



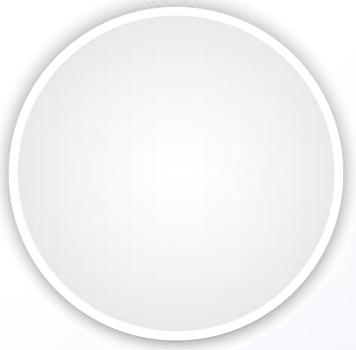
National Institute
of **Public Health**

THE AGE OF ONSET AND QUITTING OF DRUG USE IS RISING

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DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors do not have any conflicts of interest to declare.



BACKGROUND

The phenomenon of increasing prevalence of illicit drug use in older age groups and the increase in the average age at first illicit drug use has been described in foreign literature; therefore, we decided to investigate this phenomenon as well.

The research questions were:

- Is the average age at first illicit drug use among the Slovenian adults changing?
- Is the prevalence of illicit drug use increasing in older age groups?
- Is the age at quitting of illicit drug use changing?



METHODS

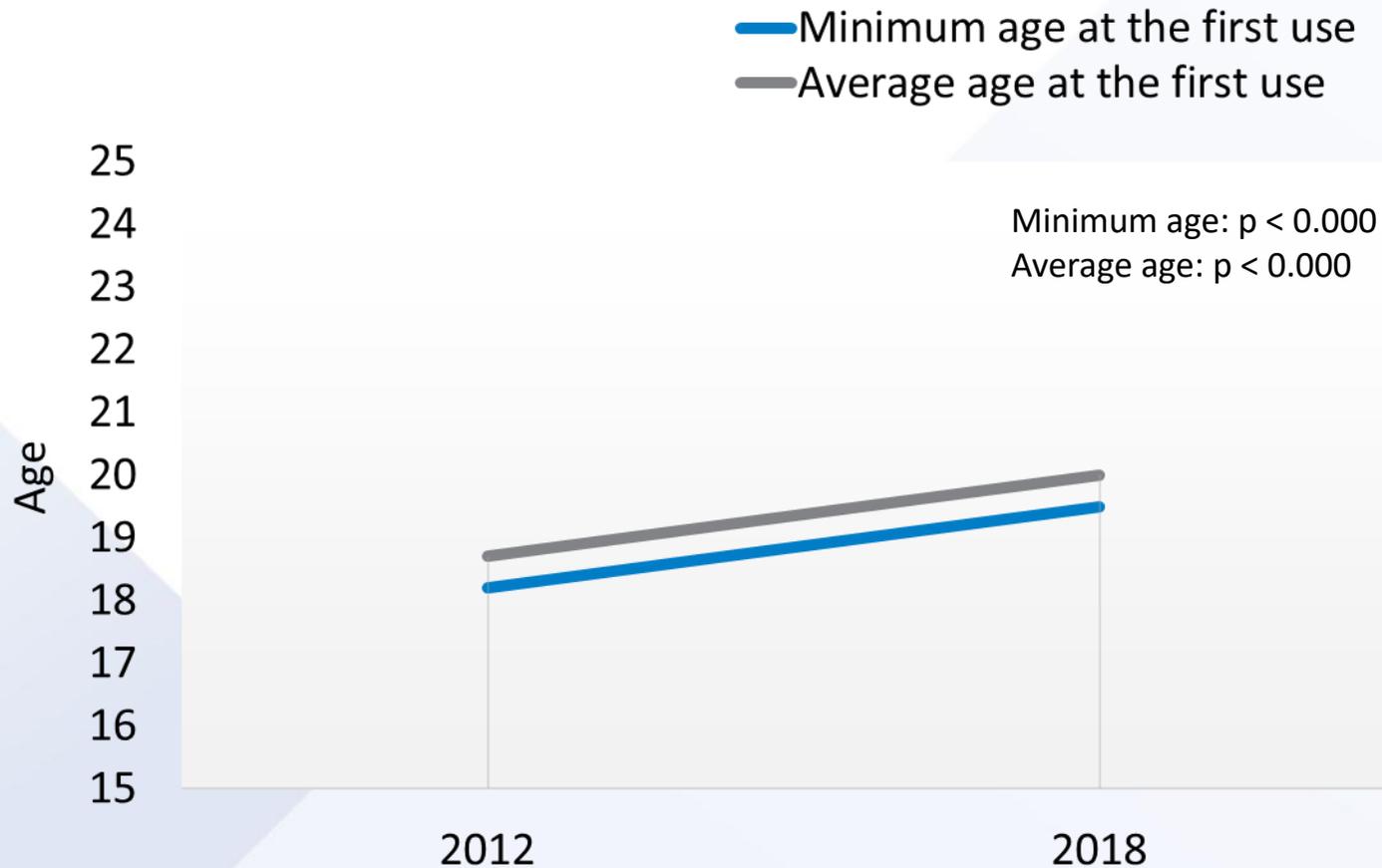
- Data was obtained within the National Surveys on the Use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs conducted in 2012 and 2018.
- A cross-sectional survey on a probability sample of individuals aged between 15 and 64 years living in private households and residing in the Slovenian territory.
- To determine the relationship between the selected variables, p-values are shown, which were calculated based on the chi-square test (χ^2), and to analyze the averages, we used one-way analysis of variance (Oneway Anova), which was used to determine whether the groups are statistically significantly different from each other. We considered the value ≤ 0.05 for the level of the statistical characteristic.

