



Edition 200 – December 2021/January 2022

Good news: more tax revenue

According to the results of the latest tax estimate, revenues of around 25.1 billion euros are expected for the state of Berlin in the current year. Compared to the tax estimate from May 2021, this means a higher revenue of around 1.43 billion euros. For the years of the next double budget 2022/2023, there will be additional income compared to the draft budget of around 1.27 billion euros (2022) and 1.23 billion euros (2023). As a result of the current high level of dynamic this nearly reaches the pre-crisis path again. However, the risks and uncertainties for economic development with a view to the pandemic remain high. So far, however, it has only been about withdrawing reserves formed before the crisis, not a surplus. Due to the coalition agreement of the designated federal government, the income from federal funds may also fall again.

Prayer: Thank God for this development

Status: Formation of the Government

The negotiations on a new government coalition for the federal state of Berlin were successfully concluded at the end of November with the presentation of a coalition agreement of 149 pages. The SPD, Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen and Die Linke have agreed on a red-green-red project for the next five years. Now the party committees (the SPD and the Greens) or the members (Die Linke) have to decide on the proposal. The new Governing Mayor, Franziska Giffey, would then be elected shortly before Christmas after the decision about the proposals. Then the new Senate will also be presented and sworn in. However, there are a number of internal critics of the treaty, especially among the Left Party, so that the acceptance does not yet seem entirely certain.

Prayer:

- **Pray that Berlin will soon have a functioning government again**
- **Pray for the removal of the last obstacles to the approval of the coalition agreement**
- **Pray that the work and direction of the new coalition is pleasing to God and serves Berlin in the best possible way**

Important Contents of the New Coalition Agreement

Often such contracts are largely declarations of intent. The financing of the planned measures is not always secured. This applies especially to the 200,000 new apartments that are to be built by 2030. That's 25,000 a year - only 16,337 were built in 2020. To this end, the new coalition wants to form an "alliance for new residential construction and affordable housing" with municipal and private partners and investors. In itself a good idea, but there are doubts about its ability to be implemented, not only in the Left Party. This includes a voluntary waiver of rent increases. This rent moratorium is a replacement for the rent cap law collected by the constitutional court. Furthermore, timely appointments at the citizens' offices (14 days) are being sought again, a project that seems illusory in view of the shortage of staff and sick leave in the administration, but also because of the encrusted structures. Denser bus and train cycles are a praiseworthy project, especially for the outskirts, which, however, has not yet been fully financed. The (finally) decided civil service of the teaching staff has unfortunately been postponed to the school year 2023/24. Lastly, Berlin is supposed to become a "green, climate-neutral capital"; billions of euros are planned for this.

Prayer:

- **Pray for much "implementing grace" from God for the many praiseworthy projects**
- **Pray that the new coalition maintains a good balance between realism and visionary power**
- **Pray simply a blessing for the restart of the "old" coalition**

Anti-Semitism and Festival of Lights

Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of light, began on November 28th and will continue until December 6th. The story is told of how a small supply of oil for the candlestick in the temple was sufficient until new oil could be produced. The so-called festival of lights stands for God's reliable help for his people in times of need. In contrast, Jews in Berlin are repeatedly attacked, insulted and discredited. 161 anti-Semitic acts were already recorded by the police in Berlin in the first half of 2021. Most of the offenses between January and June were sedition against Jews.

Prayer:

- **Bless Jewish life in the city**
- **Ask God for protection for all Jews who are recognizable in public and also for all public Jewish events**
- **Pray for awareness and conversion from anti-Semitism, even if it is latent**
- **Pray for sensitivity among the police and security forces**

Christmas During the Pandemic

These days we ask uncertainly and anxiously: How will it be on Christmas this year? Will there be further restrictions on family celebrations and visits, church services and Christmas parties because of the pandemic emergency? At the time of going to press we do not yet know whether there will be any further restrictions beyond those announced on December 2. The pandemic in itself is a challenge to prayer. And how will the congregations organize their services under these circumstances? With on-site presence or essentially (again) digital? All church leaders need our intercession that they will still convey the message of the Saviour's coming into this world. We especially want to bring lonely, homeless, sick and people in quarantine before God. Jesus wants to come to the people this year too. Our prayers can help "prepare the way" for him.

Prayer:

- **Pray for all those responsible for Christmas services in churches and the media**
- **Pray that the living Lord meets the lonely, the homeless, the sick, and for people to care for them in tangible ways**
- **Pray that the message of the Saviour who became lowly reaches many in spite of the circumstances**

Day of Prayer EINS (ONE) for Berlin, January 15th

For the fifth time, what is probably the broadest alliance of Christian networks in Germany invites you to the ONE day of prayer. It will take place again in the Berlin Cathedral, if possible, with up to 300 registered participants under 2-G conditions. It will also be broadcast via live stream at the same time. If the requirements change by then, participation will only be possible via the Internet if necessary. From 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., the various denominations and prayer traditions will pray, sing or represent prayer, e.g., through dance, in their own way. Christian Ceconi, the director of the Stadtmission, will preach. Afterwards there will again be opportunities for prayer groups on the internet. Current information can be found at www.einsfuerberlin.de

Prayer:

- **Pray that ONE can be an in-person event**
- **Pray that our unified prayer will move God's heart and change the city**

BER-Problems Without End

Experts say the airport's problems are "worrying" and the current situation is "very unsatisfactory". The BER is "not viable in its current form". In addition to the existing financial requirement of 2.4 billion euros by 2026 (to be paid by Berlin, Brandenburg and the federal government), there are often minor and major problems: recently germs were found in the water pipes of Terminal 1; so far only one of the two runways is used alternately (but that should change from December); Terminal 2 cannot open until Easter 2022 (lack of staff); only a limited number of taxis from Berlin are allowed to pick up passengers at BER; during the autumn holidays the waiting times were so long, especially at the security check, that many vacationers missed their flight (currently you should be at the airport 2 hours before departure and the waiting time at the security check is about an hour); all 17 moving walkways in Terminal 1 are defective. The new airport manager Aletta von Massenbach does not think these problems are too bad. The many problems show us that we may and should still pray a lot, intensively and probably for a long time for BER!

Prayer:

- **Thank God that, in spite of all the difficulties, BER was able to be opened and that it has been working so far**
- **Ask God to bless Aletta von Massenbach and all those responsible at BER that problems can be solved quickly and permanently**
- **Pray for sufficient staff, organization and finances and smooth flight operations**

Keeping On: Corona Pandemic

Have we as individuals and in churches, really cried out to God intensely enough to put an end to the pandemic? Perhaps we need a new emphasis on prayer for an end to the plague.

Let's keep on praying!

Dates

Dec. 8 and Jan. 1: Prayer for City Politics, 6-7 pm, Rotes Rathaus, in front of the main entrance
January 9. - 16. Week of Prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance, all Berlin prayer events can be found at www.evangelische-allianz-berlin.de
Jan. 15, 3:00-4:30pm: ONE Day of Prayer, if possible, in the Berliner Dom; otherwise, live-stream. Further Information at www.einsfuerberlin.de