



REPORT

ANALYSIS OF TOURISM POTENTIAL AND EXISTING CULTURAL TOURISM SITES IN THE ELIGIBLE TERRITORY OF BULGARIA OF JOINT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION BLACK SEA BASIN 2014-2020

Project: “Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Basin”, CULTOUR-BSB, MIS code: BSB-117, Grant Contract № 100708/05.09.2018r., funded under ENI CBC Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020.

Activity T1.1 “Preparation of analyses of tourism potential in the BSB countries”

Deliverable DT.1.1. Prepared analyses of tourism potential in the BSB countries

Beneficiary: Sozopol Municipality, Bulgaria

Prepared by: Advanced Business Consulting Ltd

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I. PROJECT “DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN” - AN OVERVIEW

Project “Development of Sustainable Cultural Tourism in the Black Sea Basin”, CULTOUR-BSB, MIS code: BSB-117 is implemented in respect with Grant Contract 100708/05.09.2018 signed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration acting as a Managing Authority (MA) of the Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin (JOP Black Sea Basin) and Sozopol Municipality, acting as a Lead Beneficiary.

CULTOUR-BSB falls under Programme Specific objective 1. Promote business and entrepreneurship within the Black Sea Basin, Programme priority 1.1 Jointly promote business and entrepreneurship in the tourism and cultural sectors.

I.1. Overall aim and specific objectives

The project aims at joint development and promotion of the cross-border business opportunities in the tourism sector with an emphasis on the cultural segment of the market within the Black Sea Basin.

Specific objectives

- Improved cooperation between the countries in the BSB and enhanced exchange of knowledge and communication between all relevant stakeholders in the tourism sector,
- Building stronger cross-border business opportunities in the cultural tourism within the BSB,
- Enhanced attractiveness of tourism sector through small scale investments in the BSB region and through the use of new technologies and interactive tools for promotion.

I.2. Group of activities:

- GA Project management and coordination,
- GA Development of joint strategy for cross-border tourism promotion,
- GA Development of national and cross-border tourism routes,
- GA Development of interactive web-based platform for tourism promotion,
- GA Enhance attractiveness and promotion of cultural and historical sites through small scale improvement,
- GA Communication.



I.3. Expected results

- Building stronger cross-border business opportunities in the tourism sector in the Black Sea Basin (BSB). Through the implementation of the project activities (conduction of 5 national seminars, development of an Analysis of tourism potential, Joint Strategy for cross-border tourism promotion, creation of 5 national routes per country or total 25, creation of 15 cross-border tourism routes in the Black Sea Region) will be obtained sustainable economic and business growth as well as stimulated business cooperation. The result will have positive impact on building prosperity and competitiveness of the region and higher levels of employment and income in the BSB.
- Development of a sustainable Joint strategy for cross-border tourism promotion that will cover the eligible programme territory of Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey.
- Fifteen (15) jointly developed cross-border tourism routes involving 2-5 countries. This result will encourage inter-flows of visitors coming from other regions and countries and will contribute the establishment of the Black Sea region as a cultural destination.
- Conduction of twelve (12) cross border tourism events organised using ENI support.
- Three (3) small scale improvements to cultural and historical sites that will enhance the attractiveness of the cultural and historical sites in Bulgaria, Ukraine and Turkey.

I.4. Project partners

The project consortium includes 6 partners from 5 BSB countries:

- Sozopol Municipality, Bulgaria (Lead Beneficiary),
- Constanta Municipality, Romania (Project Beneficiary 2),
- ECOCENTER for Environmental Protection, Georgia (Project Beneficiary 3),
- Agency of Sustainable Development and European Integration “Lower Danube Euroregion”, Ukraine (Project Beneficiary 4),
- Executive Committee of Izmail City Council, Ukraine (Project Beneficiary 5),
- Düzce Governorship, Turkey (Project Beneficiary 6).

I.5. Implementation period: 11.09.2018 - 10.08.2020

I.6. Aims of the analytic report

The current report is prepared in respect with Contract 8-34/14.01.2019 between Sozopol Municipality and Advanced Business Consulting Ltd. The document represent the work done and the results achieved as part of Group of activity (GA) 1 Development of joint strategy for cross-border tourism promotion, Activity T1.1 “Preparation of analyses of tourism potential in the BSB countries”, Deliverable DT.1.1.Prepared analyses of tourism potential in the BSB countries.

II. METHODOLOGY

The main analytic methods used by the team of Advanced Business Consulting are as follow:

- Collection, research and analysis of national, regional, municipal, sectoral strategic, planning, program, spatial, etc. documents relevant to the analysis of the tourist potential of existing cultural tourism sites;
- Collection and analysis of official statistical information that are relevant to the to the analysis of the tourist potential of existing cultural tourism sites;

The analysis covers the eligible area of Bulgaria as mentioned in the ENI CBC Programming Document approved by the European Commission, defined as NUTS II regions of Severoiztochen and Yugoiztochen, including

- Yugoiztochen Region: Districts Burgas, Stara Zagora, Sliven and Yambol,
- Severoiztochen Region: Districts Varna, Dobrich, Shumen and Targovishte.

The analysis consists the following specific information:

Criteria	Detailed Description
Geographical location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrative-territorial characteristics
Socio-economic and demographic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Population ○ Population density ○ Natural growth and migration ○ Population dynamics ○ Sex structure ○ Population structure by age ○ Economy overview ○ Economy analysis by sectors

Existing infrastructure and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water supply ○ Sewerage ○ Housing stock ○ Electricity infrastructure ○ Natural gas infrastructure ○ Environmental status and risks
Transport accessibility, mobile connections between Severoiztochen and Yugoiztochen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Road network and transport infrastructure
Analysis of existing tourism resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Natural tourism resources ○ Cultural and historical heritage ○ Archaeological sites ○ Historic landmarks ○ Architectural reserves ○ Temples, monasteries and other religious sites ○ Cultural activities and festivals ○ Museums ○ Galleries ○ Theatres ○ Libraries
Analysis of recreation and tourism facilities, tourist infrastructure and services provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accommodation base ○ Accommodation services ○ Tourist agencies ○ Entertainment ○ Tourist Information Centres ○ Other entertainment facilities ○ Existing tourist offers ○ Existing tourist routes

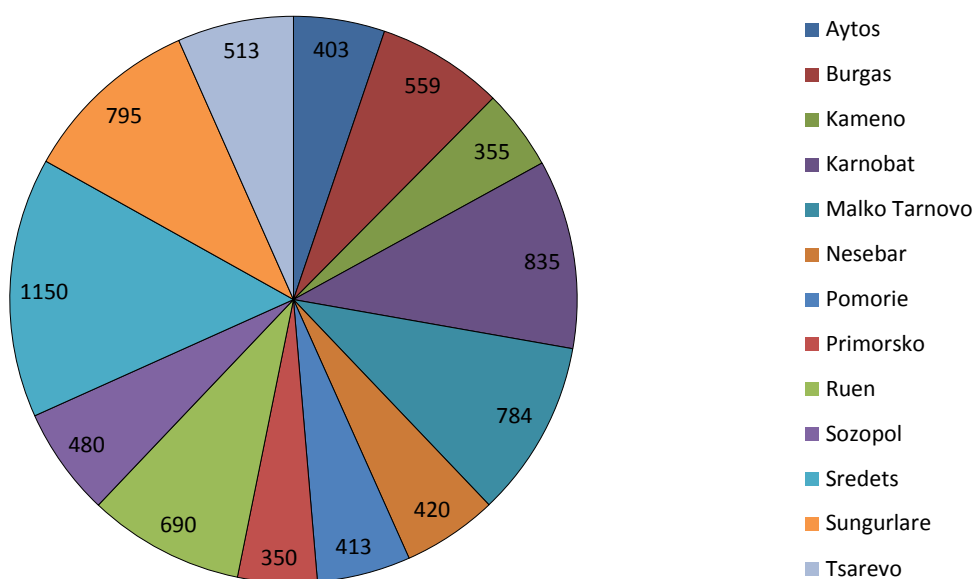
III. BURGAS DISTRICT

III.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Burgas district is part of Southeastern region of Bulgaria with a total area of 7,748.1 sq km. The district includes 13 municipalities with a total of 250 cities, towns and villages. The administrative centre is the city of Burgas.

Figure 1: Municipalities in Burgas District by Area (sq km)



Source: National Statistical Institute

III.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Burgas district was the fourth largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 411,579 people. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative centre - the municipality of Burgas.

Population density

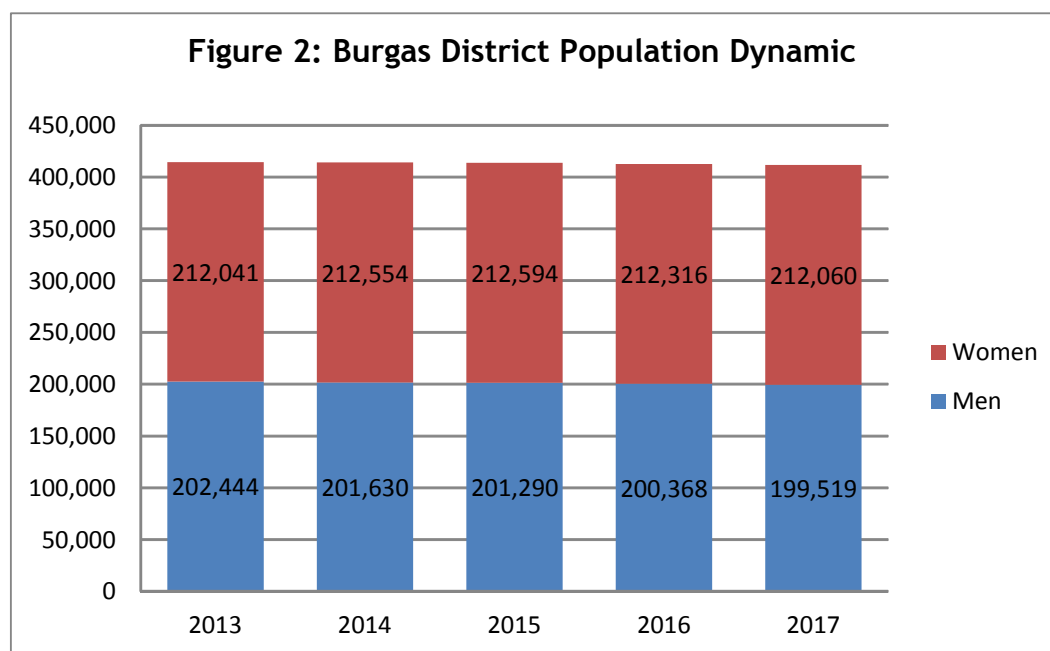
In 2017, the population density was 53.12 people per sq km. The bulk or 76.3% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 23.7% lived in villages.

Natural growth and migration

In 2017, the district reported a negative rate of natural increase (RNI) of 4.3 per 1,000 people. Burgas district gained 670 people due to migration in 2017. The number of emigrants was 9,602, while the immigrants totaled 8,932. The number of immigrants exceeded the number of emigrants in most of the district's municipalities. The highest positive migration, of 391 people, was registered in Burgas municipality, while Ruen municipality had the highest negative migration, of 50 people.

Population dynamics

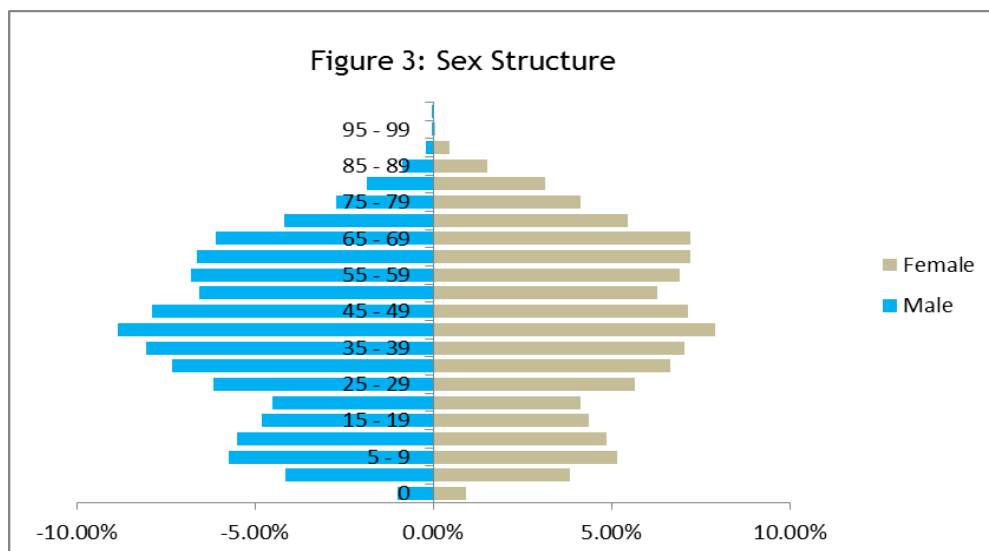
The annual decline of the population in Burgas district averaged 0.2% for the 2013-2017 period.



Source: National Statistical Institute

Sex structure

Women dominated the sex structure of the population in Burgas district in 2017. Their number came in at 212,060, or 51.5% of the total population, while men were 199,519.



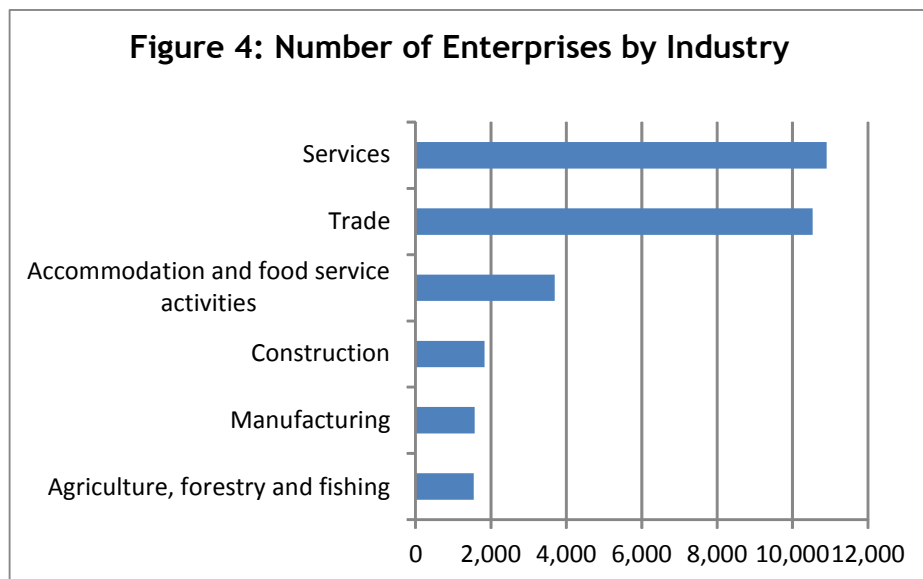
Source: National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

Population structure by age

In 2017 working age population accounted 60.9% of the total, or 250,522 people. Young and elderly population were 16.4% and 22.7%, respectively. The highest rate of working age population, of 63.2%, was registered in Ruen municipality, while the lowest of 49.3% was in Malko Tarnovo.

Economy overview

In 2017 in Burgas district operated 30,070 non-financial companies, which employed 122,937 people. They reported net sales revenue of BGN 16.249 bln and added value of BGN 2.949 bln. The micro enterprises, with less than 10 employees, accounted for 93.9% of the total.



Source: National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

The most companies operated in the service sector - 10,907, or 36.3% of the total. Most employees were also employed in the service sector - 33,956 people, while the manufacturing sector reported the highest net sales revenue, of BGN 7.791 bln.

Economy analysis by sectors

The leading 10 companies in terms of operating revenue in 2017 in the district reflected the sectoral structure of its economy:

Table 1: Top 10 Companies in Burgas District by Operating Revenue in 2017			
Company	Municipality	Sector	Operating Revenue (BGN mln)
Lukoil Neftochim Burgas AD	Burgas	Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products	5,611.3
Sevan OOD	Burgas	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	441.9

Promet Steel EAD	Sredets	Manufacture of basic metals	402.9
SE Bordnetze - Bulgaria EOOD	Karnobat	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	206.7
Kronospan Bulgaria EOOD	Burgas	Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials	188.4
BMF Port Burgas EAD	Burgas	Warehousing and support activities for transportation	148.3
Nursan Otomotive EOOD	Ruen	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	145.4
Fraport Twin Star Airport Management AD	Burgas	Warehousing and support activities for transportation	132.5
Nafta Trading AD	Burgas	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	119.9
Tobacco Trade Burgas OOD	Burgas	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	96.1

The top three industries in the district by operating revenue are:

- Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products;
- Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles;
- Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles.



Water supply

In 2017, the public water supply covered the 100% of the total population in the Burgas district. There was no regime of water supply, compared to the 3.0% national average.

Sewerage

About 79.6% of the district population had connection to urban wastewater collecting system, above the national average of 76.0%. Burgas district also had higher share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 65.7% versus the country's average of 63.4% and higher share of untreated water collection system 13.8%, compared to the national average of 12.6%.

Housing stock

There were more than 103,600 residential buildings in the Burgas district, by 293 more than a year earlier. Most of the residential buildings or 53.8% of the total were located in the district's villages, while the remaining 46.2% were located in its cities and towns. Meanwhile, the bulk, or 76.2% of the all 288,212 dwellings in the district were in cities and towns.

Electricity infrastructure

There are two interconnector lines in Burgas district. The first connects the city of Burgas with the TPP Maritsa East 2, located near the city of Stara Zagora, while the second connects the cities Burgas and Varna. Construction of third interconnection line, connecting Burgas and Dobrich, was launched in 2018.

Natural gas infrastructure

The main pipeline of the national natural gas distribution network passes through Burgas district. Meanwhile the gas distribution network for the end-users is still in development. It is well spread only in the cities of Burgas and Karnobat.

Environmental status and risks

Burgas district suffers from air pollution, due to the coal mining complex Mini Maritsa Iztok, which operates in the close district of Stara Zagora, and due to the refinery located in Burgas. The refinery is responsible also for polluting the soil with petroleum products. Other critical region is the port of Burgas - major pollution agent, which spoils sea water along the port area.

Road network and transport infrastructure

In 2017 the total length of the road network was 1,176 km. It included 51 km of motorways, 252 km first-class roads, 249 km second-class roads and 624 km third-class roads.

The railroad network was 178 km, remaining almost unchanged in the 2013-2017 period.

Through the territory of the Burgas district passes one Pan-European transport corridor - Corridor VIII Tirana (Albania) - Varna (Bulgaria), part of which is the Trakia motorway, linking Sofia with Burgas.

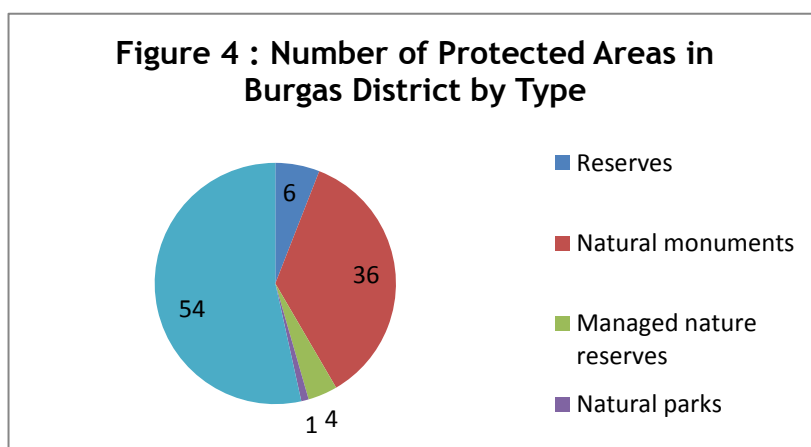
III.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourism resources

Burgas district includes part of Eastern Balkan Mountains, the northern part of Strandzha mountains, the eastern part of Upper Thracian Plain, Burgas Plain and the southern Black Sea's seaside. There are also four big lakes - Lake Burgas, Lake Mandrensko, Lake Atanasovsko and Lake Pomorie with a combined area of 9,500 ha.

As of January 2019, Burgas District had 41 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive.

Bulgarian executive environmental agency marked six reserves, 36 natural monuments, four managed nature reserves, one natural park as protected areas and 54 protected sites. The most popular of them are Strandzha National Park and Ropotamo river.



Source: Executive Environment Agency

Burgas district has a humid subtropical climate, with continental influences. The summertime in Burgas lasts about five months from mid-May until late September. The district's average temperature during high season is 24° C, while sea temperatures stay around 23° -24° C at sunrise and go up to 29° -30° C at dawn, averaging 26° C. Snow is possible during winter months of December, January and February.

Cultural and historical heritage

There is one of the tent Bulgarian UNESCO World Heritage sites is located in Burgas district. Ancient City of Nessebar is situated on a peninsula and is one of the major seaside resorts on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, located in Burgas Province.

There are ten UNESCO World Heritage sites in Bulgaria. One of them, Ancient City of Nessebar is located in Burgas district. Today it's part of Nessebar's seaside resorts on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast.

The traditional fire ritual Nestinarstvo, which is included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists, is performed in the villages in Strandzha Mountains.

Archaeological sites

There are several major archaeological sites in Burgas district:

- Southern Fortress Wall and Tower Architectural and Historic Complex in Sozopol
- Nestinarstvo Temple in Bulgari village
- Ancient Dome Tomb in Pomorie
- Church of Jesus Christ the Pantocrator in Nessebar
- Ancient Amphitheater in Nessebar
- Arch of the Ancient City of Apollonia in Sozopol
- Church of Saint Paraskevi in Nessebar
- Ancient and Medieval City Akva Kalide in Burgas
- Ancient and Medieval Castle and Port Poros in Burgas
- Ancient Roman City Deultum near Debelt village
- Roman Baths near Obzor
- Thracian Stone Sanctuary Indipaskha near Gramatikovo village
- Basilica of the Holy Mother of God Eleusa in Nessebar
- Thracian Ritual Ground Mishkova Niva Near Malko Tarnovo
- Thracian Sanctuary Big Stone near Dolno Yabalkovo village



- Church of St Stephen in Nessebar
- Aetos Castle near Aytos
- The Great Ayasma Sanctuary near Bulgari village
- Church of St John Aliturgetos in Nessebar
- St. Anastasia Island near Burgas

In the summer of 2012 in archeological excavations in the old town of Sozopol archaeologists found the remains of a medieval vampire. In an ancient temple, the excavation team found two burials older than 700 years, with clear signs of rituals against vampire.

Historic landmarks

There is one historical area in the district - Petrova Niva in the Malko Tarnovo municipality in Strandzha Nature Park. In July 1903 a group of Bulgarian Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization (IMARO) delegates announced the outbreak of an anti-Ottoman uprising aimed at liberating southern Thrace from Ottoman rule and proclaimed the Strandzha Republic. This uprising was part of Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising, an organized revolt against of the Balkan nations against the Ottoman Empire.

Architectural reserves

There also four architectural reserves:

- Architectural Reserve - Brashlyan village
- Architectural and historical reserve Nessebar
- Windmill - Nessebar
- Architectural Reserve Old Pomorie Houses - Pomorie

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Burgas District stood at 273. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 171 churches, two monasteries and one chapel, followed by Islam with 93 mosques. The other religious temples in the district are two Protestant, two Catholic and two Armenian Apostolic churches.

Table 2: Major Temples and Monasteries in Burgas District

Site	Religion	Municipality
St. St. Kiril i Metodiy Church-Monument	Orthodox Christianity	Burgas
Sv. Nikolay Chudotvorets Church	Orthodox Christianity	Burgas
Armenian Church Surp Hatch	Apostolic Christianity	Burgas
Sv. Bogoroditsa Church	Orthodox Christianity	Burgas
Sv. Ivan Rilski Church	Orthodox Christianity	Burgas
Uspenie Bogorodichno Church	Orthodox Christianity	Burgas
Sveto Preobrazhenie Gospodne Church	Orthodox Christianity	Pomorie
Uspenie Bogorodichno Church	Orthodox Christianity	Malko Tarnovo
Sv. Tsar Boris-Mihail Church	Orthodox Christianity	Tsarevo

Cultural activities and festivals

There are more than 50 festivals in Burgas district:

- International Folklore Festival Atliman Necklace - Kiten
- European Championship Of Folklore Euro Folk 2019 - Nesebar
- National Folklore Festival Horo in Strandzha, Malko Tarnovo
- National Festival of Wedding Tourism Love and Wine in Nessebar - Nessebar
- International Festival The Ship of Arts - Pomorie
- Nestinarstvo in Bulgari village
- Art Festival - Fire and Sea - Tsarevo
- Folklore Festival Da Tropnem na More - St. Vlas
- International Folklore Festival Nessebar Jewelry - Nessebar



- International Festival of Orthodox Music - Sv. Bogoroditsa - Dostoyno Est - Pomorie
- International Art Contest Joy on the Beach - Sozopol
- International Kids Festival Sun-Joy-Beauty - Nessebar
- International Folklore Festival Euro Folk - Black Sea - Kiten
- Art Festival Turn On The City - Burgas
- Folklore Festival Horo near the Pomorie Coast -Pomorie
- Kids and Youth Puppet Theater Festival Scene by the sea - Pomorie
- International Youth Folklore Festival - Primorsko
- Folk Music and Dance Festival Slaveevi Noshti - Aytos
- European Championship of Folklore Euro Folk 2019 - Sunny Beach, Sveti Vlas and Pomorie
- International Youth Art Festival Rhythms from Buglaria - Kiten
- Summer CHAOS Festival - Burgas
- Maritime Sunrise Festival - Ahtopol
- Summer Art Festival Hello, Sea - Lozenets
- Festival of Contemporary Dance Steps in The Magic of Dance and Sea - Primorsko
- Art Stream - Art Festival - Tsarevo
- International Youth Festival of Arts Muzite - Sozopol
- International Kids and Youth Art Festival We - XXI Century - Sunny Beach
- Rollerfest - Burgas
- Sea of Black Festival - Burgas
- Strandzha's Honeydew Honey Festival - Tsarevo
- International Festival Summer Celebrations for the Sang Poetry - Salty Winds - Burgas
- Festival Fashion Summer Burgas - Burgas
- Contest-festival for Folk Groups Oro se vie na Sboro - Kiten
- International Folk Festival Bulgarian Rose - Primorsko
- International Folk Festival - Burgas
- International Festival Constellations in Nessebar - Nessebar
- International Youth Art Festival Priests to the Muses - Tsarevo
- World Championship of Folklore World Folk - Nesebar, Sunny Beach, Burgas, Pomorie, Sveti Vlas
- Pop and Rock Festival - Nessebar
- First Running Festival Burgas Run - Burgas



- National Folklore Festival Primorska Perla - Primorsko
- National Kids and Youth Folk Festival Orpheus Sings with the Sea - Primorsko
- Fish Festival - Tsarevo
- Tourist Festival - Nesebar
- Evening of the Tsarevo Song Dzhurdzhuna
- International Chamber Classical Music Festival Messembria Orpheus - Nessebar
- Port Prim Art Fest - Burgas
- Masquerade Games Festival - Burgas
- National Fish Festival Autumn Shoaling - Nessebar
- Apollonia Festival of Arts - Sozopol
- Festival of Sand Sculptures - Burgas

Museums

In Burgas district there are 12 museums, according to NSI data. The major museums in the district are:

- Regional Historical Museum in Burgas - the biggest museum in southeast Bulgaria. It includes Burgas-based archaeological, historical, ethnographic and natural history museums.
- Archaeological Museum of Nessebar - it has artefacts from ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantium periods. The museum also has artefacts from the period of Bulgarian medieval kingdoms.

Galleries

- There are eight galleries and exhibition centres in Burgas district, all of them are located in the cities Burgas and Sozopol. The major galleries are:
- Burgas Art Gallery Petko Zagorski. It has more than 2,800 works of art. In the constant exhibition of the gallery there are works by renowned Bulgarian painters Vladimir Dimitrov - Maystorat, Dechko Uzunov, Bencho Obreshkov, Zlatyu Boyadzhiev;
- Art Gallery Sozopol - the gallery presents 287 paintings and 40 sculptural works.

Theatres

There are three theatres and an opera house in Burgas district:



- State Opera Burgas - the opera theatre is emblematic building in Burgas city. It share the building with Burgas philharmonic orchestra;
- Drama Theatre Adriana Budevskia - the theatre, one of the oldest in Bulgaria, is established in 1893;
- State Puppet Theatre Burgas;
- Summer Theatre Burgas - located in the Primorski park.

Libraries

There are two libraries in Burgas district. The major of them is the Regional Library P.K.Yavorov. It is the biggest library in southeastern Bulgaria with more than 600,000 books, sound recordings, manuscripts and original works of local artists. The library is also one of the oldest in the country. It is established in 1888.

III.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

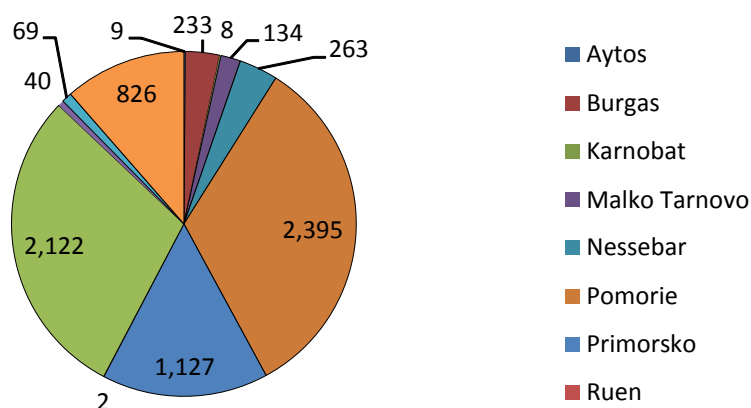
Accommodation base

According to NSI data, in 2017 Burgas district had 806 places for accommodation, or 24.1% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 134,336 beds, or 38.5% of the national aggregate. In the period January - November 2018 the number of registered overnights in the district already exceeded the annual sum for 2017 - 9.694 million against 9.459 million in the whole previous year. More than 80% of the overnights in the district were by foreigners as a consequence of the specialization of Burgas and the region in international sea tourism. The total number of visitors for the first 11 months of 2018 came in at 1.689 million tourists, of which 72.1% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 510.0 mln, up from BGN 474.6 mln in the whole 2017.

Accommodation services

There are 7,228 accommodations in Burgas district registered by the Ministry of Tourism. Pomorie municipality is the leader in the district with 2,395 accommodations, followed by Sozopol municipality and Primorsko municipality with 2,122 and 1,127, respectively. Meanwhile there are no registered accommodations in Kameno municipality. The high number of accommodation facilities in smaller resort municipalities is due to the multiple family guest houses, while beds in the city of Burgas are concentrated in larger, but fewer hotels.

Figure 5: Number of Registered Accommodations in Burgas District by Munisipalities



Source: Ministry of Tourism

The largest companies in the accommodation sector in Burgas district in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

- Dyuni AD - operates the Dyuni Resort in Sozopol municipality;
- Akademika Sea Palasce AD - specialised in hotel management;
- DIT OOD - specialised in hotel management.

Tourist agencies

There were a total of 395 registered tour operators and travel agents in Burgas district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data.

