

# Press Release

Berlin, January 22, 2019

## Experts discuss social cohesion at the 8<sup>th</sup> Berlin Demography Forum

Against the background of far-reaching demographic-political and global changes, around 200 national and international experts from academia, politics, business, and civil society are discussing "Diversity - Equivalence - Cohesion" at the 8<sup>th</sup> Berlin Demography Forum (BDF) -- Perspectives for Germany and Europe.

"Demographic change is altering the country, as well as Europe and the whole world. We must intensify the dialogue and our efforts and seize opportunities so that social cohesion remains in place. Just to wait and see is not enough," says Franz Müntefering, Chairman of the BDF Advisory Board and former Federal Minister. The future perspective depends to a large extent on society's willingness to assume responsibility for one another, he emphasized. This also requires that the government -- federal and state -- and the municipalities work together to offer and support sustainable concepts.

Jörg Rocholl, President of ESMT Berlin, says, "In order to secure our prosperity in the future, we must use the potential of all people in our society, also enabling those who migrate here to participate more and have better opportunities for education and work. We should counter the dangers of increasing isolationism and national egoism with more international cooperation. Open borders, free trade, and the free movement of people within Europe are the cornerstones of our prosperity, and we must not gamble this away."

Ulrich Lilie, President of Diakonie Deutschland and organizer of the Berlin Demography Forum, emphasizes the importance of social dialogue. He comments, "Our world is changing rapidly, and the answers to the question of what constitutes a good life are diverging more and more. Many find it difficult to navigate this new terrain and therefore prefer to communicate in their closed societies. That must change. It is important to listen to the many different perspectives and to talk and cooperate with people who have different backgrounds if we want to face the challenges of our time constructively."

The challenges currently facing Germany and all of Europe include the different living conditions and ways of life in urban and rural areas, North and South, East and West, globalization, migration, climate change, uncontrolled financial markets, digitization, and job insecurity. To respond to these challenges, new forms of international governance and cooperation are needed. The Berlin Demography Forum contributes to a better understanding of these challenges and brings together key stakeholders from politics, science, business, and civil society.

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### About the Berlin Demography Forum

The Berlin Demography Forum (BDF) is a non-partisan platform for discussion and mutual exchange with the aim of identifying solutions to the challenges of demographic change. The Forum brings together international actors from politics, business, science, and civil society to discuss solutions and contribute to sustainable development. The aim is also to anchor the significance of demographic influencing factors in the broader public discourse. Since the kick-off event in January 2012, the Forum has taken place annually. The founding initiators were the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth and Allianz. The conference series is hosted by Diakonie

Deutschland, Allianz Deutschland, and ESMT Berlin. The BDF is supported in 2019 by the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Population Europe, the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), the Stifterverband, the Förderfonds Wissenschaft in Berlin, and the Ecclesia-Versicherungsdienst are also partners of the BDF. <https://www.berlinerdemografieforum.org/bdf-2019/?lang=en>

### **About ESMT Berlin**

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