



Sikorski attacked over Berlin speech

FM accused of advocating a 'Fourth Reich'

Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski has caused fury within opposition party Law and Justice (PiS) after a controversial speech in which he called for Germany to take the lead in saving the euro-zone from the debt crisis in Berlin this week.

Spitting feathers and baying for blood, the conservative party stated it would organise a march in protest of the speech, which it condemned as an indication of the foreign minister's intent to surrender Polish sovereignty to an old historical foe.

"A march will be held on December 13 against the policies presented by the head of the foreign ministry," said Law and Justice leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski. "Against the constitution, and without consulting with parliament, Minister Sikorski went incredibly far with these declarations, [which were] made in a foreign country."

"Many Poles do not want Polish independence to be a mere 20-year interlude," he added.

Mr Kaczynski also said his party would campaign to get Mr Sikorski hauled before the Constitutional Tribunal on the grounds that he apparently broke his oath of office by saying what he did.

Stoking the fires of history, PiS MP Joachim Brudziński said the foreign minister was "advocating a Fourth Reich



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Sikorski has ruffled PiS feathers with his recent comments in Berlin

and German hegemony".

Despite the seething anger in PiS circles, Civic Platform (PO) took steps to both downplay the speech and stand by the foreign minister.

The party stressed that the Sikorski speech was "unofficial" but at the same time admitted that PM Donald Tusk and the cabinet had given it the thumbs up before it echoed around the Berlin conference room.

"The direction and the main points of his speech have been accepted by me and are the result of many months of work by my government and by Poland's presidency [of

the European Union]", said Mr Tusk at a press conference.

Away from the heated and divided atmosphere of Polish politics, the speech was well received in the rest of Europe, with German commentators lining up to praise what they regarded as timely call for action from a respected voice.

Piotr Kaczynski (no relation to the PiS leader), an expert in EU affairs from the Centre of European Policy Studies, told the PAP news agency that the speech showed that Mr Sikorski had become one of the main leaders "in the debate over the future of Europe".

NATIONAL

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Hungry hotels hike up prices

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According to research, the most drastic price hike is for a private apartment in Gdynia's Sea Towers which will set visitors back a sky-high PLN 9,500 a night, compared to the normal PLN 349.

WARSAW

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Fanzone fanfare

Warsaw's Plac Defilad will put its Mini-Fanzone into operation for a live transmission of Friday's draw for Euro 2012 in Kiev. Footy fans who are already in party mode will be able to watch the draw – the first 3,000 will get into a temporary hall, the rest will be stuck outside watching on a mega diode screen. There will also be live bands to help keep the punters warm by giving them something to jump around to.

SPORT

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Olympics beckon

Poland's volleyball team is on the brink of qualification for the London Olympics after eight rounds of the World League taking place in Japan. Superficially, their position looks great, as they top the table and a top three finish means qualification. Unfortunately, their remaining three opponents are Italy, Brazil and Serbia – the toughest teams in the competition.

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From the editor



If there has ever been a week which highlights the complete lunacy and baffling logic of the main opposition party it was this one.

Any right-minded citizen would agree with Mr Kaczynski's comments that Poland needs to stand up and fight the new regulations which state Poles must soon pay 23 percent VAT on their children's clothes.

The new ruling shows bad form by the European Court of Justice and the PiS leader makes a good point - especially when you consider the fact that Poland already pays 8 percent VAT on its kids' outfits and certain countries like the UK and Ireland (quite rightly) pay nothing. Mr Kaczynski may just be showing signs of mellowing in his old age.

But objection m'lord! No sooner is a bit of compassion shown, than Law and Justice goes and outdoes itself in the idiocy stakes by suggesting that the death penalty is re-introduced.

Now call me old-fashioned but surely a party that is trying desperately to claw back any shred of dignity it had before the fallout over the last few weeks should really spend a little more time thinking these things through before it opens its flapping mouth.

While the death penalty suggestions might help keep a few of the old guard satisfied, they are surely not going to win the party any new fans and will probably end up turning some existing supporters off in the process.

There have been a few complaints over the years that this column is too-often used to slag off Mr Kaczynski and his hapless bunch of merry men. But let me say this. As long as they continue to show themselves up on an almost-weekly basis, they'll get the column inches they rightly deserve.

Quotes of the week

"You can say 'murzyn', dark-skinned or Afropolak. It's no problem." Black Civic Platform MP John Godson after offending Mamadou Diouf of Poland's African Communities Committee on TV by saying 'murzyn' (a word some consider neutral, others derogatory).

"Tusk is still haunted by the Wehrmacht business." Janusz Palikot, explains how false allegations made in the past (that the PM's grandfather offered to join the Wehrmacht in WWII) are the reason Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski has been handed the lead role in Polish-German relations.

"I look forward to his resignation." PiS MP Joachim Brudziński puts the pressure on Sikorski over his recent speech in Berlin.

Have Your Say

Re: PiS expulsions upheld

They can't do any worse than past Polish governments. It may even be a breath of fresh air blowing across Poland.

Mike Thomas - Windsor, England

Mike, Your comment doesn't make sense. Do you have any grasp of Polish current events? Solidarna Polska does not lead the government. The group broke away from the opposition party. And it certainly doesn't represent a "breath of fresh air blowing across Poland". Ziobro and company came to the realization PiS cannot win an election with Kaczynski at the helm, which is obvious. But Ziobro has the backing of Tadeusz Rydzyk which indicates Solidarna Polska is hardly a "breath of fresh air".

Tomasz - Pittsford, NY, USA

"A breath of fresh air blowing across Poland". Are you serious? More like the stench of intolerance, with a big dollop of anti-Semitism and homophobia to complete the foul odour. You could only describe this bunch of extreme right wingers, as a breath of fresh air, if you consider your own British National Party, English Defence League and UKIP to be anything other than neo-fascists and Little Englanders.

Jestem Gejem - Opole

This week in history

1867 (5.12) - Jozef Pilsudski is born. Widely regarded as the man who helped Poland regain independence in 1918, he died of liver cancer in 1935 but is remembered fondly and has a number of statues in his honour around the country.

