



117th edition - September 2013

Good News: Surplus in Berlin's budget

Berlin is achieving a surprisingly high surplus and may soon be able to get by without new credit. In the first six months, the capital city earned approximately 730 million Euros surplus. Thus it could be probable that Berlin will not create new debt already in the coming year instead of 2015 as officially planned by the Senate. During the first half of the year, tax income rose by 11 percent. Spending grew by only 1.5 percent. However, this still means painful cuts in many areas. The result is surplus in the public budget which can be used to reduce the debt. With the current rate, Berlin could be free of debt in 50 to 100 years.

Elections for the Bundestag

Our prayer news is restricted to the city of Berlin, but we are also having local elections here. The following prayer information and decision help also applies to Berlin. There are (at least) two panel discussion events with Berlin candidates which will be dealing with questions that are of interest to Christians (see dates at the bottom of page 2). We invite you to join in a prayer campaign--The German Evangelical Alliance and the Round Table for Prayer of the Lausanne Movement are calling for prayer under the motto: **"Elections in Germany- Pray! And take part!"**

The logo and prayer information can be found here: www.ead.de/index.php?id=1314

In addition there is an interesting website with candidates' answers about the topic of German unity. The Spiritual Renewal Movement and the October 3 Initiative asked all candidates questions in the areas of **the completion of German unity and Christian values**. The answers are on the website www.Projekt-Bundestagswahl.de

Prayer:

- **Pray that Christian values will be encouraged by the representatives, their parties, and future decisions of Parliament**
- **Pray for election results which will lead to the majority required to form a government and to stable conditions**

Thanking--Celebrating--Praying on October 3

23 years of German unity will be celebrated interculturally and ecumenically on October 3, 2013 from 3-7pm. Gratitude for God's grace will be the focal point as we pray especially for North and South Korea.

3pm Ecumenical devotional in the Kapelle der Versöhnung Bernauer Straße 4, 10115 Berlin-Mitte, Revival Gospel Choir, Sermon Pastor Johannes Park, Korea/Frankfurt/M.

4pm Walk along the former border and the Wall memorial

5pm Christus-Kirche, Anklamer Str. 31, 10345 Berlin-Mitte, Interview with contemporary witness Hartmut Richter. Information about the situation in North Korea and prayer; fellowship around food in the courtyard

Prayer:

- **Pray that a culture of remembrance can be formed and strengthened in light of German unity**
- **Pray that the general public will have a sense of gratitude for God's miracle of unity and freedom**

Conflicts in Homes for Asylum Seekers

Because of the rise in refugees from crisis areas such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq, housing for a total of 1000 refugees needs to be found in Berlin in the coming months.

People who should be finding peace and quiet in Germany following traumatic war experiences are sometimes confronted with rejection which can be quite harsh. In recent weeks, a conflict has started in Hellersdorf, where an empty school building was to be made into housing for 200 refugees. Anti-immigrant right-wing activists have protested; those in favour of helping refugees, for instance Christians and left-wing activists, have mobilized counter-demonstrations.

Some of the first 40 refugees who moved in have transferred to other housing because of fear. In addition, many local residents are worried about security and the development of their districts

and are sceptical about having a home for asylum seekers in their neighbourhood.

On the other hand, others are bringing toys and clothing for the families. In Pankow, a home for 220 refugees is due to be built soon. Officials and sponsors will be informing people in schools and neighbourhoods in an effort to promote a positive image.

Prayer:

- **Pray for protection for the refugees and that they will feel safe, be able to rest, and feel welcome**
- **Pray for good ideas and initiatives to inform neighbours, lessen fears and prejudices, and provide good encounters**
- **Pray against right-wing propaganda that is being used to generate fear among residents**

Attacks on police--raids among left-wing radicals

In August eight flats of left-wing activists in Berlin were searched following an attempted murder of a policeman some time ago. The police found incendiary bottles and large amounts of so-called Polish fireworks which were tied together to cause a larger explosion. In June, masked people attacked police in Kreuzberg with stones and Molotov cocktails. An incendiary device narrowly missed hitting a policewoman. A second one hit a squad car which then burned up. Fortunately, the policemen were able to get out.

People continue to molest, hit, and throw things at policemen. Respect for governmental authority is diminishing rapidly. Policemen in the capital city are in more danger than anywhere else in the country. Firemen and civil order staff have also been the victims of rabid attacks. [Source: Berliner Zeitung]

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the work of the police and fire department**
- **Pray for protection for all those who work to keep the city safe**
- **Pray that planned attacks of left-wing extremists would be prevented before being carried out**

Expansion of Red-light Districts

Because of its liberal laws, Germany has become an attractive country for human traffickers. More and more prostitutes from south eastern Europe are coming to Berlin. Because traditional red-light districts are full, new areas are forming in Berlin's suburbs such as Buch, Weißensee, and Hohenschönhausen.

Because prostitution is a legal occupation in Germany, it is difficult to prevent.

However, some other cities have successfully restricted prostitution to certain areas. The city of Augsburg has now outlawed prostitution entirely. Intensive prayer had taken place. In addition, the law passed in July to fight human trafficking allows individual states to take more specific measures.

Prayer:

- **Pray that no new red-light districts will be formed in Berlin**
- **Pray that politicians will have the courage to take legal steps to prevent human trafficking which often occurs alongside prostitution**
- **Pray that the residents in the affected areas can creatively defend their districts against new red-light districts**

Keeping On: Airport BER

Hartmut Mehdorn, the director of the airport, is bringing obvious movement to the stalled airport project. His plan: To let a part of the airport be tested in real-time as soon as possible, perhaps even as early as spring of 2014--with a maximum of 10 flights and 1500 passengers per day.

In addition, following the stepping-down of Matthias Platzeck, a search is on for a new Chairman of the Board. Klaus Wowereit is currently serving as interim director. The largest technical difficulty continues to be fire-safety mechanisms which have to be rebuilt.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for the work of those building the airport**
- **Pray for wisdom for all personnel and other decisions**
- **Pray that God will bless the project and cause it to succeed and for good cooperation between all those responsible**

Dates

- **September 11, 6pm: Prayer for city politicians** Berliner Abgeordnetenhaus (Room 320)
- **September 12, 7pm** Apostel-Petrus-Gemeinde, Märkisches Viertel, Wilhelmsruher Damm 161: In Verantwortung vor Gott und den Menschen? (Responsibility to God and to people?)

How do the political parties stand in relation to this foundational thought in the Constitution from 1949? **Panel discussion with candidates for Parliament** from Reinickendorf

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