



Edition 154 – May 2017

## **Good News: Economic Growth**

Together with Saxony, Berlin ranked first in economic growth on a nationwide comparison in 2016: 2.7% (national average 1.9%). Growth is mainly due to strong construction activity as well as increases in trade, transport, hospitality, and communication. Increasing population and tourism also contributed to the increase. Economic growth means more jobs and revenue for the city.

## **Prayer for a Peaceful May 1st**

From **April 29 9:00 to May 2 12:00 noon**, there will be 75 hours of BURN - Praise and Prayer in the Gebetskeller am Kotti. Details at [www.Gebetskeller-kreuzberg.de](http://www.Gebetskeller-kreuzberg.de)

On **May 1 at midnight, noon, 4:00pm and 8:00pm** there are special times for intercessory prayer. Parallel to the 6 pm demonstration, which is not registered with the police, but plans to go through the middle of the Myfest, there is accompanying on-site prayer. Information in the office of GfB: Tel. 030-23003403

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for the protection of Jewish fellow-citizens and for peace for those near and far away**
- **Pray that Christians in Berlin will be called to prayer and intercession during this time**

## **Senator for the Environment Regine Günther**

Regine Günther, 55, no party affiliation, has been working as Senator for the Environment, Transport, and Climate Protection in the Senate which began its work in December, 2016. Before that, she chaired the WWF Germany's climate and energy conference for 16 years. Günther is a proven expert on national and international climate protection policy. She is married and has an adult daughter. She will first need to gain experience in managing a governmental department. At the top of her agenda is bicycle legislation. The response to a referendum about cycling has shown that there is a great need for better and safer mobility for cyclists. This is why it is necessary to offer more alternatives to the car, for instance expanding public transport and the infrastructure for cycling. Günther says that the climate problem is not necessarily directly related to cars, but

to the fact that oil is burned. So she wants to promote electro mobility on the basis of renewable energies. "I do not want to forbid anyone to drive, but rather to ensure a healthy mix where public transport and cycling are just as much the same as the car traffic. However, in a growing city, it cannot be the goal that more and more cars compete for less space for parking and driving. That is why we have to offer people alternatives. By building them, we can reduce the car traffic." (Interview Der Tagesspiegel January 21) Günther is also a deputy member of the Federal Council for Berlin and a member of the German Transport Ministers' Conference.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for an effective beginning for the new senator and blessing for her and her family**
- **Pray that Berlin becomes a model for realistic and affordable climate protection**
- **Pray for a sustainable compromise to reduce car traffic for all involved**

## **Anti-Semitism in Berlin**

According to the RIAS report, the research and information center for anti-Semitism, there were 470 anti-Semitic incidents in Berlin in 2016. The number of registered incidents rose by 16% compared to the previous year. The attacks ranged from provocations to threats of annihilation, and also included physical attacks. Most normally, the incidents are either Islamist or right-wing anti-Semitism. In early April, the Berlin media reported about a Jewish boy who had to be taken out of his school in Friedenau because of bullying. Hatred against Jews is again terribly visible in Berlin. God blesses those who bless Israel (Genesis 12:3). Both right-wing hatred and Islamic anti-Semitism receive too little attention, and there is an urgent need to develop more concepts on prevention for the training of teachers and social workers.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for protection for Jewish fellow-citizens and their institutions**
- **Pray that new concepts to deal with anti-Semitism, also among the Muslim population, will be promoted**
- **Pray the the Friedenauer school leadership will successfully deal with mobbing**

## **Campaign: Living Space for Refugees**

Thousands of refugees still live in emergency or communal accommodation. This makes it more difficult for them to assimilate and integrate. A group of initiatives is looking for Berliners who will offer the refugees a room or an apartment for one or two years or longer. A new campaign called "Papa rück die Bude raus / Mama, gib mein Zimmer her" has just begun.

Christian refugees often find it particularly difficult in the communal accommodations. They often experience bullying – exclusion, threats, or even physical violence. A Facebook group has been formed to look for Christian families and Christians who share apartments who would be willing to take in Christian refugees. Rent will be paid by the government. Interested landlords can also contact [info@gfberlin.de](mailto:info@gfberlin.de).

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1902079493367137/?fref=ts> Further information: [www.nestwerkberlin.de](http://www.nestwerkberlin.de)

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that many Berliners will open their houses to refugees**
- **Pray for protection, preservation, and safe housing for Christian refugees**

## **Berliner Stadtmission**

The future of refugee organizations and integration measures in Berlin is still not clear in many places. This also applies to the emergency accommodation and refugee projects of the Berliner Stadtmission. It is a huge challenge for staff to carry on these important tasks of refugee work with heart and commitment.

The Stadtmission has been given the opportunity to expand its support and advisory work for the socially marginalized at the Bahnhof Zoo, as well as to build a Christian education program on the topic of poverty as well as some spiritual topics. There is already much support for this.

In addition, access to psychiatric and physical care for the homeless is to be made easier. Solving this complex challenge takes patience because of the need for negotiations with different Senate administrations. Also the financing of the current costs is not yet clarified.

### **Prayer:**

- **Thank God for the long-standing loyalty of the Stadtmission and its current opportunities**
- **Pray that the staff of refugee institutions are not discouraged by the uncertain situation**
- **Pray for constructive planning with the authorities for the new project at the Bahnhof Zoo and for clarification of funding**

## **Prostitution of young refugees**

More and more young men - refugees from the Arabic countries and Central Asia – are prostituting themselves. A new red-light district which has developed around the Tiergarten has come to the notice of street workers, but they cannot provide enough support because of personnel deficiencies. In part, they are refugees who have no chance of an asylum application, or who have not made one, and who are homeless. The association "Hilfe für Jungs" looks after these people. More street workers and social workers are urgently needed to advise and help these young people. Up to the age of 18, refugees are still looked after intensively, but afterwards they are left to themselves and are no longer required to attend school. The news about the possibility of prostitution and the location of relevant places spread quickly. Therefore, the scene is growing rapidly.

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray for appropriate measures to help those affected and for more staff**
- **Pray that politicians and associations can develop an effective concept**
- **Pray that the young men (and their "customers") will develop new outlooks on life**

## **Prayer Center at the Kirchentag**

A prayer center for the Kirchentag, organized by Chemin Neuf and the local community, will take place for the duration of the Kirchentag from **May 25-27, 11am to 10pm in the Herz Jesu-Kirche, Fehrbellinerstr. 99, 10119 Berlin**. It will offer a variety of liturgical or charismatic styles, with praise or in silence, African or Persian, subject-related intercessions or worship. A visit to the prayer center is also possible without a ticket to the Kirchentag. The program can be found at: <http://www.christen-in-berlin.de/Kirchentag>

### **Prayer:**

- **Pray that Berlin will be blessed and that God will be honored by the Kirchentag**
- **Pray that many will visit the prayer center and have personal encounters with the triune God**
- **Pray that the unity among Christians will be strengthened by this ecumenical prayer**

## **Keeping On**

Despite fewer burglaries and robberies (see last prayer mail), Berlin is now at the top of the German cities in terms of **crime** per capita, but only because the other cities are experiencing a stronger decline. Let us continue to pray!

## **Dates**

**May 10, 6-7pm: Prayer for city politicians** at the Rote Rathaus