



## **Report on the OHEJP SimEx Workshop**

### **WP 4**

Responsible Partner: SVA

Contributing partners: INSA, FLI, UoS



## GENERAL INFORMATION

European Joint Programme full title	Promoting One Health in Europe through joint actions on foodborne zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance and emerging microbiological hazards
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## Abbreviations

AH	Animal Health
APHA	Animal and Plant Health Agency, UK
BfR	German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment
DTU-Food	National Food Institute, Denmark
DVFA	Danish Veterinary and Food Administration
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FLI	Federal Research Institute for Animal Health, Germany
FoHM	Public Health Agency, Sweden
FS	Food Safety
INIAV	National Institute of Agricultural and Veterinary Research, Portugal
INSA	National Institute of Health Dr. Ricardo Jorge, Portugal
IZSAM	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise, Italy
IZSLER	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna, Italy
JIP	Joint Integrative Projects
LEL	Local Exercise Leader
NEL	National Exercise Leader
NIPH	Norwegian Institute of Public Health
NMVRVI	National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute, Lithuania
NVI	National Veterinary Institute, Norway
OHEJP	One Health European Joint Programme
PH	Public Health
PIWet	National Veterinary Research Institute, Poland
PL	Project Leader
PMT	Programme Management Team



RIVM	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, The Netherlands
SIMEX	OHEJP Exercise
SLV	National Food Agency, Sweden
SSB	Scientific Steering Board
SSI	Statens Serum Institut, Denmark
SVA	National Veterinary Institute, Sweden
THL	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
UoS	University of Surrey
WOAH (former OIE)	World Organization for Animal Health
WHO	World Health Organization
WP	Work Package
WUR	Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands



# REPORT ON THE OHEJP SIMEX WORKSHOP

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## 1. Background

The *OHEJP SimEx* Project is a task within Work Package 4 in the One Health EJP. The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 773830.

The OHEJP exercise, SimEx, contributes to increased national preparedness on foodborne zoonoses, by exploring and emphasizing strengths and weaknesses in communication and collaboration between institutes responsible for public health, animal health, and food safety.

Pivotal to the success of the project was to plan and conduct a workshop for the National and Local Exercise Leaders (NELs and LELs). The aim of the workshop was to brief the NELs and LELs on the scenario and evaluation and provide them with the information and knowledge needed to run the *OHEJP SimEx* successfully at a national level. Additionally, the workshop provided an opportunity for NELs and LELs to ask questions and to spend time together as a national team to discuss and plan the conduction.

The workshop was divided into two sessions. The first day was an open session, where Stakeholders of and from the OHEJP were also invited, with presentations by experts from ECDC, EFSA, FAO, WHO and OHEJP, where they shared experiences and lessons learned from disease outbreaks and previous exercise experiences with a focus on a One Health perspective. The second session was held for NELs and LELs only and focused on the conduction procedure, the scenario, a selection of tools developed within the OHEJP, and the responsibilities of NELs and LELs. A generous amount of time was factored into the session to allow ample opportunity for the NELs and LELs to discuss the scenario and how to adapt and implement it in their country.

**Date:** 21-23 March 2022

**Subject:** SimEx Workshop

**Venue:** Microsoft Teams TC

**Organisers:** SimEx Project Team

**Target groups:** National and Local Exercise Leaders

**Other invitees:** SimEx Steering Board, SimEx Advisory Board, OHEJP Programme Management Team, OHEJP Scientific Steering Board and Stakeholders.

**Number of participants:** 72



Originally the plan was to hold a physical workshop, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, the decision to hold the meeting remotely was made at the SimEx Steering Board meeting on 27 January, 2022.

The SimEx Project Team hosted the workshop from Stockholm, Sweden. The NELs and LELs were encouraged to meet in person within their own countries and work together at a national level at one of the One Health EJP institutes.

A Save the Date was sent to the NELs and LELs on 8 December 2021. Information about the SimEx workshop was sent on 28 January and finally, the invitation was sent on 11 February 2022. The formal invitation, created by the OHEJP Comms Team, was also posted on the section dedicated to the SimEx Project on the OHEJP website together with important information about the workshop.