Table 3: Tourism Agencies in Burgas District	
Munisipality	Number tour operators and travel agents
Burgas	199
Nessebar	99
Pomorie	42
Sozopol	35

Primorsko	11
Tsarevo	6
Karnobat	2
Aytos	1

Teddy Kam EOOD has the biggest operating revenue, of BGN 31.4 mln. Second and third in terms of operating revenue are Balkan Express Travel Assistens OOD and Adventure World EOOD, respectively.

Entertainment

There are different types of entertainment facilities in Burgas district:

- Five horse bases in Burgas municipality and one in Tsarevo municipality;
- Four sport complexes in Burgas municipality;
- Two paintball arenas in Nessebar municipality;
- Four yacht clubs and yacht tours in the municipalities Burgas, Nessebar and Sozopol;
- Two tennis courts in Burgas municipality;
- Mini Golf in Tsarevo municipality;
- Carting in Nessebar municipality;
- Boat trips.

Tourist Information Centres

There were seven tourist information centres in Burgas district as of end-January 2019, according to the Ministry of Tourism.

Table 4: Tourist Information Centres in Burgas District		
Location	Address	Contacts
Burgas	Hristo Botev Str.	Tel.: +359 56 825 772 E-mail: info@gotoburgas.com Site: www.gotoburgas.com
Burgas	Tsaritsa Yoana Sq.	Tel.: +359 875 343 043

		E-mail: info@gotoburgas.com Site: www.gotoburgas.com
Primorsko	56, Treti Mart Str.	Tel.: +359 550 324 66 E-mail: tic_primorsko@abv.bg
Malko Tarnovo	Preobrazhenie Sq.	Tel.: +359 5952 30 17 +359 886 647 201 E-mail: tic_mtarnovo@mail.bg Site: www.malkotarnovo.yes.bg
Pomorie	Kiril i Metodiy Sq.	Tel.: +359 596 222 78 E-mail: tourism@pomorie.org
Nessebar	10, Mesambria Str.	Tel.: +359 554 42 611 +359 554 29 346 E-mail: isitnessebar@abv.bg Site: www.visitnessebar.org ; http://nesebarinfo.com/
Obzor	2, Ivan Vazov Str.	Tel.: +359 556 35 124 E-mail: obzor_info@mail.bg

Other entertainment facilities

There are nine aqua parks in Burgas district. Six of them are in Nessebar municipality. The other three are located in Primorsko, Sozopol and Pomorie.

Burgas district has 10 park areas. Six of them are in Burgas municipality. Two are in Tsarevo municipality and the other two are in Aytos and Nessebar.

There is also one marine aquarium in Nessebar.

One diving club offers diving experiences in Sozopol, while in Sunny Beach diving with semi-submersible personal watercraft is offered.

Existing tourist offers

Table 5: 100 National Tourist Sites Located in Burgas District		
Number in Register	Munisipality	Tourist Landmark
6	Nessebar	Archaeological Museum
6A	Pomorie	Salt Museum
6B	Pomorie	Lake Pomorie
7	Burgas	St. St. Kiril i Metodiy Church-Monument
7	Burgas	Poda Protected Area
8	Malko Tarnovo	Historical Museum
8	Malko Tarnovo	Petrova Niva Area
8A	Sozopol	Archaeological Museum
8B	Tsarevo	Historical Museum

Table 6: 50 Less Known Tourist Sites Located in Burgas District		
Number in Register	Munisipality	Tourist Landmark
25	Karnobat	Markeli Castle
26	Pomorie	Ancient Dome Tomb
27	Primorsko	Thracian Sanctuary Beglik Tash
28	Kameno	Ruskastro Castle
29	Malko Tarnovo	Architectural Reserve - Brashlyan village

Existing tourist routes

There are six major eco-trails in Burgas district. Four of them are trough Strandzha National Park, as three of them are in Malko Tarnovo municipality, while one is in Tsarevo municipality. Another eco-trail located in Tsarevo municipality goes

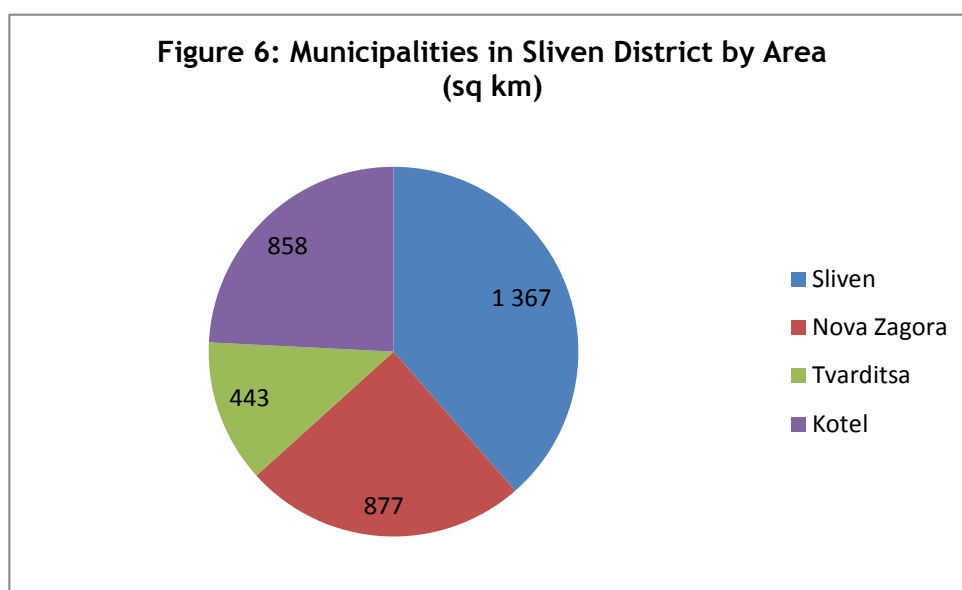
through the seaside landscape. One eco-trail goes through Balkan Mountains near the town of Obzor in Nessebar municipality.

IV. SLIVEN DISTRICT

IV.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Sliven district is located in Southeastern Bulgaria, to the south of Stara Planina mountain range and occupies an area of 354,066 sq km which represents 3.2% of the territory of the country. Its administrative centre is the city of Sliven. Sliven District consists of four municipalities with a total of 110 settlements - six cities and 104 villages. The municipalities are Sliven, Nova Zagora, Kotel and Tvarditsa.



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)

IV.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Sliven district was the 13th largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 188,433 people and had a 2.7% share of the total population in Bulgaria. In comparison to 2016, the district's population inched down by 0.6%.

The bulk or 65.9% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 34.1% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative centre - the municipality of Sliven.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Sliven district was 53 people per sq km. The highest population density in the district, of 64 people per sq km, was registered in Sliven municipality, while the bottom position was occupied by Nova Zagora municipality with 24 people per sq km.

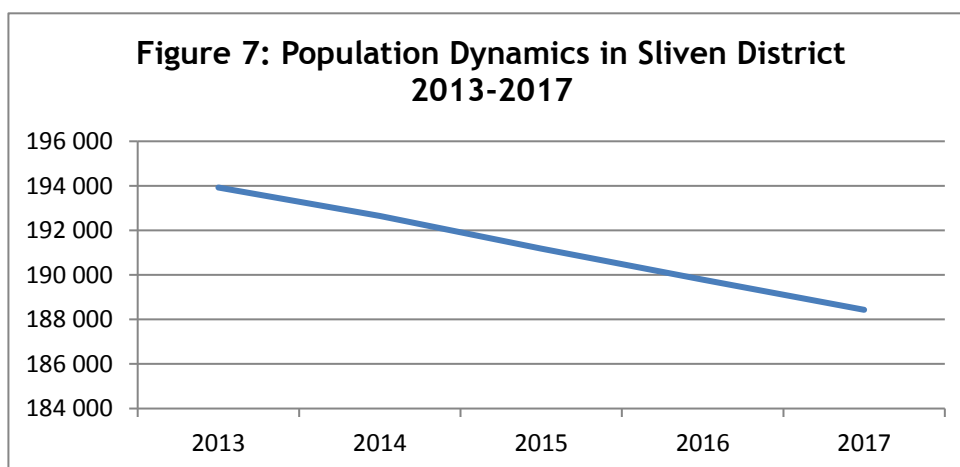
Natural growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Sliven district was negative, at - 2.8% per 1,000 people. As a result, the district's population fell by 1,355 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at - 3.6 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -2.3 per 1,000 people. The only positive RNI among the municipalities in the district was recorded in Tvarditsa - 8 people.

In 2017 the birth rate in the district was 12.5% per 1,000 people, which is slight increase compared to 12.2% per 1,000 people in 2016. Sliven district register infant mortality rate - 12.6% per 1000 people. The overall mortality rate was 15.3% per 1,000 people, of which male mortality rate was 16.7% and female - 14.0% per 1,000 people.

Migration

Migration growth was negative in all municipalities in Sliven District. The biggest contribution to the negative migration growth was made by Nova Zagora municipality with 372 people, followed by the municipalities of Sliven with 279 people and Tvarditsa with 123 people.



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)



Sex structure

Female dominated the sex structure of the population in Sliven district in 2017. They held 51.4% share of the district's population or 96,819 people, while males were 91,614 people with a share of 48.6%. On every 1,000 men there were 1,057 women.

Population structure by age

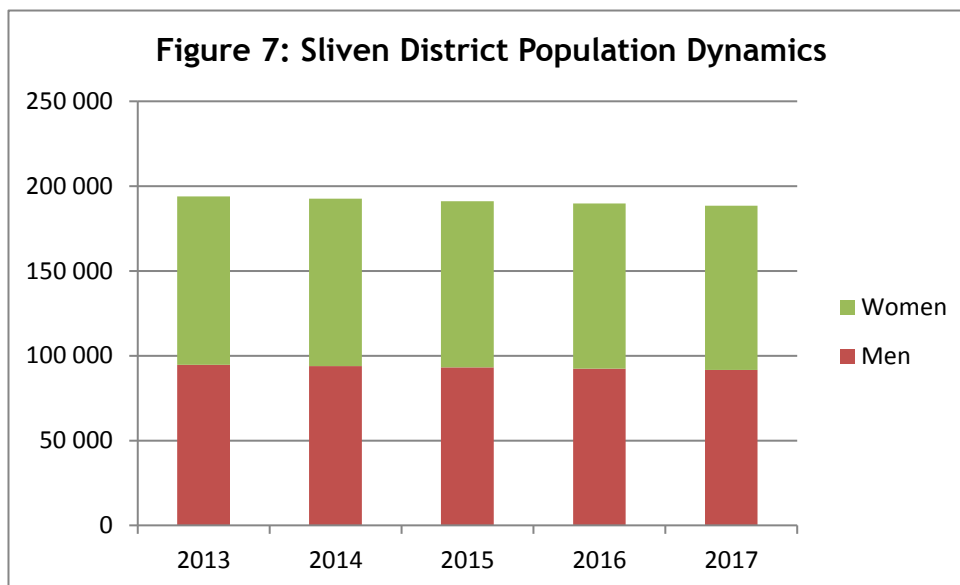
The aging process of the population in Sliven district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the persons aged 65 and more numbered 12,234, or 19.4 % of the district's total population. In comparison to 2016, the share of the population in this age group grew by 0.3% percentage.

The working age population in Sliven district was 108,471 as of end-2017, or 57.6% of the total population in the district, which is below the national average of 60.3%.

Kotel municipality boasted the highest share, 59.3%, of working-age population among the municipalities in the district. The municipality of Sliven followed with a 57.9% share. The bottom position in terms of working-age population share was occupied by Nova Zagora municipality where only 56.5% of the people were at working age.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Sliven district averaged 1.0% for the period 2013-2017. At the beginning of the period, there were more than 193,925 people in the district with an RNI of -2.2 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to 188,433 people and the RNI worsened to -2.8 per 1,000 people.



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)

Economy overview

The industry's economy is dominated by the industry sector. In 2016, there were 1,056 companies operating in the sector, which created 62.0% of the district's production. It accounts for 42.7% of the employed persons and 55.2% of the tangible fixed assets in the district. Among the industry sectors, the largest share was held by the Manufacturing sector with 82.4%, while Mining and quarrying had the lowest share - 1.2%. The construction enterprises accounted for 9.0% of the production, Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply - 6.1% and Water supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Rehabilitation - 1.3%.

According to the National Statistical Institute, in 2016 there were a total of 7,009 non-financial enterprises in Sliven district. Compared to the previous year, their number increased by 1.3%. The companies' total sales revenue was BGN 2.631 bln, up 3.6% year-on-year. Their production also increased, by 3.6% to BGN 1.864 bln.

Economy analysis by sectors

The five sectors dominating the district's economy in 2017 in terms of operating revenue were Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Manufacture of food products, Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products, Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles, and Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities. Together they formed 60.8% of the operating revenue of all companies headquartered in Sliven district.

The largest companies with headquarters in Sliven district in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

Table 6: Largest companies with headquarters in Sliven district in terms of operating revenue in 2017			
Company name	Headquarters (town)	Operating revenue in 2017 (BGN mln)	Industry
E. Miroglia EAD	Sliven	234.844	Manufacture of textiles
Lempriere Wool OOD	Sliven	84.416	Manufacture of textiles
Tirbul EAD	Sliven	71.741	Manufacture of food products
Yugoiztochno Darzhavno Predpriyatie	Sliven	68.802	Forestry and logging
Autofil Yarns Limited - Branch Bulgaria	Nova Zagora	54.227	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
Retal Balkan EOOD	Sliven	49.949	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products
Palirria Bulgaria EAD	Nova Zagora	49.258	Manufacture of food products
Toplofikatsia - Sliven EAD	Sliven	41.445	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
Sinterama Bulgaria EOOD	Nova Zagora	33.998	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products

Tabaco Trade Sliven OOD	Sliven	32.490	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
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INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

In 2017, there was public water supply for 99.95% of the total population in the Sliven district. The share of population to suffer from regime of water supply was 6.99% compared to the 3.0% national average.

The water supply network is operated by ViK Sliven OOD which provides services to the whole district. There are two waste water treatment plants. As of 2016, the water supply with drinking water in the Shumen district was carried out through 334 water sources - shaft wells, drips and deep wells with main water source the Asenovets dam. Sliven district has good sources in terms of quantity and quality, with the exception of the municipality of Kotel. The available water sources are not used rationally, so some of the settlements in the area have a not regular water supply with drinking water. There are 1,125 km of internal water supply network and 755 km of external water supply network in Sliven region.

Sewerage

Urban wastewater collecting system was available for 65.19% of the district population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0% in 2017. Sliven district also had lower share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 57.28% versus the country's average of 63.4%. In addition, the district's share of population with untreated water collection system was 7.9%, lower than the national average of 12.6%.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 59,005 residential buildings in the Sliven district, by 22 more than in the previous year. The bulk, or 64.8% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages and towns, while the remaining 35.2% were located in its cities and towns.

Electricity infrastructure

Each of the municipalities in the area is supplied by the 110 kV district network through the 110/20 kV substations located in the municipal centers. The Sliven TPP with a capacity of 30 mW, operates in the town of Sliven, which is used mainly for district heating. In the municipality of Nova Zagora is the 15 mW Zhrebchevo power plant. The main source of electricity for the region is the national power system, through the 220/110 kV Tvarditsa substation.

Table 7: Renewable Energy Power Plants in Sliven District

Municipality	Number	Power MW
Kotel	6	9.60
Nova Zagora	20	26.65
Sliven	51	66.55
Tvarditsa	11	7.50
Sliven District	88	110.30

Natural gas infrastructure

The southern branch of the national gas transmission system passes through the Sliven district. A gas distribution network is also operating in the town of Nova Zagora. The natural gas supply infrastructure that supplies Nova Zagora is part of the southern ring of the national gas pipeline network with a network's total length of 36.5 km. The network supplied gas to more than 600 customers.

Environmental status and risks

Sliven district is among the regions with the largest relative volume of waste generated. Emissions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere remain relatively low - at 161 tonnes per sq km, compared to 281 tonnes per sq km in the country.

The main water resource is the River Tundzha, with a catchment area of about 7,800 sq km. On the Tundzha River there is one of the largest dam in the country - Zhrebchevo dam, which has a volume of more than 400 million cu m. Its main purpose is to irrigate. The average flow of the Tundzha River on the territory of Sliven municipality falls into an area with a high flood risk.

As of January 2019, the district has 29 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive. The sites with biggest significance for tourism are the Sinite Kamani Nature Park, near Sliven, popular with its reserves, protected areas and natural landmarks.

ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2017, the total length of the road network was 540 km. It included 44 km of motorways, 85 km first-class roads, 202 km second-class roads and 256 km third-class roads. Through the Municipality of Sliven, the main roads of the Republican Road Network pass through:

- Road № 3 - 488 - Sliven - Kotel;
- Road № 2 - 53 - Yambol - Sliven - Elena;
- Route № 2 - 66 - Stara Zagora - Nova Zagora - Sliven;
- Road № E - 773 - Sofia - Karlovo - Sliven - Burgas.

The railway network in the district totalled 134 km.

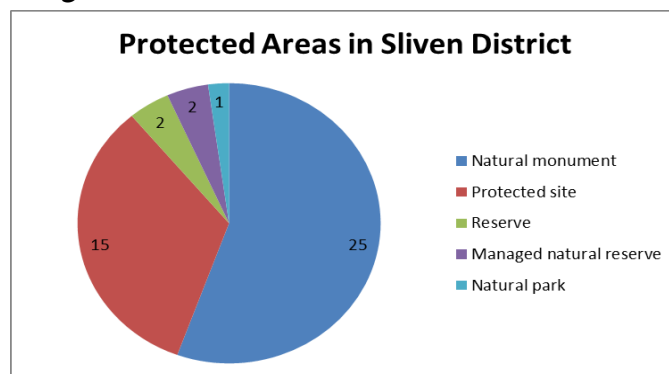
There is an airport near the town of Sliven. Its track is about 2.5 km long, parameters that allow the landing of transport and passenger planes. The airport has also a control tower. However, the airport was not in use as of end-January 2019.

IV.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourist resources

There are a total of 45 protected areas (PA) in Sliven district, according to the Executive Environment Agency. They consist of 25 natural monuments, one natural park, two natural reserves, two managed natural reserves and 15 protected sites. There is no national park on the territory of the district.

Figure 8: Protected Areas in Sliven District



Two natural reserves are located in Sliven District:

- **Sinite Kamani Natural Park** - it spans on an area of 11,381 hectares and was declared a nature park in 1980 with the aim of preserving its flora and fauna species. The park provides opportunities for mountain climbing, caving, cycling, motoring, paragliding, ski sports and mountain hiking. Sinite Kamani Natural Park has six natural landmarks - the Halkata (The Ring) rock formation. Despite its small territory, Sinite Kamani Natural Park is characterized by great biological diversity. The park is a home to 70 species and seven subspecies of endemic, rare, relic and protected plants. The fauna in Sinite Kamani Natural Park is represented by 244 vertebrate species and 1,153 invertebrate animals. A total of 78% of the discovered vertebrates in the area are protected by the Biodiversity Act, 23 species are included to the globally endangered animals. There are 176 bird species in the park, 149 of them are protected.
- **The Kutelka reserve** also falls within the Sinite Kamani Natural Park - it was declared a reserve in 1986 in order to preserve the Moesian beech communities and the rock habitats of many birds of prey. The area of the reserve is 708 hectares.
- **The Old Elm** - a natural phenomenon over 1,000 years old. It is a remnant of the Great Bulgarian Forest (Magna Silva Bulgarica), which stretched from the Rhodopes to the Black Sea. About 20 such elms exist in the village of Samuilovo, Sliven municipality. All of them are protected sites.

The major natural landmarks in Sliven district are:

- **Kersenlika reserve** with total area of 114.5 hectares near Borintsi village, Kotel municipality
- **Orlitsata reserve** covers an area of 559.4 hectares and is located in Kotel municipality. On its territory is the rock phenomenon Orlitsata - a nest of the rock eagle. The buffer zone to the reserve covers another 114.7 hectares
- **Protected area Zlosten**
- **Protected area Urushki skali**
- **Protected area Orlovite caves**
- **Vida** - a historical landmark area of 2.0 hectares, located in Kotel municipality, which includes remains of the old Roman fortress Diavena.
- **The Zhelezni Vrata Passage;**
- **Razboina peak** with an area of 5.0 hectares;

- **Okolchetasta Polyana** with an area of 2.0 hectares near Neykovo village, Kotel municipality;
- **Karandila** is a place in the Balkan Mountains near the town of Sliven. The lift Sliven - Karandila, built in 1974, connects the town of Sliven with the Karandila area.
- **Futula waterfall** is located in Karandila park above the town of Sliven at 950 m above sea level, west of Malka Chatalka peak and about 400 m south of the Zlatko Chorbazhi fountain;
- **The Selishteto village**, Sliven municipality, features remains of the Marino Gradishte fortress, excavations of one of the 24 monasteries known as the Sliven Little Sveta Gora - Saint Spas, Todorovoto Ayazmo spring and the Sv. Teodor Tiron church.
- **A natural landmark is the karst complex Zlostén**, which includes a number of protected areas. It is situated on the territory of the town of Kotel and the villages Medven and Yablanovo and covers an area of 343.7 hectares. There are numerous caves in the Zlostén area with stalactite and stalagmite formations. The major caves are The Glacier with a length of 103 m, Su Batt with a length of 58 m.

Other natural attractions are a number of separate caves:

- St. 40 Martyrs, on the territory of the village of Kipilovo, with an area of 5.0 hectares;
- Dryanovska cave with an area of 5.0 hectares;
- Cave Prikazna, with an area of 4.2 hectares;
- Maarata, with an area of 16.2 hectares;
- Malkata Maara with a depth of 59 m and an area of 3.0 hectares.

The hydrological resources of Sliven district includes the mineral springs near Sliven and Banya village, Nova Zagora municipality. Sliven mineral baths are a balneological resort of national importance, and the balneal resort in Banya has a local significance. The Sliven mineral water has a temperature of 48°C and a flow rate of 17 litres per second.

Cultural and historical heritage

Kotel neighborhood Galata is declared an architectural and historical reserve. Over 110 Renaissance houses have been preserved.

Archaeological sites

More than 120 prehistoric settlements and mounds are registered in the Sliven district.

- **Karanovskata Settlement** mound houses a thracian tomb and is located in Nova Zagora municipality. The mound occupies an area of 24 hectares. The tomb, which was discovered during excavations during the 1950s, is one of the oldest in Europe.
- **The Karanovo necropolis**, one of Bulgaria's largest, is 13 meters high, 250 meters long, and 150 meters wide. Every prehistoric epoch is represented here - from the Neolithic through the Bronze Age. The necropolis was inhabited for roughly 3,000 years. At 1.3 km northeast of the Karanovo village, Nova Zagora municipality, are fortifications and an outer wall of the burial mound's basilica, which contains 16 tombs.
- **Dyadovskata Settlement Mound** is one of the largest in Bulgaria and Europe with a height of 18 metres. During the Early Byzantine period a small fortified village was built on the mound, with a well preserved fortress wall with towers.
- **The Dalakova Mound** is located northeast of the village of Topolchane in Sliven municipality. A rich Thracian royal tomb with burial gifts was discovered during a study of the mound necropolis. Among the discovered valuable artifacts are two golden phali and a golden mask.
- **The fortress Tuida** is situated in the Hisarlaka area, in the northeast part of the town of Sliven. The fortress covers an area of 4.0 hecaters.

Architectural reserves

In the area of Kotel Municipality are located the architectural reserves of national importance - the villages of Zheravna and Katunishte with a preserved architectural environment from the National Revival period. Part of the town of Kotel was also declared an architectural reserve of national importance. It houses over 110 houses from the Renaissance and many other historical monuments. The village of Zheravna, Kotel municipality, includes more than 200 wooden houses from the National Renaissance period have been preserved, some of which are more than 300 years old.

Katunishte village, Kotel mucnicpality, houses 80 buildings declared to be architectural monuments. In Medven village, Kotel municipality, there are 120 cultural monuments.

Historical sites

There are 90 historical sites in Sliven district. The major are:

- **Monument of Hadzhi Dimitar** - Sliven municipality;
- **Orleto Monument** - Sliven municipality. Dedicated to the Sliven Seventh Horse Regiment, participated in the Balkan, Second Balkan War and World War I, built in 1996;
- **Soviet soldiers memorial** - Sliven municipality;
- **Monument to the September Uprising** - Nova Zagora;
- **Monument of the fallen in the wars for national unification** - Nova Zagora.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Sliven district stood at 107. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 77 churches and one chapel, followed by Islam with 25 mosques. The other religious temples in the district are three Protestants and one Armenian Apostolic church.

- **St. Dimitar Cathedral.** The central temple in the town of Sliven was built in 1832. It is a three-nave pseudobazilica. It is 29 meters long and 15 meters wide.
- **Sveta Sofia church** is an architectural monument of national importance, located in the town of Sliven.
- **Sv. Prorok Ilia** - Chintulovo village, Sliven municipality.

Local traditions, customs and crafts

Carpeting - the town of Kotel into one of the centers of weaving art. The town is popular for its carpets, the oldest of which are exhibited at the Galatan School.

Cultural activities and festivals

In 2019, a total of 20 local, national and international festivals will be held in Sliven district.

Table 8: local, national and international festivals will be held in Sliven district		
Name of the festival	Location	Date
National Students' Festival Arlekin	Nova Zagora municipality	26 - 29 Mar, 2019

International children's Dance Folklore Festival Friendship Without Borders	Sliven municipality	May 2019
Festival Ethnotes, colors and Kotel carpet Kotel	Kotel municipality	June 2019
Music Festival Summer Event Karandila	Sliven municipality	July 2019
National Folklore Fair Karandila sings	Sliven municipality	August 2019
National folklore gathering of the Karakachans	Sliven municipality	August 2019
Medieval Fair Remember the Glory - Tuida	Sliven municipality	October 2019
Festival of Eastern Orthodox Church Music Nikolay Trendafilov Slivenetz, Sliven	Sliven municipality	October 2019

Galleries

As of end-2017, there are two galleries in Sliven district:

- Art Gallery Dimitar Dobrovich - Sliven. It has one of the richest collections in the country with over 6,000 works and four permanent expositions;
- Art Gallery Rusi Karabiberov, Nova Zagora municipality - preserves and promotes the artistic heritage of the city and the municipality.

Museums

As of end-2017, Sliven district had five museums of national cultural value, according to NSI. They featured 163,721 exhibits and registered 86,501 visits in 2017, of which 16,700 visits were by foreign tourists.

- **The Regional Museum of History** - Sliven. It was founded in 1913 as a community center at the Zora Chitalishte;
- **Hadzhi Dimitar house-museum**;
- **Sliven's house-museum** - a typical house from the Renaissance period;



- Dobri Chintulov museum collection.

Art and craft centers

More than seven amateurs artistic, folklore and music ensembles are located on the territory of the Sliven district. They regularly organise and participate in various local and national events, competitions and festivals.

In the town of Kotel there is also a National School of Folk Arts Philip Kutev, and the National High School of Applied Arts Dimitar Dobrovich in the town of Sliven, as well as various dance and music schools and classes. One art centre is situated in the town of Sliven - the Art center Seven.

Theatres

Sliven district hosts two theatres - the **Drama Theater Stefan Kirov**, built in 1918, and the **State Puppet Theater**, established in 1960. Both theaters are located in the town of Sliven. According to the NSI, in 2017 the theatres has organised 650 performances, which were visited by 64,032 people, registering a 9.6% increase in performances and 0.7% recession in the number of visits, compared to 2016. There are two active music groups on the territory of Sliven district - an ensemble of folk songs and dances and one orchestra. As of end-2017, they organised 84 performances, which is a 16.8% decrease, compared to 2016. The concerts were visited by 37,818 people.

Libraries

Sliven district has 137 libraries, including regional, municipal, community centre libraries, university, school and special libraries. They contained 1.6 million books and register about 30,000 visits annually. In 2017, there is one library with more than 200,000 books and other units of library fund in Sliven district. The library`s registered readers are 7,988, while the visits reached 148,370.

Other cultural institutes

In 2017, there are two musical ensembles in district Sliven - one ensemble for folk songs and dances and one orchestra.

- **Symphony Orchestra** - Sliven, established in 1933.
- **Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances**, established in 1960.
- **Municipal Children's Complex** in Sliven is an extra-curricular unit in the field of education and science, which offers children more than 30 original pedagogical activities - clubs, schools and ensembles.

In 2017, the Sliven district was home to 109 chitalishta, or local community cultural centres. Out of them, 22 were located in towns and 87 in villages. Sliven is the municipality with the highest number of cultural centres - 53, followed by Nova Zagora with 32 and Kotel with 15. According to NSI, in 2017 the cultural centres in Shumen district organised 2,164 events.

National School for Folklore Arts Filip Kutev, named after famous Bulgarian composer Filip Kutev, was founded on 2 October 1967. Until 2004 the school was called Major Musical School Filip Kutev. In the school there were vocal groups and choirs.

Dimitar Dobrovich National Art School - Sliven is the only one of its kind in Eastern Bulgaria. It was established in 1981 and is directly subordinated to the Ministry of Culture. The High School preserves, develops and promotes Bulgarian traditions.

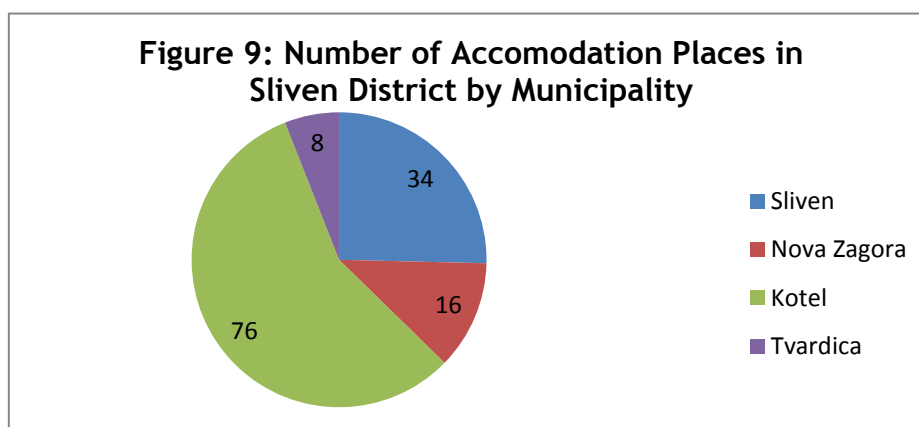
IV.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

In 2017, Sliven district had 65 places for accommodation, or 1.94% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 2.125 beds, or 0.61% of the national aggregate. In the period January - November 2018 the number of registered overnights in the district exceeded 80,970. The share of foreigners in the total overnights was 17.9%, significantly lower than the national average of 67.2%. The total number of visitors for the first eleven months of 2018 came in at 6,896 tourists, of which 14.65% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 3.100 mln.

Accommodation services

There were a total of 134 active registered accommodation places in Sliven district as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism.





More than 42.54% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities added another 26.12%. Just over 29.10% were 3-star, the 4-star numbered 2.24% and there is no one 5-star hotel in the district.

