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Wohnungen

be  **Berlin**

Senatsverwaltung
für Stadtentwicklung
und Umwelt



A city worth living in

A good and secure home
Social housing policy
and affordable rent



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Dear Berliners,

Berlin is growing – and that makes me happy. In 2014, nearly 45,000 people have moved to our city. The Senate is expecting at least 250,000 additional Berliners by 2030: this means that a city the size of Braunschweig will join us over the next 15 years. This is a great opportunity for us because Berlin stands for innovation, diversity, cosmopolitanism and quality of life.

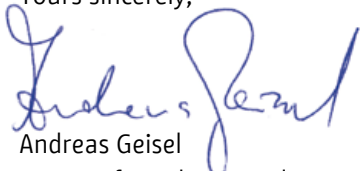
The population growth offers future perspectives for everyone. This not only brings us more companies and jobs but also greater financial freedom for necessary investments in our infrastructure for better traffic routes, strong public transport service, more parks, good schools and day-care centres.

The persisting upswing of Berlin is also a big challenge. More people also means more need for housing and growing pressure on the existing housing market. I want that living in Berlin will also stay affordable in the future and that people have the possibility to live in all parts of the city. We can reach this goal with measures to curb rental prices and build new housing.

The municipal housing societies are strong partners for both kinds of measures. Together with them, the Senate entered the nationwide exemplary “Alliance for Social Housing Policy and Affordable Rent” at the end of 2012. The key objective of the Alliance is: securing good housing for broad segments of the population.

There is nothing that cannot be improved even more, which is why we have advanced and expanded the Alliance. This flier is to inform you, as the tenants of municipal housing, of the current status.

Yours sincerely,



Andreas Geisel

Senator for Urban Development and the Environment



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Alliance for Berlin

In order to counteract the increasingly narrow market for affordable living space, the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment and the Senate Department of Finance have agreed to form the “Alliance for Social Housing Policy and Affordable Rent” with the six municipal housing societies in Berlin. The Alliance was signed on 4 September 2012 and is valid initially until 2016.

In late 2014, the partners – based on initial experiences – continued the measures and solution approaches, whereby they ensure affordable housing in Berlin.

Berlin is growing

Especially in the sought-after central locations of the city, the demand for rental accommodation is growing faster than the supply. For this reason, the housing market reserves are dwindling and rents are rising faster – especially in new buildings, but also in existing buildings. The main reasons: our city is growing. Increasingly many people are moving to Berlin. At the same time, more and more Berliners are living alone. Already today, 54 percent of all Berlin households are single-person households.

Strong partners take countermeasures

The housing policy of the Berlin Senate aims at keeping rents affordable in our growing city and continuing to provide adequate living space for households with incomes that fall behind the general trend. The diversity and character of individual neighbourhoods must be preserved, so that people with different income levels can continue to live together.

Berlin's municipal housing societies are core partners in implementing this urban development and housing policy. They create considerable benefits for our city by

- taking over more responsibility for the growing city and increasing the existing urban housing to 300,000 units by 2016 through acquisitions and new construction,
- helping to curb rental prices through their own rent price policies and strengthening tenant rights,
- playing a leading role in renovating buildings for energy efficiency and climate protection, and
- actively supporting social, demographic and cultural integration in the neighbourhoods.



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New construction and acquisitions broaden the sphere of activity

The municipal housing societies are investing strongly to increase their housing stock – with new construction and acquisitions. This is an ambitious goal but it is on track: by 2016, the municipal housing stock is to increase by at least 30,000 to 300,000 flats. The agreements under the Housing Alliance will apply directly upon the transfer of ownership also to the purchased residential units and the tenants living there.

Modernisation in line with affordable rents

Half a billion euro has been invested by the municipal housing societies in the modernisation and energy-related renovation of their flats. They thereby contribute a lot to modern living remaining affordable for the long term. They limit the costs passed on to tenants, so that the tenants are not charged excessively. Moreover, they involve the tenants in the modernisation projects from the outset.