	2012	2018
Sample size	7,514	9,161
Face to face interview	2,155	3,927
Online survey	3,022	5,234
Telephone interview	2,337	/
Response rate	53%	62%
Weighted by	Gender, age categories, educational categories and statistical regions.	Gender, age categories, educational categories and statistical regions.

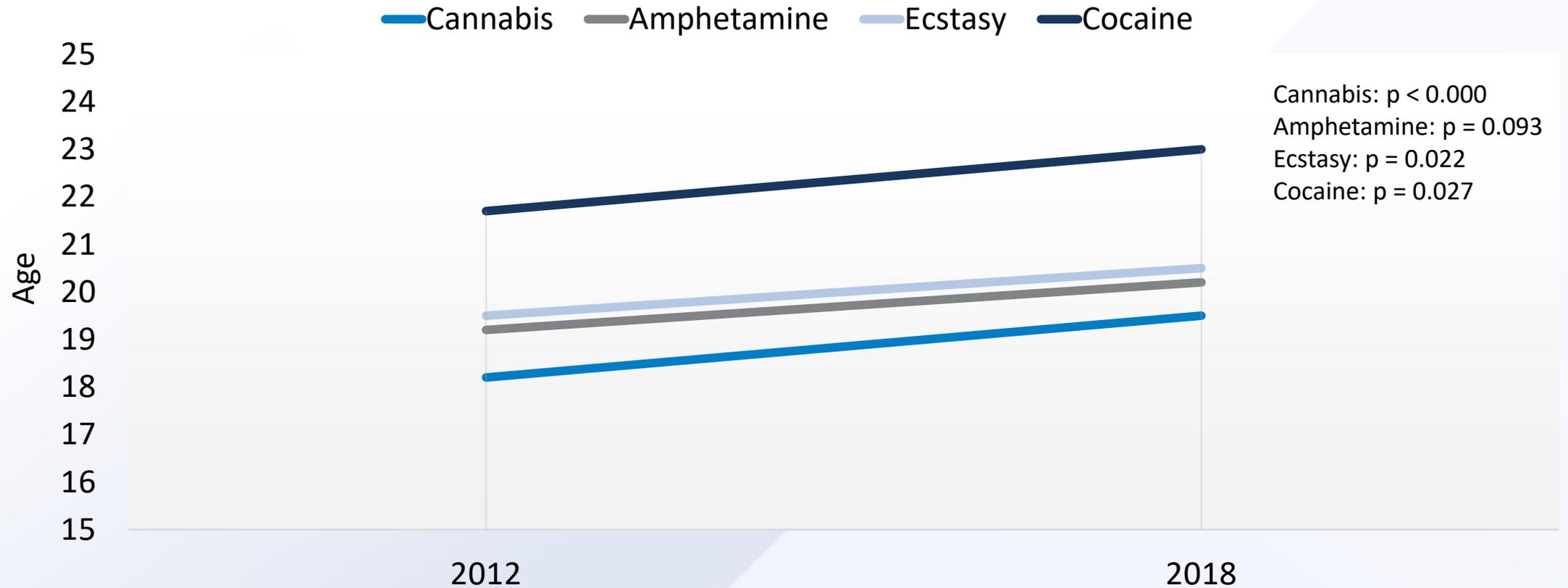


RESULTS

Minimum and average age at first use of at least one drug (cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamine) 2012–2018



