INCLUSIVE PATHways TO PEACE

The King's Law
Methodological guide

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Udruga Studio B

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Introduction

The “Block H8 - Peace puzzles Toolkit” methodological guide presents a methodology and innovative tools to engage and empower youth with conflict resolution skills through game-based educational resources and aims to increase the quality of youth work by equipping youth practitioners and organizations with new skills, approaches and methods. It strives to promote common values such as tolerance, inclusivity, and understanding, ultimately contributing to building cohesive and peaceful societies.

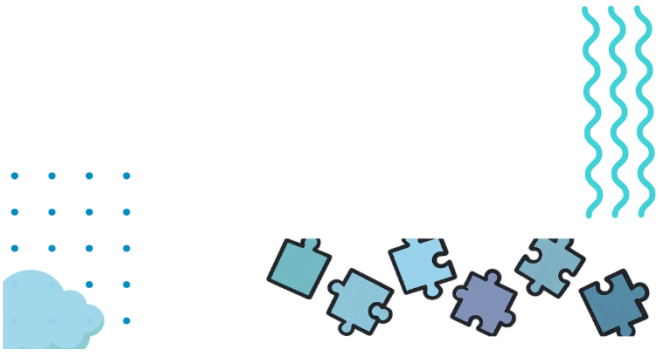
By providing Open Educational Resources (OERs) as a dynamic and interactive environment, we want to equip practitioners with hands-on experience that they can directly apply in their youth-focused initiatives, thereby contributing to enhancing the capacity of Youth and for Youth organizations by offering a practical resource for youth work.

This toolkit’s incorporation of digital elements, such as 360-degree photo/videos and Augmented Reality, provides a cutting-edge approach to non-formal education, available in English, Croatian, Serbian, Spanish, Greek and Turkish, ensuring that YPs, youth organizations, and training providers can use it in a way that respects diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Concerning the Youth, the overarching goal of these Open Educational Resources is to contribute to the enhancement of critical thinking and problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork, media literacy, communication and collaboration, leadership, professionalism, and strong empathy among young people, through active participation, in order to enhance conflict prevention and resolution abilities among youth.

Block H8 – Peace Puzzles Toolkit – Methodological Guide is a practical handbook for preparing and implementing 8 educational escape room activities focused on peacebuilding, human rights, inclusion, non-violent communication, emotional intelligence, digital safety, and the prevention of discrimination.

The guide provides detailed methodologies for each room. For every escape room, it presents the visual setup of the space, educational objectives, target group, accessibility and adaptation options, scenario, game objective, room layout, required materials, preparation process, the role of the Game master, gameplay flow, tips, hints, and debriefing questions, thereby providing a comprehensive tool for every practitioner in both non-formal and formal learning settings.



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Project context

"Inclusive pathways to peace, 2024-2-HR01-KA220-YOU-000279458" is an Erasmus+ KA2 *Cooperation partnerships in youth* project, coordinated by Association Studio B (Croatia) with partners from Serbia (Udruženje Svetlost), Spain (ASOCIACIÓN JUVENIL ERASMIAU), and Cyprus (Neolea gia antalagi kai katanoisi – Youth for Exchange and Understanding). The project aims to engage and empower 181 youth with conflict resolution skills through game-based educational resources and to increase the quality of youth work by equipping 130 youth practitioners with new skills, approaches and tools. The project promotes common values such as tolerance, inclusivity, and understanding, ultimately contributing to building cohesive and peaceful societies. After participatory action research and using creative gamification approach, partners co-created open educational resources - including interactive escape rooms enhanced with 360° and augmented reality elements - that support young people in building empathy, communication, and conflict resolution skills. By combining non-formal education and digital innovation, the project is strengthening the quality of youth work and contributing to more cohesive, democratic, and peaceful communities across Europe.

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This guidebook was developed as an intellectual output within the project.

