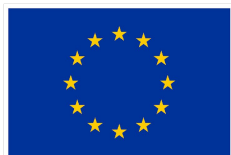


VØRRA

VOICE FOR EQUALITY AND RIGHTS
OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Final Report: what comes next?

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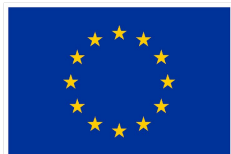


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- Achievements from VERA partnership
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- *Financial Support Social Welfare Rights*
- *Medical & technical support*
- *Access to facilities*
- *Maternity leave*
- Call to Action: join our network!



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Foreword from ASSIST's President

ASSIST's President

Luisa Garribba Rizzitelli



It is common to hear and read that we do live in exciting times for women's sports. And we do indeed. Nevertheless, I would add that we live in contradictory times instead: if on one hand achievements and developments reached during the last ten years are huge in terms of visibility, investments, attention to equal rights and opportunities, on the other hands we are still struggling with some basic needs and rights that when it comes to women in sport are not secured.

The final event of our project that took place in Brussels on 15th November 2024 gathered some professional athletes from different European countries who now are also involved as managers and top level positions in sport federations and organizations: listening to their experiences showed how common and repeated are most of the discriminations that women athletes face and how slow and hard the process of change is.



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Foreword from ASSIST's President

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One step towards equality, ten steps backwards, this is the feeling we have after this amazing experience of VERA. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves: what are we missing? What can we actually do to finally put this struggle for equality in sports towards the right direction?

History teaches us that rights must be earned and, once achieved, they must be defended. Thanks to the international network (created and consolidated also with the VERA project) we are more, we are united and stronger. However, the road is still long and therefore we must continue to keep motivation and mutual support high.

The enormous potential value of sport, its power to be a tool of personal growth and social progress is trapped in the patriarchal, capitalist, chauvinistic and paternalistic values that permeate its management model.

We rejoiced for the first Olympic Games in history (Paris 2024) with absolute equality between male and female participating athletes, but the female presence in leadership, as well as among technicians, journalists, medical staff is negligible.



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Foreword from ASSIST's President

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Just as absent is women's sport in media representation or when it comes to distributing economic resources. Not to mention safety, a topic for which women, suffering from intersectionality of discrimination, always find themselves subjected to unbalanced power relations.

The autonomy that sport enjoys and the privilege of being both controller and controlled at the same time, hinders any substantial change.

Therefore, the VERA network has developed the desire to fight for equity through a new path: we would like a participatory method with the involvement and support of non-sports supranational institutions and greater awareness of public opinion.

Together we will make it!



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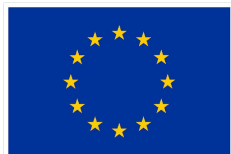


Achievements from VERA partnership

VERA is a collaborative partnership that aims at promoting an international network of organizations working to protect, advance and promote women athletes' rights improving the level of protection, respect and value for them in sport in Europe and, consequently, to build a fairer and more virtuous sporting world.

The main goal for the partnership has been to create and deliver some outputs that could be useful for WOMEN ATHLETES and ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT ATHLETES to advance their rights, their knowledge and contacts in supporting these rights concretely.

Therefore, KNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT and NETWORKING could sum up the main efforts that the partners put in this journey.



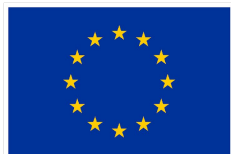
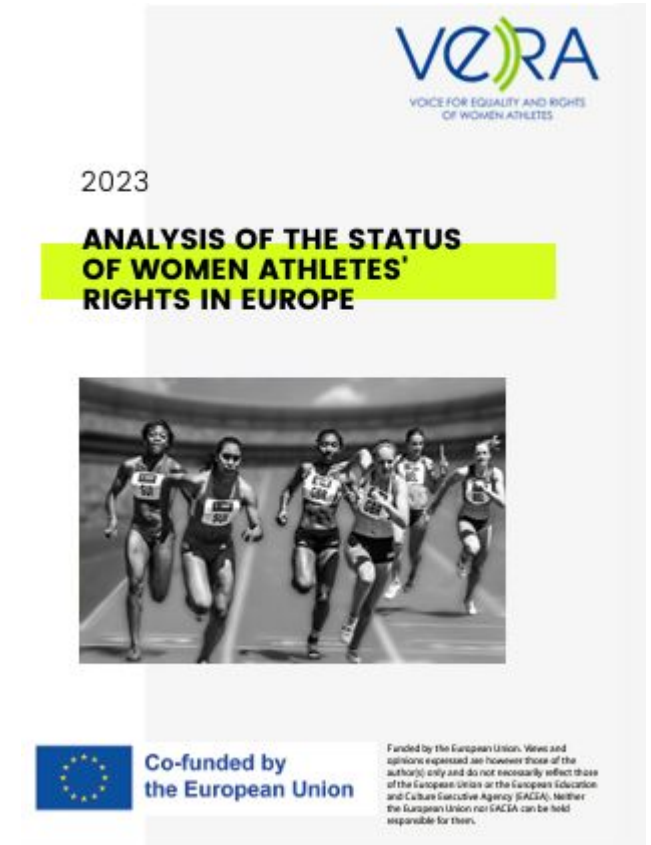
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Achievements from VERA partnership

