

## HITCHHIKING IN POLAND

Polish laws and regulations relating to traffic and safety on public roads prohibit hitchhiking on trucks and other commercial vehicles, but there are no such restrictions applying to passenger car hitchhiking.<sup>1/</sup>

While there is no legislative enactment providing for an agency to promote hitchhiking in Poland, hitchhiking is encouraged, however, by a non-government organization which functions with the government's approval and under government supervision.

Regardless of some restrictions, however, hitchhiking has become more and more popular as a way of travel, especially among students and young people. In this connection a Polish weekly Dookola świata (Around the World), in collaboration with the Polish Tourism and Hiking Association (Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze—hereafter PTTK) and a periodical Muzyka i Aktualność (Music and Actuality), in 1958

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<sup>1/</sup> The Instruction of May 23, 1970, of the Minister of Communication and the Minister of Internal Affairs on Transportation of Passengers by Trucks. Monitor Polski (Official Gazette), No. 32, 1970, text 206.

organized an action to promote hitchhiking as a legitimate form of tourism on the basis of a competition. According to the rules set forth by the Organizing Committee, the period of legitimate hitchhiking lasted from June 29 to September 30, 1958. A prospective hitchhiker was required to obtain a certificate of participation (Książeczka Uczestnictwa) for a fee of 20 zlotys and have it validated by any local branch of the PTFK. In addition to personal data, the certificate contained coupons which entitled the certificate holder to travel by way of hitchhiking over the distance of 1,000 kilometers. Coupons had to be handed to a driver to furnish him with a proof of having given a ride to a hitchhiker.<sup>2/</sup> The certificate also contained a clause providing for insurance against accidents in which the driver who gave a ride might have been involved.<sup>3/</sup> Prizes were offered for photographs, texts of original folk songs and legends as well as the description of folk customs,<sup>4/</sup> submitted in connection with this competition.

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<sup>2/</sup> Dookola świata, No. 228, 17 (1958).

<sup>3/</sup> Id., No. 230, at 17 (1958).

<sup>4/</sup> Id.

Drivers were not required to declare their participation in the competition. As an incentive they were offered prizes awarded on the basis of the total kilometers of rides offered to hitchhikers during the hitchhiking season (i.e., between June 29 and September 30). There were 100 prizes with a passenger car as a first prize.

The Ministry of Communication and Headquarters of the Citizen's Militia (Police) had agreed not to penalize drivers for giving rides to legitimate hitchhikers during the declared season.<sup>5/</sup>

Since 1959, the organization of a hitchhiking season was taken over by the PTTK,<sup>6/</sup> which appointed a special Civic Committee for Hitchhiking (Spoleczny Komitet Auto-Stopu).<sup>7/</sup>

The rules of this hitchhiking competition established in 1958 were changed by this Committee in order to reflect the experience of the 1958 hitchhiking season. Thus certificates of participation can be obtained only at the PTTK and its local

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5/ Id., No. 226, at 23 (1958).

6/ Turysta, No. 8, 10 (1959).

7/ 11 Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN (Great Universal Encyclopedia PWN), 731. The composition of the Committee cannot be established on the basis of the sources available in the Law Library.

branches by persons at least 16 years of age or older. Anyone wishing to participate can obtain one or more certificates. The fee has been increased from 20 zlotys to 25 zlotys, and the hitchhiking season has been extended to October 15.<sup>8/</sup> The number of prizes for hitchhikers and drivers has remained the same. Hitchhiking during the summer and fall continues to be a popular way of travel in Poland.

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<sup>8/</sup> Turysta, No. 11, 3 (1958).