EUFIC turns 25: Our journey on one page

1995
Foundation of EUFIC

1997
EUFIC.org & Newsletter

2006
First EUFIC publications – on Food Risk Communication and the role of media in nutrition communication

2009
Focus on partnerships - FAO organises workshop in collaboration with EUFIC on food-based dietary guidelines. 14 EU countries participated

2010
Focus on EU-wide outreach - website relaunched in 11 languages, 1st public annual report

2011
Broadening target audiences - including social media - EUFIC extends focus on consumers through social media and with consumer research projects such as CLYMBOL

2015
EUFIC’s first annual conference marking 20 years of EUFIC, EUFIC launches Speaking up for Science Action Network (SuSAN) initiative to counter misreporting of food science in the media.

2016
EUFIC partners in the EU FOOD winning consortium, new visual identity: logo and website

2017
Trust in science in the post-trust era – EU transparency register & framing the issues e.g. by explaining overall hierarchy of scientific evidence

2018
Focus on sustainability and food waste e.g. FAO collaboration on Global Initiative on Food Waste and Loss
Welcome to EUFIC
Food facts for healthy choices

Our topics are

The gap EUFIC was set out to fill was that our vision of a world where people live a healthier life because they know how to stand for the public.

Our science about food and health issues space is not a new challenge. When EUFIC ways to work towards our mission however was to help address this very problem.

Misinformation in the food and health mainstream access to the internet, it has been our compass ever since. Our ambition to stay at the forefront of content for mats and routes to reach people.

Our vision of a world where people live a healthier life because they know how to has been our compass ever since. Our ways to work towards our mission however have evolved driven by our ambition to stay at the forefront of content for mats and routes to reach people.

Our mission
We provide engaging science-based information to inspire and empower healthier and more sustainable food and lifestyle choices.

Health on the Net certification: Impartiality and scientific integrity sit at the heart of our content. The trustworthiness of our content is recognized by the “Health on the Net” initiative.

Our philosophy: At EUFIC we believe in the power of information for young and passionate team of scientists and communicators is driven by the philosophy that by improving citizens’ knowledge around food and health, we can make a real difference to the health of both people and our planet.

Travel with us across 25 years of EUFIC and be awed by the different stages of our journey discussed in a podcast by EUFIC’s Director General, Laura Fernández Celemín. Looking ahead, we are driven to continue making a difference to the health of both people and planet by improving peoples’ understanding of the science around food and health.

At EUFIC, we believe in a world where people live a healthier life because they know how to inspire and empower healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

France Bellisle, Researcher at Nutritional Epidemiology Group, University Paris 13, Vice Chairman, EUFIC Scientific Advisory Board

EUFIC has always been a source of valuable, evidence-based nutritional information presented in a user-friendly manner. In the past year, EUFIC has also shown other virtues: flexibility, adaptiveness, and creativity in response to the challenges created by the pandemic.”

France Bellisle, Researcher at Nutritional Epidemiology Group, University Paris 13, Vice Chairman, EUFIC Scientific Advisory Board

“EUFIC leads the way with its strong, clear and fact-based communication of important messages to consumers around the relationship of diet, food and nutrients with health and well-being. The choice of consumer-friendly formats and the broadening of platforms used like Instagram is helping to widen accessibility to these messages. This has been vital during the coronavirus pandemic, where EUFIC’s response was timely, highly relevant, and of high quality, reaching millions of people across Europe.”

Philip Calder, President, Federation European Nutrition Societies, FENS

“The importance of communicating sound science to the public in an easy-to-understand and trustworthy manner moved into the public spotlight even more. The EUFIC team reacted swiftly creating a Covid-19 information package with reliable information on the relationship between the pandemic and food and tips on staying healthy in quarantine and isolation. The package proved to be a trusted source of information to millions and was mentioned alongside the recommendations of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the WHO in over a hundred media articles across Europe.”

A record number of 20 EU funded projects supporting the EU Bioeconomy Strategy in the context of the European Green Deal, allowed us to promote innovation across the food chain, by ways with the consumer at the heart of our messages or instances of as part of the unique research of the IFFO Food Trust Tracker (we surveyed 20,000 European citizens on their trust in food system actors from farmers to retailers).

