PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

A. PROPOSAL: Change listing in Appendix II of *Tursiops truncatus* from "western Mediterranean population" to "Mediterranean population"

B. PROPONENT: Principality of Monaco

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

1. Taxon

1.1	**Classis**	Mammalia
1.2	**Ordo**	Cetacea
1.3	**Familia**	Delphinidae
1.4	**Species**	*Tursiops truncates* (Montagu. 1821)
1.5	**Common name(s)**	English: Bottlenose dolphin French: Grand dauphin, Dauphin souffleur Spanish: Delfín mular Albanian: Delfin i madh Arabic: ???? ? ???O (Delfin kabir) Croatian: Dobri dupin (Dolphinan yam hatichon) Hebrew: ????'? - ?? ?????? Italian: Tursiope Maltese: Delfin geddumu qasir Turkish: Afalina

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution

Bottlenose Dolphins have been reported to mostly occur the coastal waters of the all Mediterranean basin. They are considered regular off Algeria (Boutiba *et al.*, 2003), Croatia (Bearzi *et al.*, 1997), Cyprus (Hadjichristoforou, 2004), France (Deguy & Cyrus 1973; Duguy et al., 1983; Ripoll *et al.*, 2004; Dhermain, 2006), Greece (Frantzis *et al.*, 2003), Israel (Feingold *et al.*, 2005; Scheinin *et al.*, 2005), Italy (Notarbartolo *et al.*, 1993), Morocco (Bayed, 1997), Slovenia (Genov & Kotnjek, 2007), Spain (Cañadas *et al.*, 2002; Raga & Pantoja, 2004; Cañadas & Hammond, 2006), Tunisia (Chakroun, 1994; Ben Naceur *et al.*, 2004) and Turkey (Öztürk *et al.*, 2004).

The Bottlenose Dolphin is one of the most common cetacean species in the Mediterranean, after the Striped Dolphin *Stenella coeruleoalba*, particularly in continental shelf waters (Bearzi *et al.*, 2008). Bottlenose Dolphins are highly adaptable and inhabit a wide variety of habitats including lagoons and enclosed seas (Bearzi & Ferretti 2000; Bearzi *et al.*, 2007a), deep areas with steep bottom gradients (e.g. around Crete; Frantzis *et al.*, 2003), productive waters 200-500 m deep (e.g. in the Alborán Sea; Cañadas & Hammond, 2006), and the

channels and shelf waters of archipelagos (Pulcini *et al*., 1993; Bearzi *et al*., 1997; Impetuoso *et al*., 2003; Mussi & Miragliuolo, 2003; Forcada *et al*., 2004). Many of the Mediterranean areas inhabited by these dolphins are subject to intensive human use, e.g. the straits of Gibraltar, Bonifacio, and Messina (Romeo *et al*., 2003; Raga & Pantoja 2004; Dhermain, 2006), and the gulfs of Lion, Genova, and Trieste (Francese *et al*., 1999; Ripoll *et al*., 2004; Gnone *et al*., 2006). Bottlenose Dolphins are also found around oil and gas drilling platforms in the Adriatic Sea (Triossi & Tizzi, 2003). Within their overall range, gaps with very low densities of animals have been documented, e.g. in the north-western Ligurian Sea (France and Italy) and in the north-western Gulf of Vera (Spain). Variation in density is likely related to several factors, including a) habitat characteristics, b) local availability of suitable prey, and c) the generally gregarious nature of Bottlenose Dolphin communities. Moreover, the effects of past extermination campaigns (Bearzi *et al*., 2004a) and a variety of ongoing threats probably have contributed to the pattern of present-day occurrence of Bottlenose Dolphins across the region.

See section 2.3 (Habitat) for more details.

