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France at the head of the Council: positive results despite the war

Author: Eric Maurice



The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which ends on 30 June, has been shaken by the invasion of Ukraine and its consequences. The EU-27 have imposed unprecedented sanctions on Russia, broken the taboo surrounding the financing of the war, decided to change their energy supplies and opened the door to further enlargement. They have also had to accommodate several million people fleeing war, deal with the highest inflation in decades and anticipate a global food crisis. But "reflection on the future of the

Union" has only just begun.

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Front page! :

Europe: **Moving forward despite the storm**



At the end of this six-month period, the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union can claim a positive balance sheet despite the war. A dynamic has been launched and the Europeans have chosen to respond collectively and in unity to the surprises that the international situation has thrown at them, writes Jean-Dominique Giuliani... [Read more](#)

Foundation :

The Schuman Report on Europe, State of the Union 2022

The 2022 edition of the "Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union" has just been published by Marie B. With contributions from leading personalities and experts, original maps and commented statistics, the Schuman Report analyses the challenges facing Europe and offers a complete view of the European Union. It is available in



paper format on our website and in bookshops in French, as well as in digital version in French and English. Order your copy now!.. [Read more](#)

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The progress of Digital Europe



The Foundation is organising an online debate on 30 June at 2pm on the European Union's digital policy, between regulation and technological ambition. This videoconference will be held in the framework of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It is obligatory register to participate... [Read more](#)

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European Council :

Conclusions of the European Council



Meeting on 23 and 24 June, the 27 heads of state and government discussed the idea of a European political community that would bring together the European Union and its European partners to foster political dialogue and cooperation. A first meeting will take place by the end of the year. They invited the Commission to explore ways of curbing rising energy prices. They took note of the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe and recalled the importance of taking into account citizens' views. At the eurozone summit, EU leaders called on the Commission to consider proposals to strengthen the banking and capital markets union. Croatia is expected to join the eurozone on 1 January. Greece is now out of the enhanced surveillance programme... [Read more](#)

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Ukraine/Russia :

Ukraine and Moldova achieve candidate status to the European Union



On 23 June, the European Council decided to grant candidate country status to Ukraine and Moldova, and gave a perspective to Georgia. They welcomed the lifting of the Bulgarian veto on the opening of negotiations with Northern Macedonia and the political agreement reached on 12 June 2022 by the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina... [Read more](#)

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Measures to limit the risk of gas shortages and price increases



The Spanish, Italian and German governments are introducing measures to limit inflation and the risk of gas shortages in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Spanish and Italian governments are lowering VAT to 5%, Italy on gas consumption and Spain on electricity. The Spanish government announced on 25 June a €200 grant for low-income households. On 23 June, the German Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection, Robert Habeck, announced the implementation of phase 2 of the emergency gas plan. 15 billion euros are being mobilised to allow gas reservoirs to be refilled, and coal-fired power stations will be brought back into operation. In France, Catherine MacGregor, CEO of Engie, Jean-Bernard Lévy, Chairman and CEO of EDF, and Patrick Pouyanné, Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies, are calling for urgent sobriety in the face of soaring energy prices... [Read more](#)

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The 3 Seas Initiative provides Ukraine with partner status



On 21 June, following the 3 Seas Initiative Summit in Riga, the heads of state and representatives of the 12 participating states granted Ukraine partner status and supported its application to join the European Union. They announced continued investment in energy, transport and telecommunications in the Western Balkan countries... [Read more](#)

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Kaliningrad: a Russian exclave, the centre of tension with the European Union



Russia has threatened Lithuania over the past few days because of the controls applied by the Lithuanian authorities on freight trains bound for the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. The Lithuanian government and the European Commission have clarified that these controls are carried out in application of legal sanctions adopted by the European Union and do not constitute a blockade as they only concern goods under sanctions... [Read more](#)

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More than 150 cultural sites partially or totally destroyed



UNESCO has identified 152 sites that have been destroyed or damaged since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, including religious and historical sites, cultural centres, libraries, monuments and museums. UNESCO has launched a series of initiatives to protect heritage from destruction, including placing sites under the protection of the 1954 Hague Convention. In addition to documenting the damage and destruction, the organisation has already created a fund dedicated to future reconstruction... [Read more](#)

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Exceptional temporary support to Ukraine under the EAFRD



