

# European Social Dialogue

Issue N° 11 November 2020

#### **Editorial**

Dear social partners and readers,

ter was published two weeks after the WHO rec- tive and provided support to their members. They ognised the spread of COVID-19 as a worldwide produced some 43 timely and relevant Joint Statepandemic. All citizens were hoping for a quick ments at EU level, calling for EU funding support recovery. Besides being a danger to health, the to protect their sectors and people and the econopandemic has had huge negative consequences on my as a whole. Social partners proposed concrete the economy, jobs and livelihoods in the EU. The measures, such as recognition of essential workers European Union has taken exceptional measures in the sector, coordinated action plans, practical to support national governments in their efforts to quidance related to health and safety and sanitary protect jobs and businesses and to coordinate joint measures. (See below the Joint Statements reportactions. The challenges are still present. Economic ed by the social partners since April 2020). and social consequences will be felt for a long time to come.

The Commission has highlighted the important role the European social partners, the European Counof social dialogue in addressing the complex challenges of the COVID-19 crisis.

Social partners at national level took action on several fronts to ensure the health and safety of work- • On 23 June 2020, the Tripartite Social Summit ers at risk, mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the economy and employment and support the recovery. Social partners reacted quickly and efficiently to the crisis and social dialogue proved its unique value under these difficult circumstances.

Charles Michel speaking during the video conference

The last edition of the social dialogue newslet- The European social partners were also very ac-

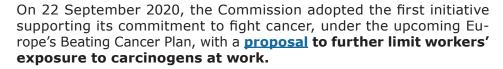
The Tripartite Social Summit continues to provide a high-level forum for the discussions between cil and the Commission. Two meetings took place since the publication of the last newsletter both focusing on the COVID-19 crisis:

- discussed the "Contribution of the Social Partners to relaunching Growth and Employment in the Aftermath of COVID-19".
- On 14 October 2020, the Tripartite Social Summit discussed "How to implement together an inclusive economic and social recovery in Europe".

The European Union has taken unprecedented action to support national governments in their efforts to save jobs and small businesses and to coordinate joint action plans. After the **COVID-19 - Economic package** in April 2020, the Commission proposed, on 27 May 2020, a **Recovery Plan "Next Generation EU** including the **Recovery and Resilience Facility** (RRF) to help Member States address the structural challenges that have been amplified by the COVID-19 crisis, such as unemployment and impeded social resilience. On 17 September, the European Commission set out **strategic guidance for the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility** in its 2021 Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy (ASGS).

On 24 April 2020, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) issued guidance on coming back to work: **Coronavirus: EU guidance for a safe return to the workplace**.

The European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience sets ambitious objectives for upskilling and reskilling for the next five years. One of the key actions is the Pact for Skills, which the Commission intends to launch on 10<sup>th</sup> November during the 2020 European Vocational Skills Week. The Pact should offer a new model for a skills offensive. It will gather and inspire different commitments from individual companies and other stakeholders like VET providers or social partners. It will also support large-scale industrial partnerships.



The last edition of the ESDE report, "Leaving no one behind and striving for more: fairness and solidarity in the European social market economy", provides evidence on how to achieve greater fairness in the face of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and of long-term challenges arising from structural change due to demographic ageing, climate change and digitalisation. It shows how social dialogue improves fairness in the workplace and beyond. It reviews how social partners across Europe have made key contributions to the public responses against the impacts of COVID-19. 15/09/2020



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## **Consultation of social partners**

On 16 September 2020, in her State of the Union speech, President von der Leyen announced the key initiatives to come. Social partners were consulted on the initiatives in the social field:

