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Volt

**Manifesto for the 2026 Berlin House of
Representatives Election**

INTRODUCTION

Berlin is an amazing city but it is fed up with politics that get lost in petty details, rather than thinking boldly about the future. Berlin is diverse but held back by politics and a public administration that have perfected the art of avoiding responsibility.

Berlin is vibrant but its beating pulse does not reach those who govern it.

Berliners feel the effects of this every day: homes that are unaffordable. Schools that are falling apart. Public services that take months to respond to simple requests. And on top of this, the sense that things are not getting better, but worse.

What Berlin needs now is a bold vision.

A vision of how Berlin can once again become a pioneer at the heart of Europe.

A vision for how the city can meet its biggest challenges with ambitious solutions that match their scale, rather than small, isolated fixes.

A vision for politics that shape our future instead of merely managing the present.

So that Berlin becomes a place where everyone has the same opportunities, where cohesion matters, and where a shared future is possible.

We supply this vision: pragmatic, progressive and European. Our politics are evidence-based and adaptive. We measure the impact of our policies and adjust them

INTRODUCTION

when they don't deliver the expected results. For us, evidence, not ideology, guides our decision-making, so that politics serves the people. We strive for a confident metropolitan region that is a driving force for an innovative, fair and sustainable society within a reformed, independent and united Europe.

Our Berlin is a Berlin with solutions that work – a European metropolis that is open to the world, welcomes talent, and makes Europe tangible in everyday life. A Berlin where public administration delivers – being able to act, digital, and judged by results. A Berlin that generates innovation, supports start-ups, and makes climate action an economic driver to secure fairness between the generations. Affordable housing, good healthcare and a clean urban environment must not be dependent on the borough you live in. Education must work for you throughout your life: from reliable childcare to high-performing schools, to a research landscape connected across Europe, as well as attractive vocational training.

Berlin needs more than small adjustments to the status quo. What we need is a vision and the determination to put it into practice. We have both. We are putting a better future on the election ballot.

*The content of this election programme reflects the
resolution adopted on 25 April 2026*

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BERLIN

WORKS

**Administration,
digitalisation and
participation**

Berlin is full of ideas and full of people who want to make a difference — in their neighbourhoods, in voluntary work, in business, and in politics. The energy for change is there. What is often missing is the public administration that can turn this energy into real results.

Administration itself is not a bad thing. Quite the opposite: it ensures that knowledge is preserved and that the same rules apply to everyone. It forms the foundation of shared daily life in a city like Berlin with millions of inhabitants. The problem is that Berlin is trying to tackle the challenges of the 21st century with structures from the 20th. Anyone who wants to complete a simple administrative task today above all needs patience in the face of unclear responsibilities, systems that do not communicate with each other, and forms that may be available online but still need to be printed out and then scanned back in.

At the same time, the administration is facing a historic shift. In the coming years, thousands of experienced staff will retire. This increases the pressure but it also creates the opportunity to rethink public services: more digital, clearer, and more attractive to new professionals.

A functioning public administration is not an end in itself. It determines whether housing construction progresses more quickly, whether businesses invest, and whether people trust the state. Berlin can become a model – if the city has the courage to modernise its structures. That is why this election manifesto begins here.

Berlin works when issues reach the right place quickly, when digital processes make life easier, and when responsibility is taken up rather than passed on. This requires clear responsibilities, measurable goals and coherent digital infrastructure. This is how we build trust in public institutions. Not as an exception, but as the norm.

Berlin works when public administration, as an attractive employer, gains and holds on to the best talent. This requires speedy recruitment procedures, competitive pay, and a working culture that encourages responsibility and development. This is how we create public institutions that remain capable of acting in the future.

Berlin works when public finances are transparent and sustainable in the long term. This requires modern accounting, reliable medium-term financial planning, and comprehensible budget data. This is how we create trust in public institutions, and the confidence to plan ahead, even when money is tight.

Berlin works when citizens not only vote every few years but can actively shape their city. This requires binding forms of participation, real transparency, and shared decision-making that has real impact. This is how we build a city that makes proper use of the knowledge and experience of its people.

BERLIN WORKS: WITH CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES AND BINDING GOVERNANCE

Berlin suffers from a lack of clear accountability. Too often, projects are passed back and forth between different levels of government and authorities, responsibilities are unclear, and decisions are postponed rather than taken. Complex challenges, from housing construction to digitalisation, are managed short term instead of being managed strategically. For many Berliners, this creates the sense that nobody takes responsibility.

We will build a public administration that takes responsibility and is focused on results. To achieve this, we will strengthen clear decision-making structures, create effective governance instruments, and assess government action by its impact. For us, public administration means providing a service to citizens — one we will continuously improve through processing deadlines and quality standards.

Decide who is responsible now

We will create decision-making structures in which responsibility is consolidated and solutions take priority. We will introduce case conferences to ensure that complex individual cases are no longer passed between authorities. In these conferences, authorised representatives of all relevant bodies will jointly discuss difficult cases and take timely, reliable decisions.

We will ensure clear responsibility in ongoing procedures. Every case will be assigned a fixed contact person who accompanies it from application to decision. Central intake and coordination teams will help to prioritise new applications and forward them on more quickly to the responsible bodies, as required.

We will enable caseworkers to find pragmatic solutions for exceptional hardship cases within legal frameworks. Guidance documents and training will give caseworkers confidence in handling discretionary decisions. We will document successful individual solutions and use them as reference points for comparable situations.

We will involve interdisciplinary teams of administration, experts and affected stakeholders from the very beginning when developing new regulations. These teams will assess the feasibility of legislation early on and refine it collaboratively.

We will consolidate decision-making, management and intervention powers more strongly at the state level (rather than the borough level) to increase Berlin's capacity to act. We will establish uniform, city-wide standards and anchor central responsibilities for strategically important tasks, reducing duplication and significantly accelerating procedures. We will define instructions to the boroughs clearly and reliably to ensure

consistent implementation of political goals. At the same time, we will relieve the boroughs from higher-level coordination duties so they can better focus on their core mission: providing efficient, citizen-centred services on the ground.

Best practice

The Netherlands (Breakthrough Method): In around 100 municipalities, this method gives caseworkers a structured procedure for finding pragmatic solutions to complex individual cases within existing laws. An evaluation in The Hague showed average savings of €22,000 per case per year, while at the same time improving quality of life for 81% of those involved.

Measure administration by its results now

We will consistently align the management of Berlin's public administration according to the impact and achievement of goals. Clear objectives and measurable indicators will make it transparent whether initiatives are actually delivering progress.

We will introduce binding service standards for administrative procedures to ensure reliable performance. These standards shall be based on a simple three-times-yes principle:

Yes to the application: Complete applications are confirmed immediately and moved straight into processing. Digital pre-checks help identify missing information early and avoid unnecessary back-and-forth communication.

Yes to prioritisation: Every case is clearly assigned to the responsible office and is prioritised according to urgency.

Yes to deadlines: Core procedures are subject to binding processing deadlines. Simple standard cases are decided within ten working days, more complex procedures within clearly defined timeframes. If deadlines are exceeded, this must be justified.

We will expand the principle of tacit approval in standardisable procedures without third-party involvement: if a complete application is not rejected with justification within the deadline, it shall be deemed approved. This shifts the burden from citizens to the administration: the administrative body must act, not the applicant. The principle already exists in German administrative law (§ 42a VwVfG) but is applied only in isolated cases. We will extend it to suitable Berlin procedures, creating certainty in planning for citizens and businesses. For complex procedures involving third parties or public-interest protections, existing review obligations will continue to apply.

We will introduce binding target systems with publicly accessible performance indicators. Processing times, quality standards and user satisfaction will be published

transparently. If responsible bodies fall below defined thresholds, they will be required to present and implement concrete corrective measures promptly. This will create accountability instead of mere intention.

We will make the use of funding programmes a measurable management metric. To this day, Berlin's boroughs regularly fail to draw down available EU, federal and state funds because capacity is lacking and responsibilities are unclear. We will support the boroughs with digital tools and clear guidance in identifying, applying for and managing funding.

We will establish a Berlin-wide benchmarking system. This system will enable comparison between boroughs and authorities and ensure that successful solutions are adopted quickly. Key performance indicators will be made publicly accessible. A central dashboard will show how quickly applications are processed, where backlogs arise and which boroughs work particularly efficiently. Common standards and clearly defined business areas will create comparable responsibilities and processes. Unified digital tools and regular exchange formats will strengthen cooperation and reduce duplication.

We will firmly embed impact-driven policymaking in the parliamentary process. The Senate and the boroughs will report quarterly on progress towards their goals, identify problems openly and set out necessary adjustments. We will establish a central Future and Impact Unit that assesses new regulations early on for feasibility and actual impact, as well as evaluating existing measures. This will render policymaking adaptive and responsive, delivering lasting results.

Best practice

Cologne and Freiburg (OKR systems): Since 2022, both cities have been managing their smart-city projects using clearly defined objectives and measurable key results. By introducing OKR (Objectives and Key Results) systems, they have reduced duplication of work and significantly improved cooperation between departments. The guidance they developed is available for other municipalities to reuse.

Austria (KDZ/CAF model): With its Centre for Public Administration Research (KDZ), Austria has been setting the standard for years in self-assessment and continuous quality improvement in public institutions. Structured evaluation processes and clear quality standards under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) have led to more efficient procedures.

BERLIN WORKS: WITH FULLY DIGITALISED PROCESSES

Berlin's public administration suffers from digital fragmentation. Systems operate alongside each other rather than together, data is collected multiple times, and procedures still land in paper files despite applications being submitted online. Responsibilities and IT structures are not sufficiently integrated, causing processes to stall at the boundaries between authorities or different boroughs. For Berliners and businesses, this means increased frustration and unnecessary extra steps. For the public administration itself, it means duplication of work, delays and unnecessary costs. The problem is not a lack of technology, but a lack of end-to-end digital processes.

We will create digital processes that work from start to finish. Data will be collected only once and then shared securely, internal systems will be interoperable, and services will be able to be completed fully online. Digitalisation is not an end in itself, but the critical tool for internal efficiency and external reliability. This will shorten processing times, reduce backlogs and relieve staff of routine tasks. Processes will become faster, responsibilities clearer and administrative services more dependable.

Build digital systems that communicate with each other now

We will create a seamless digital infrastructure that integrates processes from beginning to end. Its foundation will be the once-only principle: authorities sharing information so that supporting documentation only needs to be submitted once and can be reused lawfully. We will drive forward the comprehensive rollout of the e-file, ensuring that digital files no longer need to be printed out and re-entered manually.

We will develop a shared technical architecture for the whole of Berlin's public administration. Existing systems will be integrated, interfaces standardised, and parallel portal solutions gradually reduced. This will replace isolated legacy systems with a coherent infrastructure.

We will consolidate IT governance and clearly define responsibilities between the digitalisation administration, the Senate and the IT Service Centre (ITDZ). We will manage operations, security, support and procurement uniformly. This will reduce duplication and align investment with strategic priorities. We will critically review the efficiency and role of the ITDZ and align it consistently with the goals of a high-performing administration.

We will prioritise open and reusable software solutions. In line with the principle of „public money, public code“, applications developed with public funds will be made openly accessible by default. Open-source strategies reduce dependencies, increase transparency and enable continuous development in cooperation with other municipalities.

We will protect digital fundamental rights consistently: we will limit the use of state-held data, review it regularly and align it with people's rights. Administrative data will remain in public hands.

We will not act alone. With the Federal Ministry for Digital Affairs and State Modernisation (BMDS), there is for the first time in Germany a central federal body responsible for digital standards and interoperable administrative architecture. We will align Berlin's digitalisation consistently with these nationwide standards and contribute actively to their further development. Our goal is simple: develop once, use everywhere. Standards and basic infrastructure belong at the federal level; implementation and local adaptation belong to the state and borough levels.

Best practice

Estonia (once-only principle): In Estonia, citizens only need to submit supporting documents once because authorities exchange data securely and lawfully. Digital processes are fully integrated and free of breaks between paper-based and digital workflows.

Use digital sovereignty and innovation strategically now

We will procure new digital solutions differently from before: we will test them in rapid pilot phases, and when they work, we will roll them out across Berlin. This will make Berlin an engine of innovation and a lead customer for GovTech companies. We will introduce an experimental clause for GovTech pilots that allows simplified procurement for contracts below a threshold of €100,000. We will establish a central data-protection review unit with a binding tool whitelist: instead of every authority checking the same applications repeatedly, there will be a shared basis. This will save resources and speed up decisions.

We will strengthen cooperation with other European metropolitan areas to support the sustainable development of digital public administration. Together with partner cities, we will develop and test open, interoperable software modules that can be rolled out across Berlin after successful piloting. This will allow us to adopt innovations more quickly and reduce development costs.

We will expand open administrative data and make access to existing data portals easier. Transparent, machine-readable data will support research, civil-society engagement and economic innovation, and increase the transparency of government action.

We will use AI strategically to improve public services, based on clear safeguards. AI will support, in particular, the preliminary review of applications, check documents for completeness, prioritise cases and draft decision letters. Decisions affecting citizens must be transparent, comprehensible and free from discrimination. Responsibility will always remain with humans.

Simplify digital public administration now

We will bundle central administrative services on a single service portal. With this portal, citizens and businesses will have a clear, accessible and multilingual point of contact for the services they require, irrespective of which borough is responsible. Digital applications will be fully processed online, processing statuses will be displayed transparently, and automatic status updates will be provided. Digital pre-checks and checklists will ensure that applications are complete at the time of submission. This will eliminate unnecessary follow-up questions and make procedures predictable.

We will introduce digital support systems that assist users during the application process, explaining procedures clearly and helping avoid errors. We will complement this with a hotline that can both advise and help process cases. This will ensure that even more complex concerns can be resolved without unnecessary back-and-forth.

We will make accessibility a binding standard. We will translate forms into Plain Language, expand multilingual support services and integrate read-aloud and dictation functions.

We will measure quality transparently: users will be able to provide feedback after completing digital administrative procedures. We will publish key quality indicators such as processing time, completion rate and satisfaction, and evaluate these regularly.

Best practice

Denmark (digital public administration): A central citizen portal bundles more than 2000 fully digital services, with user satisfaction above 90%. This is made possible by a single digital identity for all interactions with public authorities, a legally mandated “digital first” principle and a central digitalisation authority with cross-departmental powers.

BERLIN WORKS: WITH AN ATTRACTIVE ADMINISTRATION AND SKILLED STAFF

The ability to deliver services depends on the people who take responsibility. But Berlin is losing ground as an employer. Around 7 000 positions are already unfilled today, and by 2030, a further 40 000 employees will retire: this is one third of the entire workforce. Limited competitiveness in pay, as well as restricted development opportunities, are worsening the shortage of skilled staff. Citizens feel the consequences of this directly: long waiting times, overstretched offices, and projects that fail to move forward.

We will make Berlin the most attractive employer in the public sector. To achieve this, we will accelerate recruitment procedures, create fair and competitive pay structures and invest consistently in training and modern working conditions. Anyone working for Berlin should be able to take responsibility, have opportunities for development and receive the tools needed to deliver good work. This is how we will build a public administration that is capable, motivated and fit for the future.

Recruit and retain the best people now

We will fundamentally accelerate and modernise recruitment. In the future, no more than 90 days shall pass from the receipt of an application to the offer of an employment contract. To achieve this, we will fully digitalise HR processes, centralise recruitment procedures and simplify job postings. Consultation processes, for example with representatives for people with disabilities, women's representatives, and staff councils, should take place wherever possible in parallel rather than sequentially. Practical experience and professional competencies will be given greater weight. This will allow us to attract career-changers in a targeted way and reach new groups of applicants.

We will use AI-supported systems in the recruitment process and review these in terms of non-discrimination before deployment. Final recruitment decisions will always remain with humans.

We will align the pay of Berlin's public administration with federal levels. For particularly sought-after professions such as IT specialists, engineers or lawyers, we will introduce additional allowances. This will make Berlin competitive again in the hunt for the best talent and capable of delivering its political priorities.

We will create flexible deployment structures to further stabilise staffing. We will establish a central expert team that can step in at short notice when staff shortages arise or projects stall. This will ensure project delivery even in the event of temporary absences.

Best practice

Hannover (Q-Two Programme): Since 2024, the Hannover region has been providing part-time training for career-changers to qualify for the upper level of the civil service. The programme is in high demand and opens up new target groups for public-sector employment. A comparable model also offers potential for Berlin to attract additional skilled staff.

Kiel (FLEX:Unit): The city of Kiel deploys a central team of around 50 experts that provide flexible support wherever staff shortages or project bottlenecks occur. A Flex-Unit deployment lasts three, six or nine months and stabilises the administration's performance capacity in the short term

Promote responsibility now

We will make continuing training a mandatory part of working in the public sector. All employees will receive an annual minimum entitlement of 40 hours for professional and methodological training, pro-rated for part-time staff and in addition to the statutory entitlement to Bildungsurlaub (educational leave), with topics ranging from digital skills and project management to modern public-service communication. We will develop the Verwaltungsakademie (Administrative Academy) into a future centre for leadership, digitalisation and impact-focussed work.

We will train staff members in all authorities to become experts, passing on their digital skills to their colleagues. They will support the introduction of new applications and ensure that technical solutions actually work in day-to-day practice.

We will create modern and performance-enhancing working conditions. These shall include flexible and reliable working-time models, mobile working where tasks allow it, and modern, secure IT equipment. We will fully digitalise HR processes such as leave requests or allowance procedures to reduce administrative burden and relieve staff. We will promote performance and responsibility through opportunities for advancement.

We will continue to develop leadership, measuring it against clear quality standards and assessing it continuously through regular anonymous internal surveys. An innovation-friendly leadership culture and transparent development opportunities strengthen personal responsibility and collaboration.

We will give teams dedicated time for improvement and innovation projects. We will capture good ideas in a structured way, recognising them and embedding them across the organisation.

BERLIN WORKS: WITH MODERN AND TRANSPARENT FINANCIAL POLICY

Since German reunification, Berlin's budget has struggled with structural challenges: rising debt, constantly shifting priorities and reporting that is difficult for citizens to understand. When people cannot see how the state spends its money, they cannot meaningfully assess political decisions.

We will develop financial policy that serves the city's future: that is based on modern accounting standards, is reliable due to medium-term planning, and that is open through digital transparency.

Invest with full information now

We will introduce an annual asset report in the short term and accrual accounting in the medium term. This will allow us to record all municipal assets, holdings, debts and financial flows, enabling a sound assessment of costs, investment impacts and future liabilities. We will ensure that Berlin plans on a solid data basis. This will allow us to use scarce funds responsibly and with a long-term perspective.

Best practice

Baden-Württemberg (annual asset report): The state introduced more transparent and comprehensive reporting in 2017. The introduction of asset accounting has modernised financial reporting in Baden-Württemberg, enabling better management of state finances and highlighting where action is needed, for example in infrastructure maintenance or managing pension obligations.

Hamburg and Hessen (accrual accounting): Both states introduced accrual accounting almost two decades ago. On this basis, Hamburg was able to develop its strategic management model, which links financial data with concrete performance and impact targets. The administration now manages not only according to available funds but according to the results achieved in each policy area.

Create certainty through forward-looking planning now

We will turn medium-term financial planning into a stronger control mechanism by introducing key elements of political self-commitment. We will link budgets to the medium-term financial planning, giving citizens, businesses and social institutions reliable conditions for decision-making.

