

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN POLAND: THE CULTURE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

As a result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the world is experiencing one of the largest migrations of refugees to Europe and other countries friendly to Ukraine. This issue requires joint efforts to solve the problems with the adaptation and assistance to refugees that have arisen. According to statistics, more than 12 million Ukrainians left Ukraine. Such data were reported for Forbes by the director of the Institute of Demography and Social Research, Ella Libanova (Libanova, 2023). At least 2 million refugees have settled in Poland, as the Polish independent newspaper OKO.press. States (Pacewicz, 2023). Thus, in terms of the number of accepted refugees, Poland is ranked first among other countries.

One of the most significant migration crises since February 24, 2022, has raised several large-scale issues that require extraordinary integration efforts. A working model which enabled to avoidance of large-scale upheavals associated with refugees from Ukraine was engaged. In this case, the work model helped to ensure the physical and safe protection of people in the short term. This, in turn, allowed them to save lives, health, and the ability to resolve issues of a strategic nature. This approach implies the participation of state and supranational institutions, a voluntary association of citizens whose activities are coordinated at all levels. Such a high degree of coordination enabled to solve of the problems of the basic needs of refugees effectively in the shortest possible time (Maslow, 2023), which has borne fruit, as once safe and supported by institutions of various levels, the refugees were able to leave the protectorate of the state and independently accept challenges of their new social and cultural reality.

Therefore, the main objective of this article is to analyze the daily life culture of Ukrainian refugees as the leading indicator of a degree of inclusion in the host community. As a result of studying the field sources for the analysis of everyday life, I distinguished two areas as the most informative. The first area is social life, which plays a vital role in the life of refugees, as it provides them with the opportunity to socialize and integrate into a new culture and society. For many refugees, public life is the only source of information about rights and options in their new host country. Participation in public life provides refugees with opportunities to establish contact with residents and other refugees, as well as participate in various activities and social groups. The second is the service sector, a crucial element for adapting refugees to a new coun-

try. For instance, education provides an opportunity to learn the language, learn the local culture and receive vocational training for a different job search. Another critical issue is mental health and support services, which help refugees overcome the trauma of moving and losing their homes. Medical services are essential for health care and disease prevention. A good indicator of the adaptation of refugees, their psychological balance, is represented by their appeal to the services of the beauty sphere, restaurant business, cultural institutions, etc. The term “everyday life” will be used in the article. This term refers to the sphere of everyday culture, which is responsible for the survival strategy, i.e., physiological needs and the need for security (according to A. Maslow’s pyramid).

Three types of sources were used in the study:

- the first type is a combined online survey, which comprises both qualitative and quantitative research;

The respondents were Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Poland after February 24, 2022. As a result of two anonymous online surveys, 530 people were interviewed.

- the second type is social networks and chats of Ukrainian refugees in Poland; an analysis of chats of Ukrainian refugees in Poland on Facebook and Telegram (more than 30 chats) was conducted:

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Telegram: Legnica-Czat /Legnica-Czat; Nashi liudy  | Szczecin | Szczecin; SZEZEEIN INFORMATSIA / NOVOSTI/ SPLETYNY; Gliwice chat ; Hdynia  Hdansk  Sopot; Cieszyn/Cieszyn dlia vseh; UKRAINTSI V ZOBRZE ; Ukraintsi  v Lublini Lublin Lublin; Ukraintsi v Hdansku | Sopot| Hdyni; Hdansk | Sopot | Hdynia; Hdansk chat; Katowice | Katowice | Chat; Mamy z Ukrainy v Gdansku  Ukraintsi!; Varshava CHAT_Ukraintsi; Vrotslav_volonteriy Chat;  Ukraintsi! Katowice, Glywitce ; Foreign Front. Darujemy cieplo obrońcom Ukrainy; Susidka-podruzhaika; Nashi mamy I babushki v Krakowi; Mamochki Wroclaw?; Mamy/Bemovo/Varshava; Ukraintsi! Varshava Chat Ukraintsi; Podslushano Liublin; Ukraintsi! Varshava Chat Ukraintsi;

