12/01/2026

Blessing of the Waters in Batemans Bay, officiated by Bishop Athinagoras of Canberra

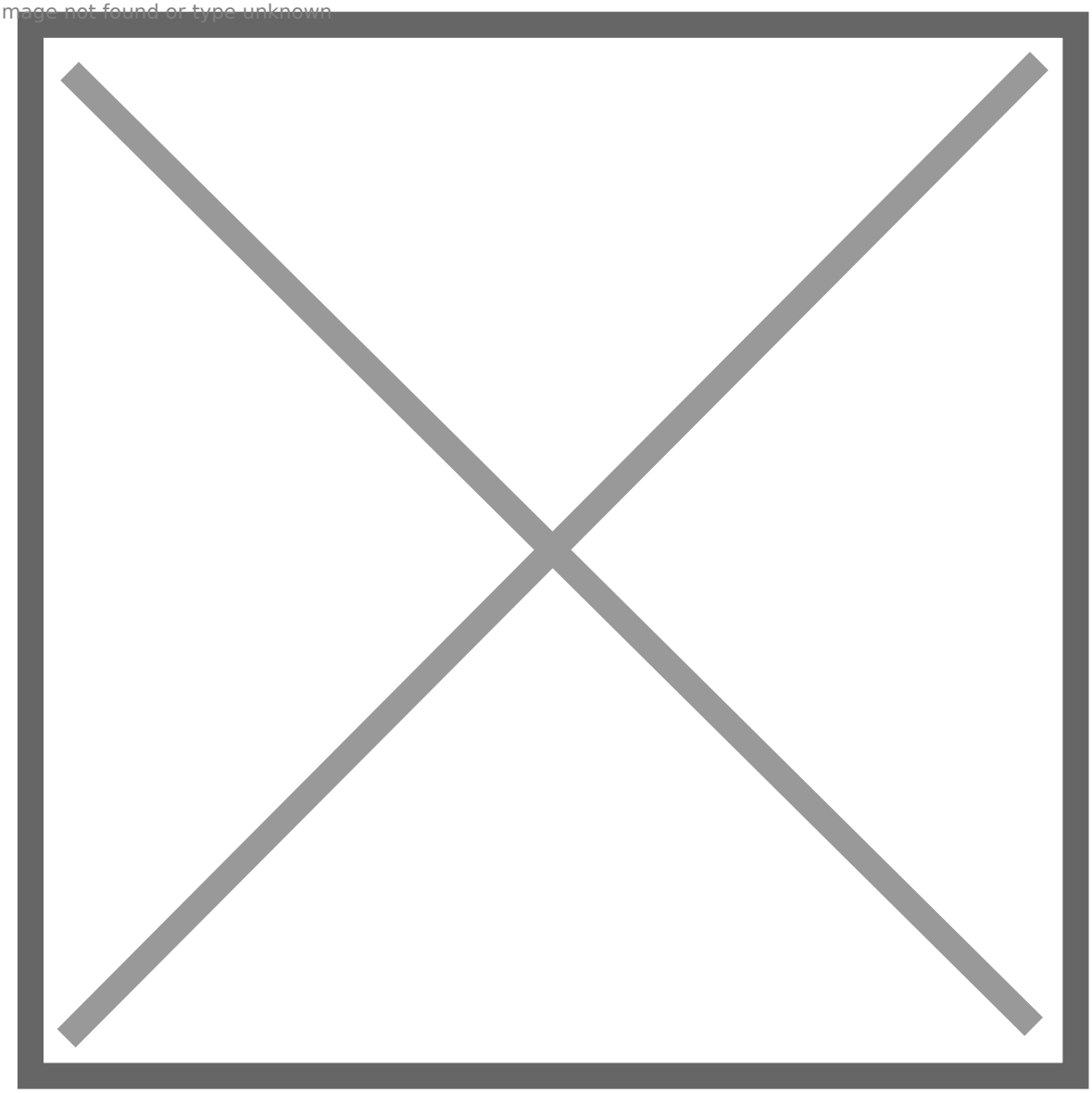
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The Feast of Theophany was celebrated with great ecclesiastical splendour in the Holy Diocese of Canberra, with the coastal town of Batemans Bay in New South Wales and the local Greek Orthodox Community of Saint John the Baptist at its centre.

Saturday, 10 January, was a blessed and historic day for the local community, as the festive celebrations were presided over by the first Bishop of Canberra, His Grace Bishop Athinagoras.

The day began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters at the Church of Saint John, presided over by His Grace Bishop Athinagoras, assisted by the clergy Fr Savas Pizanias, from the Parish of Saint Savvas the New of Kalymnos in Banksia, Sydney, and Fr Platon Derlis, from the Parish of Saint George in Shepparton, Victoria. His Grace conveyed to the congregation the paternal greetings and blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia. Among the faithful in attendance were the President of the Greek Orthodox Community of Batemans Bay, Mr Stef Pashalidis, as well as major benefactors John and Angelo Liangis, who were acknowledged for their ongoing contribution to the local community.

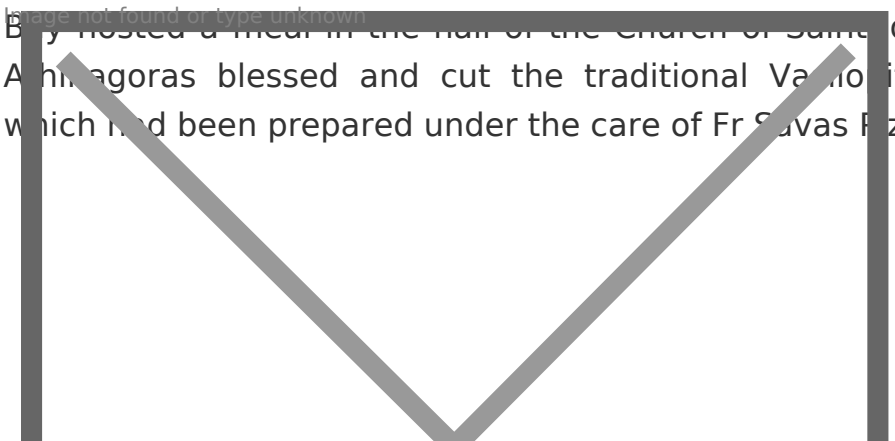
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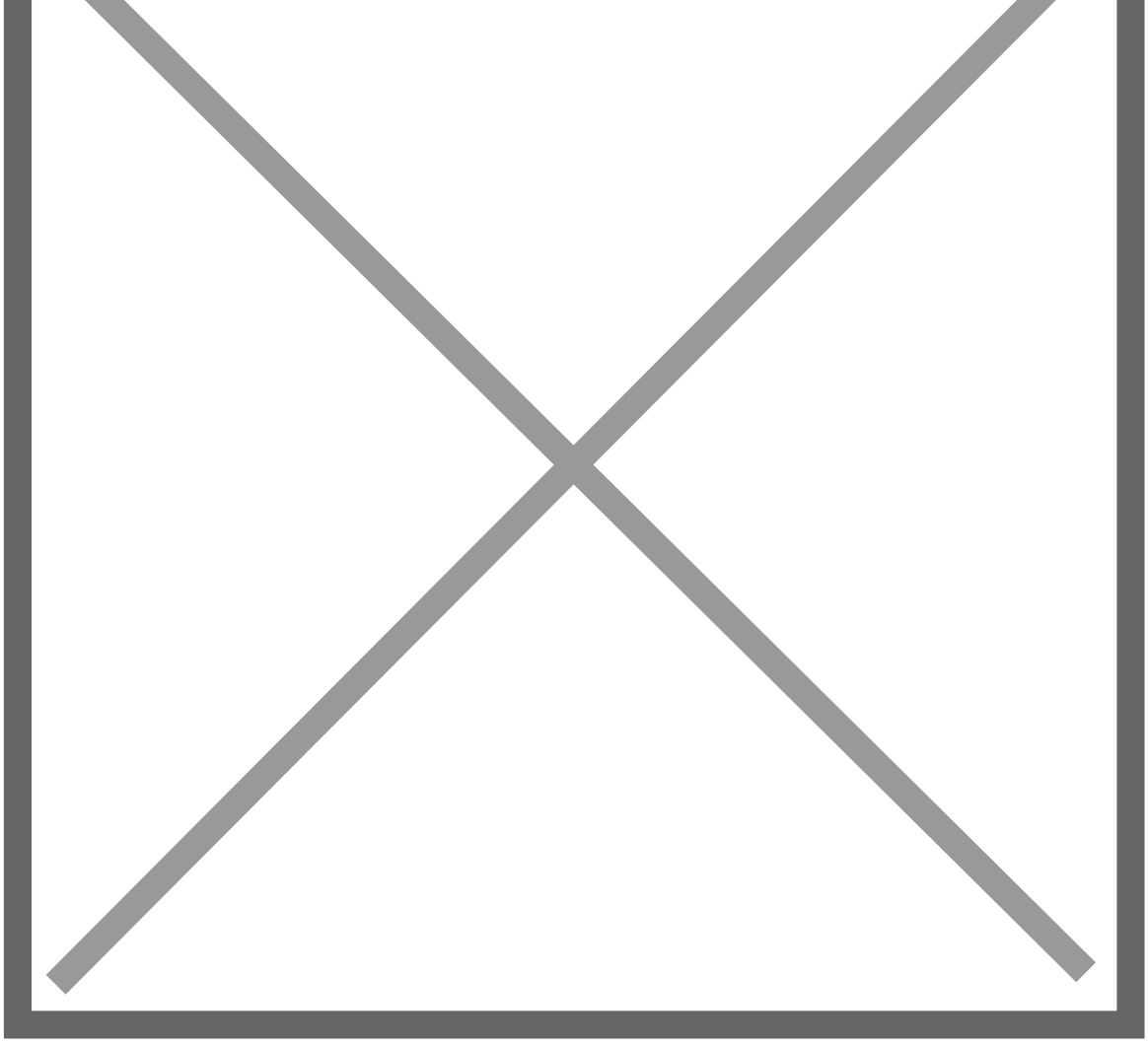


