

Haskovo district

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

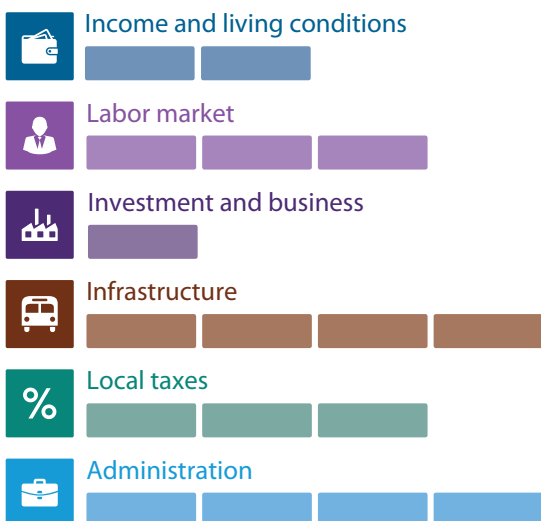
207,114
5,533
261
71.5



Although GDP per capita in the district is growing relatively fast, its value remains low. Employment is falling and unemployment is rising. Investment activity in Haskovo District remains weak. The density of the road network, the share of highways and first-class roads and the quality of road surfaces are high. Local tax levels in the municipalities of the district are close to but below the national average. The AIP rating has increased further and remains higher than average. The district's rate of natural population increase is

strongly negative, though the net migration rate is positive. Students' results are low. Healthcare in Haskovo district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. Life expectancy is high. The number of crimes in the district is increasing, but remains lower than the national average, and the detection rate is higher. The relative number of household waste generated has increased significantly but remains below the national average. Cultural life and tourism in the district have a relatively weak presence.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

Although GDP per capita in the district grew relatively fast in 2022, its value remains low and ranks Haskovo among the bottom three districts in this indicator (ahead of Silistra and Sliven). Salaries are also among the three lowest in the country. The average annual gross salary of people employed under labor contract was 14,300 BGN in 2023, versus 21,200 BGN in the country. The average monthly pension is 757 BGN, against 784 BGN nationally.

The Gini coefficient for income inequality in the district was again relatively low in 2023. Poverty is declining but remains relatively high, with 26.0% of the population living below the national poverty line, compared to 20.6% in the country.

Labor market

The share of the working-age population in the district steadied at 56.3% in 2023, remaining below the national average of 58.5%. Employment is declining and unemployment is rising. The employment rate reached 72.7%, compared to 76.2% nationally, and the unemployment rate – 6.7%, versus 5.3% nationally.

The local labor market continues to face the challenge posed by the educational structure of the workforce. The share of university graduates among the 25–64 age group was 19% in 2023, compared to 31% in the country, and the share of people with primary or lower education – 21%, compared to the national average of 15%.

Investment and business

Investment activity in Haskovo district again remained slack in 2022. The number of non-financial enterprises in the district was 68 per 1,000 population, compared to 70 per 1,000 population in the country. TFA acquisition expenditures went up but nevertheless remained extremely low at 1,700 BGN/person, compared to 4,300 BGN/person nationally. FDI also increased to 680 EUR/person, against the national average of 4,500 EUR/person. These indicator values account for the relatively limited production value, in spite of a considerable increase compared to the year before.

Utilization of EU funds is also relatively low. By 30 June 2024, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 2,213 BGN/person, versus the national average of 3,175 BGN/person. Within the district, the highest amounts were utilized by the municipality of Svilengrad.

The relative size of research and development expenditure remains extremely low, only above that in Targovishte.

Infrastructure

The density of the road and rail network in Haskovo district is above the national average. The share of first-class roads and highways is also higher than the national average – 22%, compared to 19% in the country in 2023. The quality of the road surfaces has been improving and exceeds the country's average. The share of road surfaces in good condition was 46% in 2023, compared to 40% countrywide.

Households' access to the internet in the district decreased in 2023 to 83%, versus 89% in the country.

There has been little change in the share of households with access to a public sewerage network, which in 2022 was 71%, 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

In 2024, the levels of the monitored local taxes in the municipalities on the district's territory again remained close to, though below the national average. The tax rates for immovable non-residential property for legal entities and motor vehicles were practically equal to the respective national averages. Lower than the average ones were the tax rates on retail trade (12.82 BGN/sq. m, versus 13.08 BGN/sq. m in the country) and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property (2.63%, against 2.81% nationally). Within the district, the lowest local taxes are levied by the municipality of Ivaylovgrad, and the highest – by that of Madzharovo.

Administration

In 2024, the self-assessment of the district's municipalities of the development of e-government went down but nevertheless remained above the national average. The self-assessment on the provision of one-stop shop administrative services decreased significantly and fell below the national average. The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administrations has increased further and remains higher than average – 75.4% in the district, versus 69.3% in the country.

The share of own revenues in the municipalities' total revenues in 2023 was 24%, compared to 27% in the country, and the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues – 71%, compared to 74% in the country.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The natural population increase in the district is relatively low at -9.0‰, compared to -6.8‰ nationally. However, the net migration rate has recorded a significant increase and in 2023 it was positive (7.4‰), which largely compensates for the natural population decline.

