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## **Institutional Evaluation Programme**

*Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and  
Innovation in Romanian Universities Project*

### **ACADEMY OF MUSIC GHEORGHE DIMA, CLUJ NAPOCA**

#### ***EVALUATION REPORT***

***MAY 2013***

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Gintare Alaburdaite

Airi Rovio-Johansson, team coordinator



**Performance  
in Higher Education**





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## 1. Introduction

The evaluation visits of the Academy of Music Gheorghe Dima (henceforth AMGD) at Cluj Napoca took place from 18 to 20 November 2012 and from 18 to 21 March 2013. The evaluation was carried within the framework of the project “Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities”, which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 law of national education (2011) and the various related normative acts. While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

### 1.1. The Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as upon perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a ‘fitness for (and of) purpose’ approach:



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- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

## 1.2. The Academy of Music Gheorghe Dima of Cluj Napoca and the national context

The history of Academy of Music Gheorghe Dima of Cluj Napoca dates back to 1819, when the Conservatory of Music was founded. In 1919 the Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art was established in Cluj Napoca, committed to offering music teachers and artists for the Romanian Opera House and the National Theatre of Cluj. In 1931 the Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art was advanced to university level and became the Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. The name of the first director was added to the institution's official name in 1950 and it became *Gheorghe Dima Conservatory of Music*.

The institution got its current name: *Academia de Muzică "Gheorghe Dima"* in 1990-1991. At that time, AMGD had three faculties, the faculty of theory and the faculty of music interpretation and the faculty of scenic art. The first doctoral study in musicology was introduced in 1971 and for 22 years the Conservatory of Music of Cluj was the only institution in Romania to offer doctoral programmes in musicology (SER, 2012, p. 10).

In 2011, AMGD received the status of a public "university for artistic education and creation" (Minister of Education Order No. 5262/05.09.2011; SER, 2012, p. 5). Since 2011-2012, AMGD has two faculties, faculty of theory and faculty of musical performance, and a branch in Piatra Neamt.

Since 2000, the *Department for Continuing Education and Distance Learning (Departamentul de Educație Continuă și Învățământ la Distanță (D.E.C.I.D.))* offers short-duration higher education programmes (music pedagogy, instruments-performance and singing-performance as well as undergraduate programmes; SER, 2012, p. 3). So far, AMGD is the only Romania state-funded institution offering distance education in music (SER, 2012, p. 10). Related to this department, AMGD has recently created its own specialised trade company (S.A. *Cheia FA S.R.L.*) with high quality equipment in order to make professional audio recordings and create electronic music and services (SER, 2012, p. 7). The university also includes a doctoral school, 13 laboratories and one Centre of Excellence in the field of European educational, cultural and artistic connection, established 2005 and accredited by the National Council of Scientific Research in Higher Education (CNCSIS) in 2006, that develops projects and offers continuous education programmes (cultural management, methodology of scientific publications, etc.) (SER, 2012, p. 4-5).



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The university offers 10 full-time undergraduate programmes, four distance education undergraduate programmes (one of which is in course of liquidation), three Master programmes and for the staff it offers special training programmes (SER, 2012, p. 5). Currently AMGD has 1 131 enrolled students, 110 tenured teachers, 53 auxiliary teaching staff, 29 administrative and 14 hostel staff (SER, 2012, p. 5).

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) states the following: “Regarding its integration in the national higher education system, AMGD aims at promoting the principles of university autonomy (organizational autonomy, functional autonomy, resource management autonomy, legal autonomy) and the principle of academic freedom under the University Charter” (SER, 2012, p. 6). The vision of AMGD is to be developing “towards improving the quality and expanding the approaches to scientific research and artistic creation (and less towards a quantitative development, given the realistic evaluation of the socio-professional needs reflected on the music labour market and of the population growth forecast for the near future)” (SER, 2012, p. 10).

The mission of AMGD consists of several complex socio-professional components (additional material, Annex 12 a, b).

- a culture based on thorough knowledge and oriented to innovation;
- a culture of continuing education;
- a culture of the individual’s personal development in general and professional development in particular;
- a culture oriented to globalisation, acceptance of diversity and proactive attitude.