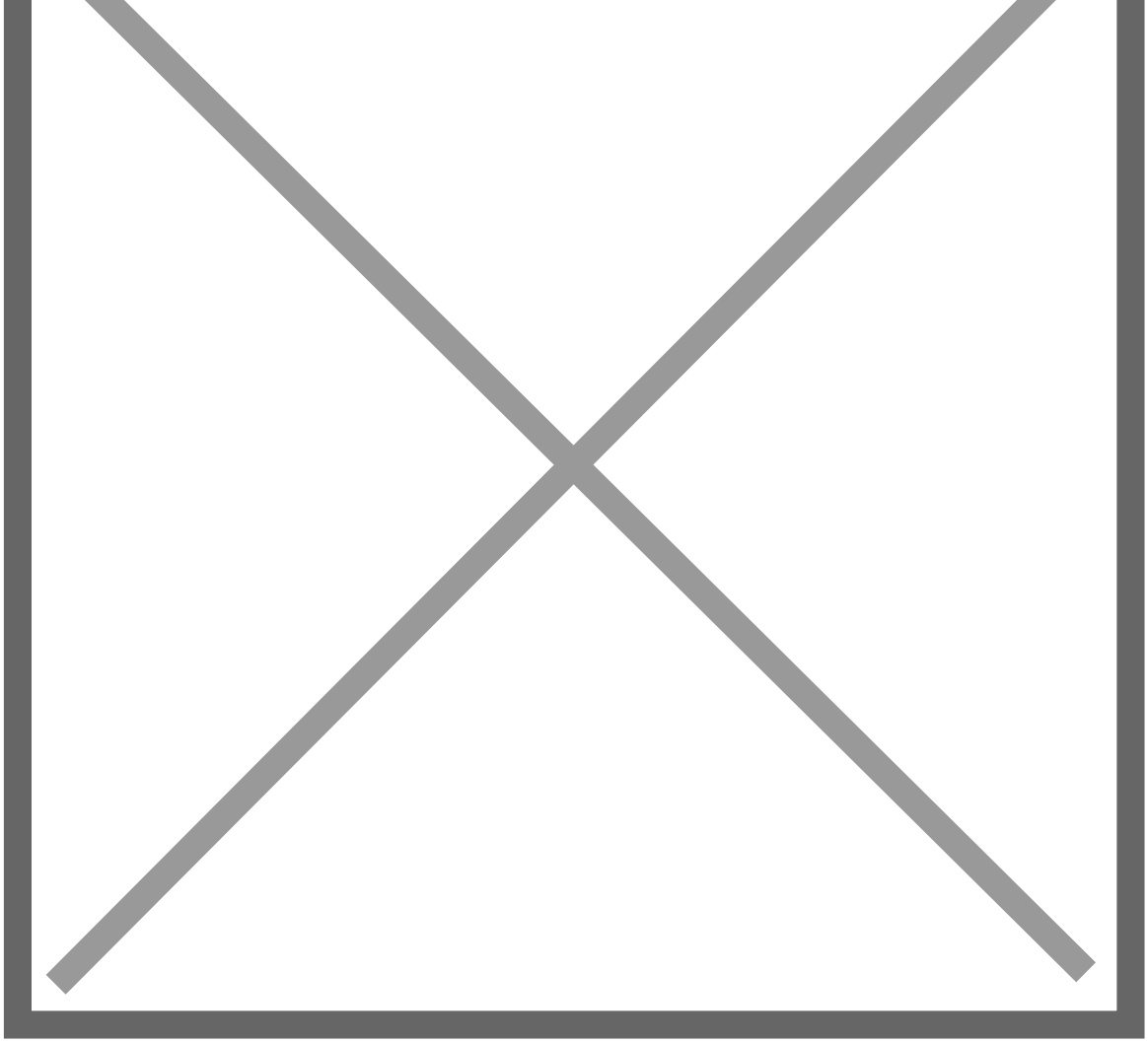
This was followed by the ceremony of the Blessing of the Waters and the immersion of the Holy Cross at Clyde Wharf, in the presence of hundreds of faithful from Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, and the South Coast region of New South Wales. The Holy Cross was retrieved by 15-year-old Julian Pilavakis from Canberra, who was holidaying in Batemans Bay with his family. Also diving into the waters were three other teenagers from Canberra: Sideri Pashalidis (13 years old), Vassili Londos (14 years old), and Andrew Haridemos (14 years old).

After the conclusion of the ceremony, the Greek Orthodox Community of Batemans Bay hosted a meal in the hall of the Church of Saint John, where His Grace Bishop Athinagoras blessed and cut the traditional Vasilopita for the new year, 2026, which had been prepared under the care of Fr Savas Pazanias from Sydney.