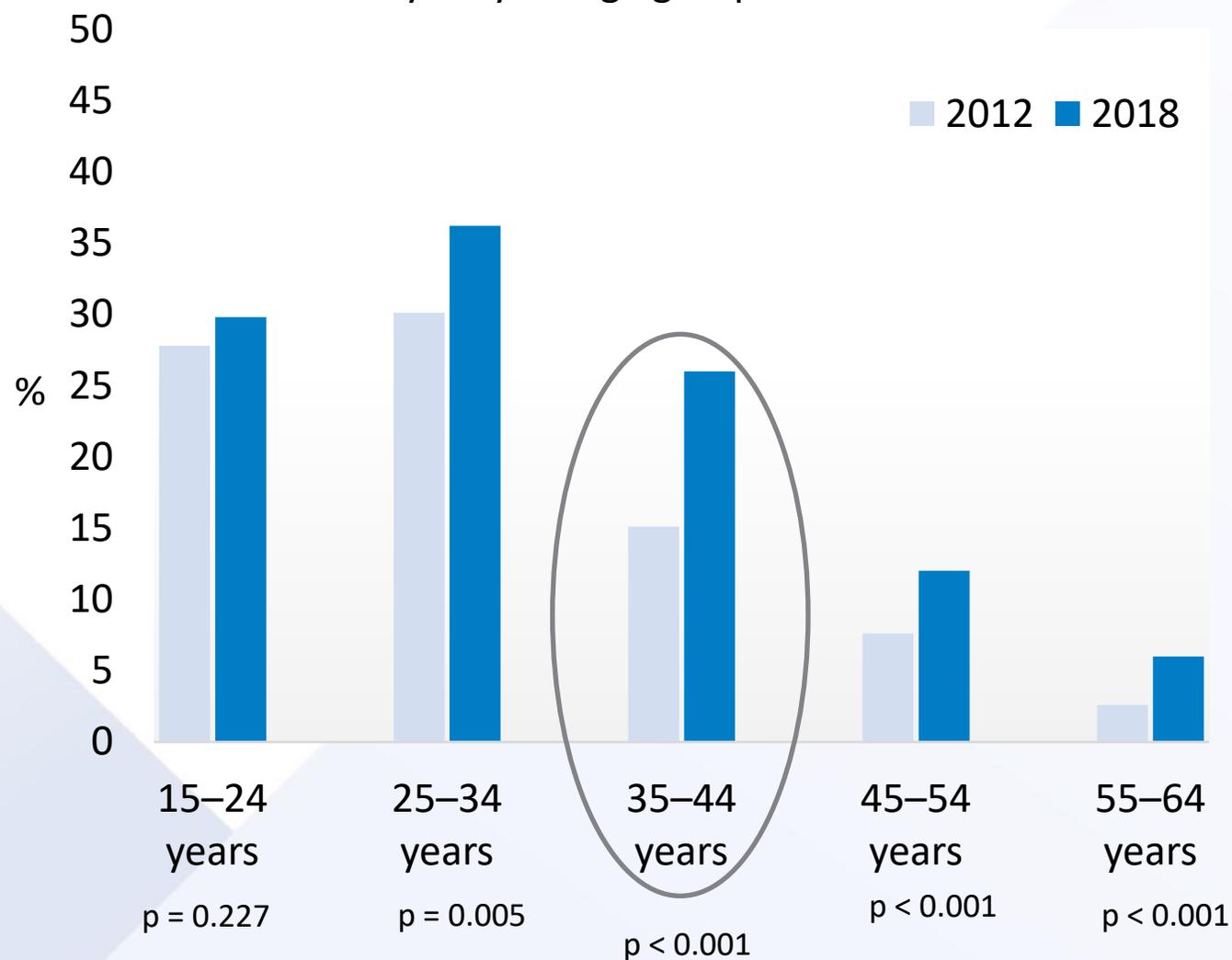
Average age at first use of cannabis, amphetamine, ecstasy, cocaine 2012–2018



Prevalence of illicit drug use in older age groups 2012–2018

- Data for ten-year age groups show that the percentage of lifetime drug use increased significantly between 2012 and 2018 in almost all age groups, with the largest increase in the 35–44 years age group.
- In this group, the percentage of lifetime cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamine use and the percentage of last year cannabis and ecstasy use increased.

