



External Interventions in Countries in Crisis



Author: Michel Foucher

The history of recent interventions since 11th September 2001 undertaken by some States in third countries shows that the game of imperatives has been singular in each case. In this study Michel Foucher, geographer and member of the Robert Schuman Foundation's Scientific Committee analyses and compares the various external interventions undertaken to settle geopolitical crises (Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Mali ...). He notes the variety of contexts of these external interventions according to the crisis, and also several features they all share (they notably have all taken place within a three to six hour flight from Brussels).

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Financial Crisis :

No deflation in the euro zone



The European Central Bank announced on 6th February 2014 that the interest rate on the main refinancing operations as well as those on the marginal lending facility and the deposit facility will remain unchanged, at 0.25%, 0.75% and 0% respectively. The ECB is forecasting increased growth in 2014 and a decrease in inflation. It is counting on continued recovery to counter the worrying weakness of inflation. ECB President Mario Draghi believes that there is no reason to fear a period of deflation right now - which means a decrease in prices, wages and growth. "There is no deflation in the euro zone," he declared at the monthly monetary policy press conference to justify the upkeep of the main interest rates at 0.25%, its lowest ever level... [Read more](#)

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Annual Inflation at 1.6% in December 2013

On 4th February 2014 the OECD announced that annual inflation since



December 2012 had increased slightly to 1.6% in December 2013 in all OECD countries. This increase is linked to that of energy prices, according to the OECD report. In the euro zone inflation increased, rising from 0.9% in December against 0.8% in November. The main EU country where inflation had risen was Germany (1.4% against 1.3%). Inflation was stable in France and Italy (0.7%) whilst it slowed slightly in the UK (2% against of 2.1%)... [Read more](#)

Further budgetary austerity measures in Portugal



On 7th February 2014 the Portuguese Parliament adopted an amending budget for 2014 planning for cuts in pensions on salaries over 1000 euros per month and an increase in civil servants' healthcare contributions. These measures aim to compensate for the gap generated by the Constitutional Court's December rejection of a 10% reduction in civil servants' pensions over 600 euro per month... [Read more](#)

IMF and European Commission conclusions after their visit to Romania



From 21st January to 4th February a delegation of IMF and European Commission experts were in Bucharest to assess the country's economic situation. It ensured that Bucharest was respecting its deficit objectives. It noted that most of the performance criteria had been achieved at the end of December and the structural reforms had been or were about to be finalised. Finally it remarked that work to reduce the number of state enterprises had been interrupted but that some work had been started to continue the process. The monetary policy was deemed adequate and should enable the country to return to the loans market... [Read more](#)

Bank of England maintains its rate at 0.5%



The Monetary Policy Committee at the Bank of England voted on 6th February 2014 in support of the upkeep of the Bank's rate at 0.5%. The rate has remained unchanged since 5th March 2009 when it was reduced by 0.5 points... [Read more](#)

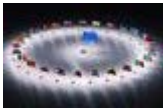
Ukraine: the Central Bank reduces its official exchange rate



On 7th February 2014 for the first time in a year and a half the Central Bank of Ukraine made a clear reduction of the official rate of exchange of the local currency against the dollar. According to data available on the institution's website the official rate was set at 8.70 hryvnias for one dollar against 7.99 in July 2012... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

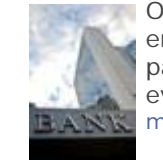
Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council : Ukraine, Central Africa, Cuba



On 10th February 2014, the 28 EU Foreign Ministers said they were concerned about the situation in Ukraine, and more particularly about the violence, disappearances and acts of torture and intimidation; they called on demonstrators to dissociate themselves from any kind of radical action and asked the authorities to take the necessary steps to guarantee the respect of Ukrainian citizens' fundamental rights. Moreover the ministers adopted negotiation directives as part of a bilateral political dialogue and cooperation agreement between the EU and Cuba. In addition to this they approved an EU military operation named EUFOR CAR in order to create a secure environment in Central Africa. Finally ministers recalled their support to human rights in view of the 25th session of the UN's Human Rights Council... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