During its implementation, partners collaborated on the creation and testing of educational escape rooms focused on topics related to peacebuilding, conflict transformation, empathy, human rights, communication, and cooperation among young people. Through international collaboration and exchange of experiences, the project explored how game-based learning and highly participative educational activities can encourage active participation and meaningful learning among youth. The escape rooms in this guide were developed by four national teams of 10 youngsters and 2 youth workers, tested in an international setting in Šabac, Serbia in March of 2026, further refined based on feedback by the participants of that mobility, to finally be used in local events in Croatia, Cyprus and Spain. This approach enabled us to create a meaningful learning resource, that is both fun and educational for both youth and youth practitioners, with an immersive experience going much deeper than traditional learning methods.

This guide was created as a practical support resource for educators, youth workers, trainers, facilitators, and organizations interested in using educational escape rooms in their work.

We hope you'll enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed the process of its creation!

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1 Introduction

A) Context

This room connects the game narrative with the project's educational focus by exploring marginalization of poor people through a historical lens. Participants encounter institutional barriers and discrimination that mirror mechanisms still present in modern societies.

B) Visual presentation of the room

The room should feel enclosed, oppressive, and deliberately uncomfortable, evoking a medieval dungeon or prison space. All windows are fully covered to block natural light, allowing only controlled, dim lighting - preferably warm, flickering sources that imitate torches or candles. Shadows should dominate the space, with corners intentionally left in near darkness to create uncertainty and unease.

The floor is partially covered with straw, unevenly scattered, mixed with rough textures such as burlap or old cloth. Cobwebs stretch across corners, door frames, and low ceilings, reinforcing a sense of abandonment and neglect. Walls should appear bare, worn, or stained, with muted, earthy tones - stone grey, brown, and black - avoiding anything clean or polished.

All modern objects are removed or concealed. Visible cables, switches, plastic, modern furniture, or contemporary symbols must be hidden to preserve immersion. Any necessary modern elements (locks, devices, AR markers) should be visually disguised using parchment, wood, fabric, or iron-like materials.

Sound plays a crucial role in shaping the mood. A continuous ambient soundscape fills the room: distant rats squealing, muffled coughing or whispers of other prisoners, the echo of dripping water, faint chains moving, or heavy doors closing somewhere far away. These sounds should be subtle but constant, contributing to a sense of confinement rather than startling players.

The air should feel heavy and still. If possible, subtle scents such as wood, dust, or dampness can be introduced to deepen immersion. Overall, the space should communicate scarcity, control, and degradation - making players physically and emotionally aware of restriction, power imbalance, and the absence of comfort or agency.

C) Educational objectives

- Raise awareness of social marginalization and institutional discrimination, using a historical setting to draw parallels between systemic exclusion in the Middle Ages and persistent inequalities faced by marginalized groups today.

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- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by engaging participants in layered puzzles that require analysis, interpretation, and logical reasoning rather than trial-and-error solutions.
- Strengthen teamwork and collaborative decision-making, emphasizing interdependence, shared knowledge, and communication between participants with different roles and abilities.
- Encourage empathy and perspective-taking, allowing participants to experience powerlessness, restriction, and injustice in a controlled environment that prompts reflection and discussion.

D) Target group profile and number

Age: 16-30

Group size recommendation: 6 participants

Group profile: The activity is aimed at young people who are open to learning, reflection, and active participation, and who are willing to step into the perspectives of others. Participants are expected to engage with social themes critically, collaborate with others, and approach the experience with curiosity rather than competition. The room is particularly suitable for young people interested in social justice, human rights, history, or experiential learning, as well as those open to exploring complex topics such as marginalization and discrimination through non-formal education methods.

Escape room difficulty: Medium

E) Accessibility & Adaptability

This escape room is designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring that participants with different needs, particularly those with hearing impairments and wheelchair users, can fully engage with the experience. All core elements, puzzles, and instructions are created to be usable without reliance on sound, and important information is always available in a visual format.

When setting up the room, facilitators should pay special attention to physical accessibility. Make sure there is enough space for wheelchair movement, avoiding narrow pathways or cluttered layouts. Key objects, clues, and interactive elements should be placed within comfortable reach (not too high or too low) and should not require excessive force or complex physical actions.

