



Barack Obama's Second Chance: a Sarajevo Moment



Author: Simon Serfaty

The Robert Schuman Foundation has published a text by Simon Serfaty from the "Schuman Report - State of the Union in 2013" (to be published) which reviews the issues at stake in American President, Barack Obama's second term in office after his investiture on 21st January last. As the author explains, in his second mandate Barack Obama has an "appointment with history" in other words it has to succeed where his predecessors failed. Hence after having advocated "Yes, we can", Obama now has to show his determination with "Yes I must".

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Front page! :

France and Germany: a common responsibility for Europe



On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation took part in a debate in the auditorium of the daily "Le Monde" on the theme of "France-Germany: a common responsibility for Europe." He debated alongside Hubert Védrine, former French Foreign Minister and Susanne Wasum-Rainer, Ambassador for Germany in Paris. Click on the link to read his speech... [Read more](#)

Talking Europe hosts Karel de Gucht



As part of the partnership between the Robert Schuman Foundation and the Audiovisuel extérieur de la France (AEF), the Foundation is broadcasting its most recent programme on its site "Talking Europe"

whose guest this week is Karel de Gucht, European Commissioner for Trade. Interviewed by the Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, he warns against protectionist trends that are emerging across Europe and explains why stimulating free trade is the only way for Europe to develop again... [Read more](#)

Youth Employment in Europe



The Republic's fifth Etats Généraux devoted to European Youth will be taking place on 1st and 2nd February in Grenoble. The newspaper "Libération" together with around 20 associations, foundations and think-tanks are organising around 35 conference-debates on the major challenges facing European youth. The Robert Schuman Foundation is organising a debate moderated by Magali Balent, Project Manager and Researcher at the Foundation. The debate is called "What is Europe doing to help youth employment?" This debate will take place on 1st February between 14:30 and 16:00 and will bring together experts like Mathilde Lemoine, Director of Economic Studies for HSBC France and Vanessa Debiais-Sainton, Head of Erasmus at the European Commission... [Read more](#)

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"Strategic Openings : 7 doors for the future"



The Chairman of the Robert Schuman Foundation, Jean-Dominique Giuliani has written an article entitled : "Strategic Openings : 7 doors for the future" which was published on 7th January 2013 in the Revue Défense Nationale (No. 756). In his article he explains that in the future there can be no stable horizon but irreversible developments. He calls these future prospects "doors open to the future" which include the "door to freedom", "doors to the skies", "the door for small birds", "the door to the ocean", the "European door" and even the "doors of war.".. [Read more](#)

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Elections :

General and Senatorial Elections in Italy



On 24th and 25th February 2013 the Italians are being called to choose the 630 MPs in the Camera dei Deputati and the 315 Senators. According to the most recent poll by SWG spa for the TV channel RAI3, published on 25th January, the coalition of the leftwing led by Pier Luigi Bersani is due to win the election with 34.1% of the vote. It is due to come out ahead of the coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi, who is forecast to win 26.6% of the vote; the Five Stars Movement (M5s) led by Beppe Grillo is due to win 17.1% of the vote and the lists supported by Mario Monti 12.8% of the vote. The leftwing coalition Civilian Revolution, comprising Italy of Values (IdV) led by Antonio di Pietro, the Left Federation and the Greens is due to win 5.4% of the vote... [Read more](#)

Milos Zeman, New Czech President



Milos Zeman, former Social Democratic Prime Minister, (1998-2002), honorary chair of the Citizens' Rights Party (SPO), which he created in 2010, was elected on 26th January President of the Czech Republic with 54.8% of the vote in the country's first presidential election by direct universal suffrage. He drew ahead of Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg (Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity 09, TOP09), who won 45.19% of the vote. The turnout rate totalled 59.11% ie -2.2 points less in comparison with the figure recorded in the first round. The new head of State will be sworn in on 8th March in the Wenceslas Hall at the Castle of Prague with the members of the two Chambers of Parliament in attendance... [Read more](#)

Financial Crisis :

New greenlight for Greece and a new Eurogroup President

On 21st January 2013 the 17 Finance Ministers of the Eurogroup congratulated the Greek authorities on the progress they had achieved notably in terms of income tax and energy price adjustments. They



called on the directors of the European Financial Stability Facility to pay 2 billion euros to Greece in January in addition to the 7.2 billion to be paid to the banking sector. They also elected their Dutch counterpart, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, who is to take over from Jean-Claude Juncker as the Eurogroup president... [Read more](#)