This will commit us to justifying future deviations from medium-term planning before the House of Representatives and to the public. We will also provide offsetting

measures for spending increases, showing where funds will be saved elsewhere. This creates credibility as the basis for moving forward together.

Best practice

Sweden (long-term financial planning): Parliament sets an expenditure ceiling for the third budget year in advance, which binds the annual budget process. Spending increases in one area are only permitted if they are offset by savings in another. An independent Fiscal Policy Council and the National Audit Office review publicly each year whether the government complies with the framework.

Build trust through transparency now

We will publish regularly updated budget figures so that it is clear where tax revenues are flowing. In addition to financial data, we will provide explanations and develop impact analyses for all major investments. This will enable financial planning and its outcomes to be understood and meaningfully discussed across the wider population, because without clear data, financial policy remains speculation. Transparency is not an end in itself but a prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. This is how we will build citizens' trust, even in the face of difficult decisions.

Best practice

Helsinki (open budget data): Since 2012, the city has published its budget data annually in machine-readable form via the Helsinki Region Infoshare (HRI) open-data portal and provides open interfaces for external analysis. The city itself estimates the budget savings generated by opening the data at between 1 and 2 percent.

BERLIN WORKS: WITH TRANSPARENCY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Democratic legitimacy is a source of the administration's ability to deliver. Where civic participation is organised in a binding way, robust decisions emerge that are accepted by majorities. In Berlin, such participation is often unequal, non-binding and of limited impact. Procedures begin too late, feedback is missing and the actual influence of these processes remains unclear. Whether civic participation succeeds depends heavily on the borough or on individual administrative decisions. This weakens trust and makes it harder to implement political projects.

We will make civic participation binding, transparent, and effective. We will involve citizens early, creating real scope for influence in decision-making, and will make subsequent political action transparent. Government action will become openly accessible. This will foster trust and provide the foundation for sustainable decisions.

Embed civic participation in the system now

We will create a binding and transparent civic participation framework for the whole of Berlin. Through mein.berlin.de, we will bring all procedures together centrally and make them easy to find and publicly review. Citizens will be able to see which proposals were submitted, how they were assessed, and what outcomes will follow.

We will evaluate all consultation processes and compile them in an annual civic participation report. We will collect criteria such as reach, representativeness, implementation rate and satisfaction. We will require politics and administration to explain publicly how they use the results from consultation processes and which actions follow on from them. A transparency law will mandate the publication of key documents such as expert reports, Senate decisions and contracts. This will provide a reliable source of information for civic participation.

We will develop existing civic participation structures into competence centres. These centres will set standards, support administrations and ensure the quality of processes. Before major projects, we will conduct a binding civic participation analysis to define suitable formats and target groups at an early stage. We will train administrative staff and embed civic participation as a professional competence. We will enable citizens to contribute meaningfully through clear information and transparent data. This will structurally embed civic participation into public service practice.

Best practice:

Belgium (legally mandated citizens' assemblies): In Belgium's German-speaking Community, citizens' assemblies are permanently embedded institutionally. Their recommendations are submitted to Parliament, discussed publicly and must receive an official response.

Hamburg (transparency law): Hamburg requires its government agencies to proactively publish key documents, such as expert reports, Senate resolutions, or contracts, above a certain threshold. This ensures transparency in government actions and reduces information asymmetries.

Finance civic participation now

We will establish binding participatory budgeting at both borough and state level, as such participation requires real scope for decision-making. We will secure these funds institutionally, making civic participation predictable and effective.

We will deliberately go beyond the small-scale neighbourhood budgets and borough funds commonly used in Berlin today. Instead of isolated involvement in individual projects, we will create genuine participatory budgets with a meaningful share of the overall budget, binding votes and guaranteed implementation of selected projects. Our goal is to develop, step by step, a model in which citizens directly co-decide on substantial parts of the budget.

At the state level, we will also open the budget process to structured civic participation. This will give civic participation a material foundation upon which to become a genuine part of political decision-making. We will also think locally with regard to civic participation and implement it directly at the neighbourhood level, alongside state and borough structures.

Empower democracy for everyone who lives here now

We will complement representative democracy with structured civic participation formats. To this end, we will introduce regular citizens' assemblies chosen at random, reflecting the diversity of the city. The assemblies will deliberate on clearly defined questions and develop recommendations based on transparent information. We will require politics and administration to respond to these recommendations publicly and justify their responses..

We will strengthen direct democracy instruments. We will introduce an optional referendum: if the House of Representatives amends a law that was adopted by referendum, just 2.5 percent of eligible voters will be sufficient to trigger a new popular vote on the issue.

Best practice

Paris (participatory budgets): Around 5 percent of the city's investment budget is decided directly by citizens. Since its introduction in 2014, this has amounted to several hundred million euros per year. The process is clearly structured: public submission of projects, administrative review, followed by a binding vote by the population and mandatory implementation of the winning projects. Participation is possible both digitally and in person. A share of the funds is specifically reserved for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

BERLIN

THRIVES

**Housing, mobility,
and liveable
neighbourhoods**

Berlin is a city you can live and breathe in everyday life: the paths through your own neighbourhood, the café around the corner, children in the playground, late-night shops, parks, and people from all over the world who bring the city to life. Berlin is loud, creative, and sometimes chaotic – but that is exactly what many people love about it.

Yet the foundations of this way of life are coming under increasing pressure. Homes are becoming unaffordable, buses and trains are too often unreliable, and many journeys across the city mainly cost both time and sanity. People travelling on foot or by bicycle often feel unsafe. At the same time, many neighbourhoods suffer from through-traffic, vacant premises, waste, and public spaces that nobody has looked after for too long.

Quality of life is decided in everyday life: whether people can afford a home, travel reliably, and feel comfortable in their own neighbourhood. This determines whether Berlin remains a city for everyone or only for some.

Berlin thrives when everyone can find a suitable home. This requires rapid and sustainable homebuilding, fair rules in the rental market, support for home ownership, and the determination to end homelessness. This is how we create a Berlin where housing is a matter of course.

Berlin thrives when everyone can travel quickly, safely, and reliably across the whole city. This requires attractive and affordable public transport extending to the outer boroughs, as well as safe streets and routes for pedestrians and cyclists. This is how we create genuine freedom of choice in everyday travel – regardless of age, where people live, or income.

Berlin thrives when everyone finds a clean neighbourhood outside their front door, with places where people of all generations can meet, grow, and flourish. Different uses do not have to conflict but can be balanced, and people can actively shape their neighbourhood. This is how we create communities that strengthen social cohesion and noticeably improve everyday quality of life.

BERLIN THRIVES: WITH RAPID AND SUSTAINABLE HOMEBUILDING

Berlin is suffering from an extremely strained housing market and continuously rising rents. The city already lacks at least 100 000 homes. Housing targets are regularly missed, and planning permits take too long. Rising construction costs and bureaucracy restrict the housing supply so severely that rapidly increasing rents put enormous pressure on our city's social diversity. At the same time, apartments stand empty or are kept off of the market for financial speculation.

We will open up new prospects for Berlin to grow sustainably. We will create more homes using modern, resource-efficient approaches. We will build more and faster by using land efficiently and digitalising applications. To deliver quickly and at scale, we will make modular and serial construction an important tool for securing permanently affordable rents. By also expanding the stock of homes owned by the state and housing co-operatives on a large scale, we will create a genuine price anchor that stabilises the wider market.

We will secure a Berlin for everyone, with binding social housing quotas in new developments and a Housing First approach for people experiencing homelessness: they will receive a home first, rather than having support made conditional on meeting prior requirements. Housing must not be an existential worry; it must become something people can rely on - dignified, inclusive, and financially smarter.

Build more and repurpose existing housing now

We will adapt the Urban Development Plan 2040 consistently to reflect reality and secure sites for 300 000 new homes. This will create the foundation needed to significantly ease the pressure on Berlin's housing market over the long term.

Most of these homes will be built in the new development areas secured through the Urban Development Plan 2040. In addition, we will implement measures that can have an immediate impact on existing buildings. By simplifying the building regulations and raising the height limits for loft conversions and additional storeys, we can potentially create more than 10 000 homes. At the same time, we will make it easier to convert vacant commercial premises and space in existing buildings into attractive homes, through fast approval procedures, flexible building standards, and support for owners carrying out conversions. This will create space for 30 000 new homes in existing buildings.

We will end the standstill in bringing building land into use through data-driven analysis (geoanalytics). We will analyse digital maps and satellite images to automatically identify vacant land and gaps between buildings where homes could

be built immediately. On this basis, we will consistently use legal orders requiring development and introduce an additional property tax category (Grundsteuer C), applying a higher rate to undeveloped plots to discourage speculation.

Best practice

Bavaria (loft conversions): Bavaria has shown, through its revised building regulations, how removing approval requirements for loft conversions can create thousands of new homes in existing buildings without delay.

Amsterdam (conversion of office space): Flexible building standards enabled thousands of vacant offices to be converted into housing, creating almost 7 000 homes.

Build faster now

We will end the construction standstill and make active, systematic use of fast-track construction rules (Bau-Turbo). This special planning provision makes it possible to approve urgently needed affordable housing quickly, including in places where outdated development plans have previously blocked projects. We will use this tool consistently to reduce the time from planning to the start of construction from years to months.

We will systematically translate building regulations into machine-readable rules, an approach known as rule mapping. This will allow planning applications to be checked automatically for compliance, significantly reducing review times and relieving pressure on public authorities.

We will digitalise the entire process, from the initial application to final building approval. A seamless digital interface between citizens, architects, and authorities creates full transparency and maximum speed.

Best practice

Thuringia (rule mapping): AI-supported rule mapping makes it possible to compare building regulations with planning applications automatically, drastically shortening the approval stages.

Build more affordably now

We will introduce the “Hamburg Standard” for affordable and efficient construction in Berlin. Simplified requirements, modular construction methods, and faster approval procedures will create a binding framework that safeguards quality while reducing both time and costs.

We will task an expert working group, composed of members from the construction and housing sectors, public administration, and research institutions, with systematically identifying further savings within existing requirements and technical standards. This will allow us to identify cost drivers and simplify rules where this does not reduce the quality of buildings or people’s quality of life. We will ensure that heritage protection and social conservation requirements are designed and applied more flexibly, making modernisation and loft conversions more attractive.

Best practice

Hamburg (Hamburg Standard): The Hamburg Standard enables high-quality housing to be built as quickly and affordably as possible.

Promote affordable housing now

We will strengthen housing co-operatives, state-owned housing companies, multigenerational housing, private building groups, and company housing models, with the aim of increasing the share of Berlin’s housing stock operated in the public interest to as much as 50%. We will reduce land costs through the consistent use of long-term leaseholds and expand existing Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB) funding programmes for low-interest loans and support for co-operatives. This will give such projects planning certainty and keep rents stable over the long term. We will also support the creation of new co-operatives and house building groups. We will therefore reserve sites specifically for community-led projects and increasingly award public land according to the quality of the proposal rather than the highest price. At the federal level, we will advocate for co-operative shares to be recognised as collateral when granting subsidised loans.

We will strengthen IBB support for home ownership in new developments, with improved terms for low-interest loans and guarantees when people buy a new-build flat in an apartment building as their own home.

Through an initiative in the Bundesrat, we will advocate for a one-off, personal real estate transfer tax allowance of €36 000 when someone buys a home for the first time. This would provide a full tax exemption for a purchase price of up to €600 000 per person. The allowance could be used only once in a lifetime, and combined when

people buy together, providing targeted support to first-time buyers. Whether the home is owner-occupied or rented out would remain a personal decision.

Best practice

Vienna (Vienna model): Vienna uses public loans with extremely low interest rates and long repayment periods in return for permanently price-controlled, high-quality housing.

Denmark (multigenerational housing, or “Bofællesskaber”): Since the 1970s, the state has supported community housing projects through clear legal frameworks, targeted allocation of land, and integration into municipal planning. In these projects, residents combine private homes with extensive shared spaces and organise parts of daily life themselves, such as childcare, care support, or shared meals. In particular, it enables older people to remain independent in familiar surroundings (“ageing in place”).

Make the rental market fair and secure now

We will create a stable political environment for private-sector investment. This will provide planning certainty while also holding large housing companies to account. The rent brake will remain in place in neighbourhoods with a strained rental market. At the same time, we simplify the process for checking whether rents are legally permissible, making the rent brake more effective. We will limit its scope to areas where intervention is genuinely needed.

We reject rigid rent caps and blanket expropriation because evidence shows that they make the underlying problem worse. They restrict supply, discourage investment in modernisation, and, in the case of expropriation, tie up billions of euros in compensation that are then unavailable for new housing. Instead, we will create a fair market in which greater supply and targeted support secure affordable rents for everyone.

We will introduce a tamper-proof digital housing database to make the rent index as transparent as possible. This will make it easier to understand how rents are set and expose vacancies and speculation. At the same time, it will provide legal certainty for landlords.

Support social housing now

We will retain binding social housing quotas for major new developments, ensuring that Berlin remains a city for everyone. We will ensure that new neighbourhoods have a healthy social mix from the outset.

We will introduce a graduated surcharge for higher-income households living in social housing. People whose income is significantly above the eligibility threshold will pay an additional charge. This will create an incentive to move into the private market and increase the likelihood that social housing becomes available for people on waiting lists. The revenue will be ring-fenced for the construction of further social housing.

We will tackle the shortage of social housing immediately through an innovative pilot project. Together with experienced non-profit organisations, we will establish a social rental agency. It will rent homes directly on the private market, whether from individual landlords, housing companies, or co-operatives, and sublet them specifically to people on low incomes. The project will offer landlords a full-service package: a 100% rent guarantee backed by the State of Berlin, professional management by the agency, and tax benefits under the new non-profit housing framework (NWG). By providing this security, the agency will bring homes onto the market for people in greatest need that were previously unavailable because of the administrative burden or owners' concerns.

Best practice

Frankfurt am Main (surcharge for higher-income social housing tenants): The city shows how a fair surcharge can work. It generates millions of euros each year, which are ring-fenced and returned to housing support.

End homelessness now

We will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping through a Berlin-wide Housing First construction programme. Having a home and support is the essential foundation for health and employment, and it is significantly cheaper for the state than managing a permanent crisis. We will provide people without a permanent home with housing and support instead of leaving them indefinitely in expensive communal accommodation or on the streets. Modular micro-apartments will help those affected regain stability and rebuild their lives.

Best practice

Finland (Housing First): Finland has reduced homelessness by around 80% since the 1980s, including through the non-profit Y-Foundation and a consistent national Housing First strategy.

BERLIN THRIVES: WITH ATTRACTIVE, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY FOR ALL

Congestion, noise, and poor air quality place a burden on the daily lives of many Berliners. Drivers spend many hours in traffic each year, while residents suffer from noise and exhaust fumes. A large share of Berlin households do not own a car or use one only rarely, yet private motorised transport continues to occupy a disproportionate share of public space. Many people who depend instead on buses and trains often experience public transport as unreliable, overcrowded, or poorly coordinated, especially in the outer boroughs. Walking or cycling is not without risk: more than 130 000 traffic accidents occur each year, with pedestrians and cyclists disproportionately likely to be seriously affected. Construction sites that continue for months without visible work also take away public space that is already in short supply.

We will promote genuine freedom of choice in everyday life. People should be able to decide for themselves how they travel. They will choose sustainable transport options when alternatives to cars are attractive. Our approach is clear: convenient, on-time and affordable services mean fewer people will depend on a car. We will develop stations into mobility hubs, add services outside the S-Bahn ring, and work towards transport automation. No one should be killed or seriously injured on Berlin's roads. For us, road safety is not a matter of individual behaviour but the result of good planning and consistent implementation.

Make public transport more attractive now

We will clean stations several times a day, repair technical faults more quickly, and expand security staffing and social work at interchange stations. This will help citizens feel safe and strengthen trust in public transport.

Accessible public transport is a prerequisite for genuine participation. By 2030 at the latest, we want to have completed conversion plans for every Berlin bus, tram, S-Bahn, and U-Bahn station that is not yet accessible, so that construction work can then proceed systematically.

We will develop Jelbi into the central mobility platform, integrating all shared and on-demand providers. Stations will become modern hubs with sharing services, Bike & Ride facilities, including secure cycle parking, and accessible routes. Park & Ride locations at the city boundary and in the outer boroughs will reduce traffic in the city centre and make it easy to change to the shared transport network.

We will support long-term financing for the Deutschlandticket. At the same time, we will improve public transport in the outer boroughs and peripheral areas through digitally booked buses and autonomous shuttles. This on-demand service will take

people from their front door to any other location, particularly to the rail network, and provide a genuine alternative to owning a car. Affordable mobility is useful only when there is also a service that people can actually use.

We will make travel by tram, and especially by bus, more attractive, comfortable, and accessible. In the medium term, wherever pavement space allows, tram and bus stops should have seating and shelter. We will prioritise seating at stops in the outer boroughs and those with less frequent services where passengers may face long waits. Advertising at bus and tram stops will finance the programme: revenue from lucrative city-centre locations will fund shelters in peripheral areas.

Finance the mobility transition now

We will introduce a congestion charge within the S-Bahn ring. Exemptions will apply to trade and delivery vehicles with a business permit, vehicles used by care and emergency services, journeys by shift workers without a public transport connection between 22:00 and 06:00, and vehicles used by people with severe disabilities that affect mobility. The cost of the charge will vary dynamically according to the time of day and emissions class.

Parking will be managed digitally across Berlin and priced according to vehicle size and emissions. Residents' parking permits will be priced to cover costs and increase according to vehicle size. Revenue will be re-invested into public transport, walking and cycling routes, and accessibility.

Best practice

Paris (low-traffic city centre): The city has consistently reduced car traffic in the centre. An Airparif study found that nitrogen dioxide pollution fell by 45% between 2014 and 2024. The Limited Traffic Zone introduced in 2024 is intended to reduce through traffic by as much as 70%. Revenue is invested in cycling and public transport infrastructure.

Amsterdam (residents' parking): The city prices residents' parking permits according to vehicle size and emissions class while strictly limiting the total number of permits. Since then, the number of cars registered in the city centre has fallen measurably, and public space has been reclaimed for green areas and cycle routes.

Digitalise and expand mobility now

We will invest in digital technology such as intelligent traffic lights. This technology will give priority to buses and trams and help traffic flow more smoothly.

We will prioritise the full automation of U-Bahn services to allow more frequent

trains and stable round-the-clock operation. For trams and buses, we will use digital assistance systems that reduce the burden on drivers and improve reliability. This will make public transport less vulnerable to shortages of skilled staff without putting existing jobs at risk.

We will clear the way for climate neutrality in transport. A modernised and comprehensive public transport system will help us avoid emissions. We will implement a modern local transport plan promptly, coordinating investment, improving service frequencies, and creating new orbital links such as tram and express bus routes. The expansion of the U-Bahn, tram, S-Bahn, and regional rail networks will be integrated and coordinated at an early stage, reducing costs and planning times.

Best practice

Nuremberg (automated U-Bahn): Driverless U-Bahn services show how automation can improve frequency and reliability. Former U-Bahn drivers were retrained for customer and system service roles.

