

# Information on the procedure applied by the Council for Budget Responsibility in the calculation of public expenditure ceilings for 2024-2027

The Council for Budget Responsibility (CBR) submits to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (the parliament) public expenditure ceilings calculated in accordance with the requirements of §30aa of Act No. 523/2004 Coll. on the general government budgetary rules (further referred to as the "Act") and the methodology agreed with the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic (MF SR) on 22 December 2022¹. The 2024-2027 expenditure ceilings presented in this report cover the term of office of the current government. Expenditure ceilings represent a key budgetary instrument to ensure long-term sustainability of public finances, and an essential operative tool of budgetary governance and consolidation of public finances.

The calculations presented in this document are based on macroeconomic and tax assumptions reflecting the legislative framework which was in force at the time of the approval of the government's manifesto and the vote of confidence in the government by the parliament on 21 November 2023. In accordance with the Act which requires that the ceilings reflect the legislative framework valid at this time, the calculation does not include the impacts of new government measures approved by the parliament after the vote of confidence. The impacts of such new measures that affect general government revenues or long-term sustainability of public finances will be considered in an update to the public expenditure ceilings at the time when the government requests such update and will thus only be reflected in the ceilings subsequently.

The new sums of expenditure ceilings will become effective following their approval by the parliament, replacing the previous sums approved for 2024 and 2025 by the parliament<sup>2</sup> on 1 February 2023. As the validity of the general escape clause, which exempts the government from the obligation to align the general government budget with the expenditure ceilings for the duration of its validity, is to be deactivated at the end of 2023, the government is obliged to align the 2024-2026 general government budget with the valid public expenditure ceilings.

#### How public expenditure ceilings are calculated

The expenditure ceilings are calculated using a baseline scenario of development in general government revenues and expenditures prepared for the period of next 50 years, published by the CBR in an special report on the long-term sustainability of public finances<sup>3</sup>. The baseline scenario is based on an estimate of the general government balance for 2023 and fully reflects the legislative framework in force at the time of the approval of the government's manifesto and the vote of confidence in the government by the parliament.

CBR, Methodology for calculation, updates to, and evaluation of compliance with public expenditure ceilings, 22 December 2022

The ceilings were approved by <u>parliamentary resolution No. 1964</u> of 1 February 2023. The CBR published a <u>legal opinion</u> on the validity of expenditure ceilings on its website.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> CBR, <u>Special Report on the Long-Term Sustainability of Public Finances</u>, December 2023.



The baseline scenario serves to set the planned value of structural balance<sup>4</sup>, which is then used in the calculation of expenditure ceilings for individual years. The value of the long-term sustainability indicator describes the current level of risk to public finances<sup>5</sup>, on the basis of which an improvement in structural balance required over the next years is determined. This ensures the link between public expenditure ceilings and the long-term sustainability of public finances.

#### Baseline scenario of 2023 and the long-term sustainability indicator

The baseline scenario of the development of public finances is based on a November 2023 forecast of the Macroeconomic Forecasting Committee (MFC) and the Tax Revenue Forecasting Committee (TRFC) (its assumptions and the balance of revenue and expenditure are included in Annex 1). The CBR estimates the general government deficit at 5.8% of GDP in 2023, which is 4.3% of GDP in structural terms (Table 1). Under the baseline scenario (i.e., excluding additional measures), the CBR expects the structural deficit to gradually increase in the subsequent years to 5.5% of GDP in 2024, 6.4% of GDP in 2025, 7.0% of GDP in 2026, and 7.4% of GDP in 2027<sup>6</sup>. This development is used as the starting point for the calculation of public expenditure ceilings for the period of 2024 to 2027. The long-term sustainability indicator is at 7.3% of GDP under the baseline scenario, which means high risks of the long-term sustainability of public finances.