Facebook: Ukraintsi v Varshavi; Ukraintsi v Katovitse / Ukrańcy w Katowicach; Ukraintsi v Polschi (Związek ukraińców w Polsce) Ukraintsi v Tarnovi; Medytsyna v Polschi. Likari Ukrainy v Polschi. Porady. Konsultatsii ; #Ukraintsi v Vroslavi/#WROCLAW; MamyWawy MamochkiVarshvy, MamochkiVrotslova ; Zelena Hura / Zielona Góra / Ukraintsi Polsha / Vzajemodopomoha/ Informatsii; POLSHA TA UKRAINTSI ; Ukraintsi v Krakovi; Ukraintsi Liublina, Zelena Hura — Dlya Ukraintsi; Elenia Hura Ukraintsi Jelenia Góra Ukraincy;

— the third type is the results of the research by various scientific institutions and industry centers, i.e., the Polish edition OKO.press, the analytical center Globsec, the international employment company Gremi Personal, the Institute of Public Affairs (Warsaw), the Kiev company Socis-Gallup International; research agency Info Sapiens; a research company that conducts research on markets and brands, target audiences, advertising campaigns and media channels Ipsos; Barometer research center of the Polish job market; online platform Gradus, etc.

The task of the study, as well as its sources, determined the choice of a specific research strategy. In this case, the most effective strategy is proposed by the English sociologist E. Giddens — triangulation. Theoretical triangulation involves choosing three theoretical approaches to meet the objective. In this study, the first approach is the theory of everyday life, which enables the comprehension of the condition of life of refugees here and now, in relation to the life of Poles in the context of their encounter with refugees (Schutz A., 2004). The second approach is the social construction of reality, which enables understanding of how refugees and Poles interact and perceive each other in the social environment (Berger, P., 1966). The third approach is the theory of cognitive dissonance, which makes it possible to analyze the discrepancy between the past experience of Ukrainian refugees in everyday culture and the present situation of their life in Poland (Festinger L., 1999).

The research strategy is applied by means of the following methods:

- quantitative and qualitative research method: anonymous online survey;
- a qualitative research method, thanks to which an analysis of various social groups and chats of Ukrainian refugees in Poland (more than 30) was carried out according to these research blocks;
- a method of reviewing other studies, with the help of which the results of many studies on the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in Poland were analyzed;
- a method of comparative analysis, with the help of which a comparison of the results of various research sources based on certain parameters was made: topic, object, data and results collection and analysis methods.

The complex of these methods makes it possible to consider the daily life of Ukrainian refugees as an area of meeting important needs, whereas the public life is regarded as an area of communication with Poles and Ukrainians. The service sector in this case serves as a practical tool to explain which services are most important for refugees in their daily lives, as well as how communication is built in the service sector with Poles and Ukrainians.

The form of communication with neighbors is an essential part of social life. It enables Ukrainian refugees to interact with each other, Poles, exchange information, express their thoughts and feelings and solve problems that may arise in society. This form of communication shows the degree of adaptation of refugees in a new place and makes it possible to understand the local culture faster.

The results of an online survey showed that only 40% of respondents feel comfortable in communication with their neighbors. It is important that the neighbors are not chosen, so it is also a serious indicator of adaptation into the environment. Considering the results of our survey, we can say that the reluctance to communicate with neighbors (13%) and the chosen neutral relationship (44%) indicate a lack of communication among neighbors and the isolation of respondents. This state of affairs is not beneficial to adaptation processes.

The chat analysis complements the results of the survey in awareness of how Ukrainian refugees integrate into Polish society by examining their communications with local residents and other refugees. This type of research also helps to identify how successfully refugees learn the Polish language and how they adapt to local norms of behavior and cultural peculiarities. Another aspect of such a study is the identification of problems and challenges that refugees face when adapting to a new country, which helps the state and social organizations in developing policies and programs aimed at improving the integration process.

When analyzing chats, we observe that the topic of communication with neighbors is closely intertwined with the topic of awareness of one's place in society, one's legal rights. The context of the study reveals how the stereotypes associated with two different ethnic groups manifest during conflict situations between them.