In AMGD’s view: “We believe, however, that the actual degree of autonomy is enough to enable us to capitalize on our unlimited possibility to cultivate our own academic and research traditions, to establish various partnerships, to raise funds from sources other than state funding, to organize a broad spectrum of artistic, scientific and managerial activities, to conduct entrepreneurial, agency and commercial activities etc. through our own company” (SER, p. 33). According to AMGD’s Self-Evaluation Report the autonomy is “relatively limited by a number of provisions of Law no. 1/2011 which give an overly detailed specification of the quality requirements developed by ARACIS and even by certain requirements of the Bologna Process itself” (SER, 2012, p. 33).

Today, AMGD is a university of education and research, in terms of its artistic integrity, complexity and strength and its cultural contribution to the society. According to the SER (2012, p. 9), AMGD considers that it is “regarded as equal in value to the National Music University in Bucharest”.



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### 1.3. The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a group of academics chaired by the former rector of AMGD. The self-evaluation group consisted of representatives of the university management, the faculty deans, the department heads, the doctoral school director, the heads of central administrative offices, the development department and one PhD student. The self-evaluation group was appointed by the Rector Vasile Jucan.

The Self-Evaluation Report (2012) gave a good description of the AMGD. However, the *Institutional Development Strategy of AMGD 2012-2016* (Additional material, Annex 2) (henceforth Strategic Plan) was under implementation, when the IEP team made its first visit in November 2012. It was sent to the team before the second visit as part of the additional material, which also included 12 Appendices of various areas of AMGD, such as organisational structure, ARACIS Council's Report 2010, criteria for entrance examination, and criteria applied in examination during the period of studies.

### 1.4. The evaluation team

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Professor Dr Tove Bull, former Rector, University of Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway, chair
- Professor Dr Grzegorz Kurzynski, former Rector of the K. Lipinski Academy of Music, Wroclaw, Poland;
- Gintare Alaburdaite, student representative, ISM University of Management and Economics, Vilnius, Lithuania
- Professor Dr Airi Rovio-Johansson, Gothenburg Research Institute, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg, Sweden, team coordinator

The team would like to thank Rector Professor Dr, Conf. Univ. Vasile Jucan, the Vice-Rectors, the Self-Evaluation Group, the liaison officer, University Secretary Roxana Huza, deans, department heads, President of the Senate, Senate members, academics, students, executive officials, administrative staff and external representatives for useful discussions, their kindness and interests during both visits at AMGD.



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## 2. Governance and institutional decision-making

As mentioned before, the Conservatory of Music came into being in 1919 and in 1991 it got the name Academy of Music Gheorghe Dima (AMGD) of Cluj Napoca following the modernising process of the whole Romanian education system in the 1990s (SER 2012, p. 2).

According to the SER “The teaching activities conducted by AMGD provide advanced competences that are immediately capitalized in the social-professional life: our graduates become members of various professional musical ensembles, teachers, composers, conductors, directors, instructors of the amateur musical movement of all types etc. Through artistic practice, certain services are also provided for the direct benefit of the entire society: concerts and recitals, events, contests for the promotion and consecration of the musical creation and performance, music education through educational concerts” (SER 2012, p.7).

### *Rectorate level*

Following the introduction of the Romanian National Law of Education (2011) the rector and three vice-rectors together have great responsibility for AMGD organisation and the construction of the new building which has got full support from the Government.

According to the university leadership the frequent changes in the legislative framework in Romania make long-term strategic planning difficult. Instead, pragmatic institutional management solutions on a day-to-day basis have been adopted. The AMGD is a small university with only 110 tenured academics and so to be able to fulfil all positions in different governance bodies, permanent staff have to fulfil different functions on different organisational levels. As such, an academic can be a member of the faculty board, a director of a department and, at the same time, a director of a laboratory. According to the National Law of Education (1/2011) the Senate is the main decision making body at the level of the university. However, given the overlapping of functions among AMGD’s academics, the distance between the different organisational levels of the university has been significantly reduced.

The team recommends AMGD to implement the pragmatic institutional management system further, in which permanent staffs fulfil several different functions.

The team also recommends the AMGD to organise an internet support structure covering all parts of the AMGD’s organisation in order to follow up student groups, examinations results and all activities at AMGD.

### *Senate level*

The National Law of Education (2011) prescribes the composition of the Senate. Faculty/departments must have Senate member representation proportional to the number of





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their students/academic staff. The number of academics representing the faculty is related to the size of the faculty, and in terms of the number of students. The students must have 25% representation in the Senate.

In 2012 the university's Administrative Board was set up, headed by the rector with a higher degree of operational autonomy than the former Senate Office. The relation and the development of activities between the Administrative Board and the Senate are continuously progressing (SER, 2012, p. 11).

