

ECO-HUB RAISMES

La Porte du Hainaut (FR)

1/3

ECO-HUB RAISMES

La Porte du Hainaut (FR)

2/3

ECO-HUB RAISMES

La Porte du Hainaut (FR)

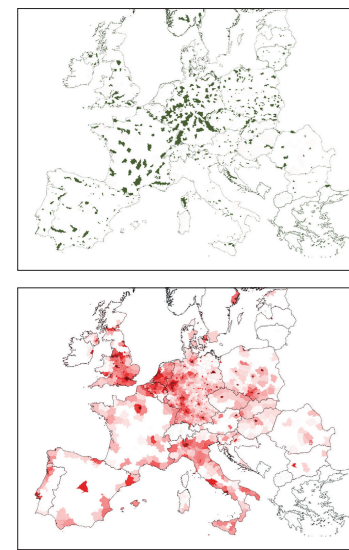
3/3

TOWARDS A DISCIPLINARY SHIFT

Biodiversity is being eroded by humans at a rate unprecedented in history. By the end of this century scientists expect the extinction of 20 to 50 percent of all living species on Earth. Important thinkers of our time fundamentally question the anthropocentric way of looking at and interacting with our planet. To ensure our own existence, we must move away from this binary view of human versus nature and develop an approach that is more sensitive towards other life forms.

"In order to respond to this ecological crisis, we must fundamentally rethink our human-centered tradition of engaging with the territory and go beyond unilateral and instrumental relations with nature."

In order to tackle these ecological challenges we must radically redefine how our landscapes are organized in space and time. This means larger accessible zones where other life forms can flourish, and also clear gradations and templates for co-habitation in different areas. At the same time, there's a need for spaces where we can reconnect with nature and rediscover our own position in the natural world.