The given analysis illustrates the relationship between intergroup stereotypes and the behavior of conflict participants in various situations. The content analysis studying the typical comments of Ukrainian refugees regarding their interaction with neighbors was carried out. The following types of comments have been identified:

Nickname: Alina (Telegram group Schetscen Govorilka 14.42 14.01.2023):

"I don't talk boldly with my neighbors, I had situations where I was just slandered, in the end, I replied to him if I were a Pole, he wouldn't say a word to me, so then he kept silent and left, and then you think. Just don't humiliate yourself, don't like it, let them write a statement"

Nickname: Svitlana (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 00.27 30.10.2022):

"What do you mean you can't make noise? I am clarifying this for myself, I just wonder. My neighbors used to come when we were watching TV or just eating in the kitchen and talking (we didn't talk loudly, and the TV worked regularly). At first, I listened to them and tried to come to an agreement, I even didn't turn on the TV after 10 pm, but when she told me that she was having trouble with the shower and bon, sorry, the drain tank works, then I couldn't resist and told her everything I was having on my mind. The neighbors are Poles, but they don't come anymore and we live a normal life (we watch TV, my son eats whenever he wants, we also go to the shower and toilet when necessary)."

Nickname: Kateryna (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 00.36 30.10.2022):

"Girls, you need to go and talk. The guy went down to the neighbors (Poles) several times, asked normally, but only when he said that he would call the police, only then they calmed down."

This type of comment reflects the need to protect one's personal rights and boundaries from violations. In scientific language, we can say that this type of conflict is associated with the manifestation of a violation of the rights to privacy and inviolability of personal life, and leads to increased levels of stress, anxiety and a decrease in the quality of life.

Nickname: Nataliia (Telegram group Ukrainci! Warszawa CHAT Ukrainci 00.27 11.12.2022):

"I lived with the Poles for 4 months, and managed to get to know almost all their neighbors and friends. I bet, it's more about greed here. Saving is in itself, but there is also a lot of greed..."

Nickname: Anna Listratenko (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 10.02 05.12.2022):

"We've got an entrance

Once I felt bad, started to choke

Barefoot I started knocking on the neighbors (adequately, not kicking the door) it was 22:00, to be honest

Nobody opened

Not a floor below, not on my floor

All Poles and each are for themselves"

An analysis of typical comments in which refugees express a negative attitude towards the host country indicates dissatisfaction and disappointment in the process of interaction. Such

comments may be due to various reasons such as lack of support, culture shock, discrimination and rights violations.

Nickname: Nick Skopych (Telegram group Vrotslav_volonter Chat14.18 10.05.2022):

“Good day. We are a family from Ukraine. Tell me who can help legally and with the police. We have a language barrier. The problem: the Polish neighbor creates noise, not the owner (rents it). After requests, he does not respond, after the police, he started threatening, cursing at Ukraine from his apartment, sticking stickers on my door, making gestures into the intercom camera. It is necessary to find a legal solution, preferably to evict. The owner does not want to influence it very much. Thanks”

This type of comment reflects the negative experience of interaction with neighbors associated with national identity. In scientific language, we can say that this type of conflict is associated with the manifestation of ethnic discrimination and leads to social exclusion, increased levels of stress and a decrease in the quality of life.

The study revealed that Ukrainians experience problems with adaptation, which is reflected in the interaction with local residents. Evaluations of each other in conflict situations are based on already functioning stereotypes, often with a negative connotation.

The construction and genesis of the stereotypes of Poles about Ukrainians and Ukrainians about Poles can be found in various scientific and sectoral studies. The Institute of Public Affairs (Warsaw), in cooperation with the Kyiv company Socis-Gallup International, noted back in 2001 that “since 1993, in the ratings of Poles’ sympathy for other peoples, Ukrainians occupy a more or less stable position — at the very bottom, below are only gypsies and Romanians. It is not surprising, because 50% of Poles have negative associations with Ukraine, and 38% have indifference. Half of the Poles advocate the introduction of visas for Ukrainians (against about 20%), and only 23% are fully prepared to recognize the modern Polish-Ukrainian border (52% are “rather” ready to recognize)” (Paliv, 2001).