Make streets safe now

We will launch an immediate programme to make junctions safer and eliminate every accident hotspot by 2030. Separate traffic-light phases for bicycles and cars, as well as green arrows for cyclists turning at junctions, shall prevent conflicts. At dangerous junctions, we will build refuge islands and waiting areas set-back from the main carriageway to separate cycle routes physically from motorised traffic and improve safety.

We will install intelligent traffic lights that respond to traffic conditions, reduce conflicts between road users, and improve traffic flow. This will create safety without restricting mobility.

We will consistently expand 30 km/h zones in places where people need particular protection, especially around schools, kitas, playgrounds, and important pedestrian routes. At the federal level, we also work to make 30 km/h the standard speed limit in urban centres, preventing accidents and improving the quality of public space.

We will provide targeted road-safety education in schools, strengthening consideration and responsible behaviour in traffic. Awareness will protect people before dangerous situations arise.

We will significantly expand enforcement against speeding and illegal parking, particularly in sensitive locations. Additional speed cameras and automated checks will provide reliable enforcement and protect people in everyday life.

We will build a system that allows people to report dangerous locations using photos and location data. This will enable rapid responses. The administration will have to demonstrate what action has been taken after a report. In this way, the city and its residents will work together to create safer streets.

Best practice

Helsinki: In July 2025, Helsinki recorded a full twelve-month period without a single road death for the first time, following the consistent introduction of 30 km/h limits on most inner-city roads and effective speed enforcement under its Vision Zero strategy.

Make walking and cycling routes safe now

We will design streets with continuous protected cycle routes and sufficient space for pedestrians. We will provide clear crossing points, safe junctions, and accessible design. To achieve this, by 2030 we will make every crossing at interchanges with tram, S-Bahn, and U-Bahn stations fully accessible.

We will plan and build cycle routes, cycle streets, and fast cycle connections consistently and rapidly. In particular, we will call for planning of fast cycle routes that was suspended to resume immediately and for these to be implemented quickly. We will implement the Cycling Plan and create continuous, safe, and comfortable cycling infrastructure. This will also protect pedestrians and drivers.

Reduce construction sites now

We will end construction-site chaos so that roadworks affect traffic only for as long as work is genuinely taking place. We will require companies to clear traffic areas and restore them to a safe condition during longer interruptions. Restrictions on walking and cycling will also have to be kept to a minimum.

We will instruct boroughs not to approve complete closures of public space for a long period as a matter of course. Where there are lengthy pauses between construction phases, temporary public use must be restored.

We will ensure that standard contractual penalties for missing deadlines on road and pavement works are enforced in a legally robust way. This will ensure pavements are closed only for as long as is genuinely necessary. We will also increase charges for the special use of public space to ensure efficient and rapid construction progress. This will prevent construction companies from blocking Berlin's pavements for weeks before

work starts or after it has ended. Charges shall rise exponentially when deadlines are exceeded.

Best practice

Vienna (safety at construction sites): Vienna's 'Safety at Vienna's Construction Sites' rules establish binding standards that keep restrictions on walking and cycling to a minimum. The city's MA 46 roadworks authority also sets out concrete conditions that companies must meet whenever they use public space for construction work.

BERLIN THRIVES: WITH NEIGHBOURHOODS SHAPED TOGETHER

Berlin's public space is distributed unfairly. Although only 22% of journeys are made by car, motorised traffic occupies 58% of available space. Around 19% of public space is blocked by parked cars that, on average, remain unused for 23 hours a day. Local businesses and quality of life suffer from through traffic, while the current political debate about low-traffic neighbourhoods is deadlocked and residents are left alone with their concerns.

We will transform Berlin's neighbourhoods into safe places to live for every generation. By distributing space fairly, we will create room for social interaction, greenery, and children playing. We want a 'city of short distances' in which local people become active designers of their neighbourhood through genuine participation. At the same time, we will use redesign projects to remove sealed surfaces, add greenery, and manage rainwater, making Berlin's neighbourhoods more resilient to heat and heavy rainfall. This will improve quality of life and strengthen local businesses.

Actively co-create neighbourhoods now

We introduce representative neighbourhood councils made up of residents and local business owners selected at random. They will serve as a link to the administration and jointly develop workable solutions tailored to each neighbourhood.

We will give citizens financial decision-making power over their immediate surroundings. Every neighbourhood will receive its own budget, which residents can use independently to finance and deliver new play streets, additional benches, new plants, and other similar projects.

We will break political deadlock by testing new concepts in time-limited living labs. Over six to nine months, we will trial measures such as bollards to prevent through traffic or new seating areas, and evaluate data on safety and air quality together with local residents.

Best practice

Hamburg (freiRaum Ottensen): The project uses councils selected at random to increase public acceptance of low-traffic neighbourhoods.

Bring neighbourhoods to life now

We will gradually reduce parking space to create room for wider pavements, safe cycle lanes, green spaces, and outdoor seating for cafés and restaurants. Transforming these areas into attractive promenades will support local businesses because people shop where they enjoy spending time.

We will redesign residential areas according to the residential street principle, under which people walking and playing take priority over motorised traffic. Physical changes will prevent dangerous through traffic, allowing children to move independently around their neighbourhoods.

We make neighbourhoods work for people of all ages and practical for everyday life. This includes sufficient seating, public toilets, drinking fountains, shade, good lighting, and safe, accessible pavements. Crossings and traffic-light timings must be designed so that older people and people with limited mobility can use them safely and independently.

Best practice

The Netherlands (woonerf principle): This approach turns residential streets into safe shared spaces where children have priority.

Barcelona (Superblock model/'Superilles'): The city has removed through traffic from entire residential neighbourhoods. Side streets belong to pedestrians, cyclists, and children at play, while car traffic is directed onto main roads.

The Netherlands (Humanitas/Ageing in Place): In the Netherlands, transport is linked to the goal of enabling older people to live independently in their own surroundings. Dense public transport networks, accessible infrastructure, and short distances to everyday services ensure that older people can continue to participate in society.

BERLIN THRIVES: WITH STRONG SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people are growing up at a time of major social change, yet their voices are still too often unheard in politics. Many Berlin neighbourhoods lack safe places to spend time, leisure services, and easily accessible support. In addition, the CDU-SPD coalition has cut almost €50 million from youth work, school social work, and political education. Dilapidated youth clubs cannot be renovated, youth organisations face cuts, and service providers lack financial certainty for planning.

We will make children and young people central actors in urban society. They are Berlin's future. A liveable city gives them safe spaces, genuine participation, and reliable structures for meeting others, leisure, and support. We will therefore strengthen easily accessible participation and youth services in neighbourhoods and online, maintain the agreed increase in funding, and include the needs of children and young people in urban development. This will empower young people at a time of many different challenges.

Create targeted services for children and young people now

We will target children and youth services where they are needed most. The Social Urban Development Monitoring system provides the basis for concentrating resources more strongly in neighbourhoods facing particular pressures. There, we will expand youth centres, sport and cultural services, and advice centres, supplemented by mobile provision.

We will strengthen easy access services such as family centres, outreach work with parents, and early support so that families are reached in good time and crises can be prevented. Prevention will therefore become a central part of child protection.

We will establish digital youth-support networks through 'online outreach workers' who meet young people in their digital environments, provide accessible help with conflicts, and offer early guidance on psychosocial pressures, disinformation, and online radicalisation.

We will establish universal quality standards and central coordination for children and youth work across Berlin. This will improve efficiency and achieve the greatest possible benefit with limited resources. We will improve coordination between boroughs and create a strong network of youth centres and independent service providers.

Best practice

Ljubljana (Network of Youth Centres): The city brings children and youth support together in a central network and sets and enforces common standards. This leads to coordinated services, higher quality, and less duplication.

Sweden (digital social work/'Nätvandrarna'): Sweden has established a model of digital youth social work in which professionals engage directly with young people on social networks, are available at an early stage, and provide accessible support for social, psychological, and digital pressures.

Give service providers long-term security now

We will give service-provider organisations certainty for planning so that they can prepare efficiently for the future and use funds in a targeted way. We will replace short-term, project-based grants with institutionally embedded structures that have secure funding and attractive working conditions.

We recognise that the needs of children and young people are closely linked to education, housing, urban development, culture, and sport. We will therefore move away from a narrow focus on the remit of a single public authority and towards interdisciplinary approaches that give children and young people a consistently positive experience of life in the city.

Involve and empower young people now

We will expand European exchange programmes for young Berliners and make greater use of EU funding programmes such as Erasmus+, allowing them to experience Europe and strengthening their commitment to European cooperation.

We will support the Berlin Youth Check (Jugendcheck), which systematically examines the effects of political decisions on young people. We will also place children and youth parliaments at borough level on a statutory footing and give them fixed budgets. Proposals from young people must receive an official response from the House of Representatives and the borough assemblies within a set period.

Best practice

Lublin (Youth City Council): The Youth City Council strengthens structured participation and direct communication with the city's leadership. It has, for example, organised a summit for young people involved in civic life and converted a site into a green space for young people.

BERLIN THRIVES: WITH CLEANLINESS, ORDER AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Berlin produces waste – too much waste that ends up on our streets and squares. Berliners dispose of significantly more waste than the national average, 220 kg compared with 151 kg, whilst at the same time recycling far less, 30% compared with 67%. Every hour, 20 000 single-use cups are consumed because reusable options are inadequate. This creates considerable additional work for street cleaning and public administration, as well as rising public costs. Littered public spaces also reduce the quality of the urban environment, while increasing the sense of neglect and lack of safety.

We will make cleanliness a central requirement for quality of life, safety, and mutual respect in the city. Our approach combines simple, practical solutions with clear information and consistent enforcement. For us, cleanliness is not merely a matter of public order but a shared responsibility of the city, businesses, and society. People who want to dispose of waste correctly should be able to do so easily, while those who disregard the rules should face consequences. We want a Berlin in which people feel at home and actively take responsibility for a clean and sustainable urban environment.

Make waste disposal easier now

We will create local neighbourhood recycling points that people can easily find through mein.berlin.de or an app. They will serve as modern collection points for recyclable materials, hazardous household waste, and bulky waste, and will be accessible around the clock. The unstaffed stations will be able to be opened by app or user card.

Digital access will enable users to voluntarily have their waste analysed by AI and receive points that can be exchanged for free bulky-waste collections, reduced charges, or vouchers for NochMall, Berlin's reuse shop.

We will explain clearly, digitally, and in several languages how waste should be separated and disposed of, supported by QR codes on bins, bottle banks, and collection points. We will focus in particular on the correct disposal of new problem items such as disposable e-cigarettes, nitrous oxide canisters, and batteries. We will also support educational services and workshops that embed the principle of waste prevention, or zero waste, over the long term.

We will significantly increase the number of public bins and consistently provide separate cigarette-waste bins at litter hotspots such as bus stops, parks, and benches. We will increase emptying frequencies at particularly busy locations and promote the use of pocket ashtrays.

We will expand the Berlin Pay reward system for Berliners and visitors and link it closely to the BSR's Kehrenbürger community-clean-up programme. An advertising campaign will raise awareness of the programme.

We will ensure consistent enforcement against illegal waste disposal. We will fund the relevant positions in borough public-order offices and establish deployment teams working across borough boundaries. We will also test innovative campaigns that make the social costs visible and increase the perceived likelihood of being caught. These approaches have been shown to be more effective than deterrence based only on fines when people believe enforcement is unlikely. We will test the measures in pilot projects and make them permanent when they succeed.

Best practice

Copenhagen (reward system): Copenhagen rewards environmentally friendly behaviour, such as collecting litter or travelling sustainably, with vouchers and prizes. Barcelona and Oslo (digital recycling stations/'Osloøkkelen'): Networks of recycling points in both cities allow residents to dispose of bulky and hazardous waste close to home. A multifunctional app provides easy access.

Vienna (disposal facilities and WasteWatchers): Austria's capital has around 70% more public bins than Berlin and empties them more frequently. Through consistent inspections and a visible presence, the city's WasteWatchers have reduced illegal dumping in public spaces by as much as 60% since 2008.

Newham, London (innovative deterrence): The campaign combined several behaviourally informed measures, including information about the costs to society, such as cleaning costs taking money away from children and young people, and visible notices about ongoing investigations into illegal bulky-waste dumping. Illegal dumping fell by around 67%.

Reduce waste now

We will introduce a packaging tax to reduce single-use waste. We will use the revenue to build a Berlin-wide reuse infrastructure, with an extensive network of return points, for example in supermarkets, and the necessary washing capacity. This will create an urban circular economy that makes reusable systems straightforward for food and drink businesses and consumers.

We will ensure that Berlin consistently monitors the existing obligation to offer reusable packaging and penalises non-compliance.

We will strengthen the Repair Bonus through a joint campaign with businesses. This will mobilise additional investment, support Berlin repair businesses, and encourage more people to repair items instead of replacing them. It will also strengthen repair cafés as important places for social connection and shared learning, as well as local repair businesses whose services are used more often because of the bonus.

We will strengthen the circular economy through modern sorting facilities that recover valuable raw materials and reduce our dependence on imports. At the same time, we will accelerate the transition to a zero-emission electric fleet in waste management by prioritising approvals for the necessary charging infrastructure. We will reject new waste-incineration plants to avoid creating long-term dependence on high volumes of waste and to prioritise recycling.

Best practice

Tübingen (packaging tax): Tübingen's local packaging tax has significantly reduced single-use waste, strengthened the availability of reusable options, and generated additional revenue for municipal schemes.

BERLIN

LEARNS

**Pre-school, school,
and careers**

Berlin has everything it needs: the youngest population of any major German city, a dense network of universities and research institutions, and children of whom one third grow up multilingual. In a European metropolis, multilingualism is not an exception – it is both a reality and an advantage.

Yet there is a wide gap between potential and reality. When children start school, almost one third have a significant need for language support. More than half of Berlin's schools cannot provide the full scheduled teaching timetable. The school dropout rate is above the national average. People who need further training after years in employment face a confusing range of services without clear guidance.

This can change, but it requires an understanding of education that does not stop at the school gate. Education begins in pre-school, continues through vocational training and university, and does not end with a person's first job. A metropolis such as Berlin can remain socially fair, economically strong, and innovative only when it makes full use of the potential of everyone who lives here. Leaving talent unused weakens not only individual lives but the ability of the whole city as a whole to take action.

Berlin learns when parents can find a reliable pre-school place close to home and every child receives the support they need from the outset. This requires trained staff with good working conditions, multidisciplinary teams, and targeted support for language skills and multilingualism. This is how we provide every child with a reliable start, regardless of the neighbourhood in which they grow up.

Berlin learns when schools do more than teach subject content and prepare pupils well for life. This requires interdisciplinary teams, modern equipment, and comprehensive careers guidance for life after school. This is how we create schools that young people enjoy attending.

Berlin learns when the transition from school to vocational training or university is not a lottery. This requires early careers guidance, stronger dual vocational training with social protection, and open doors for everyone who wants to change direction. This is how we create prospects for everyone.

Berlin learns when its universities attract and retain the brightest minds in Europe. This requires reliable core funding, transparent career paths, and targeted investment in Berlin's areas of scientific strength. This is how we create a centre of science and research that lives up to its reputation.

Berlin learns when people can take a new direction even after many years in employment. This requires education and training that adapt to changing lives, with flexible formats, targeted support for career changes, and universities open to every age group. This is how we create an environment in which experience contributes to the city's future instead of being lost.

BERLIN LEARNS: WHEN EDUCATION BEGINS BEFORE SCHOOL

The foundations of educational success are built during the first years of life: language development, social skills, and the ability to learn. Yet Berlin's early-years education system has suffered for years from staff shortages, heavy workloads, and widely varying quality standards. The support a child receives currently depends on the luck of securing a particular place. When children start school, almost one third have a significant need for language support, groups are too large, and a lack of additional support makes educational work more difficult.

We will therefore act earlier and introduce binding standards. A quality-assured pre-school phase, targeted support for language skills and multilingualism, and a better prepared transition to primary school provide a reliable start for every child. Berlin also has a strength that must be used: one third of children grow up multilingual. We will develop this potential purposefully instead of merely managing it.

Set binding standards for every pre-school now

We will strengthen the quality of early-years education through reliable standards and better working conditions. The quality of early education depends decisively on the people working in kitas.

We will therefore set statutory staffing targets of one member of staff for every three children in crèches (to ca. age 3) and one for every 7.5 children in pre-school settings. We will expand training and qualification routes, structure career changes into the sector more effectively, and accelerate recognition of qualifications gained abroad.

We will strengthen multidisciplinary pre-school teams. Alongside early-years educators, they shall include professionals in social education, health, and therapeutic education. This will provide targeted support for children and families and noticeably reduces the burden on staff.

We will establish a Berlin Pre-School Council to safeguard quality over the long term. This independent body, comprising representatives of research, professional practice, and service providers, will support the development of early-years education, regularly reviews quality standards, and makes recommendations for improving the system.

Best practice

Norway (multidisciplinary teams): Government campaigns, mentoring programmes, and better working conditions have strengthened the social standing of early-years professions and attracted more skilled staff. At the same time, multidisciplinary teams and stable staff-to-child ratios help safeguard the quality of early-years education over the long term.

Make early access easy for all now

We will specifically encourage pre-school attendance from the age of three because early-years education can only have an impact when every child genuinely has access to it. Kitas in neighbourhoods with high levels of need will be prioritised when new places are created.

We will make opening hours more flexible so that parents who work shifts or irregular hours are also able to find reliable childcare. We will strengthen physical activity and creative learning as part of everyday pre-school life. Language support will be provided where families can already be found – at pre-school, rather than as an additional appointment elsewhere. We will support innovative and nature-based educational approaches that demonstrably promote children’s cognitive, social, and physical development.

Make pre-school transition phase compulsory now

We will introduce a compulsory, quality-assured pre-school phase from the age of five, with targeted development of language, social, and cognitive foundations. We will make language assessments compulsory at the age of four and link them to targeted support delivered by qualified language teachers. Kitas and primary schools will work together through shared support planning and regular communication. This will demonstrably help to reduce educational inequalities at an early stage.

Best practice

France (compulsory pre-school from the age of three): France introduced a statutory pre-school requirement from the age of three in 2019. Pre-school forms part of the public education system and is free and available throughout the country. Internationally, the measure is regarded as an example of how early-years education can promote equal opportunities.

BERLIN LEARNS: WITH SCHOOLS THAT SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE

In Berlin, educational success still depends heavily on a pupil's family background, where they live, and the particular school they attend. More than half of schools cannot provide the full scheduled curriculum. In 2023, the school dropout rate was above the national average. Teacher shortages, heavy workloads, and insufficient support push many schools permanently to their limits. At the same time, demands are growing: diverse learning groups, digital forms of learning, careers guidance, and individual support.

We will make Berlin's schools more effective and fairer. We will strengthen teaching quality, make learning progress more transparent, and make it easier to move between educational pathways. We will use multilingualism as one of Berlin's strengths and expand our European Schools in a targeted way. For schools facing the greatest pressures, we will establish a turnaround programme with clear responsibility for results. This will create a school system that enables high achievement, uses multilingualism as a strength, and gives every child a fair opportunity to develop.

Strengthen teaching quality now

We will strengthen teaching quality by investing in the people who deliver it. We will recruit teachers more strategically and retain them for longer, while expanding training and qualification routes. We will structure career changes into teaching according to need and provide educational support so that new teachers remain in the system over the long term.