SEPA: MEPs adopt an additional transitional period



On 4th February 2014 MEPs adopted an additional transitional period to enable businesses and banks to adapt to rules governing transfers and payments (SEPA). These measures aim to avoid payment problems in the event of a delay in the implementation of European measures... [Read more](#)

Bank resolution mechanism: MEPs support their representatives



On 6th February 2014 MEPs supported the Parliament's negotiators, 441 votes in support, 141 against and 173 abstentions regarding the bank resolution mechanism which should help banks in difficulty. Negotiations between the Parliament's representatives and the Member States, whose positions diverge, are due to continue in order to reach agreement on the bank resolution mechanism which is the last stage towards the implementation of Banking Union. European Parliament refused that the resolution funds linked to the mechanism be based on an intergovernmental treaty and for national governments to have the final say, preferring to grant this right to the Commission. Moreover MEPs believed that 10 years was too long a period for the implementation of the full pooling of funds which should total 55 billion euro in the end... [Read more](#)

Less red tape for citizens moving to another EU state



On 4th February 2014 MEPs adopted 573 votes in support, 62 against and 44 abstentions a new legislative project so that citizens and businesses moving to another country of the EU face less red tape. These measures aim to simplify procedures guaranteeing the authenticity of certain official documents like birth and marriage certificates. The text still has to be approved by the Member States... [Read more](#)

Support to copyright



On 4th February 2014 MEPs adopted 640 votes in support, 18 against and 22 abstentions of new measures concerning copyrights to facilitate the granting of licences for the use of music on line in the Union. These measures should guarantee greater protection as well as faster copyright payment. Finally the legislation should also stimulate the creation of on-line music services for consumers... [Read more](#)

Stepping up air passenger rights



MEPs adopted new measures, 580 votes in support, 41 against and 48 abstentions on 5th February 2014 to step up air passenger rights. Citizens whose flight is delayed should be able to access compensation more easily and receive better information. The new measures oblige airlines to introduce contact points in airports in order to inform passengers of their rights, complaints procedures, reimbursement and re-scheduling of flights... [Read more](#)

Stricter labelling rules regarding the origins of meat



In a non-legislative resolution MEPs rejected a proposal by the European Commission on 6th February 2014 which would allow pork to be labelled as having been "raised" in a Union State after having only spent four months in situ. Moreover MEPs encouraged the Union to base itself on the stricter rules that have been set for beef as far as pork, mutton, goat and poultry were concerned irrespective of whether these were fresh, refrigerated or frozen... [Read more](#)

The Fight to Counter Climate Change



MEPs adopted a non-legislative resolution on 5th February 2014 - 341 votes in support, 263 against and 26 abstentions calling on the Member States to reduce their CO2 emissions by 40%, to reach a 30% level of renewable energies and to increase their energy efficiency by 40% by 2030. The European Parliament believes that these goals should be legally binding... [Read more](#)

Better working conditions for seasonal workers



On 5th February 2014 MEPs adopted a draft bill 498 votes in support, 56 against and 68 abstentions, that aims to improve the rights and working conditions of seasonal workers from third countries. The measures mean for example that exploitation will be stopped and also that it will no longer possible for temporary work to become permanent. The European Commission indicated that the Union hosted more than

100,000 workers yearly... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Joint Press Conference between Turkish Prime Minister and German Chancellor



On 4th February 2014 Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan met German Chancellor Angela Merkel. He declared that local elections planned for 30th March 2014 would be a test for his government and reviewed his government's positive economic results. Regarding Turkey's negotiations for EU membership the Turkish Prime Minister asked for support from Germany. For her part the German Chancellor supported the independence of Turkey's judiciary. However she did not suggest a precise calendar for Turkey's entry into the EU... [Read more](#)