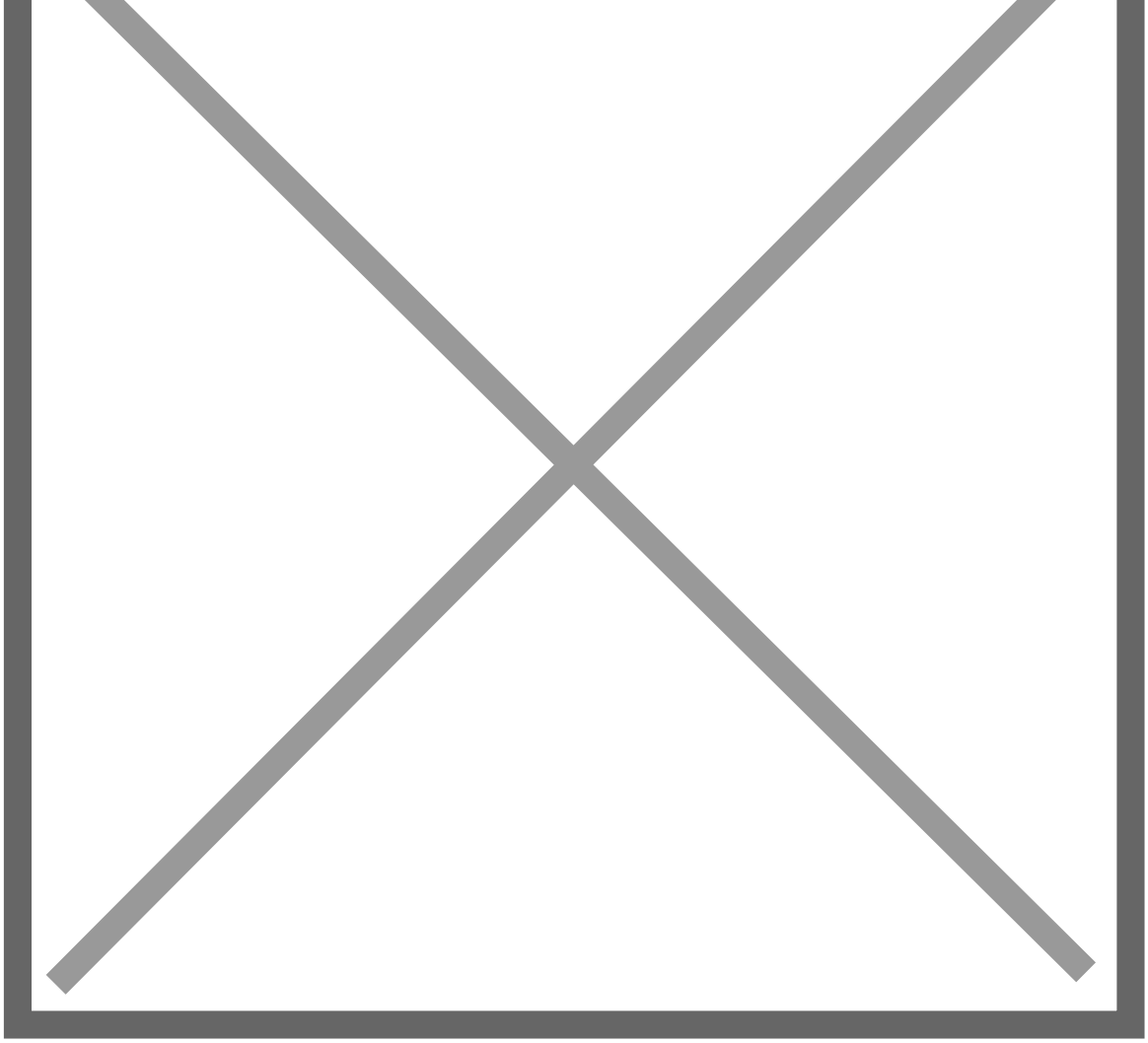
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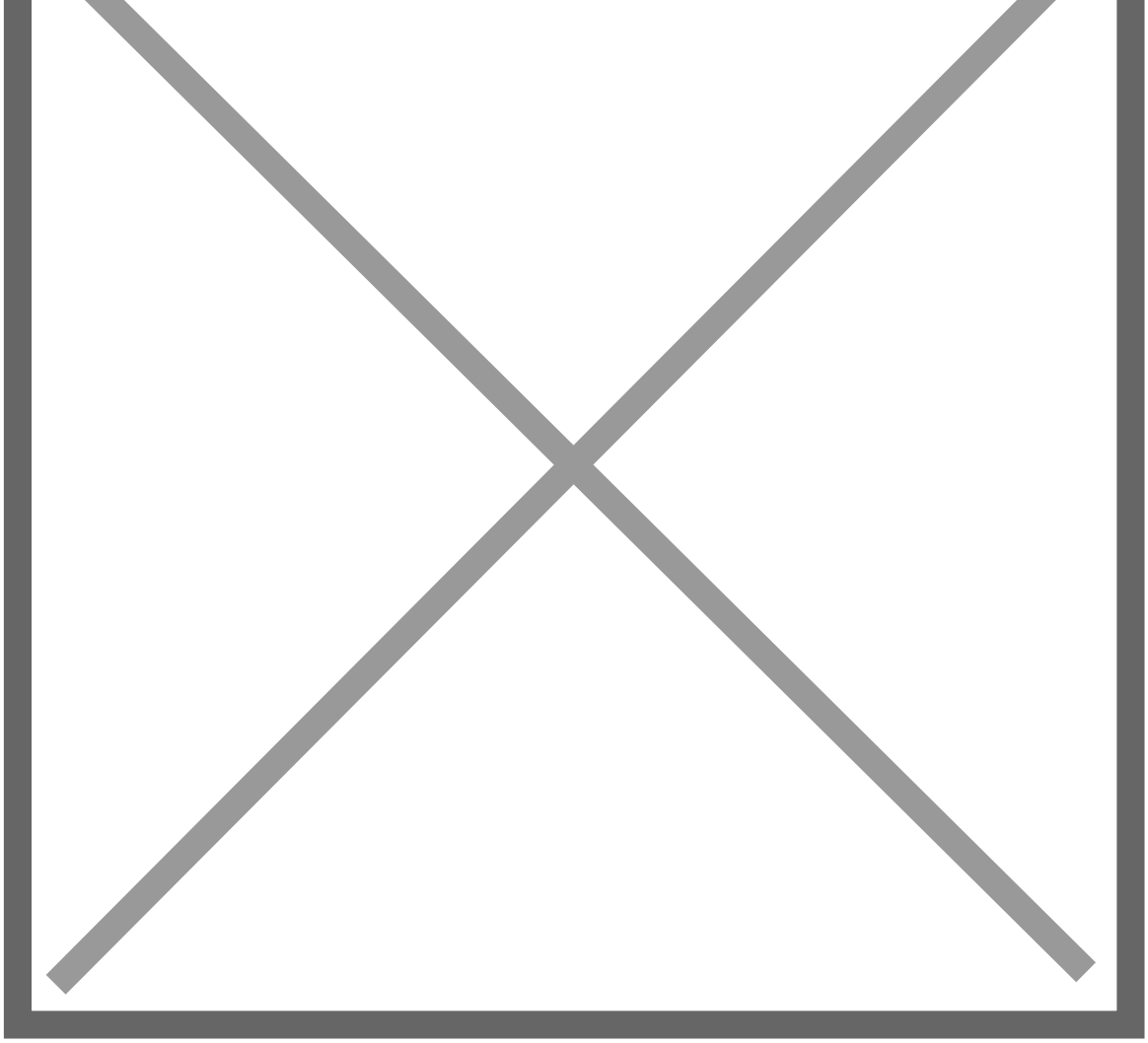


