

Geopolitics, state capture and peak corruption. What's next for anticorruption in the Western Balkans?

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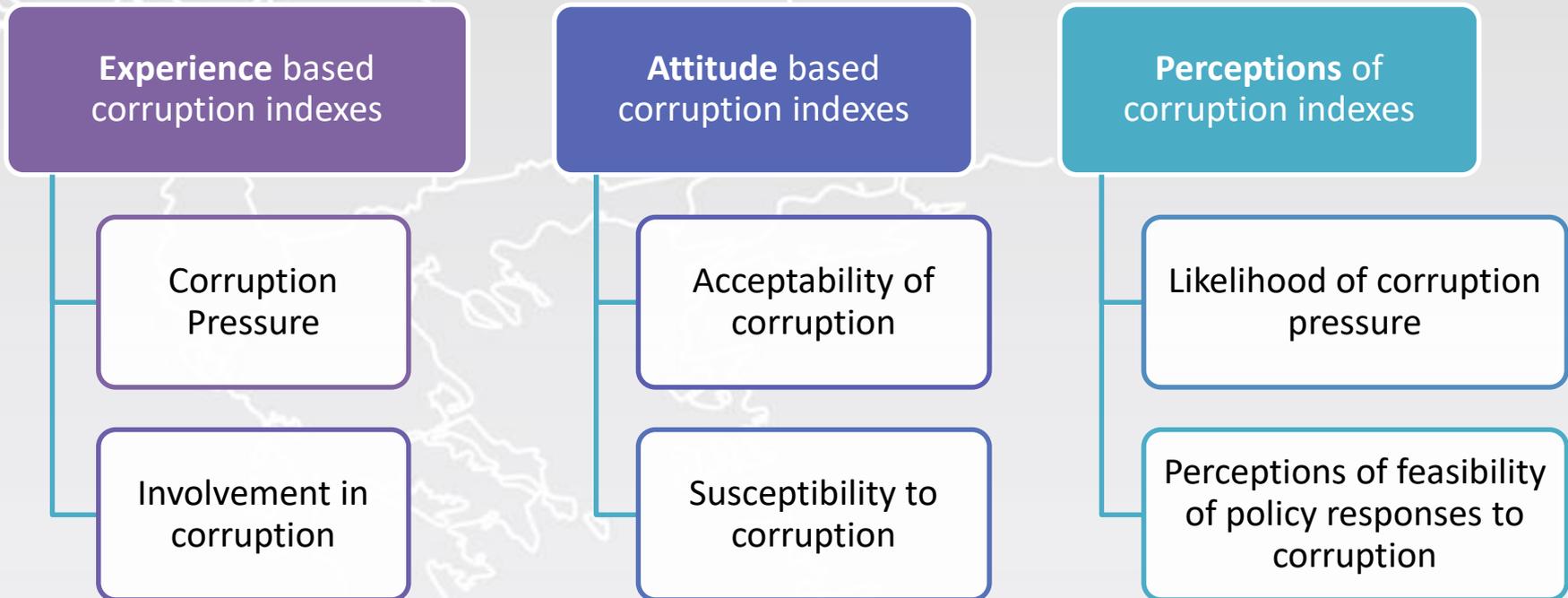
Zero hour: the war in Ukraine and the promise of enlargement

- **Geopolitics of anticorruption:** how to help when no help is (officially?) requested?
- Anticorruption should not slip from the agenda
- The **integrity** of WB governments remains under serious stress.
- **Stalled momentum** of anticorruption reforms.
- **State capture** is influencing drafting, adoption and enforcement of government rules and regulations.
- Yet, Western Balkan **anticorruption strategies** and **EC's assessment reports** rarely address it.