2.2 Population

2.2.1 Numbers: absolute and relative abundances

Little is known about the numbers of Bottlenose Dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea. There is no basin-wide estimate. The most reliable information comes from local studies conducted in the Strait of Gibraltar (Pérez *et al*., 2006), Alborán Sea (Cañadas, 2006; Cañadas & Hammond, 2006), the Spanish waters between Gulf of Valencia and Gulf of Vera (Gómez de Segura *et al*., 2006), Balearic Sea (Forcada *et al*., 2004), a small portion of the Italian waters (Lauriano *et al*., 2003), the Tunisian plateau (Ben Naceur *et al*., 2004), the northern Adriatic Sea (Fortuna *et al*., 2000), Maltese waters (Vella, 1999), portions of the Turkish and Greek seas (Bearzi *et al*., 2007a). These numbers are based on different methodological approaches, including absolute abundance estimates obtained through mark-recapture methods or Generalized Additive Models (GAMs), maximum number of photo-identified individuals, and discovery curves (i.e. curves showing the cumulative number of individual dolphins identified as a function of photo-identification effort, usually expressed as survey days with photos). Additional information that could in future increase the number of available absolute estimates for different areas exist for Lampedusa Island (Italy; Pulcini *et al*., 2004), northern Adriatic Sea (Bearzi *et al*., 2007b; Genov & Fortuna, 2005), Central Adriatic Sea (Kornati and Murtar Sea, Croatia; Impetuoso *et al*., 2003), Eastern Ionian Sea (Greece; Bearzi *et al*., 2005, 2006), Amvrakikos Gulf (Greece; Bearzi *et al*., 2007a), Ligurian Sea and northern Tyrrhenian Sea (Italy; Gnone *et al*., 2006), Gulf of Catania (Italy; Tringali *et al*., 2004), Waters off Corsica (France; Dhermain 2006), Eastern Ionian Sea (Greece; Bearzi *et al*., 2005), Mediterranean waters of Israel (Scheinin *et al*., 2005). Most studies in coastal waters are limited to relatively small areas of 400 – 1,000 km^2 and likely do not cover the entire range of the groups under study. Relatively recent, broad-scale shipboard surveys (4,000 – 80,000 km^2) showed that in some Mediterranean areas Bottlenose Dolphins are present both near shore and offshore, and densities can range between 4 and 20 animals per 100 km^2 (Ben Naceur *et al*., 2004; Forcada *et al*., 2004; Cañadas & Hammond, 2006; Gómez de Segura *et al*., 2006). In this situation, the total population size in the Mediterranean remains uncertain, but it is unlikely to exceed the low 10 000s (Bearzi & Fortuna, 2006).

Little information exists for other parts of the Mediterranean basin where only information on past and present occurrence comes from stranding records. Virtually nothing is known on abundances for large portions of the south-eastern part of the basin.

2.2.2 Population structure

Based on nuclear and mitochondrial DNA analyses, Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphins resulted as genetically differentiated from those inhabiting the contiguous eastern North Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea (Natoli *et al*., 2005). The genetic analysis of 74 samples collected along a continuous distributional range from the Mediterranean Sea showed some degree of population structure with boundaries that coincide with the transitions between habitat regions. These regions can be characterized by ocean floor topography and by features such as surface salinity, productivity and temperature (Natoli *et al*., 2005).

2.3 Habitat

Bottlenose Dolphins in the Mediterranean are often regarded as predominantly 'coastal' or 'inshore' animals but this designation may be misleading as they can be encountered in continental shelf and shallow plateaux waters at any distance from the coast of either main land and islands (Notarbartolo di Sciara *et al*., 1993; Bearzi *et al*., 1997; Triossi & Tizzi 2003; Bearzi *et al*., 2004a; Ben Naceur *et al*., 2004; Cañadas *et al*., 2004; Gómez de Segura *et al*., 2004; Ripoll *et al*., 2004; Gannier, 2005), but also in straits, gulfs, eutrophic waters of estuaries and lagoons steep coasts with no continental shelf and deep waters of the continental slope (Cañadas *et al*., 2002; Bearzi & Ferretti 2000; Frantzis *et al*., 2003; Zafiropoulos & Merlini, 2003; Cañadas *et al*., 2004; Forcada *et al*., 2004; Gómez de Segura *et al*., 2004; Bearzi *et al*., 2005, 2007a). This species usually favours depths shallower than 200 m (Pace *et al*., 1999; Mussi *et al*., 1998; Gazo *et al*., 2004b; Gnone *et al*., 2006; Gonzalvo *et al*., 2004; Manoukian *et al*., 2004).