In 2017 the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- MM 9 OOD - BGN 1.848 mln;
- Hotel Park Tsentral EOOD - BGN 1.422 mln;
- Krasi-M OOD - BGN 1.158 mln.

Tourist operators

The territorial structure of tour operators in Sliven district reflected the extreme concentration of tourism activities in Sliven municipality. As of January 2019, registered tour operators in Sliven district counted eight, of which seven are registered in the municipality of Sliven and one in Nova Zagora municipality. There were no active tour operators in the remaining two municipalities in the district.

Tourist agencies

There was a total of eight registered tourist agencies in Sliven district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data. The bulk, or seven of them were headquartered in the municipality of Sliven. There was only one travel agent in Kotel municipality. In 2017, the leading tour operators/travel agents in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Vip Sliven OOD - BGN 0.333 mln;
- Event Vacation EOOD - BGN 0.289 mln;
- HRMS Travel EOOD - BGN 0.076 mln.

Entertainment

There are a large number of entertainment facilities in Sliven District. They include drive-in cinema, billiard clubs, riding bases, musical clubs, mineral baths, the Yunak Park, which includes three areas of attractions and entertainment, children's playgrounds for different age groups and a road for children's training in road safety.

The most popular attractions in the municipality of Sliven are the horse riding base, a football hall, a wrestling hall, a sports complex, and the adaptation aviary for griffon vultures.



There is also a horse riding base and a tennis club in the municipality of Nova Zagora. In the Kotel municipality there is a ski run and a riding base. There are five shopping centers in Sliven municipality, and one in the municipality of Novi Zagora.

Tourist Information Centres

As of end-January 2019, there are three tourist information centres in Sliven district - one in Sliven municipality, one in Kotel municipality and one in Tvarditsa municipality. They are engaged in: provision of tourist information, creation of new routes, carrying out of active marketing and advertising activities; participation in national and international exhibitions, organisation of public events.

Exhibition centers for the presentation of local natural and cultural heritage

The national astronomic observatory in Sliven counts to the natural exhibition centres in the district. The regional history museum -Sliven promotes the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Sliven district.

Other facilities

There are three horse riding bases in Sliven district - in the municipalities of Sliven, Nova Zagora and Kotel. In Sliven municipality there is an adaptation aviary for griffon vultures.

Existing tourist offers

Seven of the 100 national tourist sites are in Sliven District - the House-Museum Hadzhi Dimitar, the Museum of Textile Industry and the Art Gallery Dimitar Dobrovich, all three in Sliven, the House-Museum Yordan Yovkov in the village of Zheravna, the Natural Museum in Kotel, the Pantheon of G. S. Rakovski in Kotel and the Karanova Mogila Museum in Nova Zagora.

Existing tourist routes

The most popular tourist routes and hiking trails in Sliven District include:

- Sliven - Haidushka Pateka - Karandila - Kushbunar - the Tower
- Church of St. Sofia - Hisarlaka - Dolapite - Sini Vir - Sliven
- Sliven - The Village - St.Spas - White Water - Marinino Gradishte - Todorovo
- Ayazmo - The Village
- Sliven - Andreeva Cheshma - Zmeevi Dupki
- Sliven - St.Petka - Mecha Dupka - Chukata.

- The Karandila area is part of the Sinite Kamani Nature Park. It is situated above the town of Sliven and is accessible by cable car or by car, there are ecotrails as well.

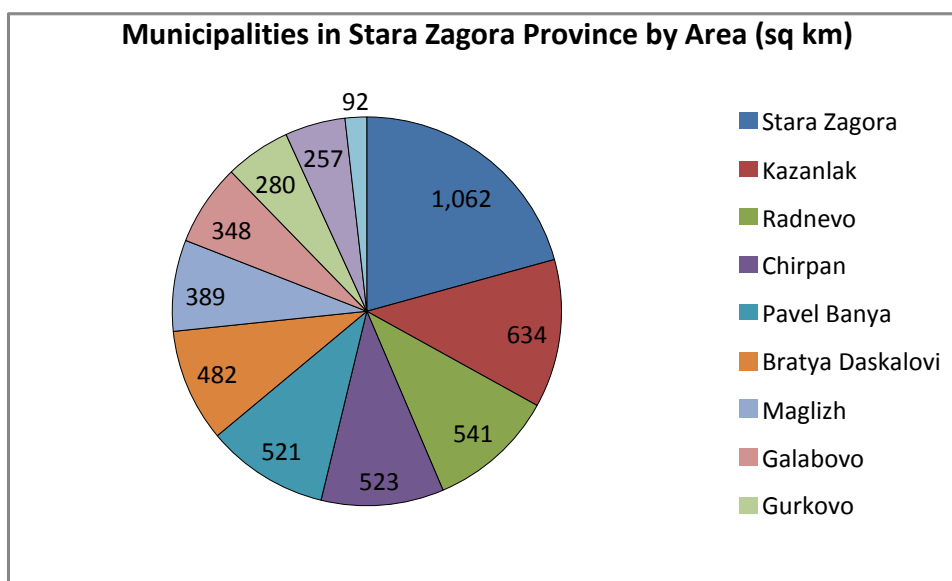
V. STARA ZAGORA DISTRICT

V.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Stara Zagora district is part of the Southeast Planning Region in Bulgaria. The district consists of 11 municipalities with a total of 206 cities, towns and villages. The district's total area 129 sq km.

The towns number 11, while the villages are 195.



V.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Stara Zagora district was the 5th largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 319,067 people and had a 4.5% share of the country's total population. In comparison to 2016, the district's population inched down by 0.7%.

The majority or 72.1% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 27.0% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in the administrative centre - the municipality of Stara Zagora.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Stara Zagora district was 62 people per sq km. The highest population density in the district, of 148 people/sq km, was registered in Stara Zagora municipality, while Nikolaevo municipality was the least populated with 49 people per sq km.

Natural population growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Stara Zagora district was negative, at -7.0% per 1,000 people. As a result, the district's population fell by 2,264 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at -14.2 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -4.3 per 1,000 people. The only positive RNI among the municipalities in the district was recorded in Nikolaevo - 2.0 per 1,000 people.

Migration

Stara Zagora district lost 64 people due to migration in 2017. The number of immigrants was 6,518, while the emigrants totalled 6,564. The number of emigrants exceeded the number of immigrants in most of the district's municipalities. The highest negative migration, of 61 people, was registered in Galabovo municipality, while Gurkovo municipality had the highest net migration growth, of 27 people.

Sex structure

Women dominated the sex structure of the population in Stara Zagora district in 2017. They accounted for 51.5% of the total population in the district, or 164,361 people. Men numbered 157,706, or on every 1,000 men there were 1,062 women.

Population structure by age

The aging process of the population in Stara Zagora district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the persons aged 65 and more numbered 70,211, or 22.0% of the district's total population. In comparison to 2016, the share of the population in this age group grew by 0.2 percentage points and compared to 2001 by 4.5 percentage points.

The working age population in Stara Zagora district was 186,928 as of end-2017, or 58.6% of the total population in the district, with 98,808 men and 88,120 women. The number of working age population narrowed by 2,539 people compared to the previous year.

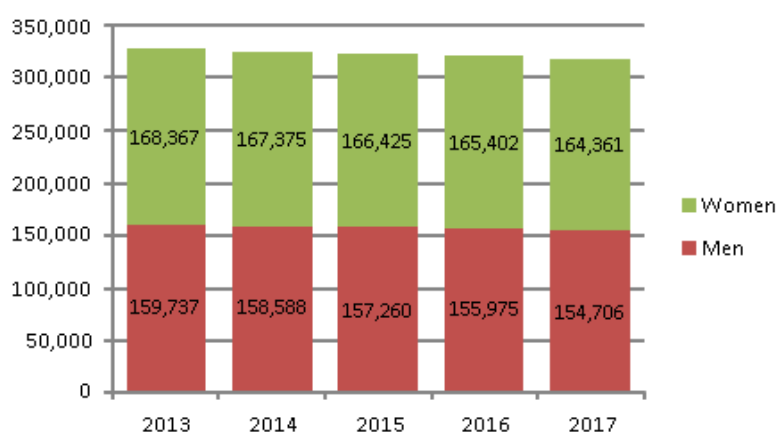
Stara Zagora municipality boasted the highest share, 61.0%, of working-age population among the municipalities in the district. The municipality of Radnevo

followed with a 59.6% share, but its total number of working age population was ten times lower than the 96,115 people in Stara Zagora municipality. The bottom position in terms of working-age population share was occupied by Opan municipality where only 41.6% of the people were of working age.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Stara Zagora district averaged 0.7% for the 2013-2017 period. At the beginning of the period, there were more than 328,000 people in the district with an RNI of -5.8 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to just over 319,000 people and the RNI worsened to -7.0 per 1,000 people.

Figure 11: Stara Zagora District Population Dynamics



Economy overview

In 2017, the economy of Stara Zagora district was dominated by two sectors - wholesale/retail and services. They accounted for nearly 80% of the total number of companies in the district. The share of the manufacturing sector was just over 10%, while agricultural and construction companies made up the remaining 10%.

In terms of size, the micro enterprises, employing up to nine people, were dominant with a 91.8% share of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people had an 8.0% share, while large employers, with staff of 250 or more people represented only 0.2% of the total number.

Although the manufacturing sector's share in the total number of companies was just 10%, it accounted for more than half of the BGN 9.945 bln in total net sales

revenue of the companies in the district. Wholesale and retail companies added another 30% and all the other sectors contributed the remaining 15%.

Economy analysis by sectors

Sector wise, the leading five sectors in the district's economy in terms of operating revenue in 2017 sliced a 62.3% share in the district's total operating revenue. However, the share of the different leading sectors varied significantly. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, and Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles had a share close to 20% each, while Mining of coal and lignite had half their share. The shares of Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment, and Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles were below 10%.

The leading 10 companies in terms of operating revenue in 2017 in the district reflected the sectoral structure of its economy:

Table 10: Top 10 Companies in Stara Zagora District by Operating Revenue in 2017			
Company	Municipality	Sector	Operating Revenue (BGN mln)
TPP Maritsa East 2 EAD	Radnevo	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	632.4
Arsenal AD	Kazanlak	Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	610.4
Mini Maritsa - Iztok EAD	Radnevo	Mining of coal and lignite	585.5
AES-3C Maritsa East I EOOD	Galabovo	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	584.2

ContourGlobal Maritsa East 3 AD	Galabovo	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	516.7
Rudnik Troyanovo - 1	Radnevo	Mining of coal and lignite	260.4
Rudnik Troyanovo - Sever	Radnevo	Mining of coal and lignite	172.2
Rudnik Troyanovo 3	Radnevo	Mining of coal and lignite	168.9
Zara - E OOD	Stara Zagora	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles	167.9
Ritam-4-TB OOD	Stara Zagora	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	154.5

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

In 2017, there was public water supply for 99.9% of the total population in the Stara Zagora district. The share of population to suffer water supply interruptions was 0.6%, compared to a national average of 3%.

Sewerage

An urban wastewater collecting system was available for 71.9% of the district population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0%. Stara Zagora district also had lower share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 61.4% versus the country's average of 63.4%. However, the district's share of population with untreated water collection system was 10.3%, lower than the national average of 12.6%.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 89,504 residential buildings in the Stara Zagora district, by 39 more than in the previous year. The bulk or 67.6% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages, while the remaining 32.4% were located in its cities and towns. However, 64.9% of the total 175,800 dwellings in the district were in the cities and towns.



Electricity infrastructure

Stara Zagora district has a well developed electricity infrastructure, according to its development plan for the 2014-2020 period. During this period, the company that operates the electricity network in the district plans to further improve it.

Natural gas infrastructure

The Stara Zagora district natural gas distribution network is spread mainly in the municipality of Stara Zagora. The network's total length in the municipality is 129 km. The length in residential areas is 104 km, while the remaining 25 km cover industrial areas. The network supplies natural gas to more than 30,000 households. A gas distribution network is also operating in the towns of Kazanlak and Gurkovo.

Environmental status and risks

Stara Zagora district often suffers from air pollution, resulting from the operations of the state-owned lignite coal mining complex Mini Maritsa Iztok. There are areas with higher air pollution in the Stara Zagora, Galabovo, Radnevo, Kazanlak and Opan municipalities. There are a total of 32 rivers in Stara Zagora district. The biggest river to pass the district's territory is Tundzha. It is the third longest river in Bulgaria with a length of 350 km in the country. The rivers in Stara Zagora district with bad water quality are Sazliyka, Sokolitsa, Blatnitsa, Bedechka, Tekirska and Tundzha.

The areas in Stara Zagora district protected under the Natura 2000 network are only 9.4% of its territory, compared to the national average of 35%. The main natural resource of the district is the fertile soil. It benefits the development of plant-breeding, animal husbandry, vegetable-growing, industrial crops, pomiculture and apiculture.

ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The total length of the road network, including motorways, was 907 km in 2017. The length of motorways in the district was 92 km, first-class roads measured 167 km, second-class roads were 215 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 433 km. The railway network in the district totalled 261 km, remaining almost unchanged in the 2013-2017 period. There are two Pan-European transport corridors that go through the territory of the Stara Zagora district:

- Corridor VIII Tirana (Albania) - Varna (Bulgaria), part of which is the Trakia motorway, linking Sofia with Burgas;
- Corridor IX Helsinki (Finland) - Alexandroupoli (Greece).

There is an airport for small airplanes in Kazanlak municipality.

V.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

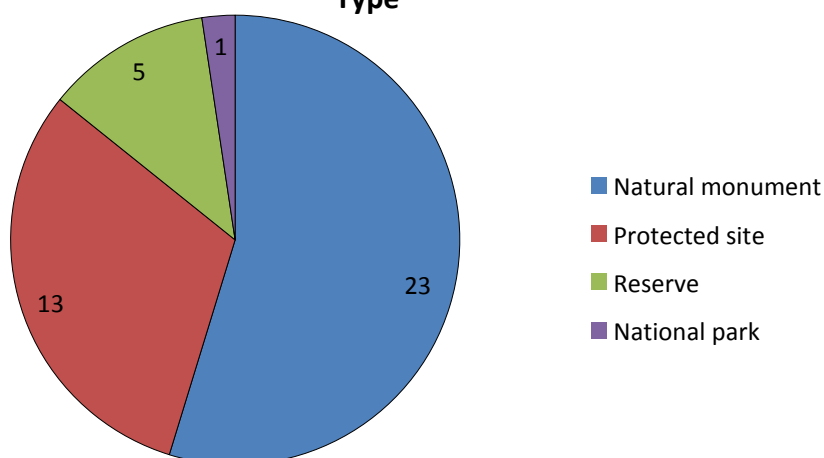
Natural tourist resources

There are a total of 42 protected areas (PA) in Stara Zagora district, according to the Executive Environment Agency. Category wise, there are no Managed natural reserves or natural parks in the district.

The only national park on the district's territory is the Central Balkan National Park, one of the three national parks in Bulgaria. The Park is the third largest protected territory in the country, spanning on an area of 717 sq km.

As of January 2019, Stara Zagora district had 24 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive.

Figure 12: Number of Protected Areas in Stara Zagora District by Type



Source: Executive Environment Agency

The major natural landmarks in Stara Zagora district are:

- **Lakes** - Starozagorski Bani lake and Zagorka Lake (Stara Zagora municipality);
- **Waterfalls** - Golemiyat and Malkiyat Skok in Maglizh municipality;
- **Rock formations** - Vkamenenata Svatba (Chirpan municipality), Megalita (Kazanlak municipality), Pirostiyata (Pavel Banya municipality), Milkini Skali (Stara Zagora municipality);

- **Trees - Kichestiyat Gabar**, a 700-year old hornbeam in Turia village, Pavel Banya municipality, the only such tree in Southeastern Europe; Vekoven dab, the oldest tree in Bulgaria, aged more than 1,660 years, located in Bratya Daskalovi municipality; Vekoven Chinar, a 500-year old plane tree in Stara Zagora municipality.

Archeological and historical sites, architectural reserve

There are more than 20 archeological sites in Stara Zagora district. They include ancient tombs, fortresses and ruins, and ancient sanctuaries. The main archeological sites are:

- **Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak** - the vaulted-brickwork beehive (tholos) tomb dates back to the 4th century BC and has been on the UNESCO protected World Heritage Site list since 1979. The tomb is a part of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, which also includes the Tomb of the Thracian King Seuthes III, as well as the tombs and the temples found in the mounds Goliamo Arsenalka, Shushmanets, Helvetsia, Grifoni, Svetitsa and Ostrusha;
- **Antique Forum Augusta Trayana** - the forum of the antique Roman town Augusta Trayana, the predecessor of Stara Zagora city;
- **Bogorodichna Stapka (Holy Mother Step)** - a large concave rock with the form of a human step. It was a place of worship used for various pagan religious rites. The site is located in Stara Zagora district;
- **Tomb of the Thracian King Seuthes III** - the tomb, built in the second half of the 5th century BC, is situated in the Golyamata Kosmatka mound in Kazanlak municipality.

There is no architectural reserve in Stara Zagora district.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Stara Zagora District stood at 169. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 135 churches, followed by Islam with 23 mosques, three mescids (small mosques without a minaret) and one türbe (a small tomb of Ottoman royalty and notables). The other religious temples in the district are four Protestant, two Catholic and an Armenian Apostolic chapel.

Table 11: Major Temples and Monasteries in Stara Zagora District

Site	Religion	Municipality
Sv. Velikomachenik Dimitar Cathedral	Orthodox Christianity	Stara Zagora
St. Nikolay Chudotvorets Church	Orthodox Christianity	Stara Zagora
Sveta Troitsa Church	Orthodox Christianity	Stara Zagora
Sveto Vavedenie Bogorodichno Chruch	Orthodox Christianity	Stara Zagora
Sveta Bogoroditsa Church	Orthodox Christianity	Chirpan
Sv. Prorok Ilia Church	Orthodox Christianity	Kazanlak
Sveti Dimitar Church	Orthodox Christianity	Maglizh
Sv. Atanasiy Veliki Monastery	Orthodox Christianity	Chirpan
Sveti Nikolay Monastery	Orthodox Christianity	Maglizh
Vavedenie Bogorodichno Monastery	Orthodox Christianity	Kazanlak

Cultural activities and festivals

There are nearly 30 festivals in Stara Zagora district:

Table 12: Festivals in Stara Zagora in 2019

Name	Municipality	Date
MENAR Film Fest - festival for films from the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa	Stara Zagora	Jan 15-31, 2019
Kukeri festival	Stara Zagora	March 9, 2019
Kukeri festival	Pavel Banya	March 17, 2019

Children horo festival	Kazanlak	May 2019
National Festival of Bulgarian Folklore and Bulgarian Traditional Dishes	Stara Zagora	June 2019
Rose Wine Expo	Kazanlak	June 2019
International Film Festival Golden Linden	Stara Zagora	June 2019
Jazz festival	Stara Zagora	June 2019
Festival of roses	Kazanlak	Jun 1-2, 2019
Festival of roses and mineral water	Pavel Banya	Jun 6-9, 2019
Svoboden Festival na Bezvremieto - an art festival	Pavel Banya	July 2019
National Thracian folklore festival The Holy Mother Step	Stara Zagora	August 2019
Folklore festival of amateur dance clubs	Maglizh	August 2019
Jazz festival	Kazanlak	August 2019
We Are Going to Maglizh rock music festival	Maglizh	September 2019
Folklore Festival of Instrumental and Dance Groups	Radnevo	September 2019
Folklore dance festival In the Heart of Thrace	Stara Zagora	September 2019
Augustiada, a festival of wine and cultural heritage	Stara Zagora	October 2019
Zdravey Zdrave, a festival for healthy lifestyle	Stara Zagora	October 2019
National Walnut Festival	Kazanlak	October 2019

Eho od Mladostta, a festival of retirement clubs	Kazanlak	November 2019
Persimmon festival	Stara Zagora	November 2019
Bread and Wine Festival	Stara Zagora	December 2019
Koledari festival	Kazanlak	December 2019
Koledari festival	Pavel Banya	December 2019
Pelin wine festival	Stara Zagora	Dec 21-22, 2019

Museums

In Stara Zagora district there are 10 museums, according to NSI data. The major museums in the district are:

- **Regional Museum of History** - the museum is located in the Stara Zagora city centre and has more than 100,000 units of historical arteacts;
- **Museum of religions** - an architectural complex, which was used by various religions, located in a former mosque in Stara Zagora city centre;
- **Neolithic Dwellings Museum** - the Neolithic dwellings in the city of Stara Zagora are among the best-preserved archaeological sites in Europe;
- **Museum of History Iskra** - the history museum in the town of Kaznlak was established in 1901 and has more than 50,000 exhibits found in the Kazanlak area;
- **House-museums of prominent Bulgarians** - Peyo Yavorov, Dimitar Zhorbadzhiyski - Chudomir, Geo Milev, Dechko Uzunov, Nenko Balkanski and Petko Staynov.

Galleries

There are five galleries in Stara Zagora district with most of them located in Stara Zagora and Kazanlak municipalities. The galleries are:

- **Stara Zagora Art Gallery** - the gallery was established in 1908 at the initiative of Stara Zagora artists. It has more than 4,600 works of art. The constant exhibition of the gallery includes works by renowned Bulgarian painters, such as Vladimir Dimitrov - Maystorat, Dechko Uzunov, Dimitar Gyudzhenov and Stoyan Venev;



- **Art Gallery Kazanlak** - the gallery houses 266 paintings and sculptural works;
- **Nikola Manev Art Gallery** - the gallery is located in a Bulgarian Revival house, built in 1867 in the town of Chirpan;
- **Georgi Danchov Zografina exhibition hall** - the hall is located in the centre of the town of Chirpan;
- **Information Centre art gallery Kazanlak** - the gallery houses exhibitions of paintings, photography and graphics.

Theatres

There are four theatres and an opera theatre in Stara Zagora district:

- **State Opera Stara Zagora** - the opera theatre in the centre of Stara Zagora city is the first purpose-built opera building in Bulgaria;
- **Geo Milev Theatre** - the theatre, one of the oldest in Bulgaria, is located in the centre of Stara Zagora city;
- **State Puppet Theatre Stara Zagora**;
- **Stara Zagora Summer Theater** - located in the Bishop Metodi Kusev park;
- **Chirpan amphitheater** - a small amphitheater in the town of Chirpan.

Libraries

The only major library in the Stara Zagora district is the Regional Library Zahariy Knyazheski in the city of Stara Zagora.

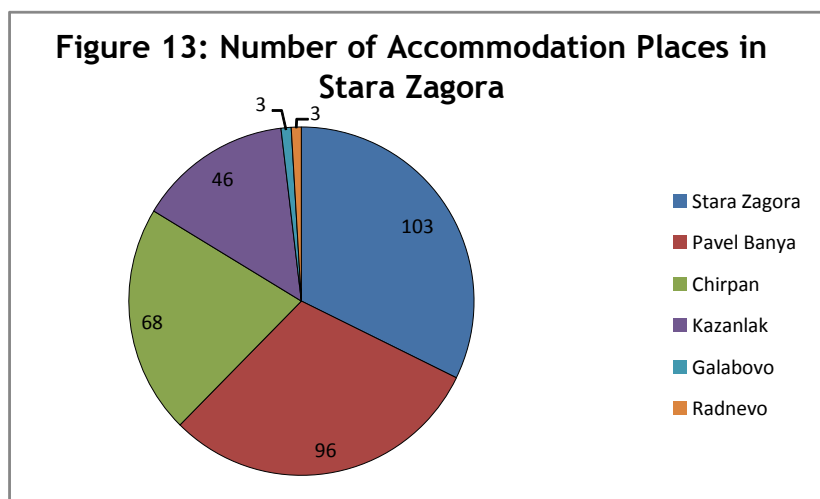
V.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

In 2017, Stara Zagora district had 58 places for accommodation, or 1.7% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 3,744 beds, or 1.1% of the national aggregate. In the period January - November 2018 the number of registered overnights in the district exceeded 320,000. The share of foreigners in the total overnights was 14.3%, significantly lower than the national average of 67.2%. The total number of visitors for the first eleven months of 2018 came in at 120,437 tourists, of whom 16.8% were foreign citizens. The district's total revenue from tourism in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 12.794 mln, or 90.5% of the sum in the whole 2017.

Accommodation services

There were a total of 319 active registered accommodation places in Stara Zagora district as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism. In almost half of the municipalities in the district there were no registered



accommodation places. More than 40% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities added another 40%. Just over 15% were 3-star, the 4-star numbered six and there was only one 5-star hotel in the district.

The largest companies in the accommodation sector in Stara Zagora district in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

- Markoni MDS EOOD - operates the Markoni balneo hotel in Pavel Banya municipality;
- Elina AD EOOD - specialised in hotel management;
- Vinorama EOOD - owns the Midalidare Hotel & SPA in Mogilovo village, Chirpan municipality.

Tourist Tour operators

There were 12 registered tour operators in Stara Zagora district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data. The bulk or nine of the companies were headquartered in the municipality of Stara Zagora. The remaining three tour operators were headquartered in Kazanlak. .

Travel agencies

The travel agencies numbered 28, of which 21 operated in Stara Zagora municipality. Six were located in Kazanlak municipality and Radnevo municipality was the only other municipality in the district to have a travel agency. A total of 19



companies were operating as both tour operators and travel agencies. They were located in Stara Zagora and Kazanlak municipalities. The three largest tour operators/travel agents by operating revenue in 2017 in the district were:

- ET Dari Tour - Darina Vasileva;
- Condor Holiday OOD;
- MM Travel EOOD.

Entertainment

There are a number of entertainment facilities in Stara Zagora district:

- Sports complex in Stara Zagora municipality;
- Tennis courts in Stara Zagora municipality;
- Two shopping centres - Mall Galleria Stara Zagora and Park Mall Stara Zagora;

Tourist Information Centres

There were three tourist information centres in Stara Zagora district as of end-January 2019, according to the Ministry of Tourism.

Table 13: Tourist Information Centres in Stara Zagora District		
Location	Address	Contacts
Stara Zagora	27, Ruski blvd.	Tel.: +359 42 627 098
Buzovgrad village, Kazanlak municipality	30, 9-ti Septemvri Str.	Tel.: +359 431 98 330 +359 431 98 329 E-mail: qnoushev@abv.bg
Kazanlak	4, Iskra Str.	Tel.: +359 431 99 553 +359 431 98 352 E-mail: tourism@municipality-kz.org

Other facilities

There are two horse bases in the district - both are in Stara Zagora municipality.

Existing tourist offers

Some of the 100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria are located in Stara Zagora district:

Table 14: 100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria are located in Stara Zagora district		
Site Number in the 100 Tourist Sites List	Sites	Municipality
71	House-museum Peyo Yavorov; Art gallery Nikola Manev; Sv. Atanasiiy monastery	Chirpan
90	Regional Museum of History; Neolithic dwellings museum; Braniteli na Stara Zagora monument	Stara Zagora
91	Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak; Chudomir museum	Kazanlak
92	Rozhdestvo Hristovo church (Shipka monastery)	Kazanlak
93	Shipka park and museum; Shipka monument	Kazanlak

According to the Ministry of Tourism, there is one tourist site which is among the 50 less known tourist sites in Bulgaria. The Golyama Kosmatka mound houses the tomb of Thracian King Seuthes III. The tomb was built in the second half of the 5th century BC. The mound is located near the town of Shipka, Kazanlak municipality.

Existing tourist routes

There is one major eco-trail in Stara Zagora district. A Time Trail through the Ages is the eco-trail, located near Buzovgrad village, Kazanlak municipality. The trail

includes the Male Stone rock formation, the Door of the Goddess megalith, the Buzovo kale fortress, as well as a Thracian tomb.

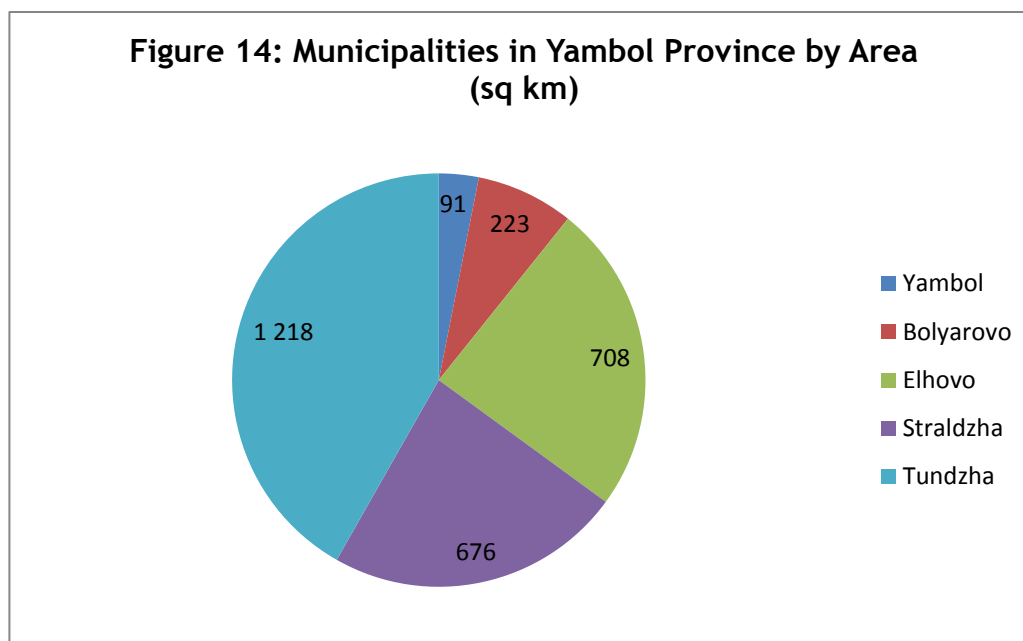
VI. YAMBOL DISTRICT

VI.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Yambol district is located in the central part of Northeastern Bulgaria and occupies an area of 3,336 sq. km, which represents 3.10 % of the territory of the country. The district is part of the S Southeast NUTS-2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - Level 2) Planning Region, which includes the neighbouring districts of Sliven, Stara Zagora, Haskovo and Burgas.

Its administrative centre is the city of Yambol. Yambol District consists of 5 municipalities with a total of 109 settlements (4 cities and towns, and 105 villages). The municipalities are Yambol, Bolyarovo, Elhovo, Straldzha and Tundzha.



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)

VI.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Yambol district was the 22nd largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 120,470 people and had a 1.7% share of the total population in Bulgaria. In comparison to 2016, the district's population inched down by 1.5%.

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Common borders. Common solutions.

The majority, or 70.6% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 29.4% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative centre - the municipality of Yambol.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Yambol district was 36 people per sq km. The highest population density in the district, of 763 people/sq km, was registered in Yambol municipality, while the bottom position was occupied by Bolyiarovo municipality with 16 people per sq km.

Natural growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Yambol district was negative, at -8.4% per 1,000 people. As a result, the district's population fell by 1,028 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at -19.8 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -3.7 per 1,000 people.

Migration

Yambol district lost 778 people due to migration in 2017. The number of immigrants was 827, while the emigrants totalled 634. The biggest contribution to the negative migration growth was made by Yambol municipality with -455 people, followed by the municipalities of Elhovo with -140 people and Straldzha with -108 people.