In a resolution adopted on 23 June, MEPs call for "exceptional" temporary support for farmers and food SMEs adversely affected by the war in Ukraine. In order to prevent liquidity problems, Parliament calls for States to be allowed to adjust the level of lump sums paid under the EAFRD. The amount may not exceed €15,000 per farmer and €100,000 per SME... [Read more](#)

Commission :

New rules for the application of trade agreements



On 22 June, the Commission presented rules to strengthen the implementation of the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters of EU trade agreements. In particular, it wants to open up new markets for the import and export of green goods and services as well as raw materials and make it possible to apply trade sanctions in the event of violations of the Paris climate agreement. It intends to include civil society more by being more transparent about the agreements and making it easier to challenge violations of sustainable development commitments... [Read more](#)

Proposals to reduce the use of pesticides



On 22 June, the Commission tabled proposals to restore damaged ecosystems and reduce the use of chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030. A law on nature restoration, as well as new rules on chemical pesticides and the Common Agricultural Policy have been submitted. Indeed, the Commission plans to support farmers in the transition to sustainable food production systems through support for new technologies or compensation for transition costs... [Read more](#)

Parliament :

Debate with the Croatian Prime Minister



In a debate with MEPs on 22 June, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic expressed his wish to see the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina change, subject to certain conditions. He also welcomed the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe but expressed reservations about the introduction of majority voting on foreign policy issues. MEPs voiced their support for Croatia's membership of the eurozone and its entry into the Schengen area... [Read more](#)

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Votes on three texts from the Fit for 55 package



On 22 June, MEPs adopted three texts of the "Fit for 55" package that they had returned to committee during the 6-9 June plenary session. They voted on amendments to the new Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to encourage companies to reduce their emissions; the Carbon Adjustment Mechanism at the Borders (MACF) and the Social Climate Fund (SCF) to fight against energy and mobility poverty... [Read more](#)

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Council :

Agreement regarding Eurodac and screening regulations



On 22 June, the Council adopted its position on the amendment of the Eurodac Regulation with a view to combating irregular movements and facilitating the return of illegal immigrants. The proposal extends the content of the database, replaces the monitoring of applications with that of asylum seekers, and ensures its interoperability with other European information systems. The Council also adopted its position on the screening regulation, which aims to strengthen the control of persons on the external borders and to direct people quickly to the appropriate procedure. States will have to put in place an independent mechanism to monitor respect for fundamental rights during screening... [Read more](#)

The regulation regarding the storage of gas has been definitively adopted



On 27 June, the Council definitively adopted the regulation aimed at ensuring sufficient gas storage before the winter season. These reserves, which will have to be filled to at least 80% of their capacity before the start of the winter of 2022/2023, can be shared between Member States and will make it possible to strengthen the European Union's security of energy supply in the context of the war in Ukraine.

The text specifies that gas storage facilities will be qualified as "critical infrastructure" and encourages Member States to diversify their sources of supply. The Parliament adopted it on 23 June... [Read more](#)

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Provisional agreement on persistent organic pollutants



The Council and Parliament reached a provisional agreement on 21 June to add new chemicals to the list of persistent organic pollutants and to update the concentration limits for certain substances to reduce their presence in waste... [Read more](#)

Agreement on serious transboundary health threats



The Council and Parliament reached agreement on 23 June on the regulation on serious cross-border health threats, providing for the establishment of a plan for warning of and managing health crises and pandemics. The Commission will be able to declare a public health emergency at EU level which will enable the monitoring of drug shortages. The Council and Parliament also agreed on the possibility for the Commission and Member States to engage in joint procurement of medical countermeasures... [Read more](#)

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Agreement on the publication of information regarding sustainability by businesses



The Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on 21 June regarding the publication of sustainability information by companies (CSRD). The text will require companies with more than 500 employees, listed companies, certain SMEs and non-EU companies with a turnover of more than €150 million in the EU to publish information on non-financial issues such as the impact of their activities on social, human and environmental rights. The sustainability standards will be determined by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG)... [Read more](#)

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Meeting of European Affairs Ministers



On 21 June, EU Affairs Ministers adopted conclusions on a seamless enlarged internal market and relations with non-EU countries in Western Europe. They adopted conclusions calling for new measures to protect media professionals whose safety and freedom of expression are increasingly under threat. They suggested the establishment of a framework for a coordinated response to hybrid campaigns threatening the European Union. Finally, they approved conclusions on the outermost regions... [Read more](#)