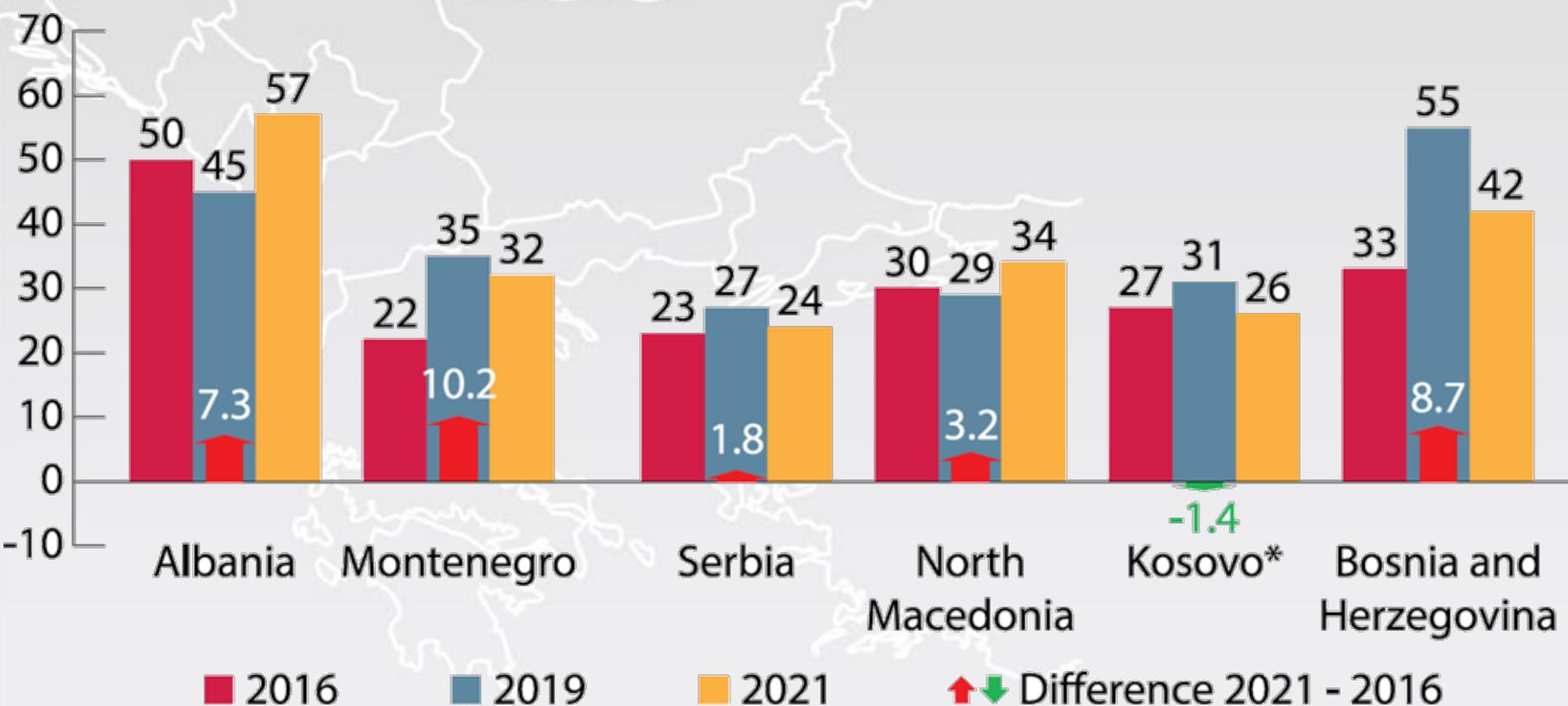
Official documents and institutions abound, unlike results

- AC strategies from the late 2010s are **not updated** and are of **general nature**, with no measurable targets.
- New laws target **sophisticated forms of corruption**
- However, law drafting is **not sufficiently inclusive and transparent**
- **Broad-mandated** anticorruption institutions are vulnerable to:
 - being **overwhelmed** by complex enforcement tasks;
 - being **captured by special interests**.
- Lack of **reliable information** to identify the reasons for the handful of **convictions**.
- CSOs are among the few running engines of anticorruption, but used as a **token of “inclusiveness”** rather than a stakeholder.
- Dominant role of **oligarchs** in domestic media -> **low media freedom**.

