

Newsletter Highlights

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN LJUBJANA/BLED, SLOVENIA

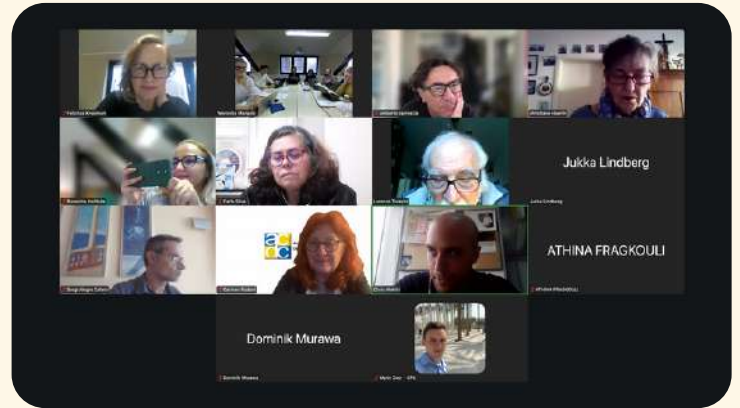
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On 10 - 11 November 2025, the Social Firms Europe CEFEC Executive Committee met in a hybrid format, bringing together members from across Europe. While several colleagues participated online, in-person delegation gathered in Ljubljana, Slovenia, creating a vibrant and collaborative environment for two days of strategic work.

The meeting was hosted by Center Ponovne Uporabe (CPU) Slovenia, in close cooperation with Etri Skupina -the main organizers of the upcoming CEFEC Annual Conference. Their support and openness offered the CEFEC delegation an opportunity to deepen better understand the local context in which the next conference will take place. During the meeting, the Executive Committee focused extensively on preparations for the upcoming SFE CEFEC Conference, reviewing organisational priorities, refining thematic directions, and coordinating with local partners to ensure a well-structured and impactful event. The discussions also addressed broader network development, opportunities for enhanced member engagement, and future initiatives at the European level.

Executive Committee meeting on 10 November 2025



EXPLORING BLED - 2026 HOST LOCATION OF THE NEXT CEFEC CONFERENCE

A key part of the meeting was a field visit to Bled, the planned location of the next CEFEC Annual Conference. The SFE CEFEC representation met with the local organizing teams and conducted an on-site review of potential venues, meeting rooms, accommodation, and the surrounding infrastructure that will host members and partners during the event.



The visit to Bled offered a unique opportunity to assess logistics, explore the town's accessibility and facilities, and ensure that the conference will offer both professional excellence and an inspiring environment. With its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and strong local engagement, Bled promises to be an exceptional setting for bringing together the European social firm community.

A FEW WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZERS OF 40TH SFE CEFEC CONFERENCE



The CEFEC 2026 Conference and Academy are fast approaching! We invite our everyone to join us in stunning Bled, Slovenia, on June 4-5, 2026.

What's New?

Our conference and academy agenda is now finished. We've curated a rich program, but there's still space for new ideas, presentations, and contributions. If you'd like to get involved as a presenter or propose a session, please reach out to us via our proposal form.

Plan Ahead for Bled

Bled is a world-renowned destination, and accommodations fill quickly, so we suggest you book them asap. To help you prepare, we've put together a Travel Info Pack with tips on transport.

How to Participate

Ready to join us? [Apply for attendance here](#) and keep an eye on future newsletters for speaker announcements, program highlights, and registration details.

We can't wait to gather, share, and learn together in beautiful Bled!

VISIT TO FUNDACIÓ CATALANA DE L'ESPLAI – STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS IN BARCELONA



From 18 to 21 September, Felicitas Kresimon, SFE CEFEC General Secretary, and Vasile Gafiuc, SFE CEFEC Development Manager conducted an official working visit to Barcelona, Spain, to meet with our member organization Fundació Catalana de l'Esplai. The visit formed part of the early planning and process for the SFE CEFEC Annual Conference 2027, marking an important step toward shaping the framework for this future European gathering.