Our Instagram account @foodfacts has grown fast and has become a key tool for engaging new audiences in an interactive way thanks to our work across a variety of platforms we now host a social media community of over 100,000 followers all keen to make healthier and more sustainable lifestyle choices. For Food Facts. We are delighted to see a stronger team than ever working tirelessly to inspire and empower healthier lives and a more sustainable food system.

As we celebrate EUFIC’s 25th anniversary and our 25th anniversary, we feel proud to be part of the future and I am delighted to see a stronger team than ever working tirelessly to inspire and empower healthier lives and a more sustainable food system.

We started off with only one person and no Internet, we’ve become a pioneer of food information online. Today we are a team of over 30 highly skilled and passionate experts running such a vast spectrum of collaborations and public engagement efforts to fulfill our mission.

In the face of such a challenging time for us all and thank the team wholeheartedly.

Dr Laura Fernández Celemín, EUFIC Director General

Dear reader,

Since EUFIC’s foundation 25 years ago our vision of a world where people live a healthier life because they know how to has been our driving force. In 2020, with the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic, our role as a science communicator in the food and health sphere became as relevant as ever.

While the media has been key to keeping people safe and informed throughout the pandemic, it also observed a real “infodemic” that created the necessity of communicating sound science to the public in an easy-to-understand and trustworthy manner. The EUFIC team reacted swiftly creating a Covid-19 information package, with reliable information on the relationship between the pandemic and food, and tips on staying healthy in quarantine and isolation. The package proved to be a trusted source of information to millions, mentioned alongside the recommendations of EFSA and the WHO in over a hundred media articles across Europe.

2020 was also a year full of fruitful collaborations and partner support. The sudden change in the way we work has been able to strengthen our institutional partnerships for greater collective impact, including the laying of foundations for a joint EUFIC & FAO Food Systems Summit Dialogue to feed into the preparation of the September 2021 Food Systems Summit.

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Dr Laura Fernández Celemín, EUFIC Director General
If 2020 has taught us anything, it is the importance of technology in our daily life. Despite rising controversies around privacy, hacking, the role of bots in the public debate and fake news, the world continues to embrace the Internet and social media, especially as we adapt to the challenges of COVID-19. This context has seen Instagram become one of the fastest-growing social media platforms, with currently more than one billion monthly active users.

EUFIC joined Instagram in February 2020 with the motivation to increase its online visibility and attract younger audiences between the ages of 18 to 34. In less than a year, EUFIC has gained over 11,000 followers, of which women between the ages of 25–34 appear to be the leading force among our followers.

As with anything we do, appealing, accessible and actionable evidence-based information remains at the forefront of all the content we publish on Instagram. With our sustained focus on visual content, our Instagram account offers a variety of formats ranging from videos, stories, carousels or Instagram TV (IGTV) videos. This has allowed EUFIC to extensively use its well-known and playful visual identity to develop new kinds of creative, fun content each month.

Instagram has also offered the opportunity to collaborate with leading social media influencers in the food & health fields, as well as co-creating impactful content through EU-funded and EIT Food projects. This is something EUFIC will continue to explore in the upcoming years, continuing to grow its online presence.

Join us @eufic!
EUFIC’s processed foods symposium: How to communicate about what we (don’t) know?

Processed foods have been with us since time immemorial, but they have never been so broadly used, so innovatively developed, so thoroughly scientifically scrutinised, and so hotly disputed as they are today. The discussion entered the public debate and gained media attention, while scientists are still in search of consensus on several aspects, – including the areas of definition and classification, and those of the relationships between health, nutritional values, and the level of processing of food products.

Fulfilling our mission to help people make better-informed, healthier choices by offering them digestible science-based information, EUFIC continuously works on this challenging topic – addressing it in a balanced way and explaining the science behind it. In November 2020, EUFIC organised a symposium on processed foods, to bridge the gap between stakeholders, acting as a neutral, science-based convener in the food and health space.