It should also be noted that the general cultural perception of the Poles was also negative on the part of the Ukrainians, as evidenced by the news of 2021 regarding conflict situations not only at the level of housemates, but the stereotypical perception of peoples by each other. For example, “Poles in Ukraine are discriminated regarding freedom of religion, access to education in their native language and freedom of speech,” said the Deputy Minister during a meeting of the Commission for Relations with Poles Abroad” (Yermolov, 2021).

Thus, throughout history, stereotypes in the relationship between Poland and Ukraine were formed, through the prism of which the culture of both peoples was perceived. Labor migration of Ukrainians to Poland, which can be observed for several decades, has led to some shift in

these stereotypes and the formation of new ones, which did not always contribute to mutual communication.

A survey by the research agency Info Sapiens showed that after the start of a full-scale war, more than 73% of Ukrainians changed their opinion about the Polish people for the better (Prihodko, 2022).

A quantitative survey of my research conducted in August 2022 showed a uniform attitude of Poles towards Ukrainians and vice versa: 50% noted a friendly attitude, about 50% not friendly, not hostile.

Various recent quantitative studies only emphasize this trend of a high percentage of perception of each other: Ukrainians are perceived by Poles: Ipsos for the Polish edition of OKO.press showed 70% (Theus, 2022), Globsec analytical center 85% (Szicherle, Kazaz, Center for Democracy&Resilience, 2022); Ukrainians of Poles: Info Sapiens Research Agency commissioned by the Polish Center for Dialogue named after Juliusz Meroshevsky 83% (Prihodko, 2022), “Polish Labor Market Barometer” 88% (Bytniewska, 2023), Gradus online platform and others.

This latter results in the change in the attitude of Poles and Ukrainians towards each other, most often in a positive way. This is confirmed by studies using versions of the questionnaire for a comprehensive study of acculturation, developed by D. Berry. These surveys often comprise a question of how a representative of another culture would be perceived as a neighbor. The results of current polls are rather high. For example, an article by Maria Babińska, Michał Bilewicz, Paulina Górka, Sabina Toruńczyk-Ruiz, Michał Wypych in the journal *Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences* shows 95% of Poles who are ready to see Ukrainians as neighbors (Babińska, Bilewicz, Górka, Toruńczyk-Ruiz, 2022). We observe the same trend in the attitude of Ukrainians towards Poles.

However, important facts within a deeper study of the ways of adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in the service sector, were discovered. It should be noted that the service sector is one of the backbones of the life of immigrants and refugees. Active consumption of various services indicates that the refugee’s life is becoming like or similar to life at home. According to the survey results, 97% of respondents indicated that they use the services of supermarkets, 81% use the services of banks and use transport, 66% use the services of doctors, about 60% use educational services. If these are vital positions in life, then the use of the beauty sphere (31%), the restaurant business (38%) are already indicators of the desire to make their life more comfortable and familiar.

However, according to the results of my survey, the Ukrainian service sector remains a priority for Ukrainian refugees: medicine (57%), beauty sphere (24%) and other types of servic-

es (21%). The degree of trust in Ukrainian specialists remains very high (50% in the field of medicine, 42% in the beauty sphere, and 11% in education). The main indicators of trust to these specialists are the absence of a language barrier (27%), the level of quality (21%), and professionalism (20%).

In the Polish service sector, only the transport sector turned out to be a priority for refugees from Ukraine. Its advantage in comparison with the Ukrainian one was noted by 45% of respondents.

Trust is the basis of interpersonal relationships and a factor influencing the motivation for entering a new social and cultural space. However, these results indicate that Ukrainians do not trust Polish specialists in areas of life that are important to them. As you can see, the language barrier does not play the most important role in this (only 27% of respondents indicated the importance of this indicator), the rest of the answers indicate the importance of such indicators as quality, professionalism, degree of trust, customer focus, etc. The latter are the qualities that they attribute to Ukrainian specialists.

The data obtained from the online survey is confirmed by the results of the analysis of chats of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. The following types of comments have been identified:

Comments related to the availability of medical care in Poland, the experience of contacting medical institutions, the quality of medical care, health problems associated with moving and adapting to a new country.

