

Berlin Focus

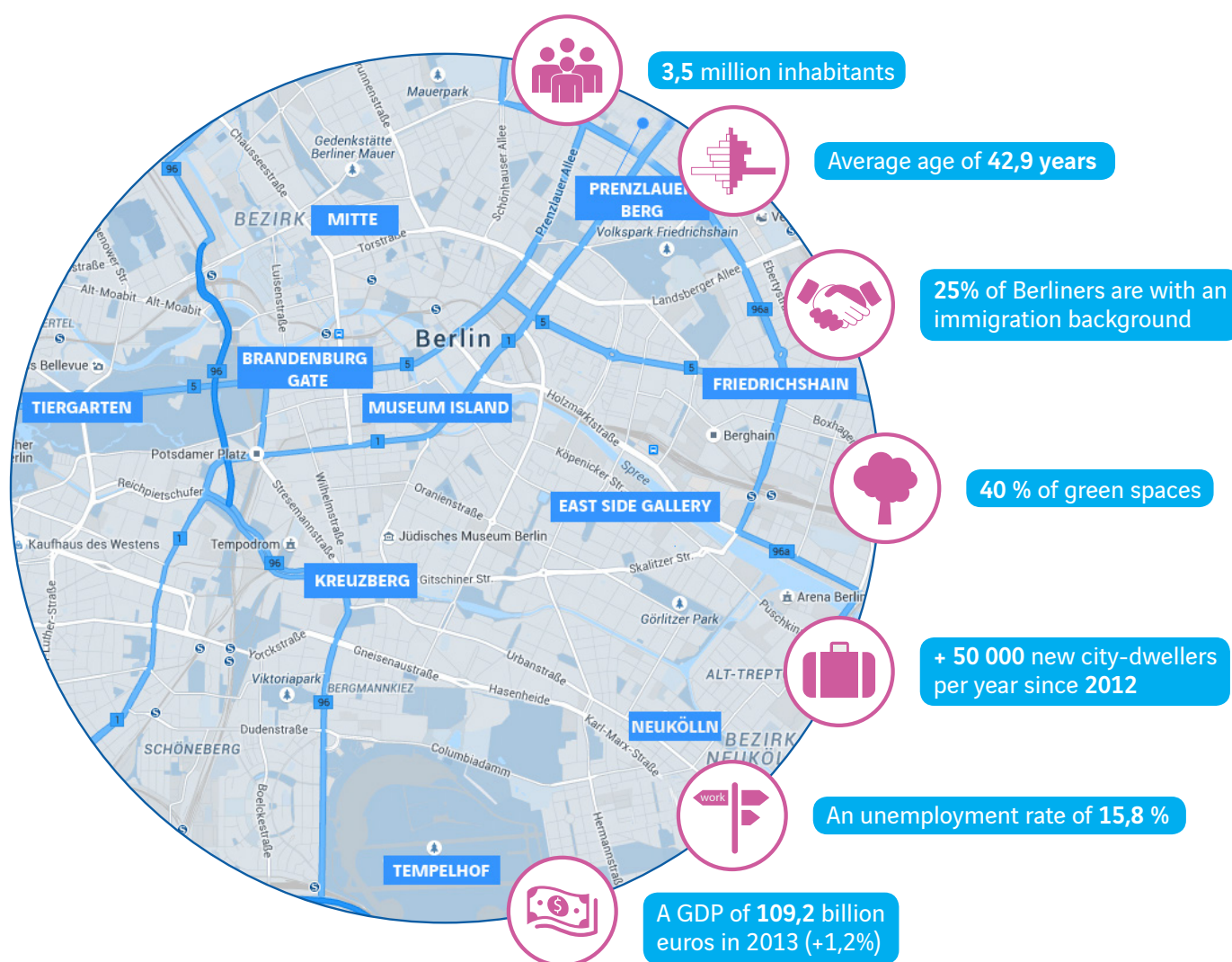


Understanding behavioural changes to keep transforming cities



«Poor but Sexy» was former mayor Klaus Wowereit's description of Berlin in 2003, and the epithet stuck as the slogan for Germany's capital city. Now much wealthier thanks to its entrepreneurial drive, it nevertheless remains a city of contrasts that appeals to creatives while taking a tolerant and welcoming approach to the less well-off communities.