Four academic experts presented at the symposium, covering definitions, concepts, and classifications. Thanks to their varied scientific perspectives, they discussed epidemiological and public health issues around processed foods, shed light on in-sights from sensory and behaviour science, and highlighted the scientific perspectives, they discussed epidemiological and public health issues around processed foods, and classification, and those of the relationships between health, nutritional values, and the level of processing of food products.

The successful processed foods symposium is a steppingstone for EUFIC in the area, leading to a Stakeholder Workshop on the topic in 2021, wherein organisations at the national and European level will gather to share their views and expertise from the fields of nutrition, food technology, policymaking, private sector and civil society. The outputs – communication insights and a peer-reviewed publication – will benefit the wider nutrition and food community, by providing a common understanding of the communication challenges, needs and solutions for bringing the message about processed foods to the general public.

Despite 2020 having turned into a year of lockdown and physical distancing, we made it a year of collaborations and partnerships, a year of bridging gaps and linking conversations for greater collective impact.

While our own major conference, Breaking Silos: Connecting the Nutrition and Environmental Conversations had to be cancelled at the very last minute due to the outbreak of the pandemic, the connections and the ideas remained – and inspired us to explore alternative ways of working with top-level stakeholders at the EU and international levels.

Most notable was the collaboration roadmap built between the FAO and EUFIC - Kicked off in early 2020 with sharing best practices on food waste. This work represented a springboard to organise a joint EUFIC – FAO Food Systems Summit Dialogue, focusing on consumers, communication and policy. Taking place in February 2021, the event will feed directly into the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit.

Other 2020 collaborations have evolved into new concrete ways of working together, too; other 2020 collaborations aimed to ensure that the voice of relevant actors is heard when planning research. That EUFIC role as chair of the stakeholders advisory board of the Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL), with a two-fold objective: aligning research priorities at national and EU level, and funding studies on diet, physical activity and health, bringing together 26 countries in Europe and beyond.
COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the world in many ways. One substantial shift is that more than ever people are concerned about their health and in search of information on how to eat, drink, move, and sleep to keep being healthy and have a strong immune system. Unfortunately, this increase in demand for information has also opened the door to a lot of misinformation and confusion, stressing the importance of EUFIC’s core work to help people navigate the constant stream of information in the midst of a growing infodemic.

Driven by our mission to counterbalance the misinformation, such as the unfounded ‘immune boosting’ claims, and a desire to provide science-based advice on how to adopt a healthy lifestyle in the ‘new normal’, the EUFIC team developed a rapid-response ‘COVID-19 package’ featuring various articles and (social) media content covering people’s frequently asked questions and misconceptions, and providing practical tips on how to keep healthy in isolation.

In 2020, EUFIC’s “COVID-19 package” reached an estimated total of 46 million people through over 130 media articles across European languages, and our materials on healthy eating and exercise during quarantine were often mentioned alongside recommendations from public authorities, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
EUFIC has cemented itself as a central partner in publicly-funded projects that tackle European and global challenges through ground-breaking research and innovation activities, with a wide-ranging focus on the food system in recent years. 2020 marked a record-year for EUFIC, standing out as a communication, outreach and consumer research partner in as many as 23 EU-funded projects, the highest number ever reached by the organization since its foundation in 1995.

All our activities in EU-funded projects, be it through the Horizon 2020 framework programme or our EIT Food partnership, are pieces of a bigger puzzle that help EUFIC meet its vision and mission to inspire and empower healthier and more sustainable food and lifestyle choices. Thanks to a wide range of collaborations with top level partners from academia, civil society, private sectors and science communicators, both Horizon 2020 and EIT Food funded projects help move the needle in creating an environment that supports healthy and sustainable diets.

Innovative ways of how we reach our target audiences include citizen engagement through virtual reality videos that encourage a connection to the food system (Future Kitchen), e-books for toddlers to familiarise them with fruit and veggies (See & Eat), infographics that explain juice-making in a mobile container (FOX) and skin microbiome testing kits to raise awareness of the importance of the microbiome in the food system (CIRCLES).