Nickname: Svitlana (Telegram group UKRAINTSI V ZABZHE 09.27 24.11.2022):

“Good morning. Has anybody visited an appointment with ENT for adults? I’ve been to 2 hospitals and there is a queue for 2 months ahead. I am shocked. How are the Poles surviving with such services”.

Nickname: Kseniia (Telegram group UKRAINTSI V ZABZHE 13.50 18.08.2022):

“I can’t say anything bad about their hospitals and service. Everything is very good. I speak the language, I was at the hospital and at doctors’ appointments (myself and with the child), everything was fine”

Nickname: Oliia Komarnytska (Telegram group UKRAINTSI V ZABZHE 14.02 18.08.2022):

“You are lucky indeed. My child has already been prescribed an antibiotic three times here without tests and even without special indications. And I was refused even to be examined in the hospital with a fever and angina, the young doctor wanted me to speak Polish (and unfortunately I still can’t, I’m using a translator on my phone).

I am very grateful to the Poles, they do everything possible and impossible for us, but there is a trouble with medicine...”

Nickname: Annushka (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 23.23 25.12.2022):

“Bureaucracy here is like medicine, assbackwards”

Comments on language issues may be another important type of comment from Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Many of them may encounter a language barrier when communicating with the local population, obtaining medical care, looking for work and in other situations. This leads to difficulties in adaptation, isolation. Comments on language adaptation may indicate the need to provide additional language courses or other forms of support for Ukrainian refugees in Poland so that they can better integrate into society and secure decent living conditions.

Nickname: Valentina Morozova (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 15.15 15.01.2023):

“Please let me know if there are Ukrainian/Russian speaking doctors there? Is it possible to make an appointment in a non-Polish language?”

Nickname: Valeria (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 12.11 04.01.2023):

“By the way, yesterday we’ve got to a doctor who was trying to speak Russian when at first I started blunting in Polish, so I can write to her and go to her, please. And then our Dzyubaty was busy until Thursday. Well-advised”

Nickname: Daria (Telegram group Hdansk | Sopot | Hdynia 21.44 17.12.2022):

“Good evening. Please tell me where to go if a person’s temperature started to rise since yesterday (currently 39 degrees). Is there someone who speaks Ukrainian/English in the emergency room or a private doctor who can be called now. District — Osowa. Thank you in advance.”

Comments from Ukrainian refugees in Poland mentioning the best quality of service from Ukrainian specialists:

Nickname: AZ (Telegram group Hdansk | Sopot | Hdynia 18.00 11.12.2022):

“Hello!

Could you advise a good Ukrainian cosmetologist”

Nickname: Yekaterina (Telegram group Hdansk | Sopot | Hdynia 10.55 29.01.2023):

“Hello!

Can you tell me please salons with Ukrainian hairdressers and cosmetologists preferably”

Nickname: Irina Gulyaeva (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 10.55 03.07.2022):

“Yet at home, the beauty industry is much better and cheaper! The whole service sector is also better — any tasteless coffee or dish has always been remade in Ukraine, there is no ..

The dry-cleaners here had cleaned my jacket so that all the stains remained. For my request to return the money, since it didn’t work out, they were also surprised why as the service had been performed”

Nickname: Svitlana (Telegram group Linblin 10.34 05.07.2022):

“Good afternoon everyone, could you tell me a service center for the repair and maintenance of equipment (phones, tablets, laptops) where our guys work Not at home, but a service center. Thank you”

Comments related to receiving social benefits, as well as problems associated with their insufficiency or delays in payment, as well as social adaptation in a new country.

Nickname: Valeria (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 22.46 03.07.2022):

“Well, payments are better in Poland than in Ukraine. I would really think of”

Nickname: Katerina Katynskaya (Telegram group Mamochki Wroclaw 10.34 17.12.2022):

“The benefits here are really good. 500 PLN when diapers cost PLN 25-40 and 860 UAH when diapers cost 300 UAH. The difference is significant.

Of course, adequate people understand that parents are obliged to support a child, not the state. But our allowances look like a mockery”

Comments on social payments show that they are a significant help for Ukrainian refugees to adapt in Poland. However, recently there have been difficulties in obtaining any social payments and deprivation of payments for a child if the guardian crossed the border with Ukraine.