Sex structure

Women dominated in the sex structure of the population in Yambol district in 2017. They accounted for 51.0% of the total population in the district, or 61,494 people. Men numbered 58,976, or on every 1,000 men there were 1,043 women.

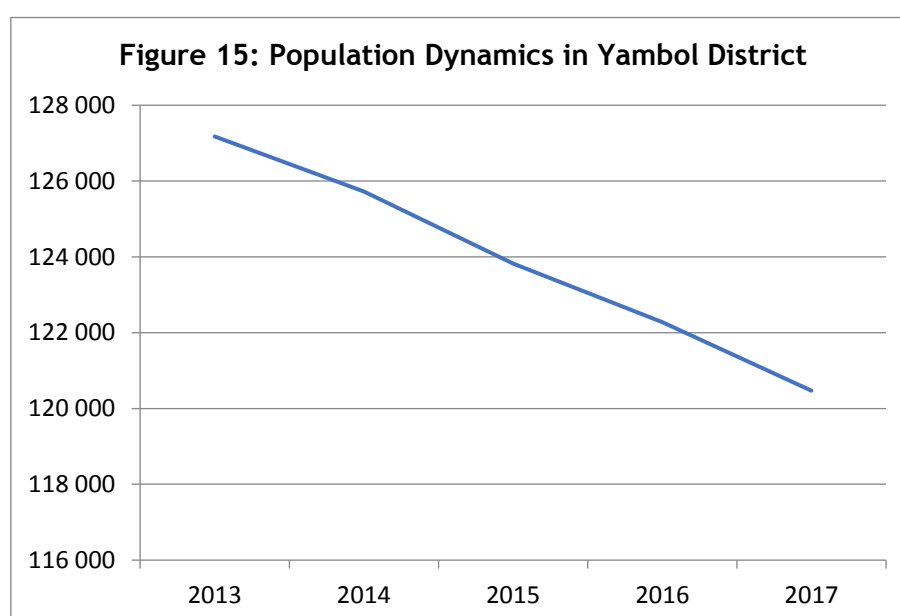
Population structure by age

The aging process of the population in Yambol district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the persons aged 65 and more numbered 28,523, or 23.7% of the district's total population. In comparison to 2016, the share of the population in this age group grew by 0.5 percentage points. The working age population in Yambol district was 68,135 as of end-2017, or 56.6% of the total population in the district, with 36,549 men and 31,586 women. The number of working age population narrowed 0.6 % as compared with the previous year. Yambol municipality had the highest share, 60.4%, of working-age population among the municipalities in the district. The municipality of Elhovo followed with a 56.5% share. The bottom position

in terms of working-age population share was occupied by Tundzha municipality where only 48.2% of the people were of working age.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Yambol district averaged 1 % for the period 2013-2017. At the beginning of the period, there were more than 127,176 people in the district with an RNI of -6.5 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to 120,470 people and the RNI worsened to -8.4 per 1,000 people.



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)

Economy overview

In 2017, the economy of Yambol district was dominated by four sectors - Trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as Manufacturing, Hotels and restaurants. They accounted for nearly 66.9 % of the total number of companies in the district. In terms of size, the micro enterprises, employing up to 9 people, were dominant with a 92.8% share of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people had a 6.0% share, while large employers, with staff of 250 or more people represented only 0.1% of the total number.

Economy analysis by sectors

The five sectors dominating the district's economy in 2017 in terms of operating revenue of companies were Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities, Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products, Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, and Manufacture of food products. Together they generated 74.6% of the operating revenue of all companies headquartered in Yambol District.

The largest companies with headquarters in Yambol District in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

Table 15: Largest companies with headquarters in Yambol District in terms of operating revenue in 2017			
Company name	Headquarters (town)	Operating revenue in 2017 (BGN mln)	Industry
Papas-Olio AD	Yambol	385.945	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
Yazaki Bulgaria EOOD	Yambol	322.556	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers
Videno Group OOD	Yambol	72.106	Manufacture of furniture
Hydraulic Elements & Systems Plc. / HES Plc. /	Yambol	55.626	Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.
Agrika EOOD	Yambol	54.309	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
ZPT AD	Straldzha	54.278	Manufacture of basic metals
Zarneni Hrani 99 PLC	Yambol	51.614	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles

Geostroy-Inzhenering EOD	Yambol	49.108	Manufacture of food products
Dias 2000 OOD	Yambol	39.601	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
Bonoil OOD		38.663	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

In 2017, there was public water supply for 100% of the total population in the Yambol district. The share of population to suffer interruptions to water supply was 1.4%, compared to a national average of 3%. The water supply network is operated by ViK Yambol Ltd., which provides services to the whole district, through 229 water sources and 4 water pumping stations. The built water network is 2,176 km long. The main water sources are built on the terrace of the river Tundzha, the karst areas around the village of Voden and the village of Golyamo Sharkovo.

Sewerage

An urban wastewater collecting system was available for 71.6% of the district population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0%. Yambol district also had a lower share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 4.7% versus the country's average of 63.4%. However, the district's share of population with untreated water collection system was 66.9%, higher than the national average of 12.6%.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 71,762 residential buildings in the Yambol district, by 58 more than in the previous year. The bulk or 66.9% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages and towns, while the remaining 33.1% were located in its cities and towns. However, 60.6% of all 71,762 dwellings in the district were in the cities and towns.



Electricity infrastructure

Yambol district has a well-developed electricity infrastructure. The power distribution network density for the district is 86 km per 1,000 sq km. Yambol Municipality is powered by four substations Yambol, Tenevo, Laskova, Zlaten rog and the municipal centre is mainly supplied by the TPP Maritsa East 2 with two power lines to the distribution system of Yambol substation. As of 2015, three photovoltaic power plants with a total power of 10.5 mW were built in Yambol district.

Natural gas infrastructure

The gas distribution network's total length in the district is 92 km. The route of Bulgargas Strandzha Station, which passes 85% of the transit gas through Bulgaria to Turkey is near the town of Yambol. The station is a branch of the main pipeline with a pressure of 5.5 MPa, supplying natural gas from Russia.

Environmental status and risks

Yambol district often suffers from air pollution, resulting from the use of fuels and combustion equipment in the domestic sector industry. However, in 2016, the relative volume of carbon dioxide emissions in the district remained significantly lower than the national average - 30 tonnes per sq km, compared to 281 tonnes per sq km at national level. the relative volume of municipal waste generated in the area was significantly lower.

In the Yambol region, water supplies are limited. Only the river Tundja provides greater opportunities. It is the fourth longest river in Bulgaria with a length of 398 km. Larger tributaries are Mochuritsa, Popovska, Kalnitza. Yambol is one of the richest areas in Bulgaria with the presence of small dams, the total area of which is about 40,000 acres.

As of January 2019, Yambol District has 21 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive. Sites of greatest importance to tourism are the Malko Sharkovo dam, the second largest in Bulgaria, and the Bakadzhik, a chain of low hills, which extends to the east of the Tundzha River.

The main natural resource of the district is the fertile soil, mainly represented by the gray and black type soils. It benefits the development of plant-breeding, animal husbandry, vegetable-growing and industrial crops.

ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

There are no Pan-European transport corridors that go through the territory of the Yambol district. However, Trakia Motorway which passes through the district, provides transport communications east-west. The total length of the road network in Yambol district, including motorways, was 637 km in 2017. The length of motorways in the district was 35 km, first-class roads measured 96 km, second-class roads were 87 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 419 km. An important road for international road transport is the road passing through Yambol I-7, which connects Northern Europe and Turkey.

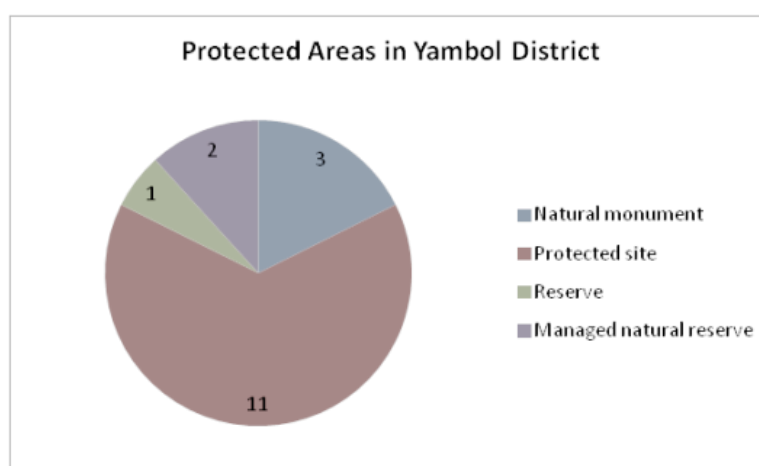
The railway network in the district totalled 52 km, decreasing by 6 km in the period 2013-2017. The main railway lines crossing the district are Sofia - Varna, between Plovdiv and Yambol , and Sofia - Burgas through Yambol.

VI.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourist resources

There are a total of 11 protected areas (PA) in Yambol district, according to the Executive Environment Agency. The Agency marked three natural monument, one reserve, two managed natural reserve and 11 protected sites. There is no National park on the territory of the district.

Figure 16: Protected Areas in Yambol District



Source: Executive Environment Agency

One natural reserve is located in Yambol District:



- **Gorna Topchia Reserve** covers a territory of 467.47 hectares in the land of the town of Elhovo. The main purpose of the protected area is to preserve the only natural habitat of Colchis pheasant in Europe.

The major natural landmarks in Yambol district are:

- **Kirilovo-Dam Lake** in the valley of the Tundzha River in the village of Kirilovo;
- **Turnavski Bakadzhik** is a chain of low hills, which belong to the Middle-Forest, extending east of the Tundja River; (Bakadzhik villages);
- **The "Manastircheto" area** - (Stroyno villages);
- **Lesovski Gorge** - a gorge of the Tundja River between the Sakar Mountains and the Dervent Heights.
- **Derventski Heights**
- **Debelata Korja** - (Tenevo villages, Tundzha municipality);
- **Ivan Gyol** - (Kabile villages, Tundzha municipality);

The diversity of grass cover in the district is also represented by protected, threatened and rare plant species included in the Red Book of endangered species of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mineral springs are located near the village of Stefan Karadzhovo, Straldzha and Pravdino village. The mineral springs studied near the village of Stefan Karadjovo have a flow rate of 13 l / s.

Anthropological tourist resources

As of end-2018, there are no discovered traces of anthropological tourist resources in the Yambol district.

Archaeological sites

There are more than 57 archeological sites in Yambol district. They include ancient tombs, fortresses, necropolises, ruins, and ancient sanctuaries. The main archeological sites are:

- **The Thracian Tomb** - (Ruzhitsa village)- The tomb was discovered in the southern sector of the mound, half-destroyed and in a relatively poor condition. It consists of a grave chamber, an anteroom and a dromos with a total length of 7.05 m. The construction of the structure is made of limestone blocks and dry masonry of unfinished granite. Archaeologists suggest that the lower part of the façade was built with bricks.
- **Early Thracian graves** - Valchi Izvor village



- The medieval fortress of Yambol

Architectural reserves

The main architectural reserve in the Yambol district:

- **National Archeological Reserve of Kabile (Antique City of Kabile)** - In 1965, the site was declared an archaeological reserve and is now one of the 100 national tourist sites. The museum to the complex offers information and shows archaeological finds made in the region. The museum has many beautiful mosaics, coins minted in the ancient city of Kabile and many exhibits.

The Yambol district owns well developed architectural tourist resources. The sites of biggest significance are:

- **The Bazaar** (covered market) - it is the only Bulgarian preserved building of this type from the period of the Ottoman domination. It is considered to be one of the most beautiful covered markets in the Balkans and a benchmark of civil construction for civilian needs in the Ottoman Empire in the period XV-XVII. It was declared a cultural monument of national importance in 1972.
- **Medieval Fortress Sofularska Mahala**
- **The Roman Bath**

Historical sites

Numerous historical sites, monuments and memorial plates also play an important role for the tourist potential of the region. There are more than 30 historical places of interest in the district of Yambol, 24 in Yambol municipality, three in Bolyarovo municipality, one in Elhovo and two in Straldzha municipality.

The most significant tourist sites are the Monument of Yambol weavers, the Monument of the reaper, the Relief Monument, and the Monument of Stefan Karadzha in Boliarovo.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Yambol District stood at 95. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 91 churches and two monasteries, followed by Islam with two mosques.

The two monasteries are Bakadzhik Monastery St. Spas and Kabilski monastery Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The biggest churches are St. George the

Victorious Martyr and the Holy Trinity, and they are some of the main attractions of Yambol.

During the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78.) Eski Mosque was turned into a warehouse for flour and clothes. In the first years after the Liberation, the building functioned as a Christian church. Today, the Eski Mosque is restored and has been declared a monument of culture of national importance.

The Kabilski monasterie Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is located about one kilometer from the village of Kabile, 6 km. from the town of Yambol. The Kabile monastery is ? Orthodox and since 1995 the abbot of the monastery has been a nun, Minodora. Besides her there are four more nuns.

Local traditions, customs and crafts

Kukeri dances are a traditional custom for Yambol District. Kuker games are distinguished with special antiquity and variety. Relatively high resistance is observed in the traditional structure of custom, which remains almost unchanged. With the game, they want to chase the evil, clear the fields,, and the yards for the coming of the new fertile year. During the day the mummers play, no one works.

Every year, the municipality of Yambol organises the traditional Koleradski buenek at Christmas. Its purpose is to popularise the traditions of the Bulgarians related to the winter folk customs, to educate the national self-consciousness and to strengthen the national identity through the eternal Bulgarian song and dance folklore heritage.

Cultural activities and festivals

A total of 25 local and international festivals are regularly held in Yambol District, out of which 14 are hosted by the Yambol municipality, two by Bolyarovo municipality, two by Elhovo municipality, four by Straldzha municipality and three by Tundzha municipality.

Table 16: Local, regional and national festivals in Yambol District		
Name of the festival	Location	Date
National holiday for processed folklore Maestro Stoyan Gagov	Yambol municipality	May 2019
Urban folklore Yambol Autumn	Yambol municipality	Once every two years

National Festival Echo over Tundja	Yambol municipality	December 2019
Urban folklore Yambol Autumn	Yambol municipality	December 2019
International Thracian Choral Festival, Yambol	Yambol municipality	In mid-October 2019
The International Masquerade Festival Kukerland	Yambol municipality	February 2019
Art Festival Open spaces	Yambol municipality	In two days of the year
Folklore Festival	Yambol municipality	October 2019
Graffiti Fest Yambol	Yambol municipality	
Students' Festival Songs Russia	Yambol municipality	At the end of May 2019
Theatrical Feasts Nevena Kokanova	Yambol municipality	June 2019
The festival Young Yambol Creates	Yambol municipality	June 2019
Yambol Rock Fest	Yambol municipality	September 2019
Festival Koleradski buenek	Yambol municipality	December 2019
Fair Belyanka	Bolyarovo municipality	August 2019
National Children's Folklore Whistles	Bolyarovo municipality	June 2019
The feast of the traditional Thracian Banitsa Vita - twisted twice	Elhovo municipality	September 2019
Sakarsko Horo Festival	Elhovo municipality	

The traditional folk fair Marash sings	Straldzha municipality	May 2019
Kuker's holiday Straldzha 2019	Straldzha municipality	February 2019
Kuker's holiday Straldzha	Straldzha municipality	February 2019
Kuker's holiday, Charda village	Straldzha municipality	January 2019
National Fair of Tourist Entertainments and Animation Kabile	Tundzha municipality	May 2019
Fair of tourist animations and entertainment Kabile	Tundzha municipality	May 2019
Kukeriada-Tundja. The Kukeri Valley	Tundzha municipality	February 2019

Galleries

As of end-2017, there is one gallery in Yambol district: George Papazov Art Gallery - owns a fund of more than 3,500 cultural assets. The gallery has the richest collection of decorative works in the country. There are 20 collections divided into 8 departments in the Art Gallery.

Museums

As of end-2017, Yambol district had 5 museums of national cultural value, according to NSI. They featured 11,000 exhibits and registered 34,000 visits in 2017. Compared to 2016, the total number of visitors decreased by 7.9%, despite the 29.2% increase in the number of foreign visitors.

The Museum of Fighting Glory "in the town of Yambol was opened on May 9, 2013 with the reconstruction of the 29th infantry Yambol regiment. This is the first



municipal specialized museum in the country. Its purpose is to preserve the memory and pay tribute to the wars of all military subdivisions of the city and the region for the period from the Liberation to the present day.

The **Historical museum in Yambol** is housed in a two-storey building in the city centre. It was founded in 1952 as a natural heir to local archaeological and scientific societies. Today, the museum's fund numbers approximately 93,000 exhibits, some of which have great artistic and historical value.

The **House Museum of Stefan Karadzha** - The house-museum of Stefan Karadzha is in the centre of the Stefan Karadzhevo village. It was declared a monument of culture of national importance. It houses an ethnographic collection.

Ethnographic complex "The Old Acupuncture House", General Inzovo village, Tundzha - an ethnographic museum representing an ensemble of buildings, recreating the old Akbunarska house. It contains exhibits and costumes, some of which are older than a century, all donated by the villagers.

The **Ethnographic museum of the town of Elhovo** is located in the centre of the town. The museum studies, preserves and promotes the diverse ethnographic heritage of the Elhovo municipality and a large part of the Strandzha-Sakar Region. The museum's fund counts 22,000 exhibits included in the Agriculture and Livestock, Housing, Transport, Hunting, Fishing, Apparel and Textile, Fabrics and Embroidery, Traditional Handicrafts, Artistic Folk Creativity sections.

Ethnographic complex- In the oldest district of Yambol - Kargona, an ethnographic complex from the Renaissance was created, with an adjoining museum exposition. The architectural ensemble includes a two-storey ethnographic house, presenting the local lifestyle, traditions and livelihoods of the population in the region, three workshops for old artistic crafts and a cultural and information centre.

Art and craft centers

Youth House Georgi Bratanov- opened in 1972 and is one of the first youth homes in the country. The home is an entertaining and cultural centre for young people from the city and the region. It has created conditions and initiatives and activities for the realisation of the municipal youth policy. There is a Studio for modern dances Kala; The Sedmochvet School - applied and fine arts; Puppet Theatre Firefly; Music School of Piano.

In Yambol Municipality there is a representation of the Union of Bulgarian Artists, Society of artists and the Society of Writers.



Theatres

Yambol District has two theatres - **State Drama Theatre Nevena Kokanova** and **State Puppet Theatre Georgi Mitev**.

There are three active music groups on the territory of Yambol district- one ensemble for folk songs and dances and two orchestras. In 2017, the number of their performances decreased by 1.7% and the number of visitors rose by 1.6%, as compared to 2016.

Libraries

Yambol district has 105 libraries. They contained 1.1 million books and registered 177,788 visits in 2013, according to the latest data published by NSI .

In 2017, there was only one library in the Yambol district with more than 200,000 books and other units of the library fund. Registered readers in the libraries in the district were 2,604, a decrease of 2.5% from the previous year, while the visits increased by 10.1% and reached 51,000.

The Georgi Rakovski Regional Library in the town of Yambol is among the first regional libraries in the country. It opened in 1862. The library is the main bookstore of the region with a fund of 270,000 library materials and serves over 3,000 readers.

Other cultural institutes

In 2017, the Yambol district was home to 85 chitalishta, or local community cultural centres. Out of them, 12 were located in towns and 73 in villages. In all centres there was an active library. According to NSI, in 2017 the cultural centres in Yambol district organised 1,150 events.

In 2017, a total of 118 films were projected in Yambol district, according to NSI. According to their nationality, the films are distributed as follows: 10 Bulgarian, 19 European, 88 from the USA and one from other countries. The number of movie screenings increased 14.4% while visitors decreased 21.9% as compared with the previous year.

VI.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

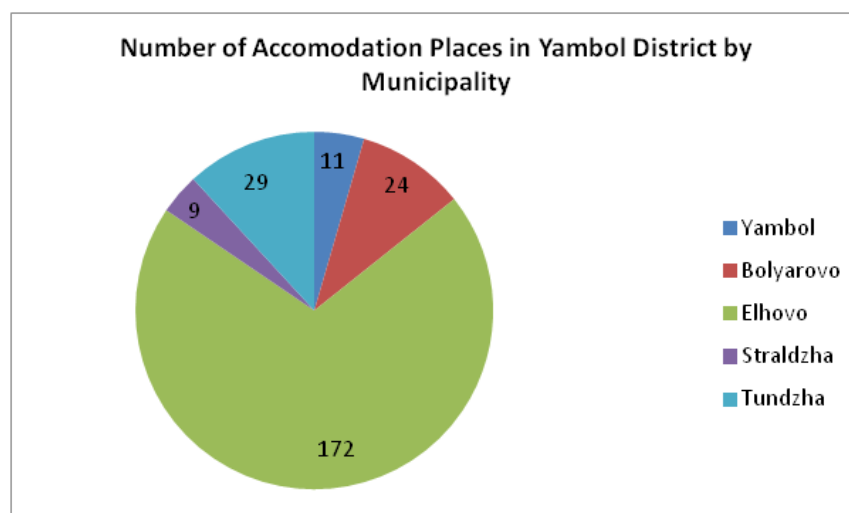
In 2017, Yambol district had 24 places for accommodation, or 0.78% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 757 beds, or 0.28% of the national aggregate.

In the period January - November 2018, the number of registered overnights in the district stood at 37,364. The share of foreigners in the total overnights was 25.8%, significantly lower than the national average of 67.2%. The total number of visitors for the first eleven months of 2018 came in at 3,084 tourists, of which 18.30% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 1.880 mln.

Accommodation services

There were a total of 245 active registered accommodation places in Yambol district as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism.

Figure 16: Number of Accomodation Places in Yambol District



Source: Ministry of Tourism, Bulgaria

More than 80.67% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities accounted for another 13.33%. Just over 3.67% of the places were 3-star, the 4-star facilities numbered 1.33% and there is no one 5-star hotel in the district.

Tourist operators

More than 77.55% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities added another 16.33%. Just over 4.49% were 3-star, the 4-star numbered 1.63% and there is no one 5-star hotel in the district. In 2017 the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Anne Mar Travel OOD
- Viva Tour EOOD



- Valeros Holiday EOOD

Tourist agencies

There were a total of 13 registered travel agencies in Yambol district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data. The bulk, or nine of the companies were headquartered in the municipality of Yambol. In Elhovo, there were three travel agencies, and there was only one travel agent in Straldzha municipality.

Entertainment

The Yambol district's entertainment facilities include:

- City Center Yambol shopping centre;
- City Park;
- Diana Sports Hall;
- Sports complex Georgi Drajev;
- Sport Complex Arena Yambol3D cinema;
- City Stadium - Yambol
- Tennis court - Yambol

Tourist Information Centres

As of January 2019, two tourist information centers are operating in Yambol region -- in the towns of Yambol and Elhovo. They provide tourist information, create new routes, carry out active marketing and advertising activities; participate in national and international exhibitions, organise public events.

Exhibition centres for the presentation of local natural and cultural heritage

Yambol Astronomical Observatory and Planetarium - The Astronomical Observatory and Planetarium are the only place in the region with a modern, specialised base for training, observation and popularisation of astronomy and cosmonauts. The Planetarium in the town of Yambol is the only one in southeastern Bulgaria and its stellar hall is visited by thousands of students and citizens annually

Other facilities

- Horse Racing Club Simex - Yambol - The Equestrian Club has 18 horses for training and racing, there are two ponies. Provides horses for movies, videos, ads.

- Paintball fields - situated near the town of Elhovo; four playgrounds are available for the game: Standard racing; Battlefield; Missions in woodland; Playing in demolished buildings;

Existing travel offers

Two of the 100 national tourist sites are in Yambol District - the Antique City of Kabile, the Historical Museum and the Ethnographic museum - Elhovo.

Table 17: Sites in Yambol District listed in the 100 Tourist Sites List		
Site Number in the 100 Tourist Sites List	Sites	Municipality
99	Antique City of Kabile	Yambol municipality
99	Historical Museum	Yambol municipality
100	Ethnographic museum	Elhovo municipality

Existing tourist routes

Tourist Information Centre - Yambol offers the following thematic routes:

- In the footsteps of the ancient Thracians - includes visits to the remains of the Thracian Age;
- Cultural stratification in architecture - the tour includes the Great Therms, the Little Basilica, the military camp itself and ends in the Archaeological Museum of the Reserve;
- Raw Christianity in Kabile - This route includes a tour of buildings related to religion in the Reserve.
- History of the Kabile through the centuries - includes a full tour of the archaeological reserve with all the studied and exposed buildings;
- Thracian suns and eco-path Dranchi Dupka - Thracian suns are rock sanctuaries, located about 4km south of Melnitsa village. Near the village of Melnitsa is the first eco-trail around these sanctuaries - Dranchi Dupka. It has a thematic orientation as it passes through the places where the Thracian suns can be seen.

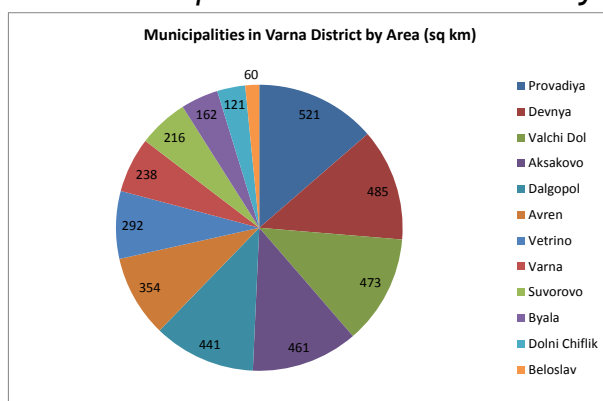
VII. VARNA DISTRICT

VII.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Varna is the 12th largest district in Bulgaria with an area of 3,819.5 sq km. It is situated in the northeastern part of the country, within the Northeastern NUTS-2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - Level 2) Planning Region and borders the districts Dobrich, Shumen and Burgas and the Black Sea coast. Its administrative centre is the city of Varna. Varna District consists of 12 municipalities, which contain 159 settlements (11 cities and towns and 148 villages). The municipalities are Varna, Avren, Aksakovo, Beloslav, Byala, Vetrino, Valchi Dol, Dolni Chiflik, Devnya, Dalgopol, Provadiya and Suvorovo.

Figure 17: Municipalities in Varna District by Area (sq km)



Source: National Statistical Institute

VII.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

As of end-December 2017, Varna District's population stood at 472,120, or 6.7% of the country's population, making it the third most populated district in Bulgaria. Out of the total population of the district, 344,748 people live in its largest municipality Varna.

Population density

The district has population density of 123.6 people/sq km, which is almost twice above the national average of below 70 people/sq km.

Natural growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Varna District was negative, at - 3.6% per 1,000 people. The overall population decline was the result of the lower birth rate, compared to the mortality rate. Varna's birth rate came in at 9.3 per 1,000 people and was the seventh highest among all districts in the country, while the mortality rate was 12.9 per 1,000, or the second lowest in Bulgaria. Infant mortality rate was also considerably lower than the national average - at 5.7 per 1,000.

Migration

In 2017, Varna District had a positive migration growth of 2.4 per 1,000 people, thus ranking fourth in Bulgaria. In absolute terms, 10,039 people settled in the district and 8,891 migrated to other districts. The difference is 1,148 people. The biggest contribution to the positive migration growth was made by Varna municipality with 1,192 people, followed by the municipalities of Provadiya with 98 people and Vetrino with 52 people. The municipality with the worst migration record in 2017 was Avren, where the negative difference was 90 people, followed by Devnya with 43 people and Beloslav with 40 people.

Sex structure

Women dominated the sex structure of the population in Varna District in 2017. They accounted for 51.2% of the total population, or 241,819 people. Men numbered 230,301, or on every 1,000 men there were 1,050 women.

Population structure by age

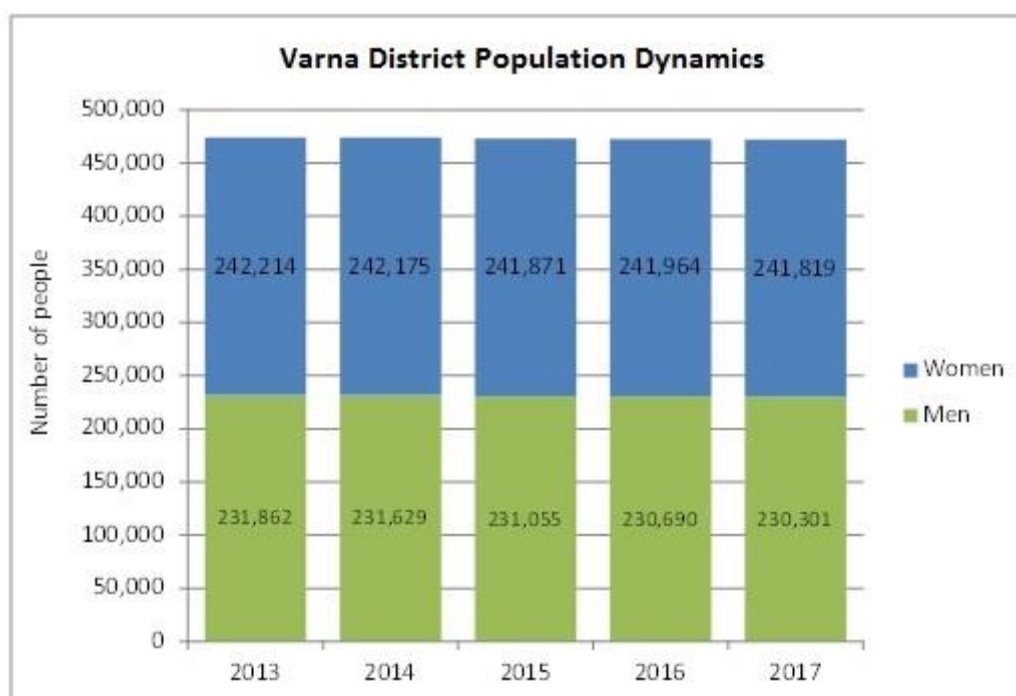
In 2017, the working age population in Varna District came in at 293,018 people, or 62.1% of the total population, well above the national average of 60.3%. Under working age were 16.0%, compared to 15.1% for the country, while the share of the population over working age in the district was considerably lower than the average for Bulgaria - 21.9% against 24.6%.

At municipal level, Varna, Beloslav and Dolni Chiflik had the best age structure - with the highest under and at working age shares and lowest share of over working age population. On the contrary, the municipalities of Vetrino, Avren and Valchi Dol reported extremely unfavourable structure with share of under working age population below 15% and over working age population exceeding 30%.

Population dynamics

The population in Varna District declined by an average annual rate of 0.1% during the 2013-2017 period. In 2013, the district's population counted more than 474,000 people, while at the end of the period its number fell slightly to just over 472,000 people.

Figure 18: Population Dynamics in Varna District 2013-2017



Source: National Statistical Institute

Economy overview

In 2016, the economy of Varna District was characterised by the dominance of the services sector, including wholesale and retail. Out of the total 33,193 non-financial enterprises, services and wholesale and retail accounted for 82% of the total number of companies in the district. Each of the sectors agriculture, industry and construction had a share of less than 10% of the business entities structure.