1926 (4.12) - The Polish football league is founded. Today Polish football is organised into a number of divisions including the national 1st League, the 2nd Level, two regional 3rd Levels, 18 regional 4th Levels and 49 regional 5th Leagues.

1975 (5.12) - Warsaw's Central train station opens its doors. Built to replace 'Warsaw Główna', construction began in 1972 and the station is regarded as one of the Polish People's Republic's major projects.

The NPE weekend QUIZ

A real treat for rock opera fans this week as we give away a double invitation for 'The Knights of the Cross' show taking place in Gdynia on December 15.



Based on the epic novel, this rock opera features a number of well-known and much-loved Polish actors and vocalists. Names such as Maciej Balcar (Dzem), Maciej Piekarski (TSA) and Robert Gadowski (IRA) all grace the stage, guaranteeing a storming night which won't leave you disappointed. For a chance to get your mitts on the tickets, just tell us which author wrote the novel...

You know the drill by now folks. Send those answers to the following address: editor@newpolandexpress.pl

Left on the attack

An investigation is underway after allegations that a number of anti-fascist websites and internet forums are promoting and encouraging violent behaviour.

According to Fakt, Human Rights Ombudsman Irena Lipowicz released an official statement earlier this week which said the investigation would be looking to see whether sites such as Antifa Poland were actively inciting brutality.

Recent reports by Rzeczpospolita claim that; "Anarchists and leftists are proud of their violent attacks and the fact they beat up people suspected of having right-wing sympathies. They happily exchange information about various demonstrations, which they intend to break up and share tactics on how to keep fighting with the police."

November 11 witnessed riots during Warsaw's Independence Day march as leftists clashed with the far-right, which featured members of the National Radical Camp (ONR) and All Polish Youth (MW). In total 210 people were arrested by police including 92 Germans.

Rzeczpospolita claims that one post on the site's forum describes a woman who was beaten up who had "close-cropped hair and a bomber jacket". It goes on to add how some were bragging that they beat up three men just for "looking like nationalists".

PiS calls for death penalty

There was controversy this week as Law and Justice called for the re-establishment of the death penalty for "exceptionally cruel murders" despite adamant opposition from the Catholic Church.

"We would like to reinstate the death penalty for exceptionally cruel murders, and in general, increase the punishment for murders," said Law and Justice (PiS) leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, as reported by news station TVN24.

"The state is there to protect honest citizens and fight crime with determination and, if need be, through the use of very tough measures," the PiS chief added.

Law and Justice has always made fighting crime a central tenant of its existence but the call for the death penalty marked a more radical departure from its conventional script.

The last execution took place in 1988, after which a moratorium came into effect, with the death penalty finally being scrubbed from the statute books in 1998.

Although since then various politicians, including the late President Lech Kaczynski, have raised the idea of bringing it back, the idea has always crashed head on into the Catholic Church and its steadfast opposition to the death penalty on moral grounds.

And on this occasion too, the proposal has drawn immediate criticism.

"A politician who declares a commitment to Catholic values but at the same time

declares himself a supporter of the death penalty is against the Church," Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek told the news magazine Wprost. "Such a person goes against Christianity."

Even Pope Benedict took it upon himself to remind the faithful of the Church's opposition to the death penalty.

But despite the high-ranking and influential criticism, PiS remains determined to push for executions.

"I believe that in the public realm authorities have a certain amount of autonomy," said Adam Hofman, spokesman for the party. "While I listen to the voice of the Catholic Church, as a politician I believe the case for the death penalty should be stressed."

PiS also dismissed another potential source of opposition - the European Union.

"There are no provisions in the EU that prohibit the death penalty," said Mr Kaczynski. "Just because the elites of the EU are against it doesn't mean we have to be. We are a sovereign state."

But Poland has already ratified Protocol 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which restricts the application of the death penalty to time of war or the "imminent threat of war".

This, combined with the opposition of other parties, including the governing Civic Platform (PO), means that the PiS call could struggle to make serious political headway.

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FA Corruption scandal

The reputation of Polish football got another dragging through the mud this week after the head of the Polish football association found himself mired in a corruption scandal.

Grzegorz Lato, once a star of the great Polish team of the 1970s, had to appear before a parliamentary committee after a video surfaced apparently showing him and his deputy, Zdzisław Krecina, talking about how they could profit from the construction of a new headquarters for the association.

Mr Lato denied any wrongdoing before calling the meeting to halt because, he said, he had to fly to Ukraine.

He flew knowing that Joanna Mucha, the new sports minister, wants his head on a platter. On seeing the video, Ms Mucha said it was "clear and obvious to any normal person that anybody participating in the recordings [should hand in their resignation]; on the other hand I expect dismissals will take place."

Krecina had already been shown the door, although the football association (PZPN) failed to provide an explanation for his dismissal.

But it looks as if Mr Lato might be saved owing to next year's Euro 2012 football championship. With just seven months to go before kickoff, the government appears to have opted to stick with him despite the corruption allegation in preference to dealing with the embarrassing diplomatic fallout his sacking would induce.

"We are in a very particular time before the Euro 2012 and any abrupt moves are not advisable," Paweł Grasz, the government spokesman, told Polish radio. "But when the games end, I think we will have to heal this situation somehow."

The scandal has delivered another blow to the increasingly creaking and rickety PZPN.

Over the past few years it has had to deal with a never ending stream of corruption and match fixing allegations that have led to hundreds of officials, referees and players being jailed or coming under investigation.

The PZPN also faces accusation that it has done too little to counter the culture of hooliganism that still plagues the Polish game.

A public opinion poll by Millward Brown SMG/KRC found that 52 percent of Poles want the PZPN dissolved while only 36 percent opposed the idea. In the same poll 67 percent of respondents said that Lato should resign.

Double death tragedy

There was tragic news in Lower Silesia this week when a mother and daughter were both found hanging in a church in what looks to be a joint suicide.

According to reports on Wiadomości24, police in the town of Olesnica were alerted to the deaths on Wednesday morning by a man who had been walking his dog past St. John the Apostle Church.

Initially believing it to be part of a church display, the man decided to take a closer look, only to be presented with the tragic scene.