2.4 Migrations

Even though bottlenose dolphins can display rather strong site fidelity, they showed to have quite wide ranges in European waters, up to 400 km (Wilson *et al*., 2004). In the Mediterranean Sea, coast-to-coast movements across open seas occur covering over 200 km, in Ligurian Sea, between Corse and Italy (Dhermain *et al*., 199), in the Adriatic Sea, between Slovenia, Croatia and Italy (Fortuna 2006). In addition, transnational mouvement are very likely to occur between the continental waters of Lampedusa Island (Italy) and Tunisia (Pulcini *et al*., 2004; Ben Naucer *et al*., 2004), the eastern Aegean waters between Greece and Turkey (Frantzis *et al*., 2003).

3. Threat data

Owing to their occurrence in coastal waters, bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean are exposed to a wide variety of human activities. Whilst intentional killing was likely the most important cause of mortality until the 1960s (see previous section), important ongoing threats include incidental mortality in fishing gear and the reduced availability of key prey caused by region-wide overfishing and environmental degradation. Additional potential or likely threats include the toxic effects of xenobiotic chemicals, epizootic outbreaks, direct disturbance from boating and shipping, noise, and the consequences of climate change. It is worth noting that this same array of known and potential threats applies to riverine, estuarine and coastal

cetaceans (and other groups of organisms) in many other parts of the world as well (e.g. Reeves *et al*., 2003).

3.1 Direct threat of threat of the population

3.1.1 Illegal trade

The level of illegal trade is unknown. At present, live capture of bottlenose dolphins is prohibited in all Black Sea countries except for Turkey where permits for the live capture of 30 animals in the Black, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean Seas were issued and realized at least in part (23 captures were reported) during 2006 and 2007 (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 2007).

3.1.2 Direct catch, captive breeding for commercial purposes (outside the country of origin)

Direct catches were common in the past throughout the entire Mediterranean Sea, mainly in the framework of national fishery management schemes (Gourret, 1894; Barone, 1895; Del Rosso, 1905; Peksider-Srica, 1931; Brunelli, 1932; Crnkovic, 1958; Cuculic, 1960; Marelic, 1961; Duguy *et al*., 1983; Bompar, 2000; Bearzi *et al*., 2004a). Dolphins were considered detrimental for fisheries in terms of competition for the same resources, but in some area they were also considered as target species (Bearzi *et al., in press*). The overall frequency of intentional killing has been drastically declining over the long term due to new legislation granting cetacean protection in most Mediterranean countries. At the present there are not known direct catches; however killing in retaliation for damage to fisheries, killing with harpoons or guns for local consumption of meat have been reported in the past in Ligurian and Tyrrhenian seas, notwithstanding legal protection (Di Natale, 1990; Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994). Such events seem to have become extremely rare in recent times, but they may still occur.