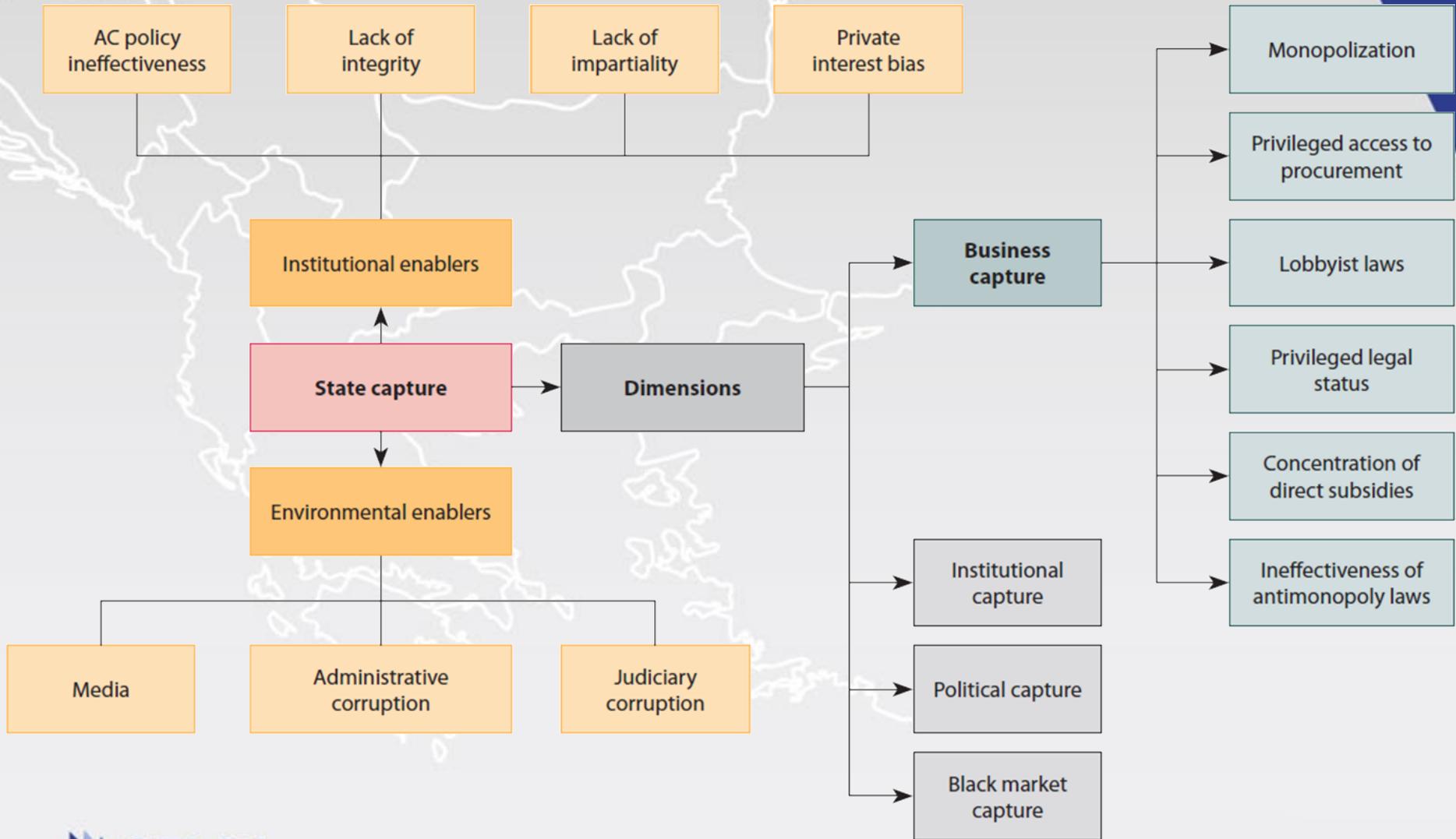
Principle corruption assessment indexes from the Corruption Monitoring System