Reports state that the two women were Wanda K. (aged 76) and Jadwiga M. (aged 53), both of whom had previously tried to take their own lives and had in the past received psychiatric treatment only a few hundred metres from the building.

The exact circumstances behind the hangings are not yet known and local

authorities are currently investigating the sad incident.

"Neither of the women left behind any note or any form of indication as to why this happened which may suggest it was some kind of religious reason," says Grzegorz Krawczyk, a press officer for Olesnica police.

"The main centre, including the Basilica, is monitored. But unfortunately the place where this dreadful event occurred is not covered by cameras, so it was impossible to prevent it from happening."

The tragedy has understandably had quite an impact on the town's inhabitants.

Those who knew the two have told reporters they lived modest lives, although appeared to have enough to survive. However while the older lady received a pension, the women were apparently reluctant to accept any help or assistance from neighbours or the social services.

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IN BRIEF

Anti-gay logo appeal

An appeal was launched this week against the decision to allow far-right group the National Rebirth of Poland (NOP) to register its apparently racist and homophobic symbols as their official logos.

According to *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the prosecution made the appeal after last week's news that the group were granted official use of both its 'Celtic cross' and its 'traffic-sign' style symbol which features two stickmen having sex with a red line running through the middle.

"In our opinion by allowing this, the District Court in Warsaw has now assured the group legal protection," said the prosecution earlier in the week.

The case is now in the hands of Warsaw's Court of Appeal.

Drunk, disabled and disorderly

A disabled man is due in court after being involved in a road accident while operating his electric wheelchair under the influence of alcohol.

The 39-year-old, from the south west town of Niemcza, was caught by police in the bizarre incident after colliding with a moving car, being driven by a 32-year-old woman.

Fortunately nobody was injured in the accident.

Boeing 767 report released

A preliminary report on the Boeing 767 that crash-landed in Warsaw on November 1, has revealed a circuit problem was responsible for the hydraulic system failure that prevented the plane's wheels from being released.

The report also states that prior to the aircraft leaving America, all the correct inspections were carried out as required by LOT airlines.

Based on the information acquired so far, the pilots and crew "acted in accordance to procedures", Maciej Lasek of the investigating commission told TVN24. He did add however that this will only be known categorically when the final report is released.

Battle of Britain funeral

This week saw the funeral of Tadeusz Sawicz, the last surviving Polish Battle of Britain fighter pilot who passed away on October 19, aged 97.

There were a number of ceremonies held, with the final one taking place at Warsaw's Powazki Military Cemetery which was attended by members of the pilot's family and Deputy Defence Minister Czeslaw Mroczek.

According to *Fakt*, the ashes of Mr Sawicz, who was born in Warsaw, were flown over from Canada where he had been living in a residential nursing home in the province of Ontario.

The brave pilot will be best remembered for flying a Hurricane in the Battle of Britain, where he reportedly shot down three enemy aircraft and damaged four more.

Hungry hotels hike up prices

With Euro 2012 fast approaching many hotels and private apartments in the host cities are boosting their prices, some as much as 27 times the normal price.

According to research carried out by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the most drastic price hike is for a private apartment in Gdynia's Sea Towers which will set visitors back a sky-high PLN 9,500 a night, compared to the normal PLN 349.

In Gdansk, one night in Kobza House was quoted at PLN 4,750 (normal price PLN 323) whilst in Wroclaw the top price found by the paper is PLN 7,990.

Mikolaj Piotrowski, a spokesman for PL.2012 which is coordinating Poland's preparations for the event, believes that if hotels are not careful, their greed may end up costing them in the long run.

"The cup is indeed a great opportunity for us to increase the country's tourist

industry. Euro 2012 can no doubt help boost the number of tourists who will visit Poland, however this depends on how the tournament is received. Hotels repeatedly raising their prices is very short-sighted and could cause them to suffer in the future, and have a knock-on effect on the industry as a whole."

To see the consequences of such hikes, one only has to look back to Euro 2008 where hotels raised their prices so much prior to the competition that many rooms remained empty. Even a reduction in price nearer the time had little effect as many fans had already made reservations away from the capital.

"We recently met with representatives from Holland and Sweden's Supporters' Association," adds Piotrowski. "They told us that if prices are too high, fans will choose to stay away from the host cities or even in Germany. This way we all lose out."



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WITHOUT RHYME OR REGION



The Polish National Bank issued a commemorative banknote this week celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Marie Curie

winning the Nobel prize. And in writing that sentence, I've just offended some people.

You see, for some Poles it's a point of honour always to stress that it's Marie, or Maria Sklodowska-Curie. The argument is that by removing the Sklodowska part, we're allowing France to claim the Polish scientist as their own.

There was a heated exchange recently in Warsaw City Hall as councillors debated a proposal to name the newly-built North Bridge after Marie/Maria. A PiS councillor referred to her as Curie-Sklodowska, and was instantly corrected by an angry Anna Nehrebecka of PO that the Sklodowska part comes first.

Marie Curie herself did use the Sklodowska-Curie name, but I confess, probably like most foreigners, I'd never heard of the double-barrelled version before I came to Poland. I did know she was Polish, though – so I think Ms Nehrebecka really doesn't have much to

worry about. Curie, let's remember, gave the world Polonium, and that's testament enough, surely?

This name game can be taken to even sillier extremes, though, and I don't mean Szopen for Chopin. No, I once proofread a book where the author in all seriousness referred to someone called Joseph Conrad-Korzeniowski.

Now that suggestion brings to mind the story of an English student who back-translated the Polish title of Conrad's classic "Jadro Ciemności" into English as "Testacles of Darkness." It's a load of bollocks.

MAZOWIECKIE

Joint tickets dislocate



The system of joint tickets operated between Warsaw and as many as thirty surrounding districts is in danger of collapse following a row between

outlying councils and the ZTM, Warsaw's public transport company.

This Thursday the three month deadline for termination of contracts passed for the districts of Zabek, Zielonek, Kobylka and Wolomin, with around 125,000 residents between them. As of March 1 they all face a possible doubling in fares and the necessity of purchasing separate rail and bus tickets for the daily commute.

