

Kyustendil district

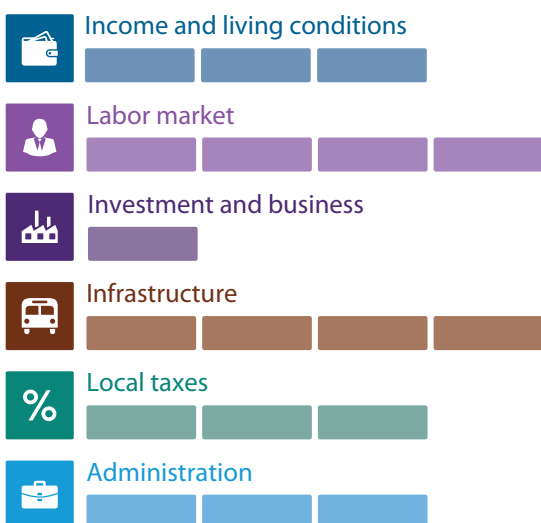
▶ Population (2021)	107,673
▶ Territory (sq. km)	3,052
▶ Number of settlements	182
▶ Share of urban population (%)	68.4



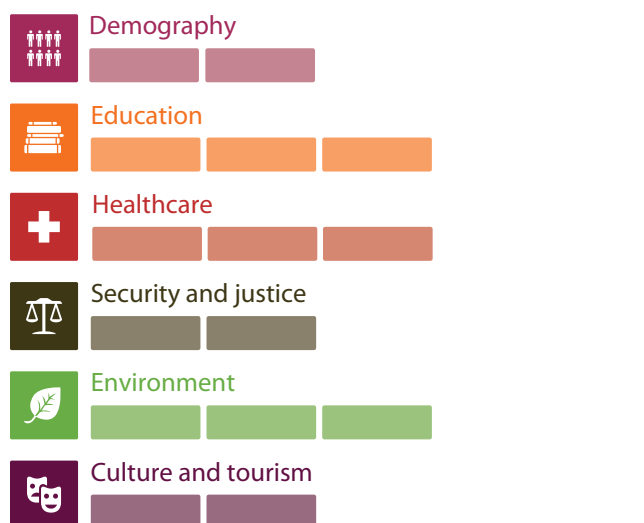
GDP per capita in Kyustendil district has been growing, though considerably more slowly than in the country on average. The labor market is developing well. Employment is rising and unemployment is dropping. Investment activity in the district is among the lowest in the country. The density of the road and rail network in Kyustendil remains high. The average rate of local taxes in the district's municipalities is close to the national average. The rating of the local administrations' transparency is improving, though remaining low.

Kyustendil is among the districts with the highest rate of population aging. The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy remains low, and students' results are unsatisfactory. The healthcare system has the highest number of GPs. The number of crimes is low, and the crime detection rate is high. The amounts of generated household waste are low, but so is the share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling. Cultural life and tourism in the district continue to show low intensity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Income and living conditions

GDP per capita in Kyustendil district has been growing, though considerably more slowly than in the country on average, reaching 13,600 BGN/person in 2022, compared to the national average of 26,000 BGN/person.

Salaries and pensions are also rising, though relatively slowly. In 2022, the gross annual salary of people employed under labor contract reached 14,000 BGN/person, compared to the national average of 21,200 BGN/person and was once again the second lowest in the country, after that in Blagoevgrad district. At the same time, the average monthly pension for 2023 reached 821 BGN, compared to the national average of 784 BGN.

The Gini coefficient, which measures income inequality, is decreasing and remains below the country's average. The poverty level in the district continues to decline and remains low. The share of the population living below the national poverty line in 2023 was 16.1%, versus 20.6% in the country.

Labor market

The labor market in the district developed relatively well in 2023. Employment registered a considerable increase, while unemployment decreased. The employment rate reached 78.9%, and for the third year in a row exceeded the national average of 76.2%. For its part, the unemployment rate decreased to 7.7%, though remaining above the national average of 5.3%.

The educational structure of the workforce in Kyustendil district also continues to improve. Kyustendil is among the districts with the highest share of workforce with secondary education – 70%, compared to 55% in the country, which is in line with the district's industrial profile. The proportion of people aged 25–64 with a university degree has gone up to 26%, versus 31% nationally, while the share of those with primary or lower education is among the lowest in the country.

