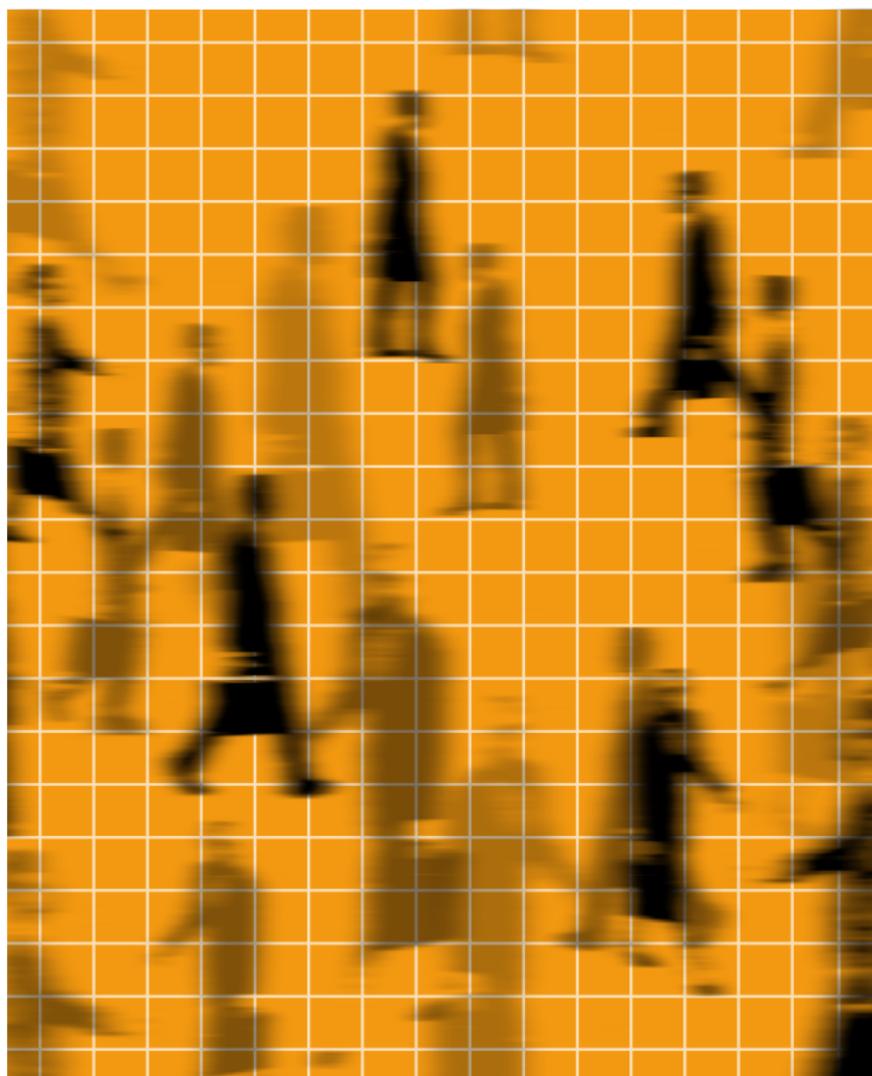


Key Findings of the
Swiss Labour Force Survey

SLFS 2008 in Brief



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
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We would especially like to thank the households
that took part in the SLFS.

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Contents



❖ The SLFS: objectives and topics addressed	4
– What is the SLFS and what is it used for?	
– What topics are addressed?	
❖ Info about the SLFS	5
– When and how is the interview conducted?	
– Who takes part in the survey?	
– What is the data protection situation?	
❖ Key findings of the SLFS 2008	6–7
❖ Employed persons	8–9
❖ Unemployed or underemployed persons	10–11
❖ Economically inactive persons	12–13
❖ A few definitions	14–15
❖ Additional information...	16
– Publications	
– Other questions?	

SLFS: Objectives and topics addressed



❖ What is the SLFS and what is it used for?

SLFS = Swiss Labour Force Survey

Since 1991, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has conducted the SLFS on an annual basis at the behest of the Federal Council. The purpose of this survey is to obtain data about working life and the labour market in general. It also provides insight into the living conditions of the unemployed, retired people, housewives and house husbands as well as students.