Robert Perkowski, mayor of Zabek, yesterday handed ZTM director Leszek Ruta a notice to cancel the current inter-district agreement. In a letter to Ruta he complains of the dire conditions faced by passengers. "Only the most desperate or physically able passengers manage to get onboard trains. There are numerous examples of people fainting or being crushed in the crowds. We're being asked to pay a 30 percent increase in subsidy and our residents are left behind on the platforms. Where are the new carriages? In our area only old wrecks operate," moaned the mayor.

Director Ruta's response is to cancel the agreements with other districts further down the line, causing widespread

consternation. "Zabek is closest to Warsaw, so I've been forced to cancel agreements all the way along the Wolomin line," Ruta told reporters. "We'll continue talking. I hope the residents apply pressure to their local councillors," he continued.

Drink drive record smashed!

Radom police this week arrested a 42-year-old man for drink driving who broke all records – hitting a massive 0.06 percent blood-alcohol level. The arrested man also had no valid license, having lost it for previous drink driving offences.

Police responded to calls that there was a drunk driving round a Radom estate and shortly after pulled over the driver of a Ford on ul. Bejna. The man had already hit a nearby fence and street sign. But the record reading had them gasping in amazement.

"That's supposed to be a lethal dose for a human, and yet you have to say that the man was pretty lucid in his chat with officers," commented Andrzej Lewicki for Radom police. The man claimed his drinking was due to family problems.

Fanzone fanfare

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POMORSKIE

Kurski out!



The Law and Justice party (PiS) moved this week to eject rebel members from their constituency offices, leaving controversial Euro MP Jacek Kurski

without a surgery. Party bosses in Elbląg moved on Wednesday to remove the ex-PiS stalwart from the office he has been sub-letting from them for many years. Kurski was recently ejected from the party and is currently in the process of setting up a rival right-wing formation along with Zbigniew Ziobro.

"It would be a rather awkward situation after what's happened, if we were to share our headquarters with him. He did contribute to our rent, but given the situation we decided to terminate his contract," Leonard Krasulski, PiS boss in Elbląg told reporters.

Cleaning up for Euros

Tri-city health authority Sanepid has announced increased testing of the food outlets best placed to make money during the upcoming Euro championships. The food outlets will be required to clean up before they can clean up, if they want to make a fast buck of the visiting footy fans.

A friendly letter has been sent to selected pubs and restaurants, announcing, "Hello, your business has been selected for Euro 2012 checks. From now on, we will be visiting you every month for an inspection." One restaurateur told reporters that the visits will increase again, to once every two weeks in the run up to the championships.

"The aim of our activities is to ensure the safety of guests and to avoid any mass food poisoning incidents," explained Regina Szymanska of Gdansk Sanepid. Approximately 160 food outlets have been identified for increased attention on the basis of criteria laid out by the chief health and safety officer.

Ciechowski memorial stolen

A 28-year-old Tczew man faces up to five years in prison for stealing the metal plaque outside the house where Grzegorz Ciechowski lived. Ciechowski was a major music star in Poland, leading the group Republika before a successful solo career.

The plaque was stolen over a week ago from the house where Ciechowski was born, and the culprit apprehended this Tuesday morning. After taking the commemorative plaque, the man filed off the lettering before selling the metal for scrap. Police soon located the missing item, though, and that led them straight to the thief.

WARMINSKO-MAZURSKIE

Bog tragedy



A 16-year-old girl died of hypothermia after being abandoned in the middle of a forest swamp by an 18-year-old colleague in the middle of the night.

The young man made it home safely, but said nothing to anyone for three days about the whereabouts of his younger friends, despite a massive search being launched.

The tragedy began last Friday when a group of friends were returning from a bonfire organised in the woods outside Ostroda. The pair decided to take a different route home to everyone else, taking a short-cut through the bog. What happened next is unclear. The two clearly got into difficulties and at some point the boy decided to leave her behind and returned home alone. "She definitely fell over several times when they were lost in the swamp," commented a Red Cross rescuer who took part in the later search for the girl. During the night, temperatures fell below zero.

The alarm was raised the following morning when the girl's friends stated trying to contact her and a full-scale search began only a full 24 hours after she went missing. A police helicopter, sniffer dogs and over a hundred volunteers were unable to find her. Her colleague only came

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forward three days later to tell authorities where he had left his younger friend. In the meantime, she had frozen to death, alone in the swamp.

Now, the young man is facing criminal charges. "He knew the situation, but he wasn't interested in what happened to the girl, he just looked out for himself," commented Zdzisław Lukasiak for the Ostroda Prosecution Service. He now faces up to three years in prison.

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OPOLSKIE

Fake pregnancies, fake abortions



Opole Regional Court this Tuesday sentenced a gynaecologist to three years in prison for defrauding his patients. First the doctor lied to patients that they were pregnant, then he charged them for fictional abortions. He was arrested in the act of receiving money from one of the women involved. On top of the custodial sentence, the man is also banned from practising his profession for a period of seven years.

"In delivering his verdict, the judge was guided by the severe degree of social harm caused by the accused's actions as well as the fact that his guilt was beyond question," commented Ewa Kosowska-Korniak, press officer for Opole Regional Court.

During routine examinations Dariusz P. would persuade his patients they were in fact pregnant. He then took advantage of their surprise to offer them a procedure to abort the pregnancy, an offer the women were happy to accept. He was caught red-handed when one of the women he offered an abortion to decided to inform police, as she was certain she couldn't be pregnant.

Dariusz P. has a previous conviction for carrying out illegal abortions. In 2002 he was handed a one-year suspended sentence and banned from acting as a doctor for two years.

Female stalker

A 33-year-old Opole woman was arrested by police this week for stalking dozens of other women via vulgar text messages and menacing silent calls. Under new legislation, rather than a fine, the woman faces up to three years in prison. Police were alerted by a 35-year-old woman from Opole, who went to them accusing the woman of stalking her.

Officers soon established who was responsible, however, it soon became clear to investigators that this was only the tip of the iceberg, as they established the woman was similarly intimidating as many as forty other women.

"She found her victims' numbers in her partner's work phone. She would call all the numbers on the mobile and, if she heard a female voice, she suspected it was a potential rival and began sending insults and threats," explained Milewski.

