



Prayer for Berlin

February 2011

Good News: More Companies and Jobs

"Ich bin ein Berliner": Who knows that the newest high-speed train from Bombardier was made for the most part by engineers in capital city region? Or that the largest gas turbines in the world are made by Siemens in Berlin-Spandau? For this reason, since September, Berlin companies are using that well-known slogan from John F. Kennedy to advertise their products made in the capital city—an idea of the Economic Growth Association "Berlin Partner".

In 2010 alone, they succeeded in bringing 105 companies to Berlin or encouraging ones already there to increase in size. Companies in the Association want to create 4,540 jobs and invest 247 million Euros. This is good for the city, since it desperately needs new jobs. (Berliner Zeitung 21.12.2010)

Measures against Amusement Arcades

Berlin's Senate is starting several initiatives designed to prevent the further proliferation of amusement arcades. In Berlin there has been a rapid growth in the number of such arcades, which often draw people into compulsive gambling. The number of amusement arcades in Berlin is estimated at 34,000. People gamble away everything, from rent-money to their children's allowances. Amusement arcades are often opened in socially deprived districts. In the Stromstraße in Moabit there are only a few grocery stores left, but there are many amusement arcades. In the Pichelsdorfer Straße in Spandau, there are 16 such arcades. Because it is not easy to legally limit the number of amusement arcades, the Berlin Senate wants to try changing the zoning making it no longer legal to build amusement arcades. In addition, the legal ordinances will be tightened, so that the opening of amusement arcades will no longer be possible. As a first measure, Berlin raised the entertainment tax on gambling machines at the beginning of the year from eleven to 20%

Prayer:

- **Pray for a change in federal law so that clear measures against amusement arcades can be undertaken**
- **Pray for all those addicted to gambling, that they will seek help and be able to get rid of their addiction**
- **Pray that the socially deprived districts will find investors who will increase the quality of life in those districts**

Civilian Service and the new Volunteer Service

For over 50 years, "Zivis" (those doing civilian service as an alternative to military service) were indispensable in hospitals or nursing homes, as well as in many Christian facilities, churches and retreat centres. Nevertheless, the federal government did away with compulsory military service and as a result, alternative civilian service as well, beginning in January of 2011. In the future, the social services must do without "Zivis". However, charities in Berlin do not see the situation as drastic, because the alternative civilian service had already lost significance in recent years. Currently there are 1,912 Zivis in Berlin. In January, 2002 there were 4,449 Zivis, more than twice as many. In addition, the civil service time for those currently serving has been reduced several times and is now only six months. The Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Kristina Schröder (CDU) hopes that the newly formed Federal Volunteer Service will find 35,000 volunteers to save the social services from losing all their help.

There is no age limit. Senior citizens can commit themselves as volunteers. The term of service is between six and 24 months. The Upper House of German Parliament must yet pass the draft of the new law. The Freiwillige Soziale Jahr (FSJ) and the Freiwillige Ökologische Jahr (FÖJ) will continue. Young people between the ages of 16 and 27 who want to do social service can apply. Such service in social centres, in organisations, or initiatives is designed for vocational orientation and must be overseen by an educator. Participants receive a small allowance and usually room and board. (Data and facts Berliner Zeitung 1-20-2011)

It will be a special challenge to encourage young men to participate, since they no longer „have to". The burning question is whether the elimination of compulsory military service will make our society and our city colder or whether the opposite will be true.

Prayer:

- **Pray that social service centres will be able to compensate for the loss of „Zivis“ with volunteers**
- **Pray that young people will be willing to serve their „weaker neighbours“**
- **Pray that Christian social services will be imaginative and creative**

Eviction of the Liebigstraße 14

A house in the Liebigstraße 14 in Freidrichshain which has been occupied since 1990 is nearing eviction. In 1992 the residents signed rental agreements with the Wohnungsbaugesellschaft in the district. Later, private investors bought the house and gave notice to the renters. Since then, all 28 residents have lost their legal battle concerning their rental contracts. The new owners were not willing to find an alternative solution and called in the Marshall. The eviction is scheduled for February 2. Currently left-wing activists are openly calling for violence on the internet, including the use of weapons and arson, to keep the police from doing the eviction. Because the residents of the house are linked to other left-wing autonomous groups in Europe, it is expected that many from other countries will come to support the residents. The importance of the protest, however, is being disputed even among left-wing radicals.

Prayer:

- **Pray that an alternative living situation can yet be found for the residents of the house in the Liebigstraße**
- **Pray for a violence-free eviction of the house**
- **Pray for the protection of all police involved and for wisdom that will lead to de-escalation**

Projects of Hope: HOFFNUNG 2011

“Dienen mit Wort und Tat“ (Serving with Word and Deed) is the slogan of a campaign called HOFFNUNG 2011 (HOPE 2011) which began mid-January in Berlin and in other parts of the country. Many of those who pray for Berlin and who are involved together for the good of the city can certainly agree wholeheartedly with this slogan. Over 270 youth groups all over the country, 10 of which are in Berlin (this number is steadily increasing), will be getting involved to meet the needs of others in their neighbourhoods this year.

The initiative began in Berlin with a prayer concert during the Week of Prayer sponsored by the Evangeli-

cal Alliance and a public ceremony with balloons at the Brandenburger Gate. A reception hosted by the Vice President of Parliament, Katrin Göring-Eckardt which was attended by over one hundred mostly young people caught the attention of politicians and the media.

Each youth group can develop its own ideas. The motto of the first two months is „Visitors“, which encourages visits to the lonely, the sick, and the needy. In the appeal it says, “You can talk a lot. But DO something! The Initiative Hoffnung 2011 challenges us as Christian teenagers and young people to serve people in our neighborhoods, thus showing the love of Jesus!”

Prayer

- **Thank God for the Initiative**
- **Pray for ideas, love and staying power for the participating youth**
- **Pray that people in Berlin will be reached and touched by God’s love through HOFFNUNG 2011**

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

This does not begin until March 9, but we want to already direct your attention to the Initiative “40 Days of Prayer and Fasting for our Country“ and invite you to participate. More than 70 associations and organisations are calling for corporate prayer for our country during Lent.

For 2,80 € a set of prayer cards can be purchased from info@down-to-earth.de which have prayer requests for various sectors of society. A poster which also invites people to take part can be obtained (donation desired) from Neues Leben: info@wertestiftung.de. Further information and detailed prayer requests: www.40tagebetenundfasten.de

Prayer:

- **Pray that the Initiative will spread and that many individuals and groups will be inspired to pray**

Continual Prayer for the Federal Government and the Parliament

Saturday, Feb. 26, 2011 in Berlin, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; 2-6:30 pm. Please register with the sponsor: GEBET FÜR DIE REGIERUNG, Pistoriusstr. 147, 13086 Berlin, Telephone: 030-99270812, Email: info@gebetfuerdieregierung.de