



Edition 208 – October 2022

Good News: Giffey Calls for Confidence

The "Q Berlin" is the official conference of the city of Berlin for global dialogue on the most pressing issues of our time. It was the fifth metropolitan conference in Berlin. This time it took place in the former International Congress Center ICC on 15/16 September. The hostess, Governing Mayor Franziska Giffey, called for optimism. The conference was entitled "The New Unknown - Navigating a turning point in time". Political and economic leaders from major international cities discussed topics such as the consequences of wars and crises such as climate change, the corona pandemic and the war in Ukraine. "Whining doesn't help," Ms. Giffey said in German (Berlinerisch – "Jammern hilft nüscht") in her speech, which was otherwise held in English.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for Mrs. Giffey's optimism**
- **Pray for clarity about the future use of the ICC, which is protected as a historic monument in need of renovation**

Berlin's Elections Likely to be Repeated

In its first hearing on September 28, the Berlin Constitutional Court revealed a surprisingly clear trend in its decision, which is to be announced in a maximum of three months: The shortcomings in the election of the House of Representatives and the district parliaments in September 2021 are so great that a complete repetition of the election will probably be necessary. At that time there had been significant shortcomings - very embarrassing for the Berlin administration: too few or wrong ballots, long queues, voting well after 6 p.m. and other things. The Bundestag will only decide from mid-October whether the Bundestag elections, which took place on the same day, must be repeated in parts of Berlin or in their entirety. However, the statements of the Constitutional Court make this more likely. Such a repeated election would then have to take place within 90 days, i.e. by the end of March at the latest. The same candidates and lists as in 2021 must compete again. This means elections campaigns will start again very soon. The composition of the parliaments at state

level and in the districts could change. The current polls for party preference suggest this might be so. Whether the current red-green-red coalition can continue to govern is just as open as the question of whether Franziska Giffey will continue as governing mayor.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the decision of the constitutional court and the Bundestag can be made soon, so that there is clarity**
- **Pray that the possible election campaign does not hinder objective government**
- **Pray for as little damage as possible to the reputation of democracy**

Berlin Aid Package for the Energy Crisis

The SPD, the Greens and the Left have agreed on further relief measures due to the rising energy costs. They are intended to supplement the measures for Berlin that have not yet been finally adopted by the federal government (gas and electricity price brakes, etc.). Citizens, companies and social organizations should benefit from this. This includes a termination moratorium (postponement) for the tenants of the state-owned housing companies if they get into payment difficulties due to energy costs. The private housing companies are asked to join this voluntarily. Depending on how the energy price brake turns out at federal level, the coalition is also planning an energy cost subsidy and an electricity discount for people with low and middle incomes. The coalition also wants to support charities and social organizations. For Berlin companies there should be an "immediate energy cost aid" based on the model of the Corona aid. Even before that, the Senate had decided to introduce a 29-euro ticket for the months of October to December.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for this concrete help**
- **Pray for help especially for people and families with low income**
- **Pray that no one will be evicted because they cannot pay the energy costs**

Contingency Plans for Power Outages

According to the Senate, a so-called blackout, i.e. a long-term, large-scale power failure, is very unlikely in Berlin. Nevertheless, the Senate will soon publish information on preparatory measures and options for action in such an emergency. If a large number of people were to switch on electric fan heaters to heat their homes at the same time, there would be a risk of overloading the power grids. For protection, the network operators would then switch off the electricity regionally and for a limited period of time "to ensure overall stability" and to avoid damage. The police are currently developing operational plans for a possible blackout. It is particularly about maintaining public safety, the crime situation and the protection of critical infrastructures. Possible failures due to cyber-attacks were not expressly mentioned.

Prayer:

- **Pray for God's protection from gas shortages and subsequent power cuts in winter**
- **Pray for protection against cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure**
- **Pray that the authorities and the police take good precautions for possible emergencies**

Water Supply Rescue Plan

The lack of rain in summer and in recent years has repeatedly brought the long-term security of Berlin's water supply into focus. In order to overcome the problems in water management, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony want to work together in the future. A position paper was signed for this purpose. In Saxony there are rivers, reservoirs and dams on which Brandenburg and Berlin depend. Lignite mining has severely disturbed the water balance in the region, which is why it now has to be stabilized sustainably and in the long term. However, the problems are so great that the federal government must also take action, emphasized the representatives of the three federal states.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the federal government and the three federal states tackle the security of the water supply**
- **Pray for lots of rain in autumn and winter**

Suitcase Chaos at BER

There are still 3,000 suitcases stranded in the basement of BER. During the summer holidays there were sometimes too few staff. That is now getting better. Most positions have been filled. Airport boss Aletta von Massenbach assures that these suitcases should now quickly get to their owners.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the suitcases get to their owners quickly**
- **Pray that sufficient staff is available**

"German Angst" also in Berlin

This term has found its way into international usage. Germans are known abroad for their hesitation and timidity. Their actions are characterized by concerns such as existential fears, worries, and an extreme need for security. Sabine Bode, a Cologne journalist, suspects this is caused by the legacy of World War II with unresolved grief over the consequences for our country (book "German Angst" 2006). A most interesting aspect! The journalist Georg Mascolo, a former Spiegel editor, is currently calling for prudent reporting in crises. Journalists should refuse the "permanent excitement" of social media. People want objectivity and explanation, not exaggeration and superlatives.

Prayer:

- **Pray for journalists and truthful and objective reporting**
- **Pray for thorough research in compliance with journalistic professional ethics**
- **Pray for more articles reporting positive developments**
- **Pray for us Christians, that we can anchor our fears and worries firmly in God and that we can convey this hope to others**

Keeping On: Reorganization of rbb

As interim director of Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb), Katrin Vernau receives less money than Patricia Schlesinger, who was fired without notice. According to research by Business Insider, the broadcaster pays her 295,000 euros annually. Unlike her predecessor, Vernau does not receive any bonus payments. Instead of a company car with a chauffeur, rbb is providing the new boss with a "Bahn Card 100" for unlimited rail travel. The previous administrative director of West German Broadcasting is to lead rbb for a transitional period. rbb circles assume that Vernau wants to position herself as a permanent solution.

Let's continue to pray for a responsible reorganization and sweeping reforms at rbb.

Dates

Oct. 3: Germany Sings – 32 Years of German Unity: 6pm on the Winterfeldtplatz, beginning 4pm, Festival of Religions in Schöneberg
Oct. 12: Prayer for City Politics: 6-7pm Rotes Rathaus, in front of the main entrance