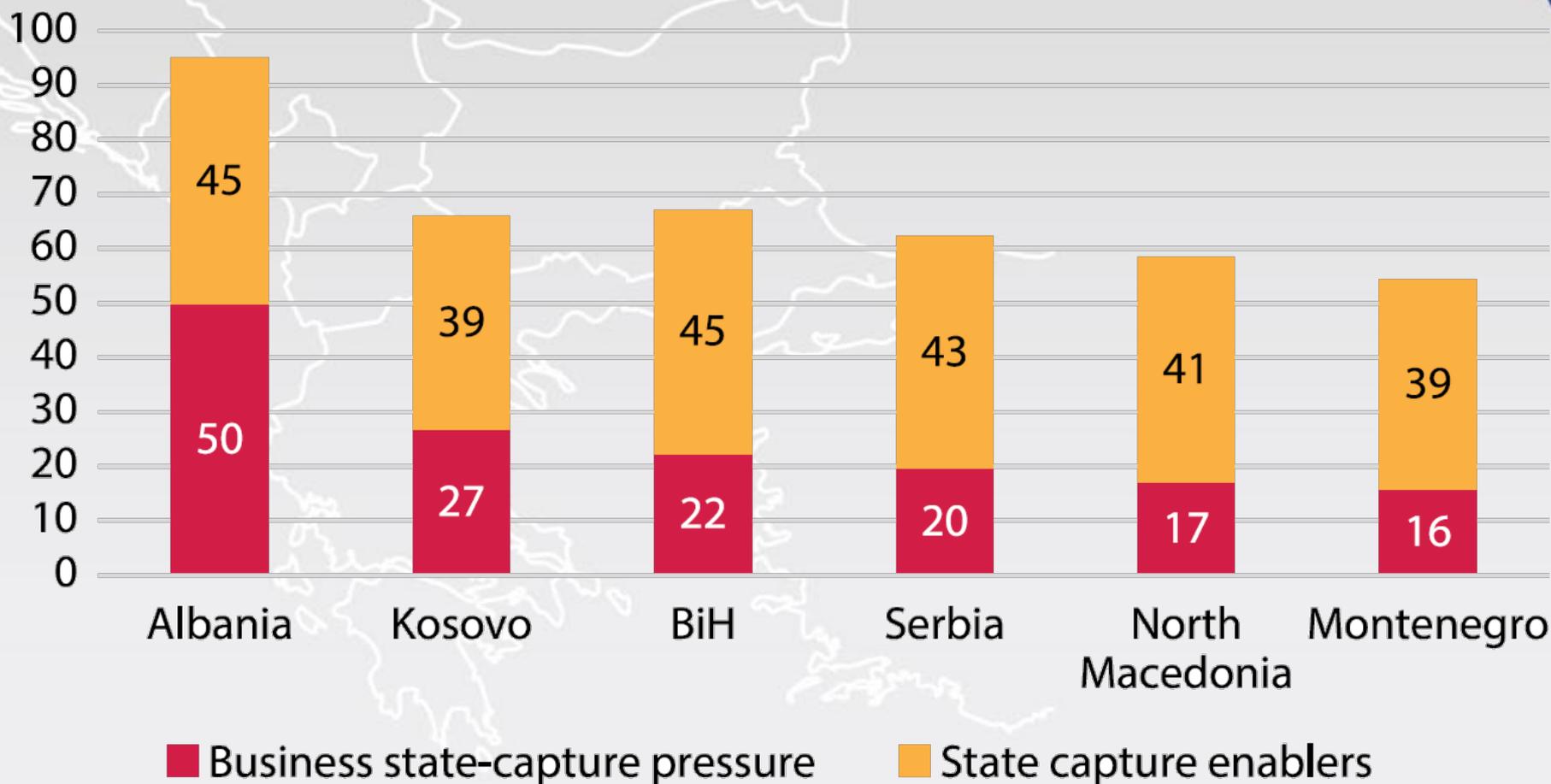
Corruption pressure: up it goes again



State Capture Assessment Diagnostics (SCAD)



