



Edition 198 – October 2021

### ***Good News: Fewer Unemployed***

There is economic progress in Berlin again - even if some industries are still suffering due to the consequences of the Covid crisis. But the Berlin economy is stabilizing. The Senate Department for Economics report for the second quarter of the year showed that there are significantly more employees in the labour market again. Above all, there is one industry that is helping the situation to stabilize again despite the pandemic: the digital economy. The unemployment rate fell to 5.6 percent in July. "The time as the capital of unemployment is finally over," said Senator for Economic Affairs Ramona Pop. The Berlin economy has been growing above the national average since 2016 - it was usually in first or second place among the federal states.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for this positive economic development and the decrease in the number of unemployed**

### ***Coalition Formation after the Berlin House of Representatives Election***

The Berliners have chosen the SPD as the strongest party, which means that Franziska Giffey, who is likely to be the next Governing Mayor, will now conduct the first coalition negotiations. According to the election results (SPD 21.4%, Greens 18.9%, CDU 18.1%, Left 14.0%, AfD 8.1%, FDP 7.1%) there is a red-green-red government coalition (still) possible. All other coalitions capable of governing in terms of numbers (SPD - Greens - CDU or SPD - CDU - Left or Greens - CDU - Left) will most likely not be sought nor would they have the approval of the respective parties. In the coalition negotiations, the respective parties agree which political goals should be jointly pursued. Each involved party tries to include as many of its own goals as possible in the coalition agreement. In addition to the willingness to compromise, the negotiating skills of the negotiating partners are now decisive for how our city will be governed in the next five years.

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that the right parties from God's perspective will negotiate with one another**
- **Pray that the negotiations themselves are respectful and based on partnership and that the coalition partners agree on a program that will be a blessing for Berlin**
- **Pray that there will be a quick and good agreement and formation of a government**

### ***What Happens after the Referendum on "Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co.?"***

On September 26th the Berlin electorate not only voted on three parliaments, but also on the referendum "Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co.", which was adopted with a clear majority of 56.4 percent. It is about socializing large private real estate companies that have more than 3,000 apartments in Berlin. This would affect over 240,000 apartments. The aim is to significantly limit the sharp rise in rental prices. The estimated costs which would be incurred by the city vary vastly, from between 7 and 36 billion euros. The future Berlin government does not necessarily have to implement a referendum, but it must deal with it in any case. The negotiations on the formation of a new coalition will be decisively influenced by this. Representatives of the initiative made it clear that they are sticking to the implementation of the decision. The Left Party also made the drafting of a law for the socialization of large real estate groups a condition for future government participation. The top SPD woman Franziska Giffey, the likely future Governing Mayor, said: "A drafting of such a bill must now follow."

#### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for wisdom, prudence and a sense of responsibility for the legal implementation of the referendum**
- **Pray for the best outcome for Berlin tenants and the finances of Berlin**
- **Pray for decisions that are as little ideologically motivated as possible**

## **“October 3rd – Germany sings”**

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> we will celebrate the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary since both Germany and Berlin became one. Because we as Christians believe in our God as the ruler of history, it is also a grateful reminder of his work. Before our eyes and in the middle of our city, God worked the miracle of the fall of the wall and the reunification. Perhaps we as Germans, who have experienced God's gracious intervention - despite all the guilt of the past - have particularly good reason to stand up for unity and justice and freedom in other parts of the world. The initiative “October 3rd - Germany sings” invites all generations and cultures again in 2021 to open singing and celebrating in all cities and villages. The song lyrics, venues, and a description of the initiative's intention can be found on the website [www.3oktober.org](http://www.3oktober.org) “Together we will sing and play well-known songs and thus set a sign of gratitude and unity. With candles we will remember the prayers for peace and the Peaceful Revolution as a symbol of peace and hope in the reunited country and in the world.” You can join other choirs and singers in our city from 7 to 8 pm on Bebelplatz in Mitte. In addition, a “unity festival” with many well-known Christian and secular singers will be broadcast on YouTube from 3 to 5 pm. Together for Berlin will celebrate the day together with some churches at 3 p.m. on Winterfeldtplatz in City West.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God and praise Him for 31 years of unity and freedom in our city and nation**
- **Pray for the success of the events on October 3rd and visibility in the media**
- **Pray that Christians as well as secular people develop a culture of grateful remembrance**

## **Independent Schools go to Court**

Shortly before the election, a school reform was supposed to have been implemented, but this failed in many areas. One of the parts that was not resolved was the desire to increase the social permeability of the independent schools (non-state institutions) by giving them more money to support poor children and children with disabilities. The Left Party voted against it. 88 independent schools are currently suing the state of Berlin. The allegation is that the Senate Department for Education paid them less grants than they are due. The Protestant Secondary School Neukölln is bringing the model lawsuit. Independent schools do not receive any subsidies for building maintenance, cleaning and construction cost, and only 93 percent of the subsidies for personnel expenses are paid.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for financial equality for independent schools if they accept a certain percentage of poorer and disabled children**
- **Pray for the inclusion of independent schools in funding for material costs**
- **Better social mix in all schools**

## **Refugee Housing Construction Stalls**

Around 10,000 people with a completed asylum procedure are still living in refugee housing, places that are urgently needed in view of the situation in Afghanistan. From the point of view of Senator Breitenbach (Linke), the districts are doing too little to bring people with a completed asylum procedure into regular apartments. The construction of urgently needed accommodations for refugees in Berlin is stalling. Of the 53 planned accommodations, 23 have been completed so far. One reason for the delay is that some districts have not yet proposed suitable properties.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for willingness in all districts to rent apartments to refugees**
- **Pray that vacant properties will be released and that accommodations will be constructed**
- **Pray for peace between the relevant authorities and a clear focus on removing the obstacles**

## **Keeping On: Corona-Pandemic**

Fortunately, the number of infections has not increased in the last few weeks, but the pandemic and how to deal with vaccinations are still a challenge for politics and society. In classes 1 to 6 of the Berlin schools, the mask requirement has just been lifted.

**Let's keep praying that the pandemic will subside and that the state will deal fairly and responsibly with sanctions against the unvaccinated.**

## **Dates**

**October 3, 3pm and 7pm: Germany sings** (see article)

**October 13: Prayer for city politics**, 6-7pm in front of the main entrance to the Rote Rathaus