net sales revenues remains low, though it has gone up to 17%, against 29% in the country.

Utilization of EU funds remains intensive. By 30 June 2024, the amounts paid to beneficiaries under EU operational programs

reached 3,666 BGN/person, compared to 3,175 BGN/person nationally.

### Infrastructure

The density of the rail network in the district is close to the national average. The density of the road network is relatively high (20 km/100 sq. km territory, against 18 km/100 sq. km in the country). However, as is typical of northern Bulgaria, the share of first-class roads and highways remains low – 12%, compared to 19% in the country. Road surface quality has been improving, but it too remains at a relatively low level – 37% of the roads in the district are in good condition, compared to 40% in the country in 2023.

The share of households with access to the Internet has been increasing and has stabilized above the national average.

The share of the population connected to a public sewerage network has decreased slightly and continues to be relatively low – 54%, compared to 75% in the country. Connectivity to wastewater treatment plants is also limited – 49%, against 67% in the country.

### Local taxes

In 2024, Vidin was once again among the districts with the lowest average rates of the monitored local taxes. The margin was especially big as regards the taxation on retail trade, where Vidin was the leader with 4.60 BGN/sq. m on average for the district, against 13.09 BGN/sq. m in the country. The level of taxation on motor vehicles was also low – 1.46 BGN/kW, versus 1.56 BGN/kW in the country. Of all monitored taxes, the average rates on immovable non-residential property for legal entities and those on non-gratuitous acquisition of property are slightly higher than the respective national averages.

Within the district, the lowest average rates are in the municipality of Chuprene, and the highest ones – in Bregovo municipality.

### Administration

Vidin is once again the district with a relatively poor performance in this category. In 2024, the district municipalities' self-assessments of the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services remained among the lowest in the country. The AIP active transparency rating of the local administrations also remains relatively low – 56.2%, against 69.3% in the country.

The municipalities in Vidin district are among the ones that are excessively dependent on transfers from the national budget. The share of own revenues in Vidin district's municipalities decreased in 2023 and remained low at 16%, compared to 27% in the country. The coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues was also relatively limited – 58%, against 74% in the country.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■

### Demography ■

In 2023, Vidin again remained the district with the most unfavorable demographic profile in the country. The net migration rate went up and retained its positive value (2.7‰) but this could not compensate for the extremely low value of the natural population increase rate, which was -16.2‰ and over half the national average of -6.8‰.

Population aging is particularly conspicuous in Vidin district. The share of children under 4 years is the second lowest in the country (only after Smolyan district) - 3.4%, versus 4.5% nationwide, while that of the population over 65 is the highest - 31.3%, versus 23.8% in the country.

The density of the population in Vidin district's urbanized settlements is the lowest in the country - 543 persons/sq. km in 2023, compared to 1,221 persons/sq. km nationally.

### Education ■■■■

In 2023, the share of children attending kindergartens in the district was close to the national average. The enrolment rate in 5th-7th grades has increased but remains low at 88%, compared to 90% nationally. The share of school year repeaters, on the other hand, is decreasing but is still higher than the national average.

The alignment index between vocational education and the profile of the economy in the district again remained low in 2024.

The performance of students in the 2024 NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was again extremely poor. With an average score of 31.3 p., against 42.9 p. in the country, the district occupies the bottom place nationwide. The performance of high-school graduates was better but also below the national average. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.20, compared to "Good" 4.30 nationally, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was relatively high - 9.6%, against 8.7% nationwide.

The number of university students relative to the population in Vidin district is low.

### Healthcare ■■

Vidin is one of the three districts (alongside Yambol and Pernik) with the worst performance in this category. In spite of some improvement, it still has the lowest life expectancy - 70.3 years, compared to 73.5 years in the country.

The proportion of people with health insurance reached 98% in 2023 and again exceeded the national average of 95%. The proportion of GPs to the district's population remains relatively high but healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and hospital beds. The number of beds in the local general hospitals has dropped to 4.3 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 among the lowest in the country - 41%, versus 56% nationwide. The infant mortality rate in Vidin district is above the national average.