Population aging in the district is similar to the country's average. The share of children under 4 years has increased slightly to 4.1%, compared to 4.5% in the country, but the share of people aged 65 and over in the district has also increased to 25.8%, against 23.8% in the country.

Population density is relatively low – 916 persons/sq. km, compared to 1,221 persons/sq. km nationally.

Education

The share of children attending kindergartens continues to be lower than the national average. The coverage of the education system in the district also remains relatively low and in 2023 the net enrolment in 5th–7th grade even went down to 85%, against 90% nationally. The share of school year repeaters is above the national average, albeit slightly. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is at a relatively high level due to the high share of students in manufacturing-related programs and employees with vocational qualifications in that sector and their low share in construction.

Students' results again remained low in 2024. The average score in the NEA in mathematics after 7th grade was 36.8 p., versus 42.9 p. in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 4.16, compared to "Good" 4.30 nationally. The share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) remained relatively high – 10.2%, against 8.7% nationally.

Healthcare

The healthcare system in Haskovo district suffers from a shortage of doctors and hospital beds. The number of doctors – both GPs and specialist physicians – is below the national average. There is one GP per 1,937 people, compared to 1,701 people per GP nationally. The number of beds in the district's general hospitals remains extremely low and in 2023 it even decreased to 3.7 beds per 1,000 population, compared to 6.1 beds per 1,000 people in the country. At the same time, hospital bed occupancy is above the national average.

The pharmacy network is also underdeveloped and access to pharmacies is deteriorating – there is one pharmacy per 2,919 people in the district, versus one pharmacy per 1,982 people in the country.

The average life expectancy of the district's population is rising and remains relatively high – 73.4 years, against 73.5 years nationwide.

The number of people with health insurance continued to increase in 2023, though remaining slightly below the national average.

Security and justice

The workloads of the Administrative Court judges in the district again remained above the national average in 2023, while the relative share of administrative cases closed within 3 months was the lowest in the whole country, after that in Plovdiv district – 59%, against 72% nationally. At the same time, the share of criminal cases closed within 3 months equaled the national average – 91%, and that of civil cases was relatively high – 79% in the district, against 65% countrywide.

The number of crimes in Haskovo district has been increasing, but remains below the national average, while the detection rate is higher. In 2023, registered crimes against the person and property amounted to 10.9 per 1,000 population, compared to 11.3 per 1,000 population nationally. The proportion of cleared crimes was 60%, against 53% nationally. The number of police officers relative to the population is slightly below the national average.

Environment

The volumes of generated household waste in Haskovo district have increased significantly, though remaining below the country's average. In 2022, the annual amount of generated household waste was 385 kg/person, compared to the national average of 488 kg/person, while 97% of that waste was handed over for treatment and recycling, compared to 76% in the country.

The share of forest area is close to the national average – 32% in the district, compared to 33% in the country, but disturbed area is significantly more limited – 0.1% in the district, compared to 0.4% in the country in 2023. The installed RES capacities are slightly above the national average relative to the population. The cooling degree days index is very high (second only to Yambol). However, the consumption of drinking water by the households is relatively low.

Culture and tourism

The district's performance in this category puts it among the bottom three, along with Montana and Kardzhali.

Cultural life in Haskovo district has a relatively minor presence. In 2023, theater visits increased to 210 per 1,000 population, against 349 per 1,000 population nationally, and visits to the local libraries – to 331 per 1,000 population, against 679 per 1,000 population in the country. The number of cinema and museum visits relative to the population is about five times lower than the national average.

Tourism is also not particularly intensive. The number of beds in accommodation establishments in the district is 13 per 1,000 population, versus 56 per 1,000 population in the country, and the number of overnight stays – 1,038 per 1,000 population, compared to 4,167 per 1,000 population in the country.

Key indicators for the district of Haskovo

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,817	12,859	n.a.	25,956
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	12,906	14,308	n.a.	21,242
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	32.9	30.2	26.0	20.6
Share of the working-age population (%)	58.1	56.3	56.3	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	71.3	73.7	72.7	76.2
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	5.7	6.4	6.7	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	19.9	20.1	21.0	14.8
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	18.5	18.6	18.6	30.5
Production value (BGN/employed person)	64,441	86,437	n.a.	122,377
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	1,399	1,747	n.a.	4,257
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	614	680	n.a.	4,544
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	71.3	71.4	n.a.	75.0
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	38.9	39.5	46.1	40.4
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	79.8	72.6	70.9	74.1
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	72.2	72.4	75.4	69.3

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	–12.6	–9.0	–6.8
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	–1.5	7.4	6.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.62	3.72	4.16	4.30
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	29.4	31.5	36.8	42.9
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	85.6	86.1	85.1	89.9
Average life expectancy (years)***	73.1	72.5	73.4	73.5
Share of people with health insurance (%)	89.6	93.5	93.8	95.0
Population per one GP (persons)	1,932	1,849	1,937	1,701
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	9.1	10.5	10.9	11.3
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	88	89	91	91
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	80	81	n.a.	103
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	319	385	n.a.	488
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	98	97	n.a.	76
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	91	51	110	684
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	501	900	1,038	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.