Berliners play an important role in the development of the city and its governance. They shape their city in their own image and promote original uses of its facilities in terms of work, mobility and housing. City-dwellers are encouraged to do so by a favourable cultural environment, local authority initiatives and input from a number of enlightened investors.



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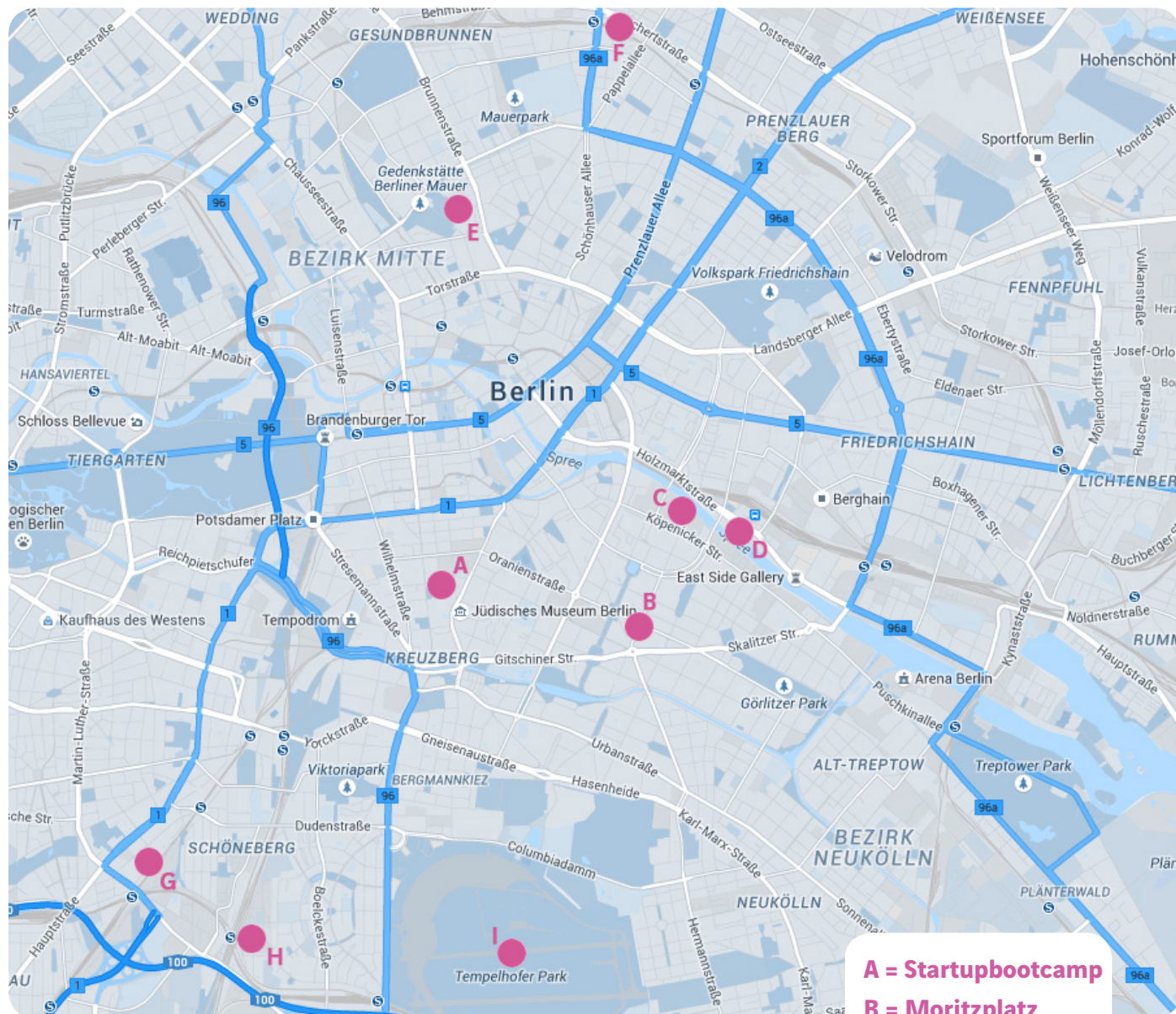
Key figures