Table 1: Baseline scenario of 2023

(million euro)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1. General government revenues	50,841	52,205	54,441	54,497	56,069
2. General government expenditure	-57,927	-60,418	-63,323	-64,528	-66,937
3. General government balance (1-2)	-7,086	-8,213	-8,882	-10,031	-10,868
- as % of GDP	-5.8	-6.2	-6.4	-6.9	-7.2
4. Cyclical component	-47	-245	-66	101	250
- revenues	-37	-233	-67	96	248
- expenditure	-9	-12	1	5	2
5. One-off effects	-1,826	-709	0	0	0
- revenues	421	1	0	0	0
- expenditure	-2,247	-710	0	0	0
6. Structural balance (3-4-5)	-5,213	-7,260	-8,816	-10,131	-11,118
- as % of GDP	-4.3	-5.5	-6.4	-7.0	-7.4
- year-on-year change		-1.2	-0.8	-0.7	-0.4
7. General government gross debt (% of GDP)	57.0	59.2	62.0	67.2	71.4
Long-term sustainability indicator (% of GDP)	7.3				

Source: CBR

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In accordance with §30aa(6) of the Act on General Government Budgetary Rules.

The long-term sustainability indicator below 1% of GDP is considered by the CBR a moderate deviation from long-term sustainability, associated with a low level of risk. The indicator value between 1 and 5% of GDP represents a medium risk. The long-term sustainability indicator above 5% of GDP is considered a high risk to the long-term sustainability of public finances. At high and medium risk to the long-term sustainability of public finances, the value of the planned structural balance is set in a way to improve the long-term sustainability indicator against the baseline scenario by 0.5% of GDP per year, at low risk by 0.25% of GDP. If the fiscal performance of the Slovak Republic is sustainable in the long-term (the indicator has a negative value), the CBR calculates the value of the planned structural balance in a way to keep the indicator at a zero value in each year. The calculation also takes into account the currently applicable debt brake sanctions (Article 4 and 12 of constitutional Act No. 493/2011 Coll. on fiscal responsibility).

The deterioration in the structural balance results from the decrease in the share of excise taxes in GDP amid high inflation, growing pension expenditure and debt interest costs, as well as measures adopted in 2023 (see Annex 2).



Calculation of public expenditure ceilings for 2024 to 2027

The following aspects are considered when setting the value of planned structural balance which serves as the basis for calculation of public expenditure ceilings (Table 2):

- 1. the level of risk to long-term sustainability of public finances; and
- 2. some sanctions under the debt brake.

According to the baseline scenario, the risks associated with long-term sustainability remain high throughout the entire horizon covered by the calculation, which means that the **requirement to improve the structural balance by 0.5% of GDP per year against the baseline scenario** applies to **all years** for which the expenditure ceilings are calculated. Even if this level of consolidation was achieved, the long-term sustainability indicator would still remain in the high-risk zone at the end of 2027.

The size of gross debt is currently above the highest sanction bracket, but due to the application of a 24-months exemption starting from the day the new government's manifesto was approved, **the most strict debt brake sanctions do not apply, therefore, they do not affect the calculation of expenditure ceilings.** Potential sanctions triggered by the size of gross debt following the end of the 24-month exemption period (concerning years 2026 and 2027) cannot be accurately specified<sup>7</sup> at the moment, therefore they have not been included in the calculation of the planned structural balance. Any such implications will be addressed in the updates to the public expenditure ceilings at a relevant time.

