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FSC.EMI/162/23
22 May 2023

ENGLISH only



Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of
Belgium to the OSCE

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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Representation of Belgium to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe presents its compliments to all Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre, and has the honor to provide herewith the Belgian response to the OSCE questionnaire on anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war for the calendar year 2022.

The Permanent Representation of Belgium to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe avails itself of the opportunity to renew to all Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration.

Vienna, 16 May 2023

to: All Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE
OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre



OSCE

Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War (FSC.DEC/7/04)



BELGIUM – 2023 Report

1. Is your country a State Party to the 1996 Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices annexed to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)?

Yes, Belgium ratified Amended Protocol II on 10 March 1999.

2. Please attach the most recent annual report submitted by your country in accordance with Article 13 of the Amended Protocol or give the appropriate electronic address for the report.

The report can be found enclosed

3. Is your country considering ratification/accession to the Amended Protocol II?

Cfr. Q 1.

4. What measures have been taken to prevent the indiscriminate use of mines, booby-traps and other devices?

Cfr. Belgian report for CCW Amended Protocol II.

5. Would your country be interested in receiving assistance related to the implementation of this Protocol? If so, please describe.

No.

6. Does your country have the capacity to assist others related to this Protocol? If so, please describe.

Cfr. Belgian report for CCW Amended Protocol II.

Part II

7. Has your country ratified or acceded to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction?

Yes, this Convention was ratified by Belgium on 4 September 1998.

8.(a) If yes, please attach the most recent report submitted by your country in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention or give the appropriate electronic address for the report.

The report can be found enclosed

(b) If no, is your country considering ratification/accession to the Convention

Cfr. Q 7.

(c) Has your country adopted legislation to address the humanitarian objectives of the convention, or taken any specific measures regarding the use, production, storage, transfer and destruction of anti-personnel landmines? In case a moratorium has been introduced, what is its scope and duration and when was it introduced?

Belgium was the first country in the world to ban the production, stockpiling, use and transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines by adopting the law of 9 March 1995¹. Belgium ratified the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention in 1998. The provisions regarding the ban of Anti-Personnel Mines are described in the law of 8th June 2006 as amended by the laws of 25 July 2008 and of 7 January 2018.

9. Does your country have any specific measures in place to provide assistance to victims?

Cfr. Q 11.

10. Does your country require assistance in mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine awareness and/or victim assistance? If so, please describe.

No.

11. Does your country have the capacity to assist others in mine action? If so, please describe.

Yes, Belgium provides assistance in the field of clearance, victim assistance, mine risk education, local capacity building, universalization and advocacy of the Ottawa Convention. The main governmental donors/actors in this regard in Belgium are: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs via its Development Cooperation department and its Peace Building desk and Belgian Defense.

Belgian Defense has been active in demining during deployments in Afghanistan (2005-2018) and Lebanon (2006 –2014) and is active in a series of smaller deployments in other countries. The Royal Military Academy and the Service for Clearance and Destruction of Explosives (SEDEE- DOVO) are involved in research and development for improved humanitarian demining and in the training of demining personnel from third countries.

In 2022, Belgium contributed to the following interventions and programs:

¹ http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/change_lg.pl?language=fr&la=F&cn=1995030934&table_name=loi

Country	Organisation	Action	Project	Amount disbursed in 2020
Iraq and Syria	UNMAS	Humanitarian mine action, including survey, clearance, risk education and victim assistance	Contributions to Iraq (1.000.000 €) and Syria (1.000.000 €) mine action programs	2.000.000 €
Angola and Cambodia	APOPO	Land release, incl. use of mine detection rats	A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola)	633.000 €
Syria	MAG	Humanitarian mine action	Humanitarian Mine Action in support of IDPs and returning communities in areas of Raqqa, north-east Syria previously occupied by ISIS	250.000 €

Total amount directly disbursed for humanitarian mine action in 2022: 2.883.000 EUR

Belgium contributes to the equipment of the Group of Five Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) in C-IED material with 1.000.000 € (period 2018-2022).