- ▶ A city of **890 km²**, which is eight times the footprint of central Paris.
- ▶ The Arcadis 2015 index ranks the German capital as the world's **6th** most sustainable city. It is particularly effective in terms of waste management, air pollution reduction and entrepreneurial energy.
As a tourism destination, Berlin is the European No. 3, after London and Paris.
- ▶ 25 % of the city's population is composed of immigrants, which represent 190 different nationalities. Forecasts suggest that Berlin is likely to gain **250 000** new residents by 2030.
- ▶ Average population density in Berlin is 3,809 residents per km², which is seven times less than central Paris.
- ▶ **80%** of Berlin residents rent their homes. Although the price of apartments is between 3 and 5 times less than in London or Paris, the refurbishment of city centre blocks by foreign developers and investors has **driven rents up by 30% in five years**. To stem this pressure on housing, the Berlin Senate introduced a law in June this year to prevent owners from charging rents more than 10% above the median rent level.
- ▶ Berlin saw **45%** of its industrial jobs disappear in the 1990s. By the beginning of the new millennium, the city had lost **20%** of its working population as a result.
- ▶ The cost of living in Berlin is between **2 and 3 lower** than in Paris. This fact contributes to creating conditions that are favourable to the emergence of startup incubators and new co-working spaces: Berlin has **230 co-working spaces**.
- ▶ **40%** of Berliners live on state benefits. Estimates suggest that 500,000 of them live below the poverty line.
- ▶ The debt level of Berlin for the current year is **€60 billion**. The repayment of this debt is depressing public-sector investment and reducing the room for manoeuvre available to local authorities. This fact explains the open door policy to private capital investment and the approvals granted to a few property developers to design controversial projects, such as the development of city centre shopping malls.

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Some flagship initiatives in Berlin



- A = Startupbootcamp**
- B = Moritzplatz**
- C = Spreefeld**
- D = Holzmarkt**
- E = Factory**
- F = Silicon Allee**
- G = Eurf**
- H = Südkreuz**

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A. Civic participation and initiatives at the core of emerging urban behaviours

The City of Berlin considers citizen involvement in the planning process as a central aspect of its long-term development. However, the role played by residents is not limited to institutionalised channels

of participation. In Berlin, the culture and practice of participation are also characterised by grassroots referenda on major urban projects and local initiatives designed to encourage citizens to reclaim their spaces.

The Moritzplatz regeneration



Moritzplatz is located in the Kreuzberg neighbourhood. It used to feel like 'the end of the world', as it was left more or less untouched since the end of the Second World War. But the arrival of Modulo, a shop for architects, designers, makers and crafts, triggered a process of revitalization for the area. In 2007, with support from private investors, Modulo founder Andreas Krüger bought from the city authorities the building Aufbauhaus, a former factory which then turned into a basis for his business. His intention was to re-energise Moritzplatz and its surrounding area by creating a central resource for the creative economy. Within the huge space inside the former factory, Modulo employees soon found themselves surrounded by artists' studios, craft workshops, bookshops, galleries, restaurants, crèches... and more.

This initial impetus has meant that Moritzplatz today is attracting new businesses and inspiring the practical implementation of innovative projects. For example, the existence of the Betahaus co-working space is thanks to Andreas Krüger, who was able to buy the building from the city authority and let it at modest rents. The Modulo initiative has also contributed to the Prinzessinnengärten success story.

The Moritzplatz regeneration has been made possible by an original bottom-up governance model that takes account of the needs of users, and proceeds through an open-ended planning process.

The community gardens of Prinzessinnengärten: urban farming fostering togetherness

Created in 2009 in Moritzplatz, in the working-class community of Kreuzberg (former West Berlin), these pop-up vegetable and herb gardens are available to everyone, and cover 6,000 m² of a former industrial site abandoned for more than fifty years. Supported by public authorities, managed by a private company, the aims of this eco-friendly community project are primarily social and educational.

► A single central concept: *Zwischennutzung* (interim use)

In 2009, Robert Shaw and Marco Clausen launched this mobile urban agriculture project in Berlin. Its basic principle was to make temporary use of a brownfield site in a central location, in order to enable the working-class, multi-ethnic community living in the neighbourhood to have access to green spaces and potentially a more healthy diet. The project aims also at bringing residents together around a common purpose that would benefit community life.