We will equip schools with multidisciplinary teams. Teachers will work alongside social educators, school psychologists, and special educational needs professionals. These teams will identify learning and support needs early, allowing teachers to concentrate on teaching.

School leaders will receive clear training, greater responsibility at school level, and protected time for school development. Mentoring, coaching, and feedback will become standard throughout a person's career.

We will accelerate the renovation and modernisation of Berlin's schools and provide reliable investment in buildings, learning spaces, and up-to-date equipment.

We will expand the compulsory all-day school model as educationally meaningful learning time, rather than simply childcare after lessons end. This will give young people practical access to physical activity and healthy food.

We will introduce a multi-year turnaround programme for those schools under the greatest pressure. It will include additional staff, stronger school leadership, experienced external school-development professionals, and clear development targets with responsibility for results. This will concentrate resources where they make the greatest difference.

Inclusion will be supported by binding resources: schools with high levels of need will receive guaranteed special educational support.

Best practice

London (London Challenge): By concentrating resources consistently and promoting cooperation between schools, the London Challenge programme achieved significant improvements in performance.

Make achievements visible now

We will create transparent performance standards and better comparability. We will ensure that pupils know where they stand through clear competency goals, regular evaluation, and understandable feedback. Feedback will show individual learning progress and go beyond occasional grades.

We will identify successful approaches and spread them more rapidly. Procurement, IT, building management, and school administration will be organised centrally rather than in parallel across twelve boroughs. This will end inequality between boroughs and save resources. In return, schools will gain greater autonomy over what matters: teaching and educational development.

We will consistently unburden teachers of administrative tasks. In this way, we will combine greater school autonomy with clear responsibility for results.

Learn together for longer and foster talents now

We will support pupils learning together for longer by making the two-track secondary school system more flexible. We will simplify movement between types of school, make transition criteria more transparent, and improve advice for pupils and parents. This will create a school system that responds flexibly to individual learning pathways and allows decisions about education to be revisited at any stage. We will build on existing types of school and promote greater cooperation between them.

We will work to enable more schools to offer their own upper-secondary provision or provide access through reliable partnerships.

We will expand programmes for gifted and high-achieving pupils, developing their abilities through targeted support. We will create programmes in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, competitions, and pupil academies. Differentiated teaching is essential if every child is to receive the best possible support for their strengths.

Best practice

The Netherlands (flexible educational pathways): In the Netherlands, movement between educational pathways remains possible and is supported by targeted guidance and preparatory programmes. Progression from vocational training to university study is also built into the system and supported through bridging programmes. This shows that clear performance standards can be combined with flexible pathways and that early decisions need not be final.

Vienna (holistic school models): Vienna has expanded all-day and inclusive school models to provide better support for pupils with different learning needs. Additional language support and multidisciplinary teams help reduce educational inequalities in a diverse city.

Strengthen foundations and prepare for life now

We will provide the foundations that people need to navigate a complex world. We will strengthen the essentials of a good education: secure skills in German, mathematics, and science, as well as a broad understanding of history, culture, and society.

We will prepare pupils more thoroughly for life after school. Media literacy and a considered approach to digital technology, as well as understanding algorithms and dealing with disinformation and extremist content, belong in the school curriculum. From secondary school onwards, the critical and competent use of AI systems will become a fixed part of teaching.

We will introduce Life Skills as a compulsory subject. It will develop the knowledge young people need in terms of health and prevention for them to lead independent lives, with a focus on mental health, nutrition, and physical activity; finance and economics, including the fundamentals of taxation and pensions; relationships and care; and the critical examination of gender and social roles.

We will make empathy and social-emotional learning a fixed part of the curriculum. Empathy strengthens relationships and self-esteem, improves the learning environment, and provides effective prevention against bullying. We will develop the content alongside teachers, pupils, and experts in psychology, economics, and social work.

We will initially test the subject in 20 pilot schools. It will be taught by teams: teachers will provide educational leadership, while external specialists from psychology, financial advice, healthcare, and social work contribute practical knowledge.

We will support digital and AI-assisted tools for individual learning. They will help identify pupils' progress at an early stage and provide targeted support. Decisions affecting pupils will always be taken by people. We will support schools in testing and evaluating new teaching formats and spreading successful approaches throughout the system.

We will expand the network of State Europe Schools ("Europa-Schulen") in Berlin and increase the number of locations and language combinations. This model, unique in Europe, strengthens multilingualism as an educational objective for a European metropolis.

Best practice

New Zealand (health and wellbeing in the curriculum): Since 2020, health, mental wellbeing, and relationship education have been compulsory elements of New Zealand's school curriculum. This has demonstrably improved young people's ability to discuss sensitive issues.

Denmark (empathy as a compulsory subject): Denmark has made empathy a compulsory part of education for pupils aged six to sixteen since 1993. Each week includes a one-hour 'Klassens tid', or class hour, in which pupils discuss problems and find solutions together.

BERLIN LEARNS: WITH REAL PROSPECTS FOR TRAINING, STUDY AND WORK

The transition from school to vocational training, university, or work is a decisive step, and Berlin loses too many young people at this point. Young people leave school without clear prospects, while businesses cannot find suitable trainees. Career guidance begins too late, information is confusing, and dual vocational training remains invisible to many, despite being a central part of Berlin's economic strength.

We will make these transitions clearer and easier to understand. Career guidance will become a binding part of everyday school life, and dual vocational training will be strengthened as an educational pathway of equal value. We will introduce a Berlin Trainee Support Agency to provide affordable housing and a guarantee of a vocational training place. People who want to change direction will encounter open doors instead of bureaucratic barriers.

Give young people early experience of career pathways now

We will make more periods of practical experience in businesses a compulsory part of school. Regular work placements, practical projects, and partnerships with Berlin companies will allow pupils to have a realistic experience of different occupational fields.

We will also embed work-related practice in teaching itself, for example through applied elements in technology, economics, and cultural education. In addition, we will expand the Berlin Training and Careers Guidance Programme.

We will establish regional education networks in which schools, businesses, chambers of crafts, universities, and social service providers cooperate permanently. We will introduce early competency profiles that help pupils identify their strengths and interests over several years and take informed decisions about their next steps.

Career decisions must remain reversible. People who want to change direction will receive straightforward opportunities to move and reliable advice.

Strengthen and secure vocational training now

We will strengthen dual vocational training as an educational pathway of equal value to university study. We will create a central, easily accessible overview of vacant training places in Berlin. Digital matching tools and better advice will help pupils discover suitable routes. This will make it easier for young people and businesses to find one another.

We will improve the social conditions for trainees. We will establish a Berlin Trainee Support Agency that provides affordable housing regardless of parental income. At the same time, we will strengthen support for small and medium-sized enterprises and promote partnerships between businesses that organise training jointly.

We will introduce a guarantee of a vocational training place. Anyone unable to find a placement within a company will receive training in an inter-company training centre. This will prevent young people becoming stuck in transitional schemes and ensure every young person has a genuine prospect of gaining a qualification.

Best practice

Vienna (training guarantee): Vienna's training guarantee ensures that no young person is left without a training place. Anyone unable to find a company placement receives a guaranteed place in an inter-company training centre through the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund, leading to the same qualifications as standard vocational training. The model has been a permanent part of Vienna's labour-market policy for years and is regarded as one of Europe's most effective tools against youth unemployment.

Simplify second-chance education now

We will strengthen second-chance education and make it easier for people to change career direction. Anyone who wants to complete a qualification or make a fresh professional start should be able to do so easily in Berlin.

We will enable skilled workers with a completed vocational qualification to obtain a university entrance qualification alongside employment. We will organise advice and qualification programmes so that people can participate in these without completely interrupting their working lives.

Best practice

Austria (Berufsreifeprüfung): Austria's vocational matriculation examination gives people with completed vocational training access to university programmes. The model connects vocational and academic pathways by allowing skilled workers to obtain a university entrance qualification later on, without following the traditional school route. Examinations can be taken alongside employment and are often prepared through adult education institutions. Educational pathways therefore remain open after people enter working life, and opportunities for progression expand.

BERLIN LEARNS: WITH SCIENCE AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Berlin is one of Europe's most important centres of science and research. Universities, universities of applied sciences, leading research institutions, and a growing innovation ecosystem form one of the continent's densest research landscapes. Yet increasing student numbers, uncertain funding, and growing demands in research, knowledge transfer, and continuing education place the system under pressure. Berlin's universities face an investment backlog of €8.2 billion.

We will make Berlin an attractive centre for science and research again. Skilled professionals, researchers, and students can choose these days where in the world they work and learn. To compete, we will create reliable conditions for universities and strengthen links with business and society. We will enable learning throughout people's lives through accessible provision because science, research, and continuing education are essential to securing skilled staff, promoting innovation, and enabling social mobility.

Improve working and study conditions at universities now

We will provide Berlin's universities with reliable and predictable core funding. Long-term budget perspectives enable them to retain staff permanently, expand courses according to need, and plan research projects sustainably.

We will create additional places in fields that are vital to the future, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, teacher training, and health sciences, meeting the city's need for skilled professionals.

We will increase Berlin's attractiveness through transparent career pathways, including tenure-track routes, long-term employment prospects, and good conditions for combining family life and research.

We will identify areas in which Berlin is already internationally strong: life sciences and medical AI, climate research and energy systems, and urban technologies. We will systematically develop these into internationally visible clusters of excellence. Targeted programmes will recruit outstanding researchers from around the world. We will focus on competitive conditions, faster visa procedures, and support in finding housing and family infrastructure.

Cluster policy requires reliability. We will therefore define it explicitly as a long-term strategic responsibility extending over at least ten years.

We will strengthen advice, psychosocial support, and family-friendly infrastructure. Good study conditions are also part of an effective university system.

We will open additional routes into higher education alongside traditional grade-based admission procedures by giving greater consideration to vocational qualifications, relevant practical experience, and alternative selection methods.

We will promote Berlin as a European centre of science and research. Multilingual degree programmes, joint degrees with partner universities, and full mutual recognition of study credits will become core requirements. We will strengthen the participation of Berlin universities in European Universities Alliances and strategically expand international networks.

Best practice

London (Francis Crick Institute): Six research funders and universities, including Cancer Research UK, the Medical Research Council, UCL, Imperial, and King's, combined their biomedical activities in a shared institute instead of operating them in parallel. Long-term funding commitments from the partner organisations, targeted international recruitment from the outset, and the physical concentration of different disciplines in one location made the institute an international reference point for life sciences within a few years.

Make continuing education accessible for all now

We will introduce a Berlin Education Pass. Technological change, new occupations, and longer working lives require continuous learning. The Education Pass will provide a single route into qualification programmes and give every Berliner aged 25 or over an annual training budget for continuing education. It will be able to be used with accredited providers, making participation easier, especially for people on lower incomes.

The Education Pass will also make skills gained at work, through volunteering, or by independent study visible and allow them to be recognised through digital accreditation. We will expand part-time and digital learning formats. This will enable people to continue their education without completely interrupting employment. In the longer term, we will supplement the Education Pass with digital assistance systems that make individual learning routes more transparent and suitable programmes easier to find.

Best practice

France (Compte personnel de formation): France has created a model in which individual training entitlements build up in a personal account and remain with a person when they change jobs. This strengthens lifelong learning independently of the current employer and shows how continuing education can be organised more systematically and accessibly.

Lisbon (City of Learning): Lisbon City of Learning connects continuing education, culture, civil society, and business through a common platform. Learning opportunities become more visible and accessible, and are understood more strongly as part of urban development.

Singapore (SkillsFuture): SkillsFuture is a national initiative launched in 2015 to promote lifelong learning, professional development, and skills for all citizens. It enables people in Singapore aged 25 or over to invest actively in their education through public credits and subsidies, helping them remain competitive in a dynamic economy.

BERLIN

CREATES

**Innovation,
economic strength,
and jobs**

Berlin is one of Europe's most exciting economic centres. Nowhere else on the continent brings together science, the creative industries, technology start-ups, and industrial tradition so closely. With 5 000 start-ups, 150 000 people working in the digital economy, and world-class research at Charité and Fraunhofer, the foundations are in place. Yet this potential is too rarely translated into jobs, genuine economic value, and quality of life for everyone. Too many companies abandon their growth plans because skilled workers are unavailable and permits take too long to approve. And while the city talks about its start-up ecosystem, shops in the neighbourhood next door are forced to close because no successor can be found or commercial rents have become unaffordable.

The economy is what enables Berlin to keep its social promises: good schools, reliable public transport, and affordable housing. A city whose economy stagnates cannot keep those promises. Berlin's economy needs dependable structures, bold investment in sectors of the future, and the determination not merely to keep pace with direct competition but to lead the field.

Berlin creates when research becomes real businesses and start-ups do not merely launch but grow. This requires strong bridges between universities and business, an environment that supports growth, and a city that acts as an innovation partner itself. This is how Berlin becomes the innovation capital it deserves to be.

Berlin creates when neighbourhood economies remain vibrant and the metropolitan region grows together as a whole. This requires space for local businesses, dependable structures for business succession, and genuine cooperation between Berlin and Brandenburg. This is how we create neighbourhoods and a region where competitiveness and quality of life reinforce one another.

Berlin creates when digital tools are accessible to every business and public-sector data provides the basis for new business models. This requires clear guidance, easy entry points, and open infrastructure. This is how we create an economy in which digitalisation is part of everyday life for the many, rather than a privilege for a few.

Berlin creates when skilled workers can settle quickly and people without work find a genuine bridge into employment. This requires an administration that welcomes talent, recognises qualifications quickly, and leaves nobody permanently behind. This is how we create an economy that succeeds because everyone can contribute their potential.

BERLIN CREATES: WITH INNOVATION DIRECTLY FROM UNIVERSITIES

Berlin has an excellent university landscape, but its potential for entrepreneurial innovation and economic value remains far from fully realised. Knowledge-transfer offices at German universities are often understaffed and not geared towards commercialisation. Poor connections, too little practical focus, and insufficient opportunities to create spin-outs prevent research from becoming products.

We will build on the successful model of Berlin's eleven "Places of the Future" (Zukunftsorte), where science and business already cooperate in successful clusters, and extend this principle across the university landscape. We will create clear conditions for spin-out enterprises, strengthen links between universities and Berlin businesses, and make entrepreneurial thinking an integral part of degree programmes. This will create a talent pipeline that brings innovation directly from universities into Berlin's economy.

Connect universities and business more effectively now

We will strengthen programmes supporting university spin-out companies and cooperation between research and Berlin businesses. Research has the greatest impact when findings are transferred directly into business, society, and public institutions. Practical partnerships, joint research projects, and innovation networks will make it easier to exchange knowledge and accelerate the application of new ideas.

We will professionalise knowledge-transfer offices at Berlin's universities by bringing together teams with experience in founding companies, licensing, and business cooperation. We will increase their staffing and strengthen connections between them.

We will further develop HealthCapital and connect universities, hospitals, start-ups, and investors in a Berlin health-innovation ecosystem. The Berlin-Brandenburg region will have some of Europe's best conditions for innovation in medical technology, diagnostics, and biotechnology, with Charité, university medicine, research institutions, and a growing health economy. This will turn research into market-ready products that reach patients as early as possible.

We will embed entrepreneurial thinking in curricula, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses, and work with universities to develop a standard framework for spin-out companies. It will provide fair conditions for the use of intellectual property and university infrastructure, as well as a fair, founder-friendly university stake in the business.

Best practice

Zurich (standardised spin-outs): ETH Zurich has developed a standard framework for spin-out companies that defines fair conditions for intellectual property, the use of infrastructure, and university shareholdings. The model is regarded as a European benchmark for founder-friendly universities.

Build a central start-up hub now

We will establish a central point of contact, or start-up hub, for founders from across the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region. It will support them from validating a business idea through to its legal incorporation. We will provide women with targeted advice on the opportunities and challenges they face as founders.

We will connect founders with venture-capital investors, family offices, experienced business angels, European funding instruments, and partners. Berlin start-ups receive support when applying for EU funding, including Horizon Europe, the European Innovation Council, and InvestEU, and when accessing markets in other EU Member States. The European single market is Berlin's greatest locational advantage.

We will create an innovation programme spanning all universities. In interdisciplinary project teams, students of technology, business, and design work with companies and start-ups on real innovation projects. This will create a talent pipeline for spin-out and high-growth companies in Berlin.

Best practice

Munich (Center for Digital Technology and Management): Munich's Center for Digital Technology and Management (CDTM) brings together students of technology, business, and design in interdisciplinary innovation projects with companies. The model has a demonstrable impact on the creation of spin-outs.

BERLIN CREATES: INNOVATION PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS A START-UP CAPITAL

Berlin has a unique starting point: a dense research landscape, a growing start-up ecosystem, and sites such as Tegel and Adlershof that are waiting to be reimaged. Yet momentum has stalled. In 2025, more venture capital flowed to the Munich region than to Berlin for the first time. The city has lost ground in the international

competition for capital and skilled workers. This is not inevitable but the result of political failures that we will correct.

We will make Berlin more attractive to young companies again. As a contracting authority, Berlin should use the latest technologies and thereby support their financing and public acceptance. We will standardise opportunities for employees to share in business success, make Berlin's growth companies attractive to venture-capital investors, and turn climate transition into an economic opportunity by providing real-world testing opportunities.

Make Berlin an anchor client now

We will make Berlin a lead customer. Rather than merely distributing grants, the city becomes the first buyer of technologies for which no established market yet exists through first-of-a-kind procurement. This will close the financing gap between prototype and series production, giving start-ups certainty for planning, and acting as a public seal of approval that makes subsequent private investment easier.

We will modernise Berlin's Public Procurement Act. Innovation criteria such as resource efficiency, scalability, and climate benefits will become decisive factors in procurement, instead of decisions being optimised solely for the lowest purchase price. This will enable forward-looking solutions.

We will establish an Innovation Clearing Office within the Senate Department for Economic Affairs. It will bridge the gap between agile start-ups and borough authorities. The office will conduct preliminary assessments, evaluate risks, and match partners so that innovative pilot projects can be integrated into public administration with legal certainty.

We will turn the city into a real-world laboratory. We will use public contracts as an instrument of industrial policy to validate local innovations for the global market.

Best practice

Singapore and Helsinki (real-world laboratories): Both cities use public procurement systematically as an instrument for innovation. Singapore tested AI applications in public spaces and subsequently scaled them up. Helsinki tested smart-city solutions in defined neighbourhoods before rolling them out city-wide.

Modernise employee participation now

We will standardise arrangements that allow employees to share in business success. This will give companies greater certainty about the tax treatment of employee shares, help them retain the brightest minds in Berlin over the long term, and enable employees to benefit from the company's success.

We will advocate a consistent application of Section 19a of the German Income Tax Act by Berlin's tax offices, setting a national example. At present, inconsistent interpretations and lengthy review processes create disproportionate costs and legal risks for young companies.

Mobilise venture capital for the growth phase now

We will fundamentally reform the conditions for venture capital. We will advocate investing more institutional capital, including from insurers and pension funds, in venture capital to close the gap in late-stage financing.

We will create a Berlin Future Fund that operates as a fund of funds and leverages private capital through co-investment models. Companies receiving support will be required to remain in Berlin and create jobs here. This will create an ecosystem that not only helps companies start but also gives high-growth scale-ups access to the capital they need to become global market leaders.