Table 2: Calculation of the planned structural balance

(in % of GDP)	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
1. Sustainability risk		high	high	high	high
<ul> <li>change in structural balance against the baseline scenario (year-on-year)</li> </ul>		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
2. Debt brake (gross debt for year t-2)		5 <sup>th</sup> sanction bracket*	-	-	-
- required change in structural balance		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3. Required consolidation efforts against the baseline scenario (cumulatively)		0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
Structural balance under the CBR's baseline scenario	-4.3	-5.5	-6.4	-7.0	-7.4
5. Planned structural balance (4+6)	-4.3	-5.0	-5.4	-5.5	-5.4
- in million euro		-6,602	-7,429	-7,966	-8,108

<sup>\*</sup>The gross debt amounted to 57.8% of GDP in 2022, exceeding the highest sanction bracket, but due to a 24-months exemption starting from the day the new government's manifesto was approved, only the sanctions under the second bracket apply (an obligation for the government to provide a justification for the debt increase and a proposal of measures to reduce the debt for discussion in the parliament, and the freezing of wages of cabinet members).

Source: CBR

Using the planned structural balance for the 2024-2027 period, the CBR's data and the data provided by the Ministry of Finance for the period of 2024-2026, the CBR has calculated the public expenditure ceilings for the 2024-2027 period (Table 3)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For example, it remains unclear whether the sanction under which the government has an obligation to prepare a balanced budget would apply in 2026 already, or in 2027 only. In general, the CBR updates the public expenditure ceilings by the most stringent debt brake sanctions only after they are triggered; i.e., the expenditure ceilings are not updated solely on the basis of a forecast.

In the case of tax and non-tax revenues forecasted by the TRFC, the CBR used its own estimate which is identical to this assumption in the baseline scenario. For 2027, the CBR adopted its own estimates from the baseline scenario for all items,



Table 3: Calculation of public expenditure ceilings for 2024 to 2027

(euro, ESA2010)	2024	2025	2026	2027
(-) Planned structural GG balance	-6,602,023,510	-7,429,312,189	-7,966,395,283	-8,108,110,334
(-) Consolidated expenditures on GG debt service	1,714,442,522	2,120,921,986	2,490,636,943	2,932,896,526
<ul><li>(-) State budget expenditures for co- financing*</li></ul>	481,978,813	668,764,777	718,223,223	430,538,181
(-) Transfers to the European Union	1,064,710,000	1,284,030,000	1,377,420,000	1,436,120,842
(+) Expected fiscal performance of local governments	-457,192,104	-477,434,998	-243,180,818	-207,316,476
(+) Expected consolidated tax revenues, excluding one-off effects, cyclical effect, and local government	40,192,946,676	41,826,951,870	42,984,783,367	44,440,973,126
(+) Expected consolidated non-tax revenues, excluding one-off effects, EU funds, RRF, and local government	3,996,738,197	3,876,176,071	3,750,720,218	3,977,152,975
Public expenditure ceilings	47,073,384,943	48,581,288,369	49,872,437,883	51,519,364,409
- of that: balance-neutral expenditures	5,573,879,871	5,705,847,285	6,147,800,389	6,309,429,587
One-off expenditure outside the ceilings included in the underlying data	710,000,000	0	0	0
- expenditure related to the support to Ukraine	10,000,000	0	0	0
- energy crisis related expenditure	700,000,000	0	0	0
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<sup>\*</sup> including VAT on RRF funding

Source: MF SR, CBR

### Comparison with the currently applicable public expenditure ceilings for 2023 to 2025

The difference between the current expenditure ceilings and the new ceilings submitted to the parliament for approval is shown in Table 4. Compared to their current size, approved in 2023, the expenditure ceilings, if approved by the parliament, would increase by 2.5 bn euros in 2024 and nearly 3.0 bn euros in 2025.

The main reason for this increase is the inclusion of the impacts of legislative and non-legislative measures adopted in 2023 (listed in Annex 2) and the development in the healthcare sector (for example, additional ambulatory care funding, higher expenditures associated with an amendment to the Act on Medicinal Products) in the baseline scenario. In addition, an increase also occurred in the expenditures that are fully incorporated in the evaluation of compliance with public expenditure ceilings. These are so-called balance-neutral expenditures, and their increase is accompanied by a rise in revenues of the same size (for example, premiums paid by the state for health insurance, expenditures financed from grants). Therefore, these do not influence the long-term sustainability of public finances. The last major factor was the inclusion of the current macroeconomic forecast in the calculation and reflecting the estimated development in public finances in 2023 (on top of the aforementioned items).

because the data provided by the Ministry of Finance only covered the 2024-2026 period for which a budget proposal is prepared. Detailed calculation, including the identification of source data, is included in a separate annex published along with this document.