- On 3 June 2020, the Commission launched the second-stage consultation of European trade unions and employers' organisations on how to ensure fair minimum wages for all workers in the European Union. The Commission proposal for an EU Directive, to ensure that the workers in the Union are protected by adequate minimum wages allowing for a decent living wherever they work, was adopted on 28 October 2020.
- On 17 January 2020, the Commission launched a broad discussion with all partners to support the implementation of the Pillar and prepare the ground for the European Pillar's Action Plan. The consultation is open until 30 November 2020. The Commission plans to present, in February 2021, an Action Plan to implement the EPSR and its 20 principles. The Action Plan will reflect the Commission's efforts to implement the Pillar's 20 principles in all policy domains and present a list of new actions to be undertaken in the coming years at EU level, as well as an updated governance. The Action Plan should be endorsed by the other EU institutions at a Social Summit organised by the Portuguese Presidency in Porto in May 2021.

On 08 June 2020, the Commission organised a high-level hearing of social partners on the planned **Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights** (EPSR).

The Commission appointed Ms Andrea Nahles, former German Minister of Employment, as special advisor to Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, to advise him on social dialogue and on concrete proposals for the implementation of the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights principal 8 on how to strengthen social dialogue. A workshop is planned for 12 November 2020, to discuss with the social partners the elements that could feed into the implementation of principle 8.

• In addition to the formal consultation on minimum wages, **dedicated hearings** were organised to consult social partners on the planned initiatives, the binding pay transparency measures (25 June 2020), the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy (16 September) and the Child Guarantee (16 October). Further consultation meetings are planned on the Disability Strategy (4 November) and the initiative regarding platform workers (17 November – tbc-).



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Some social partners' federations reported on their joint statements adopted in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic.

- Woodworking The social partners of the "Woodworking" and "Furniture" SSDCs, the European Furniture Industries Confederation (EFIC), the Federation of European Furniture Manufacturers (UEA), the European Confederation of woodworking industries (CEI-Bois) and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), signed a Joint Opinion proposing a number of measures focusing on OSH, and economic activity and recovery of their sectors in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a call to national social partners of both sectors to negotiate and cooperate with national, regional and local governments to keep companies functioning and maintain open borders for goods. It also calls for structures that compensate for losses related to COVID-19 infections, provide financial compensation for workers' loss of income and protect companies facing financial difficulties. 24/04/2020
- Textile-Clothing-Leather-Footwear Industry The Textile Clothing Leather Footwear sector issued a <u>Joint Declaration on the eco-nomic impact of Covid-19 in their sectors</u>. The Confederation of National Associations of Tanners and Dressers (COTANCE), the European Apparel and Textile Confederation (EURATEX), the European Footwear Confederation (CEC) and industriAll, highlighted key measures for the Europe medium-term recovery from the crisis and meet the challenges of tomorrow. 9/07/2020
- Temporary agency work UNI Europa and World Employment Confederation-Europe (WEC Europe), adopted <u>Joint Recommendations</u> of the sectoral social partners of the temporary agency work industry, recognising the importance of a constructive sectoral social dialogue and that temporary agency work contributes to improving the functioning of labour markets. The contribution of temporary work agencies to keeping the labour market fluent and functioning has been essential during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the phase of the economic recovery. 29/04/2020
- Telecommunications UNI Europa and the European Telecommunication Network Operators' (ETNO), adopted a <u>COVID-19</u>: <u>Statement of the Social Partners in the European Telecom Sector</u>. Workers and employers in the telecom sector embraced the key role that the sector plays especially now in the crisis, e.g. due to the increasing number of employees that are working remotely, education institutions focusing on online tools or the increased need for connectivity for leisure and entertainment to make isolation bearable. 07/04/2020
- Road transport The EU social partners, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), together with CORTE, ECR, and ROADPOL, issued a Joint Call for efficient enforcement in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector needs to become more resilient in order to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic. Signatories stressed that compliance with and enforcement of current rules are essential for the proper functioning of the road transport industry, ensuring road safety and a level-playing field for all market stakeholders. 20/05/2020
- Professional football In professional football, clubs and player unions through their representative bodies – ECA and FIFPRO – have developed international guidelines on players' health protec-