Use climate transformation as an economic opportunity now

We will support time-limited pilot projects with regulatory flexibility in which new technologies can be tested. We will create test sites for hydrogen, bidirectional charging, and decentralised energy grids. Tegel will become a green-technology hub for hydrogen and recycling technologies. Tempelhofer Feld will become a testing ground for agrivoltaics and mobile energy storage. Approaches that work are scaled up; those that do not are ended.

We will link our skills initiative directly to the needs of the climate transition. Tradespeople who installed heating systems yesterday should be able to install heat pumps today. In industrial areas such as Adlershof, we will unlock the potential of waste heat and the circular economy: shorter distances, less wasted energy, and more local economic value.

We will open Berlin's energy data to businesses, creating an innovation advantage. Berlin companies will be able to use this data to develop new services, including AI-assisted load management, smart neighbourhood solutions, and new business models for energy flexibility.

BERLIN CREATES: WITH ECONOMICALLY STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS

Berlin's neighbourhoods are under pressure. Rising commercial rents are displacing established businesses, commercial vacancies are increasing, and successors cannot be found. Too often, impersonal chains replace the small shop around the corner. Yet a vibrant local economy provides more than everyday services: it creates the neighbourhood character that defines Berlin and holds communities together.

We will develop neighbourhoods as economic areas. We will tackle vacant premises, secure business succession, and create KiezLabs: new places where local trades, founders, self-employed people, and service providers can grow together. A strong economic region is not built only in conference rooms and data centres; it lives in the restaurants, shops, and workshops of this city.

Create KiezLabs now

We will transform vacant properties and old factory buildings into KiezLabs: local innovation and start-up centres in every Berlin borough. As hybrid neighbourhood centres, they will combine co-working spaces, workshops, and event spaces under one roof, creating a platform for start-ups, self-employed people, local trades, and service providers.

We will prioritise the sustainable reuse of existing buildings rather than expensive new construction. Boroughs will select locations on the basis of data and local needs. This will create local jobs, connect founders to their neighbourhoods, and bring side streets to life for the benefit of all bricks-and-mortar retailers.

Combat vacancy now

We will map all vacant commercial premises digitally so that boroughs, owners, and potential users know what is available and where. We will issue building permits more quickly and simplify changes of use, for example from commercial to cultural purposes. Temporary uses will be subject to significantly fewer requirements so that spaces can easily serve for a limited period as studios, gyms, or repair cafés.

Secure business succession now

We will strengthen the Berlin Business Succession Centre as the main point of contact and develop it into a genuine one-stop shop that supports both outgoing and incoming owners throughout the process. Almost every second Berlin company is considering an imminent handover, and more than 20% are now considering closure instead of succession.

When these businesses close, jobs, vocational training places, and local services disappear, particularly in hospitality, retail, and the skilled trades. We will simplify approval procedures for business takeovers and assess temporary protection of existing operations so that successors are not confronted on their first day with requirements for structural alterations. We will provide reduced-interest succession loans through IBB so that takeovers do not fail because collateral is unavailable.

Best practice

Rathenow (tackling vacant premises): The town aims to reduce structural vacancy to zero by 2035 through the renovation of older buildings, traffic calming, more green spaces, and cultural activities in the town centre. Crucially, the town works across party and professional boundaries, involving citizens, investors, and retailers from the outset.

BERLIN CREATES: TOGETHER WITH BRANDENBURG

Berlin and Brandenburg already form a shared region in which people live and businesses operate. The two states complement one another: Berlin contributes density, research, and an international profile, while Brandenburg contributes space, industrial strength, and security of supply. Together, they form a metropolitan region that can compete internationally only by acting as one. Yet planning, approvals, and infrastructure development still too often proceed alongside one another rather than jointly.

We will make Berlin and Brandenburg a shared region of the future by treating the metropolis and its surrounding area as a single economic area and place to live. This means a shared economic policy, effective planning and delivery of housing and infrastructure projects, and mobility that makes commuting and logistics reliable and convenient. This will create more growth, affordable land, effective infrastructure, and security of supply, while making the shared capital region more liveable and competitive.

Plan land jointly now

We will jointly designate, develop, and provide services for commercial land, guided by the needs of industrial and medium-sized businesses and residents. Together with Berlin's "Places of the Future" and the university landscapes of Berlin and Brandenburg, we will create the conditions for spin-out companies to obtain suitable commercial space quickly and build future-ready clusters.

Shape mobility jointly now

We will consistently implement the i2030 project to improve the region's rail network. This requires continuous multi-year funding, a central management unit with genuine decision-making powers, and transparent, publicly accessible milestones for every corridor. The same approach will apply to other transport projects that create a seamless public-transport network for Berlin and Brandenburg.

We will maintain mobility during construction. A jointly coordinated overall plan covers line closures, replacement services, and diversions. On the most important commuter routes, we will establish express buses and mobility hubs with Park & Ride and Bike & Ride facilities, and close gaps in feeder services.

Anchor joint planning institutionally now

We will deepen institutional planning and decision-making with the State of Brandenburg through joint bodies, daily cooperation between the ministries involved, and joint cabinet meetings. At the administrative level, we will establish a shared coordination unit for projects of the future. It will accelerate procedures without undermining the responsibilities of either state or their municipalities. The cities, rural districts, and municipalities affected are involved early and on a binding basis in prioritisation, planning, and delivery.

Together with Brandenburg, we will draw up a list of the 20 most important projects covering housing, transport, electricity and heat, water, and commercial land, with clearly defined responsibilities and milestones. A public dashboard will make progress visible to everyone.

We will prioritise projects of the future. They will receive a single administrative point of contact, or one-stop shop, that handles all administrative matters in a coordinated way. When land is planned and used jointly, we will ensure a fair distribution of property-tax and business-tax revenue. Being part of the future region must benefit everyone involved.

We will create consistent rules wherever the state boundary causes unnecessary friction in everyday life, for example at gateways such as Berlin Brandenburg Airport, for intermunicipal infrastructure, and at interfaces between data systems and procedures.

Develop the Oder region as a European growth area now

The Oder region between Berlin, Brandenburg, and Poland is Berlin's gateway to Eastern Europe. We will use the European fundamental freedoms to develop it as a cross-border economic region. We will prioritise projects that strengthen commuter and freight transport and develop the regional economic structure. To achieve this, we will establish regular meetings involving decision-makers from Berlin and Brandenburg, the municipalities concerned, Polish voivodeships, and business.

Best practice

Scandinavia (Øresund Committee): The Øresund Committee brings Danish and Swedish regions together on a shared political platform with coordinated priorities for growth, employment, and infrastructure.

Rotterdam - The Hague Metropolitan Area (MRDH): The metropolitan region pools municipal capacity in a compact organisation that adopts a shared strategic agenda every four years, with a particular focus on mobility and economic development.

BERLIN CREATES: PRODUCTIVITY, SERVICE QUALITY AND PARTICIPATION WITH AI IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Artificial intelligence makes everyday work easier for businesses. Yet little of this promise of greater productivity has reached small companies. Tradespeople or restaurant owners who want to become more digital are often left on their own: the range of options is confusing, barriers to entry are high, and costs are difficult to estimate. The greatest obstacles to adopting AI are the fear of being overwhelmed and uncertainty about risks, incorrect decisions, and legal responsibilities.

We will make AI accessible, affordable, and safe for Berlin businesses. We will create clear standards so that companies know which solutions genuinely work, provide affordable financing, and connect businesses so that they can learn from one another.

Make AI attractive and safe for all now

Together with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, chambers of skilled crafts, and industry associations, we will define sector-specific minimum standards for AI and digitalisation solutions, including till systems, accounting, appointment scheduling, marketing, and applications to public authorities. Alongside functionality, these standards will cover data protection, transparency, non-discrimination, and resilience

against errors or manipulation. We will list providers that meet the standards and obtain certification on a public platform.

We will reward businesses that demonstrably introduce certified and responsibly designed digital processes through faster approvals, simpler reporting requirements, and preferential digital application routes. Businesses that work digitally should be treated digitally.

Best practice

Denmark (SMV:Digital): Since 2018, the state-coordinated SMV:Digital programme has supported more than 7,000 digitalisation projects by small and medium-sized enterprises. The state does not build software; it finances advice from certified private providers and investment grants for technology. Regional business centres help companies choose suitable solutions.

Make AI affordable now

Through the IBB (Investitionsbank Berlin), we will provide significantly reduced-cost financing for certified AI and digitalisation solutions. Businesses will receive low-interest loans with repayment grants of up to 40%, helping investments pay off more quickly. We will share the risk: the company takes a commercial decision, while the state assumes part of the risk of default. This will create a market in which businesses invest purposefully in their own progress.

Best practice

Germany (KfW ERP loan): KfW's Digitalisation and Innovation Loan provides low-interest finance specifically for digitalisation and AI adoption by small and medium-sized enterprises, with a repayment grant available since 2025. KfW assumes part of the risk of default, while the company takes the commercial decision.

Make AI tangible in Berlin now

Together with the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Berlin Chamber of Skilled Crafts, and industry associations, we will launch a permanent quarterly series of events: the Berlin AI Experience Days. Berlin businesses, borough digital officers, and IT managers from the Senate departments will share their practical experience of AI. This transparency will send a clear message: AI is a shared learning process in which the whole city participates.

We will document every practical example presented and publish it on a platform as the “Berlin AI Experience Library”, organised by sector, company size, and solution used. Every business will be able to see how a comparable company introduced AI, what risks arose, and how they were resolved.

Best practice

Germany (Mittelstand-Digital Centre): The nationwide Mittelstand-Digital Centre network supports businesses, including skilled-trade companies, through free twelve-month workshops on introducing AI. More than 900 businesses have participated. The format is based on peer learning: companies learn from other companies, supported by AI trainers and advisers from the chambers of skilled crafts.

Make open data usable for all now

We will require all Senate departments and state-owned companies to make their non-personal data accessible through a central data platform. We will use a tiered licensing model that makes data available both as a public good through aggregated, anonymised datasets and as a source of revenue for Berlin through commercial applications, real-time data, and high-resolution datasets.

We will make this data platform the basis for innovation in every area of life. Open education data will enable tailored learning services and apps that inform parents in real time about available pre-school places. Open environmental data will help people with allergies, older people, and families plan their daily lives. Open transport and energy data will provide the foundation for intelligent mobility solutions and new business models in energy flexibility and logistics. Open commercial data will help founders evaluate locations and identify market potential.

We will create a Berlin research-data platform that makes data accessible to start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, and other researchers wherever data-protection law allows. At the same time, it will set clear standards for secure use, ethical research, and responsible AI development. Businesses that build on Berlin research data will thereby gain an innovation advantage that other cities will first have to catch up with.

Best practice

Barcelona (open data as an economic ecosystem): The city has turned open data into an economic ecosystem. Its data has been used to build mobility apps, environmental monitoring services, and economic analysis tools.

Helsinki (the city as an open-data platform): All non-personal data is public by default. In 2021, 5,500 families received automated suggestions for pre-school places by text message, and 90% accepted. The city follows a simple philosophy: rather than inventing everything itself, it enables others to build on its data.

BERLIN CREATES: WITH ATTRACTIVE CONDITIONS FOR SKILLED WORKERS

Berlin's economy is growing, but the shortage of skilled workers is placing a structural brake on it. Around 45 000 positions are already unfilled. By 2035, more than 530 000 jobs will need to be filled, and without decisive action, more than 163 000 could remain vacant permanently. This threatens a loss of more than €50 billion in economic value. The shortage not only affects high-technology companies: public transport, hospitals, nurseries, and the skilled trades all lack the people who keep the city running.

We will tackle the shortage of skilled workers actively. We will create a fast, digital immigration authority that welcomes skilled workers. We will implement a rigorous system for recognising foreign qualifications and establish a genuine Welcome Centre as a central point of contact. Securing skilled workers will strengthen Berlin as a business location and provide the foundation for a diverse city that works for everyone.

Accelerate application procedures now

We will modernise the State Office for Immigration (LEA). We will create fully digital application procedures and, in the short term, strengthen the B1-B4 skilled-worker units in a targeted way to address bottlenecks quickly. This will halve processing times within a parliamentary term and give international talent faster access to Berlin's labour market.

Best practice

Denmark (SIRI): Denmark's SIRI immigration authority brings together all residence and work permits for international skilled workers in a central digital service. Employers can begin applications before an employee enters the country, significantly shortening the time before their first working day. Denmark processes skilled-worker visas in under 30 days and is regarded across Europe as a benchmark for employer-friendly immigration procedures.

Accelerate and digitalise recognition of qualifications now

We will create digital interfaces between the State Office for Immigration, professional chambers, and businesses. This will allow recognition and residence procedures to run in parallel rather than one after the other. We will establish binding processing deadlines for shortage occupations in care, IT, and the skilled trades.

We will create the "Employment Integration Pass", a digital record of competencies that makes qualifications immediately visible according to European standards and reduces duplicate assessments.

Best practice

Austria (berufsanerkennung.at): The central portal, berufsanerkennung.at, brings together every procedure for recognising foreign qualifications in a single digital service. Applicants are directed straight to the responsible authority and all required documents and procedural costs are listed transparently.

Build Welcome Centres now

We will develop the existing Business Immigration Service into a genuine Welcome Centre. It will bring administrative procedures together with established Berlin programmes: Arrivo Berlin for advice and placement, InVork for skilled tradespeople from abroad, and TalentsBridge, an EU-wide preparatory programme that prepares skilled workers for working life in Berlin, both professionally and in terms language skills, while they are still in their country of origin and connects them directly with businesses.

Best practice

Amsterdam (IN Amsterdam): Since 2008, IN Amsterdam has brought all administrative procedures for international skilled workers together in one place. Residence permits, municipal registration, and tax numbers are completed in a single appointment. More than 850 international companies use the service, and over 10 000 skilled workers have registered there.

Retain Berlin's talent now

We will promote company housing and trainee accommodation for shortage occupations through state-owned housing companies, prioritise nursery places for skilled workers in critical sectors, and strengthen Erasmus+ within the dual vocational-training system.

Best practice

Munich (housing for trainees): Munich's AzubiWerk creates affordable housing for trainees in cooperation with municipal housing companies, with monthly rents including utilities of around €300, far below the Munich market average. The project was initiated by the SPD/Volt group on Munich City Council.

Qualify Berliners for the economy of tomorrow now

We will create targeted qualification programmes for Berlin jobseekers and career changers in the areas where Berlin's economy is growing most strongly, including the digital economy and climate technologies. Together with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, job centres, and Berlin technology companies, we will develop compact, practical programmes that make entry into these sectors possible even without a traditional university degree.

We will also include experienced skilled workers. Rather than encouraging them to leave through severance packages, partial retirement, or early retirement, we will retain them in the labour market through continuous qualification programmes and preserve their valuable experience.

BERLIN CREATES: WITH PATHWAYS OUT OF STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT

At more than 10%, Berlin has one of Germany's highest unemployment rates, around one and a half times the national average. Long-term unemployment reached a new high of more than 70 000 people in 2025. People under the age of 25 and people with a migrant background are particularly affected.

We will leave no-one behind. We will create accessible employment opportunities that help people move step by step out of long-term unemployment, as well as modular qualification programmes that offer a practical route into a new career. We will also provide young unemployed people with targeted support, concrete opportunities, and guidance.

Build a social labour market now

We will support jobs for people experiencing long-term unemployment wherever there is genuine need: in social infrastructure, neighbourhood management, the maintenance of green spaces, and local services. We will make full use of the available federal funding for the social labour market under Section 16i of Book II of the Social Code and supplement it strategically with state funding.

Best practice

France (Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée): The programme provides people experiencing long-term unemployment with permanent jobs in specially established public-benefit enterprises. The jobs pay the minimum wage, are tailored to individual skills and preferences, and provide locally needed services that the market does not supply.

Enable modular qualification now

We will support modular partial qualifications that reflect people's individual circumstances and lead step by step to a recognised qualification. We will work to ensure that job centres actively use and promote the MY-TQ instrument, including the TQplus version with integrated language training for people with a migrant background.

Our KiezLabs will add a practical testing ground. In workshops, repair centres, and local service businesses, people will be able to gain initial work experience in an accessible way and without a vocational qualification before entering the regular labour market.

Combat youth unemployment now

We will support Berlin providers that follow the example of Munich-based non-profit organisation, Joblinge, offering six-month programmes that combine coaching, practical experience in companies, and personal mentoring. Many young people struggle because they lack guidance and networks, and because the transition from school to work leaves too many on their own when their families cannot provide support.

For young refugees and people with a migrant background, we will supplement the programme with occupation-specific language support based on Joblinge's "Kompass" approach. We will create a Berlin guarantee of a vocational training place modelled on Vienna. Anyone who cannot find a company-based training place will not fall through the cracks but instead receive a guaranteed place in an inter-company training centre.

Best practice

Munich (Joblinge): The non-profit social enterprise Joblinge supports unemployed young people facing difficult starting conditions into vocational training and work over six months. The programme combines practical experience in partner companies, personal one-to-one coaching, and voluntary one-to-one mentoring. More than 80% of participants enter working life, including many previously regarded as particularly difficult to place.

BERLIN

PROTECTS

**Safety, health,
and cohesion**

Berlin is a city where people from different backgrounds live together, stand up for one another, and build new things. Neighbours get involved, sports clubs connect entire neighbourhoods, and people bring an open society to life every day. This coexistence is one of Berlin's greatest strengths.

Yet the gaps are visible in everyday life. People feel unsafe in public spaces, struggle to access healthcare, or increasingly experience loneliness and social tension. Crises such as the pandemic, summer heatwaves, and attacks on critical infrastructure show how vulnerable a modern metropolis can be when its structures are unprepared.

Protection by the state and freedom are not opposites. A city that genuinely protects its people gives them something in return: the space to shape their own lives independently. Protection therefore means more than a police presence. It means safe streets and digital spaces, rapid help in emergencies, accessible healthcare, and neighbourhoods where people feel that they belong.

Berlin protects when prevention begins early, victims receive effective support quickly, and everyone feels safe in public spaces. This requires a well-trained police service, interdisciplinary teams, and specialised protection services, particularly for children and people who experience discrimination. This is how we create a security policy that protects everyone's freedom.

Berlin protects when the state remains capable of acting during crises. This requires resilient infrastructure and a population that can rely on rapid assistance. This is how we create a city that is prepared before crises occur.

Berlin protects when people can find help quickly and close to home in the event of illness, an accident, or the need for care. This requires neighbourhood health centres, targeted support for different groups, and urban development that considers health from the outset. This is how we create healthcare that reaches everyone.

Berlin protects when people meet one another, stand up for one another, and shape their city together. This requires meeting places in every neighbourhood, as well as sport and physical-activity programmes that are genuinely open to everyone. This is how we create a Berlin that connects rather than divides, and where diversity results in genuine community.

BERLIN PROTECTS: WITH PREVENTION, MODERN POLICING, AND CRISIS PREPAREDNESS

Berlin's security situation has deteriorated in several areas. The number of assaults is rising. Violence within relationships and families, attacks by youth groups, and attacks on police officers and queer people are increasing, while the clearance rate (i.e. how many crimes are solved) remains below 50%. The police and emergency services work under intense pressure, with sickness absence, overtime, and insufficient staffing shaping everyday operations. In addition, Berlin is barely prepared for crises. Operational shelters are lacking, and infrastructure is vulnerable.

