

### **Flats for a fresh start: Senator Dilek Kolat visits a project for women in need that is supported by Deutsche Wohnen**

**Berlin, 13 January 2016.** Today, the Senator for Employment, Integration and Women's Affairs, Dilek Kolat, visited the project "NeuRaum – housing after the women's refuge" together with the fully authorised representative of Deutsche Wohnen, Dr Kathrin Wolff. "NeuRaum" supports women in finding their way back into an independent way of life after they have stayed in the women's refuge. The project, which is run by Caritas, the official charity of the archdiocese of Berlin [Caritasverband für das Erzbistum Berlin], is financed by the senate department and is also supported by Deutsche Wohnen as its key partner. For this purpose, Deutsche Wohnen makes a total of 14 flats available to enable women to make a fresh start in a home of their own.

As Senator Kolat explained, "For years, Berlin has been a forerunner in Germany when it comes to combatting domestic violence. With the NeuRaum project, we are extending the help we can offer and, at the same time, taking the pressure off women's refuges, which are there for acute emergencies. I am particularly delighted that this commitment is also recognised and supported by private industry. Deutsche Wohnen provides women who have been the victim of violence a social good that is in short supply – housing. I am grateful for this because a major, publicly listed company from Berlin is demonstrating social responsibility in its actions."

Since July 2015, Caritas has been building up the project "NeuRaum – housing after the women's refuge" for women and children from all six of Berlin's women's refuges. It is a project that is funded by the Senate Department for Employment, Integration and Women's Affairs. The purpose of the project is, in particular, to enable women who have been living in women's refuges for some time to move into flats of their own. They often find it difficult to rent a flat independently and are forced to stay in emergency accommodation longer than necessary. For this reason, Caritas rents flats in its own name and makes them available to the women on the basis of a use and occupation contract. In the medium term, it is intended that the women should then take over the tenancy agreement. Currently, the women are supported locally and via the project office in Alt-Lietzow (Charlottenburg) by two female social workers.

In the words of Dr Kathrin Wolff, the fully authorised representative of Deutsche Wohnen AG, "As a Berlin company, we consider it important to act with social responsibility and in the interests of the people of Berlin: not just in the form of our commitment to build strong neighbourhoods in, for example, Hellersdorf, Kreuzberg or Spandau, but also by using our know-how and our residential holdings to help people who are having difficulty on the housing market. Accordingly, we offer housing to women who have suffered domestic violence and also – very much a current issue – young people from problematic circumstances as well."

As a first step, Deutsche Wohnen provided six flats for the NeuRaum project; in the course of this year a further eight will follow. In 2016, NeuRaum would like to offer a total of 22 flats to women from women's refuges. It is planned that more flats will follow. The project means that more than 30 women and children are being given help to return to an independent way of life.

For several years, Deutsche Wohnen has worked together with the registered association Hestia e.V., which helps women who have become the victims of domestic violence. In close consultation with Hestia e.V., Deutsche Wohnen regularly makes suitable housing available and, in this way, supports women in finding their way back to independence.

In addition, Deutsche Wohnen is also involved in many other areas, for example, providing accommodation to refugees. This is done, on the one hand, by letting flats directly to refugees, and, on the other hand, by collaborating with various charities. In Marzahn-Hellersdorf, for example, Deutsche Wohnen works together with JaKus e.V., a Berlin charity that supports young people, to provide flats to young people from conflict areas of the world. This form of help is an extension of Deutsche Wohnen's already successful collaboration with JaKus, which involves providing flats to socially disadvantaged young people in Berlin. Deutsche Wohnen also provides financial support to the integration work done by this charity.

### **About Deutsche Wohnen**

Deutsche Wohnen is one of the leading publicly listed residential property companies in Germany and Europe with a business focus on managing and developing its residential property portfolio. As at 30 September 2015 the portfolio comprised 149,100 units in total, of which 147,000 were residential and 2,100 commercial. Deutsche Wohnen owns flats in four Berlin Modernist housing estates, which were given UNESCO world cultural heritage status in July 2008: White City, the Horseshoe Estate in Britz, the Carl Legien Estate in Prenzlauer Berg and the Ring Estate (Siemensstadt).