
Germany: paper by German Bishops revives debate on living conditions and social decisions of the country

The German Bishops' Conference (DBK) has today published a contribution to the debate on the social significance of housing and living conditions. The title of the essay – “More participation and cohesion through equal living conditions. A contribution by the Church to the debate” – is based on socio-ethical, sociological, legal and economic considerations around the current situation in Germany, with references to the joint message “Strengthening Trust in Democracy”, issued with the Council of the Evangelical Church in 2019. First of all, the paper points to an increase in regional inequality and a subsequent decline in the population in many regions, with the corresponding economic and social effects. At the same time, the importance of rural areas is underlined as a place where many social transformation processes take place, such as in the energy, food and supply sectors. According to Mgr. Franz-Josef Overbeck, president of the DBK's Social Affairs Committee, “even despite an alleged inclination towards individualism in our globalised and digital times, the fact remains that human beings are social beings. Once again, you can see this clearly, by looking at the vast extent of the pandemic and the many impressive signs of solidarity, awareness and recognition”. The document outlines what decisions may be made based on the subsidiarity principle to further strengthen social life at the local and regional levels and considers what constructive advice the Church can give.

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