The labor market in the district continues to face the challenge of population aging. The share of working-age population has shrunk to 55.6%, compared to 58.5% in the country.

Investment and business

Investment activity in Kyustendil district again remained among the lowest in the country in 2022. The number of non-financial enterprises was 64 per 1,000 population, against the national average of 70 per 1,000 population. There has been an increase in investment, as well as in production value, though the relative volumes of both remain low. TFA acquisition expenditures per capita reached 2,100 BGN, versus the national figure of 4,300 BGN/person, while FDI amounted to 423 EUR/person, compared to the national average of 4,500 EUR/person. Production value in Kyustendil district went up to reach 77,300 BGN per employed person, against 122,400 BGN as the national average. At the same time, the share of export earnings in net sales revenues is relatively high – 35%, versus 29% in the country.

Utilization of European funds is also lagging behind. By 30 June 2024, payments made in the district to beneficiaries of EU operational programs amounted to 2,127 BGN/person, against 3,175 BGN/person nationally. Within the district, the municipality with the highest amount of utilized EU funding was that of Rila.

Infrastructure

The density of the road and rail network in the district again remained higher in 2023 than the national averages for that year. The share of highways and first-class roads is also higher – 21%, compared to 19% in the country, and so is the share of road surfaces in good condition – 56%, compared to the average of 40% nationwide.

Households' internet access in the district went down to 83% in 2023, which was below the national average of 89%.

Close to, though slightly below the national average, is the proportion of population with access to a public sewerage network – 70%, versus the national average of 75%, and to a sewerage network connected to a wastewater treatment plant – 62%, versus 67% countrywide for 2022.

Local taxes

In 2024, the average level of the local taxes in the municipalities of Kyustendil district was close to the national average. The tax rates, however, vary considerably. While the annual rates for non-gratuitous acquisition of property and for retail trade are relatively low, those for motor vehicles and non-residential immovable property of legal entities are higher than the average ones.

The average tax rate on retail trade in the municipalities of the district is 10.14 BGN/sq. m, versus 13.08 BGN/sq. m in the country.

Within the district, the lowest taxes as a whole are levied by Treklyano municipality, and the highest – by Kocherinovo municipality.

Administration

The local administrations' self-assessments of the development of e-government and the provision of one-stop shop services settled above the respective country's averages in 2024. The AIP Active transparency rating of the local administration has gone up and is no longer the lowest in the country, though still remaining relatively low – 58.7%, compared to the national average of 69.3%.

The share of own revenues in the total revenues of the district's municipalities was 20% in 2023, compared to 27% in the country, while the coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues was 67%, versus 74% in the country. This is an indicator of the high dependence of local finances on transfers from the state budget.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Demography

The rate of natural population increase continues to be considerably below the national average with a value of -13.8‰ , against -6.8‰ nationally for 2023. However, the net migration rate is positive, though at 4.3‰ , it cannot compensate for the rapid population decline. The share of children under 4 years is 3.7% , compared to 4.5% nationally, and that of people aged 65 and over is 28.5% , versus 23.8% in the country.

Population density is relatively low – $1,048$ persons/sq. km in the urbanized settlements, against $1,221$ persons/sq. km in the country on average for 2023.

Education

The share of children attending kindergarten is increasing and in 2023 it equaled the national average of 88% .

In 2023, the rate of enrolment in 5th–7th grade went up to 91% , which was slightly above the national average of 90% . However, the number of school year repeaters has also gone up to equal the national average of 1.2% . The alignment between vocational education and the profile of the local economy is extremely low, mainly due to the inflated enrolment in programs oriented towards the ICT sector, as well as the relatively reduced enrolment for the transport sector.

The performance of the students in Kyustendil district in 2024 again remained low. The average score in the NEA in mathematics at the end of 7th grade was 35.8 p., compared to 42.9 p. in the country. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was “Good” 4.20 , compared to the average of “Good” 4.30 nationally. The number of “fail” grades (below 3.00) was 8.9% , versus 8.7% as the national average.

Kyustendil is among the few districts without a university or university branch on its territory.

Healthcare

The share of people with health insurance in Kyustendil district is traditionally high and in 2023 it covered practically the whole of its population, compared to 95% in the country. The number of beds in the local general hospitals remained close to, though slightly below the national average. Hospital bed occupancy, however, remained low at 44% , versus 56% in the country. The relative number of pharmacies is below the national average.

