

THE LAST TELEGRAM

If you have never sent a telegram in your life you have just lost your chance, at least in Poland: from October 1, 2018 Polish Post **removed** telegrams from their offer. Perhaps the biggest surprise in this news is the fact that the service of sending a telegram was until recently still available. The telegram was first introduced in 1830s and **gained popularity** first in the USA, Great Britain and Germany. A telegram consists of a maximum of 160 **characters**, similar to a telephone text message. Longer ones were possible, but you had to pay extra. Telegram was fast but expensive - it cost PLN 43,05 to send a telegram in Poland and a courier would deliver it within 6 hours. Less **urgent** messages were cheaper - PLN 27,06 for an 8-hour delivery. Polish Post decided to continue the service for corporate clients who have deals with the operator.

CALIFORNIA BANS STRAWS IN RESTAURANTS

According to earthday.org in 2016 alone people produced about 335 million metric tons of plastic. To make things worse about 50% of this massive amount are single-use products. No wonder that people who care about the environment regularly come up with different ideas to reduce plastic waste. California joins this group with a solution that may sound as one having a rather limited **impact**: the state bans the use of **straws** in dine-in restaurants. To be precise the restaurants will not be allowed to give away straws automatically, without clients asking for them first. As an alternative they can give their customers paper or metal straws. The law will not apply to fast-food restaurants. Food outlets that continue giving away straws automatically will face fines of \$25, a maximum of \$300 a year. Let's hope the law works and, step by step, the world becomes a cleaner place.

POLICE WILL CHECK REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE AND POLICY ONLINE

According to the law when a driver is stopped by the police he has to show them his **driving license**, car's **registration certificate** and a valid **insurance policy**. If he fails to have any of the three with him, he can be punished with a small fine (usually PLN 100) and penalty points. The Ministry of Digital Affairs promised they would give police officers access to an online database with such information so that drivers would not have to carry the documents at all times. If everything goes well the services that have the right to check drivers' documents will use the system from October 1, 2018. The only document that will still be required during a control will be the driving license — not having it on you could mean paying a fine of PLN 50. Car owners have to remember to take registration certificate when going abroad and to the annual inspection at a control station.

JUSTICE AFTER 18 YEARS

The people who raped and later murdered a 15-year-old girl in Miłoszyce almost two decades ago will finally be sent to prison and face **life imprisonment**. The police has recently arrested Norbert B. who at the time of the crime was 19 years old and worked as a guard at a disco club. Today he is (or was) a respected **citizen** who works (worked) as a firefighter. A year ago the police arrested Ireneusz M. and they are still looking for one more person. After it was proven that Tomasz Komenda spent 18 years in prison being completely innocent the police, **left no stone unturned** to identify the perpetrator. To do so they selected all men who were older than 15 at that time and could be connected to the case. All suspects were asked to take DNA tests which led to the arrest of Norbert B. And Ireneusz M. Tomasz Komenda is fighting for one million zloties **compensation** for each year spent behind bars.

FOR&AGAINST

In the future traditional letters will disappear, just like telegrams did.

(How many people still send traditional letters? What institutions send traditional letters? Is an e-mail better than traditional letter in all situations? Why did telegrams disappear?)

The straw ban in California will not effectively help the environment.

(Would banning straws make any difference to the environment? Will the restaurants be afraid of a \$25 penalty? Will the ban on straws be a problem for people?)

It is good that drivers do not have to carry car's registration certificate and insurance policy.

(Are such documents safer when kept at home? Was it a problem for drivers to carry them? Will it be more difficult for the police to track down stolen cars? Is information of this kind safe online?)

A person who committed a serious crime and was not punished can never be really happy.

(Could you sleep well knowing that somebody else is in prison for the crime you committed? Could you keep a serious crime in secret from your family? Could you start a normal family being a murderer and a rapist?)

VOCABULARY:

to remove - usunąć

to gain popularity - zyskać popularność

character - (tu:) znak

urgent - pilny

impact - wpływ

straw - słomka

driving license - prawo jazdy

registration certificate - dowód rejestracyjny

insurance policy - polisa ubezpieczeniowa

life imprisonment - dożywocie

citizen - obywatel

compensation - odszkodowanie

to leave no stone unturned - szukać b.

dokładnie

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How many characters could a telegram include?
2. How fast was a telegram delivered by Polish Post?
3. What plastic product did California decide to ban in dine-in restaurants?
4. How much plastic is produced worldwide every year?
5. What document will the driver have to carry when the police stop him after Oct 1, 2018?
6. What helped the police catch the people guilty of rape in Miłoszyce 20 years ago?

SOURCES BOX

businessinsider.com.pl, an article from September 19, 2018 about telegrams
cnn.com, an article from September 21, 2018 about straw ban in California
auto-swiat.pl, material from September 25, 2018 about new rules concerning registration certificates
wprost.pl, an article from September 26, 2018 about the arrest of a guard from Miłoszyce