So far, nearly 20 women have declared their readiness to prosecute the woman. "We're making use of the assistance of the mobile phone operator to establish just how many people fell victim to her stalking," Milewski concluded.

LODZKIE

Wife catches killer



Atomaszow Mazowiecki woman led police to her husband's killer after he was killed by a lorry in a hit and run incident one month ago. Not prepared to wait for police action to trace the driver, she hired a private detective and used the Internet to hunt down the man responsible. The arrest of the driver was all down to the persistence of the victim's family.

The woman, identified by TVN24 only as "Marzena", lost her husband when his car broke down on the way home from a business trip. Together with a colleague, wearing reflective jackets, they were heading to a nearby petrol station when they were hit by the HGV, which failed to stop.

"We were walking so as to keep as far off the road as possible, so as to be safe. Unfortunately, it didn't work," the victim's colleague Piotr Matysik, who was also injured in the incident, told reporters.

The only evidence left at the scene of the crime was a large, red piece of the HGV's front bumper. Rather than wait for police to investigate, Marzena hired a private detective and herself logged on to websites dedicated to HGVs. In less than a month, she found her chief suspect. He explained that he didn't realise anything had happened and that he thought he had hit a barrier.

The man has a previous conviction for drunk driving and was banned for one year in 2004. On Monday, a court will decide whether or not to remand him in custody.

Send comments
and letters to
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Economy continues to rise

Poland's economy was branded 'sensational' by the head of the National Bank of Poland this week, when compared to the Eurozone.

According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the economy rose 4.2 percent year-on-year during the third quarter of 2011 - a figure that beats many analysts' predictions of 4 percent.

"The condition of the Polish economy against the background of Europe is simply sensational," Marek Belka, head of the National Bank of Poland (NBP), told TVN24.

He went on to state that the strength of

the country's economy was particularly good news for some of the weaker nations in the Eurozone, such as Portugal, Italy and Spain.

One of the main forces behind the rise has been an increase in domestic demand which rose 3.2 percent during the same period. "The surprise investment rate growth of 8.5 percent has also been the largest since the second quarter of 2008," claims Przemyslaw Kwiecien, chief economist for XTB.

Analysts state that growth is expected to slow down next year, although this change is not likely to be serious.

PiS: "Cheap clothes for kids"

Law and Justice has demanded that Poland does everything it can to avoid having to hike up VAT on children's clothes in January.

New regulations passed by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) last year mean that Poland will be forced to raise the VAT such items from its current 8 percent to a much steeper 23 percent.

However the Law and Justice (PiS) leader has stated that the country should do everything in its power to fight this ruling, say reports by TVN.

Joined on stage by various PiS MPs and their young children, Mr Kaczynski

said at a press conference, "We are going to demand that the ruling is withdrawn and we need to use every European Union procedure to overturn this unfavourable decision."

"One of PM Tusk's main points was that Poland would keep clothes cheap for kids."

However Civic Platform (PO) MP and economist Pawel Olszewski has dismissed the notion.

"PiS either consciously, or due to a lack of competence, does not realise this is a requirement of the EU. We are simply adapting to EU regulations."



What's going on in Poland?



NBP OFFICIAL CURRENCY RATES 02/12/2011		
Currency	Symbol	Mid-rate
Canadian Dollar	1 CAD	3,2839
Czech Koruna	1 CZK	0,1771
Danish Krone	1 DKK	0,6029
Euro	1 EUR	4,4812
Hungarian Forint	100 HUF	1,4725
Japanese Yen	100 JPY	4,2696
Norwegian Krone	1 NOK	0,5745
Pound Sterling	1 GBP	5,2165
Russian Ruble	1 RUB	0,1079
Swedish Krona	1 SEK	0,4927
Swiss Franc	1 CHF	3,6275
US Dollar	1 USD	3,3235

IN NUMBERS

PLN 1 trln

The amount of savings Polish households have, as reported by Rzeczospolita.

2.5%

Finance Minister Jacek Rostowski's GDP growth predictions for next year, according to news agency PAP.

BUSINESS IN BRIEF

Top times for agricultural

The total sale of agricultural land in Poland is likely to reach 120,000 hectares by the end of 2011 - the largest amount in nine years according to the Agricultural Property Agency (APA).

With the figures so high up on last year's 97,000 hectares, the agency is able to pay PLN 700 mln as its final instalment of this year's state budget - the total for the year being PLN 3 bln, reports Puls Biznesu.


In addition to this, the agency states that the price per hectare during the third quarter of 2011 is 13.8 percent higher than the same time last year.

Illegal software rife?
















New statistics suggest over two-thirds of Polish companies believe that purchasing software via Internet auctions is perfectly legal, states Rzeczospolita.

The study, carried out by Ipsos Public Affairs, also found that 39 percent of businesses considered obtaining software through file-sharing networks a legitimate act. If the research is to be believed, it may mean that many of the country's firms are using illegal software (perhaps unintentionally) rather than purchasing it over the counter.

● **Screenings:** Chico & Rita, Caroline, Wall-e, Ponyo
 ● **Workshops:** animation with puppets & painting on glass
 ● **Interactive show** Animation Now!
 ● **Karaoke Night** with animation
 ● **And more!**



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7-11.12.2011
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SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND from In Your Pocket



Last week a visiting friend and I took a few days to visit Paris and flee the country in anticipation of Andrzejki (The Eve of St. Andrew's Day) on November 29. As single women we were the target market for the holiday, which is meant to sort out when and who you will marry. I've learned that, after a certain age (23) nothing is considered more fearsome or tragic than to be a single woman in Poland, so a holiday solely devoted to getting everyone hitched makes sense.

Once upon a time St. Andrew's Day, which marks the beginning of Advent, was believed to be when the spirits of the ancestors were at their most accessible. With marriage naturally the most important thing on a woman's

mind, single gals would gather around thirteen candles (instead of Cosmos) and call the spirits forth for answers. Today the most common tradition seems to require more accoutrements: melted wax is poured through the eye of a skeleton key into a bowl of cold water, and the resulting shape is analysed by being held in front of a light to cast a shadow. That lumpy shadow is supposed to reveal your future partner – I know ladies, very exciting. I've always dreamed that my future spouse would resemble a pile of cooled wax; they come Clooney-shaped, right?