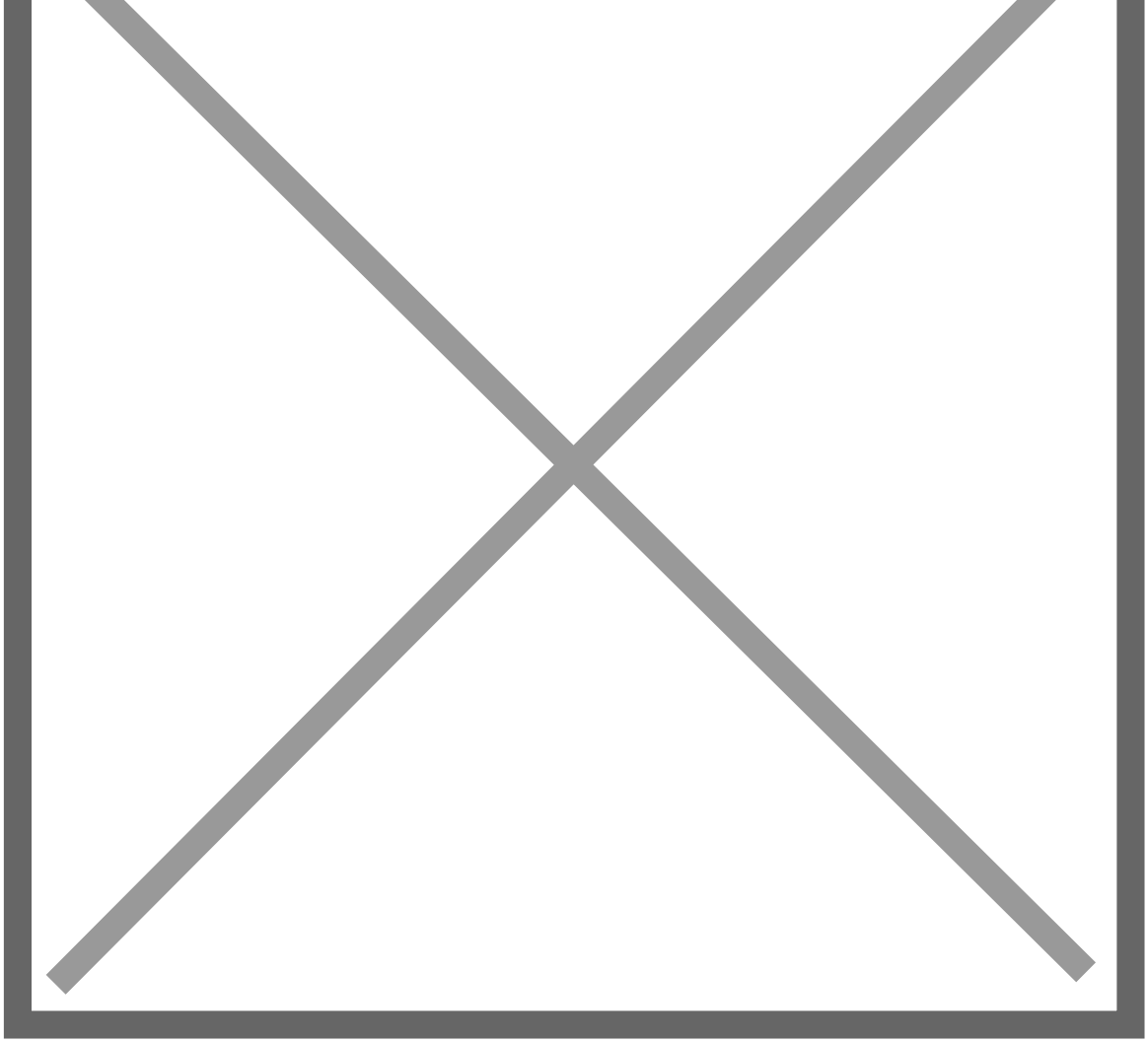


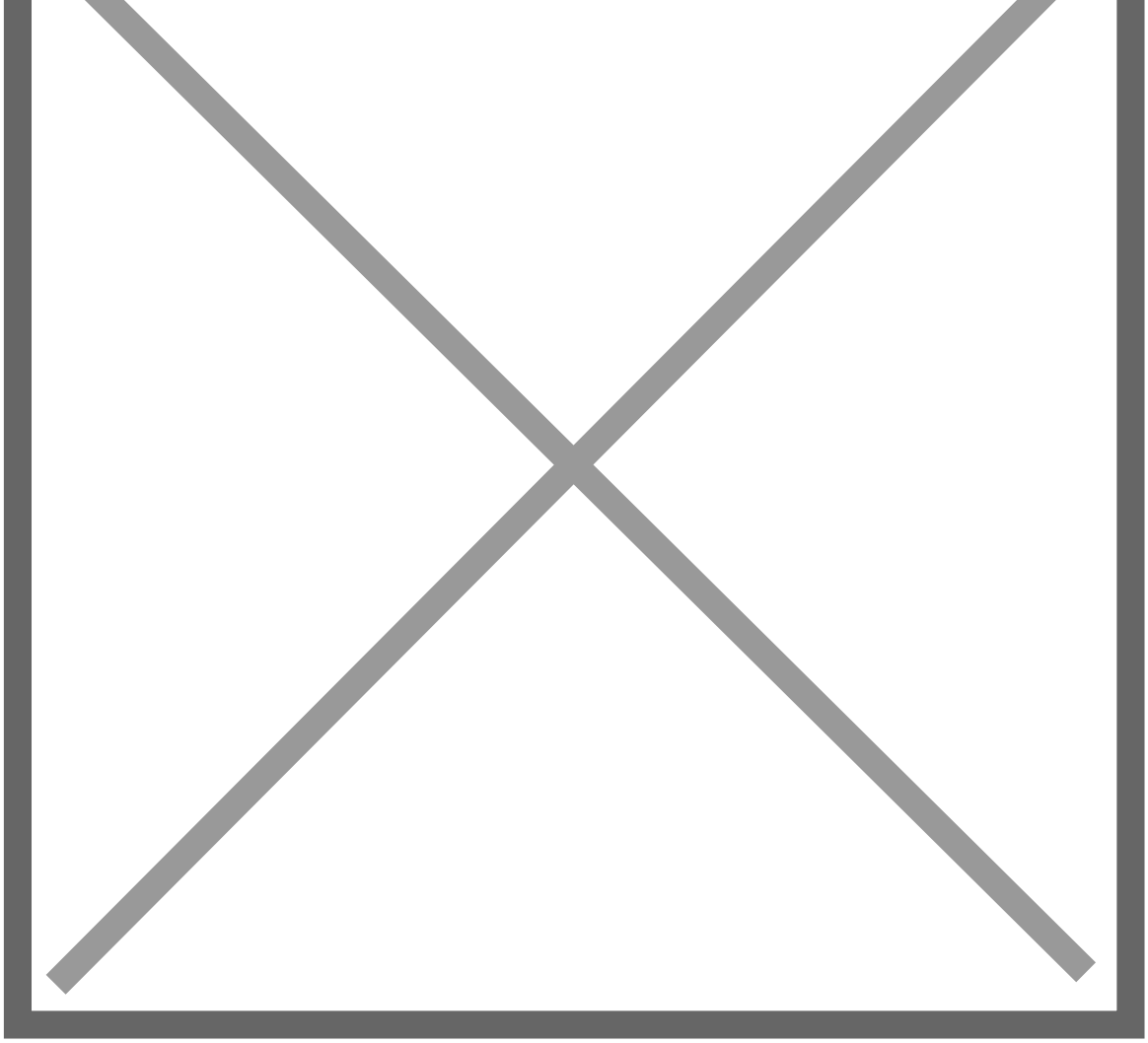