The first step of the cooperation has created a joint analysis on the status of women athletes' rights in Europe, starting from the EU countries involved in the partnership, completed by an overview of successful experiences in advancing equality and women athletes' rights on basic issues.

The research has been realised involving athletes (before, during, after career) and organizations that work with athletes, including sport federations, to produce a map of the current situation in Europe.



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Achievements from VERA partnership

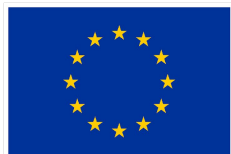
Partners together with participants have identified 4 MAIN TOPICS to focus their work on:

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND SOCIAL WELFARE RIGHTS

MATERNITY RIGHTS

TECHNICAL AND MEDICAL SUPPORT

ACCESS TO FACILITIES



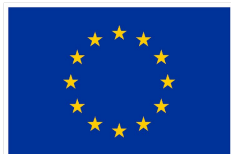
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Achievements from VERA partnership

Using what emerged from the report, and valorising suggestions from interviewed and involved beneficiaries, partners realised a **capacity building & mentoring toolkit** that can be used to train athletes, former athletes, professionals of organizations that can support the advancement of women athletes' rights at different levels and in different roles in order to increase awareness and knowledge on the 4 topics chosen as more relevant during the work for the report.

For each topic, the toolkit offers a motivation overview, legal framework, a brief test section where participants can verify the acquired knowledge, good practices examples assessed by partners during the work for the report.



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Achievements from VERA partnership

The toolkit has been tested for the first time during the V.E.R.A. transnational workshop for athletes held in Slovenia in December 2023 by an international team of 20 women athletes, representing different sports and 4 European countries.

After sharing these contents, the athletes have been introduced and invited to test what represents the main output of V.E.R.A., [the Vera Network Platform](#). Athletes have been working in groups to assess all parts of the platform following some questions and then sharing comments and suggestions that partners used to adjust and finalize the digital tool to make sure it would express users's needs as much as possible.

It has been very interesting to create this network and know different athletes, athletes don't have enough support for this

Maybe to find a contacts for sponsorship or the person that can arrange and find it

Clearly highlight the role of your inspiring athletes from the beginning. They are the strength of roundtables.

add a specific section call to action to explain how we athletes can directly contribute to the network

keep involving us in connecting VERA further to others who might empower the project



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Achievements from VERA partnership

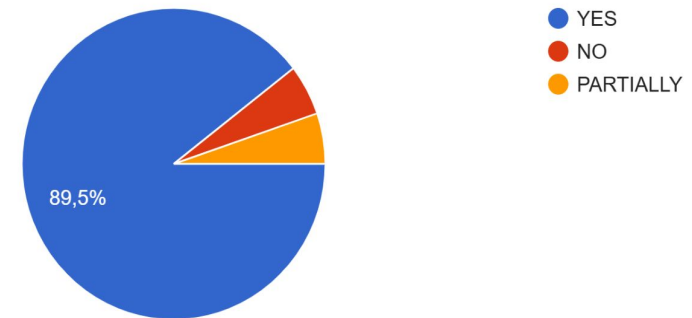
VERA aims at putting athletes at the center of the discussion, valuing their current and past experience, giving them voice to express their needs, engaging them in developing the proposed tools and concrete solutions, strengthening their network.

The workshop has fully embodied these objectives and participants' evaluation confirmed that this approach is highly appreciated.

You need to involve athletes directly and from the start when you want to work to improve their awareness and support them in promoting their rights!

