



Edition 191 – February 2021

Good News: CO2-Emissions Reduced

It has just become known that the capital already achieved its climate protection target in 2019. The CO2 emissions fell by 40.7 percent to 17.2 million tons, compared to 1990, the internationally used base year. That was before the start of the Corona crisis, which is likely to have further reduced emissions. Senator for Economic Affairs Ramona Pop (Greens) explained: "In particular, thanks to the coal phase-out initiated by the Senate and the Berlin energy and climate program, we managed to reduce real CO2 emissions by more than 1.9 million tons in 2017-2019, and thus by almost ten percent." The highest percentage declines in CO2 emissions were in the areas of private households, businesses, and services (-8.9%) and manufacturing (-17.3%). The CO2 emissions in the transport sector rose again slightly by 0.5%.

Prayer: Thank God for this positive development

Districts Series: Treptow-Köpenick

Treptow-Köpenick is the largest district in southeast Berlin. With its extensive green and water areas and various recreational opportunities, the district is rightly referred to as the "Green East Ring". With the innovative Adlershof Technology Park, there is also a strong business presence. The petit-bourgeois-middle-class district has over 270,000 residents and can now boast a stable social structure and a high employment rate. A large number of elderly people, many of whom have always lived in East Berlin, live here. But there are also young families who want to live outside the city centre. The residents here usually feel they are more German and more East German than elsewhere in Berlin. There is a rather conservative mentality, which may have lower tolerance values for new or foreign things. People with a migration background live here comparatively less often. Socially weaker milieus and precarious residential areas must not be overlooked. These people can increasingly fear losing touch with society.

Politician Gregor Gysi, who lives in southeast part of Berlin, once said that although he describes himself as an atheist, he is afraid of a society without God. This phenomenon is to some extent characteristic of a certain ambivalence that seems to emerge in the relationship between the many unchurched people (over 70%) and faith in the region. Church and faith usually have no relevance or are fraught with resentment. Fortunately, Christian initiatives and church planting have

been establishing themselves over the last few years, bringing the light of the Gospel to the southeast and networking well.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for being close to nature and lots of opportunities to relax**
- **Pray for creativity in how the gospel can become relevant and alive among unchurched people**
- **Pray that those in positions of authority would make wise decisions in order to involve all social classes in the development of the district**

Berlin's Forests Are Doing Worse Than Ever

The Forest Condition Report 2020 was presented in December. Only 7% of all trees are without damage. After three dry years, the forest, which for many Berliners is so important for local recreation, is suffering. The Senate will provide Berlin foresters with an additional three million euros by the end of 2021 for forest conversion, forest fire prevention and the necessary maintenance and security. This means that more mixed deciduous and coniferous forests that are more resistant to heat will be planted. In autumn, 425,000 trees and bushes, mainly deciduous species such as oak, beech, hornbeam, linden and maple, were planted.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for more money for the reforestation and maintenance of the forests**
- **Pray for enough rain so that planted trees can grow**
- **Pray that we all live in a more environmentally friendly way so as not to encourage global warming**

TXL-Reconstruction – A Huge Opportunity

The new BER airport has opened. The task now is to convert the former Tegel airport into a modern research and industrial park. 30,000 jobs are to be created. 2,000 students at Beuth University will move into

a new facility and 10,000 people will find a home. The area will be gradually transferred from the airport company to the Tegel-Projekt-GmbH beginning May, 2021.

Prayer:

- **Pray for blessing and success for the reconstruction, especially for good planning**
- **Pray for fast and excellent implementation**
- **Pray for careful use of resources and compliance with budget**

Berlin as the Centre of Human Trafficking with Vietnamese

The investigating authorities have long known that Vietnamese people are lured in their homeland under false promises and smuggled into Europe for a lot of money. The routes lead mostly through Russia, the Baltic States and Poland to Berlin and from here often on to Western Europe (Belgium, the Netherlands, France). Berlin is the hub for human smugglers in Germany and Europe. The human smuggling and distribution centre is located on an industrial and commercial area in Lichtenberg (Dong-Xuan-Center, "Little Hanoi", also advertised as a tourist attraction), where mainly Vietnamese business people are based. The smuggled Vietnamese have to work to pay off the smugglers under the most adverse conditions: they work in restaurants, massage or nail studios, in the slaughter industry or in cigarette smuggling, in cannabis cultivation or as prostitutes (these are often minors) in Berlin and Western Europe. And although the Federal Police and the BKA are aware of the smuggling and human trafficking and fighting against it, the State Criminal Police in Berlin often sees no basis for action. The BKA wants to make the fight against smuggling and human trafficking of Vietnamese a focus of its work in 2021.

Prayer:

- **Pray for God's blessing on the Vietnamese, who under often adverse circumstances have to work off the costs of their smuggling: that they will soon be treated freely and humanely**
- **Pray that the investigating authorities have sufficient information and evidence to uncover and prevent people being smuggled for the purpose of human trafficking**
- **Pray for better living conditions in Vietnam so that nobody wants to be smuggled into Europe anymore**

Racist Incidents Among the Police

The Berlin police are currently considering disciplinary measures against 47 police officers on suspicion of right-wing extremist and racist statements of varying severity. Even though this is only less than 2% of the police officers, according to the Interior Senator Geisel, it is "47 too many". Most incidents are reported by colleagues, which the Interior Senator sees as a good sign of self-cleaning within the police. The vast majority of police officers reject right-wing extremism and racism and do not want their reputation to be tarnished by a few. According to the Interior Senator, the problem should be dealt with openly and aggressively - not spreading a blanket of silence over it, but addressing it openly. Approximately 20 of the disciplinary proceedings are intended to remove the police officer concerned from service, which is not infrequently prevented by the courts, which consider a milder disciplinary punishment than a dismissal to be appropriate.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the Berlin police officers and their service for Berlin and the Berliners and everyone who acts according to the basic values of the constitution and who do not represent extremist views**
- **Pray for openness and good handling of right-wing radical and racist behaviour in the police**
- **Pray for just court decisions for the individuals and for the police as a whole**

Keeping On: The Development of the Corona Pandemic

In Berlin as well as nationwide, the incidence values (7-day average of infections per 100,000 inhabitants) are decreasing – thank God. However, the death toll remains relatively high. The B117 corona mutation is threatening to spread after 24 cases occurred at the Humboldt Clinic in Reinickendorf.

Let's keep on praying that the numbers will decline and for wise and effective decisions by the authorities regarding the mutation.

Dates:

- **Feb. 2nd, Prayer for City Politicians, 6-7 p.m. only online at: <https://meet.jit.si/PolitischesStadtgebet-Berlin>**