Topics:
- Food system sustainability & transformation
- Food packaging, technology, authenticity & safety
- Alternative proteins
- Personalized nutrition & healthy lifestyles
- Food system microbiomes
- Consumer engagement & trust
- Influencers campaigns for healthy & sustainable diets

"We have observed an increase in consumer trust in the food system, particularly in 2020 which has, above all, been marked by a global pandemic" (Dr Sophie Hieke, Head of consumer science at EUFIC).

The EIT Food TrustTracker® project, which was launched in 2018 in five countries, has completed its third wave of yearly data collection and expanded to 18 countries. In a unique study, the EUFIC’s Consumer Science team is now able to make observations on trust level changes across the years for a growing number of EU countries with the aim to help food producers, manufacturers, retailers, and policymakers identify gaps in trust and how to improve their relationships with consumers.

Our data shows that between 2019 and 2020, there has been a significant increase in consumer trust in the food system, whilst between 2018 and 2019 the increase had not been relevant. The 2020 data collection was conducted in June-July, right after the first lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic, which could have influenced the findings. Consumers started the year “panic-buying” food in the fear it would run out but quickly noticed that despite all the challenges of this pandemic, the food supply remained reliable. However, overall trust in the food system is still low.

Comparing different actors along the food value chain, farmers consistently benefit from higher levels of trust than retailers, authorities, and - with the lowest levels of trust - food manufacturers. On average, European consumer confidence in the integrity of their food is still highest in taste and safety, followed by health and lowest for authenticity and sustainability. Overall, consumer confidence in food integrity is highest in Finland and the UK and lowest in France and Israel.

When it comes to consumers’ motivations and intentions to eat healthily, live sustainably, and adopt innovations, our data shows that European consumers have, on average, higher motivations than intentions to do so. More specifically, motivations to live sustainably are higher than to eat healthily but intentions to buy healthy food are higher than to live sustainably.

What can individual actors along the food value chain do to close the gap between motivations and intentions? We know that trust in the food system plays a major role, but the data also shows that transparency is crucial, leading food regulators and producers to provide relevant information, in an honest and open manner. When trust is strong, consumers are more likely to get on board with innovations, accelerating the shift towards a healthier and more sustainable food system in the EU.
FIT4Food2030: Building synergies to move towards sustainable food systems

After three years of engaging food system actors and stakeholders at the local, national, and European level, the EU-funded FIT4FOOD2030 project has concluded in December 2020. The project supported the European Commission rolling out its FOOD 2030 Policy Framework, a research and innovation response to future-proof the European food systems and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreements, now reflected by the EU Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Particularly for EUFIC, the project’s Lead for Communication and Dissemination, it has been an exciting year with the delivery of some key project outputs:

- Bringing together a toolbox to facilitate food systems transformation in the FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub, a growing online repository of tools that can be freely used to encourage network building, visioning, system understanding, and co-creating actions within the transformative networks of stakeholders and audiences.

- Establishing the Sustainable Food Systems Network as a growing platform to break silos and facilitate collaboration between a wide diversity of stakeholders.

The engaging platform helps people connect, share knowledge, and inspire each other. The concluding conference was, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivered virtually and engaged more than 250 interested stakeholders on both days of the event.

John Bell, Director of Healthy Planet at the European Commission’s DG Research and Innovation, opened the event, which was divided into two streams: one focusing on understanding the food system, the other specifically on engaging stakeholders for food system transformation. John Bell congratulated the project consortium for “[its] systemic approach to connect across disciplines, value chains, communities, sectors & policies, which is key to deliver real change.”

Shortening food supply chains: the consumer perspective

Short food supply chains (SFSC) are a promising avenue for supporting sustainable food systems and increasing their resilience against shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Although consumers generally have positive perceptions of local food, very few of them purchase from SFSC with any regularity. To help advance solutions to this problem, the Consumer Science team at EUFIC was involved in conducting a consumer online survey with 500 participants each in Germany, Greece, Spain, and Hungary within the scope of the Horizon 2020 project SMARTCHAIN. The aim was to investigate consumer perceptions and behaviour regarding SFSCs.