In terms of size, the micro enterprises, employing up to nine people, constituted 93.2% of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people, had a 6.7% share, while large employers, with staff of 250 or more people, represented only 0.1% of the total number.

The net sales revenue structure of the companies in the district was dominated by wholesale and retail, which accounted for 44% of the BGN 15.499 bln generated by the district's economy in 2016. Manufacturing added another 15.8% and generation and distribution of electricity, heat and gas ranked third with 8.8%.

Economy analysis by sectors

The economy of Varna District is service-oriented. Sea tourism and chemical industry in the district are among the leading in Bulgaria. Other major economic sectors developed in Varna District include agriculture, trade and transport.

The five sectors dominating the district's economy in 2017 in terms of operating revenue of companies were Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products and Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities. Together they formed 57.5% of the operating revenue of all companies headquartered in Varna District.

The largest companies with headquarters in Varna in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

Table 17: Top 10 companies in Varna District			
Company name	Headquarters (town)	Operating revenue (BGN mln)	Industry
Energo-Pro Sales AD	Varna	561.542	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
Afer Bulgaria EOOD	Devnya	493.735	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
Solvay Sodi AD	Devnya	477.967	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
Agropolychim AD	Devnya	430.349	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
Energo-Pro Energy Services EOOD	Varna	353.818	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

Elektrozapravljenie Sever AD (Energo-Pro Mrezhi AD until Jan 29, 2018)	Varna	268.004	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
Tradenet Varna EOOD	Varna	180.605	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Intercom Group OOD	Varna	143.763	Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
Hidrostroy AD	Varna	135.380	Civil engineering
CBA AD	Varna	131.284	Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

Major water sources in Varna District include Kamchiya Dam, Tsonevo Dam, Devnya Spring and the water supply systems Batova and Pasha Dere. The water supply network is operated by ViK Varna OOD, which provides services to the whole district, and ViK Zlatni Pyasatsi OOD. The total length of the network exceeds 4,300 km in the district, out of which 1,100 km are within the city limits of Varna. There are 130 water pumping stations in Varna District. The daily consumption of tap water in Varna District in 2016 amounted to 94 litres per citizen, slightly lower than the national average of 100 litres per citizen.

Sewerage

In 2017, 100% of Varna District's population had access to public water supply. The district boasted zero share of population to suffer water supply interruptions, compared to the national average of 3.0% . An urban wastewater collecting system was available for 76.2% of the district population, the second highest share in Bulgaria after the capital district. All wastewater collecting systems were connected to wastewater treatment plants - again the second highest share in Bulgaria. The total length of the sewerage network in Varna District stands at 830 km with 26



sewerage pumping stations and 10 wastewater treatment plants. The coverage of the city of Varna with wastewater collection systems exceeds 95%. In the other towns in the district it varies between 30% and 65% of the population.

Housing stock

In 2017, the residential buildings in Varna District counted 100,000, a 0.4% increase compared to 2016. The bulk, or 54.4% of them were located in cities and towns, while the remaining 45.6% were located in villages. The number of dwellings in the district stood at 259,100, of which 210,200 are located in cities and towns. Almost 95% of the housing stock is privately owned by individuals.

Electricity infrastructure

The major electricity generator in Varna District is Varna TPP - the second largest thermal power plant in Bulgaria in terms of installed capacity with 1,260 MW. The high-voltage network in the district is well developed with total length of 240 km and three system substations. The low-voltage regional network comprises 524 km of electricity distribution lines and 11 local transformer substations.

Natural gas infrastructure

The main ring of the national gas distribution network crosses the area of Varna District. One of the three compressor stations along the national distribution network, Valchi Dol, is located in the district. The area of Varna District is also intersected by the transit interconnection network with Romania, served by the compressor station near Provadiya. The gas supply network for the end-users is still underdeveloped in the district, as only customers in the city of Varna have access to it.

Environmental status and risks

Varna District is rich in natural recreational resources and has a wide network of 37 preservation territories and biodiversity reserves. The levels of pollution in the district are below the national average, according to the district's and municipal development strategies. Nevertheless, high risk of air pollution related health problems exists in the municipalities of Varna, Devnya, Beloslav and Provadiya. Above-average water pollution levels are registered in the lower stretch of the rivers Kamchiya, Devnya and Provadiyska. Water pollution in the Varna and Beloslav lakes is caused by the large industrial plants, the thermal power plant and the port in Varna.



ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The total length of the road network in Varna District, including motorways, was 717 km in 2017. The length of motorways in the district was 58 km, first-class roads measured 139 km, second-class roads were 42 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 478 km.

The area of Varna District is crossed by Pan-European Corridor VIII, which spans from the Albanian port city of Durres to Varna. In the district the corridor is represented by the road section Byala - Varna and the railway section Asparuhovo - Varna.

The most important road in Varna District is the motorway stretch, part of Hemus Motorway, between the village of Nevsha and Varna. The Cherno More Motorway is under construction and as of January 2019 a 10.7 km section between Varna and the village of Priseltsi is operational.

The length of railway lines in the district came in at 197 km in 2017. The main railway lines crossing the district are Sofia - Varna, between Nevsha and Varna, and Plovdiv - Varna between Asparuhovo and Varna. As an important logistic centre Varna District is characterised by a relatively high density of the road and railway network and a high share of motorways and first class roads, 27.5% in 2017, compared to a national average of 18.7%.

The district has one of the four international airports in Bulgaria - Varna Airport.

VII.2. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourist resources

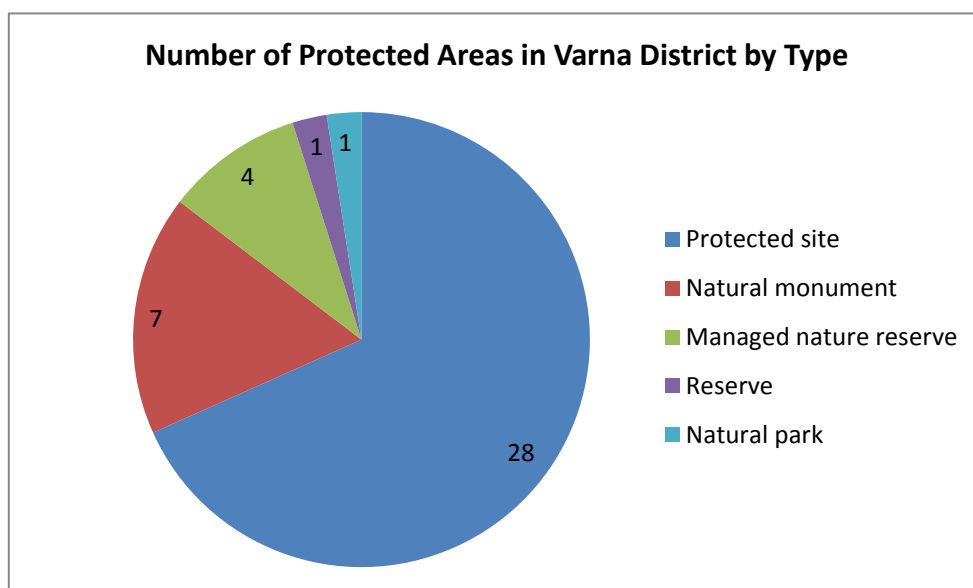
The main natural resource of the district is its geographical location on the Black Sea coast, which makes the district one of the two leading summer tourism destinations in Bulgaria. The district's territory encompasses the easternmost part of the Danubian Plain and part of the Black Sea coast. Varna District is located in two climate zones - the Black Sea zone, which covers the area within 30 km distance from the shore, and the humid continental climate zone in the rest of the district. Their characteristics include positive monthly average temperatures throughout the year, below average rainfall with winter peak and a time interval with temperatures above 20 degrees spanning between April and late October. The soil and climate in the district benefit the development of agriculture, most notably cereals, fruit and vegetables. Varna District is rich in water resources - along with the 79 km long Black Sea coastline, it also boasts two of the largest lakes in Bulgaria - Varna and Beloslav lakes. Other significant water basins include the rivers Kamchiya, Provadiyska,

Devnya, Batova and Dvoynitsa, as well as five dams. Medicinal mud is explored on the northern shore of Varna Lake.

Other major natural landmarks in Varna District include the rock formations - Pobitite Kamani near Varna city, the Provadiyan Plateau and the Royak Plateau in the western outskirts of the district.

As of January 2019, Varna District had 22 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive. The sites with biggest significance for tourism are Kamchiya River, which crosses the southern part of the district and is popular with its longose grove, protected in a UNESCO biosphere reserve, the natural park Zlatni Pyasatsi and the desert-like rock phenomenon Pobitite Kamani near the city of Varna.

Figure 19: Number of Protected Areas in Varna District by type



Source: Executive Environment Agency

The Bulgarian Executive Environmental Agency has declared a total of 41 protected areas, part of the National Ecological Network, in Varna District. The most popular among them as tourism resource are the natural park Zlatni Pyasatsi and the medieval Orthodox Christian cave monastery complex Aladzha Monastery just north of Varna, as well as the rock phenomenon Chudnite Skali near Dalgopol and the White Cliffs at the Black Sea coast near Byala.

In Vetrino Municipality there are two protected areas - a karst canyon and the habitats of Egyptian vulture and long-legged buzzard.



Cultural and historical heritage

As a developed tourist destination, Varna District has multiple and diverse cultural resources, which consist of historical heritage, archaeological sites, architecture and monuments, museums, galleries, temples, as well as local social resources, festivals and customs.

There are two reserves with the status of cultural monuments in Varna District - the territory of the ancient Milesian colony Odessos in the city of Varna and the remains of the ancient settlement Marcianopolis in the municipality of Devnya.

Archaeological sites

The most famous archaeological sites in Varna District are concentrated in and around the city of Varna - Aladzha Monastery, the Varna Roman Thermae and the Varna Necropolis.

- **Aladzha Monastery** is a medieval Orthodox Christian cave monastery complex, located in a protected area north of the city of Varna. It is hewn into a vertical karst cliff and was an active religious site between the XII and the early XVIII century. Nowadays its colourful murals are destroyed, but the complex is a popular tourist attraction and the site of thematic light shows.
- **The Roman Thermae** date back to the II century AD and are located within the city limits of modern-day Varna. The site is the fourth-largest preserved Roman thermae in Europe and the largest on the Balkan Peninsula.
- **The Varna Necropolis** is the site of discovery of the Gold of Varna, the oldest gold treasure in the world, and is considered by experts as one of the most important prehistoric archaeological sites worldwide. It is located just outside the city of Varna on the shore of Varna Lake. It was discovered in 1972 and contains 294 graves with artefacts belonging to the Chalcolithic Varna culture. The objects found in the Necropolis are exhibited in the National Historical Museum in the capital Sofia and in the Varna Archaeological Museum.

The most significant archaeological site of tourist importance in the district outside Varna municipality are the remains of the medieval fortress Ovech next to the town of Provadiya. It is located on a plateau above the town and was first inhabited by Byzantines between IV and VII century AD. It reached its highlight during the Second Bulgarian Empire between XII and XIV century.



The remains of Petrich Kale are located near the village of Avren and date back to the V century AD. The fortress was an important defense point during the Second Bulgarian Empire. Nowadays, the area is a popular climbing spot.

The remaining archaeological sites in the district include remains of medieval settlements and early Christian temples of minor tourist interest.

There are no architecture reserves in Varna District.

Historical sites

Historical sites on the territory of Varna District are represented by monuments and historical buildings. The **Euxinograd Residence**, a former royal summer palace and park on the Black Sea coast from the late XIX century, just north of the city of Varna, is regarded as the main architectural landmark and historical attraction in the district. The most numerous historical heritage sites in the district are monuments of local soldiers killed in wars, mainly the Second World War, which can be seen in most villages.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Varna District stood at 185. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 138 churches and two monasteries, followed by Islam with 38 mosques. The other religious temples in the district are three Protestant, two Catholic and two other Christian churches. The two monasteries are Aladzha Monastery and Varna Monastery St. Konstantin and Elena. The largest church is the 130-year old Dormition of the Mother of God Cathedral, one of the main landmarks of the city of Varna.

Table 18: Major Temples and Monasteries in Varna District		
Site	Religion	Municipality
Dormition of the Mother of God Cathedral	Orthodox Christianity	Varna
St. Nikolay Chudotvorets Church	Orthodox Christianity	Varna
St. Atanasiy Church	Orthodox Christianity	Varna
St. Petka Church	Orthodox Christianity	Varna

St. Archangel Michail Church	Catholicism	Varna
Aladzha Monastery Sv. Troitsa	Orthodox Christianity	Varna
Varna Monastery St. Konstantin I Elena	Orthodox Christianity	Varna
Azisie Dzhamisi	Islam	Varna
Suvorovo Mosque	Islam	Suvorovo
St. Kiril I Metodiy Church	Orthodox Christianity	Devnya

Local traditions, customs and crafts

The population in Varna District generally abides to the widespread Bulgarian customs, traditions and religious celebrations. There are also multiple local customs either in each municipality, or even in each village, or at a broader regional level in northeastern Bulgaria.

In the Avren Municipality, there are authentic folklore groups aiming to restore and preserve community rituals.

In the municipality of Aksakovo, a market for traditional foods and products from local producers is held regularly, as well as the initiative The Dexterity of Bulgarian Woman, where manufacturers offer handmade textiles, knitwear, embroidery, ceramics, icon painting and carving.

Beloslav Municipality is known for its handmade glass sculpture.

The traditional grape harvest called Babosum in Varna Municipality and in the Gagauz villages, is a festive event that is celebrated with music, songs and fun activities.

Traditional celebrations in Vetrino and Dolni Chiflik include Trifon Zarezan, Zasev, Todor's Day, Spring Eve, Lazar's Day and the Municipality Festival in May.

Wool processing has the traditions of a craft in Valchi Dol Municipality, as does pottery in the municipality of Suvorovo.

In the municipality of Dalgopol, the custom Enja is performed and the main craft is pottery.

In Provadia Municipality the best preserved traditional craft is the processing of skins.

Cultural activities and festivals

In 2019, a total of 28 local and international festivals will be held in Varna District, out of which 26 will be hosted by the city of Varna, one will be held in Suvorovo and one in the village of Dobrina. The events include:

Table 19: Festivals in Varna District in 2019		
Name	Municipality	Date
City Christmas Folklore Holidays Dryanovitsa	Varna	December 2019
Varna Oktoberfest	Varna	October 2019
International Music and Dance Festival Ethno Rhythms	Varna	Sept 5-10, 2019
XV World Animation Film Festival	Varna	Sept 11-16, 2019
37th Festival of Bulgarian Films Golden Rose	Varna	Sept 19-22, 2019
Traditional Folklore Festival Listopad na Spomenite	Varna	October 2019
European Children Music Festival Golden Sparkles	Varna	October 2019
Family Festival Smile Karin Home	Varna	September 2019
Folklore Festival Seloto na Orehte Pee - Dobrina	Provadiya	September 2019
Varna Rock Fest 2019	Varna	August 2019
International Red Cross and Health Film Festival	Varna	June 13-17, 2019
Children's Educational Fest Orange Sea	Varna	September 2019
International Music Festival Golden Dream	Varna	June 2019
International Theatre Festival Varna Summer	Varna	June 2019

International Young Talents Festival Golden Pearl	Varna	June 13 - Aug 13, 2019
Street Food Fest	Varna	June 14-16, 2019
International Festival Golden Wave	Varna	July 2019
Youth Festival FUNCITY+	Varna	August 2019
International Dance Marathon Slavyanski Venets	Varna	August 2019
Digital Arts Festival Futuro	Varna	August 2019
International Dance Festival Otkritie	Varna	May 1-10, 2019
International Festival of Poetry Slavic Embrace	Varna	May 22-25, 2019
Feast of Folk Art As Living Water	Suvorovo	Apr 27-28, 2019
International Exhibition Wine and Food Festival	Varna	April 2019
European Music Festival	Varna	Mar 25 - Apr 30, 2019
International Oriental Dance Festival Orient El Hob	Varna	Sept 7-10, 2019
Varna Ethnos Festival	Varna	June 8-9, 2019
XXIII International Exhibition of Crafts and Arts	Varna	August 2019

Galleries

There are eight galleries in Varna District, all of which are located in the city and municipality of Varna. The galleries include:

- **City Art Gallery - Varna** - hosts art events, exhibitions, concerts and fashion shows. The building dates back to the XIX century and is a prominent architectural landmark.
- **Art Gallery Largo - Varna** - established in 2008, it is concentrated on contemporary Bulgarian art and promotion of young talents.



- **Gallery 8 - Varna** - opened in 1988, exhibits art photography and sculpture objects.
- **Gallery Contemporary Area - Varna**
- **Gallery Active Art - Varna**
- **Art Zone Na Tamno - Varna**
- **Gallery Le Papillon - Varna**
- **Gallery - Graphite - Varna**

Museums

Varna District is rich in museums - as of 2017, it had seven museums registered under the National Cultural Heritage Law, according to NSI. They featured 171,046 exhibits, of which 2,521 digital exhibits, and registered 245,000 visits in 2017, of which 98,000 by foreign visitors. Along with these, the district abounds in other museums and exhibitions in different areas, some of which are unique in the country. They are concentrated geographically in the municipality of Varna.

The Varna Archaeological Museum was established at the end of the XIX century as a part of the City Library and is one of the largest institutions of this kind in Bulgaria. Its exhibits include the Gold of Varna - the world's most ancient gold treasure, dating to around 4600 BC. It displays artefacts from the region from the prehistoric, Thracian, Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman, medieval Bulgarian, Byzantine, Ottoman and Bulgarian National Revival epochs, including more than 900 medieval and Revival icons, and manages two open-air archaeological sites.

The Maritime Museum in Varna was established in 1923 and its exhibits include original ancient anchors found on the bottom of the Black Sea, ship head decorations, naval uniforms, model ships and an area dedicated to the participation of Bulgaria in the war with Serbia in 1885, the Balkan War, the First World War and the Second World War. The most popular exhibit is the museum ship Drazki - a replica of Bulgarian Navy's most widely used torpedo boat in the first half of the XX century.

The Museum of New History of Varna is dedicated to the history of the city as a port, cultural, commercial, industrial, tourist and medical centre during the period 1878-1939.

The Museum of the Revival in Varna is located in a typical XIX century house with traditional architecture. It exhibits artefacts from the revival period in the district, which took place later than in the rest of the country. Objects and documents witnessing the significance of the city during the Russian-Turkish wars and the city's economic development in this period are the highlights.



The Museum of Natural History in Varna was set up in 1962 in the city's Sea Garden. It contains specimens focused on the Black Sea region and its geology, hydrology, flora and fauna.

The Museum of Mosaics in Devnya is situated on top of a 21-room ruined Roman Villa and exhibits mosaics from the Roman and early Byzantine city of Marcianopolis, as well as other archaeological artifacts. Three of the mosaics are explored on-site, while the rest were moved from their original locations and restored in the museum.

The historical-ethnographic complex Proto-Bulgarian Settlement Fanagoria is the only open-air museum of its kind in the country. The complex is a copy of a Proto-Bulgarian settlement and battlefield from the period VI - VIII century AD and includes wooden firewalls with battle towers, furnished yurts, craft workshops, household items and furnishings.

Outside Varna Municipality, the **historical museums of Dalgopol and Suvorovo** count among the most interesting museums in the district, as well as the ethnographic exhibitions in Dolni Chiflik, Provadiya and the village of Tsarevtsi, Avren Municipality.

Art and crafts centres

Since the summer of 2017, the Street of Crafts has been operating in downtown Varna as an attraction offering various stained glass, icon painting, pottery, weaving, etching, engraving and carving objects and interactive demonstration of traditional crafts.

Theatres

In 2017, there were three operational theatres in Varna District - the **Drama Theatre Stoyan Bachvarov, State Puppet Theatre Varna and Theatre Balgaran**, all of them located in the city of Varna. Together, they organised 753 shows visited by 170,000 spectators, a 1.0% annual decrease compared to 2016. The puppet theatre performed 314 shows, while the other two theatres had a combined total of 439 shows.

Libraries

Varna District has 227 libraries, including regional, municipal, community centre libraries, university, school and special libraries, which ranks it third in Bulgaria behind the city of Sofia and Plovdiv District. The libraries in Varna District contained 3.4 million books and registered 610,097 visits in 2013, according to the latest NSI data. In 2017, the number of libraries with more than 200,000 books and other units in the fund stood at two in Varna District.



Other cultural institutions

Varna District hosts one opera - the State Opera Theatre in the city of Varna. It was established in 1947 and is located in a baroque building from 1912, known as one of the landmarks of the city of Varna.

The district was home to 164 *chitalishta*, or local community cultural centres, in 2017. Out of them, 37 were located in cities and towns and 127 in villages. In the five-year period 2012-2017 their number increased by 11. Four of the newly established centres were in the cities and towns and the remaining seven - in villages. Varna is the municipality with the highest number of cultural centres - 28, followed by Provadiya with 23 and Aksakovo with 21. In 95.1% of all centres there was an active library. According to NSI, in 2017 the cultural centres in Varna District organised 3,471 events.

In 2017, there were four cinemas with 20 screens in Varna District, unchanged from 2016. According to NSI, the number of films jumped by 14.2% on the year to 938, while the number of visitors marked an annual decrease of 7.7%.

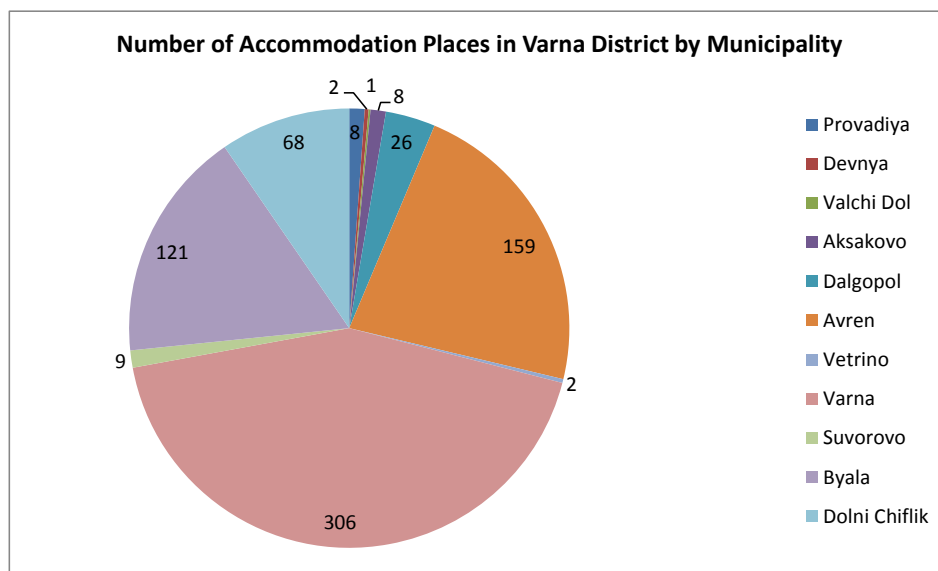
VII.3. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

In 2017, Varna District had 455 places for accommodation, or 13.6% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 70,391 beds, or 20.1% of the national aggregate. In the period January - November 2018, the number of registered overnights in the district already exceeded the annual sum for 2017 - 5.688 million against 5.558 million in the whole previous year. More than 83% of the overnights in the district were by foreigners as a consequence of the specialisation of Varna and the region in international sea tourism. The total number of visitors for the first 11 months of 2018 came in at 1.190 million tourists, of whom 72.5% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 329.4 mln, up from BGN 312.1 mln in the whole 2017.

There were a total of 710 registered accommodation places in Varna District as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism. Almost half of the facilities were located in Varna Municipality, while in the municipality of Beloslav there were no registered accommodation places.

Figure 20: Number of Accommodation Places in Varna District (by Municipality)



Source: Ministry of Tourism

In 2017, the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Hotel Management Company EOOD - BGN 23.143 mln
- Sunny Travel EOOD - BGN 18.936 mln
- HVD Hotels EAD - BGN 18.246 mln.

Tourist operators

The territorial structure of tour operators and tourism agencies in Varna District reflected the extreme concentration of tourism activities in Varna Municipality. As of January 2019, registered tour operators in Varna District counted 275, of which 267 in the municipality of Varna. The remaining companies were distributed by municipality as follows - three in Byala and Aksakovo each, and one in Devnya and Avren each. In more than half of the 12 municipalities there were no active tour operators.

In 2017, the leading tour operators and travel agencies in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Club Magelan OOD - BGN 35.183 mln
- Destination Touristic Services OOD - BGN 14.555 mln
- TUI Bulgaria EOOD - BGN 14.251 mln.



Tourist agencies

All 160 travel agencies in the district were registered in the municipality of Varna.

Entertainment

There are a large number of entertainment facilities in Varna District. They include the Sea Casino Cultural Centre, eight shopping malls and trade centres, the National Sport Facility Palace, more than 20 other sports facilities, including multifunctional halls and complexes, football grounds, tennis courts, kart racing circuits and gyms.

Tourist information centres

As of January 2019, there were four tourist information centres in Varna District - in Varna, Provadiya, Byala and the village of Staro Oryahovo in Dolni Chiflik Municipality.

Exhibition centers for the presentation of local natural and cultural heritage

The base astronomic observatory Nikolay Kopernik in Avren counts among the natural exhibition centres in the district.

Other facilities

There are five sea resorts and tourist complexes in Varna District - Zlatni Pyasatsi, St. Konstantin and Elena, Riviera, Grand Hotel Varna Resort and Sunny Day. They feature numerous tourist attractions, aqua parks and other areas for recreational activity.

Existing travel offers

Three of the 100 National Tourist Sites are in Varna District - the Archaeological Museum of Varna, the Naval Museum and the Museum of Mosaics in Devnya.

Varna District is featured with three sites in the list of 50 little known tourist sites in Bulgaria. These are the rock monasteries near Provadiya, Chudnite Skali and the Early Christian Basilica.

- The Provadiyan rock monasteries are scattered throughout the municipality of Provadiya and represent a complex of churches and rock cells cut into the rocks.



- The rock phenomenon Chudnite Skali is located four km away from the village of Asparuhovo, Dalgopol Municipality. They represent an array of about ten beautiful rock needles with a height of 40-50 metres, resembling fortress towers.
- The archaeological remains of the Early Christian Basilica in Varna are located 4 km southwest of the city centre. The church is unique with the unusual for early Christianity architecture and the rare character of the 120 sq m mosaics.

Existing tourist routes

The most popular tourist routes and hiking trails in Varna District include:

- Aladzha Monastery - Zlatni Pyasatsi Resort - eight kilometres through the natural park
- Vinitsa area in the city of Varna - Kranevo village (Dobrich District) - 15 km in forest areas parallel to the coastline
- Kamchiya eco trail - in Dolni Chiflik Municipality, through bird habitats and protected longose areas along the river Kamchiya
- Galata area in the city of Varna - Pasha Dere area - nine kilometres along the coastline.

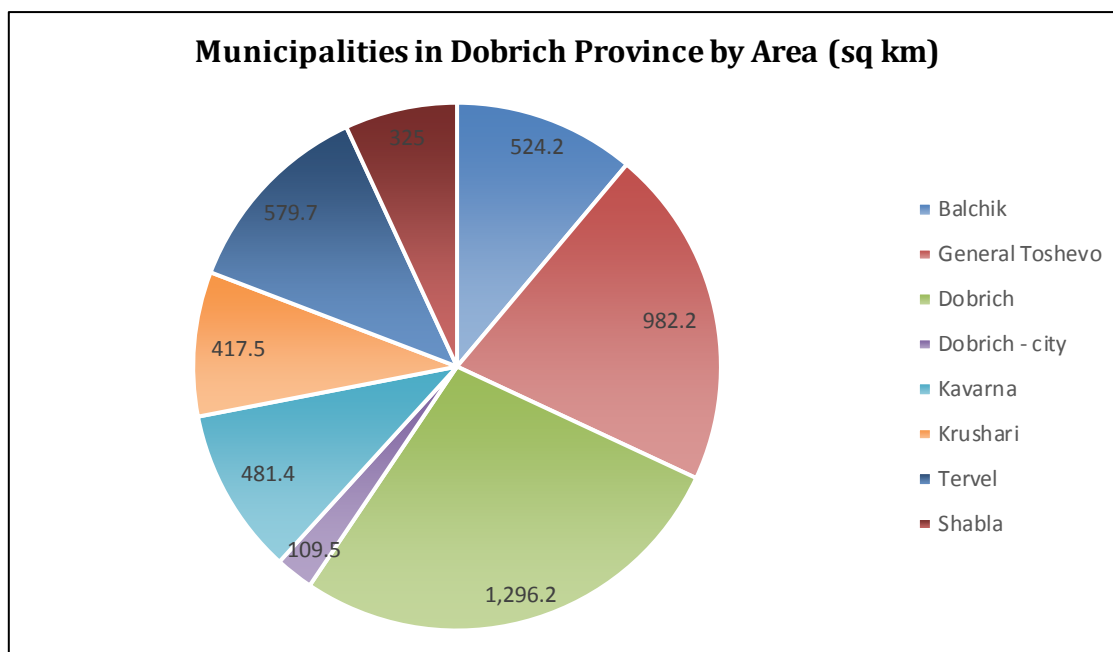
VIII. DOBRICH DISTRICT

VIII.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Dobrich is situated in the northeastern part of Bulgaria, occupying most of Southern Dobrudzha region. It is the 7th largest district in the country with an area of 4,719.7 sq km and borders with the districts Varna, Shumen, Silistra and Black Sea coast. Its administrative centre is the city of Dobrich. The district consist of eight municipalities, which contains 215 settlements of which six cities and 209 villages. The municipalities are Balchik, General Toshevo, Dobrich, Kavarna, Krushari, Tervel and Shabla.

Figure 21: Municipalities in Dobrich District (sq km)



Source: National Statistical Institute

VIII.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Dobrich district was the 14th largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 176,145 people or 2.5% share of the total population in Bulgaria.

The bulk or 69.1% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 30.9% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative center - the municipality of Dobrich.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Dobrich district was 37.3 people per sq km. The highest population density in the district, of 768.2 people per sq km, was registered in Dobrich-city municipality, while the least densely municipality was Krushari with 9.7 people/sq km.

Natural growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Dobrich district was negative, at -8.8% per 1,000 people. As a result, the district's population fell by 1,557 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at -14.4 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -6.2 per 1,000 people.

In 2017 the birth rate in the district was 7.9% per 1,000 people, which is slight decrease compared to 8.2% per 1,000 people in 2016. Dobrich district register the highest infant mortality rate - 12.9 per 1000 people. The overall mortality rate was 16.7 per 1,000 people, of which male mortality rate was 18.6 and female - 14.9 per 1,000 people.

Migration

Dobrich district lost 736 people due to migration in 2017. The number of immigrants exceeded the number of emigrants in most of the district's municipalities. The only positive migration, of 38 people, was registered in Dobrich municipality, while Dobrich-city municipality had the highest negative migration, of 401 people.

Sex structure

Female dominated the sex structure of the population in Dobrich district in 2017. They held 51.3% share of the district's population or 90,406 people, while the male stood at 85,739 people with a share of 48.7%. On every 1,000 men there were 1,054 women.