Nickname: Katerina Katynskaya (Telegram group Ukraintsi v Hdansk | Sopot | Hdynia 12.22 06.03.2023):

“I’ve also reprieved of the status. I was in Ukraine for 4 days in June. In November, I found out that my status was removed. ZUS payments were canceled in January. Now go to work to ZUS.

There is no way they will refund the 500+ payment”

Comments related to the availability and quality of education in Poland, opportunities for refugees to receive education, as well as the search for our specialists in the field of education as tutors.

Nickname: Anna Pokhvalita (Telegram group Robota/Navchannia 16.21 29.12.2022):

“Hello! I am looking for a tutor in Mathematics, Ukrainian school, 8th grade, advanced study. Please recommend a teacher, I will be grateful!”

Nickname: Odarka (Telegram group Ukraintsi v Zabzhe 11.22 17.11.2022):

“Please advise the school. Where to take 1-grade student (where are more Ukrainians?)

These examples from chats clearly demonstrate how Ukrainian refugees entrust the main areas of human life (health, beauty, education) Ukrainian specialists. The same can be said about other areas of service (car wash, cafe service, dry cleaning, office work, etc.) — they are looking for ours”

These research results are supported by research from various sectors and scientific platforms. For example, the Gradus online platform noted that with a very high percentage of positive attitudes towards host countries (including Poland), clear advantages of Ukraine were highlighted: digitalization, less bureaucracy, and lower tariffs (STRANA.UA, 2022).

The result of a survey by the international recruiting agency Gremi Personal showed that Ukrainians in Poland “are in no hurry to seek medical services, and medicine in Ukraine is considered to be of better quality” (Sobora, 2022).

An interesting fact was introduced by the analytical center of the international employment company Gremi Personal. They found that 69.3% of Ukrainians in Poland learn about the events in Ukraine from instant messengers and social media (Telegram, Viber, Facebook, TikTok). Polish media are not of interest to the vast majority of Ukrainians. Citizens of Ukraine remain in the Ukrainian information field, despite the fact that for a long time they are actually outside the international employment company Gremi Personal (Ivanov, 2022).

The research strategy and methods that have been applied in this study have become extremely effective in analyzing the daily culture of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. The identified two most informative spheres of everyday life culture (the public sphere and the service sector) enabled to single out three stages of refugee adaptation. The first stage refers to everyday life, when the initial needs of a person are solved. At this stage, state, non-state structures, the Poles themselves provided effective and meaningful assistance to Ukrainian refugees. This enabled them to survive this stage with the least losses. The second stage is the formation of a model of interaction with other people building communication with the Poles. An analysis of the public sphere showed that refugees are incorporated into public life, but they prefer closed communication in the Ukrainian community. The service industry analysis has demonstrated this

The third stage is the transition of social life into full communication with the host community. However, the identified difficulties in the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees in Poland show that the third stage of the adaptation period is not a priority in their culture of everyday life. This transition may be very slow or not occur at all. A study of refugees who arrived in Poland at different times showed that they invariably go through these stages of adaptation.

Thus, I single out two important processes affecting the adaptation of Ukrainian refugees into the social and cultural space of Poland. *The first process* is the change of stereotypes and prejudices about refugees and the host country, which occurs through awareness and intelligence. This process contributes to a more successful integration of refugees into the new society, as it helps to reduce discrimination and increase the level of social support. The enhancement of awareness and cultural literacy provides the *second process* — diffusion. It is a process of spreading cultural and social elements among different groups of people. In the context of refugee adaptation in Poland, diffusion means the exchange of knowledge, skills and experience between refugees and the host society. This makes it possible to quickly settle into a new society and reduce differences between cultures, and it is easier for the host society to accept refugees into their society. Thus,

change of stereotypes and diffusion are useful strategic features in the context of refugee adaptation in Poland.

The approach applied in this work allows us to proceed with the study and highlight new aspects of the life of Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Based on the results obtained, the main recommendations were formulated for the host country in matters of social, cultural, and economic adaptation of refugees. They have been reflected in “Practical guide for organizations involved in the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Poland” (Dobroier, 2023). In the long term, this experience can be transferred to forms of work with refugees from other countries.

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