Table 4: Comparison with the currently applicable public expenditure ceilings for 2023 to 2025

	(euro, ESA2010)	2024	2025
1.	<b>Applicable expenditure ceilings</b> approved by parliamentary resolution No. 1964 of 1 February 2023	44,309,099,762	45,621,482,931
2.	New expenditure ceilings for 2024-2027, December 2023	47,073,384,943	48,581,288,369
3.	Increase (+) / reduction (-) in ceilings	+2,764,285,182	+2,959,805,439
	a. Impact of measures approved in 2023, including healthcare sector	1,356,885,024	1,673,818,092
	b. Change in balance-neutral expenditures*	1,315,042,744	1,424,845,070
	c. Other effects**	92,357,413	-138,857,723
* T	Source: CBR, parliament		

\*\* Primarily due to the change in macroeconomic forecast



#### Annex 1 - Baseline scenario based on the 2023 estimate

Article 2(b) of Act No. 493/2011 Coll. on fiscal responsibility defines the baseline scenario as "a long-term forecast of general government revenues and expenditures which takes into account future economic and demographic developments and the current legislative framework in the Slovak Republic; liabilities of the general government also include implicit liabilities of the general government and contingent liabilities of the general government."

Assumptions used in the preparation of the baseline scenario of public finance development:

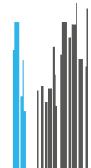
- The CBR prepared the baseline scenario of public finance development for the purposes of a
  report on the long-term sustainability in accordance with the constitutional Act within 30 days
  from the approval of the government's manifesto and the vote of confidence in the
  government. The scenario is based on a macroeconomic forecast of 8 November 2023,
  prepared by the Macroeconomic Forecasting Committee for the purposes of calculating public
  expenditure ceilings.
- The forecast of tax and non-tax revenues and selected social transfers has been fully adopted from a tax revenue forecast of 14 November 2023, prepared by the Tax Revenue Forecasting Committee.
- The estimate reflects the legislative framework in force at the time of the approval of the government's manifesto and the vote of confidence in the government by the parliament on 21 November 2023. The list of incorporated legislative and non-legislative measures approved from the beginning of 2023 is included in Annex 2.
- The baseline scenario is based on the estimated development of public finances in 2023. The estimate reflects the revenue and expenditure development in the first nine months of 2023 (in the case of local government, the data covers the first three quarters, in the case of the state budget, the preliminary figures for October and November 2023 are also included). In accordance with the methodology for calculating, updating and evaluating compliance with public expenditure ceilings, the estimate fully reflects the legislative framework, government decisions and decisions of the Slovak Constitutional Court at the time of approval of the government's manifesto and the parliamentary vote of confidence in the government. The data about the impacts of the measures were obtained by the CBR primarily from impact clauses and its own estimates (in the case of legislative changes in taxes and social transfers); the list of measures was consulted with the Ministry of Finance.
- The medium-term estimate (for years 2024 to 2027) was prepared by the CBR using the same indexation rules as those it had used in the first calculation of public expenditure ceilings for the 2023-2025 period prepared in December 2022. On top of the standard indexation rules, the baseline scenario also takes into account the government's commitment to increase defence expenditure to 2% of GDP per year starting from 2024, as well as an estimated impact of the development in energy prices on the expenditure of general government entities, calculated using a projected development in market prices of electricity and gas. Selected data (transfers to the EU budget, green energy subsidies, availability payments for PPP projects in the transport sector, nuclear decommissioning expenditure, and projected fiscal balance of local government) were adopted from the most recent projections of the Ministry of Finance.