The German Defence Minister visits Mali



German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen travelled to Mali on 6th February 2014 one day after the German government's decision to increase the number of its troops stationed there (from 180 to 250). The German Parliament still has to approve this contingent increase. Ursula von der Leyen is advocating greater involvement by the German army abroad. "We have the capability to take up new commitments." Germany's goal is also to support its partner, France which is intervening at present in Mali and Central Africa... [Read more](#)

Record trade surplus in Germany



Germany's trade surplus reached a record peak in 2013 in spite of a slight decline in December announced the Federal Statistics Office, Destatis on 7th February 2014. Last year this surplus rose to 198.9 billion euro against 189.8 billion in 2012 in gross data, thereby improving its previous 2007 record (195.3 billion euro). This is its highest level since the launch of statistics collation in 1950 said the institution... [Read more](#)

Strengthening competitiveness and creating more jobs in Europe



The heads of the two main employers' bodies in France and Germany, Pierre Gattaz (Medef) and Ulrich Grillo (BDI) met in Paris on 5th February 2014 to launch a joint appeal to their governments to support business competitiveness and employment in Europe. The call was launched in view of the Franco-German Council of Ministers planned for 19th February and before the European Council on 20th and 21st March. The two organisations have drawn up recommendations to strengthen Europe's competitiveness; reducing the cost of labour, a common energy policy, better access by businesses to financing and reduced regulatory costs. They are also demanding a revival in research and innovation in Europe, the completion of the internal market and significant progress in the opening of world markets to European products... [Read more](#)

The German Constitutional Court grants arbitration to the European Court of Justice



Referred to in 2012 to decide whether European law was compatible with the ECB's decision to undertake Outright Monetary Transactions, the German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, the country's highest legal body decided to leave the decision to the European Court of Justice. It is the first time that the German Court has done this - its most recent decisions have been examined closely by the EU's Member States since they have come to define the development of the crisis in Europe. The Court believes that the ECB is going beyond its remit as it bids to buy OMT's in that the treaties stipulate that the ECB has to limit itself to supporting the EU's economic policy but it stresses that as a German federal court it does not have the mandate to emit a decision on action taken by a European institution. It is therefore up to the European Court of Justice to decide whether this decision is legal or not... [Read more](#)

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Cyprus :

New talks in view of reunifying the island

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades and the leader of the northern part of the island, Dervis Eroglu are to meet on 11th February to



reinitiate talks in view of reunifying Cyprus, which has been divided since 1974. The two leaders will then reveal a roadmap setting the discussion framework on which they have finally agreed after months of bitter discussion... [Read more](#)

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Denmark :

Government reshuffle



Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt announced on 3rd February 2014 that there would be a government reshuffle after the departure of six ministers from the Socialist People's Party which was against the sale of shares from the state owned company Dong Energy to a group of investors supported by the American Bank Goldman Sachs. These posts were shared between the two parties in the coalition; the Social Democrats and the Radical Left. Notable changes are the arrival of former Climate and Energy Minister Martin Lidegaard in Foreign Affairs, and that of Morten Østergaard, former Higher Education and Research Minister in Taxation... [Read more](#)

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Spain :

Suspension of work to widen the Panama Canal



Work to widen the Panama Canal started in 2007 was interrupted in February by the Spanish company managing the project, Sacyr. This is due to the dispute between Sacyr and the Panama Canal Authority which administrates the canal over a surcharge of 1.6 billion dollars. In spite of proposals on both sides to enable work to continue nothing has succeeded and the director of the administrative authority, Jorge Quijano said that the agency was prepared to cancel the contract if no solution was found soon. The widening of the canal is supposed to facilitate its use by heavier boats... [Read more](#)

France :

