



Edition 158 – October 2017

Good News: Digital Economy is growing

In recent years, the digital economy in Berlin has grown considerably. 77,000 jobs are now available in this sector - more than in any other German city. 8.5% of Berlin's economic power comes from the digital economy.

Prayer:

- **Thank God for this good development**
- **Pray for many new jobs in this sector**

27 Years of German Unity

On October 3, we will celebrate 27 years of German unity - and thus also the unification of our formerly divided city. But living conditions in the east and the west have not evened out yet. The results of the Bundestag elections differed widely between east and west, and also in Berlin: large majorities for the Linke and the AfD in the east, the SPD and the Greens in the central parts of the city, CDU majorities in the north-west and south-west, but also strong growth for the AfD even there. One may see this as an image of colorful and diverse Berlin, but it also reveals the massive contrast in the (dis)satisfaction with our democratic system, in the social sector, and in the feeling of quality of life. Unity in heads and hearts is by no means completed. The contrasts have actually grown. The situation needs political wisdom, recovery of trust in politics and political parties, civic involvement – and our prayer.

Prayer:

- **Pray for new bridges of conversation and mutual understanding in the city**
- **Pray that politicians, churches and communities will actively seek people out and take their worries seriously**
- **Pray that God's grace leads us to the completion of inner unity**

Thousands of Lateral Career-Change Teachers

In 2017, according to official Senate information, a total of 3,004 teachers were hired in Berlin schools, including 1,254 who came as lateral career-change teachers, (without the usual teacher training), 944 in August alone, 558 of which are in elementary schools (<https://www.gew-berlin.de/375.php>). The vice-chairman of staff, Haase, told the Berliner Zeitung, "Another

complicating factor is that the quality of the applicants among the lateral career-change teachers has now declined considerably. In addition, a lack of knowledge of German and pedagogical training is a problem for teachers in elementary schools, but the majority of those with a lateral career-change are employed there. Furthermore, the situation could be reversed as early as 2022, since the number of graduates could then be far above the remaining need for new teachers, because the jobs would then be occupied by lateral career-change teachers. (<http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/28253276> © 2017)

Prayer:

- **Pray for sound judgement on the part of those responsible for the choice of lateral career-change teachers**
- **Pray for wisdom for every teacher with their students in the classroom and with their colleagues**
- **Pray for good, long-lasting ways of dealing with teacher vacancies, so that new graduates are enabled to enter the profession**

Rents continue to rise despite attempt to stabilize rates

In 2015, Berlin was the first state to introduce a program to put the brake on the rising cost of rental housing. It was hoped that this could be a suitable means of stopping the rents in Berlin from rising further. A Berlin court has now declared that law probably unconstitutional. Nevertheless, Lompscher, the Senator for city development, wants to sharpen this law even more. The law remains in effect pending a decision before the Federal Constitutional Court. Unfortunately, the rental price development in Berlin has not eased much. Too many exceptions prevent this law from being an effective key against rising rents. Most political parties are in favour of launching further construction programs to ease the housing market.

Prayer:

- **Pray that the rental brake will prevent extreme rent increases**
- **Pray for legal clarity, including the implementation of the law**
- **Pray for fast construction of affordable housing**

Tegel Airport – what's next?

The referendum, which took place at the same time as the Bundestag election, resulted in a clear majority of 56.1% to keep the Tegel airport (41.7% against), even after the 2019 hoped-for completion of the airport BER. The referendum did not contain a legislative initiative and is not politically binding. It merely states that the Senate should take all necessary steps to continue the operation of Tegel. The Red-Red-Green coalition in the Senate was and is against it. The outcome of the vote is seen as an expression of the dissatisfaction with the current Senate policy. The advocates of a closure of Tegel, above all the more than 300,000 residents who have been plagued by noise, have already announced they will pursue legal action complaints, should Tegel actually remain open. Now Mayor Müller wants to speak with the federal government and the state of Brandenburg as co-partners. As they have been until now, both are for the closure of Tegel no later than six months after the opening of the BER, which is the current contract. Müller wants to appoint a "recognized neutral personality", who will use a "transparent and open" roundtable to check whether and how a continued use of the Tegel airport is legally watertight. It is a difficult situation legally, ecologically, and politically.

Prayer:

- **Pray for legal clarity, political cleverness and divine wisdom**
- **Pray for an early completion of BER**
- **Pray for relief for the residents affected by noise**

On the Way to Inclusion

At the beginning of the new school year, inclusion began in the primary schools in Berlin. Teaching which takes pupils with disabilities and learning constraints into a regular class must be different. Inclusion education therefore actually means a change in the educational system. This new education experiment is starting with a very uncertain outcome. In other states (for example, Hamburg and Bremen), which have implemented a complete inclusion too quickly, inclusion has already been described as a failure by education experts. It led to a complete overburdening of the teachers. In Berlin, therefore, they want to proceed more slowly. The existing special schools for children with learning difficulties are gradually being closed. However, having both special schools for children with learning difficulties and inclusion does not appear to be a great solution either. In Berlin, children with learning disabilities and behavioural problems are to be included first. Over 60 percent of the children with special needs have behavioural problems (!). Inclusion will start first with those beginning school and those in the third grade. Specialists are assigned to normal classes according to a specific allocation key. But this allocation alone does not constitute a new educational system.

Those who have taught know how often such specialist teachers are pulled out of their assigned class to substitute elsewhere. Is it really good for the students to be taught in mixed learning groups? Many students with behavioural problems simply need more attention and smaller groups. All those affected are now approaching this experiment with much uncertainty.

Prayer:

- **Pray that inclusion is introduced cautiously and problems can be identified in a timely manner**
- **Pray that the teachers involved receive the support they need**
- **Pray that the needs of the many students with behavioural problems will be recognized**

Keeping On: Places for Births

A special summit was recently sponsored by the Minister of Health, Dilek Kolat. There are far too few places in delivery rooms for the increasing number of births (a great development!). There is also a great lack of midwives. Let us pray for solutions!

New: Our Prayer Mail App

We are pleased to report that the prayer requests from the Berlin prayer mail can now be accessed directly on your smartphone via the prayer app "Deutschland betet". This app is provided by "Round Table Prayer" (the Lausanne Movement German Branch), which is also responsible for its content. This interdenominational network wants to strengthen prayer in all areas of society and to integrate it into a comprehensive perspective for our country (<http://deutschlandbetet.de>).

Installation (Sorry, for now it is only in German):

- **Download the app "Deutschland betet" from the app store (available for Android and IOS)**
- **Subscribe to "Gebet für Berlin" and then "bis Ende des Anliegens"**
- **Done! The individual prayer requests will be distributed as notifications throughout the month on the appropriate date**

Dates

- **Oct. 11, 6-7 pm Prayer for City Politicians at the Rote Rathaus**
- **Oct. 27, 5-7 pm, Prayer for the Kotti, Adalbertstraße 97, Gebetskeller Kreuzberg**