The relation and cooperation between the institutional management, the faculties and the Senate seems to be good. For instance, the two bodies jointly work for establishing the "new building project", which will start later in year 2013, and which will offer new possibilities of strategic planning in the fields of research, performance and teaching, according to the rector.

#### *Faculty level*

As mentioned, AMGD has two faculties, faculty of theory and faculty of music performance. Moreover, there is a Department for Continuing Education and Distance Learning (D.E.C.I.D). D.E.C.I.D has an independent position in the organisation, comparable with the status of a faculty (SER, 2012, p. 19). AMGD is the only music university in Romania which has such a department and its specialisations have their own electronic platforms and research laboratories.

The National Law of Education (2011) requires the faculty management to be responsible for organisation of teaching at Bachelor and Master level. The content of these programme offerings are the responsibility of departments. Teaching assignments, student examinations and course evaluations are organised and followed up by the deans. Study programmes are organised at department level and approved by the faculty board before the Senate takes the final decision. There seems to be good cooperation between faculties in educational matters, but it appears to be different in research, since the faculty of theory seems to be the most productive faculty in terms of articles, books, and journals.

#### *Overall view on the university's governance and institutional decision-making*

The Strategic Plan, is designed to "assure the optimal functioning of the three significant fields of activity: teaching, scientific research/artistic creation, and the involvement of the institution in the social, economic and cultural life of the region" (Additional material, Annex 2, p.2).

The Strategic Plan covers objectives for most activities in AMGD, teaching, research and artistic activities in the coming years. It is mainly a description of objectives related to future activities in these areas. An Action Plan related to the Strategic Plan is missing. Therefore the team recommends AMGD to revise and update the Strategic Plan for a longer period, for instance five years, develop and relate an action plan including milestones for important activities, even if the frequent changes of the legal framework pose challenges in this process.





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The approved Strategic Plan is under implementation at AMGD. The Team's opinion is that the Strategic Plan needs to be linked to the Action Plan and financial resources as well as a decentralised decision-making process. The Team recommends AMGD to develop and implement an integrated decentralized management system.



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### 3. Teaching and learning

The *Faculty of Music Performance* offers three four-year fulltime (240 credits) accredited programmes (ARACIS notice no. 6689/9.07.2009) on undergraduate level (instruments, singing, arts) and three two-year fulltime (120 credits) Master programmes (instruments, singing and arts).

The *Faculty of Theory* offers four four-year fulltime (240 credits) accredited programmes (ARACIS notice no. 6689/9.07.2009) on undergraduate level (composition, musicology, conducting and pedagogy) and two two-year fulltime (120 credits) Master programmes (music composition, musicology, conducting and music pedagogy).

*Piatra Neamţ Branch* (extensions of the faculties of music performance and theory) offers two four-year fulltime (240 credits) accredited programmes (ARACIS notice no. 285/15.01.2010) (music performance instruments and singing); and one three years fulltime (180 credits) accredited programme (ARACIS notice no. 285/15.01.2010) on undergraduate level.

*The Autonomous Department for Continuous Education and Distance Learning (D.E.C.I.D.)* Distance education offers four fee-based undergraduate programmes of study that have the same curricula as those offered by the similar, accredited, full-time programmes (a) music pedagogy, three years (180 credits) accredited programme (ARACIS notice No. 6731/09.07.2009); (b) music performance instruments singing, four-year programme (240 credits) accredited programme (Ministerial Order No. 5483/01.10.2011); (c) musical performing arts, four years (240 credits), however, in discontinuation (SER 2012, p. 19).

#### *(a) Undergraduate level*

Students whom the team met are proud of their Alma Mater. For them, AMG D is a brand name in the same class as the Bucharest Music University. All students seemed satisfied with their choice of programme as well as the teaching. All programmes are evaluated by the students twice a year. The response rate to students' questionnaires is 80%.

All faculties had entrance examinations with set criteria. Students applying to the Department for Continuous Education and Distance Learning programmes need a diploma from upper secondary level. Academics at the faculty of theory told the team that distance students performed better than the regular students in theoretical examinations, probably due to greater experience with theoretical issues and stronger motivation to succeed in their studies. The entrance examination differs between the regular students and the distance students. The team was told that both groups sit written entrance examinations; the regular students have a performance examination also included in their entrance examination, which distance students do not have. Final examinations are the same for both groups. However, according to the



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teachers at faculty of theory, the dropout rate among the distance-learning students is 30%. This is a relatively high figure compared to under 10, 5%, which was the results of undergraduate studies at the two faculties 2011/2012 (Additional material, 2013, Appendix 4).