Energy Ministers' Meeting



Meeting on 28 June, the energy ministers adopted their position on the revision of the energy efficiency directive and the renewable energy directive. They exchanged views regarding the decarbonisation objectives and the level of preparation of the Member States to deal with the consequences of the war in Ukraine on energy in Europe. The ministers welcomed the REPowerEU plan and the creation of the joint energy procurement platform, and adopted the regulation on gas storage, which aims to ensure that gas storage facilities in the EU are ready before winter... [Read more](#)

Diplomacy :

Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers



Meeting on 20 June, Europe's Foreign Ministers discussed the consequences of the war in Ukraine for global food security and released €1.8 billion in aid for the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Levant and North Africa. They exchanged views with their Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Hassan Shoukry, as part of the new EU-Egypt partnership and

ahead of the Egyptian presidency of COP27. They endorsed a partnership agreement with New Zealand, with a view to its entry into force in July, and adopted conclusions on a strategic partnership with the Gulf in the fields of environment, energy security, visas and human rights. They extended by one year, until 23 June 2023, the sanctions against Russia following the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014... [Read more](#)

Iran nuclear talks resume



Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, visited Iran on 25 June for talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and to encourage the resumption of talks on the Iran nuclear deal. Josep Borrell reiterated the importance of reaching an agreement and maintaining a relationship of trust with Iran, a major "potential energy supplier"... [Read more](#)

Strengthening of energy cooperation with Norway



The Commission and the Norwegian government agreed on 23 June to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Norway in the field of energy. They recalled the importance of Norwegian oil and gas production for Europe's energy security, especially since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. This enhanced partnership should ensure additional supplies of Norwegian gas in the short and long term... [Read more](#)

Report on the Digital Commons



The report on the digital commons is the result of work carried out by 19 Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) and the European Commission. It formulates four proposals to ensure Europe's digital sovereignty: the creation of a European one-stop shop to direct communities towards the appropriate funding and public aid; the launch of a call for projects to rapidly deploy financial aid to the most strategic commons; the creation of a European foundation for the digital commons, with governance shared between the States, the European Commission and the digital commons communities; the implementation of the principle of the "digital commons by default" in the development of digital tools for public administrations... [Read more](#)

Meeting of the G7 Foreign Affairs Ministers



A meeting of G7 Foreign Ministers and the EU High Representative took place on 24 June prior to the Summit of Heads of State and Government. Ministers restated Russia's responsibility for the global food crisis and reiterated their commitment to support Ukraine... [Read more](#)

Healthcare partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean



On 22 June, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez launched a new EU-Latin America and Caribbean partnership on the local production of vaccines, medicines and other health technologies and on strengthening the resilience of health systems. The aim of the partnership is to stimulate growth, spur private sector innovation, facilitate trade, diversify global value chains and strengthen scientific, diplomatic and human links between Europe and Latin America... [Read more](#)

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Court of Justice :

Decision on the limits of the PNR files



The Court of Justice of the European Union ruled on 21 June that, in the absence of a real, present or foreseeable terrorist threat, EU law precludes national legislation providing for the transfer and processing of PNR (Passenger Name Record) data of intra-EU flights and transport by other means within the Union. It recalls that the PNR Directive aims to establish a regime of "continuous, non-targeted and systematic surveillance" of all data of persons using air transport services. The possibility for Member States to justify such interference must be based on verification that the general interest objective pursued is commensurate with the estimated degree of seriousness. The application of the

Directive must be "limited to terrorist offences and only to serious crime connected with the carriage of passengers by air"... [Read more](#)

ECB :

Christine Lagarde at the European Parliament



In an address to MEPs on the Economic Affairs Committee on 20 June, European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde presented the monetary policy for the end of the year, including the end of the asset purchase programme on 1 July and the increase in ECB interest rates in July and September, depending on inflation. She presented the ECB's new anti-fragmentation mechanism and its use in the context of weak economic growth and rising inflation... [Read more](#)

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European Patent Office :