From 01 May 2022 until 30 April 2024, BEL provides a pool of five EOD Operators in support of UNMAS. Through NATO DCB, Belgium contributes to the UNMAS TMAT (threat mitigation advisory team) EOD and C-IED.

The EOD operators provide ad-hoc support to the UNMAS, with train-the-trainer and mentoring missions. Belgium is the only troop contributing nation.

Belgium also contributed in 2022 to several humanitarian pooled funds out of which i.e. humanitarian mine action activities were financed: Central Emergency and Response Fund, Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, Syria Humanitarian Fund, Yemen Humanitarian Fund, Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (total Belgian contribution for 2022 to these specific funds was 46 million €).

Within means and capabilities and after thorough investigation, Belgium is prepared to continue providing assistance in mine action on demand in 2023.

* * *

OSCE QUESTIONNAIRE ON EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

1. Has your country notified the Depository of its consent to be bound by the 2003 CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) once it enters into force? Is your country considering doing so?

Protocol V was ratified by Belgium on 25th January 2010.

2. If yes, at what stage is the process?

Cfr. Q 1.

3. Would your country be interested in receiving assistance in clearing or otherwise minimizing the risks and effects of ERW?

No.

4. Does your country have the capacity to assist others in clearing and minimizing the risks and effects of ERW? If so, please describe.

***Belgian assistance instruments do not make a distinction between mines and ERW.
Therefore the answer to this question can be found in the
QUESTIONNAIRE ON ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES cfr. Part II question n° 11.***

**PROTOCOL ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF MINES, BOOBY-TRAPS
AND OTHER DEVICES AS AMENDED ON 3 MAY 1996
ANNEXED TO THE CONVENTION ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF
CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS
OR TO HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS
(PROTOCOL II AS AMENDED ON 3 MAY 1996)**

Provisional Reporting Formats for Article 13 para 2 and Article 11 para 2.

NAME OF HIGH CONTRACTING PARTY	BELGIUM <hr/>
DATE OF SUBMISSION	<u>31/03/2023</u>
NATIONAL POINT(S) OF CONTACT	Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co- operation M5 Disarmament and Non-Proliferation ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be <hr/>

Form A

Dissemination of information

Article 13 / 4 / a “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(a) dissemination of information on this Protocol to their armed forces and to the civilian population;”

Remark:

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM**

reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

Information about the Armed Forces

a. General Information:

Officers trained as “Advisers in the Law of Armed Conflict” are available in each unit (up to battalion or independent company level) to advise military commanders on the application of the Law of Armed Conflict. The education programme of these advisers encompasses inter alia general information about (amended) Protocol II. Legal advisors with in depth knowledge of Protocol II are also available to advise Units and Commanders on any legal issue regarding mines, booby-traps and other devices.

The Operational Law Manual (currently under revision) was distributed within Belgian Defence in 2016 with the aim of addressing legal questions pertaining to an operational context. The legal framework for mines and booby-traps is dealt with in Chapter 8 “Weapons, means and methods of warfare”.

b. Specific Information:

Combat engineers and EOD personnel involved in mine activities are educated and trained in all matters related to the Belgian doctrine in accordance with STANAG 2036 Land mines procedures, 2143 Minimum standards of proficiency for explosive ordnance disposal personnel, 2485 Countermine operations in land warfare and this Protocol.

These documents are translated into two Belgian doctrinal documents:

- ACOT-TTP-MILENG4-LEC-418 « Procédure en matière de pose, marquage, repérage et compte-rendu des champs de mines »,
- ACOT-TTP-ENGMFD-LECQ-030 « Déminage en Ops » (Draft). This document remains a draft as it was specifically written for UNIFIL BAC/demining mission. Once a similar mission is planned, this document is reactivated.

Explosive Risk Education is part of basic military education for all soldiers. Every year, soldiers receive a refreshment training on mine awareness. Specific training is provided before any operational deployment and is tailored to the risks that the armed forces could be facing during the operation in question.

Information to the civilian population

The law on the ratification of the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996) was made public through publication in the Belgian Official Journal.