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The IMF's Economic Outlook



In its "World Economic Outlook" published on 23rd January 2013 the IMF anticipates an acceleration in world growth but warns that it will be more gradual at 3.5% instead of 3.6% as forecast in October last. The IMF also reviewed its US growth forecasts downwards to 2% in 2013, likewise for the euro zone with a recession of 0.2% this year, whilst its last forecast indicated extremely weak growth of 0.1%. The IMF speaks of "differentiated recovery" in this region, whose peripheral countries are experiencing a more acute crisis than expected. As in the past the developing countries are driving growth forwards: 5.5% in 2013 and 5.9% in 2014... [Read more](#)

EBRD Forecasts for 2013



On 21st January 2013 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) published its report on the regional economic outlook for 2013. The institution is relatively optimistic about the economies in the 34 countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean in which it works. It is anticipating an acceleration in their growth thanks to the stabilisation of the euro zone and average growth of 3.1% in 2013 in these countries. The countries whose economy is more directly linked to the euro zone are due however to experience slower growth than the others. The EBRD reviewed its growth forecasts for several countries downwards, notably Poland, counting on growth of 1.5% in 2013 instead of 2.2%... [Read more](#)

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The Spanish Economy Contracts and Unemployment Explodes



In its monthly report published on 23rd January 2013 the Spanish Central Bank stated that the country's GDP had contracted by 0.6% in the fourth quarter of 2012 in comparison with the previous one after a decline of 0.3% between July and September. Over 2012 as a whole the GDP in the euro zone's fourth most important economy contracted by 1.3% in comparison with 2011. In spite of this the figure is below that forecast by the government, which anticipated a contraction of 1.5%. Moreover at the end of December Spain totalled nearly 6 million unemployed (5,965,400) ie 26.02% of the working population, announced the national statistics institute on 24th January 2013. The government's forecast at 24.6% for the end of 2012 has easily been surpassed... [Read more](#)

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The IMF encourages the continuation of structural reforms in Italy



In a report published at the beginning of January 2013 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) notes that the extensive structural reforms undertaken in Italy in response to the crisis can help the country's entire economy. Although it encourages the continuation of these measures "which are in the right direction" the IMF also insists on the need to strengthen some of these. Hence priorities should focus on competition in the area of non-exportable goods and the strengthening of the labour market, supported by fiscal reform... [Read more](#)

Increase in unemployment in Poland and further IMF loans



The Polish central statistics office (GUS) released the latest unemployment figures on 24th January for the month of December 2012. There are now 2,136 million unemployed and their number has risen to 13.4% of the population ie 0.5 points more than in November 2012. Poland, the only EU member not to have suffered recession after

the financial crisis, is slowing dramatically in terms of its economic activity. This situation has pushed the IMF to grant Warsaw a modulable credit line (MCL) to a total of 33.8 billion dollars for a two year period in order to help the country face this slowing and to maintain investor confidence... [Read more](#)

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Recession in the UK



At the end of 2012 the British economy seemed to be drifting towards another recession. According to the first estimates published on 25th January 2013 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the UK's GDP contracted by 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2012 in comparison with the third quarter which enjoyed the positive effects of the Olympic Games in London... [Read more](#)

European Council :

What budget for the European Union (2014-2020)?



On 22nd January 2013, the President of the European Council Herman van Rompuy called on the 27 Member States to find a compromise agreement on the multi-annual financial agreement 2014-2020 during the European Council of 7th and 8th February. He hopes for a "moderate budget" reflecting the financial constraints of the Member countries but which must "focus on jobs and growth in all of the Union's regions, in various economic sectors as well as in research and investment." He indicated that the European Council would be devoted to the Mali crisis, world trade and relations with the countries in the south of Europe, two years after the Arab Spring... [Read more](#)

Commission :

The European Commission adopts the "Clean Energy" Package



On 24th January 2013 the European Commission adopted the "Clean Energy" Package that includes a series of measures designed to introduce stations for substitute fuels in Europe. In its proposals the Commission is anticipating the adoption of design and common usage standards for the entire European Union. It intends to address the issue of the distribution of these "alternative" fuels (electricity, hydrogen and natural gas) thanks to the adoption of binding goals in terms of infrastructure... [Read more](#)

Women enter administrative boards



On 25th January 2013 the European Commission indicated that the policy aiming to promote women in management structures in European companies was starting to produce results. Their share rose from 13.7% in January 2012 to 15.8%. This share increased in all Member States except for in Bulgaria where figures declined and in Poland and Ireland where they stagnated. It more than doubled in Italy (from 4.9% to 11%). France is the first country in which all of the major publicly listed companies have more than one woman on their administrative board. However progress can still be made: 25% of the main European companies still do not have any women on their boards... [Read more](#)