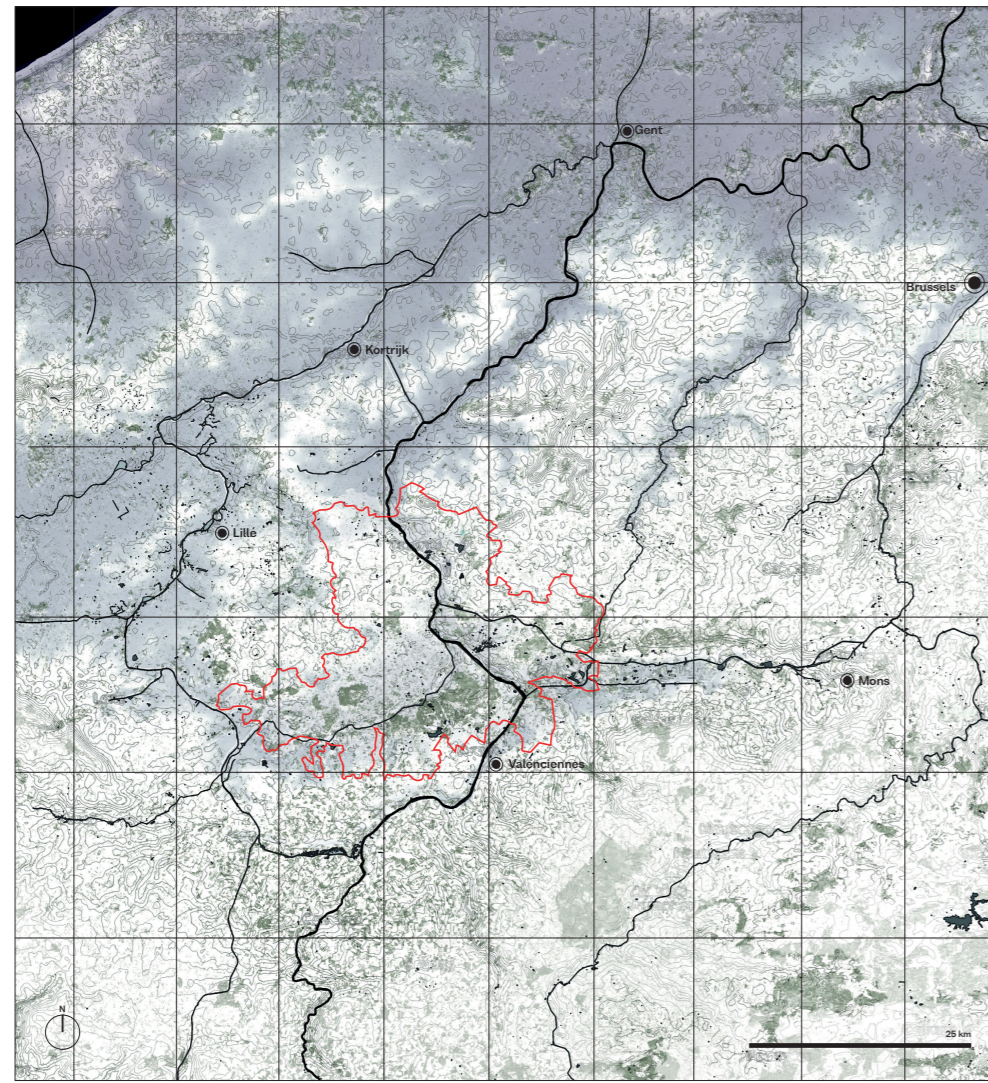


A EUROPEAN WILDLIFE PARK

The cross-border nature park Hainaut offers unique opportunities for further development as a large scale, European wildlife park. In order to provide answers to the loss of biodiversity, there is a need in Europe to establish larger vast nature areas where nature conservation and recreation can be developed in a more professional and large-scale manner (see also the ambitions of the European Green Deal and European Bauhaus).

Thanks to the central crossing of the Scheldt river, the cross-border nature park Hainaut has an extensive ecological potential with many interesting wetland habitats, alternating with drier areas and artificial landscapes (e.g. former) accommodating unique plant and animal species. With an area of 75,000 hectares, potential for expansion, and a unique mining heritage, this is an excellent location for the development of one of the most astonishing nature parks in Europe.

In addition, the park is unique because of its proximity to large urbanized regions (Paris, Lille, Flanders, Brussels). This provides a unique potential to attract not only a broad public of tourists and recreational users, but also to forge important links with research institutes and universities in the region.



The Ecohub Raimes is one of the most important gateways to the European Wildlife Park. The residential at the Maison de la Tour is the main focus point of the Ecohub Raimes. By moving the parking and adding activities, it becomes a more nature but vibrant place.

The European Nature Park Hainaut is located at an interesting biophysical location, on a spur of the hained Flemish valley. The gradients between wet and dry are interesting for diverse fauna and flora. In addition, important urban agglomerations are located in the vicinity.

AN APPROACH BASED ON THREE PILLARS

The Hainaut European Nature Park will be developed according to three main pillars. The first pillar comprises ecology and focuses on the development of the natural potential of the site and the optimization of wildlife habitat. A more proactive development of the area as a contiguous area with a better framework (scientifically and logistically) is aimed at, as well as the reintroduction of certain plant and animal species. Ecological frameworks in urbanized and agricultural areas are elaborated.

The second pillar comprises the recreational and nature education aspect of the park zone. The area can develop as one of the top destinations for nature recreation in the last years. In this respect, it is important to develop a differentiated offer that focuses on various target groups (young-old, rich-poor) and re-considers classic ways of recreation.

The last pillar comprises the local anchoring with special attention to identity, employment and heritage. The development of the European nature park must be a catalyst for a new identity for this place with opportunities for the local economy that can also support the preservation and integration of the rich mining heritage. The development aligns itself with the existing vision for the area but tries to sharpen the ambitions and tries to find important links with initiatives on a larger scale (regional, national and European). Recreation can be developed in a more professional and large-scale manner (see also the ambitions of the European Green Deal and European Bauhaus).