Strict adherence to international definitions means that the SLFS can also be used to calculate a large number of internationally comparable labour force indicators.

❖ What topics are addressed?

- Professional activity (present or past)
- Reasons why people are economically inactive (retirement, training/education, etc.)
- Profession learnt and profession exercised
- Working conditions: hours worked, night work, weekend work
- Professional revenue, household revenue
- Job hunting
- Professional and geographical mobility

Additional topics:

- Training/education and lifelong learning (1999, 2003, 2006)
- Unpaid work (2000, 2004, 2007)
- Migration (2001, 2003, 2008)
- Social security (2002, 2005, 2008)
- Balancing work and family life (2005)

Info about the SLFS



❖ **When and how is the survey conducted?**

An institute commissioned by the FSO (LINK Marketing Services) conducts a series of 20-minute phone interviews with selected households each year.

❖ **Who takes part in the survey?**

The SLFS is based on a representative sample of 48,000 people in order to avoid the overly costly alternative of conducting a complete survey of the entire Swiss population.

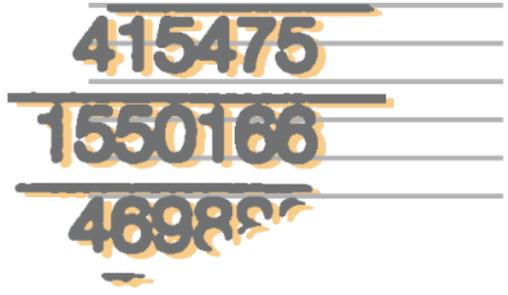
The addresses used in the SLFS are selected from private telephone numbers that also include addresses that are not contained in the telephone directory available to the general public. Consequently, the addresses selected from this register reflect the entire diversity of households residing in Switzerland.

❖ **What is the data protection situation?**

Data protection is guaranteed by the Federal Statistics Act and by the Data Protection Act. All data are treated in the strictest confidence and used solely for statistical purposes.

The statistics given in this leaflet are extrapolated from replies provided by 48,000 people. Thus, on average, every participant in the SLFS 2008 represents some 130 members of Switzerland's permanent resident population aged 15 and over.

Key findings of the SLFS 2008



❖ Dynamic job growth

According to the SLFS's results, 4.229 million persons were employed in the second quarter of 2008, i.e. 2.6% more than a year before. This increase is evident both among women (+4.1%; from 1.863 to 1.940 million) and men (+1.3%; from 2,259 to 2,289 million).

Between the second quarter of 2007 and the second quarter of 2008, the number of unemployed fell from 156,000 to 147,000 persons (-5.9%). The unemployment rate reached 3.4% of the economically active population in 2008 (2007: 3.6%).

❖ The number of foreigners in employment continues to rise

The Swiss economy needs foreign workers – a fact that is confirmed by the results of the SLFS 2008. The number of employed foreigners grew markedly once again compared to the previous year: the increase amounted to 51,000 persons or 5.8%. More than a fifth of the 4.229 million employed permanent residents were foreign nationals in the second quarter of 2008 (21.9% or 927,000).

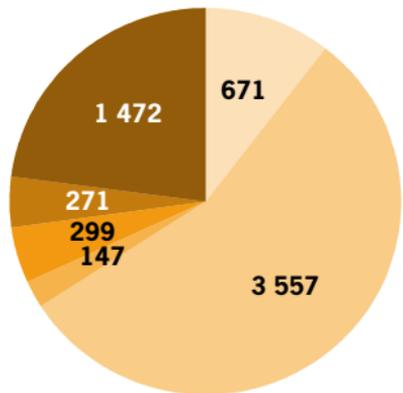
Composition of permanent resident population aged 15 and over by employment status (in '000, SLFS 2008)

Economically active persons:

- Self-employed and family workers
- Salaried workers and apprentices
- Unemployed persons

Economically inactive persons:

- People undergoing training
- Housewives/house husbands
- Retirees, pensioners and other economically inactive persons



How many are there?