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tion during the emergency calendar of football competitions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines are part of collective efforts which aim to help manage the impact of COVID-19 on the football industry and in particular on professional players, clubs, leagues and federations. 21/08/2020

Private security In private security, workers have experienced both closures of workplaces and new demand in frontline workplaces. UNI Europa and the European Confederation of Security Services (CoESS), were instrumental in getting security services recognised as essential by the European Commission. The social partners' Joint Declaration: ensuring business continuity and protection of workers in the COVID-19 pandemic also broke ground in calling for public authorities, an important client in the sector, to include collective bargaining in selecting security providers. 08/05/2020

UNI Europa and CoESS, together with the Cash Management Companies Association (ESTA), called in their **Joint Declaration on Governments to secure the Cash Cycle in times of COVID-19**. Cash management companies and their workers have been ensuring continued supply and availability of cash, safeguarding secure processes and the health and the safety of workers and service operators throughout production sites, transportation and distribution to ensure availability and access to cash to the public around the globe. Yet, this crisis means that 'business as usual' is not a viable option for the immediate future. 18/05/2020

- Metal Industry The European Tech & Industry Employers (Ceemet) and industriAll, reached a Joint Agreement on "The EU should join forces to combat COVID-19 and reboot industry", together with ACEA, CLEPA, CECRA and ETRMA. They called for an ambitious recovery plan for the automotive sector. 26/05/2020
- Maritime Transport The European social partners, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA), together with the European Maritime Pilots' Association (EMPA), issued a Joint Statement on protective measures to minimise risks between crew and shore based personnel boarding a ship (COVID-19). They urged Members States and all stakeholders to effectively work towards the implementation of the European Healthy GateWays Joint Action guidance and adapting national guidance to ensure that all 'shore based personnel boarding a ship' wear PPE provided by their employers and apply rules of social distancing. 22/05/2020
- Local and Regional Government The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), adopted a **Joint Statement on COVID-19** to assess the impact of the pandemic on the sector and prepare the recovery phase. The Statement underlines the importance of well-functioning public services at local and regional level during the COVID crisis and call on the European Commission and the Council to promote funding and investment in essential public services including health care and social services. 23/06/2020
- Live Performance The European Arts and Entertainment Alliance (EAEA) and the Performing Arts Employers' Associations League Europe (Pearle\*), called for <u>a coordinated action plan to secure the recovery and sustainability of the European cultural sector</u>. It is vital to act now to save the European cultural sector amid a resurgence of the COVID 19 pandemic across Europe. 14/10/2020
- Industrial Cleaning UNI Europa and the European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry (EFCI) adopted a <u>Joint Statement on</u> the Covid-19 impact to the Industrial Cleaning and Facility



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\* European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), European Cockpit Association (ECA), Air Traffic Controllers European Unions Coordination (ATCEUC), Airlines for Dialogue (A4D), Airline Coordination Platform (ACP), European Regions Airline Association (ERA), Airlines International Representation in Europe (AIRE), Airports Council International – Europe (ACI), Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO), Airline Services Association (ASA)

**Services sector and the necessary measures to protect it**. The sector is in a double bind. On the one hand, closed-down buildings put cleaners at risk of redundancy and cleaning companies in very difficult economic situations, which is beyond their control and not their responsibility. On the other hand, those buildings and sites which remain open require higher hygiene standards and specialised sanitisation services that demand quick adaptation and training by staff and companies. EU social partners have jointly put forward proposals to help the sector overcome this difficult situation. 22/04/2020