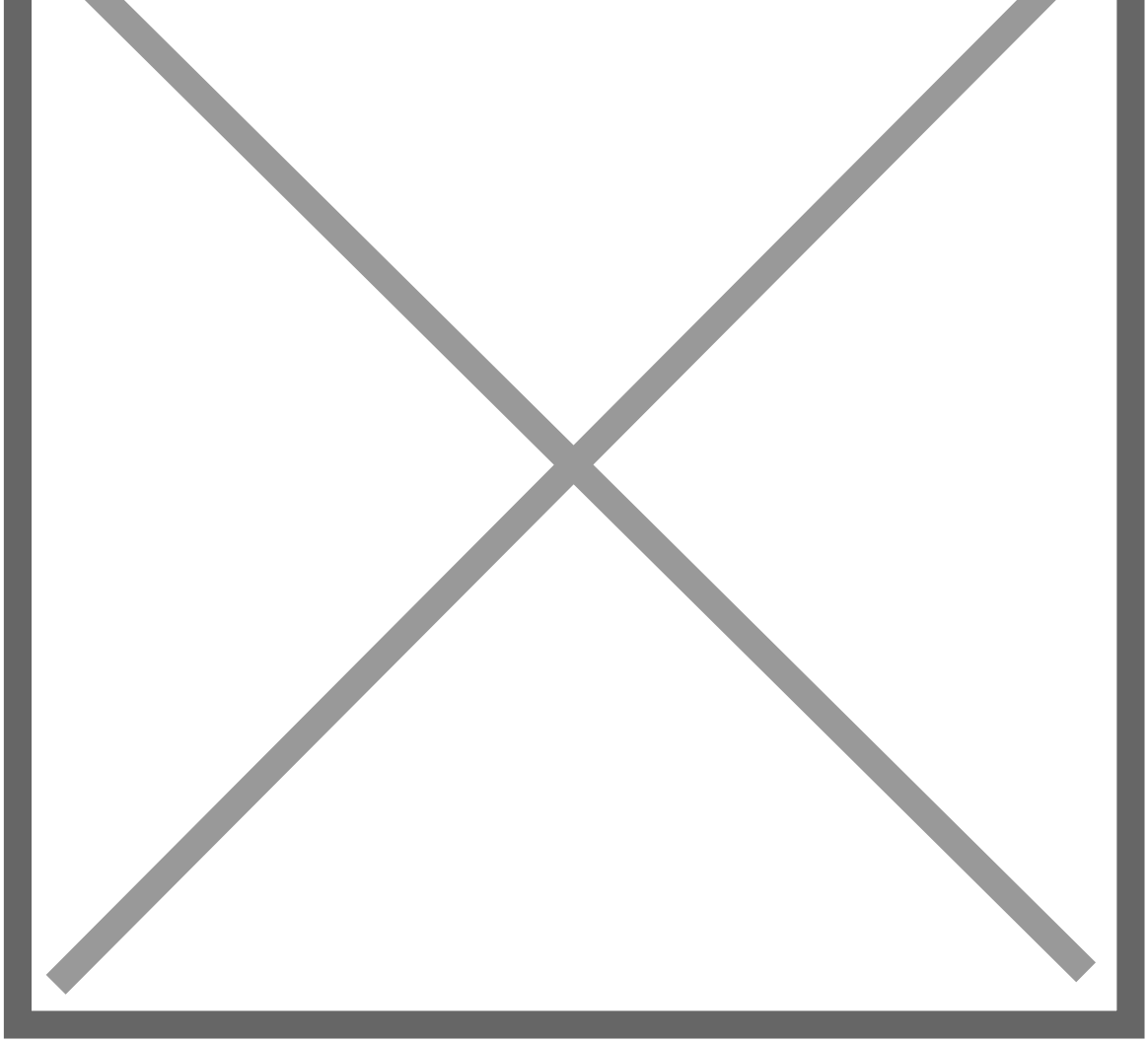


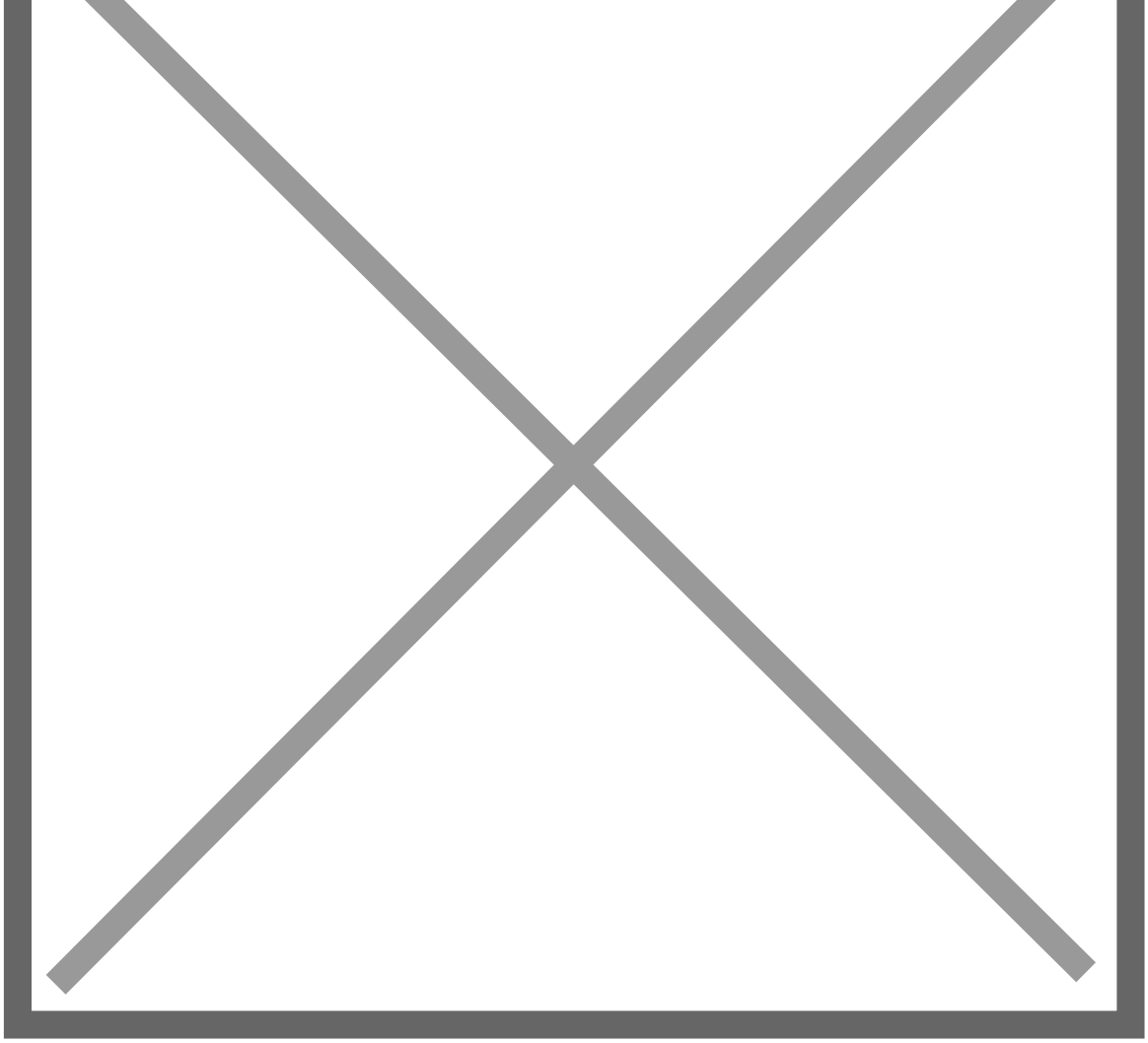


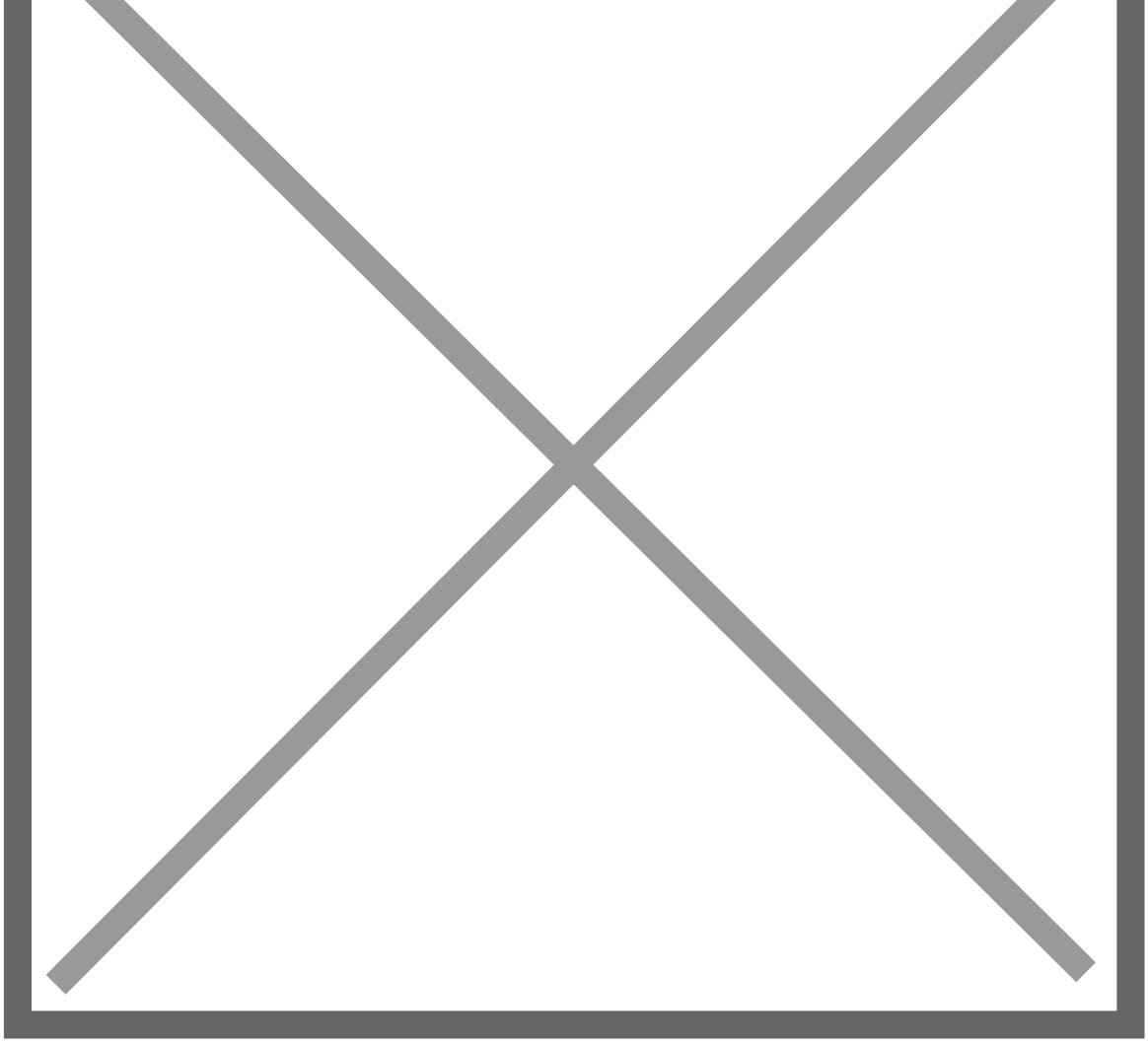