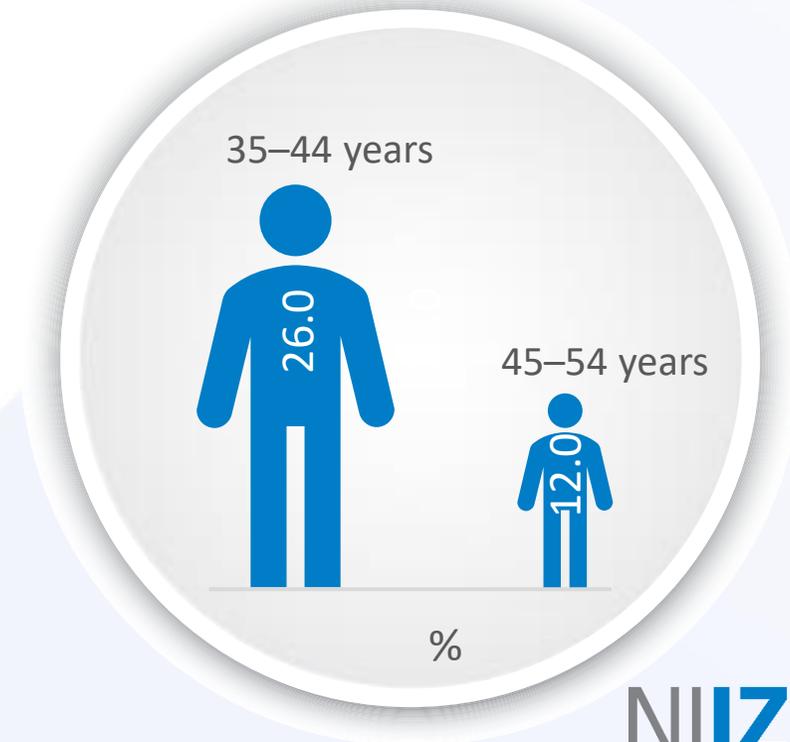
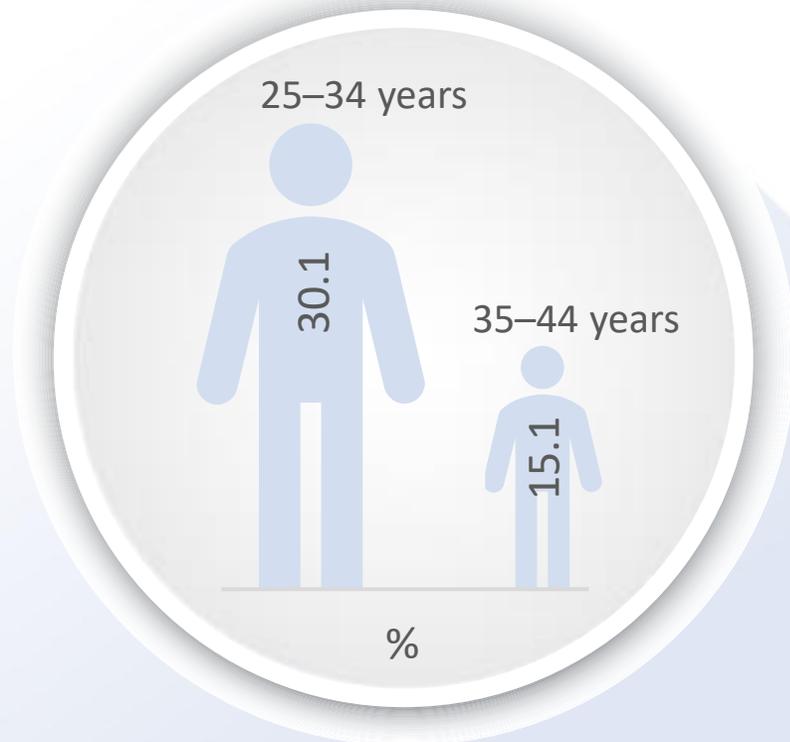
Lifetime drug use among inhabitants of Slovenia by 10-year age groups in 2012 and 2018