In the six months I've been in Poland I can easily say I've embraced and thoroughly enjoyed all the holidays I've gotten to experience – it certainly doesn't hurt that each one seems to have a special dessert associated with it that you simply must try. But this old-fashioned tradition

is one – like forcing single women to march out and catch the bouquet at a wedding to see who gets married next – I could do without.

While the whole idea of divining a gal's future mate (because what other worth does she have?) through ancient rituals seems sort of insulting to me, the Polish women I know aren't affronted but wisely choose to use the occasion as a reason to celebrate being young, single and able to select whichever dishy club-goer vaguely resembles the waxy pile they left at home. As such, many Polish bars and clubs take advantage of the holiday and have Andrzejki-themed parties this weekend, so if you're in the country be sure to check them out. Thankfully while I might be above having spirits suggest a mate, I'm not above doing it the old fashioned way: fuelled by booze and bad decisions in a local bar.

Gdansk

04.12 Sunday - Enej

Parlament, ul. Św. Ducha 2, www.parlament.com.pl ▶ Concert starts at 19:30. Tickets 25zł. Available at the Parlament box office (Open 09:00 - 19:00).

Krakow

07.12 Wednesday - Saxon

Klub Studio, ul. Budryka 4, tel. (+48) 12 617 45 45, www.klubstudio.pl ▶ Concert starts at 20:00. Tickets 100/110zł. Available at Empik Megastore, Rynek Główny 5 (Open 09:00 - 22:00) and www.ticketpro.pl.

Lodz

06.12 Tuesday - Rihanna

Atlas Arena, ul. Bandurskiego 7 (Łódź Kaliska), tel. (+48) 12 617 45 45, www.livenation.pl ▶ Concert starts at 20:00. Tickets 154-1550zł. Available at www.eventim.pl.

Sopot

03.12 Saturday - 20 Years Of the Sfinks

Sfinks700, Al. Mamuszki 1, tel. (+48) 12 617 45 45, www.sfinks700.com ▶ Event starts at 20:00. Tickets 25/50zł. Available at Papyryka, ul. Grunwaldzka 11 (Open 15:00 - 04:00, Mon, Tue, Sun 15:00 - 01:00).

Warsaw

03.12 Saturday - Our Class

Theatre On Wola, ul. Kasprzaka 22 (Wola), tel. (+48) 22 632 24 78, www.teatrnowoli.pl ▶ Events start at 19:00. Tickets 40/60zł. Available at Theatre On Wola's box office (12:00 - 19:00) and before the event.

06.12 Tuesday - Pepsi Rocks! Pablopavo

Hard Rock Cafe, ul. Złota 59 (Złote Tarasy), tel. (+48) 22 222 07 00, www.pepsirocks.pl ▶ Concert starts at 21:00. Tickets 32/22zł. Available at www.ticketpro.pl and before the event.

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Gdansk

07.12 Wednesday - 11.12 Sunday

Animation Now!

www.animationnow.pl

This will be the 3rd time out for the Animation Now! Festival. On show will be all that's best in contemporary animation to an audience including professionals, students, animation fans, teenagers and kids as well as their parents. Over five days there will be reviews, workshops, meetings with artists and audio-visual shows in venues all over the Tricity. Projections will be taking place in Kino Kameralne, Gdańsk, ul. Długa 57 and Film Club, Gdynia, ul. Waszyngtona 1 and admission for most projections is free! The festival's programme is as varied as you could wish for. The films range from Spanish romance 'Chico & Rita' to the splendid 'Wall-E' and the mighty Hayao Miyazaki's 'Ponyo', a mid-European animation section and an educational film about the life of Chopin. There are special installation projects including a fascinating interactive video mapping device. Check it out!

► Admission free. Full schedule available at www.animationnow.pl.

Warsaw

03.12 Saturday - The Great Illumination 2011
 Pl. Zamkowy, tel. (+48) 22 222 07 00, www.estrada.com.pl

As every year come to Pl. Zamkowy to see the great Christmas tree lights. This year the inspiration comes from the literature of winter topics, the show will be a mixture of music, dance and street theatre art. Everything will start very innocently as among the crowd appear fairy tale characters. Later the Winter Queen might appear, she might not - if she doesn't come, there won't be any presents or illuminations. It will finish with a firework show. The event will be lead by Robert Janowski and you will hear such artists as Patrycja Kazadi, Magda Welc and Halina Mlynkova. Great stuff. ► Event starts at 16:00. Admission free.

Poznan

06.12 Tuesday - 23.12 Friday - Poznań Bethlehem
 Stary Rynek, tel. (+48) 12 617 45 45

Traditionally Poznań gets very busy every year with artistic events, a Christmas fair as well as an ice sculpture festival. Expect competitions for the best Christmas decorations, Poznań's best Santa Claus and the tastiest cookery. The main part of the 'Bethlehem' is the bazaar with Christmas decorations and regional food. It's best to visit about 6pm to hear some carols, gospel and local bands performing live on the open air stage. Something you don't see everyday will be the live nativity-scenes with real people and animals playing the parts.

► Open 09:00 - 21:00. Admission free.

Gdansk

04.12 Sunday - Santa Claus On Motorbikes
 tel. (+48) 58 320 13 65

This will be the 9th time Santa takes to the road, well about 3 thousand Santas to be precise, all cruising the city on motorbikes, quads and scooters raising money to fund school dinners for kids in the region's schools. This time Santa will start his cruise at about 11:00 from Al. Jana Pawła II (Gdańsk, Zaspą) and go along ul. Rzeczypospolitej, ul. Kołobrzaska and ul. Grunwaldzka to Kościuszki Square in Gdynia where they'll be welcomed by the Polish Navy Orchestra. They will stay for a while to enjoy concerts by Bielizna (recommended in itself), Heroes, Pyra Squad, Inversion and have a look at a display of T55 tank and race cars. Yo Ho Ho. ► Event starts at 11:00. Admission free.