► A private project with public subsidy

The two founders of the project created a non-profit company called Nomadisch Grün with an initial investment of €25,000. The particular legal status of their company has allowed them to receive subsidies from central government and the support of the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg urban authority via a tax regulation that effectively limits the risk of speculative investment in such areas.

► Community involvement

In the initial launching phase, the project instigators recruited local volunteers with some experience of gardening. Their initiative was so successful that in 2013, and despite the fact that the lease had ended, a 30,000-signature petition resulted in the project being granted a permission to stay for a further five years.



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Tempelhof Airport turned into a communal area: citizens reinventing their use of public space

► Local city-dwellers developing temporary uses of the land

Closed down finally in 2008, Tempelhof Airport was converted into an urban park in 2010. As a result of people pressure, exerted for instance by the '100% Tempelhof' collective, this 386-hectare space, 5 kilometres far from central Berlin, has experienced the emergence of new spaces greatly appreciated by Berliners, including sliding sports facilities, barbecue areas, a Biergarten and community gardens where people can plant their own vegetables for just €1 per square metre. The park is now a social hub for the surrounding community and a popular destination for all Berliners.



► A symbol of united community resistance to a disputed transformation of the city

In a May 2014 referendum, the citizens of the Land (State) of Berlin were invited to express their views on a project for the airport redevelopment. This plan had been proposed in 2012 by Michael Müller, who was then Senator for Urban Development and the Environment, and is now Mayor of Berlin. Herr Müller's proposal consisted of developing a 75-hectare site, to include offices, a retail centre, 4,200 homes around a central park, a rainwater lake, a 50-hectare sports complex and a new library. Scheduled over 10 years, this project was rejected by 65% of Berliners, who reacted massively on this occasion to express their opposition to an increased urban density.

Spreefeld and Holzmarkt: experimenting with new forms of cooperative housing

Many Berliners see rising rents and the sale of city centre public land at high prices as threatening the social diversity on which the international reputation of the city is being built. To offset the gentrification process, some architects, retailers, artists and citizens are reinventing housing policy to create a model better suited to the needs of Berliners; a model that guarantees continuity of social justice.

In 2008, the Mediaspree versenken (Sink Mediaspree) movement fought for an open access to the banks of the River Spree for all Berliners. The movement gathered protests against multiple riverside development projects, and especially the sale of land to companies like MTV, Universal and Arena O2, resulting in the effective privatisation of this highly valued public space.

The Holzmarkt cooperative emerged in 2012, eager to expand and transform this collective initiative into concrete implementation. Its aim was to use 18,000 m² of land between the river Spree and the S-Bahn rapid transit rail line to create a new public district with a park, a startup business incubator, a student residence, shops, restaurants, nightclubs, hotels, gardens, a crèche and other facilities.

With support from the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg local municipality, the project marks a significant departure from the usual pattern of property development. In 2012, the Swiss pension fund Abendrot bought the land for more than €10 million, and leased it to the community cooperative for a renewable period of 75 years. The Holzmarkt community for urban creativity (GuK) gives each member a single vote regardless of their financial investment as soon as their €25,000 share is paid for.



Spreefeld is another community initiative that offers an alternative vision of development for the banks of the River Spree. It corresponds to a shared housing project with new apartments at affordable prices, in a highly sought-after location. This self-built, self-managed housing complex is made of 44 social and private housing units, divided into three buildings. Rather in a Do-it-together mindset than Do-it-yourself, residents are members of a cooperative and the owners of both land and buildings. In addition to individual apartments, the Spreefeld complex includes many shared areas to encourage communal living: community gardens, patios, kitchens, meeting spaces, co-working spaces, etc.

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B. A city shaped by entrepreneurial innovation

Berlin has built its reputation as a startups business haven due to a cost of living 40% less expensive than London. This affordability has enabled startups to occupy large premises and have access to excellent infrastructures. This entrepreneurial energy also draws on the way in which many artists, entrepreneurs and project promoters have come together to collaborate and work alongside each other to settle in former industrial buildings and brownfield sites.

Some parts of Berlin are under the influence of these pioneers, who injected a new vitality to entire areas of the city's central districts. Iconic spaces like **FabLab Berlin** and the **Open Design City** hub are good illustrations of this Do-it-yourself trend. This one lies at the heart of the movement towards urban citizens reclaiming a right to model their city according to their ideas.