State capture vulnerability is high



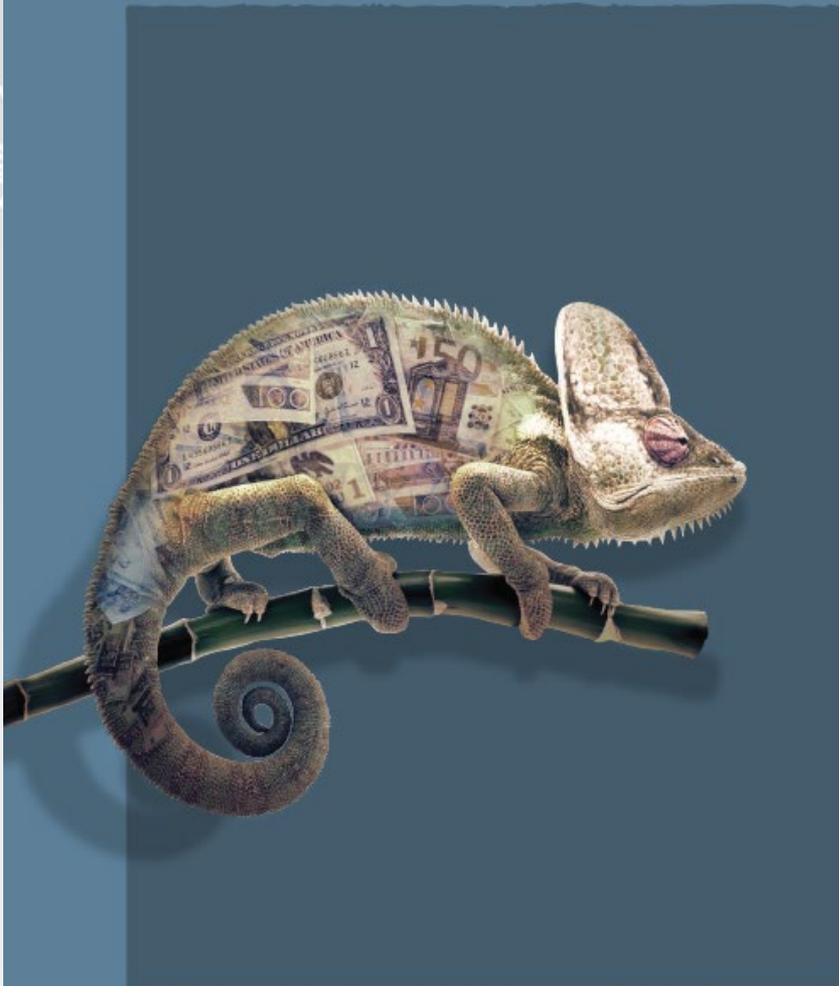
Public procurement: a high-risk zone

- High share of **restricted procedures**.
- Frequent use of **emergency procedures**, especially during the pandemic.
- Using **lowest price** as main criterion is prone to **abuse** (best price-quality ratio criterion rarely used).
- In cases of “**strategic**” **interest** contractors of public works are awarded **preferential treatment**.

Turning the tide: how to regain the anticorruption momentum

- **Prioritise the dismantling of state capture**
 - Tackle **illicit finance flows** (dirty money that crosses an international border, illegally earned, moved, or used)
 - Target **media capture**, using the European parliament drive
- **Measure effect** of evidence-based anticorruption policies, **not intentions.**
- **Focus on outputs** (actual impact) not inputs (regulations, procedures, resources).
- Work with **civil society**

Geopolitics, State Capture and Peak Corruption



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