Meeting between François Hollande and Erna Solberg



On 3rd February 2014 French President François Hollande met Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg in Paris. Ms Solberg also met OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría. François Hollande pointed to the excellent relations France entertains with Norway and recalled the energy and financial links between the two countries. Ms Solberg and Mr Hollande also addressed international issues and called for appeasement in Ukraine. At the OECD Ms Solberg talked with Mr Gurría about the means to associate the OECD with the reform programme that Ms Solberg is undertaking in Norway - more particularly in the areas of competitiveness, increasing growth and the creation of jobs... [Read more](#)

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Italy :

Giorgio Napolitano advocates a political Europe to end the crisis



On 4th February 2014 the President of the Republic of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano spoke during a plenary session at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. He analysed the European crisis since 2008 pointing to its structural, exceptional nature. Given the economic and social crisis, it is vital, in his opinion, to promote new economic policies aiming to revive growth and employment. He recalled that European integration was an irreversible process: a path that had to be continued with a new approach in order to create a political space and true European debate in order to guarantee the democratic representation for its citizens... [Read more](#)

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Lithuania :

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė stands again in the presidential election



The President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė announced on 3rd February 2014 that she was going to stand in the presidential election in May. "It is my decision to work for you and I am going to stand again in the presidential election for Lithuania as an independent candidate," declared Ms Grybauskaitė in a speech that was broadcast live on television. Her decision is far from being a surprise. Ms Grybauskaitė is the favourite in the next presidential election with a support rate that has remained

at around 40% over the last few months... [Read more](#)

Visit by Dalia Grybauskaite in Germany



Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite travelled on 8th February 2014 to Erfurt in Germany to speak with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. They discussed the strengthening of bilateral economic and trade relations between Germany and Lithuania, security issues, as well as Lithuania's integration prospects in terms of the euro zone by 2015. The Eastern Partnership was also on the agenda... [Read more](#)

UK :

David Cameron exhorts Scotland to remain in the UK



British Prime Minister David Cameron gave a speech on 7th February 2014 in London calling on the Scots to vote in support of Scotland remaining in the UK during the referendum which is due to take place on 18th September 2014. He insisted on the "power of working together", the UK's economic influence in the world and the values shared between Scotland and the rest of the UK. He also encouraged the rest of the British to send a clear message to Scotland for it to stay... [Read more](#)

Switzerland :

The Swiss vote "yes" to limiting immigration



On 9th February 2014 Switzerland organised a vote on the proposal that aims to set caps and contingents on intra-European migrants hoping to move to the country. Turnout totalled 55.8%. The proposal passed by a very short majority of 0.3 points (around 19,500 voters) with 50.3% "yes" votes. The federal government announced on the same day that it was starting work to implement the proposal... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine :

Ukraine: MEPs ask for targeted measures



On 6th February in a non-legislative resolution 2014 MEPs encouraged the EU and the Member States to step up diplomatic pressure on Ukraine as well as to adopt targeted measures such as the freezing of assets and travel bans against those responsible for the deaths of demonstrators. They called on the introduction of financial support to the country and also asked for the immediate and unconditional liberation - political rehabilitation of all demonstrators, illegally held political prisoners including Yulia Tymoshenko. However during the vote the EU's High Representative Catherine Ashton said that the "Union was not implementing a sanctions strategy at present". At the same time MEPs asked Russia to respect the sovereignty of Ukrainian citizens concerning their choice of political orientation... [Read more](#)

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Poland seeks a European compromise in Ukraine



Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk continued his tour of European capitals which started on 29th January 2014 in a bid to find a settlement to the Ukrainian crisis. He travelled on 3rd February to Tallinn to meet his Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian counterparts, then on to Stockholm for talks with Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt and Finnish Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen. Mr Tusk finally telephoned the Ukrainian opposition leaders on 6th February to discuss their claims vis-à-vis the government for the reform of the Constitution and the electoral law... [Read more](#)

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The EU re-iterates that it wants to sign an association agreement with Kiev