We will pursue a security policy that works: effective prevention, determined law enforcement, safe public spaces, and dependable protection for victims. At the same time, we will make Berlin resilient in a crisis, with operational emergency infrastructure and a population that can rely on rapid assistance.

Act early and prevent crime now

We will support young people who are at risk or have already committed offences, intervening early to prevent escalation and prevent crime rather than merely responding to it. We will strengthen schools, street-based social work, youth services, and cooperation with the police and public-order services. We will specifically encourage men to enter social and psychological professions so that they can act as role models, support young offenders, and show them alternative paths.

We will expand exit programmes and rehabilitation measures. These reduce the risk of people returning to radicalisation, addiction, or mental-health crises, and make social reintegration easier.

We will implement Berlin's state strategy for queer safety and against anti-queer hostility, as well as the state strategy against right-wing extremism, racism, and antisemitism, consistently, and develop their preventive elements further. We will strengthen early support and prevention services in boroughs and digital spaces, tackling discrimination, online hate, and emerging violence before they escalate, and closing gaps in everyday support.

We will promote innovation in the child-protection system by expanding flexible budgets for borough youth offices, allowing them to fund local preventive projects without unnecessary bureaucracy. These projects will be accompanied by academic evaluation and assessed against clear impact criteria, such as fewer incidents that endanger children's welfare and greater family stability. Successful approaches will receive long-term funding and be rolled-out across Berlin, turning local solutions into reliable standards.

Best practice

United Kingdom (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs, or MASH): Inter-agency child-protection teams bring information from youth services, the police, schools, and health services together in one central location. They assess risks jointly and coordinate action. This enables faster, coordinated decisions and reduces the loss of information in child protection cases.

Protect victims more effectively now

We will strengthen immediate protection for victims. We will expand regional contact points that provide psychological care, legal advice, and emergency assistance, particularly to victims of extremist, racist, and anti-queer violence. Berlin's existing LGBTQIA* point of contact officers at the public prosecutor's office have already shown how outreach within communities and staff awareness can be improved.

We will protect women (including trans women, as well as intersex and non-binary people) who have experienced domestic violence from further harm. We will require perpetrators to wear electronic tags that prevent them from approaching their victims unnoticed. We will expand Berlin's women's-refuge infrastructure according to need and create at least 330 additional refuge places, fully meeting the requirements of the Istanbul Convention and providing every woman and child in need of protection with a safe place of refuge in Berlin.

We will address digital sexual violence as a distinct form of violence. We will secure permanent public funding for existing advice services such as HateAid and LARA Berlin, enabling those affected to receive initial legal advice, help removing content, and psychological support without waiting times. Within the State Criminal Police Office, we will establish a specialised investigation unit for digital sexual violence against individuals.

We will improve cooperation between public authorities to identify stalking and violence early and prevent further offences. We will consistently implement the already adopted Framework for Risk Management and Multi-Institutional Case Conferences. We will systematically recognise children in households affected by domestic violence as victims and require cases to be reported to youth welfare offices. Digital reporting channels that comply with data-protection law will ensure that relevant information arrives quickly and reliably.

We will strengthen and reorganise the Regional Children's Social Services teams (Regionale Sozialpädagogische Dienste) within the youth welfare offices. Child protection will be clearly separated from general advice and support tasks and

brought together in specialised, interdisciplinary teams. This specialisation will raise professional standards, speed up decisions, and improve risk assessment. It also creates more capacity for advice, relationship-building, and the lasting stabilisation of families.

We will expand the Childhood House approach at Charité, which supports children and young people who have experienced violence, to further locations. We will increase capacity in crisis and residential facilities according to need. In an emergency, every child must quickly receive a safe and suitable place, as close to home as possible, so that social relationships and stability at school can be maintained.

Best practice

Spain (electronic tags): Spain requires convicted perpetrators of domestic violence to wear an electronic tag that automatically triggers an alarm and intervention by the authorities when they approach the victim. Since the tags were introduced, no femicide has occurred while this monitoring was active. On average, between 4,500 and 4,800 tags are in use each year.

United Kingdom (MARACs): Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences bring together professionals from the police, healthcare, housing, child protection, and other public authorities to protect victims of domestic violence who face the highest risk. Up to 60% of victims report no further violence after a MARAC intervention. For every £1 spent, an estimated £6 in public funding is saved.

Iceland and Sweden (Barnahus model): The Barnahus model brings the police, justice system, youth services, and medicine together under one roof to provide child-friendly procedures in cases of violence and abuse. Children are interviewed only once and receive medical and psychological support at the same time. This reduces distress and substantially improves investigation and protection.

Strengthen and modernise the police and justice system now

We will improve staffing in the police and justice system to increase the visible police presence and ensure that offences are consistently investigated and punished. We will divide responsibilities sensibly between the police and public-order services so that police officers can focus on their core duties.

We will use modern software and adjust the geographical responsibilities of police sections so that response times fall measurably. We will also connect control rooms digitally, allowing bottlenecks to be identified sooner and police resources to be deployed where they are needed. We will modernise the police with digital tools

that support day-to-day work, including electronic files, digital recording of parking offences, and AI assistance when drafting incident reports.

At the same time, clear data-protection rules will apply to AI: short retention periods, no real-time biometric surveillance, and human oversight at all times. This will increase the efficiency and likelihood of successful law enforcement while protecting Berliners' fundamental rights, preventing discrimination, and preserving transparency in decision-making.

Best practice

Frankfurt am Main (clear division of responsibilities): Frankfurt am Main has divided responsibilities more clearly between the police and the public-order office and increased staffing in the latter, allowing police officers to be deployed more effectively for their core duties.

Improve training and strengthen responsibility now

We will introduce better selection procedures, smaller training groups, and mandatory continuing education, sustainably raising the standard of police training. Cooperation with external institutions, mentoring programmes, values-based education, and independent quality assurance will improve training standards.

We will require police officers to attend regular training on right-wing extremism, sexism, racism, and discrimination. We will train officers to interact appropriately with particularly vulnerable groups, including people with mental-health conditions or language barriers. This will prevent unintended and unnecessary escalation.

We will make the right to sexual self-determination and sexual-offences law part of legal training in Berlin. We will strengthen Berlin's Commissioner for Citizens and the Police as an anonymous reporting body by giving the commissioner access to investigation files and independent investigative powers. This will make it possible to identify and sanction right-wing extremist, anti-queer, racist, or sexist statements made in the course of duty.

We will commission a study of group-based hatred, potential racial profiling, and extremism in Berlin. The study will regularly evaluate police data and use samples to examine how identity checks are conducted. We will derive concrete measures from its findings.

Make public spaces safer now

We will develop a plan that allows everyone to feel safe in green spaces, places for physical activity, and public spaces more generally, including through better lighting and greenery. We will introduce accessible digital reporting systems through which citizens can mark unsafe locations anonymously and receive information about crime clearance statistics and fines that have been imposed.

We will support the use of body-worn cameras in Berlin because they increase transparency and can help de-escalate situations. However, officers will be required to activate cameras during operations, all deployed personnel will be equipped with them, and operational officers will not be able to delete the data themselves.

We will use European companies for investigation software. Their solutions protect data and avoid costly dependencies. Our principle is clear: public safety requires European digital sovereignty.

We will advocate a comprehensive ban on private fireworks. This will protect emergency-service personnel, reduce the risk of injuries in public spaces, and reduce distress to animals. We will accompany the ban with public-information campaigns and support the operational plans of the fire brigade, emergency medical services, and police.

Combat organised crime decisively now

We will develop police decision-support systems in Berlin, including systems such as the Federal Criminal Police Office's Radar tool, to protect the public more effectively from organised crime. We will target the networks behind criminal systems as a whole and cooperate with European and international authorities and partners.

We will prevent organised crime in Berlin from hiding behind concealed assets. At the federal level, we will therefore advocate reversing the burden of proof in appropriate cases. We will specifically expand Berlin's capacity to combat financial crime through substantially more specialist staff, rapid reporting from customs authorities to the local police, modern data-analysis technology, a consistent and effective IT infrastructure, and clear responsibilities for complex cases and tax fraud.

Best practice

Italy (reversal of the burden of proof): In Italy, people suspected of organised crime must demonstrate that their assets were acquired legally when there is a clear discrepancy between their lawful income and their actual wealth. Assets are confiscated when they cannot do so.

Expand civil protection strategically now

We will advocate a European, smart early-warning system and a well-designed protection plan tailored to Berlin, involving all relevant public authorities. We will create a crisis-resilient administration. We will continue expanding infrastructure for disasters, including shelters and emergency stores, comprehensive Cell Broadcast coverage, and stronger integration into the civil-protection security structures of the Länder, the federal government, and the EU.

We will ensure this through the flexible operational readiness of civil-protection hubs in all twelve boroughs. We will also organise regular joint exercises for the various emergency services and the public. We will protect particularly vulnerable groups, including people in need of care, through inclusive disaster-management arrangements.

We will invest in a resilient electricity grid rather than relying only on camera surveillance of critical electricity infrastructure. We will apply the N-1 principle as a binding standard at every grid level, ensuring that the network remains operational when a component fails. We will also create mechanisms for components to be replaced and supply restored more quickly. This will prevent prolonged disruption and proactively protect infrastructure against accidents, natural events, and sabotage.

BERLIN PROTECTS: WITH HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

Berlin's healthcare system has serious gaps. Around 60 000 Berliners have no regular access to healthcare and therefore place additional pressure on accident and emergency departments. Around 450 000 people live with depression, while mental-health services fall far short of need. There is also insufficient specialist advice and treatment for post-infectious conditions. Around 80% of the 212 000 people in need of care are supported at home by relatives, often without adequate assistance. Drug-related overdoses are increasing, while noise, heat, and high living costs further increase the risk of illness.

We will make Berlin a city that reaches people effectively with support for their health needs. We will establish neighbourhood health centres and expand services for mental-health conditions. We will provide greater support to family carers and make drug use safer. Through Health in All Policies, we will make health a cross-cutting responsibility in every policy area.

Expand health centres now

We will bring healthcare close to people in their neighbourhoods by expanding the state programme for integrated health centres, particularly in structurally disadvantaged boroughs and outer areas. We will develop health centres into accessible 'houses of support', where multidisciplinary teams work together under one roof. These teams will prevent illness, strengthen health literacy, and reduce the long-term costs of avoidable chronic conditions. We will also include midwives and psychological services to provide care close to home.

Every health centre will include a health kiosk for older people, bringing care advice, therapy, and social support together in one place. Extended opening hours will reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments and provide urgent care within each borough. The goal is clear: every Berliner should receive medical care nearby.

In particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods, we will introduce health kiosks and health guides providing accessible, multilingual advice and strengthening health literacy at every stage of life. This will help people who face the greatest barriers develop the skills they need to navigate nutrition and healthcare, and support them in taking action for their own health through physical activity and a healthy diet.

We will develop the Baby Berlin app into a comprehensive Family Health app, and will also offer this through health centres and kiosks. It will help young families and single parents to build health literacy through multilingual information, practical checklists, straightforward access to support, and assistance with applications.

We will develop a Senior Berlin app providing an overview of every support service for older people, initially in healthcare and later expanded to education and voluntary opportunities. People aged over 70 will be able to request a health guide who acts as a consistent point of contact and helps them navigate the healthcare system.

We will support boroughs in joining the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. The aim is to learn from other European cities about age-friendly, inclusive design of the social environment and urban space.

We will give qualified professionals in our health centres greater responsibility for providing care and ensure that they receive practical continuing education. This will provide a constructive response to the shortage of skilled workers caused

by demographic change. We will use secure platforms for video consultations, telemonitoring, and data exchange, integrating electronic patient records into these platforms.

Best practice

Berlin and Hamburg (health kiosks): The GeKo neighbourhood health centre in Neukölln follows WHO guidance and brings a medical practice, social advice, a café, and neighbourhood projects together under one roof. It is currently supported by the Innovation Fund through the Navigation pilot project. The health-kiosk pilot provides accessible, multilingual health advice in an underserved and socially disadvantaged neighbourhood.

Helsinki (Healthy Ageing): Healthy Ageing describes a lifelong approach, pursued consistently by cities including Helsinki, that enables all residents to grow older in the best possible health. At municipal level, this means promoting the factors that support healthy ageing systematically in every area of life, across policy fields, and throughout the lifespan.

Strengthen Berlin as a centre of health innovation now

We will connect healthcare reform with Berlin's innovation ecosystem. Health centres become testing grounds for digital diagnostics, telemedicine, and new models of care. With Charité, the Berlin Institute of Health, and more than 30 life-sciences research institutions, Berlin benefits from a unique starting position for success. We will accelerate clinical trials through a central ethics committee for Berlin-Brandenburg, establish regulatory sandboxes for medical devices, and connect HealthCapital directly with municipal healthcare provision.

Give people with post-infectious conditions a chance of recovery now

We will build on existing initiatives such as PAIS-Care Berlin, CureME/CFS, and the Long COVID network of the Berlin Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, establishing interdisciplinary contact points in every borough in cooperation with health centres. They will provide diagnosis and treatment close to home, in line with the latest research, including telemedicine, home visits, and specialised palliative care.

This will create close links between research, care, and social protection for post-infectious conditions such as ME/CFS, Long COVID, Post-COVID Syndrome, and post-vaccination syndrome. We will make Berlin a model region for transferring research into practice. We will support projects that link clinical research and care networks, with the active involvement of patient organisations, to build a connected, learning healthcare system for people affected by ME/CFS and Long COVID.

We will ensure that specialised services are accessible regardless of insurance status. Through awareness-raising and continuing education in medicine, care, and public administration, we will ensure that conditions such as ME/CFS and Long COVID are recognised and correctly considered in social-security decisions, including assessments of care needs, reduced-earning-capacity pensions, and degrees of disability. This will strengthen participation, reduce stigma, and give those affected greater security.

Support family caregivers now

We value the care provided by relatives and will give family caregivers targeted support. We will expand existing digital platforms that make daily life noticeably easier, including functions such as a chatbot that assists with applications and an online community for mutual support. We will accelerate digital application services through the State Centre of Excellence 4.0, substantially reducing the administrative burden on unpaid carers.

We will help family caregivers avoid falling behind in education or employment because of their caring responsibilities. Children and young people who provide care will receive flexible school deadlines, hybrid participation options, or authorised absence during acute care crises. Caregivers in employment will be able to take up to one week of leave without a medical certificate during an acute care crisis. We will establish a 24-hour hotline that supports family caregivers through emergencies and with their questions around the clock.

Best practice

Scotland (local contact points): Statutory local contact points in Scotland provide family caregivers with individual support, psychosocial advice, and access to respite services.

Expand support for people with mental-health problems now

We will expand the social-psychiatric services provided by the boroughs. We will involve people with lived experience in designing programmes, anti-stigma campaigns, and initiatives to strengthen mental-health literacy in schools, clubs, and workplaces. We will introduce local Mental Health Days and collect regular data on mental health in Berlin.

We will establish mental-health coaches in schools and youth centres and embed mental health in the curriculum. We will create meeting places that combat loneliness, including multigenerational cafés and neighbourhood centres, benefiting older people, children, and young people in particular. We will provide women with free information about postnatal depression after giving birth. We will support single parents through intensive advice and childcare services.

We will expand the existing cooperation between the police and the Berlin Crisis Service into interdisciplinary mobile street-triage teams. This will connect people experiencing mental-health crises to the healthcare system at an early stage, reduce compulsory admissions, and improve the quality of police operations involving vulnerable groups. It will be possible to avoid escalation, arrange suitable support more rapidly, and use existing outpatient services more effectively.

Teams of police officers, psychologists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses will be deployed together and trained in de-escalation and crisis intervention. Psychiatric expertise will be supplemented by the social-psychiatric service, particularly through an on-call medical service.

Best practice

Frankfurt am Main (clear division of responsibilities): Frankfurt am Main has divided responsibilities more clearly between the police and the public-order office and increased staffing in the latter, allowing police officers to be deployed more effectively for their core duties.

United Kingdom (Street Triage): Street Triage models in the United Kingdom show that joint deployments of police and mental-health professionals de-escalate crises at an early stage, reduce detention in police custody and compulsory admissions, and strengthen access to healthcare.

Provide help to people through drug policy rather than criminalising them now

We will support the expansion of free mobile drug checking. Mobile laboratories operated by Fixpunkt or Vista outside clubs can provide accurate results within a short time. Testing can save lives and reduce pressure on healthcare infrastructure.

We will create more supervised consumption rooms with reliable opening hours. We will expand diamorphine-assisted treatment and give people with drug dependencies access to sustained psychotherapeutic support. We will focus on presence, prevention, and prospects rather than repression. We will strengthen outreach social work, as well as integration and employment programmes.

We will create prevention programmes that discourage harmful patterns of consumption and provide knowledge about the history, culture, and risks of drug use. We will avoid stigmatising language.

We will advocate the general discontinuation of criminal proceedings for possession of small quantities of drugs for personal use. We plan to raise the existing thresholds so that the police and justice system can focus on dealers, organised structures, and crime that finances drug use. Specific thresholds are determined through an evidence-based process involving addiction medicine, law enforcement, and civil society.

We will support straightforward implementation of the Consumer Cannabis Act in Berlin. We will establish clear rules for approving cultivation associations and fully digital application and processing procedures.

Improve conditions for sex workers now

We will provide sexual-health centres and advice services with better funding and staffing. We will continue to offer accessible and free testing for sexually transmitted infections. PrEP and certain medical procedures will remain accessible to everyone, including people without health insurance.

We will establish a working group of professional associations, advice centres, and civil-society organisations. It will develop effective protection plans against human trafficking, forced prostitution, and crime that finances drug use, thereby improving conditions for sex workers. We will complement these measures with discreet police patrols, a review of the restricted-zone regulation, and dialogue with residents in affected neighbourhoods. This will contribute to greater safety and better working conditions.

Integrate health into all policy areas now

We will consider how every measure and every policy we implement can improve the health of people living in Berlin: Health in All Policies, or HiAP. We will strengthen the State Health Conference into a HiAP advisory council with decision-making powers that sets standards, develops implementation proposals, and makes budget recommendations to the Senate.

Prevention reduces the cost of treating avoidable and expensive chronic conditions, lowering health expenditure while preventing human suffering. We will improve residents' health through new projects promoting physical activity and road safety. We will increase wellbeing through green and blue infrastructure, including parks, urban trees, and green roofs, as well as bodies of water, fountains, and rainwater management.

We will prioritise construction projects that apply the agreed HiAP standards, allowing them to be implemented more quickly. We will use the concept of the 15-minute city and participatory decision-making to design healthy neighbourhoods.

Best practice

Utrecht (HiAP): Utrecht has implemented Health in All Policies since 2012 and sees itself as a living laboratory in which public administration, academia, businesses, and civil society jointly develop solutions for healthy, sustainable, and inclusive neighbourhoods. Participatory measures increase public support and measurably reduce health inequalities.

BERLIN PROTECTS: WITH SOCIAL CONNECTION, MOVEMENT, AND COHESION

Many Berliners feel lonely or lack places for genuine contact and support in everyday life. Community centres, libraries, youth and senior centres, and mobile community work are underfunded or threatened by cuts in many areas. Meeting places, cultural activities, and protected, safe spaces for interaction and community are particularly lacking in the outer boroughs. Many sports grounds and halls are difficult to access because of restricted opening times or inadequate accessibility.