The workshop was a 100% funded One Health EJP activity.



## 2. Program

### 13:00-17:00 CET

#### Day 1: Monday 21st March 2022

- 13:00-13:15 Welcome and introduction – *Karin Artursson, OHEJP WP4 Leader and Johanna Dernfalk, OHEJP SimEx Workshop Conferencier, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden*
- 13:15-13:45 One Health, SimEx and a world in change: Do we have all the pieces of this puzzle? – *Carlos das Neves, Norwegian Veterinary Institute*
- 13:45-14:15 Simulation Exercises – informing the gap between planning and response – *Paul Riley, ECDC*
- 14:15-14:30 *Coffee break*
- 14:30-15:00 EFSA's Multiannual (2021-2024) Crisis Preparedness Training Strategy. 2021 EFSA's Crisis Preparedness Exercises – *Georgia Gkrintzali, EFSA*
- 15:00-15:45 One Health Systems Strengthening in Countries: Tripartite tools and approaches at the human-animal-environmental interface – *Sean Shadomy, FAO; Gunel Ismayilova, FAO; Kaylee Errecaborde, WHO and Sophie von Dobscheutz, FAO*
- 15:45-16:00 *Break*
- 16:00-16:15 What is SimEx? – *Anna Omazic, OHEJP SimEx Project Leader, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden*
- 16:15-16:45 Being a LEL and NEL – *Rebecca Litzell, OHEJP SimEx Exercise Leader, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden*
- 16:45-17:00 Q&A

### 09:00-17:00 CET

#### Day 2: Tuesday 22nd March 2022

- 09:00-09:10 Start of the day – *Johanna Dernfalk, OHEJP SimEx Workshop Conferencier, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden*
- 09:10-09:40 Presentation of LELs and NELs
- 09:40-10:00 Introduction to the SimEx Scenario - *Rebecca Litzell, OHEJP SimEx Exercise Leader, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden*
- 10:00-10:15 *Coffee break*





10:15-11:00	Scenario Part I: Who does what? (Including discussion, national level) – <i>Frederico Alves, OHEJP SimEx Project Team, National Institute of Health Dr Ricardo Jorge (INSA), Portugal</i>
11:00-11:15	<i>Break</i>
11:15-12:00	Scenario Part II: Sharing is caring (Including discussion, national level) – <i>Mats Lindblad, OHEJP SimEx Project Team, Swedish Food Agency</i>
12:00-12:45	<i>Lunch</i>
12:45-13:45	FoodChain-Lab: An integrative modular software to visualise and analyse complex global food supply chain networks during foodborne incidents - Introduction, interactive live demo and tasks in the SimEx – <i>Marion Gottschald, German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany</i>
13:45-14:15	Scenario Part III: Let's work together – <i>OHEJP SimEx Project Team</i>
14:15-14:30	<i>Break</i>
14:30-14:45	Discussion, national level
14:45-15:15	COHESIVE Information System – <i>Adriano di Pasquale, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise</i>
15:15-15:45	Q&A
15:45-16:00	<i>Break</i>
16:00-16:30	Q&A
16:30-17:15	Delivering outbreak epidemiology: planning, processes and policy – <i>Jemma Aston, Andy Patterson, Animal and Plant Health Agency, UK</i>

**09:00-12:00 CET**

**Day 3: Wednesday 23rd March 2022**

09:00-09:10	Start of the day – <i>Johanna Dernfalk, OHEJP SimEx Workshop Conferencier, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden</i>
09:10-09:30	Q&A from previous day
09:30-10:00	Sharing early signals of zoonotic events within and between countries – <i>Maria Nöremark, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden</i>
10:00-10:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:15-11:00	Evaluation process and Reporting (Including discussion, national level) – <i>Rebecca Litzell, OHEJP SimEx Exercise Leader, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden</i>



11:00-11:15	Break
11:15-11:45	Q&A
11:45-12:00	Wrap up and end of meeting – Johanna Dernfalk, OHEJP SimEx Workshop Conferencier, National Veterinary Institute, Sweden

### 3. Content

“Personal contacts, knowing someone and having met in person, is important and related to trust.”