The meeting focused on assessing the feasibility of Barcelona as the host city for the 2027 conference, reviewing potential venue options, logistical considerations, and capacity to welcome participants from across Europe. Special attention was given to identifying opportunities to integrate the local social economy ecosystem into the conference programme, ensuring strong regional involvement and showcasing innovative practices from Catalonia.



VISIT TO DOMSPAIN IN REUS – EXPANDING COOPERATION AND PROJECT PLANNING

As part of the trip to Spain, on 22 September the SFE CEFEC delegation also travelled to Reus to visit our member organization DomSpain. This meeting provided an additional opportunity to broaden the cooperation and explore new opportunities for development.

The discussions with DomSpain were intensive and highly productive. The shared objectives reflect a strong commitment to promoting inclusive opportunities and strengthening skills development within vulnerable communities.

DomSpain presented inspiring examples of their ongoing work and expressed strong dedication to expanding collaboration with SFE CEFEC in the coming years.



ESPAI BOULE
Centre obert de formació

OPEN EUROPE
DOMSPAIN
EDENSOL
LET HER IN INT.
EDUFEM
RECUPERAT-ION

NEW WORKING GROUP: INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

SFE CEFEC is pleased to announce an important development within our network

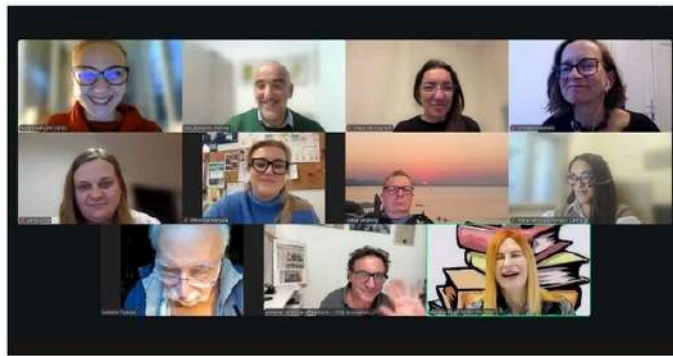


The former Working Group 1 – International Cooperation has now transformed into the newly established Working Group - International Projects.

The working group had its first official meeting on 19 November, marking the start of a more coordinated and strategic approach to international project development across the network.

FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING ON 19 NOVEMBER

WG - INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS



Social Firms Europe
CEFEC

The new structure is designed to:

- ➔ strengthen collaboration among members,
- ➔ support organisations in forming effective partnerships,
- ➔ enhance access to European funding opportunities, and
- ➔ promote high-quality project design and implementation.

With this new focus, the Working Group aims to advance impactful initiatives in the areas of social inclusion, sustainability, training, and social enterprise development.

PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL SOCIAL ECONOMY FORUM (GSEF) 2025 – BORDEAUX



The Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) is one of the world's most significant gatherings dedicated to the social and solidarity economy (SSE), bringing together cities, networks, policymakers, practitioners, and international organisations committed to advancing inclusive and sustainable economic models. Since its inaugural edition in 2016, the Forum has become a global platform for dialogue, exchange, and collective action. The 2025 edition was hosted in Bordeaux from 30 October to 1 November 2025, attracting broad global participation.

SFE CE FEC was represented by Felicitas Kresimon, who contributed to discussions emphasising that the social economy is, at its core, an economy of peace, participation, and justice. Her intervention highlighted the essential role of social firms and social enterprises in promoting inclusive employment, community empowerment, and democratic economic structures.

The Forum welcomed around 4,000 participants from all five continents

EUROPEAN DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2025 – REPRESENTATION IN BRUSSELS

SFE CE FEC was represented by Klaus Meyer, Executive Committee member, at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2025 conference in Brussels. Hosted by the European Commission, the event brought together policymakers, disability rights organisations, and stakeholders from across Europe to assess progress in implementing the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030.



Discussions highlighted achievements as well as ongoing challenges in key areas such as independent living, accessibility, freedom of movement within the EU, and employment. A strong message emerged: advancing inclusion in Europe requires a more strategic and systematic use of EU funding to remove barriers, strengthen equal opportunities, and ensure full participation for persons with disabilities.