Employment status (in '000), SLFS 2008

	Total	Men	Women	CH	Foreign ¹
Self-employed	588	382	207	517	71
Family workers	83	33	50	77	6
Employee	3345	1750	1595	2530	815
Apprentice	213	124	89	177	36
Unemployed	147	66	80	85	61
Undergoing training	299	145	154	239	60
Housewife/house husband	271	10	261	191	80
Pensioner/person of indep. means	1333	555	778	1182	151
Other economically inactive persons	139	56	82	89	50
Population over 15	6417	3122	3295	5088	1329

Labour market status (in '000), SLFS 1991, 2005–2008

	1991	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total					
Persons aged 15 and over	5606	6210	6266	6326	6417
of whom: Employed	3768	3974	4051	4122	4229
full-time (90–100%)	2811	2715	2747	2789	2824
part-time (0–89%)	956	1259	1305	1333	1405
Unemployed	68	185	169	156	147
Economically inactive	1770	2051	2046	2048	2041
Men					
Men over 15	2708	3009	3039	3071	3122
of whom: Employed	2163	2172	2214	2259	2289
full-time (90–100%)	1995	1934	1948	1990	1995
part-time (0–89%)	168	238	266	269	294
Unemployed	27	88	78	68	66
Economically inactive	518	749	747	744	766
Women					
Women over 15	2898	3200	3227	3255	3295
of whom: Employed	1605	1802	1837	1863	1940
full-time (90–100%)	816	782	799	799	829
part-time (0–89%)	789	1021	1039	1064	1111
Unemployed	41	97	91	88	80
Economically inactive	1252	1301	1299	1304	1275

¹ Holders of a B or C permit.

Employed persons



❖ Women less likely to have a management position

Thanks to the continuous improvement in their level of education and training, the number of employed women practising an intellectual or scientific occupation grew rapidly (9.8% for women against 4.8% for men compared to 2007). While 8.5% of employed men (195,000) held a management position, only 4.4% of employed women did so (84,000).

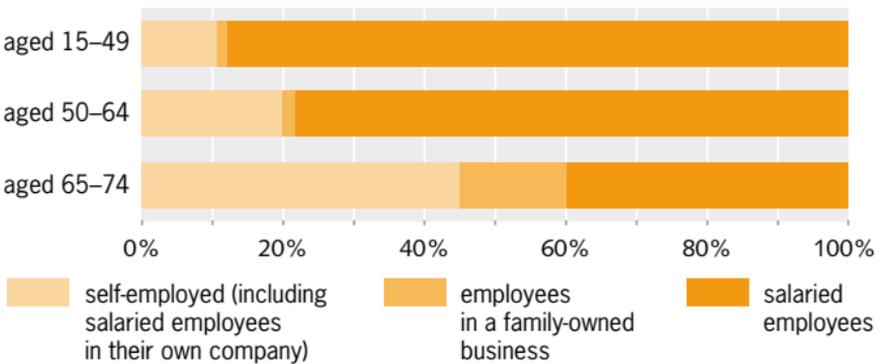
❖ Foreign nationals more likely to have fixed-term employment contract

A large majority of salaried workers have an open-ended employment contract (91.7% in the second quarter of 2008). A larger proportion of foreign nationals than Swiss citizens have a fixed-term contract. Such working conditions are particularly frequent among foreign women (8.5% of foreign women compared to 8.1% of foreign men; 7.0% of Swiss women and 5.4% of Swiss men).

❖ Working beyond the legal retirement age

In 2008, one person in seven aged 65-74 exercised an occupational activity (93,000). Most of them were self-employed or worked in a business owned by a family member (60.2%).

Economic activity status by age group (in %), SLFS 2008



How many are there?