Table 5: Baseline scenario for the development in public finances – estimated balance in 2023

(% of GDP)			lium-te		nario					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2030	2040	2050	2060	2073
Revenues	41.8	39.7	39.3	37.8	37.3	37.3	37.3	37.1	37.0	36.7
Tax revenues	19.7	18.5	18.3	17.9	17.8	17.7	17.7	17.7	17.7	17.7
- payments to NNF	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
- other tax revenue	19.6	18.5	18.2	17.9	17.7	17.7	17.7	17.7	17.7	17.7
Social security and healthcare contributions	15.5	15.3	15.3	15.4	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.4	15.2	15.0
<ul> <li>Social security and healthcare contributions (including the fully funded pension scheme)</li> </ul>	16.0	15.9	16.0	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.5	16.5	16.6	16.5
- Shortfall in the fully funded pension scheme	-0.9	-1.0	-1.0	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1	-1.3	-1.5	-1.8	-2.0
- Social insurance of armed forces	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Non-tax revenue	6.7	5.8	5.6	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
- payments to BIDSF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
- property income	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
- revenue relating to long-term care	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
- other non-tax revenue	5.7	5.0	4.8	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Expenditure	47.7	45.9	45.7	44.7	44.5	45.4	48.9	53.5	59.1	62.8
Primary expenditure	46.6	44.6	44.1	43.0	42.5	42.8	43.4	44.9	46.2	44.6
Fixed in the long-term part	22.1	20.0	19.4	18.3	17.9	18.0	18.1	18.2	18.2	18.1
Expenditure sensitive to demography	24.3	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.4	24.6	25.3	26.7	28.0	26.4
- Pension benefits	8.7	8.9	9.0	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.3	9.9	10.4	9.3
- Armed forces	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
- Health care	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.6
- Long-term care	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.5
- Education	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.6
- Unemployment benefits	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
- Sickness and accident benefits	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1
- Other social transfers	2.3	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7
Costs of NPP decommissioning	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PPP projects and maintenance costs	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interest payments	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.7	5.5	8.7	12.9	18.3
General government balance	-5.8	-6.2	-6.4	-6.9	-7.2	-8.1	-11.7	-16.4	-22.1	-26.2
General government primary balance	-4.7	-4.9	-4.9	-5.2	-5.3	-5.5	-6.2	-7.7	-9.2	-7.9
General government structural balance	-4.3	-5.5	-6.4	-7.0	-7.4	-8.2	-11.7	-16.4	-22.1	-26.2
Structural primary balance	-3.2	-4.2	-4.8	-5.3	-5.4	-5.5	-6.2	-7.7	-9.2	-7.9
General government gross debt	57.0	59.2	62.0	67.2	71.4	85.4	141.8	222.0	329.0	464.3

Source: CBR





## Annex 2 – List of measures approved in 2023

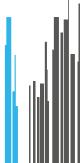
Table 6: Measures adopted in 2023 before the approval of the new government's manifesto (thousand

euro, differences against the NPC, excl. one-off measures)