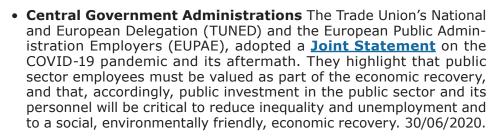
- Construction The European social partners in the Construction sector, the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), adopted a set of Joint Recommendations to counteract the negative impact and consequences of the current COVID-19 crisis for the construction industry. EFBWW and FIEC strongly encourage public authorities at all levels to evaluate solutions for temporary unemployment, provide and monitor clear instructions for Safety and Health at work, and maximize the use of existing funds and regulations to ensure the sustainability of construction companies and preserve work income for construction workers. 21/04/2020
- Commerce EuroCommerce and UNI Europa adopted a <u>Joint Statement on the retail and wholesale sector</u> calling for the continued safety of its workforce which is interacting daily with European consumers, while working to avoid the present COVID-19 pandemic putting at risk the 29 million jobs in the sector in Europe. 08/04/2020

EuroCommerce and UNI Europa also proposed "A European Pact for Commerce" to European and national authorities to help the sector improve its long-term resilience through targeted support measures and by accelerating the digital and green transitions. They emphasise the importance of investment and policy support, with focus on up-skilling and re-skilling, to increase the resilience of the European retail and wholesale, at a time when consumer confidence remains at an all-time low and workers are uncertain about their future. 16/10/2020

Civil Aviation The EU social partners in the ground handling sector, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), the Airport Services Association (ASA) and the Airport Council International – Europe (ACI EUROPE), adopted a Joint Statement calling for urgent support for ground handlers and their staff. They asked to secure operational continuity and the restarting of airport operations across Europe, as well as for extended ground handling licences and therefore derogations to the Ground Handling Directive. They warned that failure to do so would put thousands of jobs at risk. 13/05/2020

The EU social partners covering the whole aviation sector\*, adopted a **Joint Statement on the response to COVID-19**, calling for a coordinated approach to the restrictions of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The social partners called upon Member States to follow to the maximum extent possible the Council recommendation adopted on June 30, 2020, on the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU and the possible lifting of such restrictions. 21/09/2020

Chemical Industry IndustriAll European Trade Union and the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG), issued Joint Recommendations on safe and healthy workplaces in the Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Plastics and Rubber Industries in times of COVID-19. The Recommendations draw attention both to the guidelines issued by tripartite entities such as EU-OSHA or ILO on the safe return to work and to national-level recommendations or agreements. 17/07/2020





- Audiovisual UNI Europa, the International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF) and the European Coordination of Independent Producers (CEPI), together with other EU level organisations, published a Joint Recommendation on fighting the global COVID-19 crisis in the film and TV production sector. The global COVID-19 crisis has brought all film and TV production to a sudden stop around the world. Thousands of businesses, most of them SMEs, have been impacted by this crisis and millions of workers operating in front of and behind the camera have already lost, or are at risk of losing their jobs, either temporarily or, in the worst case, permanently. 2/04/2020
- Agriculture The European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) and the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations (GEOPA-COPA), signed a Joint Declaration on the deployment of seasonal workers from European countries. It draws up clear action points to ensure that seasonal workers from EU Member States experience decent working and employment conditions and access their workplace in full safety during the current pandemic. 15/05/2020

## Other joint contributions by the social partners



- Cross industry EU Social Partners BusinessEurope, ETUC, CEEP and SMEunited, signed the <u>European Framework Agreement on Digitalisation</u>. The agreement supports the successful integration of digital technologies at the workplace, investment in digital skills, skills updating and the continuous employability of the workforce. The agreement enables employers and unions to introduce digital transformation strategies in partnership in a human oriented approach at national, sectoral, company and workplace levels, including on the modalities of connecting and disconnecting and respect of working time rules and appropriate measures to ensure compliance. 22/06/2020
- BusinessEurope, ETUC, CEEP and SMEunited and Eurochambres, renewed their commitment to the European Partnership for Integration through a <u>Joint Statement</u>. The ceremony was attended by Vice-Presidents Schinas and Dombrovskis as well as Commissioners Johansson and Schmit (<u>press release</u>). 7/09/2020

#### **Sectors**

Joint Statement on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work

EU social partners (HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EuroCommerce, COESS, EUPAE, EPSU, UNI Europa, ETUCE, TUNED), reaffirmed that their respective sectors continue to address third-party violence and all forms of harassment related to work, ensuring that, in the upcoming years, each workplace has a targeted results-oriented policy, also in the context of the initiatives of the European Pillar of Social Rights. 16/07/2020



# First European campaign for declared work, #EU4FairWork

The European Platform tackling undeclared work and the European Labour Authority (ELA), on 23 July 2020, launched, as part of the first European campaign for declared work, **#EU4FairWork competition open for workers and employers** social media competition, calling on workers and employers from across the EU to share their personal stories about declared work.

