Yambol district

▶ Population (2023)	106,320
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,355
▶ Number of settlements	109
▶ Share of urban population (%)	69.9

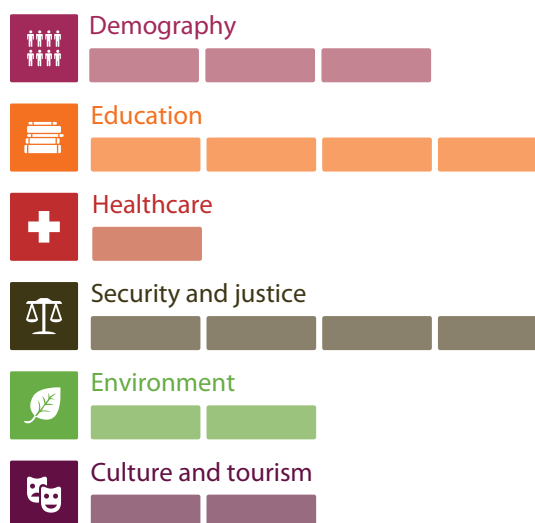Straldzha

YAMBOL

ELHOVO

Bolyarovo

GDP, incomes and pensions in Yambol district continue to grow. The share of the working-age population in the district is one of the lowest in the country. Investment activity remains slack. Yambol is characterized by a high density of the road network, but the railway network is among the least developed in the country. The average levels of local taxes are close to the national averages. The self-assessments of the local administrations on the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services have gone up.

Both natural population increase and net migration rates are unfavorable. The district's students are not among the good performers but their results indicate an improvement compared to the rest of the districts. Healthcare in the district suffers from a shortage of specialist physicians and a limited number of hospital beds. The workloads of the local judges are considerably below the national average, but delivery of justice is relatively slow. The volume of household waste is low. Tourism in Yambol district is poorly represented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Income and living conditions

Labor market

Investment and business

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	WEAK	UNSATISFACTORY	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Security and justice

Environment

Culture and tourism
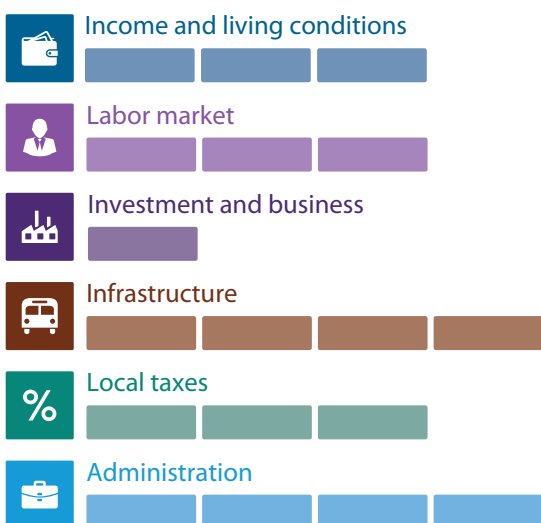
📈 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪

💳 Income and living conditions ▪▪▪

GDP in Yambol district has continued to grow at a fast pace, reaching 15,800 BGN per capita in 2022.

The rate of increase in incomes and pensions also remains stable. The average gross annual salary of people employed under labor contract is 16,500 BGN, compared to 21,200 BGN nationally. The average monthly pension is 763 BGN, versus 784 BGN nationally.

After several years of decline, in 2023 the poverty rate in the district went up. The share of population living below the poverty line reached 26.7%. Income inequality remains below the national average.

👤 Labor market ▪▪▪

The share of the working age population in the district was one of the lowest in the country (only ahead of Vidin district) in 2023. Employment has increased and unemployment has decreased. The employment rate has reached 74.8%, compared to 76.2% in the country, and that of unemployment – 5.1%, versus 5.3% nationwide.

A challenge still facing the labor market in Yambol district is the educational structure of the workforce, although 2023 saw some improvement. The share of people aged 25–64 with primary or lower education went down to 19%, against the national average of 15%, while that of university graduates increased to 20%, compared to 31% in the country.