The number of pharmacies relative to the population is close to the national average.

### Security and justice ■■■■■■

In 2023, the workloads of the criminal judges in Vidin district remained below the national average, which impacted the speed of delivery of justice. There were on average 11.4 cases a month per one District Court judge, compared to 14.4 cases per judge nationally, and 11.5 cases a month per one Administrative Court judge, compared to 14.8 cases per judge in the country.

Of all criminal cases in Vidin district, 96% were closed within 3 months, compared to 91% in the country, for administrative cases the share is 85%, versus 72% in the country, and for civil cases - 89%, against 65% in the country.

The relative number of police officers in the district is the second highest in the country (after Vratsa district) - 5.6 per 1,000 population, against 4.2 per 1,000 population in the country. It thus corresponds with the relatively high crime rate - the number of registered crimes against the person and property relative to the population in the district rose in 2023 and became the highest in the country - 15.3 per 1,000 population, compared to 11.3 per 1,000 population nationwide. At the same time, the crime detection rate has gone up and remains above the national average - 58% in Vidin district, against 53% in the country.

### Environment ■■■

The amount of household waste generated in the district again remained relatively low in 2022 - 419 kg/person per year, compared to the national average of 488 kg/person. At the same time, however, the share handed over for treatment and recycling continued to be very small - 21%, versus 76% countrywide. The share of forest areas is low - 26% in Vidin district, versus 33% in the country, though the share of disturbed area is also low - 0.2% in the district, against 0.4% in the country. The installed RES capacities relative to the population are lower than average.

### Culture and tourism ■■■

The relative numbers of visits to the local cinemas, museums and libraries in Vidin district have been increasing but in 2023 they remained lower than the respective national averages. There has been a considerable increase in visits to theaters and their relative number is above the national average - 438 per 1,000 population, compared to 349 per 1,000 population nationwide.

Despite a weak growth in 2023, the number of beds in accommodation establishments remains extremely limited (15 per 1,000 population, compared to 56 per 1,000 population nationally), but the relative number of overnight stays also remains low (990 per 1,000 population, compared to 4,167 per 1,000 population nationally). The number of guest nights booked via online sharing economy platforms is 47 per 1,000 population, against 500 per 1,000 population in the country.

## Key indicators for the district of Vidin

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,438	13,273	n.a.	<b>25,956</b>
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	12,855	14,566	n.a.	<b>21,242</b>
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	43.3	39.2	33.7	<b>20.6</b>
Share of the working-age population (%)	54.6	53.6	53.5	<b>58.5</b>
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	62.4	65.9	65.9	<b>76.2</b>
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	12.3	14.1	14.7	<b>5.3</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	17.6	13.4	11.5	<b>14.8</b>
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	19.8	22.4	20.5	<b>30.5</b>
Production value (BGN/employed person)	42,883	53,200	n.a.	<b>122,377</b>
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	1,260	1,794	n.a.	<b>4,257</b>
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	597	490	n.a.	<b>4,544</b>
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	54.8	54.3	n.a.	<b>75.0</b>
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	28.3	36.1	37.1	<b>40.4</b>
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	61.4	73.9	58.0	<b>74.1</b>
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	57.4	57.5	56.2	<b>69.3</b>

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	–21.3	–16.2	<b>–6.8</b>
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	0.9	2.7	<b>6.4</b>
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.83	3.63	4.20	<b>4.30</b>
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	21.6	25.4	31.3	<b>42.9</b>
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	78.8	87.3	87.6	<b>89.9</b>
Average life expectancy (years)***	70.5	69.4	70.3	<b>73.5</b>
Share of people with health insurance (%)	92.4	97.5	98.2	<b>95.0</b>
Population per one GP (persons)	1,433	1,361	1,338	<b>1,701</b>
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	10.0	14.1	15.3	<b>11.3</b>
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	94	96	96	<b>91</b>
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	91	94	n.a.	<b>103</b>
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	355	419	n.a.	<b>488</b>
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	18	21	n.a.	<b>76</b>
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	232	320	365	<b>684</b>
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	626	911	990	<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.