Kyustendil is among the districts with the highest relative number of GPs, with one GP per $1,443$ people, versus one GP per $1,701$ in the country, but there is a relative shortage of specialist physicians.

The infant mortality rate remains low, while life expectancy is below the national average.

Security and justice

In 2023, the workloads of the criminal judges in Kyustendil district remained below the average ones in the country, yet this had no substantial effect on the speed of delivery of justice. There were on average of 12.4 cases a month per one District Court judge, compared to 14.4 cases per judge nationally in 2022, and 12.5 cases per one Administrative Court judge, versus 14.8 cases per judge nationally.

The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months is 92% , against 91% in the country, and of administrative cases – 75% , versus 72% nationally. Kyustendil is the district with the lowest share of civil cases closed within 3 months – 45% , compared to 65% in the country.

There has been a slight increase in the relative number of registered crimes in the district, though in 2023 it remained below the national average. At the same time, the crime detection rate has increased to 57% , against 53% in the country. The number of police officers in the district is above the country's average.

Environment

The amount of household waste in Kyustendil district remains among the relatively low ones in the country, though over the past few years it has registered a rapid increase. In 2022, it was 372 kg/person per annum, compared to the average of 488 kg/person in the country. At the same time, only a little over half of it was handed over for treatment and recycling – 51% , versus the national average of 76% .

The share of forest areas is relatively high – 42% , against 33% in the country, but the share of disturbed area is also above the national average – 0.6% , against 0.4% in the country for 2023. Relative to the population, the installed RES capacities are above the national average. Kyustendil is among the districts with the lowest cooling degree days during hot days, but also among those with the highest consumption of drinking water.

Culture and tourism

In 2023, cultural life in Kyustendil district again retained its relatively low intensity. Only museum visits relative to the population were above the national average – $1,062$ per $1,000$ population, against 770 per $1,000$ population nationally. The relative number of visits to the cinema, theatre and libraries remained considerably below the respective national averages.

The number of beds in accommodation establishments has registered a slight decrease to 38 per $1,000$ population, versus 56 per $1,000$ population in the country, but the number of overnight stays has risen to $2,290$ per $1,000$ population, against $4,167$ per $1,000$ population in the country. There has also been a sharp rise in the number of guest nights booked via online sharing economy platforms, although the relative value of that number is relatively low.

Key indicators for the district of Kyustendil

Economic Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	11,535	13,575	n.a.	25,956
Average gross annual salary of people employed under labour contract (BGN)	12,719	13,988	n.a.	21,242
Share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	17.9	19.9	16.1	20.6
Share of the working-age population (%)	56.0	55.7	55.6	58.5
Average annual employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	76.6	77.8	78.9	76.2
Average annual unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	7.8	7.8	7.7	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	6.4	4.0	3.9	14.8
Relative share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	23.9	23.0	26.0	30.5
Production value (BGN/employed person)	60,421	77,306	n.a.	122,377
Expenditures on the acquisition of tangible fixed assets (BGN/person)	1,194	2,069	n.a.	4,257
Foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (cumulative) (EUR/person)	351	423	n.a.	4,544
Share of the population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	70.3	70.2	n.a.	75.0
Share of road surfaces in good condition (%)	55.3	56.0	55.5	40.4
Coverage of municipal expenditures with local revenues (%)	63.7	76.8	67.0	74.1
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	50.0	50.0	58.7	69.3

Social Development Indicators	2021	2022	2023	National average
Natural population increase rate (‰)	n.a.	-17.1	-13.8	-6.8
Net migration rate (‰)	n.a.	2.4	4.3	6.4
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	3.76	3.58	4.20	4.30
Average grade in the National external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	28.2	28.3	35.8	42.9
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	92.9	90.2	90.8	89.9
Average life expectancy (years)***	72.0	71.1	72.2	73.5
Share of people with health insurance (%)	96.8	99.3	100.0	95.0
Population per one GP (persons)	1,493	1,460	1,443	1,701
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 population	9.3	10.2	10.5	11.3
Share of criminal cases closed within 3 months	94	83	92	91
Households' consumption of municipally supplied drinking water (liter/person/day)	111	117	n.a.	103
Generated household waste of serviced population (kg/person/year)	312	372	n.a.	488
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	47	51	n.a.	76
Visits to cinemas (number/1,000 population)	48	288	432	684
Overnight stays in accommodation establishments (number/1,000 population)	1,265	1,753	2,290	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.