Employed persons (in '000), SLFS 2008

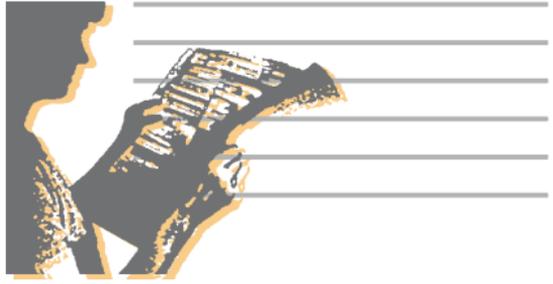
	Total	Men	Women	CH	Foreign ¹
Age brackets					
15–24	566	293	272	451	115
25–39	1380	745	634	973	407
40–54	1535	827	707	1222	312
55–64	631	353	279	549	82
65 and older	117	70	47	106	11
Level of Education					
Lower secondary	678	322	356	412	266
Upper secondary	2188	1092	1096	1815	373
Tertiary	1362	875	487	1075	288
Full-/Part-time employment					
Full-time employment (>=90%)	2824	1995	829	2107	716
Part-time employment (50–89%)	758	175	582	634	124
Part-time employment (<50%)	647	119	529	560	87
Professional situation					
Self-employed	588	382	207	517	71
Family workers	83	33	50	77	6
Employee in managerial position	596	411	185	467	130
Employee with supervisory function	692	437	255	521	170
Employee without supervisory function	2057	902	1155	1542	515
Apprentice	213	124	89	177	36
Professions exercised (ISCO)					
Executives, senior managers	280	195	84	215	64
Academic/scientific professions	792	504	288	633	159
Intermediate professions	921	394	527	781	140
Administrative staff	462	139	323	390	72
Service and sales staff	559	176	382	413	145
Farmers	173	120	53	161	12
Craftsmen and skilled workers	596	513	82	420	175
Drivers and fitters	188	150	37	122	66
Unskilled workers	236	82	153	146	89
No answer	24	14	10	20	4
Total employed	4229	2289	1940	3302	927

Employment rate (in %), SLFS 1991, 2005–2008

	1991	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total	67,2	64,0	64,7	65,2	65,9
Men	79,9	72,2	72,8	73,6	73,3
Women	55,4	56,3	56,9	57,2	58,9

¹ Holders of a B or C permit.

Unemployed or underemployed persons



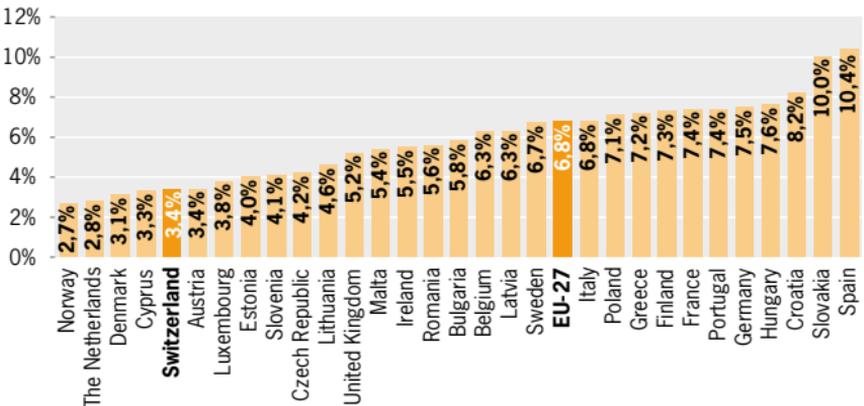
❖ The unemployment rate remains low in Switzerland by international comparison

By international comparison, Switzerland remains one of the countries least affected by unemployment. Its unemployment rate (3.4%) is considerably lower than the European average (UE-27: 6.8%). Between the second quarter of 2007 and the second quarter of 2008, a large majority of EU/EFTA countries registered a drop in unemployment. Poland, which had the highest unemployment rate when it joined the EU in 2004, registered the sharpest drop in unemployment (-2.5 points to 7.1%) and is now close to the European average. In contrast, in Spain the unemployment rate rose sharply (+2.4 points to 10.4%); during the second quarter of 2008 it was the highest in Europe.

❖ The amount of additional work required corresponds to 192,000 full-time posts

In all, 421,000 persons had no work or an insufficient amount in the second quarter of 2008, which represents 9.6% of the economically active population. This figure has declined in recent years (10.5% in 2nd quarter 2005). The amount of work needed in order to meet the needs of unemployed or underemployed persons corresponds to some 192,000 full-time posts. 59% of this amount (113,000 posts) is attributable to unemployment, which here continues to outweigh underemployment (79,000 posts).

Unemployment rate in Switzerland and in Europe, 2nd quarter 2008, SLFS and Eurostat



How many are there?