According to the undergraduate students the learning resources seem to be sufficient at the AMGD's library. However, according to the students whom the team met there are too few rehearsal rooms available in AMGD, and accommodation fails to cover the students' needs.

#### *(b) Master level*

The foreign students whom the team met were very satisfied with their Master studies. They were told before starting their studies that they would have one year of language study before they started the Master programme, which allows them to take full advantage of the teaching and they appeared to be satisfied with this arrangement. Therefore, the team recommends AMGD to continue to offer foreign students language courses in the Romanian language.

#### *(c) PhD-level.*

The doctoral school has a board consisting of heads from each department, who are involved in the doctoral programme for PhD-students and a director.

The PhD students whom the team met seemed satisfied with their studies and a few of them worked as musicians in Cluj on a non-permanent basis or as assistant teachers. Students seem to find jobs after graduation if not in their specific field in others.

#### *(d) Teaching staff*

AMGD has a devoted teaching staff appreciated by the students. The teachers take on the workload according to the national law of education and on top of that they offer their students extra practice hours. They seem to have ambitions on behalf of their students, even beyond their examinations.

Teachers are assessed each year by the AMGD management (Additional material, 2013, Appendix 12d, p. 10). Teachers' research activities have a relatively strong impact on this evaluation as well as on their salaries. However, the team noted that non-permanent teachers, while constituting 40% of the teaching staff, were not included in this evaluation process. The Team recommends AMGD to include non-permanent teachers in the yearly evaluation of all teachers.

In addition, the team learnt that in AMGD students evaluate teaching and teachers twice a year. However, according to some of the students, they are missing feedback from these results from these surveys. Even some of the teachers pointed out for the Team that they were missing results of these surveys. The team recommends AMGD to offer students and teachers systematic feedback on students' evaluations regarding courses and education programmes.



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## 4. Research

According to SER (p. 17), there are three aspects to research activities at AMGD: 1. The “Sigismund Toduță” doctoral school; 2. Research related structures (musicology-composition-performance); 3. Research activities (SER, 2012, p.20).

*The “Sigismund Toduță” Doctoral School* offers three-year doctoral programmes of two types in the area of "arts", and the field of “music”. PhD students choose among the research areas such as musicology, ethnomusicology, historiography, theory, musical aesthetics, and musical theatre; and for becoming professional, PhD students choose among musical composition, opera direction, choreographical direction, music interpretation stylistics (SER, 2012, p. 20). The guidance committees are made up of ten members of the teaching staff, according to the Dean’s Council. Currently, after the latest changes in the National Law of Education (2011), AMGD can expand the number of PhD students. The activities of *the research related structures* (musicology-composition-performance) are on-going activities carried out in several branches, namely: a centre of excellence, a publishing house, three scientific journals, 13 laboratories, 20 established musical ensembles, and organisation of a concert season (SER, 2012, p. 20). *Research activities* are conducted at department level mostly as individual research projects (SER, 2012, p. 21).

One of the team’s questions was: How do academics at AMGD define “research”? What is research at AMGD? The answers were varied, leading to a blurred definition of scientific research at AMGD. There is no uniform concept of research. The academics whom the team met in musicology explained the various forms of research in AMGD. “Artistic performance/activity” is another research area which extends over a range of activities such as concerts, opera performances, activities related to composition/performance, teaching, student’s artistic practice, and application of musicological research and artistic management. These activities are open to partnerships with artistic performance institutions or specialised universities, music companies, associations and schools.

The team learnt that there are ambitious staff members who want to build a career in the academy and who are eager to do research. However, it was told that while national research funds and EU’s Structural Funds exist, getting applications approved is difficult. While, recognising the challenges, the team recommends AMGD to appoint a central position for supporting researchers in getting access to research information, application opportunities and international research funds.



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## 5. Service to society

AMGD has developed a strong national and European identity and reputation. In order to keep this status as a cultural institution, AMGD teachers regularly contact the schools in the region (compulsory and upper secondary schools), to inform them about programmes at AMGD and about future possibilities to go to AMGD for higher education. According to the teachers at AMGD, this is a very important recruiting activity, particularly from the perspective of future demographic changes.

AMGD offers to the city of Cluj: “concerts and recitals, events, contests for the promotion and consecration of the musical creation and performance, music education through educational concerts” (SER 2012, p. 7). AMGD also has its own performance venues (a concert hall, a Baroque hall with an historic organ) and an outstanding inventory of musical instruments.