05.12 Monday - Gdańsk Christmas Tree
 ul. Długi Targ, tel. (+48) 58 320 13 65

As you'd imagine, the communist authorities didn't go in for large public Christmas trees, it just wasn't cricket. In 1989 Gdańsk became the first city in which the tradition of lighting tree was born. Every year the event is organised on 5th December and beforehand there is a competition for Christmas decorations which later hang on the tree, next to Neptune Fountain. Then Santa arrives, by boat unusually enough, to light up the festive treat. ► Event starts at 17:00. Admission free.

Warsaw

03.12 Saturday - 49th Barbórka Rally
 tel. (+48) 22 652 81 16, www.warsawsun.pl

Not a lot of visitors realise that rally driving is quite a big deal in these parts, even fewer that the season ending Barburka rally is the most prestigious event on the Polish rally calendar. There are no points involved, just 50 years of tradition and the cup for who is fastest round the special section circuit, Come along to Ul. Karowa, its winding twisty route gives the drivers a great to opportunity to show off. The cars vary from those that younger fans might know only from stories, for example: Alpina 310A, Renault 5, Audi Quattro, Mazda 323 or real relics like Syrena, Fiat 125p or Polonez. The are current stars like Toamsz Kuchar or Leszek Kuzaj and old war horses like Sobiesław Zasada, Longin Bielak, Janusz Siniarski. The pass which allows to watch all the special sections costs 49zł. If you want to sit in the stands prices vary from 89 to 249zł. The circuit programme looks like this:
 07:30 - Żerań, FSO track, Jagiellońska 71
 08:30 - Służewiec, ul. Puławska 266
 10:00 - Autodrom Bemowo, ul. Powstańców Śląskich
 16:00 - ul. Karowa
 ► Tickets 49 - 249zł. Available from Automobilklub Polski, ul. Pańska 85 (Open 10:00 - 18:00) on 02.12 and the Supporter Information Point, ul. Powstańców Śląskich 127 (Open 08:00 - 14:00) on 03.12.

02.12 Friday
Supporter's Zone: EURO 2012 Groups Draw
 Pl. Defilad, tel. (+48) 22 222 07 00

Friday 17:30 is the moment fans holding tickets for the Euro 2012 football championships have been waiting for as it sees the draw take place in Kiev. If you want to watch it amongst a load of other fans, come to the hall constructed near the Palace of Culture and Science which will be illuminated in the Polish and Ukrainian colours, open from 15:30. It holds 3000 and before the action starts on the big screens there are concerts by Me Myself and I and Atmosfera. Afterwards at 19:00 Adidas will present the official tournament ball and there will be more concerts: SheMoans, Atmosfera, again, and talent show winners Enej. ► Event starts at 15:30. Admission free.

Wisla cling on, Legia stutter

Polish football suffered a mixed start to December (ignoring the PZPN debacle covered elsewhere in this paper), with Wisla Krakow clinging on to hopes of qualifying from the Europa League, while Legia were given a reminder of the gulf in class separating them from the European elite.

This Thursday Wisla defeated Odense in Denmark 2-1, erasing some of the pain of their 3-1 home defeat earlier in the competition by the same team. Elsewhere, results went the way of the Krakow side, with FC Twente defeating Fulham 1-0 in Holland.

Now Wisla enter the final round of group matches only one point behind the London side and with everything to play for. Qualification is still somewhat unlikely, as Fulham play the group's weakest team Odense at home, while Wisla entertain top dogs Twente.

Thursday's match, though, was a positive exercise for the beleaguered Krakow side as they raced into a 2-0 first half lead, and despite being pegged back early in the second half, they saw the match out comfortably enough, and even introduced the much-missed Israeli midfielder Maor Melikson back into the side following a long and troubled absence

involving injury and a flirtation with the Polish national side that ended badly for all involved.

Wisla won't enter the last match with too much hope, but at least the positive result may be reflected in their remaining league matches, approaching the winter break.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday night Legia suffered a depressing 3-0 home loss to PSV Eindhoven. Qualification to the next round had already been secured, and that was a fortunate thing, as PSV comprehensively outplayed their hosts.

The Dutch side were stronger in all areas and took the chances that came their way clinically. Legia started brightly enough, but faded badly and were reduced to 10 men in the second half after Kuciak was sent off conceding a penalty. The Warsaw side could feel a little aggrieved about that, as it came from a desperate lunge in defence following a missed offside call.

That put Legia 2-0 down, having gone a goal behind earlier following an unlucky deflection off Michal Zewlakow, and took the wind out of their sails. The third goal came soon after and the match slowly petered out. Manager Maciej Skorza will now need to pick his team up for the last few fixtures prior to the winter break.

Olympics beckon

Poland's volleyball team is on the brink of qualification for the London Olympics after eight rounds of the World League taking place in Japan. Superficially, their position looks great, as they top the table and a top three finish means qualification. Unfortunately, their remaining three opponents are Italy, Brazil and Serbia – the toughest teams in the competition.

"We're facing a battle against the three best teams in the world. In Tokyo, we're

playing as if in a different league from what went before, and we're going to give it everything to win Olympic qualification," one of the team's star players, Bartosz Kurek, told reporters.

Poland needs a single victory, or even three 3-2 losses, to secure a ticket to London next summer. "No calculations. We don't want to count on scraping through. We're not frightened of our opponents, let them fear us," Kurek's team-mate, Zbigniew Bartman, commented.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Euro draw

Around about the time you receive this week's NPE in your mail box, the hard-core footy fans among us will have their noses glued to the TV, watching the group draw for Euro 2012. Coverage of the draw, which takes place in Kiev, will be on from 17.20 on TVP1, TVP Sport and TVP HD as well as live on TVP's Internet site. The channel's coverage will be anchored by veteran commentator Dariusz Szpakowski. "There are always nerves, but even more so this time as we're so involved," the commentator commented.