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Dedicated to strong neighbourhoods

Social responsibility and strong neighbourhoods have priority. With their commitment to education and culture in the inner-city neighbourhood, the municipal housing societies support cultural, social and demographic integration. Likewise, specific allocation of flats to people, who are qualified for a certificate of eligibility to public housing (WBS), contributes to stable neighbourhoods. In order to broaden cohesion in the neighbourhood and strengthen social and ethnic integration, the municipal housing societies cooperate with the respective partners at the neighbourhood level. In the process, they work together in particular, with the district management on site and integrate their own projects or support the projects of third parties.

Student housing

To improve student housing, municipal housing societies are cooperating with Studentenwerk Berlin (Berlin student services) and offer designated student housing.

A campaign informs of the offer, for example at www.wohnenfuer.berlin/jungeswohnen



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The most key points of the Rent Alliance

To provide for broad sections of the population, the municipal housing societies offer living space at affordable rents. They strive to keep their rental prices at acceptable levels following renovation and when concluding new contracts, as well. Lower-income households in particular should be able to find good and secure housing with the municipal housing societies. For this reason, the municipal housing societies have committed to a socially just and responsible rent policy under the Rent Alliance.

- They limit their general rent increases in privately funded housing to a maximum of 15 percent within four years, insofar as the Berlin rent index permits.
- The municipal housing societies limit building modernisation contributions in privately funded housing to a maximum of nine percent of the expenses per year. Rents should continue to be affordable also after modernisation. Therefore, the net rent without ancillary costs following a modernisation measure should not exceed the locally common reference rent (plus the saved operating costs). To protect households with weaker incomes, it is ensured



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on fulfilment of social criteria that the net rent without ancillary cost after modernisation does not exceed 30 per cent of the household's net income.

- Whenever new rental agreements are concluded for the first time, the housing societies rent every second flat within the S-Bahn ring and every third flat outside of the ring at the local reference rent to households, which have a certificate of eligibility to public housing ("WBS").
- A joint pool of flats is to make fair exchanges of flats possible if a tenant is looking for a flat that is at least ten percent smaller than the present one. In the case of an exchange, the housing societies guarantee that the new gross rent including ancillary costs is below that of the old flat – with comparable equipment, modernisation state and location. If social criteria are fulfilled, single-person households can receive 1,500 euro, two-person households 2,000 euro, and households with three and more persons 2,500 euro as a one-off allowance for moving. Relocation officers help with the flat exchange and organise a comprehensive relocation management at the six housing societies.



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- The moving allowance is granted only if the move takes place within an urban housing society. The allowance is paid by the relevant housing society.
- An individual solution will be sought for tenants who are unable, for financial or other social reasons, to bear a rent increase. Following a rent increase and on fulfilment of social criteria, the net rent without ancillary costs should not exceed 30 percent of the household's net income, provided the number of household members is appropriate for the flat size (for example, 45 qm for single-person households, 60 qm for two-person households), and that the household's income is within the limits defined by Berlin (for example, 16,800 euro/year for single-person households, 25,200 euro/year for two-person households) for receiving a certificate of eligibility to public housing ("WBS").
- If social criteria are fulfilled, a limit of 27 percent of the household's income applies to households, which bear above-average operating costs (=energy requirement value of the building >170 kWh per qm/year). The precise



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energy requirement value is assessed by the housing society as specific to the relevant building and the tenant is informed of it.

- Tenants, who have to master a difficult personal situation, receive further relief. If particular circumstances of life or the specific layout of the flat require that larger floor spaces be allocated, limits of tolerance of up to 20 percent apply.
- Hardship provisions for pregnant women and single parents who are dependent on their social environment, for senior citizens, people with disabilities, caregivers and sick or bereaved people ensure that other private issues of hardship, besides income can be taken into consideration for rent increases.
- These individual solutions also apply to flats of municipal housing where increases of the rent are due to the scheduled reduction of public funding.
- A legal right is not established.

Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment

Section IV

Housing, Urban Renewal, Socially Integrative City

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Exhibition room of the Senate Department for Urban Development and the Environment

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www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de

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