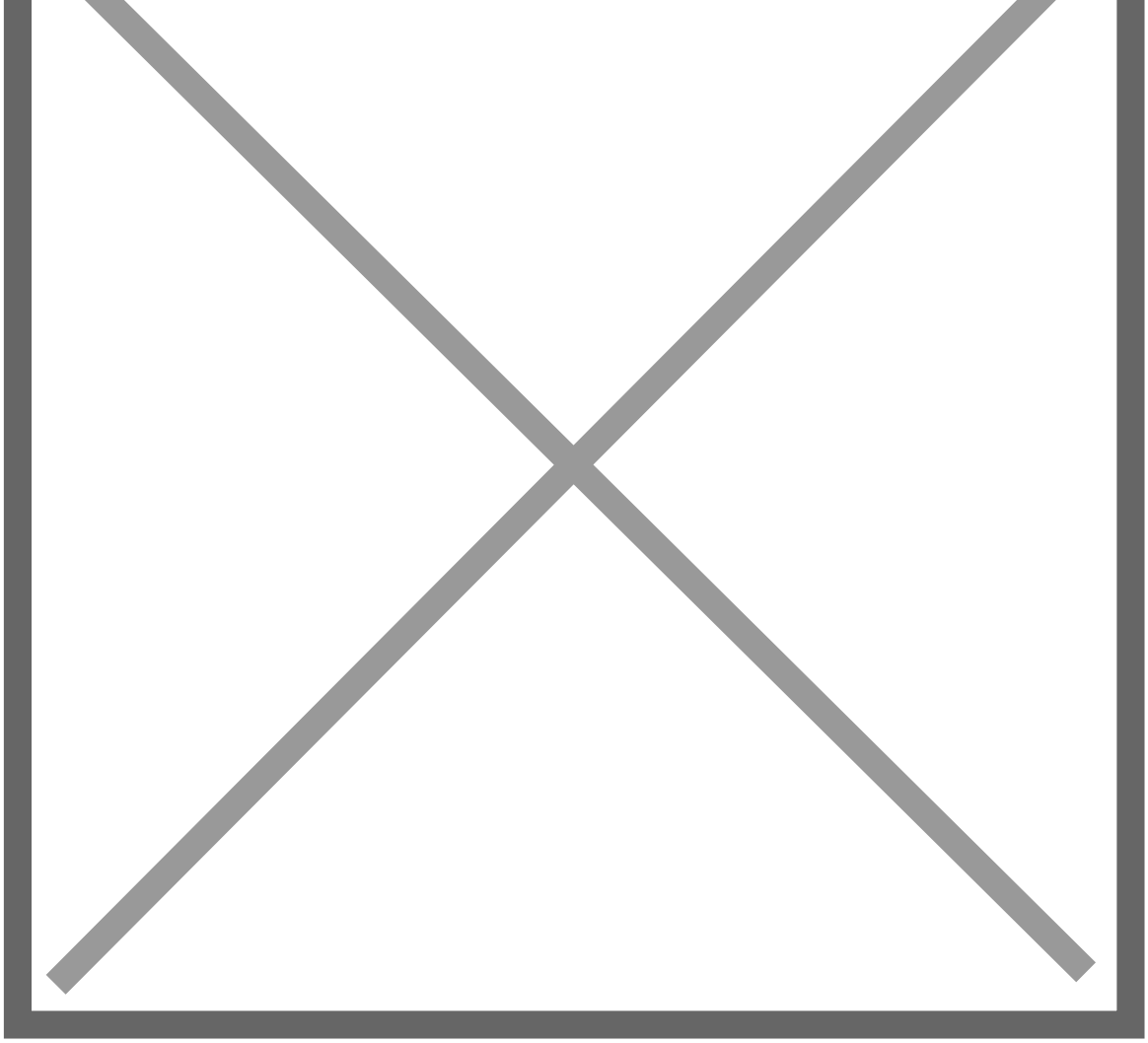












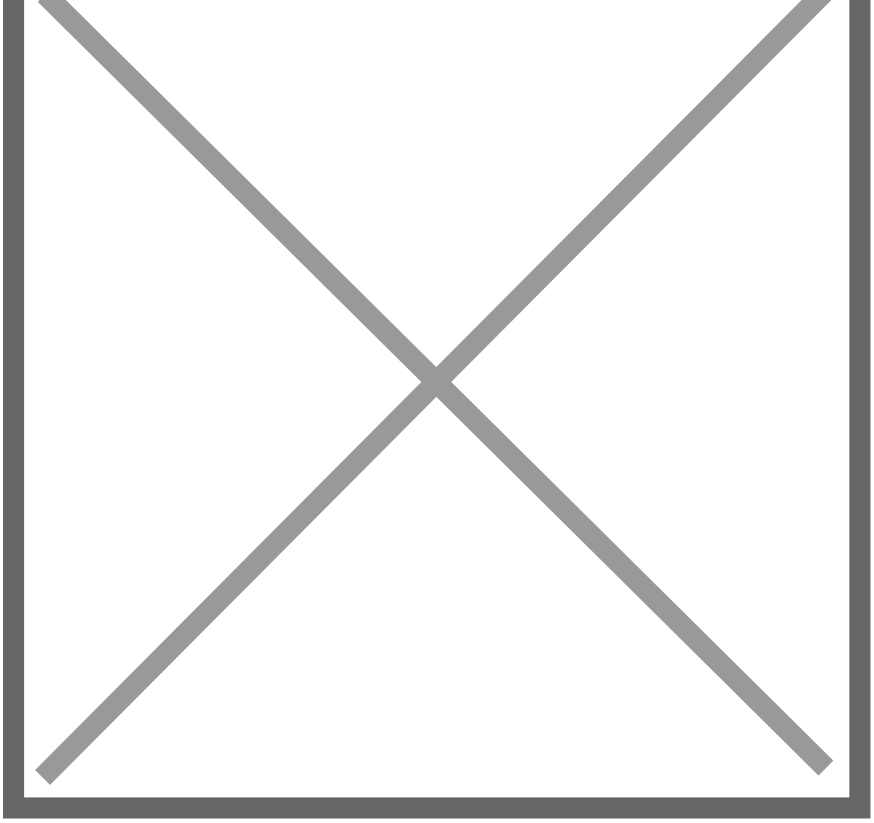
