02/02/2026

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to the Archons of the Ecumenical Throne: “With you as my supporters, I have nothing to fear”



“Personally, having you as my supporters, I have nothing to fear,” stated His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, commenting on the statement issued by the Brotherhood of the Archons of the Ecumenical Throne, in which they condemn as “unprecedented attacks,” “insults,” and “falsehoods” the claims made against His All-Holiness in the recent announcement of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation.

During its annual dinner, the Brotherhood of Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate “Panagia Pammakaristos” read aloud its joint communiqué in the presence of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and distinguished guests. The Brotherhood emphasised that the Russian agency’s announcement “targets the Ecumenical Patriarch, placing at risk, through the gravely offensive characterisations employed, even his personal safety.”

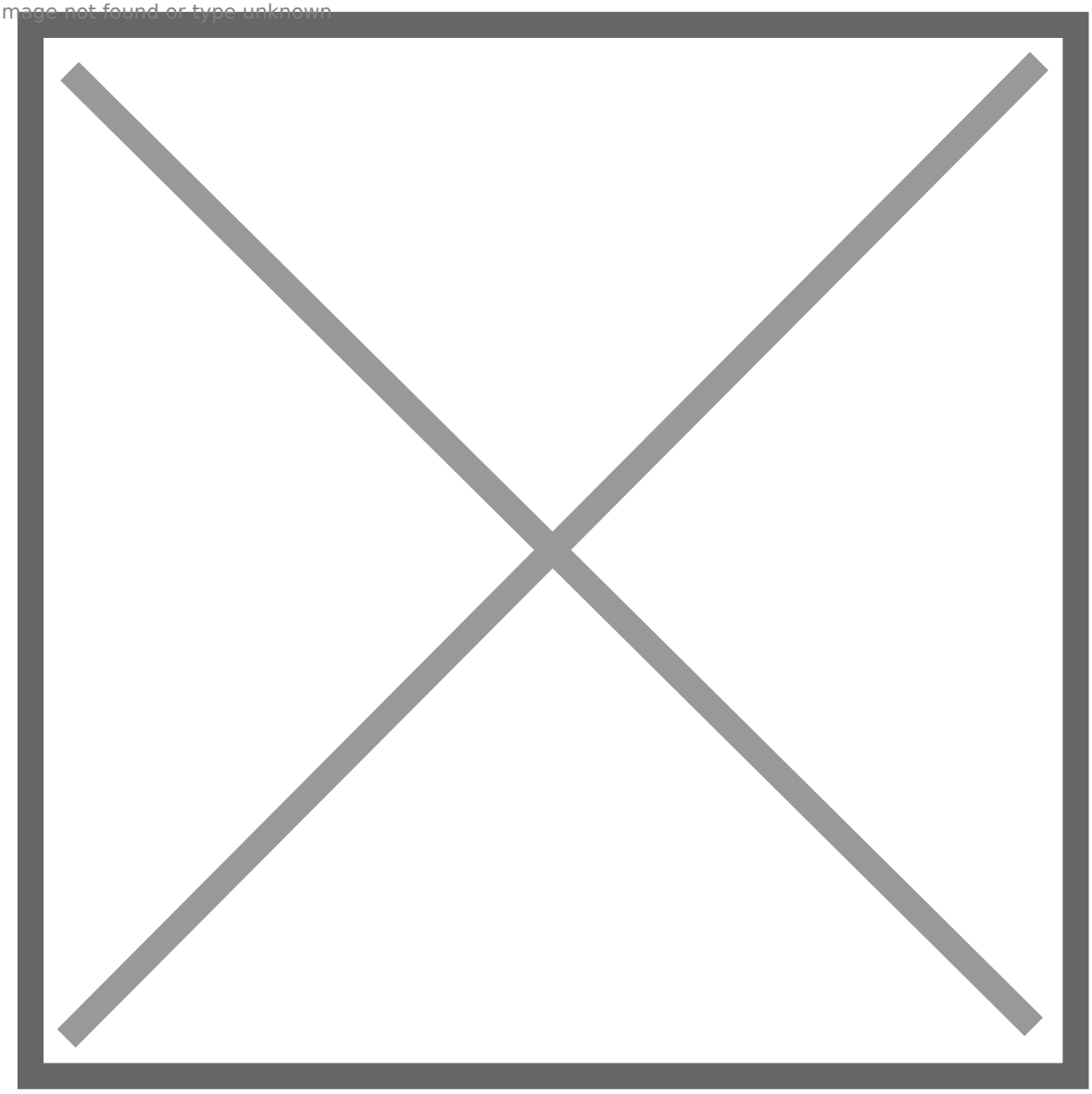
They further called upon all Orthodox Christian Churches and Confessions, as well as ecumenical organisations, to “denounce these practices: the dissemination of false news and the slander of the Ecumenical Patriarch by political or ecclesiastical