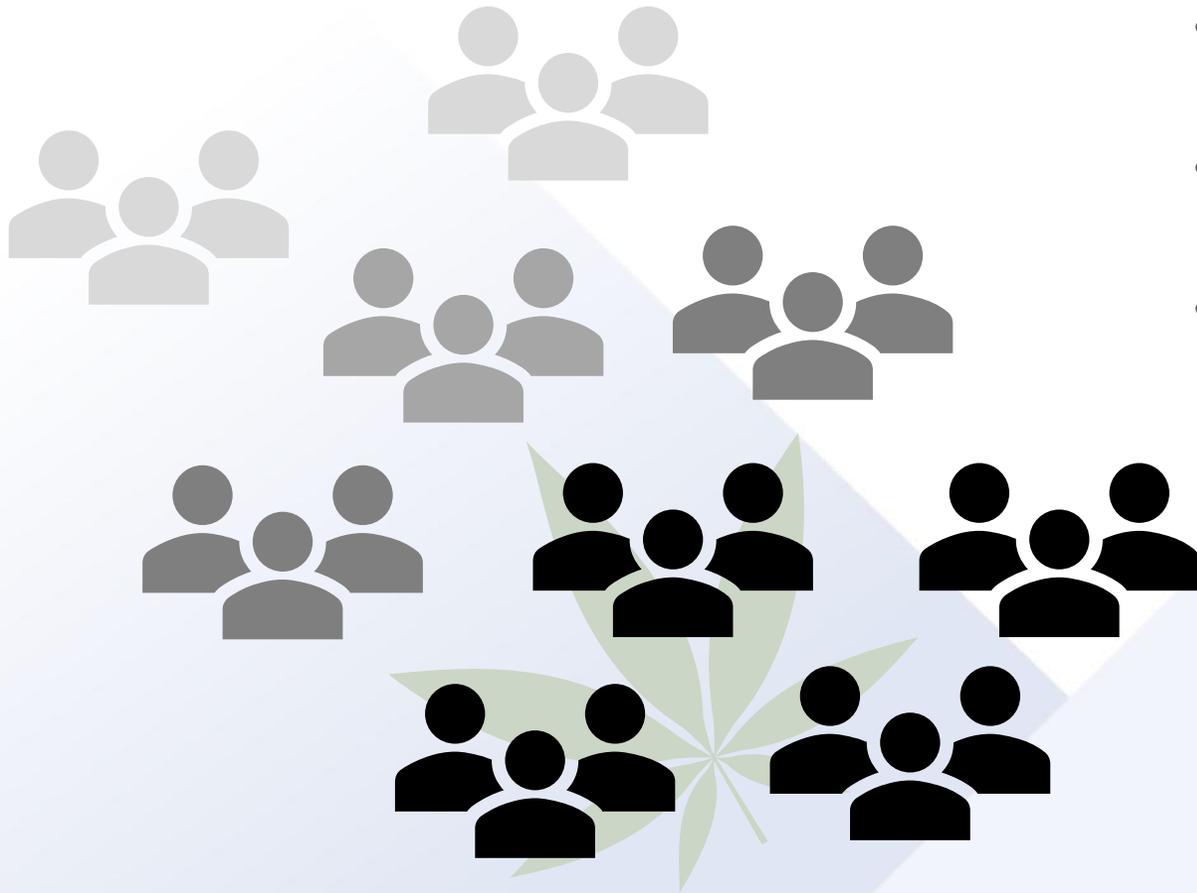
Quitting of illicit drug use 2012–2018

The significant decline in the illicit drugs use:

- was observed in 2012 survey in the period after the age of 34
- in 2018 it shifted to the period after the age of 44



Possible reasons for the increased prevalence of illicit drug use in older age groups and the increased age at quitting of illicit drug use



- Aging of the cohort, in which drug use is most prevalent
- Greater availability of drugs, especially cannabis
- Changes in society's attitude toward cannabis and other drugs



CONCLUSIONS

The findings of our research show that between 2012 and 2018:

- The average age at the first illicit drug use among Slovenian adults increased for 1.4 years;
- The prevalence of illicit drug use in older age groups increased, especially in the 35–44 age group;
- The significant decline in illicit drug use shifted by ten years – from the end of young adulthood to middle age.

This indicates the need for further research into the causes of use in later years and the implementation of preventive programs among young adults and middle-aged people.

**THE USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS, CANNABIS
FOR HEALTH PURPOSES AND ABUSE OF
PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES AMONG
THE POPULATION OF SLOVENIA –
ABSTRACT**



<https://www.nijz.si/en/publikacije/use-illicit-drugs-cannabis-health-purposes-and-abuse-perscription-medicines-among>



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