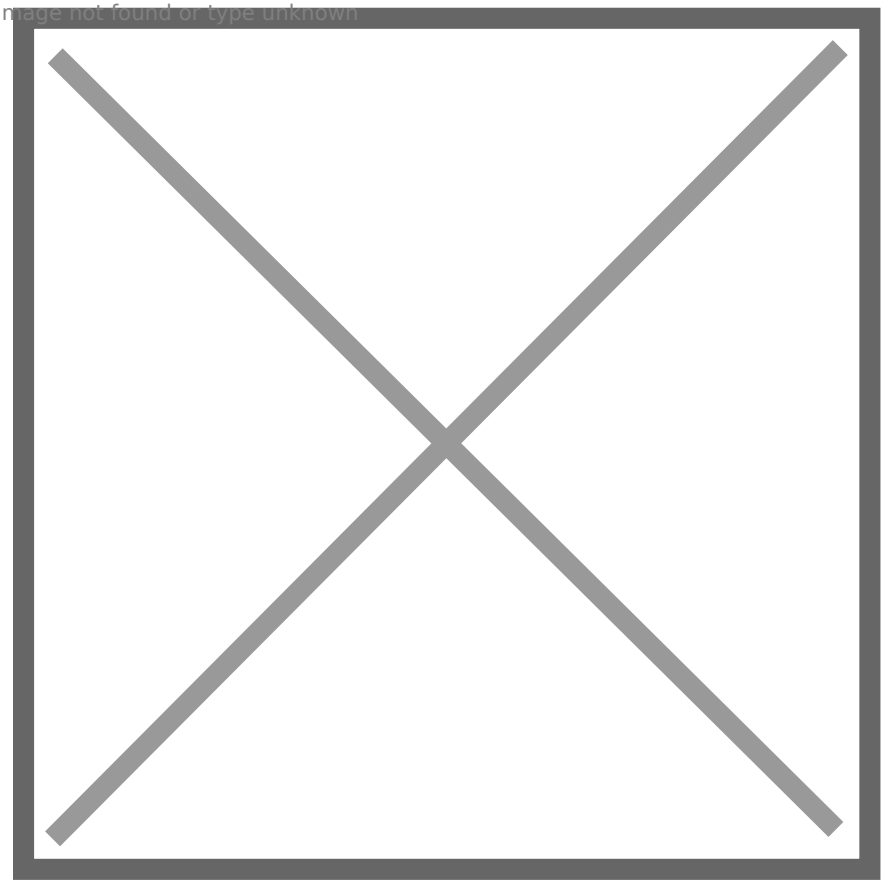
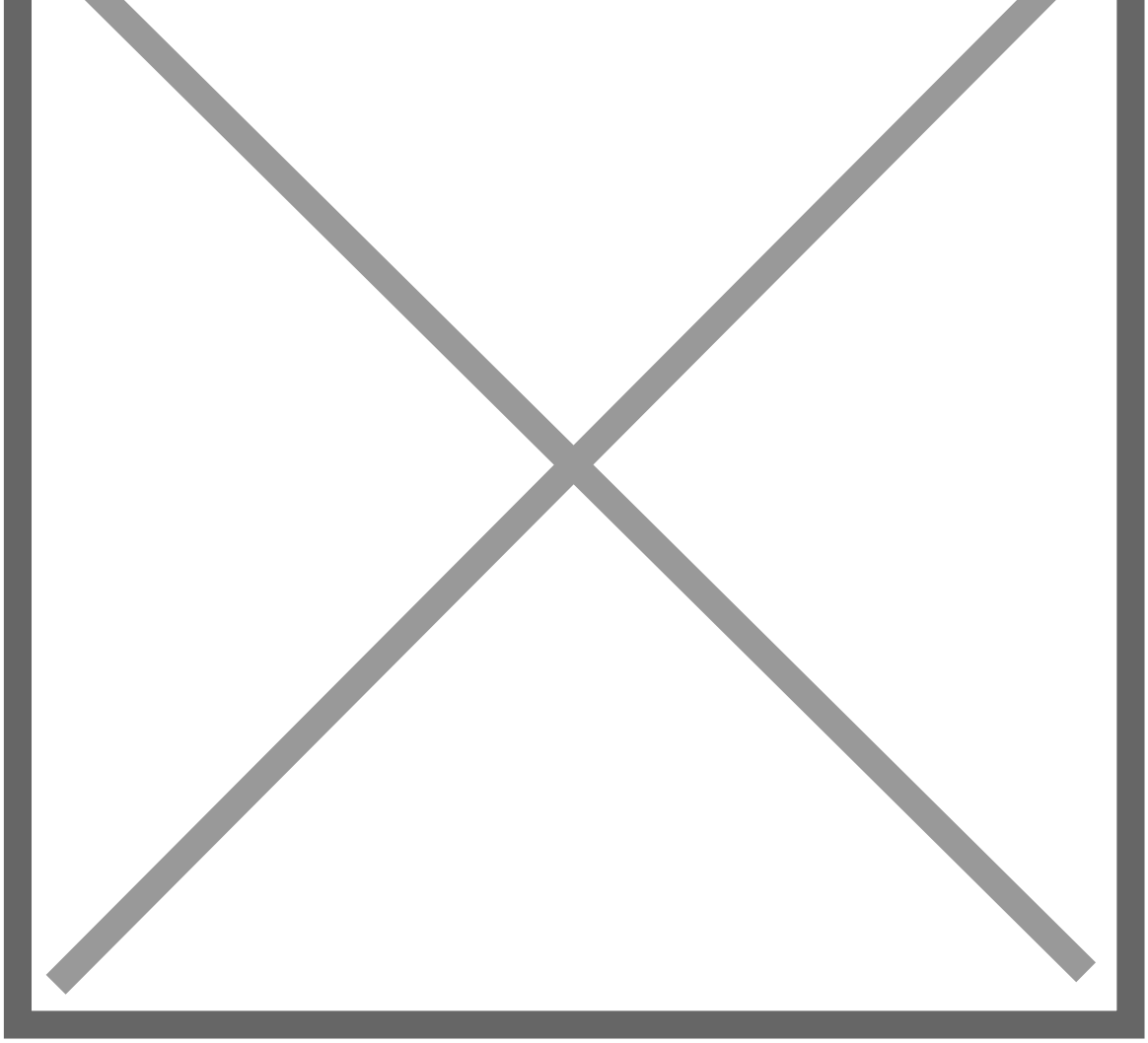