M. Nöremark, COHESIVE

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to the introduction of the One Health approach to exercises as well as introducing the OHEJP SimEx Project. The day started with a welcoming by facilitator Johanna Dernfalk from SVA followed by an introduction to the OHEJP by Karin Artusson, OHEJP WP4 Leader, SVA.

The first external presentation was delivered by Carlos da Neves from NVI, covering the link between One Health and exercises and the role they assume in tackling animal and public health issues. Paul Riley from ECDC and Georgia Gkrintzali from EFSA followed with presentations covering the process of exercise design and the importance of exercises as a part of outbreak preparedness. The invited international experts Sean Shadomy, Gunel Ismayilova, Sophie von Dobscheutz, all representing FAO, and Kaylee Errecaborde from WHO joined the workshop to introduce the Tripartite Zoonoses Guide. This tool supports countries that want to make the transition to a joint multisectoral approach to zoonotic diseases helping them put into practice a One Health initiative in order to achieve an efficient collaboration between human-animal-environment authorities.

After the introduction to the topic, Anna Omazic, SimEx Project Leader, SVA, and Rebecca Litzell Forss, SimEx Exercise Leader, SVA, introduced the *OHEJP SimEx* and explained the roles of the NELs and LELs throughout the different stages of the project i.e. conduction, evaluation and reporting. The day ended with a Q&A session.

The second and third days of the workshop were for the NELs and LELs only. The second day started with a presentation of each of the participants and their roles. Most of the national teams followed the recommendations and met at one of their institutes, to get to know each other and facilitate discussions. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was not possible for all participants.

The day continued with the SimEx Project Team presenting the different parts of the scenario and the participants were able to ask questions both during the presentations and at dedicated Q&A sessions. After each part of the scenario, there was time for the countries to discuss internally.



The afternoon of the second day primarily focused on the presentation and demonstration of two tools developed by the OHEJP Joint Integrative Project COHESIVE. Marion Gottschald from BfR presented the FoodChainLab, which is an integrative modular software to visualize and analyse complex global food supply chain networks during foodborne incidents. The SimEx Project Team has worked closely with Marion Gottschald during the development of the scenario and as a result, the software has been successfully integrated into the scenario.

After the introduction of FoodChainLab, the institutes were introduced to the COHESIVE Information System (CIS) by Adriano di Pasquale from IZSAM. The countries were encouraged to contact Adriano di Pasquale if they wanted to know more about the CIS.

The second day finished with an interesting presentation from Jemma Aston and Andy Patterson from APHA on *Delivering outbreak epidemiology: planning, processes, and policy*. This comprehensive presentation focused on the importance of collaboration at a national level between policymakers, scientists, and field delivery staff to ensure outbreaks are managed swiftly and effectively.

The last day of the workshop started with a talk by Maria Nöremark from the OHEJP Joint Integrative Project COHESIVE on the importance of sharing early signals of zoonotic events and understanding each other's roles and mandates.

The workshop ended with a session on the SimEx evaluation and reporting process to emphasize the importance of the NEL working close together with the evaluator and assisting each other during and after the conduction to collect as much useful information as possible, not only for the report but also for the benefit of each country.

#### 4. Evaluation of the workshop

"Brilliant to have this workshop, and the opportunity to discuss in person with the other LELs."

*Participant*

The workshop evaluation was conducted using Microsoft Forms (see Appendix 1). A link to the form was sent to all the NELs and LELs who attended the SimEx workshop via email on 1 April 2022 and a follow-up reminder was sent on 20 April 2022. The survey was composed of eight questions covering the workshop delivery and the benefits of the presentations in clarifying the NELs' and LELs' roles during the conduction of the *OHEJP SimEx*. The survey comprised both closed and open questions. 18 responses of 34 (53%) were received within the time frame.