euro, differences against the NPC, excl. one-off measures)					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Free meals in schools		-192,582	-192,673	-192,049	-191,319
Schools Act	0	-115,891	-231,717	-282,093	-294,227
Provision of funds from the state financial assets to finance	-15 //21	-114,514	-178,105	-114,157	-1,007
investments in Valaliky	-13,421	-114,514	-170,103	-114,137	-1,007
Draft national strategy for research, development and innovation	0	-57,200	-190,500	-325,300	-336,140
Abolition of television/radio licence fee	-34,836	-76,146	-77,061	-77,990	-78,930
Long-term plan for educational activities in the higher education	0	-47,311	-67,576	-87,676	-67,494
sector for 2023-2028	U	-47,311	-07,370	-67,070	-07,434
Extraordinary indexation of parental allowance	-51,559	-40,082	-41,166	-41,307	-40,649
Determination of the number of administrative capacities for EU	0	-37,400	-31,701	-31,612	-33,104
funds technical assistance (2021-2027)	U	37,400	31,701	31,012	33,104
Reducing taxation on the sale of virtual currencies, securities and	0	-24,713	-30,874	-31,688	-32,523
units	U	24,713	30,074	31,000	32,323
Changing the registration fees for passenger cars	-13,500	-27,000	-27,000	-27,000	-27,000
Changes in minimal pensions	-10,915	-25,993	-26,059	-26,396	-27,274
Act on RTVS: 0.17% of GDP for RTVS	0	-23,133	-35,379	-49,571	-51,198
Assistance in material need	-14,115	-22,975	-21,987	-22,996	-23,112
Increased housing allowance for the staff of the Prison and Court	-10,388	-15,784	-16,432	-17,055	-17,679
Guard Service	-10,300	-13,764	-10,432	-17,033	-17,073
Personal assistants in schools	-3,567	-13,363	-15,116	-17,110	-17,517
The Criminal Record Act	0	-4,928	-925	-234	-245
Action plan for the development of electromobility	0	-4,554	-2,533	-2,532	-2,531
Adjustment of reimbursement for emergency outpatient facilities	-3,892	-4,424	-4,730	-4,951	-5,248
Act on the European Capital of Culture (Trenčín)	-2,000	-3,500	-5,735	-11,185	-800
Act on air pollution charges	-3,653	-2,917	-1,814	-702	-702
Decree of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic on the	0	-2,660	-2,575	2 605	-2,816
administration and office rules of courts	0	-2,000	-2,575	-2,695	-2,810
Increasing the resilience of the Slovak Republic against hybrid	-157	-2,177	-2,280	-2,378	-2,478
threats towards public administration capacities	-137	-2,1//	-2,200	-2,376	-2,476
Solving application problems in the Act on information	-388	-1,466	-1,545	-1,620	-1,697
technologies in public sector	300	1,400	1,343	1,020	1,057
Measure of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family on	-279	-1,431	-1,607	-1,720	-1,761
cash allowances for persons with severe disability	213	1,431		1,720	1,701
Childbirth allowance	-930	-1,391	-1,387	-1,373	-1,359
Financial allowance for social service provision	0	-1,361	0	0	0
Integrated Health System Act	-952	-1,238	-1,211	-1,270	-1,329
Air Protection Act	-1,108	-1,232	-1,319	-1,402	-1,487
Government proposal concerning the minimum network of	-920	-1,227	-1,312	-1,373	-1,455
healthcare providers –Trnava hospital	-320	-1,227	-1,312	-1,3/3	-1,433
Amendment to the Regional Housing Support Act	-1,110	-1,164	-1,195	-1,224	-1,253
Declaration and zoning of the national park Slovenský kras	0	-1,151	-1,157	-1,186	-1,214
Waste disposal at the Chemko Strážske site	0	-1,000	-5,000	0	0
Extraordinary indexation of pensions	-523,566	0	0	0	0
Streamlining the functioning of the Slovak Rescue Service	0	0	1,550	15,889	19,380
Organisational and technical support for general election in 2023	-15,136	15,971	0	0	0
Other measures	-7,457	-7,491	-5,196	-5,310	-5,117
Total impacts of measures against the NPC scenario	-830,572	-863,430	-1,223,316	-1,369,268	-1,251,286
Total impacts of measures against the NPC (% of GDP)	-0,68	-0,66	-0,88	-0,95	-0,83

Note.: The impacts of legislative changes are taken from official documents (Tax Revenue Forecasting Committee documents, impact clauses), from the documents provided by the Ministry of Finance and the CBR's own estimates, and are expressed in reference to the developments in public finances under the nopolicy change scenario (NPC).

Source: CBR, MF SR, parliament, government of the Slovak Republic



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