



Edition 194 – May 2021

Good News: Startups and Research

Berlin has a unique research structure because of the Free University (FU), the Humboldt University (HU), the Technical University (TU) and the Charité. This is an ideal basis for research and science-based startups - when new connections are created between science and the established start-up ecosystem. In this sense, the restart of the start-up service of the Berlin University Alliance "Science & Startups" is a correct and important signal.

Prayer: Thank God for the research infrastructure and the new start-up service

Demonstrations and Prayer on May 1st

The left-wing activists have again called for a "Revolutionary May Day Demonstration" at 6 pm. It is supposed to go from Hermannplatz to Oranienplatz. In addition to several migrant groups who were invited to this demonstration by the left-wing scene and who have been given a platform there for their concerns and views, the main topic of the demonstration will be the failed rent cap and the future of rents in the city. There will be several smaller and larger demonstrations in town throughout the day. If the weather is nice, the police - in addition to accompanying the various demonstrations - will also have to check compliance with the pandemic restrictions. It is not yet known to what extent events from the spectrum of corona deniers will take place again. The police will accompany the activities in the city with around 4,000 officers.

Prayer:

- **Pray that all events and demonstrations will remain peaceful**
- **Pray that the police will make wise decisions in all their activities**
- **Pray that all those involved will treat each other with mutual respect and appreciation**

Series on Political Parties for the Berlin Election: SPD

On September 26, 2021, three parallel elections will take place in Berlin: in addition to the Bundestag election, the election for the Berlin House of Representatives and the District Council Assemblies (BVV) in the

twelve Berlin districts. The BVV then elects the district mayors and the members of the district offices. In the months before the elections, we want to present the parties that have so far been represented in the House of Representatives, our Berlin state parliament, in a series with their party platforms and top candidates

We will start with the SPD: In Berlin, the SPD governs in a coalition with "DIE LINKE" and "Bündnis 90 / DIE GRÜNEN". Together they form the Berlin Senate as the state government of the federal state of Berlin. As the strongest parliamentary group in the Berlin House of Representatives, the SPD provides the Governing Mayor, currently still Michael Müller, who is running for the Bundestag as the top candidate on the Berlin state list in September. The SPD's election manifesto for Berlin is entitled "Berlin is a matter of the heart. We fight together for a social city. Definitely Berlin". The SPD wants to emphasize that Berlin should be developed further as a livable metropolis with heart and mind. Berlin is described as a city of freedom and diversity. But the SPD says that Berlin needs a new start, a reconstruction program, after the pandemic. There is talk of the "five B's" (in German): "Building, education, the best economy, resident-centered administration, and a secure Berlin", which means, whoever lives in Berlin should be able to feel safe. In addition, the SPD platform states, "Everywhere in Berlin, we advocate not the law of the strongest, but the strength of the law. We oppose every form of extremism, racism, inhumanity, hatred and agitation." The SPD finds it important to preserve Berlin as a city for everyone, an international city of freedom, respect and solidarity with freedom of religion and as a rainbow city. The Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Franziska Giffey, was nominated as the top candidate for the House of Representatives election. Since November 27, 2020, she and Raed Saleh have formed the Berlin leadership duo of the SPD.

Prayer:

- **Pray for social cohesion and clarity of the respective profiles of the parties**
- **Pray for the ability to create social equilibrium because the pandemic has widened the gap between rich and poor**
- **Pray that politicians would adopt a servant attitude**
- **Pray for respectful interaction with one another and fair election campaigns**

More anti-Semitic Incidents

The Research and Information Center Antisemitism Berlin (RIAS) has presented its 2020 annual report: a total of 1,004 cases were documented. Against the background of limited interpersonal contacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of anti-Semitic incidents is considerable. Around one in five incidents was also directly related to the pandemic and its containment. For example, Jews were held responsible for the spread of the virus. In other cases, the Shoah was trivialized by equating the measures to contain the pandemic with anti-Semitic Nazi politics. Social media are often hostile to people who are involved and active against anti-Semitism and seek to intimidate them.

Prayer:

- **Pray for protection for Jews on the street, in local public transport, at school, etc.**
- **Pray for recognition that age-old reservations and prejudices are based on lies**
- **Pray that all Christians would courageously stand up against hatred of Jews and ostracism**

Rent Cap Overturned – Now What?

After the rent cap was classified as unconstitutional, the Berlin Senate agreed on 10 million euros for "safe living aid". It is assumed that 40,000 tenants will have problems paying back the previously reduced rent. This aid will be paid as a loan at first. It is feared that otherwise many tenants would be affected by evictions. A discussion has flared up about why the general public should now pay through their taxes for the fact that tenants have not adhered to the warning to put money aside for just such a case. The good news is that the subsidized social housing companies want to forego charging additional back rent.

Prayer:

- **Pray for fast, uncomplicated help so that evictions can be prevented**
- **Pray that in the end, only a small amount of government (tax) money is needed**
- **Pray for well thought-out and legally binding federal legislative initiatives that stop the rent spiral**
- **Thank God that the subsidized social housing companies will forego charging additional back rent**

Corona-Tests in Schools

Due to the new compulsory tests at Berlin's schools, significantly more infections are being detected: 844 in the week up to April 23, compared to 329 until April 16. Tests are not yet compulsory for teachers.

The figures pertain to around 1,000 general and vocational schools. By far the most infections were in primary schools. The increase is lower for secondary schools. There had been criticism from many sides in Berlin that the mandatory tests for students were not to take place at home, but rather in schools. The Association of School Psychologists had warned that many would unnecessarily worry about the risk of "false positive" tests. In addition, they might be shamed in front of their classmates. For this reason, teachers, headmasters and parents of some schools protested against the school test site, while others - especially in socially disadvantaged areas - were happy to finally have certainty about possible infections in symptom-free students. A further complicating factor was the fact that Education Senator Sandra Scheeres (SPD) had initially advised against the school tests and then turned around at short notice under pressure from the coalition. In addition, under the new federal law, if the incidence exceeds 165, schools may be closed again.

Prayer:

- **Pray that students will be protected from infection**
- **Pray that teachers and parents will be sensitive in dealing with children's fears**
- **Pray that especially the weaker students will be strengthened and preserved**
- **Pray that schools will not have to be closed again**

Keeping-On: Corona Situation and the Vaccination Campaign

In Berlin, the 7-day incidence on April 27th was nearly 138 and thus slightly lower than in the previous week. The high occupancy of the intensive care units with Covid 19 patients (27 percent) is a cause for concern.

Let's continue to ask God for a decrease in the pandemic and the noticeable success of the vaccination campaign!

Dates:

- **Prayer surrounding May 1st: April 28th, 6 pm, and May 1st, 4:30 pm, with joint prayer beginning at the Hermannplatz**
- **May 12th, Prayer for City Politics, 6-7pm, Rotes Rathaus, main entrance**