



Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Culture and society

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Letters and packages in Germany obviously come in a variety of colors, but if you were to ask someone on the street about the "color of the post office," most people would say yellow. Public mailboxes are yellow, post office signs are yellow, and even the cars and bikes used by letter carriers are yellow. If you buy an empty box at the post office to send a package, it's made of yellow cardboard. Until 1990, before postal service was privatized, all public telephone booths were also bright yellow.

Why yellow? In 1615, the House of Thurn and Taxis held the hereditary rights as postmaster general. The family developed a reliable postal system that extended far beyond the borders of the German Empire. They chose the eye-catching color yellow for the uniforms of postal workers and mail coaches. In 1946, after World War II, the Allied Powers decided that Germany would use the color throughout the country. From then on, the post office was a state institution recognized by the color yellow – in both East Germany and West Germany. After privatization, other postal service providers entered the market, adding new colors. Now the postal system in Germany can be as colorful as the mail it processes.