Two projects awarded prizes for their scientific excellence



On 28th January the European Commission declared the names of the winners of a competition, the prize of which totals several billion euros as part of the future and emerging technologies framework (FET). The projects, "Graphene" and "Human Brain", won the competition and will be each be receiving one billion euros over ten years for high level research across the world at the crossroads between science and technologies. The "Graphene" project focuses on the study and use of exceptional properties of revolutionary carbon-based materials. The "Human Brain" project enables the creation of the biggest experimental base in the world for the ultra-precise modelisation of the human brain, the study of its functioning and in the end, the development of an individual treatment against neurological pathologies amongst others... [Read more](#)

Parliament :**MEPs approve more efficient, more ecological and fairer agriculture**

On 23rd January 2013 the "agriculture" committee at the European Parliament approved a series of amendments pertaining to the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). These amendments aim to re-balance aid between the Member States but also between the "small" and "large" farmers within the States. As an example the agriculture commission is now suggesting that subsidies granted to the biggest farmers be limited to 300,000 euros per year as of 2014. MEPs are hoping to achieve an agriculture that respects environmental standards. Hence 30% of direct aid granted to farmers might be conditioned by the respect of sustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore aid like this would now be paid to "active" farmers. The principle of "double payment" would however be maintained... [Read more](#)

MEPs denounce the lack of solidarity with the French in Mali

On 24th January 2013 the European Parliament's sub-committee "Security and Defence" criticised the lack of solidarity on the part of the Member States as part of the French intervention in Mali, in spite of loans of material and medical staff. The members of this committee also said they are surprised by NATO's silence. During the session MEPs drew attention towards the need for the political control of the Malian army which is to be trained by the European Union. For the MEPs this control should be undertaken by "legitimate, democratic authorities"... [Read more](#)

Council :**Council's Greenlight for financial transaction tax**

On 22nd January 2013 the 27 Economy and Finance Ministers of the European Union gave the greenlight to the 11 Member States to implement an enhanced cooperation agreement that aims to introduce a tax on financial transactions. These countries are Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia. The European Commission must now look into the issue and put an agreement forward that will have to be adopted by all 11 States... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)**Diplomacy :****EU-CELAC Summit in Santiago, towards "new impetus" in the strategic partnership**

On 26th and 27th January 2013 the heads of State and government of 27 EU Member States and 33 countries of the Communities of Latin American and Caribbean States 'CELAC' met together in Santiago in Chile during the first CELAC-EU Summit. They concluded a "new strategic alliance" in a unanimously adopted declaration. This means that they "commit" to "avoiding protectionism in all of its forms" and to support "productive investment that respects the economic, social and environmental aspects, which are an integral part of sustainable development." The text "rejects all unilateral measures with extra-territorial effects contrary to international law and the rules governing free trade." A 2 year action plan (2013-2015) was also adopted... [Read more](#)

[Other link](#)**EU-Brazil Summit Conclusions**

During the 6th EU-Brazil Summit in Brasilia on 23rd and 24th January 2013 the two parties agreed on the need to finalise negotiations in the Doha Cycle (WTO) and on the enhancement of cooperation in the sanitary and phytosanitary areas. The European and Brazilian delegations expressed their satisfaction with the conclusions of the 8th Conference between the Kyoto Protocol members and the Rio+20 Conference on development issues. Regarding international crises both sides said they were concerned with the situation in Syria and support the introduction of political renewal. From the point of view of scientific cooperation the EU will look into the possibility of Brazil's participation in the "Horizon 2020" programme... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Further steps to strengthen Franco-German Friendship



During the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty in Berlin on 21st and 22nd January 2013, two declarations were jointly approved by the French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The "Berlin Declaration" recalls the final goal of the bilateral treaty concluded in 1963 and lays out the main areas of cooperation: youth, culture, economy, energy and defence. The second, adopted after the Franco-German Council of Ministers, includes 75 propositions focusing on joint measures in support of training and youth employment, such as the development of bilingualism and bi-national diplomas. Both governments commit to facilitating cooperation between industrialists, to strengthen their cooperation in research and innovation and to improve "strategic dialogue"... [Read more](#)

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Bulgaria :

Referendum invalidated due to low turnout



The referendum on 27th January 2013 that targeted the construction of a new nuclear power plant in Bulgaria was invalidated due to low turnout. At least 60% of Bulgarians were supposed to vote for the exercise to be acknowledged, but only 21% of the electorate turned out to ballot. Although the vote was invalidated 60.55% of voted in support of the project. Since turnout was higher than 20% and the majority of the vote was positive the question will be debated in the Bulgarian Parliament... [Read more](#)

