



Edition 187 – September 2020

Good News: University Start-ups

In 2019, start-ups that emerged from universities created 62,600 jobs and generated sales of 8.4 billion euros. Senator for Economic Affairs Ramona Pop (Greens) said it was particularly gratifying that a quarter of the start-ups registered throughout Germany in 2019 were founded in Berlin. If you look at all the start-ups - not just the technology-oriented start-ups - the capital is well ahead of the field with 105 start-ups per 10,000 inhabitants in Germany.

Prayer: Thank God for this positive development

Series Berlin Districts: Lichtenberg (1)

“Stasi, Platte, Neo-Nazis” - these were the three stereotypes which the East Berlin district of Lichtenberg was often associated with in the past. But these attributes have long since become obsolete as the clichés of the 1990s and are much less appropriate for the dynamic and diverse reality of the district between Berlin's inner city and the periphery than it used to be. For about 10 years, the two formerly independent districts of Hohenschönhausen and Lichtenberg have experienced rapid population growth with an increase from around 40,000 to over 290,000 residents. From Karlshorst and the Rummelsburger Bucht in the south, the district stretches over historically grown residential areas up to the large Neu-Hohenschönhausen housing estate and three villages on the state border with Brandenburg. The district has repeatedly been successfully certified as a “family-friendly municipality”. Art and culture are increasingly prevalent in the district. Innovative companies are settling in. However, these processes are not without side effects: residents have to be prepared for a change in the population structure, significant structural densification processes and, in some cases, significantly increasing rents. The baby boom in recent years has pushed the capacities of the day-care and school system to their limits despite drastic expansion measures. The need for investment collides with the little public space left or is at the expense of green areas. Commercial areas are in competition with residential construction. New building projects sometimes meet with strong resistance.

Lichtenberg has hardly any major social hot spots, but many migrants have moved here in the course of the flow of refugees of recent years and have to find their way into society and the labour market. Most recently,

the effects of the pandemic were clearly felt by the sharp rise in the number of unemployment registrations. Homeless people from different countries gather at some hotspots, which sometimes causes conflicts.

Prayer:

- **Pray that a good coexistence between established residents and new neighbours would be developed**
- **Pray for tolerance and courage to embrace the new diversity**
- **Pray that isolated right-wing extremist groups would stop abusing the district for their inhumane agenda**
- **Pray for improvements among problem groups: Refugees, unemployed, homeless**

New Senator for Construction Sebastian Scheel

Sebastian Scheel, 44, who was previously the State Secretary of the resigned Senator for Urban Development and Housing, Katrin Lompscher, was sworn in as the new construction senator in Parliament. Actually, this post in a key department, which was so important for the Linke party was meant to be filled by a woman. But the search for a successor was unsuccessful. Three years ago, just a few weeks after the start of the new red-red-green coalition, Scheel, who has a degree in philosophy, inherited the post from rent activist Andrej Holm, who was politically unable to continue as State Secretary due to his Stasi past. In close coordination with the "Housing Supply Berlin", a public institution run by rental activists, Scheel implemented the left-wing housing policy of lower rents and the allocation of apartments to households with low incomes. When he took office, he said he wanted to continue the policy of his predecessor.

Prayer:

- **Pray for a blessed start for the new Senator**
- **Pray that he will accelerate the urgently needed new construction of apartments**
- **Pray for good cooperation in the Senate and with its agencies**

Endless Arguments About Rigaer Straße 94?

The house was occupied for the first time in 1990 and has since been repeatedly vacated and reoccupied. For many years it has been the starting point and retreat from and after militant actions. The authorities tolerate unlawful conversions in the house by the militant occupiers, such as wall breakthroughs to create escape routes, the tapping of power lines, the installation of trap doors and other sometimes life-threatening changes to the house. The regular criminal and violent acts such as attacks on tenants of other construction projects in the neighbourhood and on police officers are generally not punished. A complaint by the owner before the regional court (second instance) has now been dismissed because, according to his statement, the court did not have sufficient power of attorney from the owner's lawyer. There are said to be two private owners who, for fear of personal assault by the squatters, "hide" behind a foreign company for which there is no legitimation under national law in Germany. The Senate would buy the house, but does not want to negotiate with a "front company". The militant squatters welcomed the dismissed complaint.

Prayer:

- **Pray for the clarification regarding owners, legitimation of legal representation, legality of the "front company" - that God's light brings the truth to light**
- **Pray for protection against physical attacks by militants: for the residents, the police, the owners; God's protection for all**
- **Pray that law and order are established and observed and that God's justice is achieved for all involved**

IT-Protection Gaps in Wastewater?

A safety report on data protection at the Berlin wastewater supply revealed considerable gaps. The most important of them are now closed, says Senator Pop. The opposition doubts whether that will be enough.

Prayer:

- **Pray that security loopholes can be closed quickly and that the city will be protected from cyberattacks**

Jewish Holidays

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year will be celebrated this year from September 18-20. It is the day to take stock of the moral and religious behaviour in the past year and to come before God with prayers for a good future. It follows a ten-day period of repentance, in which members of the Jewish community are supposed to get along with everyone who has offended or injured them in the past year. The conclusion takes place on Yom Kippur, the Great Feast of

Reconciliation. Shouldn't we as Christians take an example, look back and examine what was good and what was bad, and now make changes? Let us be challenged, in a time that seems to be filled with fear of illness, mistrust, frustration and anger, to put our previous life to the test, to ask for forgiveness without waiting for the other person, and to seek reconciliation to search.

Prayer:

- **Pray for safe and blessed high holidays for the Jewish communities in Berlin (the attack in Halle happened on Yom Kippur 2019)**
- **Pray for protection for all Jews who suffer from insults, marginalization, bullying and physical attacks**
- **Pray for understanding and repentance in our relationship with God and our fellow human beings**

Keeping On: School Problems (not only) due to Corona

In the last weeks there were Corona cases in 38 schools, but the infection apparently did not occur in the school. The hygiene concepts seem to be working. School senator Sandra Scheeres was severely criticized two weeks ago by the Berlin parents' representative, Norman Heise, together with an alliance of education union, student representatives and headmasters' associations for inadequate preparation for the new school year. She was also accused of poor communication with those responsible in the schools. There is now a "hygiene advisory board" which is attempting to find sensible solutions for all involved. And Ms. Scheeres announced that after the next election she will no longer be available for the job of Education Senator.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the hygiene advisory board**
- **Pray that schools do not become corona hotspots**
- **Pray that Senator Scheeres will use the next 12 months to drive improvements in the schools**

Dates

Sept. 9, 6pm: Prayer for City Politics at the Rote Rathaus

Oct. 3: 30 Years- Miracle of Freedom and Unity.

This year we are celebrating 30 years of reunification. It is yet to be seen which celebrations will be possible. Together for Berlin, however, assumes that events will take place outside. A prayer service "Thank you - Celebrate - Pray" is planned again at the Wall Memorial and the Chapel of Reconciliation. In the evening the initiative "3. October - Germany sings" wants to sing together in different places in the city: www.3oktober.org