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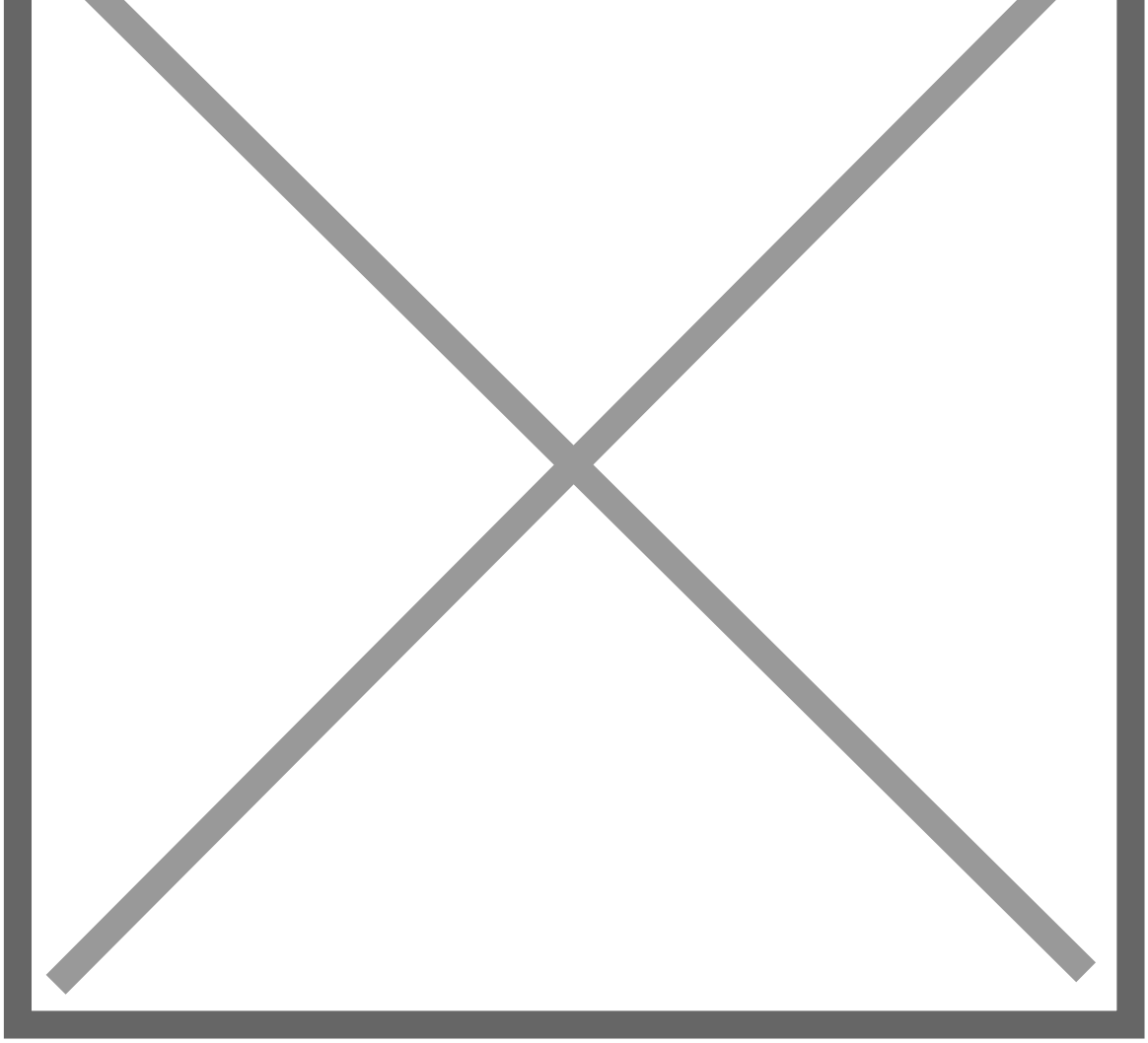
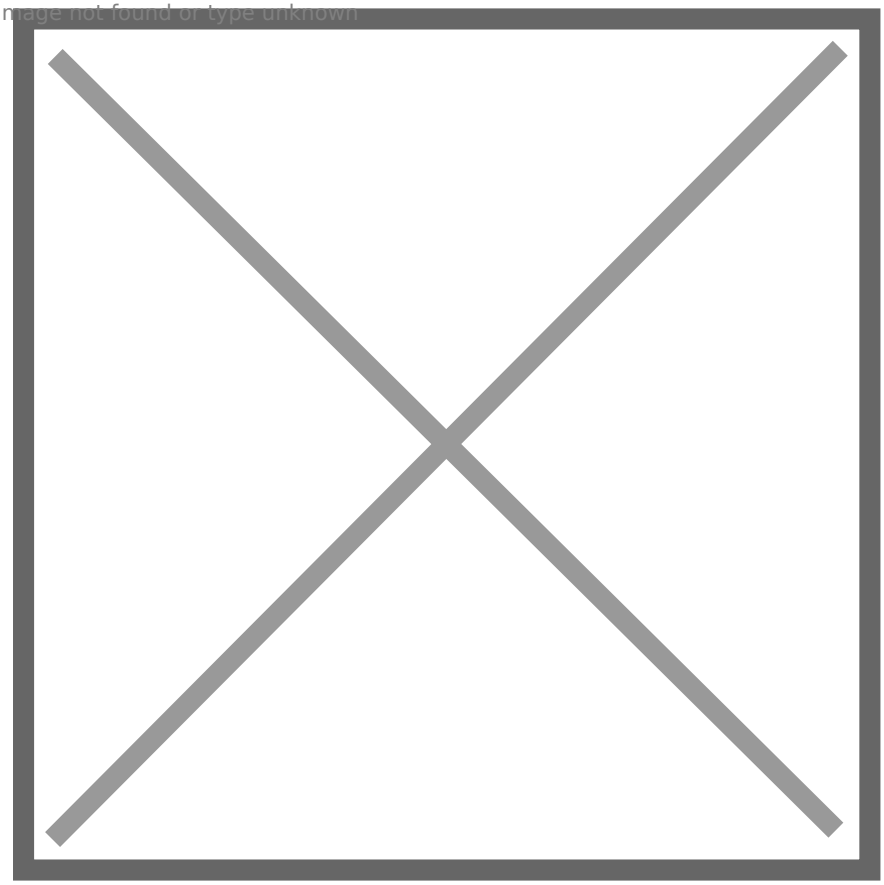


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