On a regular basis, representatives of the Defense Department give lectures as part of the IHL courses organised by the Belgian Red Cross and/or International Committee of the Red Cross. General or specific education related to means and methods of warfare, including the issue of ERW, and in particular Protocol V, is included in these courses.

The Armed Forces Engineer School contributes to BGT (Belgian Generic Training) organised by FPS Foreign Affairs with an ERW module. BGT is a mandatory module for every civilian wanting to participate in a Civilian Crisis Management or Peacebuilding mission.

Form B

Mine clearance and rehabilitation programs

Article 13 / 4 / b “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depositary ... on:

(b) mine clearance and rehabilitation programs;”

Remark:

High Contracting Party BELGIUM reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

Mine clearance programs

NOT APPLICABLE: the country is not affected by minefields

For international cooperation: see Form E

Rehabilitation programs

NOT APPLICABLE: the country is not affected by minefields

For international cooperation: see Form E

Form C

Technical requirements and relevant information

Article 13 / 4 / c “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(c) steps taken to meet technical requirements of this Protocol and any other relevant information pertaining thereto;

Remark:

High Contracting Party BELGIUM reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

Technical requirements

- a. The procedures in use for the recording of minefields are in accordance with those requested in the Protocol. For the recording, marking and control of minefields in operation, Belgium is acting in accordance with the provisions of the STANAG 2036. This STANAG is fully in line with what is required by the Protocol.
- b. Detectability: this is not applicable because the use of anti-personnel mines is prohibited by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) and by national law.
- c. Self-destruction and self-deactivation: not applicable.
- d. Signalisation: see answer in paragraph a above.

Any other relevant information

Form D**Legislation**

Article 13 / 4 / d “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(d) Legislation related to this Protocol;

Remark:

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM**

reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

Legislation

Law of 20 March 2007 prohibiting the financing of the production, use and possession of antipersonnel mines and cluster-munitions.

Law of 8 June 2006 concerning the regulation of economic and individual activities with weapons, as amended by the Laws of 25 July 2008 and of 7 January 2018.

Law of 8 January 2004 approving the modification of Art 1 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Law of 30 March 2000 on the definitive Prohibition of Antipersonnel Mines.

Law of 10 August 1998 approving the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and other Devices (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996) annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Law of 10 August 1998 approving the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

Law of 24 June 1996 amending the Law of 3 January 1933 on Arms production and Trade, on the Carrying of Weapons and on Ammunition Trade, with the View to Prohibit the Belgian State and Public services from Storing Anti-personnel mines.

Law of 9 March 1995 on Anti-personnel mines, Booby-traps and Similar Devices.

22.05.23

Form E**International technical information exchange, cooperation on mine clearance, technical cooperation and assistance**

Article 13 / 4 / e “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(e) Measures taken on international technical information exchange, on international cooperation on mine clearance, and on technical cooperation and assistance;

Remark:

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

International technical information exchange

- In May 2004, Belgium became a member of the European Research Grouping Arrangement n°2, with France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and Germany, in relation to the European Co-operation for Ammunition Destruction.
- A complete handbook on EOD technical information was produced, translated into KHMER and handed over to the Cambodian mine action centre (CMAC). Belgium provides technical information support upon request.
- On a regular basis, 1 or 2 Belgian representatives, skilled in demining, participate in meetings related to humanitarian mine action and organized under the umbrella of the NATO working group EOD, GICHD Review Board for IMAS, and EDA working group. Belgium assumes a liaison role between those organizations.
- Since 2005, Belgium participates in the Swedish owned EOD Information System as active member.
- Belgium participates at Board of Directors level in the International Test and Evaluation Program for humanitarian demining (ITEP). Through this channel, it takes part in the decision and policymaking process of the ITEP.

International cooperation on mine clearance

1. Projects:

Total amount directly disbursed in 2022 for humanitarian mine action: 2,883,000 EUR

- Mine Action Group: Humanitarian Mine Action in support of IDPs and returning communities in areas of Raqqa, north-east Syria previously occupied by ISIS: 250,000 €
- UNMAS: contributions to the Iraq and Syria mine action programs: 2,000,000 €
- APOPO: A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola) : 633,000 € (disbursed in 2022 but part of a five year program and financing over the period 2022-2026).