European Inventor's Prize 2022



The European Patent Office announced the winners of the European Inventor Award on 21 June, honouring inventors from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, France, Hungary, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the US. First place for the Young Inventors Award went to Belgium's Victor Dewulf and Britain's Peter Hedley, who developed an artificial intelligence-based waste detection and sorting system, and to American Erin Smith, who created an artificial intelligence-based application that uses video to detect Parkinson's disease at an early stage... [Read more](#)

European Agencies :

Launch of two satellites by Ariane5



On 22 June, the Ariane 5 rocket placed into orbit two satellites dedicated to telecommunications services and satellite TV broadcasting. This was the first launch from the Kourou Space Centre in French Guiana since the start of the war in Ukraine and the cessation of Russian launches. The European Space Agency (ESA), which is responsible for European launcher programmes, including Ariane, is due to launch two Ariane 5s and two Vega rockets by the end of the year... [Read more](#)

Germany :

Ten recommendations to G7 leaders in support of women



Following its summit on 20-21 June in Berlin, the Women's Forum for Economy and Society released its 10 recommendations to the G7 to advance gender equality. These recommendations include the inclusion of women in the Sustainable Development Goals, the establishment of broad-based policies that empower women and combat discrimination against them. They also include the establishment of mechanisms to ensure women's representation in all sectors and to combat all forms of sexual and gender-based violence... [Read more](#)

Bulgaria :

Bulgarian government overthrown



The Bulgarian government of Prime Minister Kiril Petkov was toppled on 22 June by a motion of no confidence in parliament tabled by the opposition GERB party after the populist ITN party decided to leave the government coalition. The text was adopted by 123 out of 240 MPs, while 116 voted against... [Read more](#)

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Parliament lifts veto on North Macedonia's accession negotiations



The Bulgarian Parliament voted on 24 June to lift the country's veto on the opening of accession negotiations between North Macedonia and the European Union. The decision was adopted with 170 votes in favour, 37 against and 21 abstentions. Several conditions were nevertheless set by the parliamentarians, including ensuring the inclusion of Bulgarians in the constitution of North Macedonia and guaranteeing that the accession process does not imply recognition by Bulgaria of the Macedonian language... [Read more](#)

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Council of Europe :

Summer Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe



Meeting from 20 to 24 June, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) discussed with Simon Coveney, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Pekka Haavisto, Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, ways to defend democratic security in Europe. PACE also debated the "consequences of the Black Sea blockade", the "UK agreement on asylum seekers", the humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the control of online communication. Speaking at the PACE, Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou called for the strengthening of the Council of Europe to confront Russian aggression, and King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands denounced the Russian invasion and stressed the importance of the rule of law... [Read more](#)

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OECD :

Report on Agricultural Policies



On 23 June, the OECD released its report on agricultural policies. The organisation notes record levels of public support for agriculture to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises. Between 2019 and 2021, the 54 countries surveyed spent an average of \$817 billion on agricultural support, 13% more than between 2018 and 2020. The OECD finds that only a small share of this support was spent on long-term efforts to address climate change and food systems issues... [Read more](#)

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Eurobarometer :

The war in Ukraine is strengthening support to the Union



According to the European Parliament's Eurobarometer published on 22 June, the war in Ukraine has led to the highest level of support for the European Union (EU) since 2007. 65% of European citizens view their country's membership of the EU favourably; 52% of Europeans have a positive image of the EU and 80% say they support the economic sanctions against Russia. The impact of the war is also reflected in the fundamental values and political priorities cited by citizens: the defence of freedom and democracy... [Read more](#)

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Survey on the importance of agriculture for European citizens



Almost half of Europeans believe that securing a stable food supply in the European Union should be one of the main objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), according to a Eurobarometer survey published on 21 June. In addition, the survey reveals that a large proportion of respondents (58%) say that agriculture has already made a major contribution to the fight against climate change and that the CAP helps protect the environment (65%)... [Read more](#)

Culture :

The world of culture mobilises for Ukraine



The war in Ukraine continues to mobilise the cultural world in Europe. On 30 June in Dublin, members of the Celtic music group Kila will perform in support of Ukraine. From 2 to 9 July, Ukraine will be in the spotlight at the Casino de Paris, where the Virsky company, the National Ensemble of Ukraine, will give a series of exceptional performances. Until 3 July in Hamburg, the photographer Anastasia Taylor-Lind is exhibiting outdoor portraits of mothers fleeing Ukraine with their children, which she took during a trip to Lviv. In Poland, the cultural association "Pegaz" and the Stanislaw Moniusko Theatre in Poznan are mobilising as part of a programme in support of Ukraine called Opera Helps U, aimed at artists from Ukraine forced to leave their country. Until 17 July, Madrid has launched an extensive campaign to raise awareness and donations in support of Ukraine, which is taking place in many educational centres and at entertainment and cultural events... [Read more](#)