Flexibility is encouraged. Facilitators can adapt elements of the room depending on the specific needs of the group. The goal is not just access, but meaningful participation, ensuring that all players can contribute, explore, and enjoy the experience equally.

2 Step by step preparation

2.1 Scenario

Behind thick stone walls, time slows and justice bends.

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You awaken in a place where poverty is treated as guilt and knowledge is met with suspicion. The air is heavy with damp straw and whispered accusations. Chains rattle somewhere in the dark, and unseen eyes are always watching. Each prisoner claims innocence, yet the rules of this world were never meant to be fair.

To leave, you must navigate an environment shaped by fear, hierarchy, and silent agreements. Progress depends not on strength, but on observation, cooperation, and the courage to question what is presented as "law." Some truths are hidden in plain sight; others reveal themselves only when voices are shared.

This is not a story about heroes and villains. It is a reflection of systems - past and present - that decide who is heard, who is punished, and who is allowed to belong.

Will you escape the room... or simply learn how it was built?

2.2 Objective of the game

The objective of the game is for participants to collectively navigate a restrictive and unjust environment by uncovering hidden information, interpreting fragmented clues, and confronting the rules imposed upon them. Players must move through the experience by questioning what is allowed, what is forbidden, and who is granted access to knowledge, rather than simply searching for keys or codes.

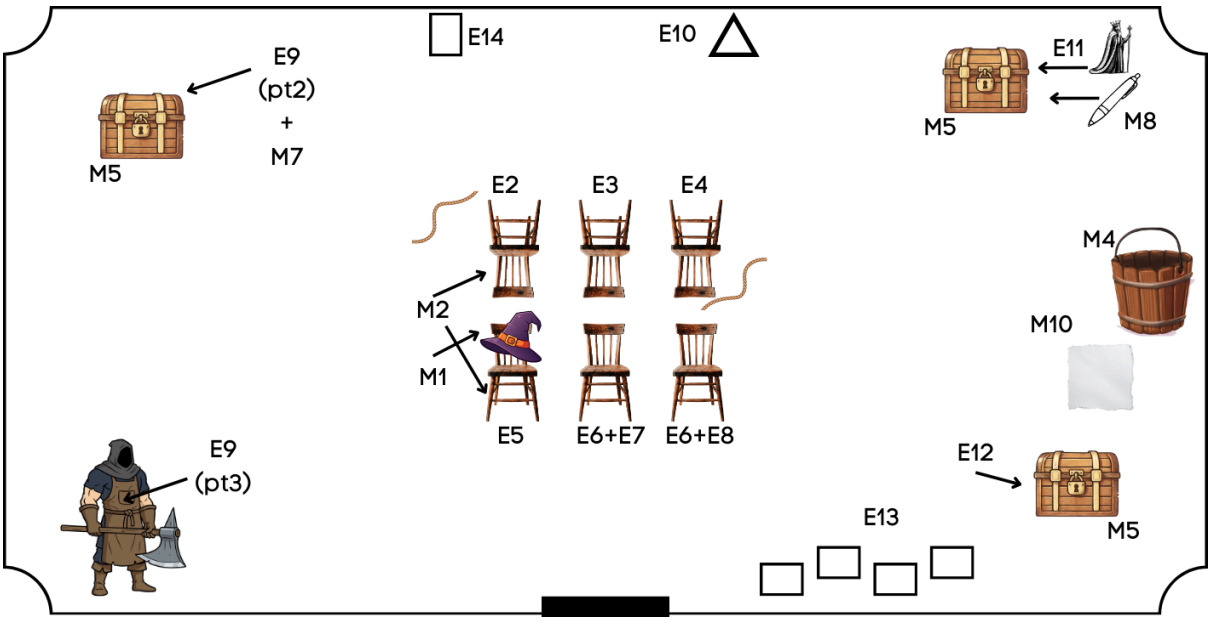
The game is designed so that no single role can succeed alone. Information, abilities, and tools are unevenly distributed among characters, reflecting an unequal system in which some voices are trusted while others are silenced. Progress is only possible when participants recognize these imbalances, actively share what they know, and rely on one another to overcome barriers created by the system itself.