Belgium also contributed in 2022 to several humanitarian pooled funds out of which i.e. humanitarian mine action activities were financed: Central Emergency and Response Fund, Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, Yemen Humanitarian Fund, Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (total Belgian contribution for 2022 to these specific funds was 46 million €).

Belgium contributes to the equipment of the Group of Five Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S) in C-IED material with 1.000.000 € (period 2018-2022).

2. Research and Development:

Research and development activities are conducted both at the national and international level. A national example is the PARADIS project (a Prototype for Assisting Rational Activities in Humanitarian De-mining Using Images from Satellites) led by the Royal Military Academy (RMA) with the participation of the Department of Geography (IGEAT) of the Free University of Brussels (ULB). Its results are still used by different actors.

The NGO APOPO (<http://www.apopo.org/>), in collaboration with the University of Antwerp and funded inter alia by the Belgian Government, started a research project in 1997 on the use of rats for scent detection of mines. The African giant pouch rat (*Cricetomys gambianus*) was selected for this task and successfully trained. In 2004 the first group of mine detection rats passed the licensing tests according to the international mine action standards (IMAS). APOPO became an international NGO active in humanitarian demining and is still employing rats for survey of contaminated areas.

From 2012 to 2015 the Royal Military Academy coordinated TIRAMISU, an international project to develop a comprehensive modular toolbox for the main humanitarian mine action activities, from survey up to the disposal of explosive hazards. TIRAMISU offers a comprehensive, integrated and modular solution for tackling large contaminated areas. The main financial contribution to the project was provided by the European Framework Program 7 - Security. The results of the project continue to be exploited by the International CBRNE Institute established in Les Bons Villers, Belgium.

Starting from October 2021 and lasting until September 2023, the Belgian company Space Applications Services N.V. and the Belgian Royal Military Academy are leading a research project, called AIDED, on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the detection of explosive devices. AIDED will use a set of state of the art Artificial Intelligence algorithms able to identify unconventional (IEDs) and conventional (buried mines) explosive devices, and autonomously plan offline and run-time missions plans. It will also provide positioning, navigation and mapping to control a fleet of robots that cooperate quickly to identify a safe passage in a high-risk area. The AIDED project is financed by the European Commission and managed by the European Defence Agency in the framework of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research.

Form F

Other relevant matters

Article 13 / 4 / f “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(f) other relevant matters.

Remark:

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 to 31.12.2022

Other relevant matters

Belgium has regularly organised EOD courses in French and English to train team leaders of other countries. Currently, these courses are organised on an ad hoc basis.

Since 2017, BEL has contributed to MINUSMA with an EOD specialist in the analysis branch.

Form G

Information to the UN-database on mine clearance

Article 11 para 2 “The High Contracting Parties shall provide information to the database on mine clearance established within the United Nations System, especially.....on:

- information concerning various means and technologies of mine clearance, and lists of experts, expert agencies or national points of contact on mine clearance

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from 01.01.2022 To 31.12.2022

Means and technologies of mine clearance

For detection purposes, two different man portable detectors are used, one based on the magnetic principle, the other one on dual sensors technique. Only manual removal and disposal means are applied except for some IED devices where a remotely operated robot can be used during the handling process.

Lists of experts and experts agencies

Belgian Ministry of Defence:

- DOVO/SEDEE (Service for the removal and destruction of explosive devices)
- ComOpsLand MILENG (Operational Command Land – Military Engineers Branch)

The Belgian military experts working for DOVO/SEDEE have NATO degrees and qualifications for:

- EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal)
- IEDD (Improvised Explosive Device Disposal)

National points of contact on mine clearance

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Department of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs

Tel. 00 32 2 501 31 74 – E-mail: ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be

**CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

Reporting Formats for Article 7 ¹

STATE PARTY:	BELGIUM
DATE OF SUBMISSION	30/04/2023
POINT OF CONTACT	M5 - Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Division of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation Tel. +32.2.501.31.74 e-mail : ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be

Form D APMs retained or transferred (As adopted at the final plenary meeting on 02 December 2005)

¹ These reporting formats informally provided by Austria on disk are based on document APLC/MSP.1/1999/L.4 of 31 March 1999, as amended and decided upon by the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Maputo from 3 to 7 May 1999. Tables of formats may be expanded as desired.