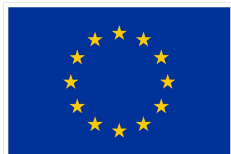
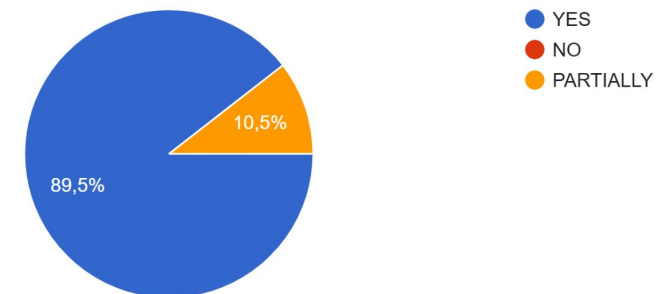
Do you think the workshop increased your knowledge of the topics proposed?

19 risposte



Do you think the VERA platform that has been presented could offer you useful services and functions?

19 risposte



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Achievements from VERA partnership

The V.E.R.A. platform represents the main output of the action, as it aims to be a concrete digital place where athletes can find **knowledge**, through a digital library of useful contents and documents, **solutions** to issues, through a pool of experts they can contact in different EU countries on the main 4 topics of the project, **networking** through a forum where they can exchange of expertise, resources, mutual support and inspiration with other athletes.

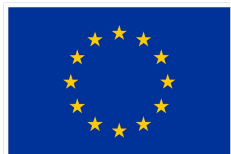
A brief [manual of use](#), available in different languages, and a tutorial video were created to facilitate users in navigating the features of the platform.



Cerca



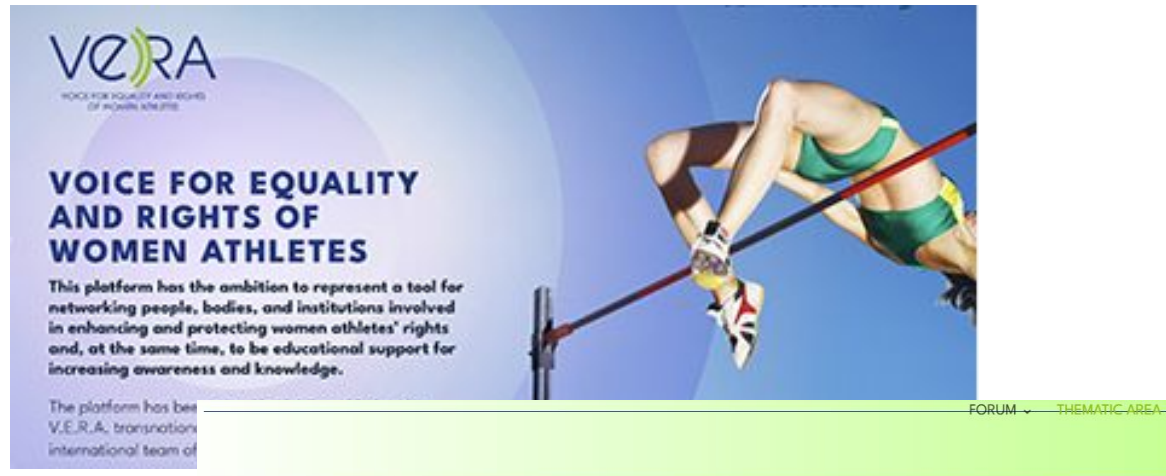
VERA Platform Tutorial_ENGLISH



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Achievements from VERA partnership



Homepage · Forums · Topics

Viewing 4 topics - 1 through 4 (of 4 total)

Topic	Voices	Posts	Last Post
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Mentors



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Caterina Caparello

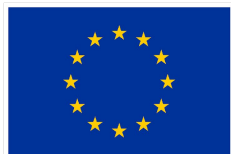
✉ veraplatformproject@gmail.com



Gioia Virgilio

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Achievements from VERA partnership

To spread the platform and the main messages of V.E.R.A., a 12 months campaign was developed, trying to reach a wider audience both online and offline.

The activities and outcomes of this campaign were summed up in a digital toolkit which would like to provide for a simple guideline for other organizations and athletes to further spread the word in the future.