Population structure by age

The aging process of the population in Dobrich district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the persons aged 65 and more numbered 37,885, or 21.5% of the district's total population. In comparison to 2016, the share of the population in this age group grew by 0.5 percentage points.

The working age population in Dobrich district was 104,922 as of end-2017, or 59.6% of the total population in the district, with 55,385 men and 49,537 women, which is below the national average of 60.3%. Under working age share was equal to the country's 15.1%.

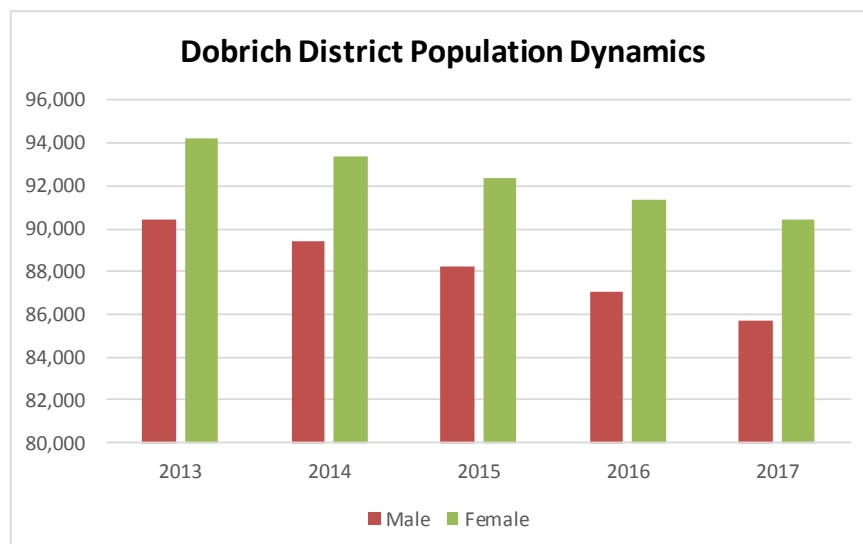
Dobrich-city municipality boasted the highest share, 61.3%, of working-age population among the municipalities in the district. The municipality of Tervel followed with a 60.6% share, but its total number of working age population was eighteen times lower than the 51,832 people in Dobrich-city municipality. The

bottom position in terms of working-age population share was occupied by Shabla municipality where only 54.6% of the people were of working age. For under working age the municipality of Krushari held the highest share of 18.2%, while Shabla registered the lowest share of 11.5%.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Dobrich district averaged 1.0% for the period 2013-2017. At the beginning of the period, there were 184,680 people in the district with an RNI of -6.7 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to 176,145 people and the RNI worsened to -8.8 per 1,000 people.

Figure 21: Population Dynamics in Dobrich District 2013-2017



Source: National Statistical Institute

Economy overview

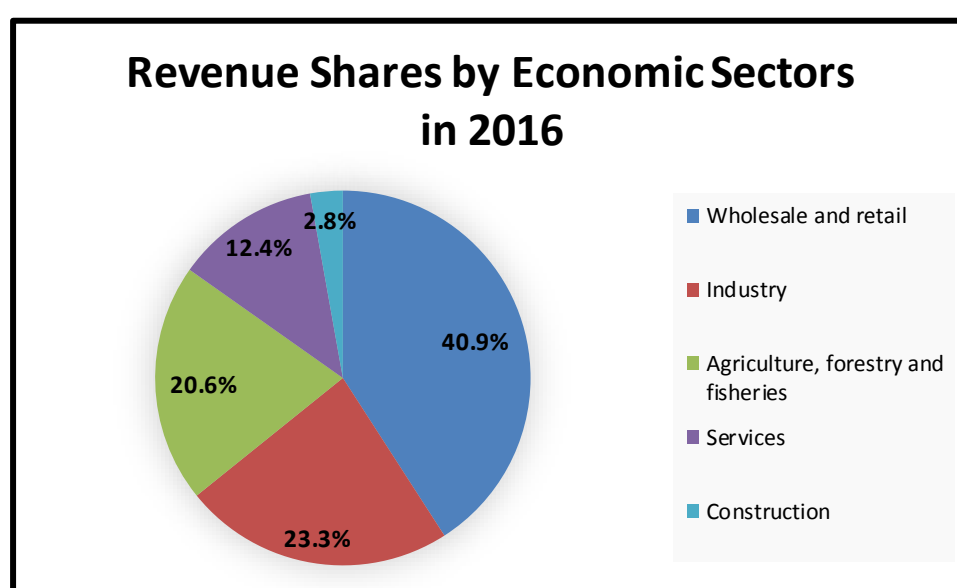
In 2016, the economy of Dobrich district was dominated by Agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector, which registered the highest production share of 31.0%. Out of the total 9,572 non-financial enterprises, 5,215 or 54.5% are located on the territory of Dobrich-city municipality, followed by 1,377 or 14.4% in Balchik municipality, while the smallest numbers of companies, 160 were located in the municipality of Krushari.

In terms of size, the micro enterprises, employing up to nine people, were dominant with a 93.6% share of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people had a 6.4% share, while large

employers, with staff of 250 or more people represented only 0.1% of the total number.

The net sales revenue structure of the companies in the district was dominated by wholesale and retail, which accounted for 40.9% of the BGN 3.542 bln generated by the district's economy in 2016, followed by Agriculture, forestry and fisheries with 20.9%, and Manufacturing industry with 20.9%, respectively.

Figure 22: Revenue Shares by Economic Sectors



Source: National Statistical Institute

Economy analysis by sectors

Sector wise, the leading five sectors in the district's economy in terms of operating revenue in 2017 sliced a 73.9% share in the district's total operating revenue. However, the share of the different leading sector varied significantly. Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities and Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles had a share close to 25% each, while Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles and Manufacture of food products stood at 12% and 9%, respectively. The lowest share among the top sectors was 5%, generated by Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply.

Table 18: Top 10 Companies in Dobrich District by Operating Revenue in 2017

Company	Municipality	Sector	Operating Revenue (BGN mln)
Sun Foods EOOD	Balchik	Manufacture of food products	126.4
Han Asparuh Trade EOOD	Dobrich-city	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	91.4
Albena AD	Balchik	Food and beverage service activities	89.7
Klas Olio AD	Dobrich	Manufacture of food products	65.9
Gospodinovi Stoimarket OOD	Dobrich-city	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	64.7
Agrochemicals OOD	Dobrich-city	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	56.6
Agrofert OOD	Dobrich	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	56.5
NPI Bulgaria EOOD	Dobrich-city	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	34.9
D S Home OOD	Dobrich-city	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	34.7
Nedko Nedkov - Ovcharovo EOOD	Dobric	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities	32.8

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

In 2017, there was public water supply for 99.9% of the total population in the Dobrich district. The share of population to suffer from regime of water supply was 0.1%, compared to the 3.0% national average.

The water supply network is operated by ViK Dobrich AD, which provides services to the whole district, through 190 water sources and 93 water pumping stations. The built water network is 3,392 km long, of which 1,563 km are external pipelines and 1,892 km internal network.

Sewerage

Urban wastewater collecting system was available for 70.8% of the district population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0%. Dobrich district registered higher share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 67.6% versus the country's average of 63.4%. In addition, the district's share of population with untreated water collection system was 3.2%, lower than the national average of 12.6%. Wastewater collecting is done through 254 km long sewerage network and seven sewage pumping stations, while the treatment is carried out by five wastewater treatment plants located in the towns of Dobrich, Albena, Balchik, General Toshevo and Shabla.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 60,382 residential buildings in the Dobrich district, by 103 more than in the previous year. The bulk or 61.8% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages, while the remaining 38.2% were located in its cities and towns. However, 60.6% of the all 101,849 dwellings in the district were in the cities and towns.

Electricity infrastructure

The meteorological characteristics of the northern Black Sea coast are a prerequisite for the development of electricity generation through wind energy parks. The largest wind farm in Bulgaria is built in the municipality of Kavarna with installed capacity of 156 MW. The plant has the capacity to produce 340 gigawatt hours per year. A total of 18 renewable energy sources were build In Shabla municipality in the 2008-2010 period.

The electricity source of Dobrich district is the electricity system of the country, through 110/20 kV substations. There are two substations in the municipality of Dobrich-city, from which Dobrich municipality is also supplied.

All the municipalities receive a power supply of 110 kV and the individual settlements are supplied with the medium voltage network. The total length of the medium voltage power lines in the district is 2,017 km and consists of 1,205 transformer stations with a total power of 541,293 kVA. The largest number of transformer stations is 288, located in the municipality of Dobrich, while the longest power line is on the territory of Balchik municipality - 353.36 km.

Municipality	Medium-voltage line (km)	Transformer posts	Transformer posts kVA	Renewable energy sources	Renewable energy sources (MW)
Dobrich-city	247,82	288	265,640	1	14.1
Dobrich	320,01	156	26,330	6	15.1
Balchik	353,36	169	92,880	16	29.15
General Toshevo	245,74	129	34,723	9	16.5
Kavarna	192,25	109	53,010	67	371.6
Krushari	277,72	132	21,880	0	0
Tervel	213,56	102	30,540	2	6.2
Shabla	166,42	60	16,290	18	45.1

Source: Dobrich district development strategy

Natural gas infrastructure

The main ring of the national gas distribution network crosses the area of Dobrich district. One of the three compressor stations along the national distribution network, Kardam-1, is located in the district. The area of Dobrich district is also intersected by the main gas pipeline, linking the Republic of Bulgaria with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the two transit interconnection networks with Turkey, Greece and Macedonia. Kardam-2, one of the six compressor stations along the transit gas transmission network is also located in the district.

Automatic gas distribution stations (AGRs) are deviated from the national gas distribution network to provide natural gas for large industrial sites in the cities of General Toshevo and Dobrich.

The gas distribution network is operated by Aresgas EAD which provides services to the municipalities of Dobrich, Dobrich-city and Tervel. The longest network, 110 km, which services a total of 3,516 consumers is located in Dobrich-city municipality, followed by the 38.6 km long gas network, servicing 979 consumers in Kavarna municipality. The municipality of General Toshevo is supplied by 30 km long gas distribution network, while Tervel and Shabla municipalities have gas supply network with length of 2.8 km and 1.3 km, respectively.



Environmental status and risks

In 2016, Dobrich district was among the areas with the lowest pollution of the air with carbon dioxide - 5.0 tonnes per sq km, compared to 281 tonnes per sq km at national level.

The district is not rich on rivers and other surface waters. There are total of three rivers.

Protected territories occupy 28.3 sq km of the Dobrich district, with protected areas having the largest share. As of January 2019, the district had 21 Natura 2000 sites.

The priority risk factor is the Cherna Voda NPP on the territory of Romania, which is only 90 km away from Dobrich district and the natural geographic factors would adversely affect it during a hypothetical nuclear accident.

ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Dobrich District is mainly served by a regional road network through second-class roads. There are no Pan-European transport corridors or motorways that go through its territory. The total length of the road network was 883 km in 2017. The length of first-class roads measured 83 km, second-class roads measured 242 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 498 km.

The railway network in the district totalled 155 km, remaining unchanged in the period 2013-2017. A significant railway line is crossing the territory of Dobrich district, which is used for transportation of goods in the country and abroad, to Romania.

The implementation of foreign trade by means of water transport is facilitated by the port of Balchik, which is the third largest cargo port on the Black Sea coast. Another smaller port is located in the city of Kavarna.

VIII.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

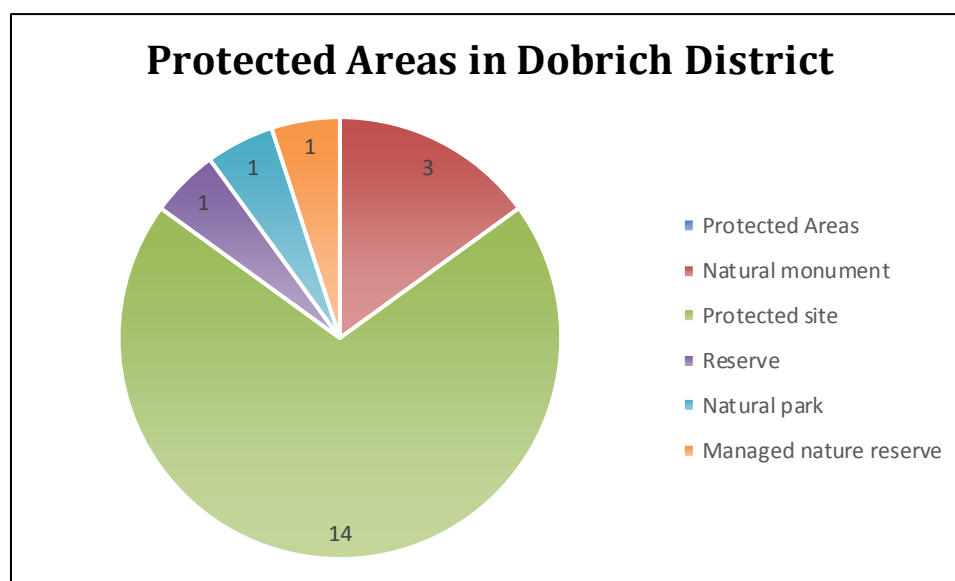
Natural tourist resources

The district is located on the territory of Ludogorsko-Dobrudzhanski loess plateaus, thus covering the whole of Dobrudzha and part of Ludogorsko plateau. Dobrich district is located in two climate zones - the Black Sea zone, which covers the area within 30 km distance from the shore, and the humid continental climate zone in the rest of the district.

Dobrich district is very poor in water resources, which occupy only 0.3%, compared to national average of 2.0%, except the 100 km long Black Sea coast line, spanning the municipalities of Balchik, Kavarna and Shabla. Significant rivers that run through the district are Suha Reka and Batova. Its territory also encompasses three lakes - Durankulashko, Ezeretsko and Shablensko, 44 dams and over 250 natural fountains, fed by karst waters. Especially specific are the small salt ponds, the so called Tuzla - Balchiska, Shablenska and Nanevska, the bottom of which is covered with healing mud.

There are a total of 20 protected areas (PA) in Dobrich district, according to the Executive Environment Agency. The most popular among them are the reserve with international importance and historic place Kaliakra, the natural park Zlatni Pyasatsi and the Durankulak lake, which is one of the four protected areas from the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which the Republic of Bulgaria signed in 1975.

Figure 23: Protected Areas in Dobrich District



Source: Executive Environment Agency

Other major natural landmarks in Dobrich district include Aleksandriyska Gora - the only natural deposit of lime tree plantations in the region, Bolata bay and Shablensko ezero, which connects two coastal lakes.

The natural conditions, especially soils and climate, are particularly suitable for growing cereals and some technical crops such as wheat, soy, corn and sunflower. In the valley of the Batova River fertile alluvial and alluvial-meadow soils are the most suitable for cultivation of vegetable and fodder crops.



Cultural and historical heritage

In Dobrich district there are two reserves with the status of cultural monuments - the National archeological reserve Yailata and medieval fortress Kaliakra and its adjacent territory.

As of January 2019, Dobrich District had 20 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive. The sites with biggest significance for tourism are the natural park Zlatni Pyasatsi, the Chaira area, one of the few preserved pastures with semi-natural steppe vegetation.

Archaeological sites

Dobrich district is rich in terms of archaeological sites. They include ancient settlements, tombs, fortifications, necropolises and ruins. In Balchik and Kavarna municipalities are found a number of archaeological areas:

The temple of Mother Goddess - Cybele in Balchik is the only open and preserved Hellenistic temple not only in Bulgaria but on the Balkans. It is believed that the temple was active for 700 years, where rituals were performed even after the introduction of Christianity as a religion.

The ancient and medieval fortress - Balchik - The first ancient fortress founded in the city of Balchik, dates back to 1st millennium BC. The fortress's territory spans on more than 60.7 hectares and is not yet fully explored. Parts of the fortress walls, gates and defensive towers have been revealed.

On the territory of Balchik municipality are also located two late antique fortresses, an ancient settlement, one ancient and one medieval necropolis and eight tumuluses.

National Archeological Reserve Yailata, Kavarna municipality - a 45.3 ha sea basin, separated from the sea by 50 metres to 60 metres of rocks. The reserve includes a cave city with 101 dwellings inhabited as early as the 5th millennium BC. Three necropolises of the 3rd - 5th century BC are carved in the rocks. In the northern part of the reserve there is a small early Byzantine fortress, built at the end of the 5th century AD. Partially, four towers and one tower-gate are preserved. Since the antiquity, there have been preserved another sanctuary, sacrificial stones, wineries and four buried tombs. During the middle ages the caves were used as a monastery complex. On the walls of some of them there are Bulgar signs - runes, crosses and stone icons.



Chirakman cape and the Bizone area represent an ancient city founded by Thracians in 6th -7th century BC. Fragments of the fortress wall, which stretches 250 m long, can be seen in the eastern foot of Chirakman. On the cape can be founded a restored, 29 m long church and one of the most well researched and the largest medieval necropolis in Bulgaria.

In the municipality of Krushari are situated the only **Alanian necropolis** in Bulgaria, near Alexandria village and the largest rock monastery complex in Bulgaria and Europe Giaur Evleri:

Rock monastery complex Giaur Evleri is located on three levels and includes a church, chapel and large dormitory area made of rocks. The central catholic church is thoroughly excavated with naos in the form of a square 3.10 m long and 1.90 m high and a three-dimensional altar was formed on the eastern wall.

The Durnakulak lake is also an archaeologically important area of Dobrich district. Pithouses of the oldest known inhabitants of Dobrudzha, dating to 5100-4700 BC, have been unearthed near the west shore, as well as 3500-3400 BC mound burials and a Sarmatian necropolis from Late Antiquity. The Big Island of Lake Durankulak is the site of an Eneolithic settlement of 4600-4200 BC, a cultural monument of national importance. The island also features a 1300-1200 BC fortified settlement, a Hellenistic rock-hewn cave sanctuary of Cybele (3rd century BC) and a Bulgar settlement from the 9th-10th century AD. Because of its age and importance, the archaeological complex has been dubbed the "Bulgarian Troy".

In the municipality of Kavarna are registered 68 archaeological sites, including ancient settlements, fortifications and necropolises, from which 40 are categorised as national importance and the rest are of local importance. High concentration of archeological monuments of culture is located in the villages Balgarevo, Kamen Briag, Topola and the city of Kavarna.

Architectural reserves

Although the Dobrich district does not have architecture reserves, it owns well developed architectural tourist resources. There are 62 architectural monuments in the district, including the former hotel Moscow, the old train station and the former Bulgarian-Soviet friendship building.

Historical sites

Historical sites on the territory of Dobrich District are represented mainly by monuments and historical buildings. Most of them are monuments of local soldiers killed in wars and Bulgarian enlighteners. Architectural and Sculpture Memorial

Complex Han Asparuh, located in Dobrich-city municipality is the largest monument of the Bulgarian ruler khan Asparuh.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Dobrich District stood at 142. Orthodox Christianity prevailed with 78 churches and one chapel, followed by Islam with 56 mosques and two turbes. The other religious temples in the district are five Protestant churches.

The oldest Orthodox church that can be seen in Dobrich is Sveti Velikomachenik Georgi.

In the Sveto Vaznesenie church in Spasovo village, General Toshevo municipality, is the only iconostasis in Bulgaria, where the typical for the country martenitsa is depicted by carvings.

Cultural activities and festivals

In 2019, a total of 32 local, national and international festivals will be held in Dobrich District, out of which 11 will be hosted by Balchik municipality, eight by General Toshevo municipality and six by Kavarna municipality.

Table 19: Festivals in Dobrich District in 2019		
Name	Municipality	Date
Regional children dance festival White Swallow	General Toshevo	Apr 13, 2019
Folklore flair Song and dances from sunny Dobrudzha	Dobrich	June, 2019
International cheerleading dance festival Golden Pompon	Balchik	June, 2019
The Bread festival	Dobrich-city	June, 2019
Talents festival	Dobrich-city	June 1, 2019
International youth music competition Hopes, Talents, Artists	Dobrich-city	September

International Enyov folklore festival Near Dryan dam	General Toshevo	June, 2019
National festival of the slumber and old urban song Give me a sea	Shabla	June 8-9, 2019
National lavender festival General Toshevo	General Toshevo	June 22, 2019
Russian song festival Ulybka	General Toshevo	July 6, 2019
Dobrudzha folklore flair Virgin Mary	General Toshevo	August, 2019
A gathering of the Bulgarian settlers from North Dobrudja	General Toshevo	September, 2019
Fertility feast Kardam autumn	General Toshevo	September, 2019
Sarma and meatballs festival	General Toshevo	Nov 8, 2019
Bulgarian folklore youth fair With Bulgaria in hearth	Kavarna	May, 2019
National festival of amateur theaters	Kavarna	June, 2019
Fire festival Chirakman	Kavarna	August, 2019
Melon feast	Kavarna	August, 2019
Clam and fish fest	Kavarna	Aug 30 - Sept 1, 2019
Folklore festival With songs and dances in Bulgarevo	Kavarna	September, 2019
Festival of groups in elderly people homes Golden Autumn	Tervel	Sept 5, 2019

Municipal feast of koledarski groups Oy Koledo, my koledo	Tervel	December
Amateur festival Lazarovden	Balchik	Apr 20, 2019
International chorus festival The sounds of Black Sea	Balchik	June, 2019
International dance arts festival	Balchik	June, 2019
International art festival Morning Star	Balchik	June, 2019
International short film festival In the palace	Balchik	June 29-30, 2019
Children's festival Sand creations	Balchik	July, 2019
International theatric festival Friends of Bulgaria	Balchik	July 8-11, 2019
Music festival Balchik Classic days	Balchik	July 20-27, 2019
International folklore festival Dancing and singing in Albena	Balchik	September, 2019
National folklore festival Sea of rhythms	Balchik	Sept 21-24, 2019

Galleries

As of 2017, there are three galleries in Dobrich district:

Art Gallery Balchik stores 1,500 works of 447 Bulgarian and foreign artists, 556 artists painting, 579 graphics, 118 watercolors and posters, 170 cartoons and 76 sculptures. In the lobby centerpiece is the torso of the god Dionysus (Greek replica of the original), a symbol of the ancient name of the city - Dionisopolis.



Art Gallery Dobrich, located in Dobrich-city municipality, exhibits works by Bulgarian artists - painting, graphics, sculpture and objects of paper. The building of the gallery is neoclassic and is one of the few preserved in the city since the 1930s. It is a monument of culture and one of the 100 national tourist sites in Bulgaria. On two floors, in nine halls, there is a permanent exhibition of the gallery displaying masterpieces of painting, sculpture and graphics from early 20th century to the 1990s.

Art Gallery Kavarna, Kavarna municipality stores 1,000 art works.

Museums

As of end-2017, Dobrich district had six museums of national cultural value, according to NSI. They featured 241,000 exhibits and registered 212,000 visits in 2017, of which 47,000 visits were by foreign tourists. Compared to 2016, the total number of the visitors decreased with 20.0%, while the visits from foreigner dropped by 61.8%.

The **history museum in Balchik** preserves findings, illustrating the material culture of the population and the environs of Balchik city since the emergence of the town in the 6th century BC until 1940. The exposition also includes marble statues and epigraphic monuments from the discovery in Balchik - the temple of Pontius goddess, mother Cybele.

The **regional historical museum Dobrich**, located in the municipality of Dobrich-city preserves 180,000 exhibits from which, one of the richest in the country and the Balkans prehistoric collections of finds from the archeological complex near Durankulak, one of the largest collections of medieval weapons in Bulgaria and the Dobrudzhanski Vapros collection, which is the only in the country.

The **historical museum in Kavarna** was opened in 1971. Its exhibition follows the Kavarna town history from the 5th century until 1940. It features objects that reflect the culture of the people who inhabited Dobrudzha.

The **historical museum in Tervel** municipality includes three collections - archeological, ethnographic and artistic. Over the past 20 years, the museum has been closed and non-functioning, but rehabilitation is under way.

Three ethnographic museums are located in the district, in the municipalities of Kavarna, Balchik and Dobrich-city. Other three museum exhibits and exposures are located in the municipality of Dobrich-city and one museum site in Balchik municipality.



The **Revival complex in Balchik** is one of the most visited museum exhibits in the city. It includes the St. Nicholas Temple, built in 1865-1866, and a complete rebuilding of the old mutual school that existed in this place from the middle of the 19th century until the first half of the 20th century.

Art and crafts centers

The largest number of amateur artistic, folklore and music ensembles in Bulgaria is in Dobrich-city municipality. They number more than 150 and regularly organise and participate in various local and national events, competitions and festivals.

In the town of Dobrich is located Art centre Palitra, which unites all performing and musical arts in its three dance halls, four music cabinets and a concert hall.

Professional Folklore Ensemble Dobrudzha is set up in 1954 and its main task is to search, preserve and popularise the folklore heritage of the Dobrudzha region.

Theaters

Dobrich district hosts two theaters, both in Dobrich-city municipality - **Yordan Yovkov drama theater and puppet theater Dora Gabe**. According to NSI, in 2017 the theaters have organized 370 performances, which were visited by 44,553 people, registering an annual increase both in performances and the number of visits, with 3.4% and 7.0%, respectively.

There are three active music groups on the territory of Dobrich district. A total of 62 concerts were organised, and were visited by 26,800 people.

Libraries

Dobrich district has 130 libraries, including regional, municipal, community centre libraries, university, school and special libraries. They contained 1.7 million books and register about 20,000 visits annually.

In 2017, according to the NSI's research for the libraries with more than 200,000 books and other units of the library fund, the Dobrich district's fund contains 398,000 library documents. Registered readers in the libraries in the district are 3,552, or 7.6% less than the previous year, while the visits increased by 15.3% and reached 73,000.

The regional library Dora Gabe is the main library in Dobrich district. It contains the largest book storage on the territory of Dobrich district with a fund of over 368,000 library units, archive of print, publishing and literature.



Other cultural institutes

In 2017, the Dobrich district was home to 121 chitalishta, or local community cultural centres. Out of them, 13 were located in towns and 108 in villages. In the five-year period 2012-2017 their number increased by 20. Dobrich is the municipality with the highest number of cultural centres - 41, followed by General Toshevo with 24 and Tervel with 13. In 82.6% of all centres there was an active library. According to NSI, the cultural centres in Shumen district organised 2,260 events in 2017.

Chitalishte Yordan Yovkov, Dobrich-city municipality is established in 1870 and is the oldest and unique cultural and educational institution on the territory of Dobrich. It contains a library with a fund of over 173,000 books.

VIII.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

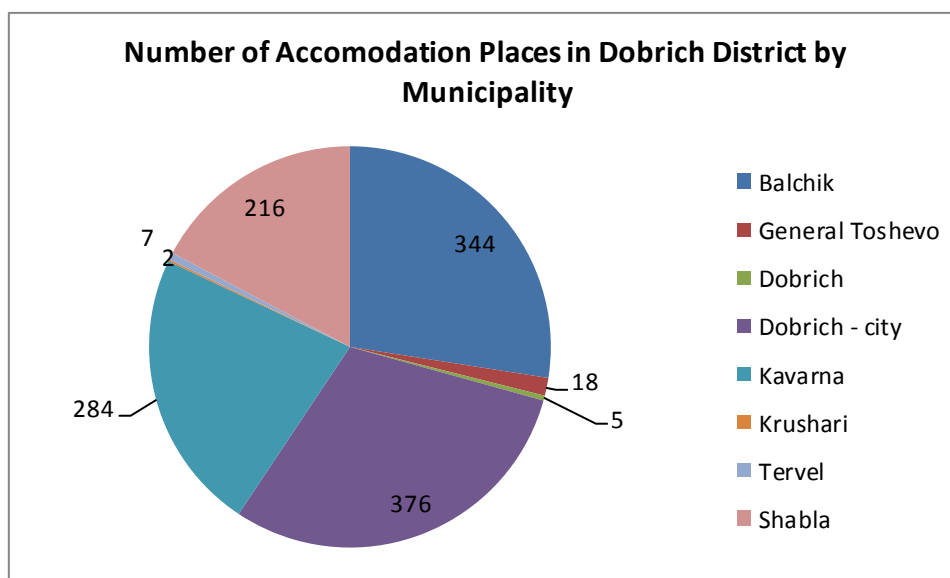
In 2017, Dobrich district had 165 places for accommodation, or 4.9% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 32,426 beds, or 9.3% of the national aggregate.

In the period January-November 2018, the number of registered overnights in the district exceeded 2.372 million. The share of foreigners in the total overnights was 77.7%, outmatching the national average of 67.2%. The total number of visitors for the first eleven months of 2018 came in at 472,499 tourists, of which 67.1% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January- November 2018 stood at BGN 132.9 bln, or BGN 13.795 more than the sum in the whole 2017.

Accommodation services

There were a total of 1,252 active registered accommodation places in Dobrich district as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism. In all of the eight municipalities in the district were registered accommodation places.

Figure 23: Number of Accommodation places in Dobrich District by Municipality



Source: Ministry of Tourism, Bulgaria

More than 56% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities added another 23%, followed by 3-star units with 19%. The four-star hotels numbered 10, while the 5-star were only two.

In 2017, the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Lighthouse Golf & Spa Hotel AD - BGN 12.281 mln;
- Golf Resort Management EAD - BGN 10.311 mln;
- White Lagoon AD - BGN 4.774 mln.

Tourist operators

The territorial structure of tour operators and tourism agencies in Dobrich district reflected the extreme concentration of tourism activities in Dobrich municipality. As of January 2019, registered tour operators in Shumen district counted 33, the most, 19 were registered in Dobrich municipality, followed by 10 in Balchik. The tour operators in the municipality of Kavarna were only three and one in Shabla. In the rest four municipalities there were no active tour operators.

Tourist agencies

There were a total of 17 registered tourist agencies in Dobrich district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data. The bulk or 11 of the



companies were headquartered in the municipality of Shumen. The Dobrich had the highest number of companies - 8. Another seven travel agencies were registered in Balchik, while the last two are located in Kavarna municipality.

In 2017, the leading tour operators/travel agents in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Albena Tour EAD - BGN 11.510 mln;
- Dobar Den EOOD - BGN 3.018 mln;
- E-Tours OOD - BGN 0.914 mln.

Entertainment

The Dobrich district's entertainment facilities include Kaliakra stadium, sports complex Izida Sport and 25 small sport facilities in the city of Dobrich.

The Lighthouse Golf and SPA, located in Balchik, provides hotel accommodation and holiday homes. The complex features a 6,100 m golf course and five lakes with a total area of 33,000 sq m.

Tourist information centres

As of end-January 2019, there are two tourist information centres in Dobrich district - in the towns of Balchik and Kranevo. Both are engaged in the provision of tourist information, advertising and information on the competence of the various institutions on tourism issues.

The tourist information centre in Balchik is located inside the largest mill on the Balkan Peninsula.

Exhibition centers for the presentation of local natural and cultural heritage

The regional library Dora Gabe is the leading cultural and information center for Dobrich district, which organises and conducts cultural and educational initiatives.

Other facilities

Dobrich district has shooting range and horse base in municipality of Dobrich-city. The Black Sea resort Albena is located in Balchik municipality.