We will shape Berlin as a city of community. Physical activity, neighbourly assistance, and protected working conditions will bring people together across social groups and thereby contribute to everyone's safety and protection. Everyone, whether children, young people, or adults, will be able to find opportunities for physical activity close to home. Sport becomes what it should be: a place for health, social contact, and cohesion. We will create more spaces for people to meet, strengthen civic engagement, and remove barriers. This will create a Berlin that connects people, and where diversity becomes genuine community.

Secure places for social connection now

We will secure the long-term future of community centres, borough libraries, and youth and senior centres, developing them into open and welcoming meeting places where people do not have to spend money. We will expand opportunities for social connection particularly in the outer boroughs, enabling everyone to meet others close to home.

We will combine the two sites of Berlin's Central and Regional Library into one, creating a single accessible and innovative meeting place that enriches the city through intelligent use of space and a strong programme of activities.

We will design public spaces such as parks, squares, and sports facilities so that people enjoy meeting there: accessible, safe, well connected, and equipped with seating and shade. Where residents actively support it, we will transform selected public parking spaces into green areas for spending time, small community gardens, or spaces for neighbourhood initiatives.

We will support queer cultural and meeting places and strengthen queer visibility in public space, including through memorials, plaques, and visible signs of recognition. We will also provide targeted support for cultural events throughout Berlin Pride Month in all twelve boroughs, including alcohol-free formats.

We will support borough volunteer agencies as volunteering holds Berlin together. Through the Berlin State Volunteer Agency, we will provide voluntary organisations with advice and training. This will give particular recognition to people who work for the benefit of others every day, often without drawing attention.

We will support projects that bring together people of different generations, backgrounds, and life experiences through cooking, gardening, sport, music, or games. We will introduce two-year funding periods for these projects.

We will expand the Digital Zebra pilot project because participation and social contact also take place in the digital world. The project supports people across Berlin with digital needs, including setting up devices and booking appointments online. We will evaluate it systematically and make it permanent throughout Berlin. We will also establish permanent digital guides in libraries and neighbourhood facilities, supporting older people in particular to access online services such as medical appointments, public administration, and communication tools.

Best practice

Helsinki (Oodi Central Library): Helsinki's Oodi Central Library is a public, non-commercial meeting place in the centre of the city. It is open to everyone free of charge and serves as a social space for learning, work, and leisure.

Make sport accessible for everyone now

We make better use of Berlin's approximately 1,200 sports locations. We consistently open school playgrounds, sports halls, parks, and green spaces after the school day, at weekends, and during holidays. A transparent online system makes it easier for clubs and initiatives to book halls or pitches, shows available capacity, and removes administrative barriers.

We will create safe spaces for physical activity, including fixed time slots in sports halls for FLINTA* (women, lesbian, intersex, non-binary, trans, agender) groups. Sports facilities are often dominated by boys and men, while girls and young women are scarcely represented.

We will create at least one accessible, inclusive physical-activity programme in every borough. For every new or renovated sports facility, we will implement the requirements of DIN 18040 on accessible construction and the guidance of the German Olympic Sports Confederation and German Disabled Sports Association.

We will expand the Education and Participation Pass. Children from low-income families receive higher subsidies, making sports clubs and swimming pools more affordable. We will support clubs that actively include migrants and refugees with grants for equipment and instructors' fees.

BERLIN PROTECTS

We will expand physical-activity programmes in nurseries and schools, including sports clubs and dedicated activity sessions, helping children develop active habits early. Schools and clubs will benefit from new partnerships and exchange programmes.

We will develop the existing Berlin bewegt sich (Berlin moves) portal into a central, city-wide platform for physical-activity programmes in public spaces. We will provide multilingual information about sports opportunities and expand programmes such as Integration through Sport.

Best practice

Vienna (Bewegt im Park): The Bewegt im Park programme in Vienna and other cities offers hundreds of free outdoor classes each year, open to people of all ages without registration.

BERLIN

PROSPERS

**The future,
resilience,
and nature**

Berlin has an opportunity: solar panels on thousands of roofs, green corridors through the city, new technologies, and an energy transition that genuinely reaches people. Berlin is large enough to set standards and innovative enough to meet them. Yet reality continues to fall short of this potential.

In summer, we overheat in our homes while shaded green spaces are lacking and asphalt stores up even more heat. During heavy rain, our basements flood because the ground cannot absorb the water. Our dependence on fossil energy costs us not only a stable and liveable climate, but also hard cash during every geopolitical crisis.

Climate action is not an agenda of sacrifice. It is an investment in the city's future. By taking bold decisions in favour of future-proof technologies, we secure cheaper energy, healthy neighbourhoods, resilient infrastructure, and nature that makes Berlin liveable. What we invest today will determine what Berlin looks like in the decades ahead.

Berlin prospers when rooftop electricity and climate-neutral district heating become affordable for everyone. This requires a solar offensive, more flexible grids, the smart transformation of the district-heating network, and a close energy partnership with Brandenburg. This is how we create an energy supply that is independent, reliable, and affordable.

Berlin prospers when buildings are modernised more quickly and affordably, and construction materials remain in circulation. This requires serial renovation, digital platforms for reusing materials, and a construction sector that treats resources as valuable assets rather than waste. This is how we create a building sector that finally meets its climate targets.

Berlin prospers when the city can withstand heat, heavy rain, and water scarcity, and regards nature not as decoration but as part of its infrastructure. This requires removing impermeable surfaces, an ambitious sponge-city programme, and green corridors for people and animals. This is how we create a city that continues to function in extreme conditions, and where nature remains a natural part of everyday life for the long term.

BERLIN PROSPERS: WITH INDEPENDENT, AFFORDABLE, AND CLIMATE-NEUTRAL ENERGY

In 2023, almost 74% of Germany's emissions resulted from burning fossil fuels and biomass to generate energy for households and businesses. More than half of Berlin's households are currently heated with gas, with natural gas supplying three quarters of Berlin's district heating, and renewable energy accounting for only 5.6% of electricity fed into the grid. This leaves Berlin dependent on expensive imports and vulnerable to price shocks.

The war in Ukraine since 2022 painfully demonstrated this, and the war in Iran only confirms it: anyone who imports energy from fossil sources pays the price of every geopolitical crisis. We will overcome this dependence and, in close cooperation with Brandenburg, make Berlin's energy and heat supply fit for the future, with a smart electricity grid based on renewable energy and a heating transition that is affordable and socially fair. We will expand solar and wind energy, particularly through citizen-energy projects for tenants, as well as large-scale heat pumps and the use of waste heat.

Generate climate-neutral electricity for Berlin now

We will gradually replace fossil-fuelled power stations within the city with renewable energy. Together with Berliner Stadtwerke, we will launch a solar offensive, with the public sector leading by example. By 2031, we will equip every technically suitable public building with solar panels, whether it is an administrative office, school, or railway station, while respecting heritage-protection requirements.

We will use car parks and land alongside motorways and railway tracks for photovoltaic installations, working closely with the federal government and the boroughs. We will make it easier for tenants and citizen-energy projects to install and operate rooftop and balcony solar systems.

We will create a Berlin Citizen Energy Act so that Berliners can participate directly in the economic success of the energy transition. We will enable financial participation in energy projects, support energy cooperatives, and simplify energy sharing within neighbourhoods. This will distribute costs fairly, keeps economic value within our city, and increase both public support and social balance.

Expand the Berlin-Brandenburg energy partnership now

We will institutionalise cooperation with the State of Brandenburg and neighbouring rural districts as a cross-border joint project that benefits both sides. Under the leadership of the Joint State Planning Department, we will coordinate the expansion of wind and solar power in Brandenburg with the gradual decommissioning of fossil-energy sources in Berlin.

We will use long-term power purchase agreements between industrial companies in Berlin, state-owned utilities, and electricity generators in Brandenburg to develop climate-neutral power rapidly, secure investment in Brandenburg, and provide stable prices in Berlin. We will prioritise cross-border electricity grids and heat-storage facilities at the interface between the two states. This will prevent wind turbines from being curtailed and transport green energy efficiently into Berlin's neighbourhoods.

Make heating climate-neutral for Berlin now

To decarbonise heating effectively, we will use a combination of scientifically tested and proven energy sources. Together with Berlin Energie und Wärme, we will revise the decarbonisation roadmap into an evidence-based timetable defining when individual power stations will be replaced by large-scale heat pumps and complementary technologies.

We will systematically convert the district-heating network to large-scale heat pumps and establish an ambitious timetable with concrete targets. River-source heat pumps will use heat from the Spree and Havel, as well as from wastewater. We will connect data centres, industry, and underground stations to district-heating networks so that their waste heat can be used for heating. Large-scale heat pumps will convert these heat sources efficiently into usable heat.

We will expand the district-heating network so that as many Berliners as possible can access affordable, climate-neutral heating. We will prioritise neighbourhoods with high heat demand and close proximity to heat sources, including data centres, geothermal sites, and industrial areas, thereby minimising network losses. We will connect designated heat-network areas rapidly to district heating and create local heat networks outside these areas, where technically and economically appropriate. We will test and support deep geothermal energy at suitable locations.

We will expand heat storage and seasonal storage to absorb peaks in demand. This will provide affordable and reliable heat even on extremely cold days, reduce the need for peak-load power stations, and lower heating costs.

We consider the existing waste-incineration capacity for residual and bulky waste sufficient and see no need to expand it. However, we will accelerate construction of

a modular, expandable biogas facility for processing organic waste. In the future, it should also be capable of operating with hydrogen to meet peaks in demand. Using non-recyclable and organic waste for energy will stabilise the system and replace fossil fuels.

Expand the electricity grid intelligently now

We will expand the electricity grid intelligently and flexibly, giving every Berliner access to affordable, green energy. We will accelerate construction of energy-storage facilities at strategic grid nodes by providing sites, granting approvals, and connecting storage to the grid quickly. On sunny days, batteries will store electricity generated on roofs or balconies and make it available for household use in the evening.

Large-scale heat pumps will use renewable electricity highly efficiently to generate heat. Complementary power-to-heat facilities will convert peaks in electricity generation directly into heat, which will be stored until households need it. The same approach will apply to waste heat from data centres, industry, and wastewater.

We will test technical and regulatory solutions for bidirectional charging. Electric-car owners should be paid when they temporarily store surplus electricity in their vehicle batteries and feed it back into the grid when demand rises.

We will promote dynamic electricity tariffs. People who use electricity intelligently when abundant wind and solar energy is available will pay less. We will therefore accelerate the installation of smart meters where they provide the greatest benefit: in households with electric cars, heat pumps, or solar panels. We will overcome barriers through advice for tenants and property owners and better cooperation between broadband providers and metering-point operators. Our goal is complete coverage for controllable loads by 2028.

Implement Berlin's Energy and Climate Protection Programme now

We will remain committed to the ambitious targets of the updated BEK 2030 and Berlin's Climate Protection and Energy Transition Act, which require a 70% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2030. We will turn the existing catalogue of measures into a genuine acceleration plan that closes the implementation gap from the current 2022-2026 period.

Annual public reporting will create transparency about implementation. We will reduce the burden on citizens and businesses through digital one-stop shops for funding and actively support the skilled trades in recruiting workers. This will finally put the heating transition and expansion of solar energy into practice. We will pursue

mobility plans that substantially reduce the high share of Berlin's climate-damaging emissions produced by transport.

Best practice

Copenhagen (integrated energy and heating transition): Around 98% of households in the Danish capital are connected to a largely climate-friendly district-heating network that increasingly uses large-scale heat pumps, waste heat, and geothermal energy. Already, 80% of district heating is CO₂-neutral, achieved by moving from coal to biomass and renewable energy. Transport is also being electrified consistently: dense charging infrastructure, affordable electricity tariffs for electric mobility, and clear municipal heat plans connect buildings, the electricity system, and mobility. Since 2005, Copenhagen has reduced its CO₂ emissions by more than 70%, while the city has grown by 20% over the same period.

BERLIN PROSPERS: WITH A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE BUILDING SECTOR

Around 40% of Germany's CO₂ emissions are attributable to the building sector, which misses its climate targets every year. This is not only about operating buildings, but also about construction itself. Of the almost seven million tonnes of waste generated in Berlin, around 4.5 million tonnes come from the construction sector. Illegal dumping of rubble and other construction waste in public spaces creates particularly high clean-up costs. In addition, only 13% of construction materials are recycled; the rest is used, for example, in roadbuilding, to fill excavations, or to cover landfill sites.

We will modernise Berlin's building stock and transform the construction sector into a circular economy. We will work to stop unnecessary demolition, require the consistent reuse of construction materials, and support straightforward modernisation. This will provide lasting relief for Berliners and make the building sector fit for the future.

Renovate buildings fairly and energy-efficiently now

We will create dependable conditions for the building sector by establishing serial renovation through type approvals for prefabricated components. We will also strengthen regional production locations, including in Brandenburg, accelerating modernisation and reducing costs.

We will establish a central advice centre for property owners and tenants. Through its expertise and targeted support, the centre will remove barriers and ensure that renovation measures are implemented efficiently.

We will promote timber and environmentally friendly construction materials to make Berlin climate-neutral. Rather than selling land to the highest bidder, we will introduce quality-based selection procedures: the proposal with the best social, environmental, and community benefits is awarded the site.

We will create a phased renovation roadmap for inefficient buildings. We will make renovation socially fair through a neighbourhood-based approach, comprehensive hardship provisions, and innovative technologies such as highly reflective insulation films. We will adapt building law so that heat-protection measures, including greenery and shading, can be implemented without unnecessary bureaucracy.

We will systematically review non-residential buildings owned by the State of Berlin, including schools and administrative offices. Where energy efficiency is inadequate, we will take immediate measures, such as optimising existing heating and ventilation systems.

Best practice

Austria (timber construction): Vorarlberg is regarded worldwide as a pioneer of modern timber construction, where simplified standards and environmental requirements support the efficient creation of housing.

The Netherlands (Energiesprong): For years, the Dutch housing sector's Energiesprong model has demonstrated how serial renovation can create climate-neutral and affordable buildings. Residential buildings are modernised within days using prefabricated façade and roof components, including efficient heating technology and insulation. Standardised solutions reduce costs, shorten construction times, and provide dependable results.

Advance smart construction cycles now

We will create a digital Re-Build platform that brings together information about buildings, materials, and their potential for reuse across Berlin. Developers, businesses, and public institutions will be able to identify reusable materials early, plan transport efficiently, and reduce costs, including by avoiding landfill charges.

We will also introduce material and building passports that provide transparency about circularity, carbon footprints, and manufacturing data. We will support urban-mining hubs as storage and distribution centres for reusable materials, making use of the city's existing resources. Berlin and Brandenburg will cooperate on this by designating free interim storage sites, as has already happened in Reinickendorf.

We will develop a CO₂-reduction roadmap for the construction sector, defining measures and opportunities for innovation together with the industry.

Best practice

Denmark (Reduction Roadmap): Denmark's Reduction Roadmap was developed by more than 630 companies, research institutes, and organisations from the construction and property sectors, which voluntarily commit to CO₂-reduction targets.

Amsterdam (circular economy): In 2020, Amsterdam became the first city in the world to make a binding commitment to a fully circular economy. Its interim target is to halve the use of new raw materials by 2030. In the construction sector alone, consistent reuse of materials could save €85 million each year.

Design conversion and deconstruction intelligently now

We will make conversion and renovation more attractive than demolition and new construction. Feasibility studies for public buildings will also consider environmental criteria, allowing conversion to receive priority more often and making it easier to use environmentally friendly materials and resource-efficient construction methods.

When demolition is unavoidable, we will initially introduce pre-deconstruction audits for public construction projects. These will examine materials systematically so that they can be preserved and prepared for reuse wherever possible. Particularly in public projects, this will reduce costs and waste and increase resource efficiency.

BERLIN PROSPERS: WITH A LIVEABLE CITY FOR PEOPLE, ANIMALS, AND NATURE

The effects of the climate crisis are already clearly visible. Forecasts indicate a temperature increase of up to 2.3°C by 2050, twice as many very hot days, and a substantial rise in tropical nights. Heavy rain and flooding are becoming more frequent, and drinking-water supplies are under pressure. At the same time, habitats for animals are disappearing as the city grows.

We will make Berlin a role model by investing today in protection from heat, nature conservation, and animal welfare. We stand for a city that takes responsibility: with cool neighbourhoods that protect people from heat, green spaces that safeguard biodiversity, and infrastructure that continues to function in extreme conditions. We understand resilience as an investment in our future and will ensure that every Berliner is protected from the consequences of the climate crisis, regardless of income or where they live.

Make Berlin a sponge city now

We will retain rainwater locally rather than allowing it to flow unused into the sewerage system. This will prevent flooding during heavy rain, stabilise groundwater, and actively cool the urban climate through evaporation. We will launch a systematic programme to remove impermeable surfaces, replacing sealed surfaces in squares and streets with permeable ground.

We will simplify approval for green roofs and façades and for installing rainwater-collection tanks. We will structurally expand Berlin's Heat Action Plan through central coordination, secure funding, and academic support. A public map will show Berliners the locations of free cool spaces and public drinking fountains, including in libraries and parks. Planting more urban trees will create shaded and accessible places in local streets to spend time.

We will prepare Berlin for disasters caused by extreme weather and ensure that protection benefits all Berliners equally, regardless of income. We will safeguard Berlin's drinking-water supply and the water level of the Spree. To achieve this, we will restore floodplains and coordinate water-extraction prices with Brandenburg and Saxony. We will reduce industrial consumption through binding requirements.

With lignite mining in Lusatia (Lausitz) coming to an end, the water level of the Spree is at risk of falling because mine water is no longer being channelled into the river from open-cast mines. During periods of water scarcity, we will advocate temporarily continuing to operate the pumps. We will take water-policy decisions jointly with Brandenburg and Saxony, within ecological limits and with fair consideration for affected municipalities.

To use drinking water efficiently, we will simplify approvals for water recycling in residential buildings and dual pipe networks in new neighbourhoods.

Best practice

Paris (Oasis): The Oasis programme has removed impermeable surfaces from school playgrounds, added greenery, and opened them to neighbourhood residents as cool places to spend time. Paris is also expanding a dense network of freely accessible drinking fountains and cool spaces, open to all residents during heatwaves.

Integrate urban development and animal welfare now

We will create varied green spaces by allowing some areas of tall grass to remain, deliberately supporting biodiversity. This will create habitats for insects and wild bees, which are essential pollinators. We will integrate these areas into green-space maintenance plans and urban planning.

We will support green-blue corridors that connect habitats for species including foxes, hares, and otters. At the same time, together with neighbouring municipalities, we will develop sustainable management strategies for potentially dangerous wild boar, including coordinated population control.

We will maintain funding for urban pigeon management to limit the population. While continuing to use dovecotes in the boroughs, we will reduce uncontrolled nesting sites, including in abandoned buildings. We will combat the spread of rats by implementing the KaRMa campaign throughout Berlin, teaching citizens how they can help control rat populations. At particularly affected hotspots, we will also support rat-proof bins and the rapid removal of illegal waste piles and food remains.

We will care not only for wild animals but also for domesticated animals in our city. We will introduce animal-ownership licences with a competency test to promote responsible treatment of animals. We will enforce Berlin's cat-protection regulation consistently to prevent uncontrolled reproduction by unneutered cats. At the same time, we will inform Berliners about the harmful consequences of abandoning cats, the associated penalties, and alternatives such as shared ownership or co-sitting.