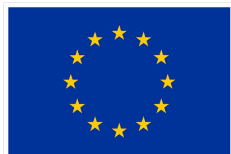


VERA
EU CAMPAIGN
TOOLKIT

VERA

PROMOTING EQUALITY
AND RIGHTS FOR
WOMEN IN SPORT

VOICE FOR EQUALITY AND RIGHTS
OF WOMEN ATHLETES



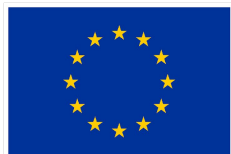
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Achievements from VERA partnership

The campaign used different channels to reach its audience:

- ★ *Training of Trainers*
- ★ *International Conference*
- ★ *Testimonial Athletes*



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Achievements from VERA partnership

★ Sport events










24 FEBBRAIO 2024 CAPPELLA FARNESE – PALAZZO D'ACCURSIO
 PIAZZA MAGGIORE – BOLOGNA

MEETING DELLO SPORT FEMMINILE

STEREOTIPI, GENDER EQUALITY, VISIBILITÀ E SVILUPPO.
 IL RUOLO DELL'ASSOCIAZIONISMO E DEL GIORNALISMO SPORTIVO PER VALORIZZARE LO SPORT FEMMINILE
 COME STRUMENTO DI INCLUSIONE, CONTRASTO A RAZZISMO, MULTI-DISCRIMINAZIONI E SPORT WASHING.
 VERA IL PROGETTO CHE FA RETE PER I DIRITTI DELLE ATLETE IN EUROPA

PROGRAMMA
INIZIO LAVORI H 8-9
DIRITTI DELLO SPORT COME VALORE SOCIALE, BUONE PRATICHE E
STRUMENTI PER UNO SPORT INCLUSIVO E PARITARIO
 Sabina Infilonardo: Roberta Li Cadi - Assessore allo sport e bilancio Comune di Bologna
 Luisa Garrubbo Rizzelli - Presidente AssisT
 Beatrice Pelli - Progetto VERA PM AssisT
 Avv. Antonio Ronelli - Legista ed attivista di diritti umani

TESTIMONIAL: Lara Lugli - Palavatore e formatrice AssisT

H 12-13-30
FARFUGLIANDO E PULESTIE NELLO SPORT PREVENZIONE E AZIONE.
 Roberta Li Cadi - Assessore allo sport e bilancio Comune di Bologna
 Lorenzana Pesoli - Resp. Relaz. Istituzionali AssisT
 Francesca Vitali - Università di Verona
 Manuela Ciapesset - Responsabile Politiche di Genere e Diritti Utop

MODERA: Marta Savitini - Giornalista e Ufficio stampa AssisT

13.30 PAUSA

RIPIESA LAVORI H 14.30-18.30
Salute: Massimo Righi - Presidente e AD Lega Pallavolo Serie A

SPORT WASHING E SPORT INCLUSIVO E SOSTENIBILE.
IL RUOLO DEL GIORNALISMO PER CONTRASTARE STEREOTIPI E PREGIUDIZI.
 Tina Testolini - Responsabile Campagne Amnesty Intern. Italia
 Victoria Di Trapani - Presidente Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana
 Serena Bernani - Presidente Giuria Giornalista e Consigliera Ordine Giornalisti Emilia Romagna
 Chiara Savitini - Manager internazionale sport

SPECIAL GUEST: Evelyn Wirth - Vice Presidente Associazione International Sports Press Association*
TESTIMONIAL: Apollonia Fotomeneo - Campionessa Azzurra e ginnasta italiana 400 ostacoli
MODERA: Luisa Garrubbo Rizzelli - Presidente AssisT

Al termine della sessione pomeridiana verranno consegnati gli attestati agli allievi e alle allieve di LEA Leadership Empowerment Academy Italia Prof.ssa Vanessa Vizzolati, Resp. Formazione AssisT e Coordinatrice LEA e dalla Dott.ssa Margherita Giuliodori Santocchia, Direttore Generale AssisT.

Credits Foto Fidal



Achievements from VERA partnership

★ Digital Infographics



Reflections and recommendations from VERA's experience

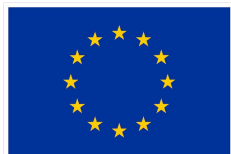
The main finding from the VERA point of view can be summed as follows:

a **structural change** is needed in the organizations that decide on sport at the national and international levels. Certain reforms should be made mandatory, backed by **enforceable sanctions** to ensure compliance.

Institutional support is crucial to amplify grassroots efforts—such as those by associations, third-sector organisations, and activists.

Without **top-down support**, actions from the bottom up will have limited impact, leaving deep-rooted structural issues unresolved. Coordinated efforts from both sides are necessary to drive meaningful and lasting change in sport.