Existing travel offers

In Dobrich district are located some of the 100 Tourist Sites in Bulgaria:

Table 20: Top Tourist Sites in Dobrich District

Site Number in the 100 Tourist Sites List	Sites	Municipality
23	Art Gallery - Dobrich; House monument Yordan Yovkov	Dobrich
24	Architectural-park complex Dvoretza; Botanical garden; Cape Kaliakra;	Balchik
24b	Historical museum Kavarna; Archeological reserve Kaliakra	Kavarna

Among the 50 less known tourist sites in Bulgaria, there are two that are on the Dobrich district's territory. The museum Old Dobrich is an open-air museum where the traditional Dobroudzha crafts from the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century are preserved. Teketo near the village Obrochishte is a prayer house of the Muslim saint Akh Jazala Baba and his Christian counterpart St. Atanas is an religious and architectural monument.

Existing tourist routes

The most popular tourist routes and hiking trails in Dobrich District include:

- Resort complex Albena-Shabla lake - route length 114 km;
- City of Balchik-National Archeological Reserve Yailata - route length 78 km;
- City of Kavarna-cape Kaliakra - route length 13.6 km;
- City of Dobrich-city of Balchik - the route is three days long, passing through National Archeological Reserve Yailata and cape Kaliakra - route length 122 km;
- City of Kavarna-Durankulak lake - the route type is combined, including transportation with automobiles and hiking.

IX. SHUMEN DISTRICT

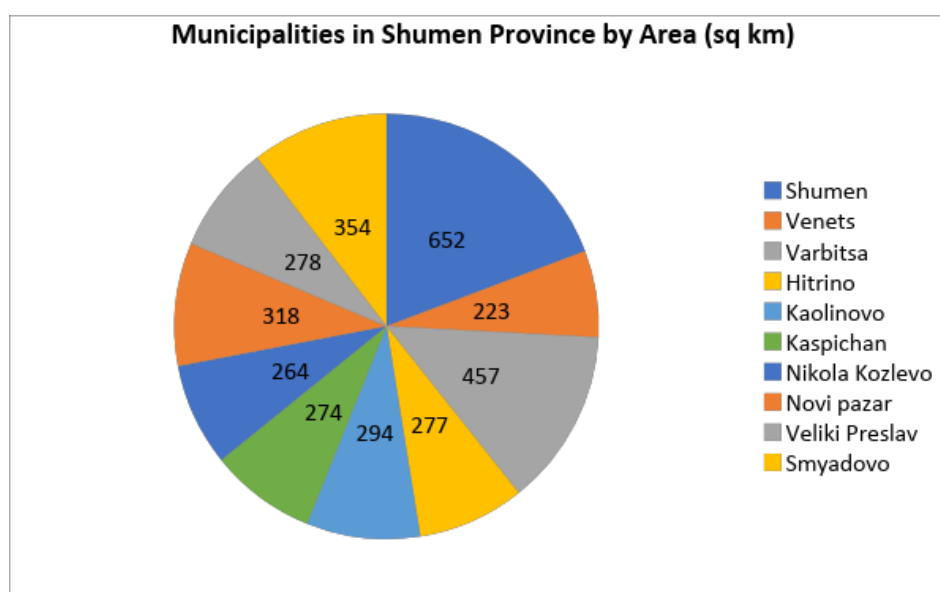
IX.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Shumen district is located in the central part of Northeastern Bulgaria and occupies an area of 3,390 sq. km, which represents 3.05% of the territory of the country. The district is part of the Northeastern NUTS-2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics - Level 2) Planning Region, which includes the neighbouring districts of Varna, Dobrich and Targovishte.

Its administrative centre is the city of Shumen. Shumen District consists of 10 municipalities with a total of 151 settlements (8 cities and towns, and 143 villages). The municipalities are Shumen, Veliki Preslav, Venets, Varbitsa, Kaolinovo, Kaspichan, Nikola Kozlevo, Novi pazar, Smyadovo and Hitrino.

Figure 24: Municipalities in Shumen Province by area (sq km)



Source: National Statistical Institute (NSI)

IX.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Shumen district was the 15th largest province in Bulgaria in terms of population with 172,966 people and had a 2.5% share of the total population in Bulgaria. In comparison to 2016, the district's population inched down by 0.9%.



The majority, or 61.5% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 38.5% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative centre - the municipality of Shumen.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Shumen district was 51 people per sq km. The highest population density in the district, of 135 people per sq km, was registered in Shumen municipality, while the bottom position was occupied by Smyadovo municipality with 17 people per sq km.

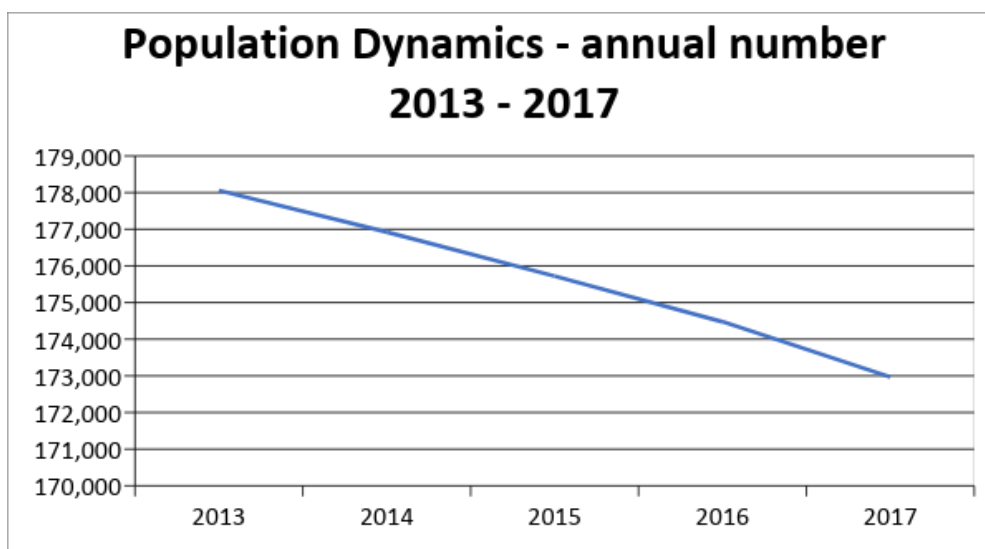
Natural population growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Shumen district was negative, at -7.6% per 1,000 people. As a result, the district's population fell by 1,510 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at -9.4 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -6.5 per 1,000 people. The only positive RNI among the municipalities in the district was recorded in Nikola Kozlevo - 69 people.

Migration

Shumen district lost 193 people due to migration in 2017. The number of immigrants was 827, while the emigrants totalled 634. The number of emigrants exceeded the number of immigrants in four of the 10 district's municipalities. The biggest contribution to the positive migration growth was made by Hitrino municipality with 236 people, followed by the municipalities of Kaolinovo with 133 people and Venets with 116 people. The municipality with the worst migration record in 2017 was Shumen, where the negative difference was 712 people, followed by Kaspichan with 53 people and Novi pazar with 33 people.

Figure 25: Population Dynamics in Shumen District 2013-2017



Source: National Statistical Institute

Sex structure

Women dominated in the sex structure of the population in Shumen district in 2017. They accounted for 51.1% of the total population in the district, or 88,427 people. Men numbered 84,539, or on every 1,000 men there were 1,046 women.

Population structure by age

The ageing process of the population in Shumen district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the persons aged 65 and more numbered 36,232, or 20.9% of the district's total population. In comparison to 2016, the share of the population in this age group grew by 0.5 percentage points.

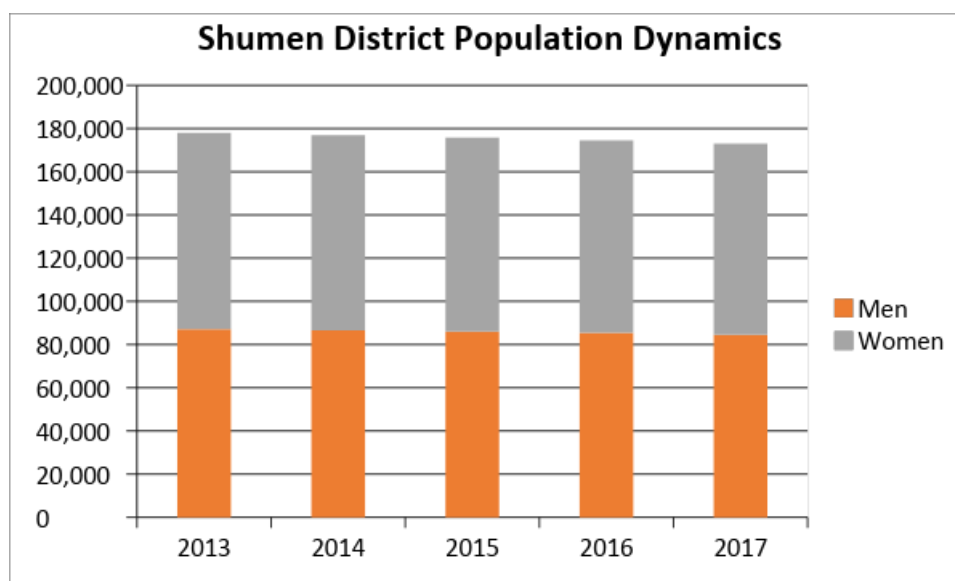
The working age population in Shumen district was 104,588 as of end-2017, or 60.5% of the total population in the district, with 55,348 men and 49,240 women. The number of working age population narrowed by 1,343 people or 1.3% less than in the previous year.

Kaolinovo municipality boasted the highest share, 62.8%, of working-age population among the municipalities in the district. The municipality of Varbitsa followed with a 62.6% share, but its total number of working age population was twelve times lower than the 53,844 people in Shumen municipality. The bottom position in terms of working-age population share was occupied by Smyadovo municipality where only 55.7% of the people were at working age.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Shumen district averaged 1.0% for the period 2013-2017. At the beginning of the period, there were more than 178,000 people in the district with an RNI of -4.6 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to 172,966 people and the RNI worsened to -7.6 per 1,000 people.

Figure 26: Population Dynamics in Shumen District 2013-2017



Source: National Statistical Institute

Economy overview

In 2016, the economy of Shumen district was dominated by three sectors - Trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as Manufacturing. They accounted for nearly 60% of the total number of companies in the district. 67.7% of the companies in the region are located on the territory of Shumen municipality.

In terms of size, the micro enterprises, employing up to 9 people, were dominant with a 92.0% share of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people had a 7.7% share, while large employers, with staff of 250 or more people represented only 0.3% of the total number.

In 2016, as many as 6,882 non-financial companies operated in Shumen district, which employed 38,178 people. They reported net sales revenue of BGN 3.448 bln and added value of BGN 3.236 bln.

Economy analysis by sectors

Sector wise, the leading five sectors in the Shumen district's economy in terms of operating revenue in 2017 sliced a 77.5% share in the district's total. However, the share of the different leading sector varied significantly. Wholesale trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles had a share close to 20%, while Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities, Manufacture of basic metals and Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles had a 11% share. Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products accounted for about 6%.

The largest companies with headquarters in Shumen district in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

Table 21: Top 10 of the largest companies in Shumen District			
Company name	Headquarters (town)	Operating revenue in 2017 (BGN mln)	Industry
Alcomet AD	Shumen	366.031	Manufacture of basic metals
Ficosota OOD	Shumen	203.509	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
Tesy OOD	Shumen	116.471	Manufacture of electrical equipment
Tranchev OOD	Shumen	71.002	Retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles
Vias EOOD	Shumen	64.727	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products
Primex EOOD	Kaspichan	64.464	Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Kamchiya AD	Shumen	60.241	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities
Tetrahib AD	Nikola Kozlevo village	56.103	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities
New Glass EOOD	Novi pazar	44.744	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products

Roka Bulgaria AD	Kaspichan	43.499	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
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INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply

In 2017, there was public water supply for 99.8% of the total population in the Shumen district. The share of population to suffer water supply interruptions was 4.36%, compared to the national average of 3%. The water supply network is operated by ViK Shumen OOD, which provides services to the whole district. There are three waste water treatment plants in the district - in the towns of Shumen, Novi pazar and Veliki Preslav. The daily consumption of tap water in Shumen district in 2016 amounted to 80 liters per citizen, which is below the national average of 100 liters per citizen. As of 2016, the supply of drinking water in the Shumen district was carried out through 241 water sources - shaft wells, drips and deep wells with main water source the Ticha dam. The total length of the sewerage network on the territory of the towns of Shumen, Veliki Preslav, Novi pazar, Smyadovo and Kaspichan was 175 km.

Sewerage

An urban wastewater collecting system was available for 58.4% of the district population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0%. Shumen district also had lower share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the average for Bulgaria - 54.7% versus the country's average of 63.4%. In addition, the district's share of population with untreated water collection system was 3.7%, lower than the national average of 12.6%.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 53,295 residential buildings in the Shumen district, by 10 less than in the previous year. The bulk, or 65.7% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages and towns, while the remaining 34.3% were located in its cities and towns. However, 59.6% of all 88,928 dwellings in the district were in the cities and towns.

Electricity infrastructure

The transmission power system Madara substation operates on the territory of Shumen District and it is the main source of electricity for the region. The power distribution network has a total length of 2,050 km, and consists of nine regional substations and 1,085 transformer stations. The 400kV transit line from Veliko



Tarnovo to Varna passes through the district, without having any effect on the power supply of the region. As of 2012, 20 photovoltaic power plants with a total power of 24.3 mW were built in Shumen district. In 1951, the small hydropower plant Ticha was built in Veliki Preslav municipality and in 2010, the small hydropower plant Mosta was constructed.

Natural gas infrastructure

The northern branch of the national natural gas distribution system passes through the Shumen district. The district natural gas distribution network is spread mainly in the municipality of Shumen. The network's total length in the municipality is 70 km. The network supplies natural gas to more than 1,000 households, industrial and administrative clients. A gas distribution network is also operating in the town of Kaspichan, with a network's total length of 5 km, and in the municipality of Novi pazar.

Environmental status and risks

Shumen district often suffers from air pollution, resulting from the use of fuels and combustion equipment in the domestic industry. However, in 2016, the relative volume of carbon dioxide emissions in the district remained significantly lower than the national average - 30 tonnes per sq km, compared to 281 tonnes per sq km at national level.

There are a total of 252 water basins in Shumen district, of which 17 rivers. The biggest water basin is the Ticha dam with a maximum volume of 310 mln cu m.

The total area of protected sites covered by the National Ecological Network in the district is 883.5 sq km, or a 26.02% share, which is lower than the country's average - 34.24%. The total area of protected sites is predominantly formed by the very large share of Natura 2000 sites.

As of January 2019, Shumen District has 13 Natura 2000 network sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive. The sites with biggest significance for tourism are the Shumen Plateau, near Shumen, popular with its plateau landscape and the Provadiysko-Royaksko plateau, located between the towns of Shumen and Provadia, as one of the most important ornithological sites.

The main natural resource of the district is the fertile soil, mainly represented by the gray and black type soils. It benefits the development of plant-breeding, animal husbandry, vegetable-growing and industrial crops.

ROAD NETWORK AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

There are no Pan-European transport corridors that go through the territory of the Shumen district. However, the Ruse-Varna direction, which passes through the district, is considered as an alternative sector of the Corridor VII - Rhine-Main-Danube.

The total length of the road network in Shumen district, including motorways, was 619 km in 2017. The length of motorways in the district was 37 km, first-class roads measured 189 km, second-class roads were 77 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 316 km. The most important road in Shumen District is the highway stretch, part of Hemus Highway, connecting Varna with Sofia.

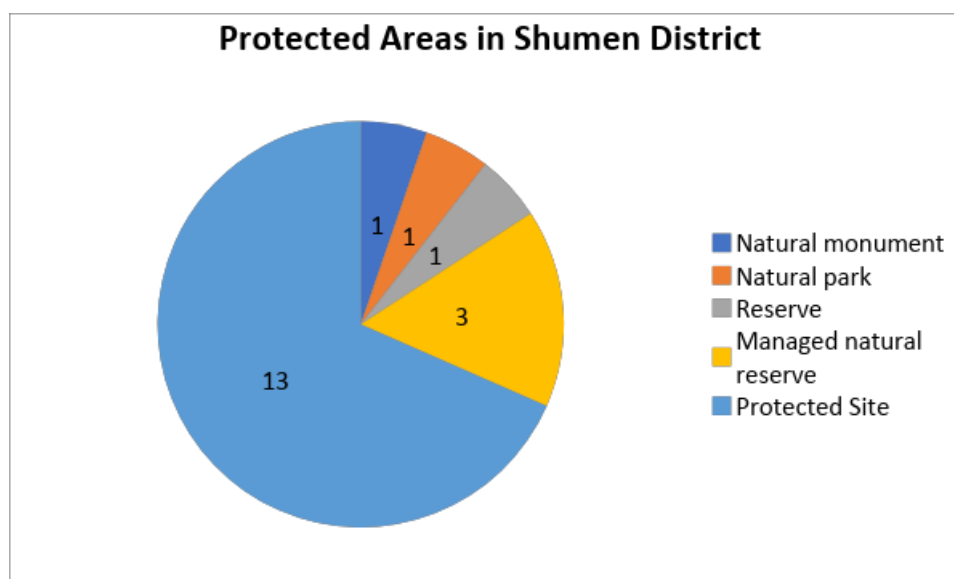
The railway network in the district totalled 155 km, remaining unchanged in the period 2013-2017. The main railway lines crossing the district are Sofia - Varna, between Shumen and Kaspichan, and Ruse - Varna through Kaspichan.

IX.3. REVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourist resources

There are a total of 13 protected areas (PA) in Shumen district, according to the Executive Environment Agency. The Agency marked one natural monument, one natural park, one reserve, three managed natural reserve and 13 protected sites. There is no National park on the territory of the district.

Figure 26: Protected Areas in Shumen District



Source: Executive Environment Agency, Bulgaria



Three natural reserves are located in Shumen District:

Shumen Plateau Nature Park in the Shumen Plateau (Shumen municipality) - it takes an area of 3,930 hectares and was declared a nature park in 1980 with the aim of preserving its valuable flora and fauna species, its tableland landscape, tourist spots and places for rest. The park provides good conditions for practicing hiking and cycling, tourist orientation, rock climbing, speleo tourism, paragliding;

Patleyna reserve (Veliki Preslav municipality) - declared a protected area in 1948 and situated on an area of 40.6 hectares. It is the only place in Bulgaria where wild carob trees grow, a species included in the Red Book of endangered species of Republic of Bulgaria. The reserve is also popular with its yellow tulips, another protected species;

Dervisha reserve (Veliki Preslav municipality) - a protected area since 1948, stores and protects the natural habitat of the only tree species horse chestnut in Bulgaria, a preserved remnant of the former extensive forest.

The major natural landmarks in Shumen district are:

- Park Kyoshkovete, situated at the foot of the Shumen Plateau (Shumen municipality). It was formed in 1897 on an area of 800 hectares. There is a small zoo, a stone fountain, several restaurants and a hotel;
- Planted stones area (Zlatna niva village, Kaspichan municipality);
- Rock formation the Red Rock (Zhivkovo village, Hitrino municipality);
- Rock-hewn cells (Markovo and Mogila villages, Kaspichan municipality);
- The caves Biserna, Taynite ponori, Mladost, Sulumara, Nahodka 13, Bezdanna propast, Labirinta, Zvezdnata, Deliburana and Lozevska cave, all located within the Shumen Plateau (Shumen municipality);
- Kurt Kanara cave (Nikola Kozlevo municipality);
- Saraya cave (Smyadovo municipality);
- Madara rock wreaths (Kaspichan municipality);
- Rock monasteries (Osmar and Troitsa villages, Veliki Preslav municipality);
- Kuparov waterfall (Smyadovo municipality);
- Natural spring Arpalak (Nikola Kozlevo municipality);
- Natural areas Chelekliya, Debelets, Sofrata and Skoka (all situated in Smyadovo municipality);

The diversity of grass cover in the district is also represented by protected, threatened and rare plant species included in the Red Book of endangered species of the Republic of Bulgaria.



The main mineral resources in Shumen district are non-metallic, with researched and proven reserves of limestone, rock materials, marl clay, calcareous sands, sands and gravel. There are unique locations of kaolin and quartz sands in the Kaolinovo municipality.

In April 2017, mineral water with very good quality was found in Marash village in Shumen municipality.

Anthropological tourist resources

As of end-2018, there are no discovered traces of anthropological tourist resources in the Shumen district.

Cultural and historical heritage

Since 1979, one of the 10 Bulgarian UNESCO World Heritage sites has been located in the Shumen district. The Madara Rider (Madara Horseman), representing the figure of a knight triumphing over a lion, is carved into a 100 m high cliff near the village of Madara, Shumen municipality. Madara was the principal sacred place of the First Bulgarian Empire before Bulgaria's conversion to Christianity in the 9th century.

Archaeological sites

There are more than 50 archaeological sites in Shumen district. They include ancient tombs, fortresses, necropolises, ruins, and ancient sanctuaries.

There are four reserves with the status of national historical and archaeological reserves in the district of Shumen:

- **National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Madara**, near Madara village (Shumen municipality) - the place includes many cave sanctuaries, palaces and mansions, fortresses, temples, hermitage cells and monastery complexes, as well as a rocky monastery with more than 150 cells, built in the 14th century in the rocks of the plateau;
- **National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Pliska** (Kaspichan municipality) - the ancient Pliska was the capital of the First Bulgarian Empire since its foundation in 681. Occupying an area of 23 sq km there are remains of an external and an internal town, a throne hall, a small palace, a pagan temple, a palace church, a water storage, bathrooms, industrial and residential buildings, as well as a cathedral, known as the Great Basilica;
- **National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Veliki Preslav**, located in Veliki Preslav municipality, represents restored and preserved fragments of

the excavations of the medieval city of the second Bulgarian capital during the Golden Age of Bulgarian literature and culture. The reserve includes the Big and Western Palaces, a throne hall, the Golden church, ruler's temple and the St. Cyril and St. Methodius temple. The museum funds include 35,000 exhibits, including the Preslav Gold Treasure, the ceramic iconostasis of the palace monastery and a copy of the monumental icon of St. Theodore Stratilat;

- **National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Kabiuk** (Shumen municipality) is established in 1864 as a stud, aiming to supply the Turkish army with riding horses. On its territory there are the first Bulgarian Horse Museum, the summer residence of Prince Alexander Battenberg and an icons exposition.
- **Shumen Fortress Historical-Archaeological Reserve** (Shumen municipality) is situated in the Shumen Plateau on a territory of 32 hectares. It is one of the oldest fortifications in Bulgaria, built 3,200 years ago. There are remains of 12 churches, an ancient Roman bath, pottery, vessels, adornments and coins.

Architectural reserves

Although the Shumen district does not have architecture reserves, it owns well developed architectural tourist resources. The sites with biggest significance for the tourism are:

- **The clock tower in Shumen** (Shumen municipality) - a preserved clock tower with an active clock mechanism built in the middle of the 18th century. At the base of the tower there is a built-in fountain, which represents a rich ornamented marble slab with a trough;
- **The clock tower in Novi pazar** (Novi pazar municipality), built in 1826 of finished stone blocks from the ruins of ancient Pliska;
- **Kurshun fountain**, built in 1774 of limestone quarried stones. The front facade is richly ornamented. Originally, it was covered with lead plates;
- **Renaissance school in Divdyadovo Quarter** (Shumen municipality) - the monastery school is among the few fully preserved Bulgarian schools in the country nowadays. It is located in the courtyard of a church and was built in 1846;
- **Monastery school in Novi Pazar municipality**, built in 1840, now acting as a house-museum;

- **The Bezisten** (the covered market or bazaar) in Shumen, a monument of the late Middle Ages, built in 1529 of stone blocks. Still there are ornaments on some of the blocks with plant and geometric motives and written signs. During the time, the building had the functions of a covered market, a weapons store and a restaurant.

Historical sites

Numerous historical sites, monuments and memorial plates also play an important role for the tourist potential of the region of Shumen district. More than 20 historical places of interest are located in the municipality of Shumen. Most of them are monuments of local soldiers killed in wars and Bulgarian enlighteners. There are 13 monuments and memorial plates situated in municipality of Veliki Preslav, 12 are situated in Nikola Kozlevo municipality and nine in Varbitsa municipality.

The major historical sites in the district are:

- **The Monument Founders of the Bulgarian State** - a large monument located on a plateau above the town of Shumen (Shumen municipality). It was built in 1981 to commemorate the 1,300th anniversary of the First Bulgarian Empire.
- **The Monument of Freedom** - built after establishing the communist regime in Bulgaria. It symbolizes the victory of communism over fascism. The monument is located within the memorial complex The Monument Founders of the Bulgarian State in Shumen.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Shumen district stood at 209. Islam prevailed with 126 mosques, followed by Orthodox Christianity with 75 churches and five chapels. The other religious temples in the district are one Protestant, one Catholic and one Armenian Apostolic church.

Sherif Halil Pasha Mosque, more commonly known as the **Tombul Mosque**, located in the town of Shumen and built between 1740 and 1744, is the largest mosque in Bulgaria and one of the largest in the Balkans.

Round Church, also known as the **Golden Church** is a partially preserved early medieval Eastern Orthodox church. It lies in Veliki Preslav, the former capital of the First Bulgarian Empire. The Church dates back to the early 10th century, and is one of the most impressive examples of medieval Bulgarian architecture.



The Monastery St. Panteleimon, situated in the village of Patleyna (Veliki Preslav municipality), was founded in the 10th century and was destroyed in the 11th century. Nowadays, only ruins have been preserved.

The Armenian Apostolic Church Sveta Bogoroditsa (Shumen municipality) was built in 1834 by Armenian refugees. In 2001 it was renovated and renewed with a new bell tower. In the courtyard of the church there are gravest marble slabs of Armenian leaders and donors from the 18th-19th century with inscriptions and sculptural decorations.

Catholic monastery St. Benedict is located 10 km away from the town of Shumen and is the only one operating in northeastern Bulgaria. The monastery was founded in 1924 by four German Benedictine sisters.

Local traditions, customs and crafts

According to an official census of 1866, three-quarters of the population in Shumen municipality was engaged in craft and trade activities. Nowadays, the region has representatives of all groups of crafts - construction, restoration, electrical and metal processing, processing of wood and other materials, tailoring, textiles and furs, ladies and men's tailoring, food and beverages, glass and ceramics.

There are many active representatives of the group of artistic crafts, such as masters of artistic processing of leather, manufacturing of wrought iron, embroidering, artistic knitting, making of national dolls, icon painting, ceramics, wood processing, who participate in various exhibitions and fairs.

In Smyadovo municipality, the main livelihood was agriculture and cattle breeding. Later, during the Renaissance and especially after the Liberation, the development of craftsmanship began - pottery, shoemaking, furs and goat fur processing, blacksmithing, carpentry and masonry.

Kuda is an authentic custom for Smyadovo, which is performed during the grape harvesting. According to the local people, the Kukeri dance was typical of Veselinovo village during the Russo-Turkish liberation war.

Municipality of Varbitsa was popular with its craftsmen for fabrication of folk costumes. Every year the municipality organises its traditional bathing in the river for men who got married during the previous year.

Every two years the municipality of Shumen organizes the traditional Carnival of productivity with a carnival parade and culinary exhibition of dishes. The programme also includes a variety of events - concerts of local and guest ensembles

and performers, exhibitions and plenaries, carnival photo shops, crafts market, honey and bee products and many other attractions.

In 1998, the regional club National Society Tradition was established in the town of Shumen, aiming to bring together collectors, restorers and fans of historical cold guns and firearms.

Cultural activities and festivals

In 2019, a total of 24 local, national and international festivals will be held in Shumen District, out of which 11 will be hosted by the Shumen municipality, three by Kaspichan municipality and one by Smyadovo municipality.

Table 22: Festivals in Shumen district in 2019

Name	Municipality	Date
National dance festival The Magic of the Dance	Shumen municipality	March 9-10, 2019
National children's theatre festival Kolombina	Shumen municipality	March 28-29, 2019
National student theater festival Todor Kolev - Shumen	Shumen municipality	March 2019
Cheerleader dance festival Madara Rider	Shumen municipality	May 2019
Regional folklore fair Stana pee	Novi Pazar municipality	May 2019
Folklore fair Enyovski ritmi	Novi Pazar municipality	May 2019
Drumevi theater festival New Bulgarian Drama	Shumen municipality	May 11-16, 2019
Ancestors days - Pliska	Kaspichan municipality	June 1-2, 2019
Regional Folklore festival Kireka Pee i Tantsuva	Kaspichan municipality	June 2019
Municipal folklore fair Petrovska kitka	Veliki Preslav	June 2019

Shumen rock fest	Shumen municipality	June 2019
Folklore festival Na izvora horo se vie	Shumen municipality	June 2019
Ethno folklore festival Cherga in Pliska	Kaspichan municipality	July 2019
Festival of the rug and woven articles	Smyadovo municipality	August 2019
Festival of peppers and tomatoes	Shumen municipality	August 2019
Folklore fair Shumen autumn with dance and song	Shumen municipality	September 2019
International festival of the popular song Autumn Shumen evenings	Shumen municipality	September 2019
Home-made rakia festival	Shumen municipality	September 2019
Carnival of productivity	Shumen municipality	October 2019
Ritual games Sayadzhilar	Hitrino municipality	October 2019
National student arts festival	Shumen municipality	October 2019
Feast of the Terlik	Shumen municipality	October 2019
Beer festival	Kaspichan municipality	October 2019
Cinema in the Palm Festival for movies shot with mobile devices	Shumen municipality	November 2019

Municipality of Novi pazar hosts three national cultural competitions:

- Literary competition Kalina Malina for children and youth literature;
- National contest for accordionists Dancing keys;



- National competition for bagpipers and instrumental ensembles Magic Rhythms.

Galleries

There are four galleries in Shumen district:

- **Art Gallery Elena Karamihaylova** in Shumen (Shumen municipality) - founded in 1955 as a collection of plastic art works. There are more than 1,600 preserved works, including art paintings, sculptures, graphics and applied arts. The exhibition halls occupy a territory of 333 sq m. They are suitable for all kind of exhibitions and other cultural activities;
- **Art Gallery Peter Persengiev** in Novi pazar (municipality of Novi pazar) - established in 1974 it holds more than 900 artworks by different authors;
- **Art Gallery Veliki Preslav** (Veliki Preslav municipality) - built in 2008, it presents expositions of local artists;
- **Art Gallery Stoycho Presnakov** (town of Smyadovo in municipality of Smyadovo) - founded in 2015, as part of the Revival complex.

Museums

As of end-2017, Shumen district had 10 museums of national cultural value, according to NSI. They featured 204,145 exhibits and registered 194,595 visits in 2017, of which 16,700 visits were by foreign tourists. Compared to 2016, the total number of the visitors increased by 1.7%, despite the decrease of the foreign visitors by 9.2%.