🏭 Investment and business ▪

In 2022, investment activity in Yambol district remained low. Due to the relative dominance of the process industry, Yambol is among the districts with a relatively small number of enterprises – only 59 per 1,000 population, compared to 70 per 1,000 population nationally. TFA acquisition expenditures have gone up significantly, reaching 2,800 BGN/person. FDI, however, has registered a negligible increase and remains among the lowest in the country at 476 EUR/person, versus 4,500 EUR/person nationally. At the same time, production value has increased rapidly to reach 92,000 BGN per employed person. The share of export earnings in net sales revenue is decreasing and remains relatively low at 24%, against 29% in the country.

Research and development expenditure relative to the population is comparatively low.

There has been an increase in the utilization of European funds and their amounts are getting much closer to the national average. By 30 June 2024, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs reached 3,132 BGN/person, compared to 3,175 BGN/person nationally. Within the

district, the largest amounts were utilized by Bolyarovo municipality.

🚌 Infrastructure ▪▪▪▪▪

Yambol district is characterized by a high density of the road network. However, its railway network is among the least developed in the country, after that of Dobrich district. In 2023, the share of first-class roads and highways exceeded the national average – 21%, compared to 19% nationally. The quality of the road surface in the district, however, is below the national average and in 2023 the share of roads in good condition decreased to 29%, thus lagging well behind the average of 40% countrywide.

In 2023, the share of households connected to high-speed internet went down and again remained relatively low.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network, which in 2022 again remained below the national average – 71%, against 75% in the country. At the same time, the share of households whose sewerage system is connected to a wastewater treatment plant is above the national average – 69% compared to 67% countrywide.

% Local taxes ▪▪▪

The average rates of local taxes in Yambol district in 2024 again remained close to the average ones in the country. Among the monitored taxes, the relatively higher than average one, albeit by a small margin, was that on the immovable non-residential property for legal entities. At the same time, the rate on retail trade remained well below average. The tax rate for retail trade in Yambol district was 8.17 BGN/sq. m on average, compared to 13.09 BGN/sq. m in the country.

Within the district, the highest local taxes are levied by the municipality of Yambol city, and the lowest – by that of Elhovo.

💼 Administration ▪▪▪▪

The self-assessments of the local administrations in Yambol district regarding the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop administrative services went up in 2024 to exceed the national average. However, the AIP active transparency rating achieved by the local administration fell below the country's average – 68.8% in the district, compared to 69.3% in the country.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities in 2023 was 21%, versus 27% nationally, and the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues – 64%, against 74% nationally.

👥 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ▬▬

🏛 Demography ▬▬▬

In 2023, both the natural population increase rate and net migration in Yambol district again remained less favorable than nationally. The natural population increase rate was –9.0‰, compared to –6.8‰ nationally. The net migration rate was negative at –0.9‰.

The share of children under 4 years is higher than the average – 4.8% in the district, compared to 4.5% in the country, but the share of the population aged 65 and over is also relatively high – 26.8%, against 23.8% nationally.

Population density in Yambol district is significantly lower than in the country on average – 680 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,221 persons/sq. km countrywide.

📚 Education ▬▬▬▬

The share of children attending kindergarten again remained relatively low in 2023. The net enrolment in 5th–7th grade, however, is close to the national average. The share of school year repeaters is high. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is relatively good, especially in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

The 2024 students' results indicate an improvement compared to the rest of the districts. The average score in the NAE in mathematics after 7th grade was 40.4 p., versus 42.9 p. in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.25, compared to "Good" 4.30 in the country, and the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) was low – 7.1%, against 8.7% nationally.

The number of students in the district relative to the population is declining in line with its nationwide decline, falling to 6 per 1,000 population, against 30 per 1,000 population nationwide.

✚ Healthcare ▬

The district's poor performance in the sphere of healthcare us due primarily to the low relative number of specialist physicians (where Yambol ranks only ahead of Kardzhali), the low number of hospital beds, as well as to the high child mortality rate in 2023 (8.5‰, against 4.9‰ in the country). At the same time, the number of GPs relative to the population in the district is close to the national average. The district's residents' life expectancy lags behind the country's average by slightly over a year. The number of hospital beds in the local general hospitals has increased, but remains relatively low – 3.9 beds per 1,000 population, compared to the national average of 6.1 beds per 1,000 population. Hospital bed occupancy is also lower than the national average.