Silicon Allee: the origins of Berlin-style entrepreneurship



The term Silicon Allee refers to the startup community that sprang up in the early 2000s in the Schönhauser Allee, an urban wasteland that has since given birth to many creative companies, including **SoundCloud** (the audio sharing platform), **Wooga** (online computer gaming) and **Zalando** (the online shoe shop). Silicon Allee has also given its name to an online platform created by American developers Todd Davis and Schuyler Deerman, who came to Berlin to try their luck. The irresistible rise of Silicon Allee has been accompanied by the opening of coworking spaces like **Betahaus Berlin** and **Rainmaking Loft**, and the creation of entrepreneur networks, including Berlin Geekettes and Venture Village.

Factory Berlin: a technology campus in the heart of the city

In June 2014, sponsorship from Google Entrepreneurs made it possible for Berlin to boast a full-blown technology campus in the central district of Mitte, close to Silicon Allee. Called Factory by its two German creators Simon Schäfer and Udo Schlömer, Factory Berlin occupies 16,000 m² and provides a base for 22 resident companies, including the head offices of Twitter and Mozilla in Germany.



Rainmaking Loft & Startupbootcamp



Rainmaking Loft is a Berlin coworking space occupied by many startups, including the German office of Drivy, the French peer-to-peer online car rental service.

Rainmaking Loft is also home to Startupbootcamp, part of a global network of startup accelerators offering

intensive mentorship programmes. The Berlin branch of Startupbootcamp focuses particularly on energy and smart transportation. A number of startups specialised in these sectors are based here, including:

► **High Mobility**: this company is developing an Internet of Things platform that connects cars with wearable devices to provide real-time communication of routing and traffic status data.

► **CarZapp GmbH**: this peer-to-peer car sharing platform exploits the fact that half of all Berlin households do not own a vehicle. Instead of needing a key, drivers can use their smartphone to open and start the car.

Design Thinking : a framework for innovation

Design Thinking is an approach to innovation that links ideas directly to implementation via an iterative path. Thus, it requires that an idea must be tested and adjusted until it leads to a product that perfectly fits the needs of its user. Widely applied in the innovation networks of Berlin, this methodology has partly its origins in the vision of Hasso Plattner, co-founder of the German IT giant SAP. Together with David Kelley, the founder of IDEO, he set up the *School of Design Thinking* at the Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam in partnership with Stanford University in 2004.

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C. Active experimentation with innovative mobility methods

On the European stage, Berlin is clearly a pioneering city when it comes to electric mobility. It even has its own public sector agency - the Berlin Agency for Electromobility. In conjunction with the federal action plan for energy transition, the States (Länder) of Berlin and Brandenburg

have set two ambitious targets: to meet 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2030 (compared with 45% today) and to have 15,000 electric vehicles on the road, supported by 3,700 battery charging points (2,300 of them privately operated).



The EUREF Campus: a giant laboratory for smart mobility

The Technical University of Berlin EUREF Campus for renewable energy was created in 2009 with a total investment of €600 million. Occupying a 5.5-hectare site laid out around the Schöneberg gasometer, it incorporates green spaces and sustainable buildings, all of which are supplied with energy via a carbon-neutral micro smart grid. The EUREF Campus is home not only to students, but also to companies specialised in the mobility sector, including Deutsche Bahn Rent, Schneider Electric, EMO, the Innovation Centre for Mobility and Social Change (InnoZ), Ubitricity and Climate-KIC. The campus offers users free access to electric bikes and cars.

Electromobility experimentation on a larger scale: the Südkreuz station project

Berlin Südkreuz station, located in the South of the city, will be the real-life experimental laboratory used to test the interconnection of transport and energy, as well as networked innovation. This will involve the installation of wind turbines and solar panels on the roof of the station to power connected electric bike and car access points. An internal navigation system for the station will also be tested as the basis for simplifying the intermodal transfer of passengers and enabling transition to an all-electric mobility system.

Lastly, and in coordination with the planning initiatives of the Berlin Senate, the space between the station and the highway - the Schöneberger - is to be developed for business use. The ultimate aim is to increase the use made of public transportation via new technologies and by addressing the needs of passengers, whilst simultaneously contributing to the development of the surrounding area.



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