NATURE DEVELOPMENT

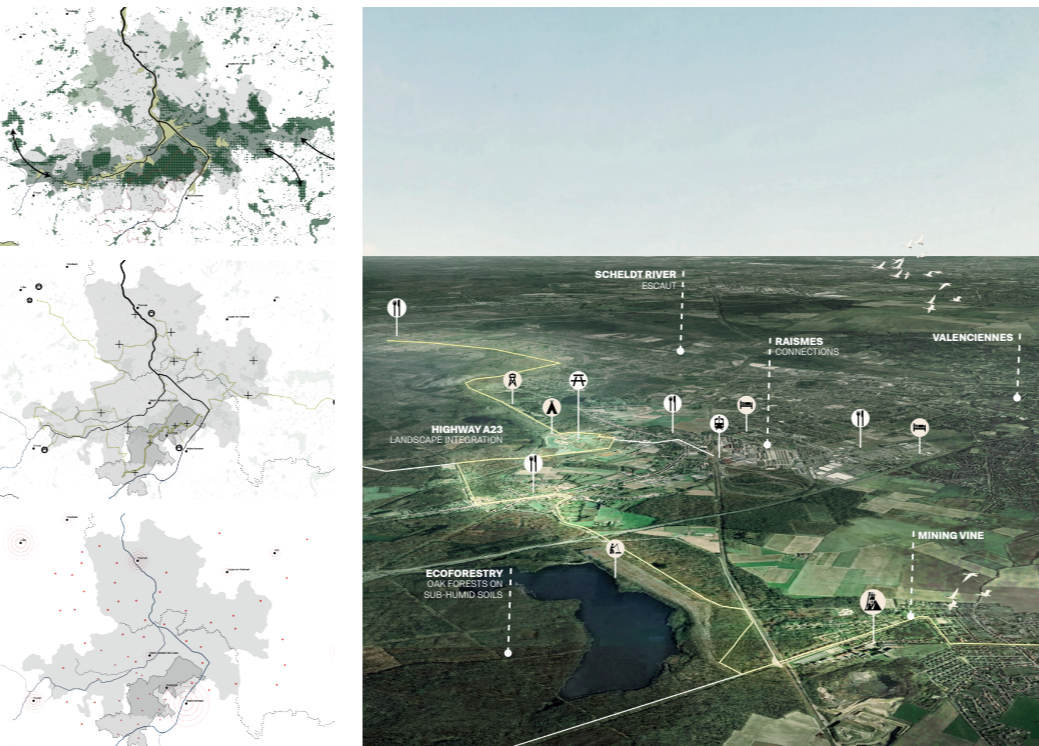
We distinguish three structures: the east-west oriented forest corridor, the alluvial grasslands and marshes along the Scheldt and Escarp, and the ecologically open agricultural areas in the north. The most valuable natural areas are made inaccessible to people. Between these zones, important corridors will be further developed. The corridors focus on target species and movement patterns. Important conflicts with infrastructure are solved with ecopassages.

UNIQUE RECREATIONAL CONCEPT

The recreational structure is organized around the most important gateways to the area. Multi-day trips are especially encouraged between these points. The bike sharing system, the shuttle bus, the horse rest area, etc. make these exchanges possible. The routes integrate valuable places and heritage elements. Different flows are also organized conflict-free with car traffic and separated from each other (paved paths, non-paved paths, bridle paths) in relation to the surrounding natural value.

