



Edition 199 – November 2021

Good News: Economy is overcoming Corona Crisis

The Chambers of Commerce in the capital region thinks the worst of the corona crisis is over. Since spring 2020, parts of the regional economy had come to a complete standstill. Many industries are now on a recovery course, but getting back to the pre-crisis level is progressing at different speeds.

Prayer: Thank God for this positive development

Status of the Coalition Negotiations

After various exploratory talks between the parties, the SPD, the Greens and the Left are now conducting serious coalition negotiations. As things currently stand there will most probably be a red-green-red government again. Since Oct 22, first negotiations have been taking place in a so-called umbrella group and in 16 specialist working groups. These consist of five to eight members of the three parties and develop joint proposals for the later coalition agreement. They are in constant coordination with the umbrella group. From November 17th on, the main negotiations will begin on the basis of the results of the working groups. The coalition agreement should be in place at the end of November. If the respective party committees approve the contract, the Berlin government will be formed, the governing mayor elected and the senators appointed on December 21. There are still issues where the three parties have very different ideas. The new government and its plans for Berlin will be valid for five years. It is now important to pray that a coalition agreement will be agreed upon which contains the best plans and goals for Berlin and its residents - and not just an agreement on the lowest common denominator. And that those people come into government and other offices who find approval before God, who look for the best for the city.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the best ideas of the three parties get into the coalition agreement**
- **Pray for mutual respect in the working groups and in the umbrella group**
- **Pray that the best government for Berlin comes together that governs the city well until the next election**

Sick Leave Among Government Administration

In 2020, the employees of the Berlin authorities were often sick - an average of 36.8 calendar days. In the previous year it was even 37.7. For years, the health of the Berlin administration has been getting worse, especially in the district administrations. On average, employees in Germany were absent on 11.2 days in 2020 - a considerable difference to the Berlin administration. Employees in the Senate Department for the Interior are by far the most often sick. These include, for example, the police and fire brigade, where the sickness levels are particularly high. At 85.5 percent, the health rate is also low in prisons. This is in conjunction with the increased psychological and physical stress. Civil servants are much more likely to be ill than salaried employees. In general, older people are sick more often than younger people, women slightly more often than men. Individuals can become seriously ill for a long time and cause statistical outliers. Nevertheless, above-average absenteeism means that an administration cannot work as planned. Though, in the year of the corona pandemic, the number of short-term illnesses in the Berlin administration fell significantly. The opposite is the case with long-term illnesses. This development corresponds to the national trend determined by the health insurance company DAK. Mental illnesses in particular reached a new high in 2020.

Prayer:

- **Let us lament before God the high sickness rate and the apparently high burden on those working in the Berlin administration**
- **Pray for research into the real causes**
- **Pray for relief by improving working conditions and more staff**

Need for Change in School Policy

The top state parents' representative put out a joke advertisement for the appointment of the school senator: "You love to stick with it, even if it takes a little longer?". Sandra Scheeres held the office for ten years, the SPD a total of 25 years. Before the election, the Berlin Citizens' Platforms had spoken to the top candidates from the various parties to advertise that they should apply for the position and send their best people into the running for it. Now it seems that

nobody wants to take responsibility for the schools. In the exploratory talks there has been no evidence so far of any innovative creative drive. The top state parents' representative would like someone to take over the education office who can dissolve the sluggishness of the authority. The recommendations of the quality commission must now finally be implemented. An initiative of many committed parents, teachers and students called "School has to be different" tries to build pressure during the coalition negotiations for necessary changes to be tackled now.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the right person will be found for the office of school senator**
- **Pray that the coalition parties give school a high priority**
- **Pray that necessary change processes in the administration are approached with energy and courage**

Fixing the Chaos at BER airport

In contrast to the beginning of the fall school break, the return traffic at the capital city airport BER ran largely without problems at the end of the autumn holiday. The airport expected around 190,000 passengers for the last holiday weekend. It is one of the busiest weekends since the outbreak of the pandemic. Due to personnel bottlenecks and the more complex controls in the Corona crisis, chaotic scenes had occurred two weeks earlier at the start of the holiday. Long queues formed in front of the check-in counters; some missed their plane despite sufficient lead time. On the tarmac, arriving travellers had to wait for exit stairs and later for their luggage. Many employees are still on short-time work; important positions remain unfilled. On the last weekend of the holiday, BER therefore positioned itself differently according to its own information and, among other things, supports the airlines with their own staff at the check-in counters.

Prayer:

- **Pray for better planning and organization by everyone involved for peak loads**
- **Pray that BER will get out of the negative headlines**
- **Pray for God's protection from further interference**

Dispute over the Colonial Legacy in the Humboldt Forum

The Humboldt Forum emphasizes that part of its profile is to take a critical look at German colonial history. At the opening ceremony, Federal President Steinmeier said that we have blind spots in our memories and self-perception when it comes to the colonial era. Many objects from Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Oceania came to the Humboldt Forum with the Ethnological Museum and the Museum of Asian Art. The exhibition of a long boat from Papua New Guinea and the Benin bronzes were hotly debated in public. It was decided to return the Benin bronzes next year to today's Nigeria as looted art. The Humboldt Forum sees itself deliberately as a forum and not first and foremost as a museum. Coming to terms with the colonial era is referred to as the second culture of guilt after 1945 and also affects current everyday racism.

Prayer:

- **Pray for even more light on the long-concealed German guilt during the colonial era**
- **Pray for an attitude of humility and the return of objects to the affected countries**
- **Pray for positive effects of this historical revision for today**

Keeping On: Corona-Pandemic

The number of reported infections and the occupancy of intensive care beds are also increasing more sharply in Berlin. **Let's keep praying.**

Dates

Nov. 10: Prayer for City Politics, 6-7pm, Rotes Rathaus, in front of the main entrance

Nov. 14, 3-4:30pm, Day of Prayer for persecuted Christians: Stadtkloster Segen, Schönhauser Allee 161, 10435 Berlin. The Evangelical Alliance Berlin, together with Open Doors and others, invites you to a prayer event for persecuted Christians: »Persecuted Christians keep asking for our prayer. We want to comply with this request together with other believers around the world. Please pray with us for the strengthening of the churches in North Korea, Nigeria, Iran and Afghanistan. We will briefly report on these four countries so that we can pray together for our brothers and sisters on site.«