Rather than rewarding speed or individual problem-solving, the game emphasizes collective sense-making: listening, negotiating meaning, and deciding together how to act. The group's success depends on its ability to connect partial truths, challenge assumptions, and transform separation into cooperation to reach freedom

2.3 Room Layout

Depending on the shape and size of the room you will be using as the area of the escape room, the room layout will also vary. The most important thing is keeping the flow of the room relatively the same, eg. keeping the first steps of the escape room towards the entry way and the final steps toward the back of the room. We suggest the following layout as an idea which can be adapted according to the space being used:

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2.4 The Materials

- M1. Witches hat
- M2. 6 chairs
- M3. 6 pieces of rope
- M4. Bucket filled with water
- M5. 3 lockable wooden chests (or cardboard boxes painted to resemble wood)
- M6. 3 padlocks (with 3 number codes)
- M7. Mobile phone with access to internet
- M8. UV pen
- M9. Pencil (or a quill with ink)
- M10. 2 papers and a graphite pencil
- M10. Speaker

Additional:

The use of phones is deliberately restricted to preserve immersion; participants may only interact with the single mobile phone discovered during the game, which serves as a narrative artifact rather than a modern convenience. Background audio should remain low but constant, featuring atmospheric medieval soundscapes such as distant chains, muffled footsteps, dripping water, echoing voices of unseen prisoners, and occasional rats scurrying or squealing, reinforcing

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a sense of confinement and unease without overwhelming communication between players.

To support character embodiment, simple physical props can be provided for each role: the knight may wear a worn tabard or carry a symbolic crest, the noble a folded parchment or signet-like token, the priest a simple rope belt or wooden cross, the witch a hat or small pouch of "herbs," the free peasant a piece of rope or shepherd's crook, and the serf rough cloth or straw-bound wrists. Decorative elements should remove all traces of modernity and emphasize the dungeon setting: covered windows, dim lighting, straw scattered on the floor, wooden crates and chests, cobwebs in corners, iron chains, torn banners, candles or lantern-style lighting, and aged paper textures throughout the room. Together, these elements help participants physically and emotionally step into their roles, deepening engagement with both the narrative and the underlying themes of restriction, power, and inequality.

Timer can be displayed visibly in the room, or the GM can have it on their phone, making sure to notify the players as time passes. Time to be set for this room is 45 minutes.

2.5 How to set up the room

The following steps you will have to do before every group of participants starts their escape room journey.

First make sure you have laid out all the materials that make up the room (M1-M9) according to the room layout requirements.

Follow the next steps to set up the room with the game elements from the *Peace puzzles Toolkit* or the *Unlock Peace - modules for DIY production* so it is playable:

1. Have E1 ready to give to the participants during the introduction speech.
2. In the witches hat (M1) hide a paper with number 3 written on it or write directly on the inside of the hat.
3. Place the witches hat (M1) on the player playing the witch character, without them looking inside.
4. Place 6 chairs (M2) in the middle of the room in a circle or row pattern.
5. Place 6 pieces of rope (M3) on each chair, ready to "tie" the participants to the chairs.
6. Have E2- E8 ready to place in the appropriate participants laps. E2 goes to the noble, E3 to the priest, E4 to the knight, E5 to the witch, E6 + E7 to the free peasant, E6+E8 to the serf.
7. Place the pen (quill and ink) with the witch as well.
8. Make sure the GM has the 1st and 3rd (top and left part) part of E9 ready to give to the participants.
9. Fill the bucket with water (M4) and place it in the room.
10. Prepare the invisible letter- take one piece of blank paper, wet it with water and place it on a window or mirror. On top of it put a dry piece of paper and on the dry paper write with a graphite pencil the number 6. Make sure to go over it a few times with the graphite pencil. Take off the first (dry) piece of paper and throw it away. Allow the wet paper to dry and the writing to

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become invisible. Place the now blank paper somewhere in the room, the writing will become visible once placed in the water again.