According to the stakeholders the team met, there is a very good relationship between AMGD and the different cultural and music institutions in Cluj Napoca. There are also possibilities offered to the students to practice with various music groups and orchestras as well as theatre performances. AMGD provide highly qualified students to the cultural institutions in Cluj and in the region.

The team recommends AMGD to continue these external activities and offers to society and not least for the sake of students who constantly need practice.



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## 6. Quality Culture

There is a quality system at AGDM based on a quality policy defined in the Quality Management System, the Quality Manual and the Quality Standards (SER 2012, p. 6).

The accreditation of all programmes is conducted by ARACIS and every programme has to be reaccredited every five years. The accreditation is based on thresholds, half of which concern teaching (curriculum, staff, infrastructure, student feedback) and half research. If the programme does not pass the accreditation, it is closed.

The students met by the team informed the team that teaching was evaluated with surveys/questionnaires, twice a year, as discussed in section 3. The lack of information to the students and teacher as to the results of these surveys and the fact that the evaluations only cover permanent staff members have equally been discussed in section 3.

In addition, there are tools used in a Quality Assurance System (Additional material, Annex 12 d, page 4) and there is a Quality Manual (Additional material, Annex 12 d), which indicate to the Team that a quality culture in AMGD is being developed. So to promote the sense ownership for quality culture among the university community, the team recommends the AMGD to train and support teachers in the assessment of students as well in the evaluation of their own teaching, i.e., so they can implement an internal quality assurance system and quality audits according to the Quality Manual (Additional material, 2013, 12 d).



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## 7. Internationalisation

AMGD aims to be recognised as a prestigious institution on the European music scene. According to the SER, “AMGD’s international relations are reflected mainly in the establishment of partnerships, the promotion of student, teacher and administrative staff mobility (within the framework of programmes like Erasmus and Fulbright), the education of foreign students. AMGD has established partnerships with 42 institutions” (SER 2012, p. 16).

The academics the team met confirmed that the internationalisation of AGDM is important. According to the teachers, mobility among the academics seems to be relatively frequent. But this mobility seems to be limited to the teachers often attend conferences, the team was told. A few academics, who are involved in cross-border or international projects, have better possibilities for mobility. Due to the relatively low level and legal restrictions of teachers’ salaries, it is not possible to invite foreign teachers or to compete with the major music academies in Europe. So far, AMGD has attracted famous artists and teachers for their “summer schools” and “master classes”. Currently, AMGD has one foreign teacher.

Furthermore, there are very few foreign students in undergraduate education, while AMGD has plans to intensify the recruitment of students from outside Romania. Nevertheless, the team did meet foreign Master students from Moldavia, Bulgaria, China, Singapore, India and Mexico.

The team recommends AMGD to develop a systematic exchange and mobility scheme for AMGD’s students in the three cycles and teachers and with this aim in mind utilise fully the possibilities offered by the European mobility programmes, i.e. the Erasmus Programme.





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## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

*Our recommendations concern:*

### 1. Institutional management and decision-making

- revise and update the Strategic Plan for a longer period, five years for example, develop and relate an action plan including milestones for important activities, even if the frequent changes of the legal framework are obstacles in this process;
- implement the pragmatic institutional management system further, in which permanent staff fulfils several different functions;
- organise an internet support structure covering all parts of the AMGĐ's organisation in order to follow up student groups, examinations results and all activities at AMGĐ and not to wait until the new building will be finished in about four years.

### 2. Teaching and learning

- give students and teachers systematic feedback on students' evaluations of courses and education programmes
- include the non-permanent teachers in the yearly assessment process of teachers;
- continue to offer foreign students language courses in the Romanian language

### 3. Research

- appoint a central position for supporting researchers in getting access to research information, application opportunities and international research funds;

### 4. Service to society

- continue the external activities and offers of concerts and recitals, events, contests for the promotion and consecration of the musical creation and performance and music education through educational concerts not least for the sake of students who constantly need practice;

### 5. Quality Culture

- train and support teachers in evaluations of students as well in evaluation of their own teaching, i.e., so they can implement an internal quality assurance system and quality audits according to the Quality Manual.



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## 6. Internationalisation

- develop a systematic exchange and mobility scheme for AMGD's students and teachers, with the aim to fully utilize the possibilities offered by the European mobility programmes, i.e., Erasmus programme.

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