3.1.3 Incidental catch and commercial exploitation

Due to their opportunistic behaviour and predominantly coastal occurrence, Bottlenose Dolphins in the Mediterranean are often exposed to entanglement in many types of fishing gear, in most of the Mediterranean countries, including Algeria, Croatia, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey (Di Natale, 1990, 1995; Consiglio *et al*., 1992; Silvani *et al*., 1992; Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994; Öztürk *et al*., 2001; Boutiba *et al*., 2003; Raitsos *et al*., 2003; Roditi-Elasar *et al*., 2003; Tudela *et al*., 2005; Kent *et al*., 2005; Brotons *et al*., 2006; Díaz López, 2006b; Fortuna, 2006; Van Canneyt & Peltier, 2006). Large pelagic driftnets (Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994; Öztürk *et al*., 2001), small pelagic driftnets (Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994), set nets (Silvani *et al*., 1992; Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994; Raitsos *et al*., 2003; Brotons *et al*., 2006; Díaz López, 2006b), bottom trawls (Silvani *et al*., 1992; Goffman *et al*., 2001; Feingold *et al*., 2005; Brotons *et al*., 2006), purse seines (Bradai, 2001), traditional tuna traps (Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994) and antipredator nets used in aquaculture facilities (Díaz Lopez & Bernal Shirai, 2007). In addition to incidental mortality, depredation and damage caused by dolphins to fishing gear may result in animals being shot or harassed in retaliation (Di Natale, 1990; Silvani *et al*., 1992; Di Natale & Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1994; Commission of the European Communities, 2002; Fernández-Contreras *et al*., 2002; Gazo *et al*., 2004a; Mitra *et al*., 2004; Blasi & Pace, 2006).

Few attempts have been made to estimate fishery-related mortality for Bottlenose Dolphins (Silvani *et al*., 1992; Di Natale, 1995; Díaz Lopez, 2006b; Díaz Lopez & Bernal Shirai, 2007) and the magnitude of bycatch and retaliation events is unknown in most cases. Even when

they are available, bycatch estimates are partial in terms of geographic and gear coverage. However, the available studies and circumstantial evidence for local populations raise serious concern, suggesting that annual fishery-induced mortality is locally unsustainable in at least some cases (Silvani *et al*., 1992; Brotons *et al*., 2006; Díaz Lopez, 2006b; Fortuna 2006; Díaz Lopez & Bernal Shirai, 2007). Rigorous studies of bycatch rates using reliable methods, which normally must include on-board observers and a statistically robust sampling design, are needed to obtain credible estimates of mortality. It is then incumbent to determine 'sustainability' by reference to the population size, also taking into account other existing threats.

In recent years, takes due to illegal fisheries has been reported off Morocco (Tudela, 2004), Spain (Silvani *et al*., 1992; Gazo *et al.*, 2004a; Tudela, 2004), Italy (Consiglio *et al.*, 1992; Blasi & Pace, 2006) and Greece (Mitra *et al*., 2004).

The persisting illegal use of dynamite for fishing in several Mediterranean areas, including Algeria, Croatia, France, Greece, Lebanon, Libya and Malta (Di Natale, 1990; Reynolds *et al*., 1994; Tudela, 2004; Fortuna, 2006; Notarbartolo di Sciara *et al*., 2006; Dhermain & Cesarini, 2007), represents another fishery-related threat to Bottlenose Dolphins. Though impact at the basin level is probably low, it may be significant locally (Fortuna 2006).

3.2 Habitat destruction

3.2.1 Lack of food resources

Overlap between dolphin prey species and fishery target species does not necessarily imply direct competition (Briand, 2004). However, it is reasonable to infer competitive interactions of some kind when key prey become scarce and remain subject to heavy fishing pressure (Trites *et al.*, 1997). In this regard, we note that about 95% of marine-fish catches globally come from continental shelf regions (Roberts & Hawkins, 1999) where Bottlenose Dolphins occur. Overfishing is having profound direct and indirect impacts on Mediterranean ecosystems (Sala, 2004). In the Mediterranean there is an acute lack of historical data and fisheries statistics are generally incomplete and unreliable, data on fishing effort being almost absent (Briand, 2000, 2003; Lleonart, 2005). Nonetheless, it is generally acknowledged that unsustainable fishing has contributed significantly to dramatic ecological changes and caused the decline of many fish stocks (Caddy & Griffiths, 1990; De Walle *et al.*, 1993; Stanners & Bourdeau, 1995; Caddy, 1997). According to FAO, approximately 35% of the Mediterranean stocks are exploited beyond MSY levels, and 43% at MSY levels (Garcia *et al.*, 2005). Some of the Mediterranean fish stocks that have been either 'overexploited' or 'fully exploited' include important Bottlenose Dolphin prey such as European Hake, Striped Red Mullet, European Pilchard, Common Pandora *Pagellus erythrinus*, Annular Seabream *Diplodus annularis*, and Atlantic Horse Mackerel *Trachurus trachurus* (Lleonart, 2005).