11. Place 2nd part (bottom part) of E9 in the first wooden chest, together with a mobile phone with scanner app opened on it (M7), https://thekingslowserbia.netlify.app/ Or printed QR code from the DIY module.

SCAN

12. And lock it with a padlock (M6), CODE-683.
13. Tape E10 on the wall of the dungeon.
14. Tape E11 on the second wooden chest, place the UV pen light (M8) inside and lock the chest with a padlock (M6), CODE- 512.
15. Place E12 in the third wooden chest, lock it with a padlock (E6), CODE- 742
16. Tape E13 and E14 on the walls of the room.

Steps 1 to 15 are to be repeated before every group of participants enters the room; these will be your setup and reset steps to follow.

TIPS:

- When you install the game zone: make sure you remember the location of every clue! This will allow you to follow the progress of the participants during their game and give them the right clues.
- It is recommended to recount the material at the end of the session. It is possible that players have written on some or that they have accidentally kept some of the materials in their pockets.

3 Step by step implementation

3.1 The Game master

General Game master missions are to:

- Prepare all the game media, set up the room and then put it back in place;
- Welcome the players and immerse them in the atmosphere of their mission before the game;
- Follow the game to help them, give them clues or advice;
- Once the mission is over, the Game master is here to debrief with the players by going back over the highlights of the mission.

In the game space, we advise that the Game master remains a little bit away from the group to leave the necessary space for the players to evolve independently and perhaps be less tempted to ask for clues or judge the reactions of the Game master.

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Specifics of the GM role in this ER:

Game master is playing the role of the captor, or executioner in the dungeon. They should be dressed in dark clothes, wearing a hood, any props are encouraged.

First task of the Game master is to help participants choose their roles, this can be done randomly, or they could read out the names of the roles and let participants choose. Upon choosing, the GM gives the roles cards to the players and makes sure they understand the notes on the card, and that the players that have characters that cannot read should not open any envelope or read any text.

Once the players enter the room the GM should tie them to the chairs in such a manner that they can move their hands and handle the props. Each player receives appropriate element (setup step 5).

Game master should make sure players that cannot read are not opening the envelopes but should not intervene if other players try to help them open or read it. If a player has not solved their puzzle, they cannot be untied from the chair, and the game does not move along further.

Once all players have solved their initial puzzles, the GM should drop the first part of E9 discretely on the floor, keeping the third part of E9 until players figure out it is with the GM. Once the players are aware it is at the GMs discretion to either let them have it or make them convince the guard somehow to give the piece to them.

Once players have all 3 pieces of E9 and read the UV text the guard should release them from the room and congratulate them.

3.2 Introductions and instructions

Before starting the game, it is the Game master's job to introduce themselves and explain their role. The Game master is here in case participants need some help or are lost in the game. Explain the scenario if they still have some questions and explain about the timer.

Ask the participants if they have already played an escape game and if not, explain to them the purpose and mechanisms of escape games.

Inform the participants they have 45 minutes to complete the escape room.

Give the following instructions:

- Respect the Props and Decor: Treat all props and decor with care and respect.
- Do not use physical force, only mental. No clue is intended to be revealed by breaking elements of the room.
- Communicate Effectively. Clear communication is key to success. Make sure to verbalize your thoughts. observations and ideas with your team members.
- Listening to each other's perspectives is crucial for solving puzzles efficiently.

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- Use your resources wisely. Utilize all available resources, including clues, tools and your teammates' skill and knowledge.
- Think creatively and think outside the box to find solutions to challenges.
- Stay focused. Keep your focus on the task at hand and avoid distractions.
- Concentrate on solving puzzles and progressing through the game to achieve your ultimate goal.
- Manage your time. Time management is essential. Pace yourselves throughout the game to ensure you have enough time to solve all puzzles and complete the mission before the countdown expires.
- Stay positive and encouraging. Maintain a positive attitude and encourage your teammates. Support each other through challenges and celebrate your successes together.
- Seek help if needed. If you find yourself stuck on a particular puzzle or clue, don't hesitate to ask for hints or assistance from the Game master. They are there to help guide you and ensure you have an enjoyable experience.
- Follow safety guidelines. Be mindful of any safety guidelines provided by the Game master. Avoid running, jumping or engaging in any behaviour that could result in injury to yourself and others. No clue is hidden in a way that requires climbing furniture or moving heavy pieces of the set.
- Above all, remember to enjoy the experience! Embrace the adventure, immerse yourself in the story, and have fun working together with your team to overcome challenges and the escape room.