Article 7.1 "Each State Party shall report to the Secretary-General ... on:

d) The types, quantities and, if possible, lot numbers of all anti-personnel mines retained or transferred for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance or mine destruction techniques, or transferred for the purpose of destruction, as well as the institutions authorized by a State Party to retain or transfer anti-personnel mines, in accordance with Article 3"

State [Party]: **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from **01 January 2022** to **31 December 2022**

1. a. **Compulsory** Retained for development of and training in (Article 3, para.1)

Institution authorized by State Party	Type	Quantity	Lot # (if possible)	Supplementary information
ARMED FORCES	Mine APers M35 Bg	3.041 EA		As of 31 December 2011
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.569 EA		As of 31 December 2012
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.564 EA		As of 31 December 2013
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.564 EA	0023PRB61 (XBBG)	As of 31 December 2014
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.288EA		As of 31 December 2015
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.288 EA		As of 31 December 2016
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.118 EA		As of 31 December 2017
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.066 EA		As of 31 December 2018
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.044 EA		As of 31 December 2019
	Mine APers M35 Bg	2.021 EA	0023PRB61 (XBBG)	As of 31 December 2020

	Mine APers M35 Bg	967 EA	0023PRB61 (XBBG)	As of 31 December 2021. 31 EA were consumed. 1023 EA were defused.
	Mine APers M35 Bg	958 EA	0023PRB61 (XBBG)	As of 31 December 2022 9 EA were destroyed by DOVO. (Lot: 0023PRB61) 1.183 EA were irreversibly defused.
Total	Mine APers M35 Bg	958 EA		

Objective	Activity/project	Supplementary information
Education and training of EOD specialists and deminers with live ammunition Training militaries in "Mine Risk Education"	The use of M35Bg mines takes place during different sessions of courses organized by the Belgian Armed Forces.	priority for EOD community due to operational engagements.

1. b. Voluntary information:

Form D (continued)

2. **Compulsory** Transferred for development of and training in (Article 3, para.1)

Institution authorized by State Party	Type	Quantity	Lot # (if possible)	Supplementary information: e.g. transferred from, transferred to
NA				

3. **Compulsory** Transferred for the purpose of destruction (Article 3, para.2)

Institution authorized by State Party	Type	Quantity	Lot # (if possible)	Supplementary information: e.g. transferred from, transferred to
NA				

Form J: Other relevant matters

Remark: States Parties may use this form to report voluntarily on other relevant matters, including matters pertaining to compliance and implementation not covered by the formal reporting requirements contained in Article 7. States Parties are encouraged to use this form to report on activities undertaken with respect to Article 6, and in particular to report on assistance provided for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims.

State Party: **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from **01 January 2022** to **31 December 2022**

Narrative / reference to other reports

1. At this stage, no live mines (from the stock retained under Article 3) were used for research and development studies. Some of the Belgian studies are using data collected from live minefields abroad.

2. Belgian contribution to international assistance in 2022

Country	Organisation	Action	Project	Amount disbursed in 2020
Iraq and Syria	UNMAS	Humanitarian mine action, including survey, clearance, risk education and victim assistance	Contributions to Iraq (1.000.000 €) and Syria (1.000.000 €) mine action programs	2.000.000 €
Angola and Cambodia	APOPO	Land release, incl. use of mine detection rats	A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola)	633.000 €
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3. Other assistance provided by Belgium in 2022

NA

4. Research and Development:

Research and development activities are conducted both at the national and international level. A national example is the PARADIS project (a Prototype for Assisting Rational Activities in Humanitarian De-mining Using Images from Satellites) led by the Royal Military Academy (RMA) with the participation of the Department of Geography (IGEAT) of the Free University of Brussels (ULB). Its results are still used by different actors.

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