The confidence level of the attendees regarding their assigned roles showed a clear improvement as a result of the SimEx workshop with 78% of the participants feeling either very confident or confident by the end of the SimEx workshop. Furthermore, all the participants who felt rather unconfident before the workshop (28%) indicated improved confidence after the workshop.



Apart from the presentations, covering the scenario and evaluation process, the SimEx workshop also included external lecturers with different backgrounds related to One Health and exercises. Most participants (83%) felt that the number of invited speakers was adequate, with no respondent stating the need for more presentations. The external presentations were rated with an average of 4, on a scale from 0 to 5.

Concerning the workshop lectures delivered by the SimEx Project Team, the majority of the participants found it either beneficial or very beneficial to go through the different parts of the scenario (100%) and evaluation (94%). In terms of workshop duration, most participants (78%) were happy with the allocated time for the event. Some responders, 22%, found the SimEx workshop too long.

The SimEx workshop was also an opportunity for the responsible NELs and LELs within each participating country to meet up, go through the scenario and injects, and discuss any concerns. Each discussion was carried out at national level followed by an open forum with the SimEx Project Team. The majority of participants were satisfied with the amount of time allocated to this process, however, some participants (17%) thought that the question-and-answer session could have been extended. All participants were encouraged to contact the SimEx Project Team after the SimEx workshop if further questions emerged. After the SimEx workshop all the questions from the workshop were collected and added to the others in the FAQ section on the SimEx webpage.

The participants were also encouraged to inform the SimEx Project Team of any changes they intended to make to the scenario.

"The workshop was very useful to guide us in our tasks as NEL/LEL and to facilitate national discussion."  
*Participant*

## 5. SimEx Project Team

The SimEx Project Team met physically in Stockholm, Sweden, to host the SimEx workshop, and to ensure effective coordination of the tasks and presentations (Fig. 1). All members of the SimEx Project Team were involved in the planning and execution of the workshop, and during the parts of the SimEx workshop, where participants were engaged in national discussions, there were other activities for the SimEx Project Team members, for instance, deciding the tasks and responsibilities for the supervisors during conduction and planning the activities during summer and autumn.

This was the first time that the SimEx Project Team met physically and even though this international group works well together remotely, this was an opportunity to get to know each other and bring the work forward in ways that are complicated in a fully remote project.



Figure 1: Part of The SimEx Project Team at the workshop.

## 6. Conclusions

The SimEx Steering Board was very pleased with the organization and performance of the workshop. The SimEx Advisory Board, which attended day one, commented that the presentations were interesting and relevant, and served as a good introduction and a good basis for the NELs and LELs.

From the survey, it can be concluded that the workshop was successful in the aim to prepare the NELs and LELs and inspire them in their work. The SimEx workshop was fundamental for the success of the SimEx Project as it allowed to prepare NELs and LELs with the knowledge and capabilities needed for their assigned roles during exercise conduction, thus contributing to the project's success.

The participants welcomed the time given to facilitate within country conversations between the LELs from all three One Health sectors, that further developed their understanding of the scenario and sparked discussion surrounding country specific adaptation.

Furthermore, the workshop enabled an increased cohesiveness between the different sectors ahead of the exercise conduction, enhancing the benefits for each country, not just for this exercise conduction, but also, for future outbreak management.

The opportunity for the SimEx project team to meet in person was welcomed by all the team. The team members have worked extremely effectively over the course of the project, despite the remote nature. However, coming together to deliver the workshop has strengthened the collaboration, made people connect on a personal level, and developed a stronger working relationship between team members.