Unemployed (in '000) and unemployment rate (in %), SLFS 2008

	Unemployed			Unemployment rate		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Age brackets						
15–24	43	21	22	7,0	6,7	7,4
25–39	44	17	27	3,1	2,2	4,1
40–54	42	19	23	2,7	2,3	3,1
55 and older	18	9	8	2,3	2,2	2,5
Nationality						
Swiss	85	38	47	2,5	2,1	2,9
Foreign ¹	61	29	33	6,2	4,9	8,0
Level of education						
Lower secondary	44	19	25	6,1	5,5	6,7
Upper secondary	76	33	43	3,4	3,0	3,7
Tertiary	26	14	12	1,9	1,6	2,4
Unemployed						
Registered	63	34	30	–	–	–
Not registered	83	33	50	–	–	–
Duration of unemployment						
Less than 1 year	96	48	48	–	–	–
One year or more	50	18	32	–	–	–
Number of unemployed						
1991	68	27	41	1,8	1,2	2,5
2005	185	88	97	4,4	3,9	5,1
2006	169	78	91	4,0	3,4	4,7
2007	156	68	88	3,6	2,9	4,5
2008	147	66	80	3,4	2,8	4,0

Underemployed (in '000) and underemployment rate (in %), SLFS 2006–2008

	Underemployed			Underemployment rate		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
2006	259	58	202	6,1	2,5	10,5
2007	263	57	206	6,2	2,5	10,6
2008	275	54	221	6,3	2,3	10,9

¹ Holders of a B or C permit.

Economically inactive persons



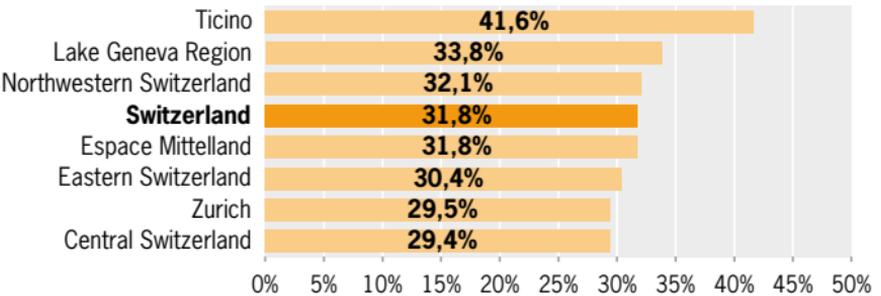
- ❖ **A minority of mothers do not exercise an occupational activity**

Only 31.7% of mothers with one or several children aged under 4 are not professionally active. The proportion of economically inactive women whose youngest child is aged 4–6 is even smaller, i.e. a little more than one mother in four (26%). Lastly, this proportion is even lower (16.6%) for mothers whose youngest child is aged 7–14.
- ❖ **Growth of the economically inactive population aged 65 and over**

The increase in the number of economically inactive persons aged 65 and over (+18,000 to 1.127 million) is attributable to the ageing of the population. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the proportion of retirees has grown continuously: while in 1991, there were 3.5 economically active persons aged 20 to 64 for each person aged 65 or over, by 2008 this figure fell to 3.2.
- ❖ **The proportion of economically inactive persons in the population aged 15 and over varies from one region to another**

In Switzerland, the proportion of persons aged 15 and over who do not exercise any occupational activity hovers around one third of the population (31.8%). This proportion varies considerably from one major region to another: the share of economically inactive persons is particularly high in the canton of Ticino (41.6%) and in the Lake Geneva region (33.8%). Zurich (29.5%) and Central Switzerland (29.4%), on the other hand, have the lowest proportion of economically inactive persons.

Share of economically inactive people as a percentage of the population aged 15 and over, by major region, SLFS 2008



How many are there?