*TIP- It is better to give instructions outside of the play area, preferably in a quieter area where players can focus on what is being said by the Game master.

3.3 Hints and tips

During the course of the game the Game master should observe and give some hints or tips to the players. We have suggested some hints, at certain moments through the course of the play, depending on the situation, the Game master can give additional hints or tips. However, make sure you give players time to play and try to guess things, only give hints if asked or in case players are stuck.

3.4 Course of the gameplay

1. Participants are given the roles and lead into the room, tied to their chair and given a puzzle each.
2. Puzzles are ranging in difficulty with the easiest being the nobles, and the most difficult ones for the peasant, the surf and the witch.

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3. The peasant and the serf are unable to even start their puzzle before someone who can read frees themselves and helps them to solve the puzzle by reading it out to them.
4. The expected order of solving is the noble, followed by the priest, the knight and then the rest. Having the first players free gives the chance to the peasant and serf to be helped and free themselves.
5. Once all are free from the chairs, the GM drops the first puzzle piece E9, making the participants search for the first 3 number code. This code is hidden in 3 spots, the first number will be revealed once they wet the blank paper in the bucket of the water, revealing the number "6". The second number will be revealed once they count the sheep on the poster (E10) on the wall. The third number is hidden in the witch's hat; they only must look.
6. Entering this code in one of the chests will provide them with the second piece of the puzzle and a phone, prompting them to scan the triggers on the walls and try to discover the final piece of the puzzle.
7. On the wall they will also find plain in sight a code for one of the chests, and when they open it, they will only receive a message from the king's fool, giving them no further hints.
8. Scanning the triggers on the wall, they will learn facts on inequality and institutional obstacles and discrimination, as well as the location of the final puzzle piece.
9. They must obtain the puzzle piece from the GM and scan the QR code on it.
10. The QR code will lead them in a 360-degree Chappel, where on the walls there are pictures of each of their characters as well as the king. If they click on the king image they will receive the code to the final chest.
11. Opening the final chest players can shine the lamp on the 3 pieces of the puzzle revealing a message: *We did not enter this place as equals, but we stand here as one. Bound by different laws, judged by different rules, we were made unequal by birth, by knowledge, and by fear. Yet through sharing what was denied to some and granted to others, we broke the chains meant to keep us apart. We leave not as subjects of your law, but as one voice, one will, one truth*.
12. Once they read this message out loud to the GM, they are free to go.

3.5 Debriefing phase

The Game master congratulates the players on completion of the escape room.

Elementary questions:

How do you feel?

Did you enjoy the game?

Did you feel under pressure with time?

Discussion:

A discussion led by the Game master based on the educational topic should follow. Together with participants, the GM should recap all that was important to learn from this educational escape room experience.

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- How did it feel to have some roles or information withheld from you? How does this reflect real-world inequalities in access to knowledge, resources, or decision-making?
- Which obstacles in the game seemed unfair or arbitrary? Can you think of similar examples in today's societies where rules or systems disproportionately affect certain groups?
- How did you rely on others to succeed in the room? What does this teach us about cooperation and solidarity in contexts where people are marginalized?
- Did playing your character change how you think about people who face social, economic, or legal disadvantages? How might this experience influence your actions or attitudes outside the game?
- Were there moments in the game that reminded you of issues in contemporary society, such as discrimination, unequal opportunities, or social stigma? How can awareness of these issues lead to positive change?

Taking a group picture: Game master helps the players take a group picture in celebration of completion.

Participants' feedback: Game master invites the players to give any additional feedback they might have regarding the experience.

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Impressum

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