Most consumers report buying from SFSC at least sometimes, with farmers’ markets being the most popular channel. The products they tended to buy from SFSC were vegetables, fruit, eggs, honey, and bread. Consumers reported being more willing to pay for eggs, fruit and vegetables, as well as meat and fish.

The most strongly endorsed reasons cited for buying from SFSC were that it supports local producers, they know where the food comes from, the products are more natural, and it is better for the environment. The main obstacles cited were the expensive-ness, the difficult availability mainly caused by bad promotion, and the SFSC limited opening hours.

Those who were more likely to buy from SFSC cared more about health, ethical issues, and the environment when making purchases. When buying local food, they considered the influence of their peers and partners in the issue to be important, as well as the feasibility of buying local food in terms of time, money, and access to the food. An analysis of consumer segments suggests that although most consumers supported SFSC, females tended to do this more than males. There was also a sizeable proportion of consumers (37.6%) who have positive attitudes towards SFSC and positive expectations of the produce, but who tended not to buy from SFSC. Compared to those who are more likely to buy from SFSC (42.2%), this segment of consumers was more concerned about low prices, suggesting that price rather than attitude is a barrier to purchasing from SFSCs. This implies that reducing the cost of food from SFSC would be more likely to encourage uptake compared to promoting the virtues of SFSCs and their products.

Bringing new technology into peoples’ homes: The Future Kitchen Virtual Reality Series

Can you imagine how your kitchen will look like in the future? To show what food technology makes possible, the EIT Food-funded FutureKitchen project produced a series of videos that infotained – showing for example how a 3D food printer can reduce food waste, how sustainable insect burgers are produced, or how we can feed a growing population with new proteins.

EUFIC sparked conversations about these topics via engaging social media posts, collaborations and (online) events. The feedback collected shows that the videos were a powerful tool to learn about new technologies: “Really get the sense of the source of the food by walking around the place it was produced”, said a participant of an event in May 2020, after watching a VR video about the organic insect farm. “I thought the social aspect reduced the ‘fear’ of the new food”, added another.

The project launched a variety of videos on FoodUnfolded, EIT Food’s global platform on the latest food innovations. EUFIC sparked conversations about these topics via engaging social media posts, collaborations and (online) events. The feedback collected shows that the videos were a powerful tool to learn about new technologies: “Really get the sense of the source of the food by walking around the place it was produced”, said a participant of an event in May 2020, after watching a VR video about the organic insect farm. “I thought the social aspect reduced the ‘fear’ of the new food”, added another.
Despite an ever-increasing variety of available foods, in many regions across Europe, we face decreasing levels of food engagement among children and young people, and a lack of knowledge about our food and its origins. The EIT Food-funded project WeValueFood aimed to educate, engage and advance young Europeans’ knowledge and appreciation of food, thereby empowering the next generations to make better choices about the food they eat, for both health and the environment.

In 2020, WeValueFood developed a network of food-savvy young consumers, called ‘Food Champions’. These Food Champions were recruited from schools and universities in Spain, Iceland, and the UK and they were challenged to inspire their peers through sharing food-related information on social media and school networks. They received training on current trends in science communication, such as the production of podcasts and social media content.

To support the Food Champions on their journey to becoming impactful food science communicators, EUFIC organized a next-generation influencer workshop that brought the Food Champions together with three successful social media influencers from across Europe. The influencers and educators, with a combined following of over 40K people in 3 languages, shared inspiring guidance from their own experience in communicating about food, health, and sustainability to their online communities.

During the workshop, the Food Champions received advice on ensuring their social media posts are supported by scientific evidence, dealing with negative comments and trolls, and showing personal authenticity in their content to help them connect with people online and increase the impact of their messages. The most valuable advice was also captured in a series of infographics that EUFIC shared more widely on Twitter following the event.

By December 2020, the WeValueFood Food Champions had created their community of almost 20K followers who continue to share science-based information with their peers on the origins of our food, eating healthy and how what we eat affects the planet.