Spain :

The Catalan Parliaments slightly closer to independence



On 23rd January 2013 the Catalan Parliament approved a sovereignty declaration, 85 votes in support, 41 against and 2 absentions. This text, approved by the nationalist rightwing coalition (CiU) and the leftwing secessionists (ERC) and rejected by the two main Spanish parties (PP) and (PSOE), acknowledges the "sovereign, legal and political nature" of the Catalan people. According to the leader of the Generalitat of Catalonia, Artur Mas it is the first step that will be followed - before 2014 - by a referendum on the independence of Catalonia. Madrid does not acknowledge the legitimacy of this and is clearly against it... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Italy: Confindustria presents a project to reform industry



Italy needs some economic "shock therapy" otherwise it is condemned to decline said the chairman of the main employers' confederation Confindustria on 23rd January 2013, Giorgio Squinzi. He presented a series of requests which in his opinion should take the country towards a growth rate of 3%, a reduction in unemployment and a rise in household revenues. At the same time public finances should improve. The weight of industry would rise to 20% in added value in the Italian economy against 16.7% at present. Confindustria is also recommending the reorganisation of the civil service so that it "runs alongside other businesses and not against them", a simplification of administrative rules and greater flexibility on the labour market. It is also calling for a reduction in company tax... [Read more](#)

Poland :

The Polish President revives debate over the euro in Poland



In a TV interview on 21st January 2013 Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski revived debate over the date of Poland's adoption of the euro. Indeed he declared that he wanted Poland to launch the decision making process after the general and presidential elections in 2015. These declarations contrast sharply with those of Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk who deemed mid-December in Brussels that Warsaw had to take

decisions "in the coming months" regarding the adoption of the single currency. President Komorowski also said that Poland must, above all, fulfill the euro accession criteria. Indeed only Poland's public debt is in line with the Maastricht treaty... [Read more](#)

UK :

David Cameron promises a referendum on the European Union



In his speech on Europe delivered on 23rd January 2013 in London British Prime Minister David Cameron confirmed that he intended to organise a referendum by 2017 on the maintenance or not of his country in the European Union if the Conservatives win the general elections in 2015. He did say however that a referendum like this would only be organised once relations between the UK and the EU had been re-organised. These new relations will be focused on the single market without any details being released on how these might be organised. He pleaded in support of a new European treaty saying that the EU would benefit from a reform. He recalled the importance of the UK's membership of the EU, for both his country and for the Union. He also said that it was not necessarily in the British interest to quit the EU... [Read more](#)

Slovenia :

Political Crisis in Slovenia



The Citizens' List (DL) led by Slovenian President Gregor Virant quit the government coalition on 23rd January 2013 given the refusal by Prime Minister Janez Jansa, mentioned in several corruption scandals, to resign. This event has started a political crisis in Slovenia since Mr Jansa no longer has the absolute majority in Parliament. The Finance and Justice Ministers resigned on 24th January after the party's departure from the government coalition... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

Yulia Tymoshenko accused of murder



Accused by Prosecutor Viktor Pchonka of having contracted the murder of an MP from Donetsk in 1996 due to a "business conflict", former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko now risks a life sentence. A leading figure of the Orange Revolution, Yulia Tymoshenko is at present serving a seven year sentence in Kharkiv for abuse of power. Also on trial for tax fraud the former Prime Minister denies any guilt and is denouncing "political vengeance" orchestrated by Head of State Viktor Yanukovich who she says fears "losing the presidential election in 2015". The prosecution of the opponent is causing a serious crisis between Ukraine and the West, which suspects that there are indeed political reasons behind the affair. The EU/Ukraine Summit planned for 25th February 2013 might be the lowest point in relations between Brussels and Kyiv... [Read more](#)

Switzerland :

The 43rd World Economic forum



The 43rd World Economic Forum held under the banner of dynamic resilience took place in Davos, Switzerland on 22nd to 26th January 2013. More than 2500 participants, including 50 heads of State and government, were there. This time round the Forum was marked by the return of careful optimism as far as the world's economic situation was concerned. From Mario Draghi, the ECB's President, to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, all said that the worst was over. However there was still concern about the world economic situation. Hence several speakers including Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the OECD expressed their fears that governments would be relying on the central banks which have become the "heros" of the world economy... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

J-C Mignon re-elected as Head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Europe



On 21st January 2013 Jean-Claude Mignon was re-elected for a year as the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on the inauguration of the winter session. The Assembly also elected 19 Vice-Presidents, one seat remains vacant for Romania at present... [Read more](#)