The conference offered an important platform for exchanging perspectives, sharing good practices, and reinforcing the collective commitment to promoting disability rights across Europe.

PARTICIPATION IN THE “ECHOES OF ERASMUS+” SEMINAR – POZNAŃ, POLAND



SFE CE FEC was represented by Weronika Margula at the “Echoes of Erasmus+” seminar organised by the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme, held in Poznań on 6–7 October. The seminar explored how Artificial Intelligence, social media tools, and effective dissemination strategies can enhance the visibility and impact of social projects. Participants also discussed intergenerational differences and how understanding them can strengthen teamwork, communication, and inclusion across age groups. The knowledge gained will help bring fresh ideas and innovation into the SFE CE FEC network.

WEBINAR PARTICIPATION: DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

SFE CE FEC participated in the “Digital Storytelling for Social Impact” webinar, organised by our Bulgarian member, the European Development Foundation, within the framework of the Story for Impact project.

The session explored key elements of using storytelling as a tool for visibility, engagement, and social change.

The webinar offered practical insights into how compelling narratives can strengthen the communication of social initiatives.

We thank our colleagues from Bulgaria for the invitation and inspiring exchange.



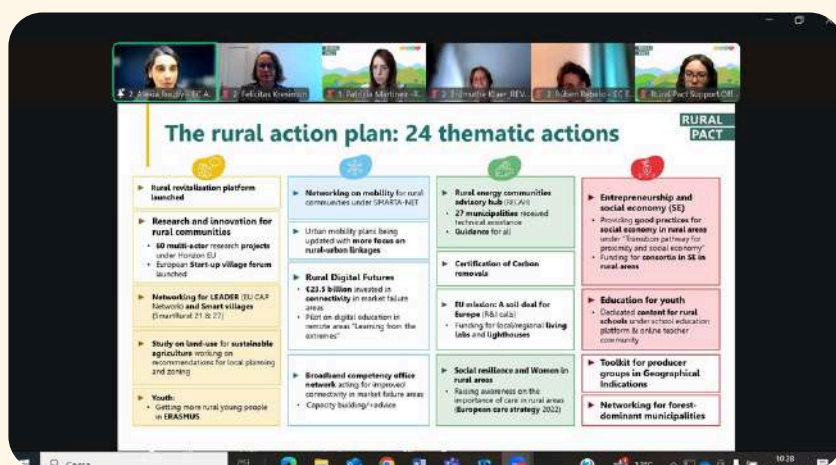
CEFEC CONTRIBUTIONS TO EU CONSULTATIONS ON SOCIAL ECONOMY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND MIGRATION

On 1 October 2025, SFE CEFEC, took part in an online consultation on the Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) and the Rural Action Plan (RAP), organised within the Rural Pact Community Platform.

Together with other members of the Social Economy Group, the discussion focused on strengthening the role of social economy actors in rural areas, highlighting successful local initiatives, sector-specific opportunities in energy, care, and tourism, priorities for the 2026–2030 period, and the need for stronger cooperation between rural and social economy stakeholders. The exchange underlined the importance of social innovation for sustainable and inclusive rural development across Europe.



In addition, on 12 October, CEFEC submitted its formal contribution to the EU Call for Evidence on the Five-Year Migration & Asylum Strategy. The contribution emphasised the need for community-based solutions that support dignified employment opportunities and strong local integration pathways for people seeking protection. Drawing on the practical experience of social enterprises, CEFEC highlighted how inclusive employment and local support structures can contribute to more effective and humane migration and asylum policies.



Through these contributions, CEFEC continues to actively engage in European policy processes, bringing field-based expertise to support inclusive, sustainable, and socially driven solutions.

E-LOCUM PROJECT

Multilateral Workshop in Gorizia – A Powerful Start to Youth Engagement

On 23–24 October, young people, youth workers, and institutional representatives from across Europe gathered in Gorizia for a two-day cross-border workshop within the E-LoCum – Local Compacts of the United Mates of Europe initiative. The event offered an inspiring platform for dialogue on education, media, youth participation, inclusion, and mobility.