### Several EU social partners are supporting the #EU4FairWork:

- Private Security The European Confederation of Security Services (CoESS) and UNI Europa issued a <u>Joint Statement on tackling</u> <u>undeclared work</u> in support of the European Campaign for Declared Work 2020 in the private security sector, calling on companies, workers and policymakers alike to take responsibility and action. 22/09/2020
- Industrial cleaning Within the framework of the Week of Action of the European campaign #EU4FairWork, UNI Europa and the European Cleaning and Facility Services Industry (EFCI) adopted a Joint Statement for the European Campaign for Declared Work 2020 #EU4FairWork. They joined forces to show their support to the principles behind the Undeclared Work Platform and the campaign to tackle undeclared work. 25/09/2020
- **Construction** Joint actions of the EFBWW and FIEC to tackle undeclared work in the construction industry.



According to the latest Eurobarometer survey (2019), 21% of all undeclared jobs were to be found in the construction sector. Undeclared work in the construction industry remains a major challenge for the whole sector, as it affects good and safe working conditions for workers, fair competition between construction companies and the long-term financial sustainability of national social security and tax systems.

In a high-level virtual conference (24/09/2020) attended by more than 200 participants, the European sectoral social partners, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), presented their toolkit and a Joint Statement with 10 recommendations to tackle undeclared work in the construction industry. The Conference was the starting point for a long-term commitment to tackle Undeclared Work in the construction industry.

## **Further news from social partner organisations**

European employers are committed to create the conditions for return to employment, job creation and better skills matching as part of the recovery

On 24 July 2020, nine sectoral employers' associations and BusinessEurope signed a **Statement on employment and social aspects of the recovery**. The aim of the document is to express the commitment of European employers to employ and create new job opportunities across the EU, expressing at the same time their needs to be able to do so.

## News from the eu agencies/institutions/international organisations

#### **ECJ**

On October 26,the European Court of Justice held its oral hearing in Case C-928/19 P EPSU. The case concerns the appeal introduced on the Judgement of the General Court from October 2019 in case T-310/18 EPSU and Goudriaan v Commission, in which the General Court ruled on the question whether or not the Commission is not obliged to automatically submit a proposal for a decision to the Council on a social partner agreement when it receives a joint request from social partners. The Advocate General announced his opinion on EPSU appeal for 18 January 2021.

#### **ELA**



Jordi Curell, interim director of the European Labour Authority

The European Labour Authority, on 21 September 2020, coordinated its very first concerted inspection of three EU countries fighting arm in arm against undeclared work in the construction sector. It kicked off the Week of Action of the very first European campaign on the benefits of declared work.

Following a vote on 22 October, the European Labour Authority's Management Board appointed Cosmin Boiangiu as ELA's next Executive Director.

#### **EUROFOUND**

- Policymakers including governments, support institutions, social partners and other social actors

   moved swiftly to mitigate the social and economic effects on businesses, workers and citizens.

   Eurofound's COVID-19 EU Policy Watch aims to map measures introduced to cushion the social and economic effects on businesses, workers and citizens. It also includes information on the role played by social partners in the design and implementation of the measures.
   Policymakers including governments, support institutions, social partners and other social actors moved swiftly to mitigate the social and economic effects on businesses, workers and citizens.
- **Eurofound's e-survey, Living, working and COVID-19** aims to capture the far-reaching implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the labour market, working conditions and quality of life across the EU. Two rounds of this unique survey have been carried out to date, allowing comparison between the first round in April, when most Member States were in lockdown, and the second round in July, when society and economies were slowly re-opening.