centres which, through their words and conduct, demonstrate that they recognise neither what is sacred nor what is holy.” “We honour the dogmatic and canonical tradition of the Church, which is vigilantly safeguarded by the Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople,” the communiqué concludes.

“Forgive them, for they know not what they do, Your All-Holiness,” said Mr Athanasios Martinos, President of the Brotherhood of the Archons of the Patriarchate, as he welcomed Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, characterising the attacks directed against him as “unseemly.”

In his keynote address, Professor of International Law and former Deputy Prime Minister Evangelos Venizelos referred to the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its witness to the world, and its course amid contemporary international challenges.

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“You have the weighty privilege of standing as attendants of the Ecumenical

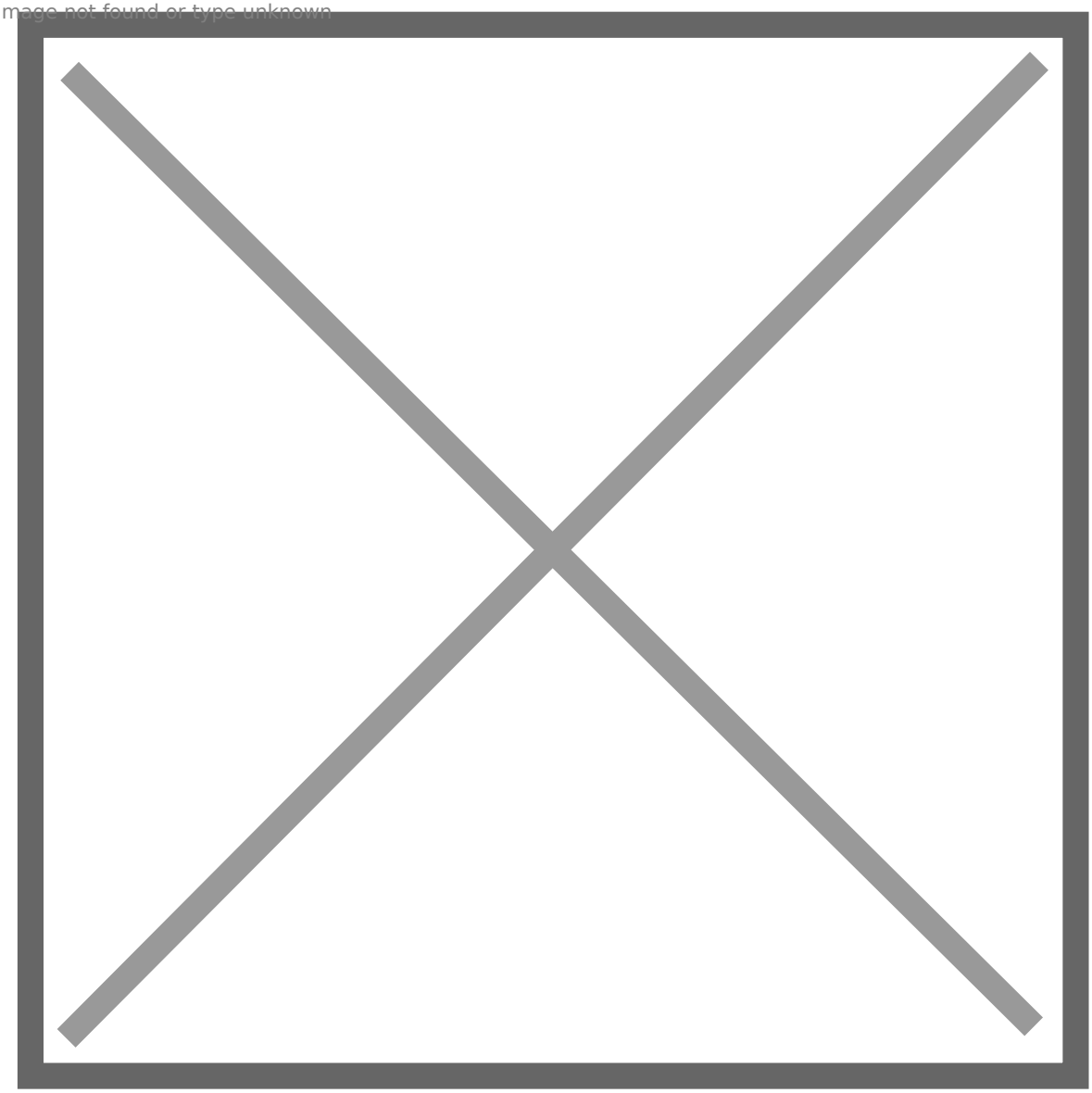
Throne, the Mother of the Churches to which autocephaly was granted by the First-Throned Patriarchate, the Holy Great Church of Christ," Mr. Venizelos noted. He added:

"Autocephaly is one thing, this Orthodox, transcendent understanding that each nation-state may have its own national Church, and ethnophyletism is another. For Orthodoxy, therefore, the first and enduring geopolitical challenge is the distinction between autocephaly and ethnophyletism. That is why it is of great importance to emphasise that the voice of the Patriarchate expresses an Orthodoxy of peace and reconciliation, an Orthodoxy of human rights and ecological sensitivity, and clearly not an Orthodoxy of war, hegemony, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism."

Mr. Venizelos spoke of the transcendent yet decisive role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and of its radiance in the contemporary world.

"Orthodox Christians constitute barely 4% of the world's population and approximately 12% of the Christian population. Thus, in the world, the Phanar is humble, a minority, and embattled, and yet at the same time radiant, emitting the light from the East to the entire West. For the Ecumenical Patriarchate, of which you are Archons and attendants, bears a weighty primacy, carried by the Ecumenical Patriarch as the first among Orthodox bishops," he observed. He added: "Without the Ecumenical Patriarchate, without the Eastern Christian expression, the Western one cannot be constituted either. Therefore, our East is an inseparable and foundational element of the West as a whole."

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“The Orthodox faith remains a source of inspiration and creativity in every aspect of social life,” stated His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew.

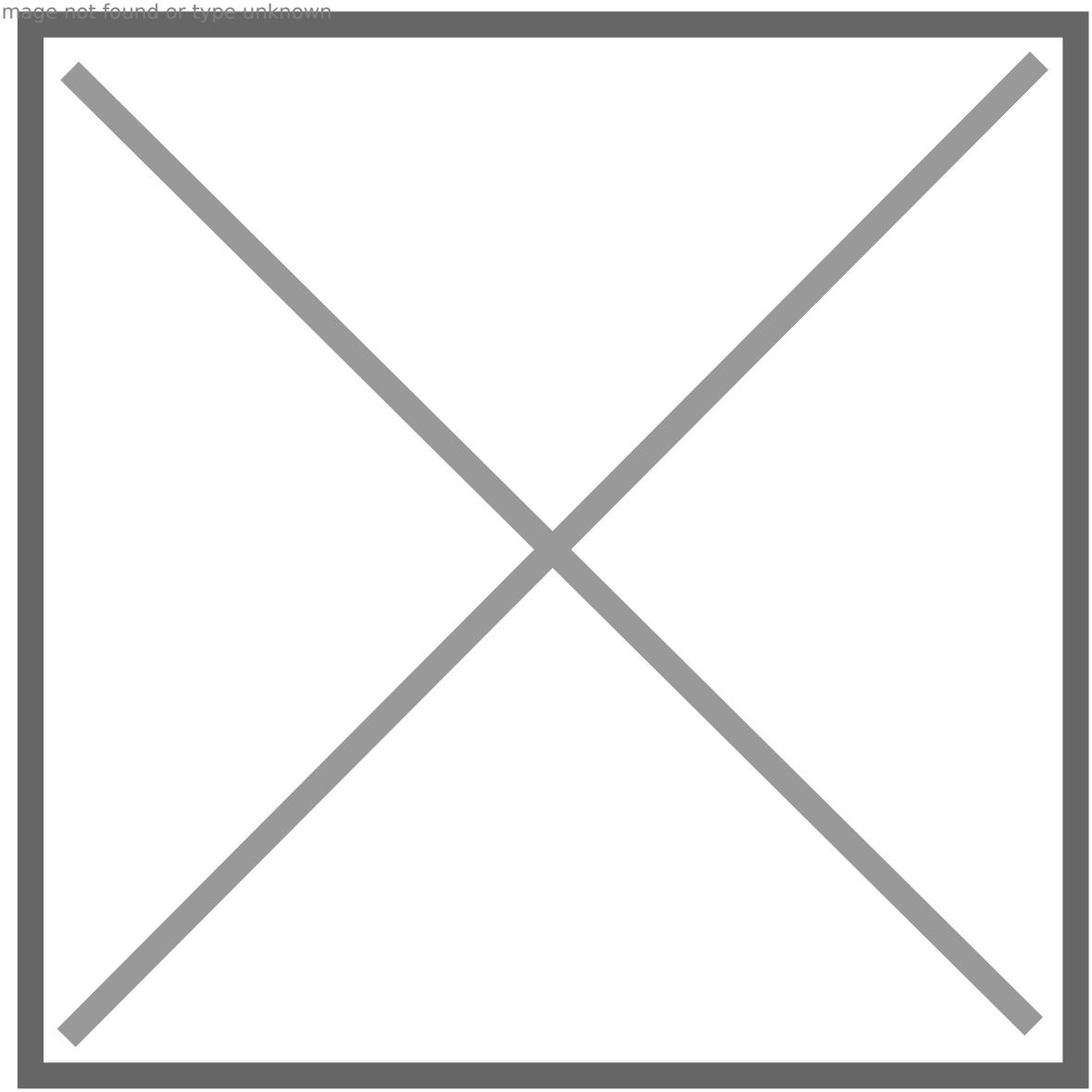
Earlier, the Ecumenical Patriarch had delivered an address on the role of the Archons, recalling that during the first days of his Patriarchate he himself had taken the initiative to establish the Brotherhood “Panagia Pammakaristos.” He emphasised that for thirty-five years the Archons have stood as steadfast supporters of the institution, just as their predecessors did during Byzantine times, offering invaluable service, and after the Fall of Constantinople becoming irreplaceable defenders of the multifaceted mission of the Great Church and willing contributors to the preservation of the sacred and venerable heritage of the Nation.

His All-Holiness also recalled the outward-looking initiatives he undertook during the early years of his Patriarchal ministry, when the Ecumenical Patriarchate began

opening itself to the wider world and to Turkish society, noting that the life of the Greek Orthodox community in Constantinople is inseparably linked with that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

“We informed Turkish public opinion about the identity and mission of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the past, we were a very closed institution; we had a fear, a hesitation… I sense and observe that the President of the Republic of Turkey has respect for the institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; he invites me to all the annual receptions at the Presidential Palace, and we meet on various social occasions, and so forth,” His All-Holiness remarked.