The two-day cross-border workshop in Gorizia opened at Kulturni Dom with a keynote address by the Regional Minister for Labour, Education and Research and institutional contributions from Italian and Slovenian authorities, establishing a solid framework for cooperation.

Participants then moved for multilateral sessions exploring the perspectives of educational organisations and local authorities. Led by young facilitators and experts, the discussions focused on how local systems can better support inclusion and youth engagement.

Day two continued with workshops on the narrative of the media and youth organisations, with contributions from young journalists, youth workers, and student representatives. In the afternoon, youth delegates presented the outcomes of all working groups, followed by dissemination activities.



Parallel to the youth programme, a Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) for partners also took place, attended by Felicitas Kresimon and Weronika Margula on behalf of SFE CEFECE. The meeting provided an opportunity to review project progress, coordinate upcoming activities, and strengthen cross-border collaboration among partner organisations.



Project's website

Networking & Projects



Project Number: 2024-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000248804

ALL4JOBS

The partners of the ALL4JOBS project met online on 29 October 2025 for a coordination meeting dedicated to reviewing progress and preparing the next steps.

The session brought together all partner organisations as we continue working on the key milestones and strategic moves of the project.

The consortium discussed updates, upcoming activities, and collaborative actions aimed at enhancing the competences and employability prospects of disadvantaged and disabled youth. A strong emphasis remained on digital innovation, inclusive methodologies, and sustainable practices in youth work.

The meeting once again highlighted the solid cooperation within the partnership and our shared commitment to expanding digital and professional opportunities for young people facing barriers.



Celebrating — 20 YEARS —



Bucovina Institute celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special event that brought together partners, supporters, and community representatives to mark two decades of work dedicated to community development, social cohesion, and regional identity.

As President of the Bucovina Institute and Development Manager of SFE CEFEC, Vasile Petru Gafiuc addressed the participants, highlighting the organisation's achievements, its ongoing mission, and its commitment to strengthening solidarity and supporting local initiatives.

The celebration included artistic moments and reflections on the Institute's impact over the years, offering a meaningful opportunity to honour its journey and to look ahead toward future projects that will continue contributing to the development of the Bucovina region.



20 DE ANI PENTRU
EDUCAȚIE ÎN
COMUNITATE



SFE CEFEC is pleased to highlight the upcoming **Annual Assembly & Networking 2026**, organised in Spain by our close partner, the Let Her In International Network.

This event will bring together professionals and organisations from across Europe working in education, innovation, and vocational training, offering a valuable platform for exchange and cooperation.

What we're looking forward to:

- Engaging with international colleagues from across education, innovation and vocational training
- Sharing our latest work at EDF, especially our trainings, workshops and digital learning initiatives
- Discovering new ideas, best practices and inspiration to bring back to our projects
- Expanding our network and strengthening collaboration in the European education community



22-23 January
2026

Free for LHI members /
100€ for non-members

Reus, Catalunya
Spain

Come, **meet international partners**, present your own ideas, and **get inspired** by others!