Yet, the fact that availability of Bottlenose Dolphin prey is strongly influenced by fishing pressure, with potential consequences on dolphin density, status and population trends is rarely taken into due consideration. Reduced carrying capacity due to overfishing was proposed as one explanation for the low densities of Bottlenose Dolphins in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas (Bearzi *et al*., 1999, 2005a, 2006). Conversely, dolphin densities tend to be high in areas where prey is still abundant. For instance, dolphin density in the prey-rich Amvrakikos Gulf, Greece - where effective fishery management measures including the prohibition of purse seining and trawling are in place - is one order of magnitude higher than in the overfished waters of the nearby island of Kalamos (Bearzi *et al*., 2006, 2007a; Table 2).

3.2.2 Disease

Epizootic outbreaks appear to have affected Bottlenose Dolphins to a lesser extent than other Mediterranean delphinids, such as the Striped Dolphin (Aguilar & Raga, 1993; Van Bressem *et al*., 1993). Morbillivirus infections have been reported in one individual Bottlenose Dolphin stranded on the Mediterranean coast of Israel in 1994 (Tsur *et al*., 1997), and one stranded in Mauritania (Atlantic coast of West Africa) in 1988 (Van de Bildt *et al*., 2001). However, Bottlenose Dolphins elsewhere have experienced mass mortality from such outbreaks, e.g. in Black Sea waters (Birkun *et al*., 1998) and on the Atlantic coast of the United States, where more than half of one local population may have died (Lipscomb *et al*., 1994; Duignan *et al*., 1996; Schulman *et al*., 1997). As epizootic phenomena may be related to immune-system compromise induced by exposure to xenobiotics and/or by stress from poor nutrition (Aguilar & Borrell, 1994; Calzada *et al*., 1996; O'Shea & Aguilar, 2001), the risk of disease outbreaks in Bottlenose Dolphins in the Mediterranean may be considerable.

Toxoplasmosis that can cause mortality in many species of domestic and wild animals (Dubey *et al*., 2003), were also found in specimen of bottlenose dolphins in Mediterranean Sea (Di Guardo *et al*., 1995a, 1995b; Cabezon *et al*., 2004).

3.3 Indirect threat

Toxic contamination is a major concern in marine mammal populations because of the potential effects on reproduction health and DNA damage (Gauthier *et al*., 1999; O'Shea *et al*., 1999; Fossi & Marsili, 2003; Newman & Smith 2006). The Bottlenose Dolphins' worldwide distribution and great adaptability to diverse habitats make this species a good indicator of the quality of inshore marine ecosystems.

Contaminant levels, particularly of organochlorine compounds, in Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphins are very high compared to the levels reported for Bottlenose Dolphins in other areas (Corsolini *et al*., 1995; Marsili & Focardi, 1997; Aguilar *et al*., 2002; Fossi & Marsili, 2003; Wafo *et al*., 2005; Borrell *et al*., 2006; Borrell & Aguilar, 2007). At concentrations similar to or lower than those documented for Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphins, compounds such as PCBs or PAHs have been associated with reproductive disorders, immune-system suppression, and neoplasia in other populations of Bottlenose Dolphins (Lahvis *et al*., 1995; Reddy *et al*., 2001; Schwacke *et al*., 2002; Jaber *et al*., 2005; Hall *et al*., 2006). Although organochlorine contamination is decreasing in some areas, levels in Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphins remain high (Tolosa *et al*., 1997; Aguilar & Borrell, 2004; Borrell & Aguilar, 2007). Constant monitoring of toxic elements, improvement in developing suitable biomarkers and risk assessment frameworks must be among the priorities for the conservation for such coastal species (Schwacke *et al*., 2002; Fossi & Marsili 2003; Jaber *et al*., 2005; Porte *et al*., 2006).