The share of people with health insurance has gone up but still remains below the national average. The pharmacy network in the district is also relatively limited.

⚖ Security and justice ▬▬▬▬▬

The workloads of the local judges are considerably lower than in the country, and delivery of justice is relatively speedy. In 2023, one local judge in the Administrative Court heard an average of 10.1 cases per month, compared to 14.8 cases per judge in the country, and the District Court average monthly workload was 12.7 cases per judge, against 14.4 cases nationally. The share of civil cases closed within 3 months was 84%, compared to 65% in the country, that of administrative cases was 84%, versus 72% countrywide, while the share of criminal cases equaled the national average of 91%.

The number of crimes in the district is close to, though above the country's average, and the detection rate is relatively high. In 2023, registered crimes against the person and property amounted to 11.5 per 1,000 population, versus 11.3 per 1,000 population nationally. The detection rate was 67%, compared to 53% nationwide. The number of police officers relative to the population is above the national average.

🌿 Environment ▬▬

The volumes of generated household waste in the district are relatively low, and their management – relatively good. In 2022, the amount of household waste generated in the district was 417 kg/person, against the national average of 488 kg/person, while 88% of the generated waste was handed over for treatment and recycling, compared to 76% on average countrywide.

The share of forest areas is low – 15%, versus 33% in the country, but that of disturbed area is also limited – 0.2% against 0.4% countrywide. The installed RES capacities are above the national average relative to the population.

The cooling degree days index in the district is the highest in the country. At the same time, the consumption of drinking water by the households is relatively low.

🎭 Culture and tourism ▬▬

Visits to the local cinemas reached 449 per 1,000 population, versus 684 per 1,000 population in the country, and visits to libraries numbered 471 per 1,000 population, against 679 per 1,000 population nationally. The relative number of visits to museums is among the lowest in the country, although in 2023 it went up to 189 per 1,000 population, compared to 770 per 1,000 population nationally. Among the indicators monitored in this category, only the number of visits to local theatres relative to the population was higher than average – 358 per 1,000 population in the district, compared with 349 per 1,000 population nationally.

Tourism has an extremely low representation in Yambol district. In 2023, the number of beds in accommodation establishments was 7 per 1,000 population, versus 56 per 1,000 population in the country. Overnight stays, for their part, numbered 452 per 1,000 population, against 4,167 per 1,000 population in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Yambol

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	12,617	15,805	n.a.	**25,956**
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	14,779	16,472	n.a.	**21,242**
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	24.0	20.2	26.7	**20.6**
Share of the working-age population (%)	56.1	54.2	54.1	**58.5**
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	67.3	73.7	74.8	**76.2**
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	5.5	5.4	5.1	**5.3**
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	20.6	21.8	18.6	**14.8**
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	23.0	19.7	20.0	**30.5**
Production value (BGN/employed person)	73,402	91,955	n.a.	**122,377**
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	2,165	2,755	n.a.	**4,257**
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	396	476	n.a.	**4,544**
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	70.9	71.5	n.a.	**75.0**
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	36.3	30.4	29.5	**40.4**
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	93.2	87.2	64.0	**74.1**
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	72.5	72.4	68.8	**69.3**

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	−11.5	−9.0	**−6.8**
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	−0.4	−0.9	**6.4**
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.79	3.79	4.25	**4.30**
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	30.7	30.8	40.4	**42.9**
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	89.1	90.0	89.3	**89.9**
Average life expectancy (years)***	72.3	71.5	72.4	**73.5**
Share of people with health insurance (%)	88.6	92.6	93.1	**95.0**
Population per one GP (persons)	1,733	1,662	1,696	**1,701**
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	10.0	11.0	11.5	**11.3**
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	82	88	91	**91**
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	87	90	n.a.	**103**
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	371	417	n.a.	**488**
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	91	88	n.a.	**76**
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	130	391	449	**684**
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	240	437	452	**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.