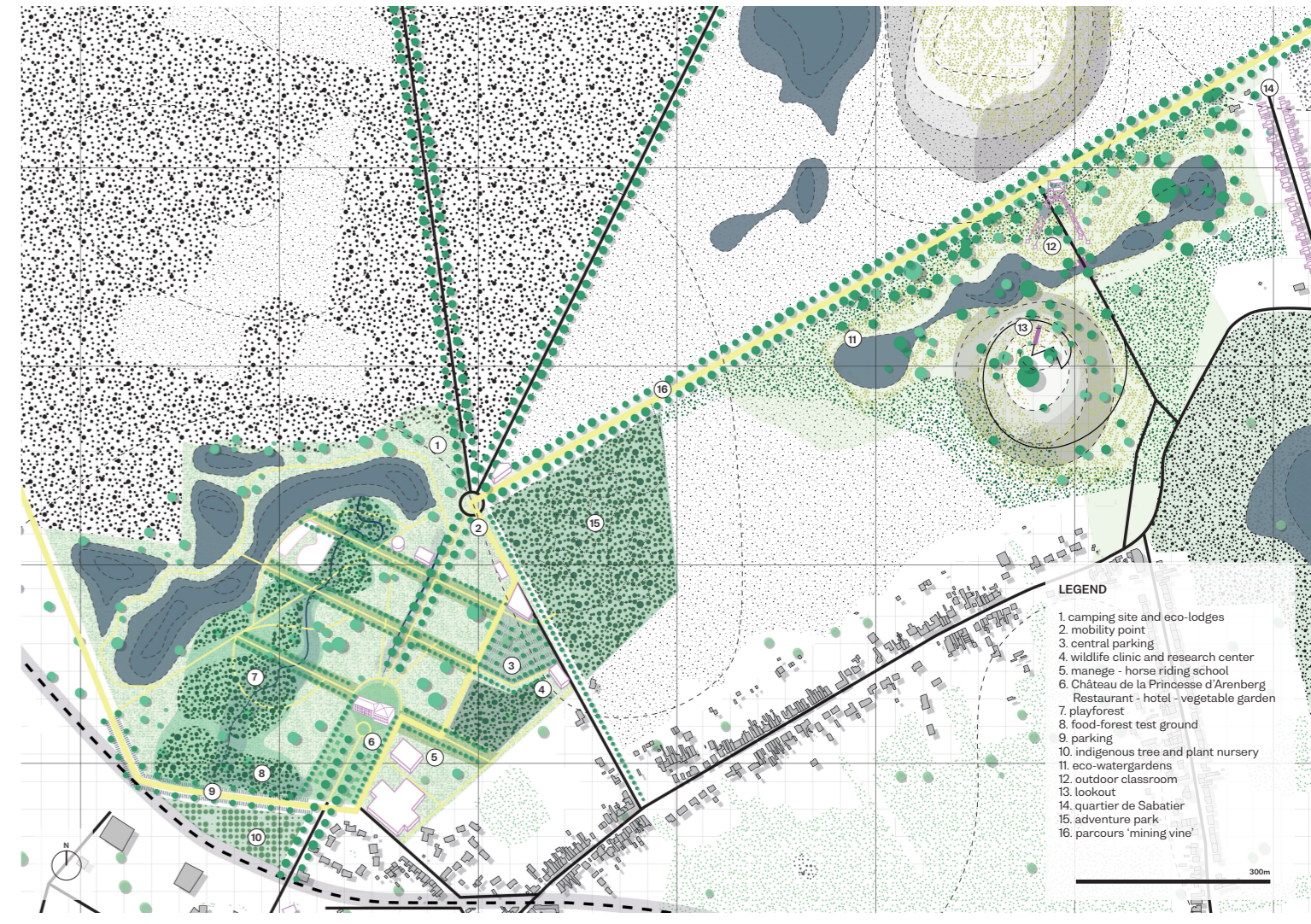
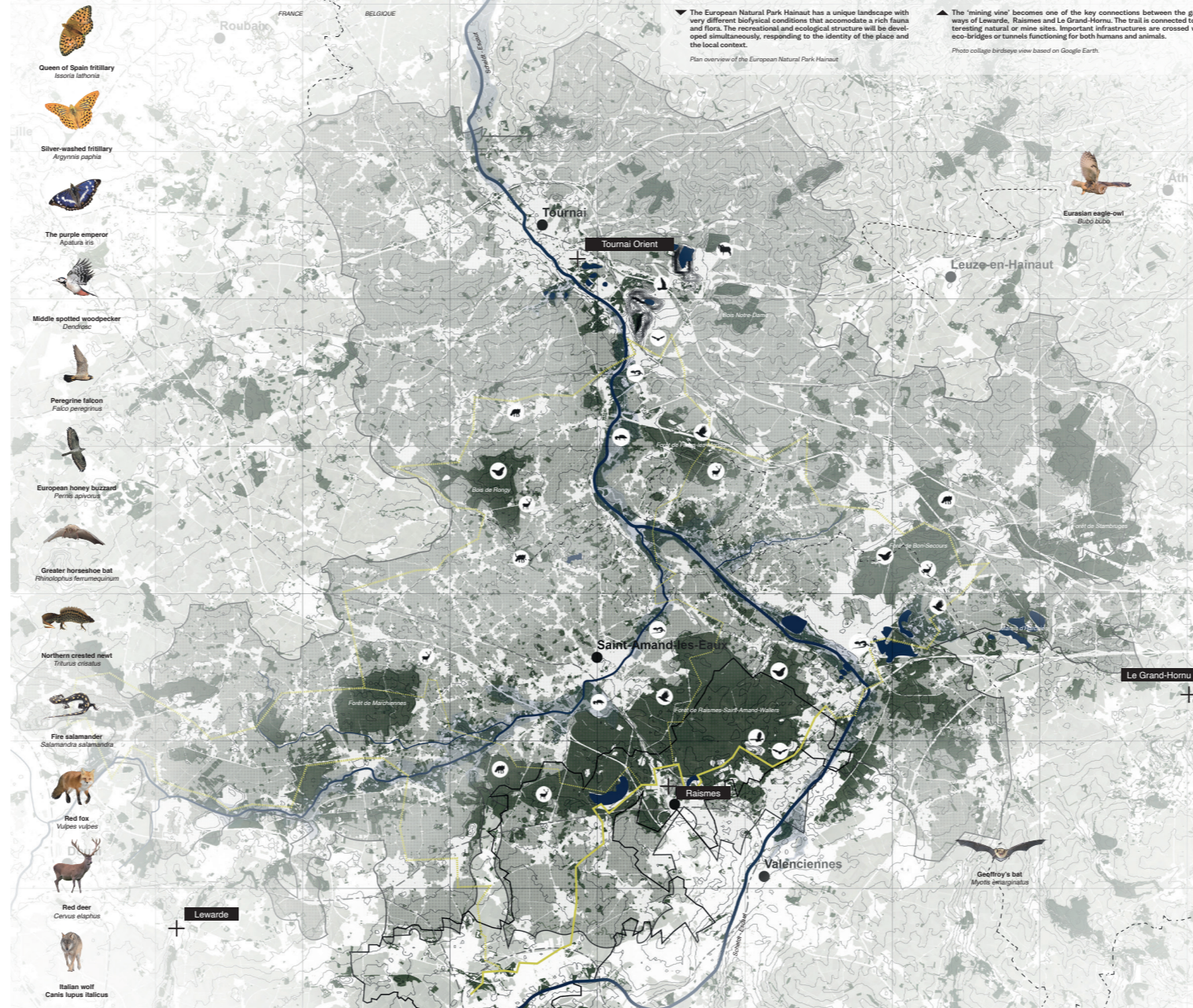
LOCAL INTEGRATION