Various and sometimes high levels of heavy metals have been found in stranded Bottlenose Dolphins from the Mediterranean (e.g. Leonzio *et al*., 1992; Frodello *et al*. 2000; 2002; Roditi-Elasar *et al*., 2003; Lahaye *et al*., 2006). The impact of these metals at the population level is unknown.

3.4 Threat connected especially with migrations

3.5 National and international utilization

4. Protection status and needs

4.1&2 National and International protection status

Cetaceans are protected by law in most Mediterranean countries (Bearzi *et al*., *in press*). In addition, the existing legislative and treaty instruments in force today provide a potentially solid framework for the conservation of cetaceans in this region.

The western Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin population is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The bottlenose dolphin is also listed in Appendix II (Strictly Protected Fauna Species) of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

This species is fully protected Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS).

Two protocols of the Barcelona Convention address issues of direct relevance to the bottlenose dolphin in the Mediterranean basin. These are: 1) Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution Resulting from Exploration and Exploitation of the Continental Shelf and the Seabed and its Subsoil (Offshore Protocol): 1994a; 2) Protocol for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol); and 3) Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA and Biodiversity Protocol).

An other international initiative relevant to Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin protection is the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Mediterranean Environmental Action Plan - Action Plan for the Conservation of the Cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition, for the Mediterranean European Countries, the following Directives and Regulation are of particolar importance in terms of conservation of bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean region: 1) Council Directive No 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive); 2) Council Regulation (EC) No 1626/94 of 27 June 1994, laying down certain technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea; 3) Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (*Tursiops truncatus* is listed in Appendix II); and 4) Council Regulation (EC) No 812/2004 of 26 April 2004, laying down measures concernine incidental catches of cetaceans in fisheries and amending Regulation (EC) No 88/98.

Tursiops truncatus is listed as "Data Deficient" in the IUCN Red List (Source: http://www.iucnredlist.org/search/search-basic); however the Mediterranean bottlenose dolphin, as a whole, has been recently proposed by an IUCN-ACCOBAMS Workshop as "Vulnerable" (Bearzi & Fortuna 2006). This proposal is currently under scrutiny.

4.3 Additional protection needs

Populations of *Tursiops truncatus* in the North and Baltic Seas, western Mediterranean and Black Sea are currently listed in Appendix II of CMS, but not the Bottlenose Dolphins of the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Given the fact that there are not scientific reasons that would suggest to treat the Mediterranean Bottlenose dolphins as divided into two populations, it is believed that this rather peculiar listing was most likely due to a mistake. Alternatively the previous listing could have been affected by the past almost total lack of information on Cetaceans species in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. However, since individuals of *Tursiops truncatus* in the Mediterranean Sea can either be resident, share a wide home range or migrate, it is suggested that all *Tursiops truncatus* populations should be included in App. II of CMS.

4.4 Recent initiatives for increased protection

ACCOBAMS is preparing a Mediterranean Action Plan.

5. Ranges states[1]

Listing of states where the occurrence of species has been proved:
ALBANIA, ALGERIA, Bosnia-Herzegovina, CYPRUS, CROATIA, FRANCE, GREECE, ISRAEL, ITALY, Lebanon, LYBIA, MALTA, MONACO, Montenegro, MOROCCO, PORTUGAL, SYRIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, TUNISIA, Turkey, UNITED KINGDOM (Gibraltar).

6. Comments from Range States

7. Additional remarks

Preserving populations that are biologically unique and geographically isolated is recognised as an international priority for conservation. The Mediterranean Bottlenose Dolphins are genetically differentiated from those of the Atlantic (Natoli *et al*. 2005). Therefore, the whole Mediterranean bottlenose dolphins should be listed in Appendix II, not only the Western Mediterranean group.

8. References

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