On 10th February 2014 the EU's 28 Foreign Ministers discussed the situation in Ukraine. They said they were concerned about the political crisis in the country and called on the authorities to respect fundamental rights. The EU is still available to support political and economic reform in the country and said that it still wanted to sign an association agreement with Kiev. Europe and the USA are working on an alternative aid plan. However the Ukrainian crisis has led to disquiet amongst the western leaders with Angela Merkel deeming comments regarding the role played by the EU

made by one American diplomat, Victoria Nuland as "unacceptable". On 9th February 2014, around 70, 000 demonstrators met in Independence Square in Kiev asking for a return to the 2004 constitution as proposed by the opposition to the Ukrainian parliament. On 8th February Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich travelled to Sochi in Russia for the launch of the Olympic Games. He met his Russian counterpart V. Putin with whom he discussed the situation in Ukraine. Moscow has decided to put the economic aid promised to Kiev on hold until the appointment of a new Prime Minister... [Read more](#)

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Opponent Dmytro Bulatov, a sad symbol of bloody repression in Ukraine



On 4th February 2014 Lithuania took in Dmytro Bulatov, a Ukrainian opposition activist and one of the leaders of "AutoMaidan". His state of health is deplorable and shows signs of extensive torture. More worrying is that Mr Bulatov declared to the press on 6th February that his torturers were Russian speaking and that they had forced him to admit that he was an American spy. Moreover Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius called on the EU to take urgent measures regarding the kidnapping, torture and inhuman treatment of peaceful demonstrators in Ukraine. According to the Minister the EU must demand that Kiev undertake an investigation -which is both in-depth and independent of this and similar incidents and bring the guilty parties to justice... [Read more](#)

Eurostat :

Public Deficit: 3.1% in the euro zone and 3.5% in the EU



The public deficit lay at 3.1% of the GDP in the euro zone in the third quarter of 2013 according to data adjusted to seasonal variations published on 3rd February 2014 by Eurostat. According to figures published for the first time by Eurostat the public deficit of the euro zone with 17 members (without Latvia which joined on 1st January 2014) was lower in comparison with the second quarter when it totalled 3.3%... [Read more](#)

Eurobarometer :

Europeans and Corruption



Eurobarometer published a survey on 3rd February 2014 on European attitudes to corruption which reveals that 76% of those interviewed believe that corruption is widespread. Moreover 56% of European citizens think that corruption has grown in their country over the last three years. Finally 8% of Europeans believe that they have seen or have been the victim of corruption over the last year... [Read more](#)

Studies/Reports :

Publication of the first EU anti-corruption report



On 3rd February 2014 the European Commission published the EU's first anti-corruption report which stresses that corruption affects all Member States and that it costs them nearly 120 billion euros per year. Even if Member States have taken several measures in the previous years results are unequal and additional work has to be undertaken to prevent and punish corruption more effectively. The report highlights the nature of what corruption is, how developed it is and the efficacy of the measures taken by the Member States to counter it... [Read more](#)

The European Centre to counter Cybercrime is one year old



The European Centre to counter cybercrime presented its first report on 10th February illustrating what it has done to help protect citizens and businesses in Europe since it was launched in January 2013... [Read more](#)

The Military Balance 2014

The International Institute for Strategic Studies presented its annual report on 5th February in London entitled "The Military Balance 2014". The report lays out the military and defence capabilities of 171 countries and includes essays on the developments in armed conflict in



the world. Graphs also present comparative statistics on defence, its economic aspects and ongoing research in the areas of infantry, the marine and aviation... [Read more](#)

2013, the sixth hottest year since 1850



2013 was the sixth hottest year observed since the mid-19th century on a par with 2007. The preliminary climate results for last year published on 5th February 2014 by the World Meteorological Society states that the average temperature on Earth was 0.5°C more than the meteorological norm calculated over the period 1961-1990. The El Niño and La Niña, known respectively for heating up and cooling the climate were the main causes in the natural changes of the latter. They were notoriously absent in 2013 which was hotter than 2011 and 2012, when La Niña caused a cooling effect. 2013 was one of the four hottest years that had been typified by the neutral ENSO conditions (ie without Niño or Niña)... [Read more](#)