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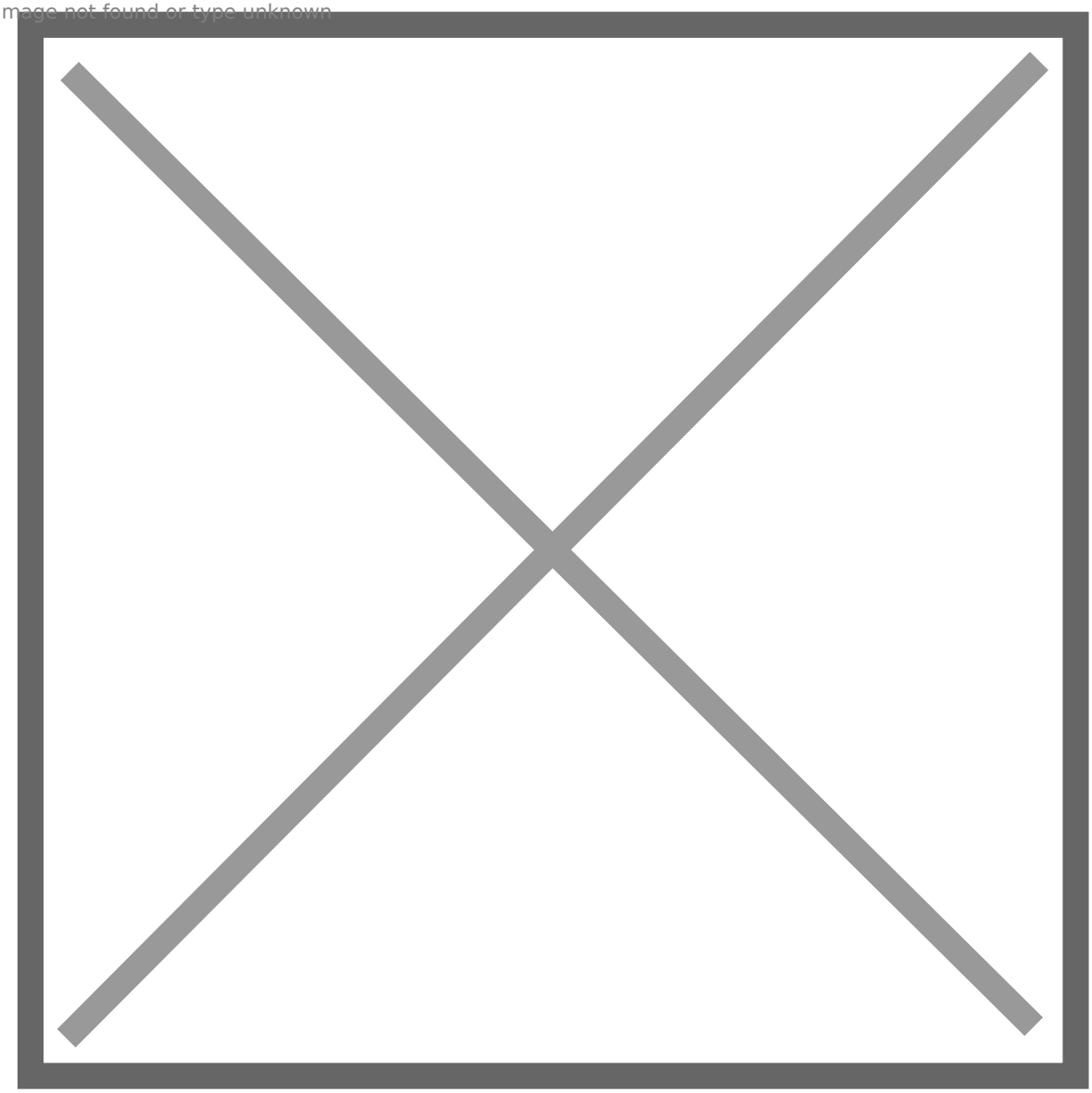


“Our Ecumenical Patriarchate never considered closure and inward-looking isolation to be a consistent expression or application of the tradition and ethos of the Church,” Patriarch Bartholomew stressed, noting that whenever this occurred it had negative consequences for both society and the Church. He continued:

“Our Church has never been indifferent to the problems, both positive and negative, of each era, to the contradictions and advances of civilization and cultures. Even today, the Orthodox faith remains a source of inspiration and creativity in all aspects of social life. The Church is called in every age to articulate her philanthropic witness, to proclaim the Christian understanding of the human person, to emphasize that there are dimensions of our existence inaccessible to scientific knowledge, and to remind political and economic authorities of their moral and social responsibility. We have proclaimed that nothing justifies the violation of human dignity, that we can live in the world without destroying it, in peace.”

Earlier in the afternoon, the Ecumenical Patriarch visited the exhibition of the Philoptochos Brotherhood of Thessaloniki, dedicated to the Brotherhood’s early years. He was guided by its President, Georgios Konstantinidis, through the exhibits and historical photographs documenting the Philoptochos Brotherhood’s supportive role across all facets of social life: education, healthcare, parish life, missionary activity, teaching, and its contribution to national struggles.

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His All-Holiness was accompanied throughout the events by His Eminence Metropolitan Philotheos of Thessaloniki; Metropolitan Barnabas of Neapolis and Stavroupolis, and Metropolitan Ioustinos of Kalamaria and Nea Krini, hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne, as well as Deputy Minister of the Interior (Macedonia–Thrace) Kostas Gioulekas, Deputy Minister of Development Stavros Kalafatis, Deputy Minister of Education Nikolaos Papaiannis, Mayor of Thessaloniki Stelios Angeloudis, Members of Parliament Dimitris Kouvelas and Petros Pappas, the Prime Minister’s Coordinator in Thessaloniki Yiannis Papageorgiou, the Civil Governor of Mount Athos Alkiviadis Stefanis, Athonite fathers, and others.

Source: APE–MPE

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