Find out about **international funding opportunities!**

REGISTER NOW →



For More Information: <https://letherin.org/events>



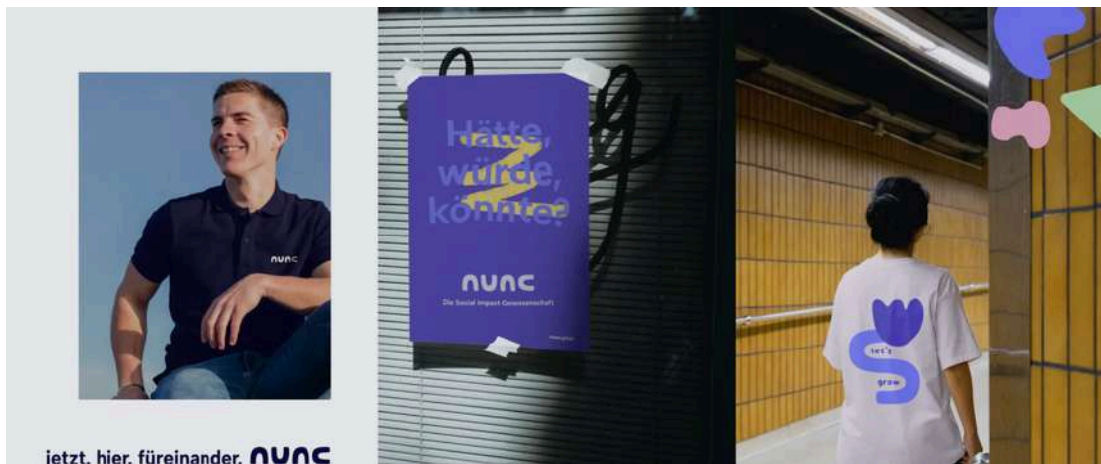
NEW MEMBER ORGANIZATION

nunc

**NUNC – SOCIAL COOPERATIVE FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



NUNC is dedicated to promoting social innovation, inclusive employment, and sustainable business models that create real opportunities for individuals facing social or economic barriers.



The cooperative works to develop entrepreneurial initiatives that combine economic viability with strong social impact, supporting people in vulnerable situations to gain skills, enter the labour market, and participate fully in community life.

Their commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and responsible entrepreneurship aligns closely with the core values of SFE CE FEC.

VISIT WEBSITE



RISE INTERNATIONAL (UK)

A UK-based organisation dedicated to advancing social enterprise, inclusive employment, and community-led development. RiSE International works to strengthen the capacity of social entrepreneurs and organisations through training, cooperation, and innovative project development.

With a strong focus on empowerment, skills-building, and opportunities for people facing disadvantages, RiSE International supports the creation of sustainable pathways into employment and entrepreneurship. Their commitment to collaboration and social impact aligns closely with the mission and values of SFE CE FEC.



Our vision

Our vision is that people across the world have access to the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential and contribute to a progressive and sustainable future.

Our mission

We deliver programmes that empower both individuals and organisations to grow and succeed.

VISIT WEBSITE



This year, Social Firms Europe CE FEC is proud to present the updated Part B of the Linz Appeal, first launched at our 2007 Conference in Linz.

The Linz Appeal is CE FEC’s call to action for more Social Firms and Social Enterprises across Europe, creating meaningful employment for disabled and disadvantaged people. It sets out shared definitions and country-specific insights that guide policymakers and practitioners alike:

- Social Firm – a business created for the employment of people with a disability or disadvantage, combining market activity with a clear social mission.
- Social Enterprise – a business created primarily to promote the economic and social integration of disabled and disadvantaged people, often combining training, rehabilitation, and commercial activity.
- Social Cooperative – a legal structure for a company that is owned and managed democratically by its members.

Part B of the Appeal compiles country reports from our members, updated every two years. The 2025 edition highlights significant progress at cultural, social, and legal levels across Europe. While “Social Firm” remains the core guideline, many countries also embrace the broader term “Social Enterprise.”

Importantly, this update also shows that two-thirds of Social Firms are now actively reducing their CO₂ footprint, reflecting the growing awareness of green economy practices within inclusive employment.

← **EXPLORE THE UPDATED LINZ APPEAL HERE: THE LINZ APPEAL RESEARCH**



Linz Appeal PART B Country Reports - Update 2025

This is an update of Part B of “The Linz Appeal 2007”, brochure printed and online <https://socialfirms.europa.eu/socialfirms.europa.eu/>, which gives an overview of the Social Firms movement, starting up aims, beliefs, strategies and serves as a manual to organizations and countries who wish to spread Social Enterprises.

At its Conference in Linz 2007, CE FEC promoted its core message in the so-called LINZ APPEAL.

The Appeal, which is in two parts, set out CE FEC’s view on the reasons why there should be more social firms for disabled and disadvantaged people in Europe, produced good practice guidelines and outlined overviews of the social firms/social enterprise sector in members’ home countries.

Social Firms Europe CE FEC has a constant interest to clarify the most used terms from the social economy field and every two years is doing research to update the legislation and the information related with social firms among the European countries.