The development of a European nature park can give a boost to the local economy. For example, various jobs will be created in tourism and recreation, catering, nature management, etc. The arrival of, for example, an animal hospital or a wildlife research centre will also attract important research activities. These economic activities are organized at the entrance gates. Raimes could become the most important southern gateway to the area. The new activities make maximum use of the existing patrimony.



The European Nature Park Hainaut has a unique landscape with different biophysical conditions. The park is located in a rich fauna and flora. The recreational and ecological structure will be developed differently, depending to the identity of the place and the local context.

The 'mining vine' becomes one of the key connections between the gateway of Raimes, Raimes and Le Grand-Hornu. The trail is connected to interesting natural or mine sites. Important infrastructures are crossed with new bridges or tunnels for walking for both humans and animals.



AN ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK

The strong landscape gestures (axes with trees) in the recreational area will be further developed and compose the framework for circulation, sub-zones and meetings spaces. The avenues with trees become the meeting spaces of the park. On the other hand, the rows of trees are flanked by wild meadow zones, which is beneficial for biodiversity and gives the site a more diverse character. Furthermore, the natural forest zones will be further developed as an ecological natural play forest parallel to the main axis.

DIVERSE RECREATIONAL OFFER

As a southern gateway, Raimes will become a thriving hotspot of nature-oriented recreation and tourism. In addition to the current recreational activities, the offer will be extended with activities that are more focused on the European Nature Park. For example, the castle of the princess of Arrenberg could be transformed into a unique hotel and restaurant. The theme of sustainable food is central here and important links are being sought with the adjacent food forest and the hunting culture of the region. A new research centre and clinic for wildlife is situated at the access road. The site can also accommodate a tree and plant nursery to promote indigenous and exceptional plant species with a local sales point. Finally, we plan to integrate ecologies on the terrain to the north, where guests can stay with a unique view of the water.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY PROFILE

The connection with the Raimes train station and bus stops are improved in terms of attractiveness and safety. A sustainable mobility point will be created at the roundabout where a shuttle bus, a bicycle target point, electric charging points, horse water points, etc. will be provided. The parking facilities will be combined to avoid search traffic in a new, green car park. A second, smaller grouped car park will be located at the castle of the princess of Arrenberg.



In the area around the Terté Sabatier and the water gardens, nature education is central. At the height of the old mine tower, an outdoor classroom is placed where the story of the mining past and nature can be told in a unique place.



The Ecohub Raimes is one of the most important gateways to the European Wildlife Park. The residential at the Maison de la Tour is the main focus point of the Ecohub Raimes. By moving the parking and adding activities, it becomes a more nature but vibrant place.

