

## Press release:

# Ballot initiative campaign successful – the campaign Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen hands over more than 343,000 signatures to the State Election Commissioner +++ Rally and public announcement of the number of signatures today at 4p.m. in front of the Senate Department for Internal Affairs.



**Berlin, 25.06.2021.**

At 4pm today, the initiative Deutsche Wohnen & Co. Enteignen will hand over the last signatures in support of the referendum to the Berlin state election administration. According to the initiative, more than 343,000 signatures will be handed over (as of 11pm on 24.06). The initiative assumes, even before the final count is in, that the ballot initiative will be successful, due to the very high number of signatures, and that there will be a referendum on 26 September, simultaneous with citywide and federal elections.

"The success of the second collection phase shows that very many Berliners want affordable housing in common ownership. They will not be fobbed off with symbolic politics," says Jenny Stupka, spokesperson for the initiative.

The signature collectors will celebrate this with music and a performance at today's handover in front of the Senate Department for Internal Affairs and Sport.

"During the numerous conversations while collecting in public, I noticed that the referendum struck a chord with the city. Almost all the conversations were very positive and people readily signed. I am very happy that we were successful despite the conditions of the Corona pandemic" says Leonie Heine, active in the Sammel-AG, the working group for the organisation of signature collecting.

The rally is not just a celebration, but also the kick-off for the referendum election campaign in the coming months: "Due to the disastrous rent policies of the last decades, housing will be one of the defining issues of the election campaign. With door-to-door canvassing and conversations on the streets, we will inform all of Berlin that we have a historic opportunity to permanently secure good quality, affordable housing for numerous Berliners through the socialisation of profit-oriented corporate landlords. This will form a crucial pillar of housing, next to the existing cooperatives," says Leonie Heine.

The initiative draws attention to the problem that tens of thousands of signatures will be declared invalid by the state election administration because they are from Berliners without a German passport.

"Berliners without a German passport are a crucial part of our communities and have built their lives here in this city. It's a scandal, that these Berliners are not allowed to take part in these decisions", criticises Jane Plett of the campaign's Right to the City working group.

The state election administration now has two weeks to count all signatures from the entire four-month collection period. If the initiative has collected 175,000 valid signatures for its cause, there will be a referendum in September. The initiative "Deutsche Wohnen and Co. enteignen" advocates the expropriation of housing corporations with more than 3,000 flats in Berlin, while explicitly excluding cooperatives. In doing so, more than 240,000 flats are to be transferred into the ownership of an institution under public law and managed democratically, transparently and in the public interest, according to the initiative's proposal.

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