**Connecting with the food and health community while in lockdown our events and presentations in 2020**

- **January 29th**: “Food for the Future: accelerating the protein transition”, Protein2Food conference (organiser)
- **March 5th**: “From Agricultural Policy to Food and Nutrition Policy” CEPIS Annual Ideas Lab (panelist)
- **May 5th**: “From plastics to policy” REFUCOAT webinar on project outcomes (organiser)
- **June 27th**: 3rd World Microbiome Day (co-organiser)
- **July 27th**: University of Surrey Nutrition Seminars, launch EUFIC-Surrey collaborative PhD project
- **July 7th**: Imagining the future of food with Virtual Reality - FutureKitchen webinar (co-organiser)
- **June 30th**: Open innovation Forum, University of Cambridge (presenter)
- **September 29th**: 3rd FAO International Day of Awareness on Food Loss & Waste (invited intervention)
- **October 13th**: UN Global Compact - Youth Summit, Singapore, “Food and Carbon” workshop (presenter)
- **October 1st**: YPACK final event, Food Packaging for a Circular Bioeconomy (organiser)
- **November 11th**: MoniQA Conference: The Future of Food Safety (panelist)
- **November 19th**: Next Generation Influencer workshop WeValueFood, (organiser)
- **November 24th**: EUFIC symposium on processed foods: how to communicate about what we (don’t) know?
- **December 1st**: 1st UN Global Food System Summit Dialogue (facilitator, rapporteur)
- **December 1st / 2nd**: EIT Food: The Future of Food, session “Do European consumers trust their food?” (presenter)
Meet the Team

“Why I love working at EUFIC”

At EUFIC I can communicate about topics I really care about. I’m happy to contribute to important conversations on food science, sustainability & health. Also: I love food!

Marie Christine, Communications Manager

What makes EUFIC’s experience unique is not only its mission to provide science-based information to empower healthier lifestyles, but also a truly passionate and supportive team.

Joanna, Senior Manager, Food & Health Science

“I love working at EUFIC because I believe in our purpose: we want to make the world a tiny bit healthier and sustainable, one step at a time.”

Sophie, Head of Consumer Science

“Before joining EUFIC, if they told me that the greatest creativity would come from translating science into visual communication, I would have never believed it.”

Astrid, Junior Manager, Graphic Design

“EUFIC I can communicate about important conversations on food science, sustainability & health. Also: I love food!”

Marie Christine, Communications Manager

“What makes EUFIC’s experience unique is not only its mission to provide science-based information to empower healthier lifestyles, but also a truly passionate and supportive team.”

Joanna, Senior Manager, Food & Health Science
## Our Finances

### Income in 2020 (€)

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<td>EU funded projects</td>
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### Expenses in 2020 (€)

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## Our Members

To navigate the complex science in the realm of food and health, the role of EUFIC’s scientific advisory board (SAB) is essential. Our topics are chosen based on scientific relevance, their importance to public health, and the state of the public debate. Our decision-making process is guided by their expertise and independence, forming a group of top-level food and health scientists across Europe.

*We thank our committed members for helping make our work possible, and for co-creating the open space at EUFIC to exchange on and advance our collective goal of improving nutrition and public health in Europe.*

### EUFIC Scientific Advisory Board

- **GIORGIO POLI**
  - Past Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Milan, Italy

- **FRANCE BELLISLE**
  - Vice Chairman of the EUFIC Scientific Advisory Board; Researcher at the Nutritional Epidemiology Group, University Paris 11, Bobigny, France and Adjunct Professor of the Kinesiology Department, Laval University, Québec, Canada

- **CHRISTINE WILLIAMS**
  - Professor of the institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research and Innovation, University of Reading, UK.

- **FRANÇOISE RICHER**
  - Professor of Nutrition, Medicine, and Public Health, and Dean of the School of Public Health, University of Geneva, Switzerland

- **MICHAEL SIEGRIST**
  - Professor for Consumer Behaviour at the Institute for Environmental Decisions (IED), ETH Zurich, Switzerland

- **ANÁPRIA TRONCOSO GONZALEZ**
  - Professor in Food Science and Nutrition, Department of Nutrition, Food Science, Toxicology and Legal Medicine, University of Sevilla, Spain. Former Chief Executive Officer of the Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency (Agencia Española de Seguridad Alimentaria)

- **ANNE MARIE BISHOP**
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