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France called to step up the fight against human trafficking



In a report published on 28th January 2013 the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on the Fight to Counter Human Trafficking (GRETA) called on the French authorities to launch a national action plan against human trafficking immediately. The group of experts also recommends that national guidelines be established to formally identify the victims of trafficking and to ensure that they receive assistance and protection. According to some estimates the number of child victims of trafficking is rising, notably amongst children from the Roma community and from the south east of Europe, who are being used for begging and forced theft... [Read more](#)

Poland must strengthen its arsenal against corruption



In a report published on 25th January 2013 the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) highlighted the progress made by the Polish authorities in terms of preventing corruption amongst MPs, judges and prosecutors. The GRECO did however stress that it was possible to make further progress in terms of the existing anti-corruption measures. Hence the report criticises professional politicians' and those involved with the judiciary for their ignorance of what is expected of them and notably what is meant by conflict of interest, an idea that is not defined by law. Therefore the group deems it highly desirable to develop and set out the ethic and legal rules in force clearly and to provide training on these issues... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Public Debt in the Euro Zone and the EU



On 23rd January 2013 Eurostat said that the public debt of the euro zone and the European Union remained stable in the third quarter of 2012 in comparison with the previous one, at 90% and 85.1% of the GDP respectively. In Greece it is over 150% and it nearly 120% in Italy, Portugal and Ireland. It is below 10% in Estonia. Over one year 22 States have recorded a rise and 5 a reduction... [Read more](#)

The EU's investment stocks in the rest of the world have increased



According to a publication by Eurostat on 22nd January 2013 EU Member States' foreign direct investments in the rest of the world increased by 50% between 2008 and 2011 representing 5000 billion euros. They increased by 20% between Member States. However only 40% of the stocks held are to be found in the rest of the world, 60% are invested in another Member State. The US are the first destination (29%), easily ahead of Switzerland (12%) and Brazil (5%). The US and Switzerland are also the leading investors in the European Union (35% and 12%)... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

European writers plead for Political Union



Several European daily papers like Le Monde and El Pais published a manifesto on 26th January 2013 launched by Bernard Henri-Lévy, which was signed by some major writers such as Vassilus Alexakis and Salman Rushdie entitled "Europe or Chaos? Rebuild Europe or die?" These intellectuals maintain in this paper that as a project Europe is "dying". To remedy this situation they defend greater European political integration that in the long run should lead to a European federation... [Read more](#)

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Culture :

Two Giacometti Exhibitions in Hamburg



Two exhibitions are being devoted to the work of Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) in Hamburg. The Museum "Hamburger Kunsthalle" is putting on an exhibition "Giacometti. The playing fields" until 19th May 2013. The exhibition highlights the artist's beginnings, which are anchored in surrealism. The "Bucerius Kunst Forum" is presenting Giacometti's portraits until 20th May 2013 via sculptures, pictures and drawings... [Read more](#)

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Manet Exhibition: "Portraying Life" at the Royal Academy of Arts in London



Until 14th April 2013 the Royal Academy of Arts in London is putting on the first retrospective devoted to the portraits painted by Edouard Manet. Although these portraits comprise around half of the artist's work no exhibition has been devoted to this until now. The exhibition, which brings together works from all over Europe, Asia, and the US, offers the visitor an overview of this enigmatic, controversial artist's career, notably via 50 paintings and the portraits of Emilia Zola and Stéphane Mallarmé... [Read more](#)

Exhibition "Le Corbusier, Secret Laboratory"



Until 18th April 2013 the Moderna Museet in Stockholm is putting on an exhibition "Le Corbusier's, Secret Laboratory". The exhibition is showing all of the architect's work in five thematic parts, including the paintings and sculptures rarely on show to the public. Le Corbusier is believed to be one of the greatest architects of his time having influenced the design of buildings and urbanism across the whole world... [Read more](#)

The Venice Carnival



On 26th January 2013 the Venice Carnival was launched. There will be balls, theatre plays, competitions to find the most beautiful costumes and other shows until 12th February setting the pace for the inhabitants of the community as well as for the many visitors who have travelled there for this particular event... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



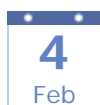
28th and 29th January
Brussels
Agriculture and Fisheries Council



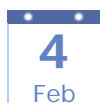
31st January
Brussels
"Foreign Affairs" Council



1st-3rd February
Munich
Conference on Security



4th February
Brussels
"General Affairs" Council



4th-7th February
Strasbourg
Plenary Session-European Parliament

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