## 7. Attendance list

### **SimEx Project Team (on site)**

Anna Omazic, SVA  
Rebecca Litzell Forss, SVA  
Johanna Dernfalk, SVA  
Lena Tuominen, SVA  
Juliette Bloch, ANSES  
Anne Brisabois, ANSES  
Denise Marston, UoS  
Mats Lindblad, SLV  
Frederico Alves, INSA  
Omid Parvizi, FLI (remote)

### **Presenters**

Karin Artursson, SVA  
Maria Nöremark, SVA  
Carlos das Neves, NVI  
Marion Gottschald, BfR  
Adriano di Pasquale, IZSAM  
Paul Riley, ECDC  
Sean Shadomy, FAO  
Georgia Gkrintzali, EFSA  
Jemma Aston, APHA  
Andy Patterson, APHA

### **Other participants**

Hein Imberechts, Sciensano  
Racha El Mounaged, Sciensano  
Roberto La Ragione, UoS  
Aurore Poirier, UoS  
Annemarie Käsbohrer, BfR  
Ana Botelho, INIAV  
Vitor Borges, INSA  
Mónica Oleastro, INSA  
Kitty Maassen, RIVM  
Dariusz Wasyl, PIWet  
Karolina Žiogelytė, NMVRVI  
Wim van der Poel, WUR  
Lars Villiam Pallesen, SSI  
Tianna Brand, WOA  
Gunel Ismayilova, FAO  
Sophie von Dobscheutz, FAO  
Kaylee Errecaborde, WHO



## Participating countries (NELs and LELs)

### Belgium

- Jorgen Stassijns, Sciensano

### Denmark

- Pikka Jokelainen, SSI
- Luise Müller, SSI
- Aura Georgina Aguirre-Beltran, SSI
- Dorte Lau Baggesen, DTU-FOOD
- Nikolas Kühn Hove, DVFA
- Tine B. Nielsen, DVFA

### Estonia

- Mari Reinik, Vetlab
- Jelena Sögel, Agriculture and Food Board
- Janne Pullat, Health Board
- Irina Dontšenko, Health Board

### Finland

- Liisa Maunuksela, Ruokavirasto
- Ruska Rimhanen-Finne, THL

### France

- Renaud Lailler, ANSES
- Caroline Lemarechal, ANSES

### Germany

- Torsten Herold, BfR

### Italy

- Daria di Sabatino, IZSAM
- Matteo Gradassi, IZSLER
- Gaia Scavia, ISS
- Rosangela Tozzoli, ISS

### Lithuania

- Petras Mačiulskis, NMVRVI
- Jovita Petruškevičienė, NMVRVI

### The Netherlands

- Anita Dame, WUR
- Roan Pijnacker, RIVM

### Norway

- Cecilia Wolff, NVI
- Taran Skjerdal, NVI
- Solveig Jore, NIPH



#### Poland

- Katarzyna Domańska-Blicharz, PIWet
- Anna Pikula, PIWet

#### Portugal

- Sandra Cavaco Gonçalves, INIAV
- Vera Manageiro, INSA

#### Sweden

- Johanna Lindahl, SVA
- Cecilia Hultén, SVA
- Rikard Dryselius, FoHM
- Catarina Flink, SLV