#### **EU-OSHA**

#### Stop the pandemic: Resources for promoting healthy workplaces across Europe

Under the tagline, 'Healthy Workplaces Stop the Pandemic' EU-OSHA, is an initiative to address
the occupational health and safety challenges linked to the pandemic, offering guidance and useful
information. The resources include multilingual EU guidance on 'COVID-19: Back to the workplace –
adapting workplaces and protecting workers. EU-OSHA also collaborates with the European Centre
for Disease Prevention and Control to promote their materials to reduce the burden of seasonal
influenza at the workplace in times of COVID-19.

## New OiRA tool to support a safe return to work in times of COVID-19

 EU-OSHA's Online interactive Risk Assessment platform – OiRA - has developed a tailored tool to support the process of returning safely to the workplace in times of COVID-19. The interactive tool can help identify, assess and manage the risks posed by the pandemic to ensure that workers from small companies and organisations come back to a safe and healthy environment. By September 2020 up to 10 national COVID-19 tools have been published. Try the COVID-19 OiRA tool

## The OSH Barometer to discover the status of occupational safety and health in Europe

The OSH Barometer is the first data visualisation tool with up-to-date information on the status of
and trends in occupational safety and health (OSH) in European countries. The tool consists of four
groups of indicators on a range of OSH topics, such as OSH authorities, national strategies, working
conditions and OSH statistics. The indicators, data and features included in the OSH barometer are
regularly updated. Explore the tool

## The Healthy Workplaces 'Lighten the Load' Campaign 2020-22 on MSDs

Launched on 12 October by the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicholas Schmit, accompanied by Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Hubertus Heil, representing the German Council Presidency of the EU, and EU-OSHA Executive Director Christa Sedlatschek, this campaign will run until the end of 2022. It will focus on addressing occupational musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), the most common work-related health problem in Europe. Visit the HWC 2020-22

## Learn how to manage musculoskeletal disorders in the healthcare sector

• A growing care burden, recruitment difficulties and an ageing workforce mean that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are likely to become an increasingly difficult occupational safety and health challenge in the healthcare sector. EU-OSHA's discussion paper presents an overview of MSDs and their prevalence in the healthcare sector, reviewing the risk factors and discussing effective interventions to manage MSDs in healthcare workplaces. **Read the discussion paper** 

## **ILO**

#### ILO - Sectoral briefs on impact of COVID-19

• In a series of **briefs**, the ILO analyses how the pandemic is affecting the functioning of economic sectors and how they are responding to alleviate its effects.

## **ILO Call-to-action for the garment industry**

• This <u>Call to action</u> sets out urgent priorities and specific commitments for organizations across the industry to endorse as the first step to collective action to achieve these goals. The call to action aims to generate action from across the global garment industry to protect workers' income, health and employment and support employers during the COVID-19 crisis, and to work together to establish sustainable systems of social protection for a more just and resilient garment industry.



• Cooperating globally on employment and social matters: 15<sup>th</sup> High Level meeting between the EU and the ILO 29 September to 2 October <u>Press release</u>. ILO and the EU underlined the essential role that social dialogue plays in the recovery process, exchanged information on recent developments and committed to continue and further their cooperation in this field.

Mr Joost Korte, Director-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion led a delegation bringing together high-level representatives to meet with an ILO delegation, headed by Heinz Koller, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia.

## **Social Dialogue Meetings**

With the outbreak of COVID-19, restrictions on travel and the rules for social distancing, meetings of social dialogue committees have been organised with teleconferencing. This will continue until further notice but at least until the end of 2020.

# Send us your contribution

You have a contribution for the next edition of the newsletter? Please contact the editor.

We also look forward to your comments and suggestions.

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