- **The Regional Historical Museum Shumen** is a successor to the Archaeological Society established in Shumen in 1904. It is one of the most influential cultural institutions in the district with a wide network of permanent expositions and sites. Its structure includes nine departments, eight exhibition halls and more than 150,000 movable cultural monuments.
- **Revival complex Shumen** is located in the town of Shumen. It includes museums, taverns in Renaissance style and hotels, as well as the Museum complex Pancho Vladigerov.
- **Museum of the Shumen garrison** (Shumen municipality) covers a 264 sq m built-up area. It has 140 standing and six table showcases, in which 484 exhibits and photos related to the military history of the town of Shumen are presented. On the 2 hectares outdoor space, 30 artillery cannons and mortars are exposed.



The district abounds in historic house museums - a total of ten house museums are situated in the Shumen district - eight in the town of Shumen, one in the town of Smyadovo and one in Varbitsa municipality.

Three ethnographic museums are located in the district - Kartalovata kashta and Sveshtarovata kashta (Veliki Preslav municipality), as well as the ethnographic museum in the town of Smyadovo (Smyadovo municipality), a former monastery school.

Art and craft centres

More than 80 amateurs artistic, folklore and music ensembles are located on the territory of the Shumen district. They regularly organise and participate in various local and national events, competitions and festivals

In the town of Shumen there is also a School of Fine and Applied Arts, Art workshop, Acting youths' school, Ballet school, various dance and music schools and classes.

Two art centres are situated in the town of Shumen - Art center Palitra and Art center Hobby. They are specialised in the distribution of materials for artists, picture frames, photos, mirrors and tapestries.

Theatres

Shumen district hosts one theatre - the Drama-puppet Theatre Vasil Drumev in the town of Shumen, built in 1921. According to the NSI, in 2017 the theatre organised 263 performances, which were visited by 30,800 people, registering a 13.8% decrease in performances and a 13.1% drop in the number of visits, compared to 2016. In 2017, the average number was 117 individual visitors per performance, or one person more than in 2016.

There are two active music groups on the territory of Shumen district. As of end-2017, their performances increased by 16.9% and the visits rose by 6.1%, compared to 2016. A total of 58 concerts were organised by a music agency, and were visited by 43,500 people.

Libraries

Shumen district has 171 libraries, including regional, municipal, community centre libraries, university, school and special libraries. They contained 2.5 million books and registered 34,718 visits in 2013, according to the latest data published by NSI .



In 2017, there were two libraries in Shumen district with more than 200,000 books and other units of the library fund. Registered readers in the libraries in the district are 10,100, or 12.8% more than the previous year, while the visits decreased by 1.7% and reached 160,200.

The Regional Library Stiliyan Chilingirov in the town of Shumen is one of the largest and fund-rich libraries in the country. It opened in 1922, and moved in a specially designed building in 1980. The library has 750,000 library units.

Other cultural institutes

State Philharmonic Orchestra Shumen (also known as Sinfonietta) is a symphony orchestra in Shumen, established in 1954, with the status of a state cultural institute. The Orchestra often performs tours in Germany, Austria, Italy, Belarus, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Monaco and the Republic of Korea.

In 2017, the Shumen district was home to 130 chitalishta, or local community cultural centres. Out of them, 25 were located in towns and 105 in villages. In the five-year period 2012-2017 their number increased by 3. Two of the newly established centres were in the towns and the remaining one - in a village. Shumen is the municipality with the highest number of cultural centres - 36, followed by Hitrino with 14 and Novi pazar with 13. In 96.2% of all centres there was an active library. According to NSI, in 2017 the cultural centres in Shumen district organised 3,278 events.

Municipal Children's Complex in Shumen is an extra-curricular unit in the field of education and science, which offers children more than 30 original pedagogical activities - clubs, schools and ensembles.

School of Arts Anastas Stoyanov is a structure of the Municipality of Shumen, and since 1954 it has been playing an important role among the cultural institutes in the town of Shumen as a children's music school.

In 2017, in Shumen district a total of 267 films were projected in 2,560 projections, according to NSI. According to their nationality, the films are distributed as follows: 17 Bulgarian, 20 European, 228 from the USA and two from other countries. The number of visitors during the year was 28,000.

IX.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

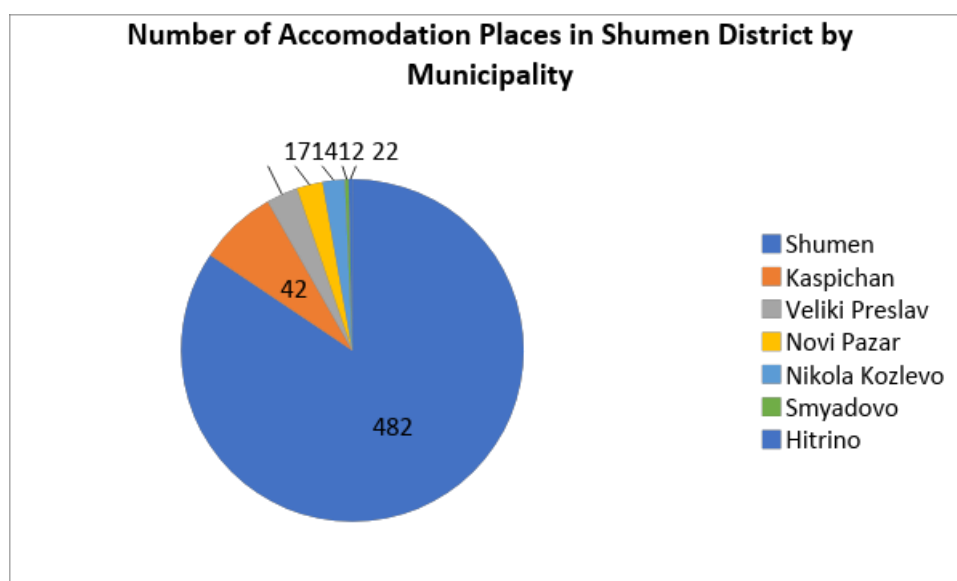
In 2017, Shumen district had 68 places for accommodation, or 2.03% of the total number in Bulgaria, with combined capacity of 1,785 beds, or 0.5% of the national aggregate.

In the period January - November 2018, the number of registered overnights in the district exceeded 78,100. The share of foreigners in the total overnights was 18.2%, significantly lower than the national average of 67.2%. The total number of visitors for the first eleven months of 2018 came in at 50,305 tourists, of which 17.2% were foreign citizens. The total revenue from tourism in the district in January - November 2018 stood at BGN 2.880 mln, or twice more than the sum in the whole 2017.

Accommodation services

There was a total of 571 active registered accommodation places in Shumen district as of end-January 2019, according to data from the Ministry of Tourism. In three of the ten municipalities in the district there were no registered accommodation places.

Figure 26: Number of Accomodation Places in Shumen District by Municipality



Source: Ministry of Tourism



More than 65% of the accommodation places were with 1-star categorisation. The 2-star facilities accounted for another 31%. Just 4% were 3-star and there was only one 4-star hotel in the district.

In 2017 the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Transcontinental Holding OOD - BGN 2.013 mln;
- Pliska-1 EOOD - BGN 1.029 mln;
- X & X EOOD - BGN 0.439 mln.

Tour operators

The territorial structure of tour operators in Shumen district reflected the extreme concentration of tourism activities in Shumen municipality. As of January 2019, registered tour operators in Shumen district counted eight, all registered in the municipality of Shumen. There were no active tour operators in the rest of municipalities in the district.

Travel agencies

There were a total of 15 registered travel agencies in Shumen district as of end-January 2019, according to Ministry of Tourism data. The bulk, or 11 of the companies were headquartered in the municipality of Shumen. In Kaspichan there were three travel agencies, and there was only one travel agent in Smyadovo municipality.

In 2017, the leading tour operators/travel agents in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Red Tours EOOD - BGN 0.952 mln;
- Avista OOD - BGN 0.408 mln;
- Vaskoni Travel EOOD - BGN 0.154 mln

Entertainment

Shumen district offers different types of entertainment facilities:

- Two wine cellars in Veliki Preslav municipality;
- Two tennis complexes in Shumen municipality;
- Two sport complexes in Shumen municipality and one in Smyadovo municipality;
- Two multifunctional halls in Nikola Kozlevo municipality;



- City Center Shumen shopping centre;
- Xcape room and 3D cinema in Shumen municipality;
- Tandem paraglider flights;
- Kart racing.

There are a total of 20 stadiums on the territory of the whole district.

Tourist Information Centres

As of end-January 2019, there is only one tourist information centre in Shumen district - in the town of Shumen. It is engaged in: provision of tourist information, creation of new routes, carrying out of active marketing and advertising activities; participation in national and international exhibitions, organisation of public events.

Exhibition centres for the presentation of local natural and cultural heritage

Shumen Astronomical Observatory is located in the new summer information centre on the Shumen plateau, near the Founders of the Bulgarian State Monument (Shumen municipality). The Observatory is used as a multifunctional educational centre and is accessible both to hobbyists and citizens.

The Old Bulgarian yurt attracts tourists near the Founders of the Bulgarian State Monument in Shumen. The tourists can learn about the curious moments of life and livelihood, history and customs of the ancient Bulgarians.

Other facilities

There is one horse base in Shumen municipality, which is visited by 15,000 - 20,000 tourists annually, mainly by foreign visitors.

Existing tourist offers

Some of the 100 national tourist sites are located in Shumen district.

Table 23: Shumen District Sites in the 100 national tourist sites		
Site Number in the 100 Tourist Sites List	Sites	Municipality
94	Regional Historical Museum Shumen	Shumen municipality
94	Shumen Fortress Historical-Archaeological Reserve	Shumen municipality

94a	Founders of the Bulgarian State Monument	Shumen municipality
95	Tombul Mosque (Sherif Halil Pasha Mosque)	Shumen municipality
96	National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Pliska	Kaspichan municipality
97	Madara Rider (Madara Horseman)	Shumen municipality
98	National Historical and Archaeological Reserve Veliki Preslav	Veliki Preslav municipality

Existing tourist routes

There is one major eco-trail in Shumen district. It is located near the Veselinovo village, Shumen municipality and has a length of 8 km. The eco-trail passes through the waterfall Malkia skok, the Saraya Cave, and the Sofrata area. There are recreational areas with gazebos and wooden tables.

Municipality of Shumen offers various types of tourist routes:

- seven mountain hiking routes;
- three mountain biking routes on the territory of Shumen Plateau Nature park;
- paragliding route;
- rock climbing route;
- hang gliding route;
- horse breeding route in the horse base Kabjuk in Shumen municipality;
- national scout camps.

X. TARGOVISHTA DISTRICT

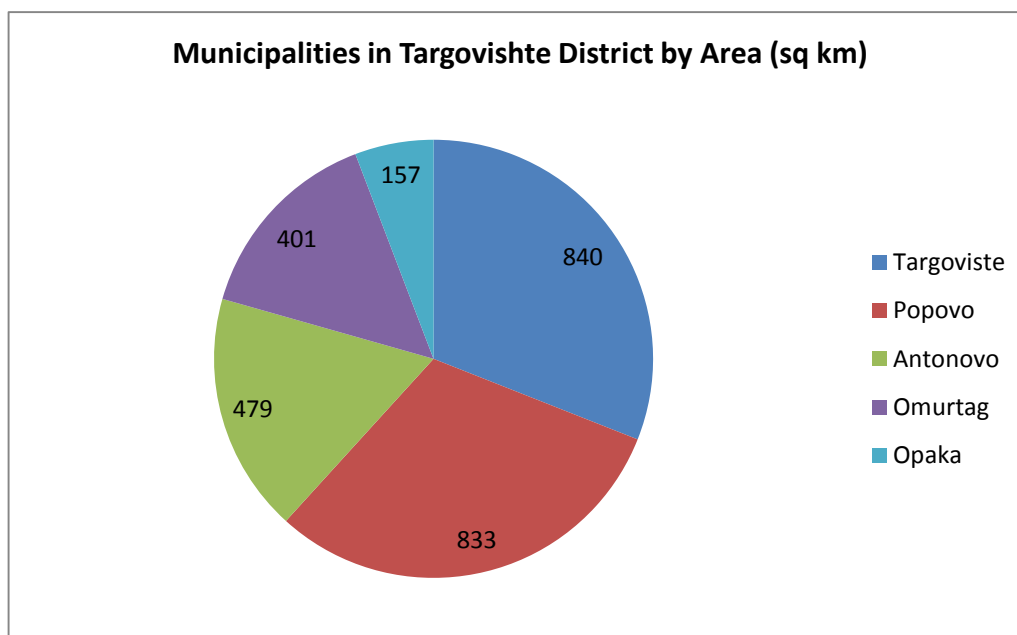
X.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Administrative-territorial characteristics

Targovishte District is part of the Northeast Planning Region in Bulgaria. The district consists of five municipalities with a total of 194 cities, towns and villages.

The district's total area is 2,710.4 sq km. The towns number five, while the villages are 189. At the end of 2017, there were two non-populated settlements.

Figure 26: Municipalities in Targovishte District by Area



Source: National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

X.2. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARECTERISTICS

Population

In 2017, Targovishte district was the 24th largest in Bulgaria in terms of population with 112,474 people and had a 1.6% share of the country's total population.

The bulk or 54.0% of the people lived in towns, while the remaining 46.0% lived in villages. Nearly half of the district's total population lived in its administrative centre - the municipality of Targovishte.

Population density

In 2017, the population density in Targovishte district was 42 people/sq km. The highest population density, of 64 people/sq km, was registered in Targovishte municipality, while the bottom position was occupied by Antonovo municipality with 12 people/sq km.

Natural growth

In 2017, the rate of natural increase (RNI) in Targovishte district was negative, at -8.0% per 1,000 people. The overall population decline resulted mainly from the much higher negative RNI in the villages, at -10.8 per 1,000 people, than in towns, at -5.7 per 1,000 people.

Migration

The biggest contribution to the positive migration growth was made by Targovishte municipality with 39 people. The municipality with the worst migration record in 2017 was Popovo, where the negative difference was 153 people, followed by Omurtag with 141 people, Opaka with 50 people and Antonovo with six people.

Sex structure

Women dominated the sex structure of the population in Targovishte district in 2017. They accounted for 51.15% of the total population in the district, or 57,532 people. Men numbered 54,942, or for every 1,000 men there were 1,047 women.

Population structure by age

The aging process of the population in Targovishte district continued in 2017. As of the end of the year, the number of persons aged over 65 stood at 23,775, or 21.14% of the district's total population.

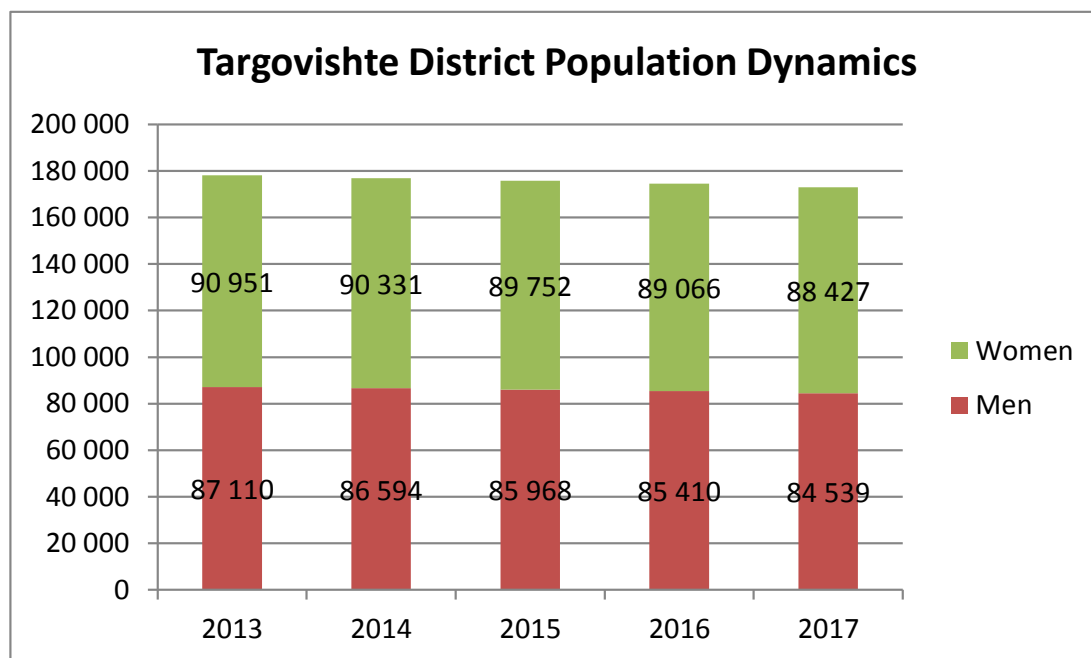
The working age population in Targovishte district amounted to 66,841 as of end-2017, or 59.4% of the total population, with 35,615 men and 31,226 women.

Opaka municipality boasted the highest share of working-age population among the municipalities in the district with 61.3%. The municipality of Omurtag followed with a 60.3% share, ahead of Antonovo with a 60.1% and Targovishte with 59.8%. The bottom position was occupied by Popovo municipality, where only 57.3% of the people were at working age.

Population dynamics

The annual decline of the population in Targovishte district averaged 0.96% for the 2013-2017 period. At the beginning of the period, there were more than 117,719 people in the district with an RNI of -5.8 per 1,000 people. In 2017, the population slumped to just over 112,474 people and the RNI worsened to -8.0 per 1,000 people.

Figure 27: Targovishte District Population Dynamics 2013 - 2017



Source: National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

Economy overview

Among the active enterprises in Targovishte district, the largest share fall within the sector Trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles - 39.9%, followed by Agriculture, forestry and fishing with 10.0% and the Transport, storage and post sector with 9.8%.

In terms of size, micro enterprises, employing up to nine people were dominant with a 27.6% share of all companies in the district. Small and medium-sized enterprises, with staff of between 10 and 249 people had a 43.6% share, while large employers, with staff of 250 or more people represented 28.8% of the total number.

The realized net sales revenue in the region in 2016 stood at BGN 2 346 mln. The most significant increase in net sales revenue was reported in Trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles - by 22.7% and other activities - by 18.1%.

Economy analysis by sectors

The five sectors dominating the district's economy in 2017 in terms of operating revenue of companies were Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles, Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products, Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities, Manufacture of food products and

Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles. Together they formed 73.2% of the operating revenue of all companies headquartered in Targovishte District.

The largest companies with headquarters in Targovishte District in terms of operating revenue in 2017 were:

Table 23: Top 10 largest companies in Targovishte District			
Company name	Headquarters (town)	Operating revenue in 2017 (BGN mln)	Industry
Trakiya Glass Bulgaria EAD	Targovishte	243.593	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
Pasabahce Bulgaria EAD	Targovishte	182.178	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
Kristera AD	Popovo	128.305	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Sisecam Automotive Bulgaria EAD	Targovishte	112.979	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
Rosa AD	Popovo	98.353	Manufacture of food products
Agrotron 2007 EOOD	Targovishte	68.345	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Patengineeringstroy - T EAD	Targovishte	60.617	Civil engineering
Agrodimex OOD	Targovishte	37.184	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles
EnerSys AD	Targovishte	23.520	Manufacture of electrical equipment

Tandem-Popovo OOD	Popovo	21.118	Manufacture of food products
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INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Water supply and sewerage

The water supply in the area is managed by the company ViK OOD - Targovishte. The water supply of all settlements in the region is carried out through a total of 746 km of external water mains and 1,375 km of internal water supply network. The infrastructure of Targovishte district provides water for almost 99% of its population. Sewerage networks are available only in the towns of Targovishte, Popovo, Omurtag and Antonovo and partially in several villages. The total length of the sewerage network in the district is 156 km. In 2017, the share of population suffering from regime of water was 18.1%, compared to the 3.0% national average. Urban wastewater collecting system covered 56.0% of the district's population, lagging behind the national average of 76.0%. Targovishte district also had lower share of population connected to wastewater treatment plants than the national indicator - 44.5% versus the country's average of 63.4%. The district's share of population with untreated water collection system came in at 11.6%.

Housing stock

In 2017, there were a total of 43,700 residential buildings in Targovishte district. The bulk or 72.5% of the residential buildings were located in the district's villages, while the remaining 27.5% were located in its cities and towns. The average living area per person in Targovishte district amounted to 31.5 sq m. In the towns it was 31.1 sq m, and in villages - 32.1 sq m.

Electricity infrastructure

The country's national electricity system is the main supplier of electricity for the district. Its power distribution network has a total length of 2,048 km. Two wind power plants with a power of 0.75 mW in Omurtag and 0.5 mW in Targovishte were built in the district.

Natural gas infrastructure

The northern branch of the national natural gas distribution system passes through Targovishte district. The district natural gas distribution network is spread mainly in the municipality of Targovishte. The network's total length in the municipality is 64 km. The network supplies natural gas to more than 1,309



households, industrial and administrative users. The town of Popovo is one of the earliest gasified towns in Bulgaria with 650 household users.

Environment

The state of the atmospheric air in Targovishte district is relatively good. Targovishte municipality often suffers from air pollution, resulting from the use of fuels and combustion equipment by households. In the Targovishte district the soils are one of the most unpolluted and undamaged in the country. The main sources of noise and vibration are road transport and industry. The radiation situation is relaxed and normal in the area.

The district ranks last in the country by area of the protected areas.

Two regional landfills - in Targovishte and Omurtag and the municipal depot Antonovo for waste recovery and disposal - operate in the region. All settlements of the five municipalities are included in organized waste collection and disposal. The total number of the population covered is 100%.

Road network and transport infrastructure

The total length of the road network was 523 km in 2017. The length of first-class roads measured 77 km, second-class roads were 105 km, and third-class roads were the longest - 341km. The most important road in Targovishte district is the first-class roads E772, connecting Sofia with Varna.

The railway network in the district totaled 72 km, which were doubled and electrified.

There is an airport for small airplanes in Targovishte.

X.3. OVERVIEW OF EXISTING TOURISM RESOURCES

Natural tourist resources

As of January 2019, Targovishte District had 10 Natura 2000 sites - special areas of conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive and special protected areas under the EU's Birds Directive:

- **Bozhur Polyana** - Protected Site (Targovishte municipality);
- **Derventskata Pestera** - Natural Monument (Targovishte Municipality);
- **Garbavata cheshma** - Natural Monument (Antonovo municipality);
- **Iglikina Polyana** - Protected Site (Targovishte municipality);
- **Petka Balkan** - Protected Site (Targovishte municipality);
- **Rimskiyat Most** - Protected Site (Antonovo municipality);



- **Skalno obrazovanie Konya** - Natural Monument (Targovishte municipality);
- **Skalno obrazovanie Kostadin Tepe** - Natural Monument (Antonovo municipality);
- **Urumovo Lale** - Protected Site (Targovishte municipality);
- **Vodopad v mestnostta Boaza** - Natural Monument (Targovishte municipality).

On the territory of Antonovo municipality there are two natural landmarks, one protected area and two protected areas within the meaning of NATURA 2000.

- **Garbavata Cheshma** - rock formation, a natural landmark, is located in the territory of the village of Stara Rechka.
- **Rimskiyat Most** - a protected area declared for the purpose of preserving a territory with a characteristic landscape.
- **Golyamata Reka** - a protected area under the Habitats Directive.

Cultural and historical heritage

On the territory of Antonovo municipality there are 137 cultural sites. Several historical places are also distinguished. One of them is the Rimskiyat Most near Stevrek village, as well as the museum collection in the village of Malogradets and the picture gallery in Bojitsa.

On the territory of Opaka municipality there are many ancient settlements.

In the municipality of Omurtag there are archaeological monuments from the antiquity and the middle Ages, of which with national significance are:

- **Ancient settlement** - Golyamo Tsarkovishte;
- **Thracian necropolis** - Kamburgovo village;
- **Roman castle** - Kamburgovo village, Tabiyata village;
- **Roman villa** - Mogilec village;
- **Early medieval fortress** - Omurtag.

In the municipality of Popovo are registered over 40 mounds and prehistoric terraced settlements, more than 70 tombs, the largest of which in the village of Starve, over 50 ancient and medieval fortresses and remains of settlements. An interesting place for the lovers of cultural tourism is the excavated ruin of the Late Roman fortress and the town of Kovachevsko Kale. A frequently visited tourist site is the Kapanski architectural-ethnographic complex in the village of Sadina.

In the Park area, seven kilometres southwest of Targovishte is located Misionis Fortress. This is the prototype of the modern town of Targovishte. Interesting



landmark is Slaveikovo School - Targovishte. School building is one of the most remarkable monuments of public construction dating back to the Bulgarian Revival.

Temples, monasteries and other religious sites

As of January 2019, the number of operational religious temples in Targoviste District stood at 225. Islam prevailed with 133 mosques and the two turbe (a small tomb of Ottoman royalty and notables) followed by Orthodox Christianity with 84 churches and six chapels.

The Church of The Dormition of the Mother of God in Targovishte with unique architecture is one of the most beautiful revival church buildings in the country. With great potential, but insufficiently explored, are the rock monasteries in the village of Krepcha, Opaka, the mosque Sat Dzamisi in Targovishte and Sindzhirleyeni in Omurtag.

Local traditions, customs and crafts

The population in Targovishte District follows the well-known national Bulgarian traditions and religious holidays. There are also many local customs in each village and municipality.

Cultural activities and festivals

Important cultural events of international and national importance regularly take place in the district. The town of Targovishte hosts Feasts of the Women's and Virgin Choirs, Days of the Big Theater in the Small Town, International Festival of Professional Performances for Children. Targovishte Municipal Wind Orchestra hosts a festival with international participation. In the town of Popovo a Balkan cinema festival for cinematography is held once every two years. In the municipality of Omurtag there is an annual National Folk Festival.

Table 24: Festivals in Targovishte in 2019

Name	Date	Municipality
Festival of Banitsa, Village of Makariopolsko	October 2019	Targovishte
VII National Folklore Festival for Amateur Dance Clubs Dzhumaliysko Nadigravane	October 2019	Targovishte

Folklore Fair I Nie si Nosim Pesenta	August 2019	Omurtag
National Folklore Meeting Authenticity and Modernity	September 2019	Popovo
Folklore Festival S Horo i Pesen vav Vodica Vsyaka Esen	October 2019	Popovo
6th Festival of the Disadvantaged People Da Podarim Mechta	December 2019	Popovo

Galleries

There is one municipal art gallery in Targovishte District, in the town of Targovishte, where the largest watercolor exhibition in Bulgaria by local and foreign authors is held.

Museums

In Targovishte district there are four museums of national cultural value, according to NSI data. They featured 81,183 exhibits and registered 19,361 visits in 2017.

The Regional Historical Museum, located at the beginning of the Varosha quarter, in Targovishte, is of paramount importance. Cultural institutions with traditions are also the municipal historical museums in Popovo and Omurtag. The Aviation and Space Park in the city of Omurtag has a museum dedicated to aviation. The town is the birthplace of the second Bulgarian astronaut Alexander Alexandrov. There are two interesting ethnographic collections in the municipality of Popovo: Ethnographic collection of the Aegean - the village of Svetlen and Kapan ethnographic collection - Sadina village.

Artistic and craft centres

In the town of Popovo is located a Complex centre for culture, arts and crafts, trade and tourism. The internal construction of the building is an immovable cultural asset and is one of the emblematic buildings of Popovo.



Theatres

There are two theatres in Targovishte District, in the town of Targovishte - The Drama Theatre and the State Puppet Theatre.

Libraries

In Targovishte District there are 136 libraries. With contribution to cultural life is the Regional Library in the town of Targovishte with 223 thousand library units, which performs the functions of a modern civil and information centre with its own compute

network.

Other cultural institutes

At the end of 2017 in the territory of the region there are 112 chitalishta, community cultural centres, distributed in five municipalities.

Most community centers are in the municipality of Targovishte - 38, followed by Popovo municipality with 32 and the municipality of Omurtag with 25. The municipalities of Antonovo and Opaka had 11 and six community centers respectively.

X.4. OVERVIEW OF RECREATION AND TOURISM FACILITIES, TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES PROVIDED

Accommodation base

In 2017 the Targovishte District had 21 places for accommodation with combined capacity of 797 beds. The number of registered overnights is 48,027, of which 8,848 are by foreigners. A total of 26,532 tourists visited the accommodation facilities. The total revenue from tourism in the district in 2017 stood at BGN 1.860 mln.

Availability of services

As of January 2019 the total number of accommodation facilities and restaurants in Targovishte District is 304. The most of them are in municipality of Targovishte - 261, followed by Omurtag and Popovo municipalities with 25 and 9 sites.

In 2017 the leading accommodation providers in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- Regata EOOD - BGN 156,000
- Rech Group EOOD - BGN 55,000
- ET N-S - Nadezhda Sabeva - BGN 41,000.



Tour operators and travel agencies

There are three licensed companies in the municipality of Targovishte as a tour operator; two of them are operating as travel agencies. In Omurtag Municipality there is only one licensed company, which operates as a tour operator and travel agent.

In 2017 the leading tour operators and travel agencies in the district in terms of operating revenue were:

- M4 Holiday EOOD - BGN 175,000
- Toni-Tour 05 EOOD - BGN 78,000
- Magic Trip EOOD - BGN 11,000.

Entertainment

Antonovo Municipality's sports infrastructure includes an open-air sports complex in the town of Antonovo and a football field in the village of Treskavets.

The Relax Complex, which combines an outdoor swimming pool, a bar, a restaurant and a summer disco, is located in the town's garden of Popovo.

There are 10 sports facilities in the town of Targovishte, such as Shooting Hall, Motostadion, swimming pools, tennis and boxing halls.

Tourist Information Centers

In May 2014 a tourist information centre was established in Targovishte, which offers information about the tourist sites, the tourist routes, offers for excursions, promotional materials and opportunities for hiring a training and seminar room.

Existing tourist offers

Two of the 100 national tourist sites are in Targovishte District - the Misionis Fortress and the Slaveikov School - Targovishte.

The Misionis Fortress is located in the Park area, seven kilometres southwest of the town of Targovishte. This is the prototype of modern day Targovishte. It dates back to the period of early Byzantine and medieval Bulgarian history. The second site is the Slaveikov School - Targovishte. The school building is one of the most remarkable monuments of public construction dating back to the Bulgarian Revival. The famous revival poet Petko R. Slaveikov, who briefly taught in the city, takes the architectural design.



Existing tourist routes

An attractive area for short-term recreation in Antonovo municipality is the Yastrebino Dam, with its convenient beach strip and the fishing and water sports opportunities.

The tourism in the municipality of Opaka is not developed. In the village of Gorsko Ablanovo, Opaka was built the hut Third March, surrounded by beautiful nature and fresh air.

20 km south of Popovo, along the beautiful and picturesque valley near the Buyukdere (the Big River), an eco-path of 13.5 km is built.

The Kalakoch Hill is the highest part of the Popovo Heights (488 m). It is located between the villages of Kovachevets, Palamartza, Golyamo Gradishte and Tsar Asen. There is the third highest point in the Danube Plain.

On the territory of the Municipality of Popovo is located the healing holy spring with a chapel in the village of Zvezda.

On the territory of the Municipality of Targovishte there is a waterfall, near the main road Varna - Sofia in the locality of Boaza. It is about five metres tall and is formed by a small underground stream of the Vrana River. Ovcharovski dam is located near the village of Ovcharovo. There are also the remains of Kaleto Fortress.

The Borovo Eye Lake, located in a picturesque park in the town of Targovishte, is a nice place for relaxation.



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