At the federal and European levels, we will also advocate a ban on breeding and using wild animals for entertainment.

Best practice

Amsterdam (Green Infrastructure Vision): Through its Green Infrastructure Vision to 2050, Amsterdam demonstrates how green-blue corridors, or greenways, can connect streets, canals, and parks so that wildlife can move safely between habitats.

Promote smart nutrition for the climate and animal welfare now

We will make the State of Berlin a customer for regional food businesses and support technological innovations, including plant-based and cultivated alternatives, to promote climate-adapted diets and community-based food production.

We will create a central advice and coordination office that connects community gardens, organic farms, and food-technology start-ups directly with canteens, schools, and public institutions. We will give regional businesses purchase guarantees while also creating market access for sustainable technologies of the future.

We will use innovation-friendly, regionally focused procurement criteria, new funding programmes, and pilot projects. This will make the capital a model for a climate-positive food strategy that advances animal welfare and supports a strong economy.

BERLIN

CONNECTS

**People, Europe,
and the world**

Berlin is one of the most international cities in the world. Cultures meet here, networks are formed across continents, and European openness and lived diversity are part of everyday life. Embassies, international companies, trade fairs, and a civil society drawn from around the world make Berlin a hub whose influence extends far beyond the city's borders.

Yet, international networks are not harnessed strategically, and people who live and work here are excluded from democratic participation. The independent cultural sector is suffering from funding cuts and a lack of certainty, while tourism places pressure on the city it should be enriching. International connections, integration, and cultural promotion require dependable structures, strategic thinking, and the determination to see Berlin not merely as Germany's capital but as a European metropolis.

International networks, cultural openness, and European integration are not optional extras. They are among Berlin's strongest competitive advantages and form the basis on which the city will continue to attract talent, businesses and ideas.

Berlin connects when the city actively shapes Europe and benefits from European cooperation. This requires stronger representation of Berlin in Brussels and better rail links with our neighbours. This is how we create a Berlin that brings Europe to life.

Berlin connects when international residents can settle quickly, participate, and want to stay. This requires straightforward processes when arriving in the city, genuine political participation, and dignified conditions for everyone who is new to Berlin. This is how we create a city that understands integration as a strength rather than an administrative task.

Berlin connects when visitors come from around the world without reducing residents' quality of life. This requires high-quality alternatives to mass tourism, intelligent management of visitor flows, and events infrastructure that strengthens Berlin as an international destination. This is how we create tourism that gives more to the city than it takes.

Berlin connects when culture is accessible to everyone: in diverse museums, European theatre productions, and a club scene that brings together people from around the world. This requires dependable funding, protection for established cultural venues, and vibrant exchange with the rest of the continent. This is how we create a cultural city with global reach that remains open to everyone.

BERLIN CONNECTS: WITH A STRONG AND UNITED EUROPE

Europe is more than a political framework for Berlin. It is an economic foundation, a source of cultural exchange, and geopolitical protection. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU has provided extensive support for infrastructure, the economy, and culture. Since 2000, around €4.3 billion has flowed from the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund alone.

Yet Berlin does not use this potential fully. The Berlin office in Brussels is understaffed and cut-off from the Senate departments, funding from specialised programmes regularly goes unused, and culture, climate action, and mobility are too rarely approached from a European perspective. In a period of geopolitical uncertainty, this is not an abstract weakness but a concrete risk.

We will place Europe at the heart of Berlin's politics and society. We will strengthen exchange between political institutions so that available funding can be used consistently. We will accelerate the expansion of high-speed connections with our European neighbours, strengthen Erasmus+ for all Berliners, and advocate the rapid removal of internal border controls.

Strengthen the European capability of Berlin's administration now

We will increase staffing in Berlin's representation office in Brussels from the current 11 employees to at least 16. This will provide adequate capacity at the level of other German federal states. Every Senate department will be permanently represented by qualified staff working there on rotation.

We will make Berlin's administration capable of operating effectively in Europe. We will establish dedicated EU teams and integrate European structures and funding processes into individual administrative units. Berlin's senators and public administration will maintain a regular presence in Brussels through meetings and events, supported by the Berlin office and Berlin's Members of the European Parliament.

Intensify European infrastructure and cooperation now

At federal and European level, we will advocate for faster expansion of high-speed rail connections with neighbouring European countries, particularly Poland. This will make cooperation through the Oder Partnership and with our partner city Warsaw easier.

We will focus on connecting the economies of Berlin and Brandenburg with our Eastern and Central European neighbours, the EU's fastest-growing region. We will simplify access to Erasmus+ programmes for education, youth, and sport. This will bring the benefits of European cooperation closer to every Berliner and build enthusiasm for European and international cooperation.

We will advocate for the rapid removal of internal border controls. Like Germany as a whole, Berlin benefits from European freedom of movement: the free movement of workers brings urgently needed skilled workers from across Europe to the city. Reintroducing border controls within the single market is a step backwards into national isolation and damages the European idea.

BERLIN CONNECTS: WITH GLOBAL THINKING AND ACTION

Berlin's society and economy thrive on global connections. Embassies, international companies, universities, and migrants from around the world connect the city with the rest of the world and contribute to its diversity and prosperity.

Yet politics in Berlin has not lived up to this ambition. Funding for international cooperation is being cut rather than strengthened, city partnerships remain symbolic instead of being used strategically, and Berlin's potential as a hub for international business and research cooperation remains largely untapped.

We will make international cooperation a core responsibility of Berlin politics. We will make the city's diverse global connections visible, bring them together strategically, and use city partnerships and other forms of cooperation to deliver concrete benefits in culture, business, and research.

Use international connections strategically now

We will use Berlin's city partnerships strategically to initiate concrete cooperation. We will strengthen innovative clusters, including the Berlin-Brandenburg digital-health ecosystem, systematically complementing them with international partnerships, and closing gaps in value chains.

We will involve migrants more closely in international cooperation by drawing on their networks in their countries of origin. This strengthens Berlin's global connections and creates genuine opportunities for participation.

Strengthen Berlin's presence in the world now

We will strengthen cooperation within the EU and internationally to increase Berlin's geopolitical resilience. We will position Berlin and Paris as a dual location for intercontinental cooperation and business investment. We will use the synergies between the two metropolises by establishing an initiative that connects start-ups internationally.

We will expand Berlin's presence around the world, complementing our partnerships with Bangalore, New York, and Beijing. Rather than rigid and expensive representative offices, we will rely on smart cooperation with local partners. We will develop these partnerships in close coordination with the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and businesses, supporting students and skilled workers and developing market access in both directions.

Best practice

France (La French Tech): La French Tech is an internationally connected start-up ecosystem focused, among other things, on building scale-ups. It combines state coordination with close involvement from businesses and founders.

BERLIN CONNECTS: WITH INTEGRATION AS A LOCATIONAL ADVANTAGE

Berlin has been a destination for migration for centuries. Today, around 40% of the population has a migration background (i.e. a personal or family experience of migration), while approximately 25% of Berliners do not hold German citizenship and are therefore excluded from voting. The city's openness and the ability to communicate in English are genuine locational advantages. International companies deliberately establish departments here because Berlin offers access to globally recruited skilled workers who are difficult to attract elsewhere.

Yet despite the falling number of newly arriving refugees since 2022, integration in Berlin remains too poorly organised: inadequate accommodation despite high costs, barriers to entering the labour market, and difficult access to housing, schools, and nurseries. Attacks on people seeking protection are a further alarming problem.

From the outset we will organise integration structurally as a genuine competitive advantage. We will make it easier to settle in through one-stop integration guides, a single digital file, and Welcome Shops for skilled workers. We will introduce consistent standards and independent complaints management for refugee accommodation. We will strengthen political participation through reformed voting rights for EU citizens and the inclusion of international Berliners in citizens' assemblies.

Ensure representation of all Berliners now

At the federal level, we will advocate reforming voting rights so that EU citizens living in Berlin can vote in every election. We will remove barriers that currently prevent EU citizens from participating.

We will enable international residents of Berlin to take part in city-wide citizens' assemblies selected at random, including for those without German citizenship. The same will apply to participatory budgets. After several years, we evaluate whether this has sufficiently strengthened the representation of international Berliners. Should it not have done so, we will introduce an additional citizens' assembly composed exclusively of international Berliners.

Make settling in easier for skilled workers and refugees now

We will create a binding, cross-departmental structure of integrated responsibility. We will establish permanent roles specifically responsible for the needs of migrants within youth welfare, social services and public-health offices, school authorities, job centres, Bürgerämter (citizens' offices), the State Office for Immigration (LEA), and the State Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF). Positions in the Senate Department for Labour, Social Affairs, Equality, Integration, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination, including the Commissioner for Integration and Migration, that coordinate and improve processes will be retained or established.

We will establish a Welcome Centre for skilled workers. We will create permanent one-stop integration-guide positions, whose staff will serve as the primary contacts for newly arriving individuals and families. We will require every relevant public authority to approach coordination, monitoring, and governance jointly, and to exchange information. We will improve the Participation in a Migration Society Act to support this.

We will remove administrative barriers and simplify recognition of foreign professional qualifications. We will improve the implementation of a single digital file with clearly defined processing deadlines for essential steps, including school registration, a nursery place, a language course, permission to work, and access to benefits. We will provide accessible, multilingual digital information and straightforward procedures. We will make access and communication in languages other than German easier, including through the use of AI.

We will establish English as the administration's second working and service language, with additional languages added in the medium term. We will comprehensively expand information, advice, and application services in English. English-language skills will be considered specifically when recruiting for roles with substantial public contact. In

the long term, every service and interaction with Berlin's public authorities should be available in English.

Best practice

North Rhine-Westphalia (Participation and Integration Act): State legislation makes integration a structural responsibility with dedicated funding of €130 million.

Hamburg (integration strategy): Hamburg's integration strategy demonstrates how integration can be managed across public authorities through clear objectives, coordinated measures, and joined-up implementation.

Strengthen civil society through early participation now

We will establish a publicly accessible register of migrant-led organisations, containing information about associations, communities, religious congregations, and women's and youth groups, together with their contacts and services. We will complement the register with services from public authorities, particularly the Commissioner for Integration and Berlin Partner for Business and Technology.

New arrivals will receive this information during their first contact with advice or social services, helping them build connections rapidly with the wider city through sports clubs, neighbourhood centres, volunteering, and culture.

We will provide children and young people with experience as refugees with a nursery or school place as quickly as possible. Permanent teams with mobile contacts will provide advice and complete registrations directly in accommodation centres in every borough. To avoid segregating children and young people with limited German-language skills, we will move away from permanent welcome classes in schools and nurseries and instead provide intensive language support alongside mainstream education.

Provide dignified accommodation for refugees now

We will introduce consistent minimum standards for every Berlin accommodation centre housing particularly vulnerable people, including accommodation operated by the State Office for Refugee Affairs, accommodation under the General Security and Public Order Act, and other emergency accommodation. The same standards will apply to privacy, protection plans, hygiene, and access to advice and participation, regardless of residents' status, whether they are refugees, migrants from the EU, or Berliners experiencing homelessness.

We will adapt funding programmes so that services can be used flexibly by all residents. Rather than separating people by target group, we will assess comparative needs, including those of young men, people living alone, and families with children. We will first guarantee basic security and participation for every resident and then create specific services for individual groups.

We will require residents' committees in accommodation centres to identify needs and support integration into the surrounding neighbourhood. We will establish an independent structure for complaints management, monitoring, and regular reporting that covers all accommodation operated by the State Office for Refugee Affairs, under the General Security and Public Order Act, and by private providers. This body will receive clear rights of on-site access and provide anonymous reporting channels, ensuring that social-services offices and operators do not investigate complaints against themselves.

We will create a single framework contract for organisations that provide accommodation places for boroughs. The contract will include clear quality criteria, a right to complain, and transparent, dependable refinancing. This protects residents and gives service providers certainty for planning.

BERLIN CONNECTS: WITH TOURISM AND EVENTS AS DRIVERS OF EXCHANGE AND THE ECONOMY

Tourism and events contribute €8.4 billion, or around 3.2%, to Berlin's GDP and directly or indirectly employ more than 224 000 people. Yet the sector is under pressure: the number of overnight stays fell by 3.8% in 2025 compared with the previous year. At the same time, noise, waste, and overcrowding at tourism hotspots noticeably reduce residents' quality of life.

We will strengthen Berlin as a liveable city for visitors and residents alike. We will support high-quality activities instead of mass tourism, establish clear climate and cleanliness standards, and develop data-based management of visitor flows. At the same time, we will strengthen Berlin's events infrastructure and safeguard its club and cultural landscape as an essential part of the city's identity.

Develop a high-quality and sustainable tourism sector now

By 2035, we will make Berlin Europe's leading smart destination: a metropolis where tourism, digitalisation, sustainability, and social participation work together in harmony.

Together with visitBerlin, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Messe Berlin, and relevant industry associations, we will develop a practical online guide for climate-friendly and hybrid events. It will bring together concrete requirements and advice on energy-efficient technology, digital participation, sustainable logistics, and carbon reduction.

We will develop tourism policy through dialogue with the city's residents, ensuring that tourism remains an asset rather than a burden. We will specifically support tourism opportunities outside the S-Bahn ring to reduce pressure on the city centre.

Instead of mass tourism, we will support high-quality and sustainable activities such as cultural events, academic conferences, and continuing education. We will task the Berlin Convention Office with developing programmes to bring international trade fairs, specialist events, and European cultural projects to the city.

We will establish clear climate and cleanliness standards for tourism hotspots. We will reduce single-use materials, require reusable systems at major events, and introduce clearly visible reusable-container and deposit-return stations. We will manage visitor flows with multilingual information, working with the boroughs, hospitality businesses, hotels, and cultural institutions. Participating organisations that meet these standards will receive a visible quality label.

Best practice

Amsterdam (City in Balance): Through its City in Balance programme, Amsterdam demonstrates how a city can balance the interests of tourists, residents, businesses, and culture. Clear rules and data-based management reduce pressures including noise, waste, and overcrowding, protecting quality of life in neighbourhoods.

Make Berlin's tourism sector future-proof now

We will support Berlin's bid for and delivery of EXPO 2035. It will accelerate sustainable urban innovation and the modernisation of historic events venues, including the International Congress Centre and Tempelhof Airport.

We will modernise existing congress, events, and cultural venues, securing Berlin's international competitiveness. At the same time, in cooperation with Messe Berlin,

the boroughs, the Clubcommission, relevant associations, and event organisers, we will improve digital infrastructure, accessibility, and technology for hybrid events. We will use existing buildings efficiently and avoid expensive new construction.

We will advance the Berlin Smart Tourism Database and prepare its data in a practical form for public administration, boroughs, and event organisers. We will develop a central overview that transparently shows visitor flows, numbers of events, and peaks in pressure. On this basis, we will establish integrated tourism monitoring that brings together visitor-flow data and makes capacity limits visible. These measures will enable data-based management of tourism and major events.

Best practice

Barcelona (Tourism Observatory): Barcelona's Tourism Observatory uses a comprehensive system of indicators and analysis to measure visitor flows, economic effects, and pressure on infrastructure. These data feed directly into the city's strategic tourism planning.

BERLIN CONNECTS: WITH CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Berlin's cultural and club scene is a global attraction, from the Berlin Philharmonic to Berghain. It provides space for creative expression, makes the city liveable and internationally attractive, and is an economic factor of the highest importance.

Yet current cuts disproportionately affect the independent cultural sector, diversity and participation programmes, and cultural education. Established institutions such as SchwuZ and Watergate have had to close. Short-term project funding instead of dependable structural support threatens livelihoods and undermines precisely those areas that strengthen social cohesion, make our city liveable and attractive to visitors, and define Berlin internationally as a beacon of openness, diversity, and particularly queer visibility, culture, and communities.

We will preserve Berlin as a free and diverse cultural city where everyone has space to express themselves, and as a city with international reach. We will replace short-term project-based thinking with dependable structural support, strengthen club culture through the Agent of Change principle, and expand cultural exchange with Europe in a targeted fashion.

Secure culture for the long term now

We will secure cultural funding permanently at state level and in every borough, replacing short-term project-based thinking with dependable structural support.

We will provide permanent and dependable funding for cultural education, participation, and projects that strengthen democracy. We will develop a binding cultural-development plan with the involvement of the city's residents. We will protect existing cultural venues and preserve Berlin's cultural knowledge and places of tradition. This will provide urgently required certainty and safeguard Berlin's diverse cultural landscape.

We will develop an EU funding strategy for culture and provide EU funding guides to support boroughs and cultural institutions. We will make vacant commercial premises available for cultural uses without unnecessary bureaucracy with a transparent digital platform that connects supply and demand efficiently.

Best practice

Düsseldorf (cultural-development plan): Düsseldorf's 2016-2017 cultural-development planning is regarded throughout Germany as a reference model for dialogue-based cultural planning. Broad public participation and a structured catalogue of measures systematically reoriented the city's cultural policy towards the future.

Support club culture and open-air events now

We will recognise clubs as cultural venues and ensure that protecting and supporting them is a core political responsibility. To prevent expensive soundproofing measures from placing clubs in financial difficulty, we will advocate the Agent of Change principle. Under this approach, the party introducing a new use shall bear any soundproofing costs, rather than the existing club.

We will simplify event registration by bringing responsibilities together. Traditional outdoor hospitality is already permitted to remain open for longer, but the independent cultural sector is still waiting for this rule to be extended to them, as is desperately required. We will advocate using the flexibility available under Berlin's State Immission Control Act to adopt appropriate exemptions.

We will expand noise-tolerance zones in open spaces away from residential areas, allowing events to take place with legal certainty until 23:00.

Open cultural education for all now

We will make cultural education in Berlin accessible to everyone, regardless of income, age, language, migration background, or physical disability. Everyone should be able to experience theatre, make music, express themselves artistically, and access museums and libraries easily.

We will support and connect existing services provided by cultural venues, youth cultural centres, and music-education institutions. Together with schools, institutions, and civil-society organisations, we will strengthen programmes for creative learning, intercultural exchange, and comprehensive participation. We will provide structural rather than project-based funding, as well as fair and secure employment for cultural educators, in line with the public sector collective pay agreement (TVöD).

We will invest in digital formats for museums, theatres, and festivals, making culture accessible without barriers.

Strengthen remembrance culture and European cultural exchange now

We will support education projects, museums, and initiatives that preserve the memory of National Socialist terror, the SED dictatorship, and German colonial crimes, enable remembrance from multiple perspectives, and strengthen critical engagement with the past.

We will develop the Humboldt Forum into a centre for critical examination of German and European colonial history. Exhibitions and education will clearly identify systems of colonial violence in order to challenge continuing inequalities and racism. We will advocate the restitution of looted colonial objects and human remains, transparent provenance research, and a decisive role for representatives of societies of origin in exhibitions and programmes.

We will further expand cultural exchange across Europe. We will connect Berlin artists with European partners and our partner cities through co-productions in film and theatre, residency programmes, joint exhibitions, and festivals. We promote awareness of Europe through Europe Day and celebrate it with a festival in the city.

Best practice

Brussels (decolonisation agenda): Through its own decolonisation agenda and strong partnerships between the city, museums, and African civil-society initiatives, Brussels supports public debate, education, and artistic projects that critically examine colonial history.

Volt

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