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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

“Testing the City” – What’s it like to live in the heart of Europe?

Flat too small? Workspace too expensive? Not enough room for self-development? If the answer to these questions is yes, you’re a suitable candidate for the project “Testing the City – Living and Working in Görlitz”. From January 2019 you have the opportunity to try out life in the German-Polish town of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, located in the very heart of Europe. Interested persons will be offered a flat and a workspace for four weeks free of charge.

Aimed at the self-employed and freelancers who would like to test this city for four weeks, the motivating idea behind the project is that the boom in large cities also has its downsides, namely expensive housing, a lack of space for creative individuals and the self-employed as well as scarcer open space. Young people and families, in particular, are suffering from these developments. *“Our core question is therefore: To what extent can smaller but nevertheless attractive cities beyond the metropolitan regions profit from this development and offer an alternative to stressed city dwellers,”* explains Prof. Robert Knippschild, Head of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Ecological and Revitalizing Urban Transformation (IZS) in Görlitz. Therefore, the project not only considers the residential qualities of Görlitz; participants should also experience and try out the city as a business location and potential place of work. The focus is on the self-employed and freelancers as well as creative individuals, namely people with flexible work schedules who can easily plan a four-week stay in Görlitz.

From January 2019 to June 2020, project participants can make use of three test flats as well as an office workplace in a co-working space, a workshop space in a creative cultural and commercial centre as well as a studio space with accompanying exhibition possibilities in an artistic centre. This offer has been realized by means of a partnership between the IZS and local partners. Thus “Testing the City” is supported by Görlitz’s town planning office and the local municipal housing company KommWohnen Service GmbH. Three additional cooperation partners are the local organizations KoLABORacja e. V., Kühlhaus e. V. and Wildwuchs e. V.

The project is headed by the IZS in Görlitz, which also conducts the accompanying scientific research. During their stay, the test residents will be asked on several occasions to provide information on, for example, their motivation for participating in the project, their requirements for a new living and working location as well as their experiences in Görlitz. The survey results should help to identify factors that make smaller cities and towns in peripheral locations attractive to young, well-educated individuals and which can positively influence the appeal of such locations. From these findings, the team around Professor Robert Knippschild will derive practical recommendations for urban development in Görlitz and other comparable cities.

The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) within the framework of the *“National Urban Development Policy”*.

Information and applications by 31.10.2018 available at: <http://stadt-auf-probe.ioer.eu/en/>

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