Report on Imprisonment



According to a Commission report published on 5th February 2014 the common rules governing imprisonment, adopted unanimously by the Member States are only being implemented in around half of the Member States. The report looks into the implementation of three framework decisions covering the transfer of prisoners, probation and alternative sanctions as well as the European Supervision Order. In virtue of these three measures prison sentences, probationary decisions or alternative sanctions and supervisory measures can be executed in an EU country other than the one in which the prisoner has been sentenced or where the person is awaiting trial. It might be a country whose nationality he carries, his usual place of residence or another EU country with which he has links. The Commission is inviting the Member States to implement the common rules regarding those in prison or those awaiting trial in another EU country... [Read more](#)

Culture :

To counter downloading - let's widen the range of films on offer



According to a recent study by the European Commission on the behaviour of cinema-going public nearly 70% of Europeans download films or watch them on streaming free of charge either legally or illegally. The study concludes that this is not surprising in that the public is often extremely interested in films in general and most of the time do not have a cinema close by and are offered a relatively limited choice of films. According to this study the European cinema industry might increase its revenues by using different types of on-line profitable platforms so as to extend the choice of films on offer and reach new audiences. Moreover the sub-programme MEDIA will finance 2000 cinemas and 800 European films over the next seven years... [Read more](#)

In Leipzig the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy House has been renovated



After ten months of work and 1.5 million euros in investments the house of Romantic composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) reopened its doors on 3rd February 2014 in Leipzig. It is the only house having belonged to Mendelssohn that remains. The renovated building comprises the first floor apartments dating back to the 19th century and a museum on the ground floor. For the inauguration the museum acquired new original documents including a water colour by the composer... [Read more](#)

Félix Vallotton: fire beneath the ice



The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam is running an exhibition from 14th February to 1st June 2014 on Félix Vallotton (1865-1925) entitled "Fire beneath the Ice". The exhibition shows a mixture of paintings and prints. Nearly 60 paintings from museums and private collections offer an overview of all of the artist's work... [Read more](#)

From Matisse to the Blue Rider - Expressionism in Germany and France



The Kunsthaus in Zürich is running an exhibition devoted to Expressionism in Germany and France entitled "From Matisse to the Blue Rider" The exhibition highlights the beginnings of Expressionism showing that this movement was born in a cosmopolitan spirit and that it was marked by a series of rich international exchange. The 107 pictures and prints on show come from both public and private collections in Europe and America... [Read more](#)

Exhibition on artistic relations maintained by Berlin and Vienna



The Belvedere in Vienna is putting on an exhibition together with the Berlinische Galerie from 14th February to 15th June 2014 "Vienna-Berlin". It is a retrospective devoted to artistic relations maintained by Vienna and Berlin at the end of the 19th century until the 1930's. Those forty years were marked by three major artistic movements: the Secessionists of the 1900's, Expressionism and New Objectivity. The exhibition brings together the works of Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, George Grosz, Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner, Gustav Klimt, Oskar Kokoschka, Max Liebermann, Egon Schiele ... in all the exhibition presents 90 artists and 200 pieces of art... [Read more](#)

Richard Deacon Exhibition at the Tate Britain in London



The Tate Britain in London is running an exhibition on the work of Richard Deacon, a British sculptor and winner of the Turner Prize until 27th April 2014. The exhibition focuses on materials and their use by the artist between language and materialism. Three seminars will also be organised by the museum on Richard Deacon's work from February to March 2014... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



10th February
Brussels
Foreign Affairs Council



11th February
Brussels
General Affairs Council



17th February
Brussels
Agricultural and Fisheries Council

Brussels
Meeting of Euro zone Finance Ministers



18th February
Brussels
Economic and Financial Affairs Council

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Contact/Suggestions
info@robert-schuman.eu

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