## Appendix 1: Evaluation form

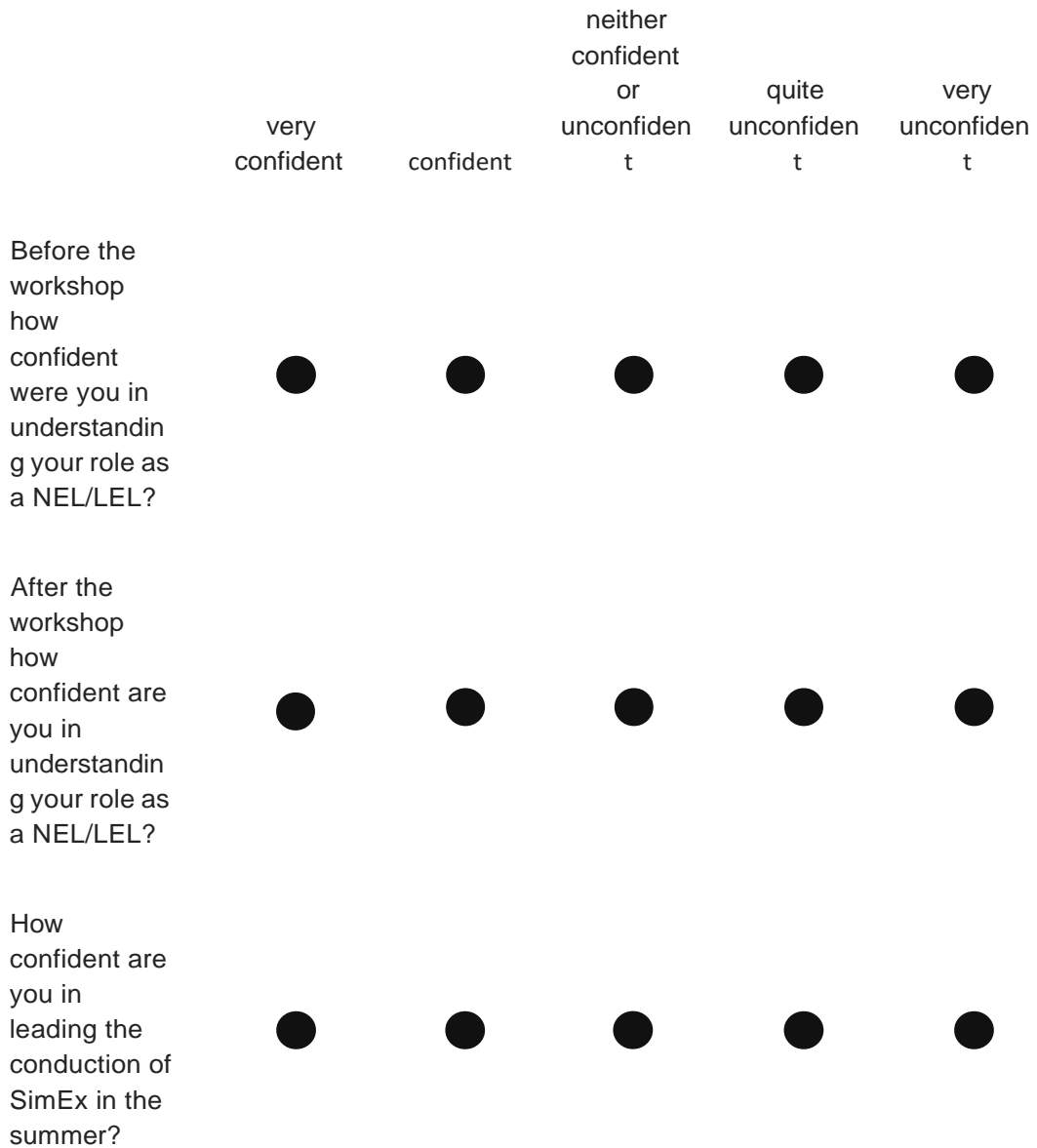
### Feedback from NEL/LEL Workshop

We hope you found our workshop enjoyable and that you gained the information you needed. We would appreciate you taking 5 minutes out of your busy schedule to provide us with some feedback. Your feedback will be used in our final report and could be used to promote the SimEx project, so please use the opportunity at the end to provide us with any quotes that we could use. Please rest assured any feedback you give us is anonymised.

\* Required



1. Your role as the **NEL or LEL** \*



2. Your role as an **NEL or LEL** - any further comments you wish to make



## External Speakers

This section will gauge your opinions of the external speakers

3. How did you find the external speaker talks? \*



4. How did you find the number of external speaker talks? \*



Too much



Just right



Not enough



## Workshop

5. How beneficial were the following parts of the workshop? \*

	very beneficial	quite beneficial	neither beneficial nor unbeneficia 	quite unbeneficia 	very unbeneficia 
Going through the scenario with the project team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Going through the evaluation document with the project team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. How did you find the length of the workshop? \*

- Too long
- Just right
- Not enough



7. How did you find the length of the communication time provided in the workshop (for Q&A and team discussions)? \*



Too long



Just right



Not enough

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8. Please let us know any other comments you may have

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