



Club culture

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Berlin government pledges €1m to soundproof city's nightclubs

Berlin's club scene makes money for the city - and a lot of noise. A new initiative will soundproof venues, helping to protect clubs from closure

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Clubbers of the world rejoice: the techno mecca of Berlin is to receive a €1m (£900,000) boost from the local government to protect its renowned clubbing culture.

The funding will go towards soundproofing projects, with the aim of improving relations between venues and local residents, based on a similar project in Hamburg. The [noise protection programme](#), which was proposed last year and came into effect on 30 November 2018, indicates the importance of Berlin's nightlife culture and its relevance to the city's economy, including the tourism industry.

According to German newspaper, [Der Tagesspiegel](#), senator Ramona Pop said: "Berlin's club culture is known worldwide and a hallmark of our city."

Venues are each eligible for grants of €50,000, or for “projects of extraordinary importance” up to €100,000. Clubs that receive funding must contribute 10%-20% of the overall grant towards renovation.

Since 2011, [around 170 Berlin nightclubs have reportedly been forced to close](#), many shutting their doors after disputes with residents over noise. The new project will protect many of the famous venues – Berghain, Watergate, Sisyphos, [://about blank](#) and Griessmühle – that have become part of the cultural scene, as well as being tourist attractions.

The list of venues set to receive funding is still to be decided. An independent jury of experts will meet several times in February, May and September 2019 to select the venues that best qualify. The online [application](#) site states that the project is aimed “primarily to subsidise noise reduction measures” while “taking into account the diverse needs of those affected”, and may give priority to “current conflict situations”.

This isn't the first time Berlin's government has stepped in to help the city's clubbing scene. [In 2012](#), €1m was pledged to protect it in the wake of what was called *Clubsterben* (literally club death), helping venues to find new locations and hold fundraising concerts. City politicians were forced to address the significant economic impact of a potential drop in visitors, many of whom are young Europeans who fly to Berlin, sometimes just for one or two nights.

In the UK, London's once-vibrant club scene has fallen on hard times in recent years, with councils implementing strict licencing rules and curfews. However, last year the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, introduced new protections for venues in the [Draft London Plan](#). This included the [Agent of Change](#) principle to ensure developers building new residential properties near clubs, pubs, and live music venues will be responsible for ensuring they are adequately soundproofed and designed to reduce sound, instead of what can be crippling costs falling on the venues.

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