Part A

CE FEC members agreed on a clear definition of the terms **Social Firm** and **Social Enterprise Social Cooperatives** which has been and is still a guideline for creating work for the named target groups. CE FEC encourages the creation of work for its target groups in the open labour market and welcomes whatever actions and programmes lead to this aim:

Definition of a Social Firm
 “A Social Firm is a business created for the employment of people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market.
 It is a business which uses its own market-orientated production of goods and services to pursue its social mission.
 A significant number of its employees will be people with a disability or other disadvantage in the labour market.
 Every worker will be paid a market wage or salary appropriate to the work – whatever their productive capacity is.
 Work opportunities should be equal between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged employees. All should have the same employment rights and obligations.
 The term “cooperative” should be confined to a legal structure for a company which is owned and managed democratically by its members.”



Definition of Social Enterprise
 “A Social Enterprise is any business which is created primarily for the purpose of promoting the economic and social integration of disabled and disadvantaged people.
 Its activities would include training and rehabilitation as well as commercial activity”.

Definition of Social Cooperative
 “A social cooperative, is the legal structure for a company, which is owned and managed democratically by its members”.

Part B

This part contains the country reports of our members, which are being updated every other year. Here is the latest version of 2025!

There has certainly been progress at a cultural, social and legal level in most European countries regarding the status, spread and numbers of social firms/social enterprises.

We have found that the above given definition of a „social firm“ is the valid guideline.

However, in addition to the traditional use of the term „Social Firm“ other expressions are used, mostly the term „Social Enterprise“.

We have also found that there is growing awareness of more and more green economy within social firms for disabled and disadvantaged persons and two thirds are actively taking steps and measures to reduce their CO₂ footprint.

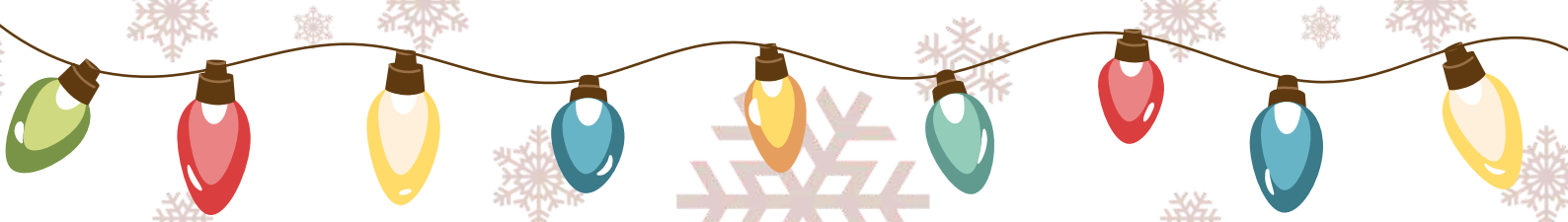
We thank all contributors! Comments are welcome to the coordinators Christiane Haerlin, Alina Bisan & Weronika Margala, under socialfirms@cefec.org!



In 2024 we managed to develop with support of Bucovina Institute team, a series of podcasts with several Social Firms Europe CEFEC members, and we are very happy to continue with this tradition in 2025. So, we are very excited to share with you these recordings, with:

- » **Ophir Peleg**, the Chief Global Officer of Shekulo Tov Group (STG) and an Israeli-born.
- » **Stéphane Willems**, AIGS - Association Interregionale de Guidance de la Sante asbl, Belgium,
- » **Richard Mehmed**, founder and managing director of Community Wood Recycling, the biggest social franchise in the UK.
- » **Raymo Bucher**, who works as the Ecological Advisor for Oeko Service GmbH from Switzerland.
- » **Hana Horii, Mihoko Tsukahara and Mikiko Yoshizaki**, representing Jinzaikyoikusya from Japan.
- » **Șerban Raia**, 5th edition of the Academy participant from Romania. He studied social entrepreneurship for 2 years in Sweden.
- » **Lusine Dostibegian**, 5th edition of the Academy participant from Georgia, representing a social enterprise called "Orbis Bude" which received a recognition certificate for the 2025 CEFEC Award.

Click on the **yellow button** to view & listen!



Social Firms Europe

CEFEC



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**



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