



Nr. 103 – April 2012

Good News: More Business in Berlin

In 2011 more new businesses were registered than for quite some time: 48,700, the highest number since reunification. The construction business is booming. On the other hand, 33,800 businesses closed (mostly retail stores and auto repair shops due to a decrease in the number of cars in Berlin). However that still leaves 14,900 more businesses than in 2010. This is a sign of hope in a city with a continuing high rate of unemployment. In addition, 1443 businesses moved to Berlin in 2011 (7% more than in 2010). However 1,232 also moved out of Berlin (1.9% less than in 2010).

Thank God for this positive development.

Senator for City Development and the Environment: Michael Müller

47-year old Michael Müller (SPD) is known to be a confidant of Klaus Wowereit. Since 2004, he has been the local head of the SPD. Now he is facing many challenges as a Senator. His department is responsible for such difficult areas such as the new airport Berlin-Brandenburg, the planning of the new usage of the Tegel airport, rising rent costs, and landscape planning. The new usage of the Tegel airport is an important project for the city. Using the premises as a research and industry park for future technologies is currently being considered. Herr Müller said in a recent interview that the areas on top of and around the landing strips could be used for testing and experimenting. There are already applications for such usage. The surrounding areas could be used for research and high-technology. It is hoped that an industrial zone and a modern technology park can be developed here.

Prayer:

- **Pray for wisdom and strength for the many tasks of the new Senators**
- **Pray that the best type of usage for the Tegel airport can be identified which will give new employment opportunities for the city**
- **Pray for good cooperation among the Senators**

Problems of the Jewish Congregation

There is great friction within the Jewish congregation of Berlin which has not been able to be resolved in spite of the clear results of elections, which unfortunately had to be repeated because of irregularities. The former chairperson Lala Süßkind has been replaced by Gideon Joffe. The Jewish congregation in Berlin is comprised of 11,500 members, which is the largest in Germany. The congregation has had to exert a lot of energy dealing with the internal problems between two differing factions. Through the immigration of Jews of Russian descent in recent years, there has been a shift in the power structure. 80% of the congregation now come from Russia. Long-time resident Jewish families have lost their influence. Because of the irresolvable differences of opinion between the fractions, the congregation is heading towards a split. In addition, it is in debt. The Senate subsidizes the congregation with 9.3 million Euros per year for personnel costs, religious life, security, and pensions for staff. High pensions are a large roadblock to getting the finances under control. The Senate is willing to help only if a coherent budget concept is produced. The congregation is facing the task of huge reforms.

Prayer:

- **Pray for courage for the necessary reforms for the congregation, including finances**
- **Pray that the parties which are at odds with one another will be reconciled and find a common direction**
- **Pray for blessing and protection for all Jews living in our city**

Berlin is becoming the Science Centre

In recent years there has been a huge growth in the area of science and research in Berlin. Up till now, Munich had been the most important centre for science and research, but now Berlin has become the number one. The number of people doing research in the capital city is continually growing – twice as fast in comparison with the rest of the country. The “City of Science Adlershof” is a Berlin success story. 17 scientific establishments and 866 companies have settled there since 1991. The German Association for Research, which funds scientific projects, awarded the

most money to projects in Berlin. Many top-scientists are being attracted to Berlin. It's easier to build large research groups from various fields here than, for instance, in the USA.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for all the promotion of science and research in the city**
- **Pray for many discoveries which promote life**
- **Pray that politicians discover how to create good frameworks**

Rising rent costs – Gentrification

An increasing number of buildings and entire streets are being renovated in Berlin's districts, first in parts of Kreuzberg, Mitte, and Prenzlauer Berg, then also in Friedrichshain and Neukölln. On the outside, this seems like a good development. Attractive facades and top-quality flats are the result. However, many forget that this also results in a social shift. When investors sell or rent these flats to more affluent people, groups of people with lower social status are being replaced or displaced. Former residents can no longer pay the higher rent and have to move to "poorer" districts. This process is called gentrification. In recent years, this has become a pressing problem, resulting in explosive social situations, not only on the part of left-wing activists. The right to a free real-estate market needs to be balanced by social responsibility for the large number of poorer residents, especially families. The new red-black Senate wants to alleviate the problem by building lower-cost housing; however the number of such housing units in the coalition treaty is already too low.

Three-fourths of those renting flats in the city are not worried about gentrification, but 145,000 people have reported that they can no longer afford to live in their districts (representative study by the Society for Consumer Research). Tenants from immigrant backgrounds are more likely to be affected by increased rents. Three-fourths of the tenants with Turkish backgrounds reported that they have had an increase in rent in the last two years. Only 20% of other tenants had an increase in rent. Many are afraid that they will soon no longer be able to afford to live in Mitte and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. (Der Tagesspiegel 3.30.2012)

Prayer:

- **Pray for political policies with far-sightedness and a view for social concerns**
- **Pray for justifiable solutions for the affected tenants, especially for families**
- **Pray for peaceful dialogue about these problems instead of violent dispute**

Preparations for May 1st

May 1st is approaching. The next prayer mail will have current requests, but we ask you to begin to pray now. Several demonstrations are planned. The "Revolutionary 6pm-Demo", which has been violent in the past, has applied for a route from Kreuzberg through Mitte to the Brandenburg Gate. This will need to be decided on by the courts.

Once again, Together for Berlin invites you to a 12:00 noon prayer service for peace, which will be part of the Myfest and will most probably taking place on the Mariannenplatz. The motto for this year is: "A different sort of power--Do something different" [a play on words, in German: "Mach(t) etwas anders], which is taken from this year's verse of the year that talks about God's strength being perfected in weakness.

Prayer:

- **Pray for wisdom so that demonstration routes can be arranged to the satisfaction of all**
- **Pray for successful preparation of the worship service and that the question of the stage can be cleared up**
- **Pray for a peaceful May 1st holiday**

Dates

Remembrance of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Easter-Monday, 4/9/2012 at 11:15, Dorotheenstädtischer Friedhof, Chausseestr. 126 (Corner Tiekstraße) S Nord-bahnhof or U Naturkundemuseum On the anniversary of his death, there will be a short ceremony and speech. The honorary grave 140 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the other members of the resistance is a short distance from the entrance.

April 28, 10:30am to 4pm, Marktstr. 1, 10317 Berlin (JMEM Berlin): Day of Prayer and Fasting for North Korea, more information at: info@ywamberlin.org

May 1st, Kreuzberg: Prayer Service 12noon to 1pm, most probably on the Mariannenplatz (see above)