Encourage and support **multi-stakeholders and multi-professional cooperation** among experts who can support athletes: foster collaborative efforts to provide comprehensive support for athletes, following the example set by the VERA platform. Such cooperation will create a more inclusive and supportive environment



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Reflections and recommendations from VERA's experience

We would like to stress that the financial aspect is just a part of the problem, we should not consider enough working on the pay gap.

Ensuring equal social welfare rights, such as equitable treatment and sustainable income for women athletes, better access to retirement, health insurance, and long-term career planning resources for female athletes, go beyond the mere focus on salary parity.

Financial support and social welfare rights

Financial support can be a monthly remuneration, contracts, scholarships, and sponsorships.

A variety of stakeholders, including National Olympic Committees, federations, clubs, universities, and third-party entities, contribute to athlete support.



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Reflections and recommendations from VERA's experience

End the reliance on the "male standard" in designing sport health protocols and infrastructure and promote gender-specific training for coaches and staff to address the unique needs of women athletes.

We need to ensure that medical and technical support are thoroughly trained and knowledgeable in the specific needs of female athletes. To address the quality gap, prioritize equal investment in gender-specific research, resources and professional training in both men's and women's sport, to enhance health outcomes and elevate the overall quality of support provided to women athletes



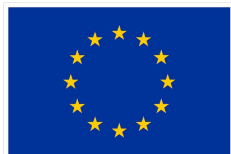
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Technical and Medical Support

- **Specialists involved in ensuring the excellent performance** of sportswomen.
- Medical support includes **all medical professions** (doctor, physiotherapist, osteopath, psychologist, etc.).
- Technical support has a **broader scope and concerns any action that might be necessary** for the practice of sports by women athletes (**administrative staff, management, etc.**).

Assist ASSOCIAZIONE NAZIONALE ATLETE
AJFSF ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA FEDERAZIONE GIOCHI SPORTIVI FEMMINILI
ALICE MILLIAT ASSOCIATION
CRESTA
EASE
NZZS
Sport Evolution Alliance



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Reflections and recommendations from VERA's experience

Access to decision-making positions is a key prerequisite also when talking about facilities, as well as making it compulsory for sport institutions and public institutions to accept no gender-based discrimination in the use and quality of facilities between male and female athletes, enforcing policies and regulations that ban gender-based discrimination in facility usage and in the quality of facilities offered to both men and women athletes.

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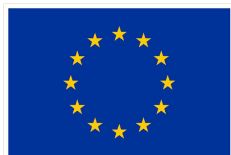
Access to facilities

Definition:

- It refers to the **availability and suitability** of sports **training facilities**.
- It involves **assessing training conditions to ensure** they meet the standards required for high-level performance.



Assist AJFSF ALICE MILLIAT ASSOCIATION CRESTA EASE NZS Sport Evolution Alliance



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Reflections and recommendations from VERA's experience

Discriminations because of maternity it is banned by EU framework legislation, but we still face cases of athletes fired or challenged in their careers due to maternity: we recommend to set up at EU level a pilot project/preparatory action establishing a clear and equal legal framework for athletes' remuneration and parental/maternity leave, as well as raising awareness about the benefits of collective bargaining agreements that address essential issues like maternity leave.

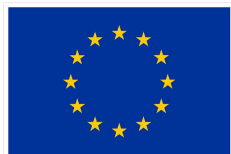
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Maternity Rights

Definition (Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU):

"The right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child, to reconcile family and professional life"



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Call to Action: join the V.E.R.A. network!

To become an effective and useful network for athletes, V.E.R.A. needs you.

If you are an ATHLETE, you can check and use our tools, become a testimonial to further spread our messages, test our experts and share your experiences.

If you are an EXPERT, you could join our pool of experts to reinforce the support we can give to athletes, improve shared knowledge and quality of our services



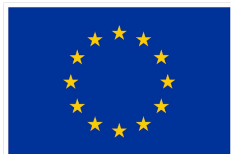
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Call to Action: join the V.E.R.A. network!

... if you are an NGO working to support athletes, you could be part of a transnational network to share expertise, experiences and help us reaching more athletes, as well as promoting more cooperation and joint actions.

If you are a sport institutions and decision/policy makers, support the network to reach a meaningful impact on future programmes and policies, read our recommendations and invite us to opportunities of discussion.



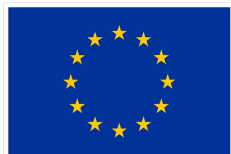
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Join the V.E.R.A. network



Together we can realize an equal and healthier sport environment in Europe



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