

NIK: MATHS MATURA SHOULD BE SUSPENDED

According to present regulations students who graduate from high school are required to pass final exams (matura) in three compulsory subjects: Polish, a foreign language and mathematics. Over the years 2015-2017 Supreme Audit Office (NIK) observed a group of high schools as well as matura exam results and **came to the conclusion** that taking a maths exam should not be **mandatory**, at least for some time. NIK experts draw the attention to the fact that one in six high school graduates fails this exam whereas results in Polish and foreign languages are better. The institution claims it is not exactly the students who are to blame but the system. NIK report points out that in most cases students are not divided into more and less advanced groups and teachers do not **adjust** the pace or difficulty of material to individual needs of students. As the teaching process progresses learners get **discouraged**, which is reflected in marks they get: in as many as 42% cases students' end-of-the-year maths grade in high school was 2.

WHAT FRUSTRATES US MOST?

Poles are often described as a complaining nation, not without a reason. Thanks to a poll conducted by BIG InfoMonitor we get some insight into what frustrates us most. A definite number one on the list are bad **earnings**, since 40% of respondents said they are unhappy about their inadequate salary. This concern is true mostly in the case of young people (18-24) whose needs are big and their position on the job market still not **appreciated** financially by the employers. The second reason which upsets people most is health: 23% complain about weak health and 22% worry about money they have to spend on medicines and treatment. Finally, for many people the source of dissatisfaction is the way they look (11%, number 3 on the list). Less frequent choices included place of living, partner, size of flat or a boring job. Perhaps because of a huge number of universities the least frustrating thing for Poles is their education.

CITIES WITH BIGGEST TRAFFIC JAMS

Inrix has just published the most recent list of cities in which drivers spend most time stuck in traffic jams. Although drivers from Warsaw are probably of a different opinion, our capital city did not top the ranking. Still, Warsaw is the city with most dense traffic in Poland, number 28 in the world. On average, during **rush hours** drivers spend 173 hours a year in traffic jams, which translates to over 7 days. No wonder the average speed does not exceed 20 kph. Nevertheless, having a car in Warsaw is not connected with as much trouble as in number 1 on the list, Bogota, where one can expect to spend 272 hours a year in traffic jams, almost 100 hours more than in Warsaw. A runner-up is Rome, closely followed by Dublin and Paris. Although logic would suggest Asian cities should dominate it is European ones that feature on the list most often. There are many more in the top 20, for instance London, Milan, Bordeaux, Moscow, Florence, Brussels and Naples.

SECOND-EVER US-NORTH KOREA SUMMIT: WILL IT CHANGE ANYTHING?

Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump are set to meet in Hanoi on 27 and 28 February. It will be the second high-level meeting between US and North Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953. The first one took place last summer in Singapore and there have been mixed reactions as to the **tangible** results of that meeting. So far the US objective has been to force North Korea to abandon their nuclear program and North Korea's was to convince the US and its allies to remove economic sanctions **imposed** on them. Although the Singapore summit was a diplomatic success for both **parties**, US Army General Robert Abrams gives it a **sobering assessment**: the recent winter trainings of the North Korean army were the same size as in previous years, while the US-South Korea ones were significantly smaller. The good news is that North Korea hasn't conducted a nuclear test in a year, which makes their program far less dangerous. So the world seems to be a safer place after all. This time around the US will be asking North Korea to supply a list of nuclear scientists in order to see who is actually behind their nuclear program. How realistic is the expectation that NK provides such list and if such list has anything to do with reality, remains to be seen.



FOR&AGAINST

High school final exam from mathematics should be compulsory.

(Is maths more difficult than other subjects? Should there be any compulsory subjects? Is mathematics useful in life?)

Being short of money is the most common source of frustration.

(What kind of people get frustrated over money? Can work or school be more frustrating?)

If you live in a big city it does not pay off to have a car.

(Is it possible to travel comfortably in a car in a big city? What problems do car owners in big cities face? What costs are connected with having a car in a big city?)

North Korea stopped being a threat to the world for good.

(Why has North Korea change its attitude? Will North Korea really abandon its nuclear programme?)

VOCABULARY:

to come to a conclusion -dojść do wniosku

mandatory - obowiązkowy

to adjust - dostosować

to discourage - zniechęcać

earnings - zarobki

to appreciate - doceniać

rush hours - godziny szczytu

tangible - namacalny, rzeczywisty

party - strona [np. konfliktu]

to impose - nakładać [np. sankcje]

a sober assessment - trzeźwa ocena [sytuacji]

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why does NIK think obligatory maths matura should be suspended?
2. What are the compulsory subjects of high school final exams in Poland?
3. What frustrates Poles most?
4. What is the city with biggest traffic jams?
5. How many days a year does a citizen of Warsaw spend in traffic jams?
6. When did the Korean War end?

SOURCES BOX

polskieradio24.pl, an article from February 19, 2019 about final exam from mathematics

businessinsider.com.pl, an article from February 19, 2019 about things which frustrate Poles

businessinsider.com.pl, an article from February 18, 2019 about cities with biggest traffic jams

cnn10.com, a February 14, 2019 material on the upcoming US-North Korea summit