Piet Mondrian at the Fondation Beyeler and Picasso-Greco at the Kunstmuseum Basel



There are two exhibitions in Basel this summer. Until 9 October, the Beyeler Foundation is presenting an exhibition on the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth. The exhibition traces the artistic development of this leading artist of the avant-garde movement up to the 1920s. In addition, the art museum is presenting an exhibition until 25 September that highlights the influence of the Cretan master El Greco on Pablo Picasso. The exhibition juxtaposes more than 40

works by Picasso and El Greco. It comprises prestigious loans from all over the world and works from the Museum's collection... [Read more](#)

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Artistic experiments in Wroclaw



Muzeum Współczesne
Wrocław

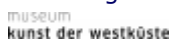
The Museum of Contemporary Art in Wroclaw is presenting the exhibition "Metascore of New Gestures" until 26 September, which analyses the artistic experiments of Ewa and Jacek Doroszenko conducted between 2016 and 2022. With the help of sound installations, videos and graphic works, the artist duo explores and crosses the notions of space, visuality and sound... [Read more](#)

Thought about art in Oslo



Until 11 September, the National Museum of Oslo is presenting the exhibition "I Call it Art", which explores the distinction between what is considered Art and what is not. This reflection on the very definition of art also includes an analysis of themes such as identity, democracy and belonging... [Read more](#)

Following the footprints of Max Liebermann



From 3 July to 19 March 2023, the West Coast Art Museum in Alkersum is hosting an exhibition on the research into the history of Max Liebermann's "Drying Laundry - Bleach"... [Read more](#)

Masterpiece Art Fair in London



From 30 June to 6 July, London's Royal Hospital Chelsea is hosting the Masterpiece Art Fair. More than 120 exhibitors from all over the world will be there to present works from different periods and origins. The fair will award the Masterpiece prize to the best exhibitor... [Read more](#)

Jazz Festival Vienne



The Jazz in Vienne festival will take place from 29 June to 13 July at the city's Théâtre Antique. The musical programme is varied, with funk, soul, jazz and electro music... [Read more](#)

Summer Nights Festival in Barcelona



The Summer Nights festival organised by the CaixaForum cultural centre will take place in Barcelona throughout the summer until 31 August. There will be numerous film screenings, concerts and exhibitions. Cellist Ana Carla Maza will perform on 6 July... [Read more](#)

Med Festival in Loulé



From 30 June to 3 July, the historic city of Loulé in Portugal will bring together the biggest names in world music for one of the most important festivals in Europe. The Med Festival offers a rich programme with 66 concerts on 12 stages, but also art exhibitions and other cultural events... [Read more](#)

Opera Festival Savonlinna



From 1 to 31 July, the Savonlinna Opera Festival is being held in Finland. World-famous soloists and operas take the stage in the medieval setting of Olav Castle... [Read more](#)

International Film Festival Karlovy Vary



The 56th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic takes place from 1 to 9 July and welcomes feature films from all over the world, devoting part of its programme to Central and Eastern European cinema... [Read more](#)

The "Offrande Musicale" Festival in Tarbes and Lourdes



From 29 June to 11 July, the second edition of the "L'Offrande Musicale" Festival is being held in the Hautes-Pyrénées. The Festival supports the cause of disability in France, working to improve access to music for people with special needs. The programme includes three premieres in France for the shows and concerts "Watermusic22" with Antoine Wagner and the Concert d'Astrée, John Neumeier's ballet "Ghost Light" and Ricardo Muti's "Concert de l'amitié"... [Read more](#)

Agenda :



26-28 June
Schloss Elmau
G7 Summit



27 June 2022
Luxembourg
Energy Council



27 June - 1 July
Lisbon
UN Conference on the Oceans



28 June 2022
Luxembourg
Environment Council



29-30 June 2022
Madrid
NATO Summit



1 July 2022
Start of Czech Presidency of the Council

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