Lech run out of steam

A 1-0 loss in poor style at home to Widzew Lodz last weekend has cast the Railwaymen of Lech Poznan into the pits of despair, and pushed Spanish manager Jose Maria Bakero once again to the brink of the exit door. "It's not exactly a storm, but the clouds look pretty solid," admitted the club's director of sport, Andrzej Dawidziuk. "It's a matter of bringing the sun out again as quickly as possible," he continued. Lech hasn't been in such dire straits since the club merged in 2006 with Amica Wronki, creating

a Wielkopolska powerhouse. If Lech fail to win European qualification, the financial and sporting losses could lead to an exodus of the team's best players.

For now, Bakero retains the support of club owner, Jacek Rutkowski, but the fans have already fallen out of love with the Spaniard, chanting, "Guantanamo, it's time to f**k off Bakero!" during the last league match. Anything less than two wins against LKS and Zagłębie prior to Xmas, and they could get their wish.

Classifieds: Place your free ads and community news here. Email editor@newpolandexpress.pl

Physiotherapist

I am recently graduated from the Free University of Brussels, Belgium. I'm searching for a job as physio in Warsaw. Polish: basic, French: mother lang., English: very good, Dutch and Italian: good.
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I'm an experienced Polish native teacher looking for a French native to exchange conversation classes with. One class in Polish, for one class in French.
For more details, please contact:
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ernominee@gmail.com

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Community Groups: Place free listings for your community groups here. Email editor@newpolandexpress.pl

Free conversation lessons

Free conversation lessons take place at KLUB DIALOGU, Krakowskie Przedmieście 13/156 (entrance from Tokarzewskiego) every Saturday at 11:00 am and 12:10 pm.
Please call: 22-498-1010
or email us: info@klubdialogu.pl if you are interested

Church of England in Poland

We welcome Anglicans, Episcopalians and all others interested, to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday morning at 10.30 am. Join us for light refreshments after the service to learn more about the activities of our church.
Place: Res Sacra Miser Chapel, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 62, Warsaw.

The Sikh Community

The Sikh Community of Warsaw meets each Sunday at the Sikh Gurudwara in Rashyn, Ul Na Skraju 56. All are welcome. Kirtan starts at midday and langar is served after the Bhog at about 1400. For more information contact 22 868 4541. The Sikh faith is about equality, honesty and standing up to oppression. Anyone visiting the Guru's house is welcome, in return for due respect and consideration of the Sikh faith.

Role Playing Game in Warsaw

International English-speaking group in Warsaw, mostly foreign professionals, play tabletop Dungeons & Dragons fortnightly. No experience necessary but fluent English proficiency is required. Have a good time. Play some games. Meet new friends. Open your imagination. More info: Facebook group: <http://tiny.cc/zaffa> or [CreativeCowboy\[at\]yahoo\[dot\]com](mailto:CreativeCowboy[at]yahoo[dot]com)

Poland Tartan Army

A new Poland Tartan Army Facebook group has been created. If you are a fan of Scottish football and our national team please join the group by visiting Facebook and conducting a search for Poland Tartan Army. If anyone, who is not a part of Facebook, is interested in this idea then please email murraymaw@hotmail.com to register your interest.

HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

We are a Polish and Expat social group who organise a walk/run in a forest, park or around the city, followed by a few beers (or whatever takes your fancy!). We meet at the Marriott hotel on alternate Saturdays at 2pm. "Hash House Harriers" is an international group, which was originally established in Malaysia 70 years ago. All are welcome. For details, call Martin at 502-052-958. Email warsawh3@gmail.com or www.warsawhash.pl

International Women's Group

Meetings are held twice a month on the SECOND Monday at 10.30 (for location see our newsletter or website) and on the FOURTH Monday of the month at Restauracja Tapa y Toro located in the Złote Tarasy Shopping Mall (ul. Złota 59) from 10:00 - 11:00.
For more information see www.iwgwarsaw.eu or contact us at iwgwarsaw@yahoo.com

International Rotary Club

International Rotary Club - Warszawa Wilanow is the only English speaking Rotary Club in Warsaw. Visiting Rotarians are warmly welcomed to join the weekly meetings held at the Polonia Palace Hotel, Al. Jerozolimskie 45. Tuesday's at 12:00, except the last Tuesday of each month when the meeting is at 19:00. For more information: +48 601 897 731

Gospel Baptist Church

Services are held in Polish and English languages: Sun. 11:00, Thurs. 19:00. For more information contact: Pastor Paul Sock, mob. 0500-270-990, e-mail: paulesock@yahoo.com www.gbc-ekb.com.

GAA in Warsaw

Cumann Warszawa.Poland's first and only GAA club is up and running and is looking for players of all levels, all nationalities and both sexes. We offer weekly training, competitive games and regular social events as well as fresh oranges at half time.
Contact Eoin at 0518-425-587 or cumannwarszawa@gmail.com

Expat meetings

Meeting English speakers in Warsaw just got a whole load easier. We don't teach you Salsa, we make you pay for your own drinks, but we do promise to give you the premier multi-cultural event of the week at Warsaw's very own Professional Wednesday Meetup.

Contact - asamu@sniper-rook.co.uk or 691535566

Toastmasters club

Toastmasters club (Polska) invites all to its weekly meetings. Toastmasters is the international organization for learning the art of public speaking and enhancing leadership skills. Meetings every Wednesday at 19.00 at the Palace of Culture 12th floor (premises of Collegium Civitas) - entrance from ul. Marszałkowska side. For more details visit www.toastmasters.org.pl or call Etan at 696-292-451

Poznan International Church

Every Sunday at 10:00
Contact details: www.international.pl. It's simple at P.I.C.. Come and experience God through current music and relevant teaching. Grow in your relationship with God and others by making friends and joining a small group. Serve God and people by being generous with the gifts God has given you. Go and make a difference in the world by sharing the love of Christ.

CFM (Christian Fellowship Ministries)

Kościół Chrześcijański (evangelical/Pentecostal)
Location: Aleja Prymasa Tysiąclecia 74B (Wola, Warsaw)
Services in Polish and English:
Wednesday 19.30 hrs and Sunday 11.00 & 18.30 hrs
Every Saturday evening at 20.00 hrs: Film, Concert & Drama or other activities
Website: www.thedoor.pl
Phone: 784 653 666 (Pastor Jan-Willem van Dam)
Email: info@thedoor.pl

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