Economically inactive persons (in '000), SLFS 2008

	Total	Men	Women
Economically inactive persons			
Undergoing training	299	145	154
Housewife/house husband	271	10	261
Pensioner/person of indep. means	1333	555	778
Other economically inactive persons	139	56	82
Age brackets			
15–24	298	147	151
25–39	160	28	132
40–54	182	41	141
55–64	275	97	178
65 and older	1127	453	673
Nationality			
Swiss	1701	634	1066
Foreign ¹	340	132	209
Level of education			
Lower secondary	741	221	520
Upper secondary	1018	379	640
Tertiary	282	166	116
Total inactive persons	2041	766	1275

Economically inactive persons aged 15 to 64 (in %), SLFS 2008

Reasons for not looking for work	Total	Men	Women
Training	32,6	46,2	25,5
Looking after children or adults in need of care	14,9	()	22,5
Other personal or family reasons	14,3	2,9	20,3
Retirement	15,9	20,8	13,4
Illness/temporary incapacity	7,8	10,1	6,6
Permanent disability	7,3	11,9	5,0
Other reasons	7,1	7,9	6,8

Economically inactive persons as a percentage of the population, SLFS 1991, 2005–2008

	1991	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total	31,6	33,0	32,6	32,4	31,8
Men	19,1	24,9	24,6	24,2	24,5
Women	43,2	40,7	40,2	40,1	38,7

¹ Holders of a B or C permit.

Extrapolations based on fewer than 50 interviews are shown in parenthesis.

A few definitions



❖ Permanent resident population

The term “permanent resident population” refers to all persons who officially reside in Switzerland for the entire year. Swiss citizens domiciled in Switzerland, foreign citizens holding a permanent residence permit or a residence permit valid for at least one year, international civil servants, diplomats and their family members all fall into this category. Specifically, the permanent resident population includes the following groups of foreigners: Holders of a short-term residence permit valid at least 12 months, diplomats, international civil servants and their family members.

❖ Employed persons

The term “employed persons” refers to all persons aged 15 and over who, during the reference week:

- worked at least one hour for payment
- or who, although temporarily absent from their work (due to illness, holidays, maternity leave, military service, etc.) had a job (either in an employed or self-employed capacity)
- or who worked in the family business without payment.

❖ Unemployed persons (ILO-based)

The term “unemployed persons” refers to people aged 15-74 who:

- were not gainfully employed during the reference week,
- were actively looking for work during the previous four weeks, and
- were available for work.

The definition used by Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco) differs from the ILO-based one indicated above. SECO’s definition is based on the number of unemployed persons registered with regional job placement offices. For this reason, the number of unemployed persons reported by the SLFS and SECO do not match.

❖ **Economically active persons**

The term “economically active persons” refers to employed and unemployed persons. This concept is also expressed in economic terms as “labour supply”.

❖ **Underemployed persons**

The term “underemployed persons” refers to employed persons who:

- work less than 90% of the normal full-time workweek in companies,
- wish to work more,
- are able to do so within the next three months.

❖ **Economically inactive persons**

The term “economically inactive persons” refers to people who are not in the labour force and therefore cannot be considered as either employed or unemployed persons.

❖ **Definitions of rates**

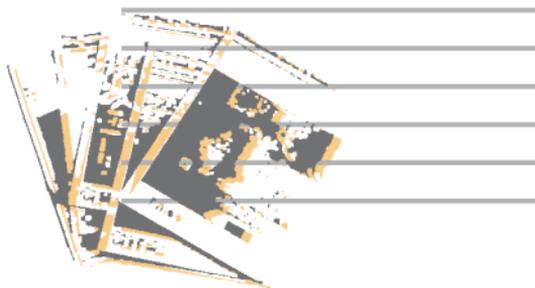
$$\text{Employment rate} = \frac{\text{Employed persons}}{\text{Permanent resident population}}$$

$$\text{Unemployment rate} = \frac{\text{Unemployed persons}}{\text{Economically active persons}}$$

$$\text{Underemployment rate} = \frac{\text{Underemployed persons}}{\text{Economically active persons}}$$

$$\text{Activity rate} = \frac{\text{Economically active persons}}{\text{Permanent resident population}}$$

Additional information ...



❖ Publications

Annual publication:

Labour market indicators 2008

(Order N°: 206-0802 in French or 206-0801 in German, price: CHF 22.–, excl. VAT)

FSO press releases and news bulletins:

Subscription to “Employment & Income”, all press releases and FSO announcements relating to labour market statistics

(Order N°: 0609, price: CHF 30.– a year, in French or German).

❖ Other questions?

For additional information, contact the FSO's Labour Force section:

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