

# TESTING INTERNATIONAL

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## ARTICLES

### National Centre for External Evaluation of Education - Croatia

Natalija Curkovic, Ines Elezovic, Jasminka Buljan Culej, Goran Sirovatka  
National Centre for External Evaluation of Education,  
**CROATIA**

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Croatia has a population of 4 million people and it is situated both on Mediterranean coast and in Central Europe region. First Croatian standardized testing in field of intelligence was conducted in early 60'es by the Department of Psychology at the University of Zagreb. For many years there was no systematic large scale testing in the field of education until National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCEEE) was founded by government in 2004. NCEEE is a public institution responsible for conducting external evaluation exams in Croatian educational system. NCEEE has two main objectives: to establish a system for improving the quality of education and to establish a system of standardized evaluation of knowledge and skills – competencies. Its aim is to fulfill the responsibilities of external evaluation within Croatia's educational and training system and conducting exams based on national standards. In that regard the following tasks are stated in NCEEE's Statute: research and preparation of national standards and exam materials; conduct international proficiency tests, coordinate the work of all participants responsible for conducting national exams (task forces, reviewers, exam coordinators, evaluators); organize and conduct training of afore-mentioned groups; organize and conduct national exams and State Matura; process and analyze results, make proposals for modifications and train all participants to use results and to introduce modifications in the system. Many young field experts were employed and a complex network of associates from Croatian academic institutions was established for these purposes from the start of Center's functioning.

National exams were introduced to high schools in 2006, and in the next year to all primary schools. National exams on both educational levels are being conducted every year, and until this year 95 national exams for different subjects were administered and analyzed. Most of the tests were translated into the languages of Croatian national minorities: Italian, Hungarian and Serbian. The results of tests are published and presented to Croatian public annually. Experimental State Matura was introduced in 2009 to all high schools, and in the school year 2009/2010 it is planned to conduct State Matura and use the obtained results for defining student's applications and rankings at Croatian universities. In its essence the State Matura is a group of exams, which is under the same circumstances and criteria conducted for all students at the same time. This process enables receiving comparative results for all students at the national level. State Matura is a uniformed process, meaning that all students have to take mandatory exams in Mathematics, Croatian language and one of the foreign languages at elementary or higher level. Students can also choose as many facultative subjects as they like according to the propositions of the faculty they would like to apply to.

Throughout national and international long-term projects, NCEEE have accomplished many goals in a few years. The most important ones are forming the content method expert groups (primary or secondary school teachers and university teachers for a certain subject), establishing the network of exam coordinators in primary and secondary schools, building the self-evaluation system in primary and secondary schools and obtaining scientific and technical cooperation with a number of key institutions in the field. Very important contact with ITC was established throughout the cooperation with distinguished professor R. K. Hambleton who held a se-

ries of lectures this summer in Croatia. This event contributed to better understanding of psychometric subject matter (IRT, standard setting and reporting of test results), reconnecting regional experts and their national institutions (participants from Slovenia, Serbia, Slovakia etc.) and reaching out to the eminent international organizations in the field of testing (IEA, ITC, ALTE). These efforts correspond with an ongoing activity within the NCEEE which is the Croatian representative in well known international projects such as PISA, PIRLS and European Survey on Language Competences - ESLC.

In the future NCEEE will proceed with its present activities and projects but will also try to widen the scope of scientific and research interests in the field of testing. That policy is in the same time the necessity and consequence of an ongoing tendency to implement current global standards in educational testing. Cooperation with leading international institutions and organizations, primary having in mind the International Test Commission, is the key aspect to fulfill that goal.

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**Psychological Test Development and Use in South Africa**  
**J.G. Maree & C. N. van der Westhuizen**  
**University of Pretoria**  
**South Africa**

This brief article summarizes some historic and current characteristics of the development and use of psychological tests in South Africa (SA). Consult references embedded in the text for additional information.

*Early Efforts.* The development and use of psychological tests in SA have been impacted significantly by prevailing international trends, national watershed political events, and local government policies. The history of test development somewhat paralleled international trends (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004). Psychological testing was introduced in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when SA was a British colony and shaped by the British, European and US practices (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2004). For example, intelligence tests were imported and adapted, albeit largely for use with whites (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004, p. 2).

Between 1960 and 1984, the National Institute for Personnel Research and the Institute for Psychological and Edumetric Research developed many tests. Both agencies later were incorporated into the Human Sciences Research Council. In the 1990s, this Council had almost exclusive responsible for test development and adaptation, including the listing of suitable tests (Foxcroft 2004; Stead 2002). Most tests were and are based on tests developed in the United States and Europe. Three firms distribute tests in SA: MindMuzik Media, Jopie van Rooyen and Partners SA, and PsyTech SA.

Although the development of the psychological test framework followed US and European examples, the apartheid system, characterised by the unequal distribution of resources in reference to different population groups, has highly influenced testing practices (Foxcroft, 1997). For example, in reference to education, some see achievement tests used to maintain the status quo (Stead 2002). Many tests normed only on whites are outdated and need to be indigenized. Others are suitable only for highly educated groups and need to be revised in light of cultural conditions (Stead 2002). Thus, one can understand the belief that the development and use of psychological tests may seem unjust and unfair to and by certain groups.

*Language issues impacting test development and use.* Much resistance toward testing is due to the fact that, before the 1990s, tests were developed in the erstwhile two official languages, English and Afrikaans, used mainly by the white population (Paterson & Uys, 2005). Language-related issues are exacerbated by the use of eleven official languages. English allegedly is spoken as a first language by only 10% of South Africans (Stead 2002).

*The need to implement a more inclusive approach to psychological tests and test development.* Given the dearth of recently developed tests for use in SA and even fewer tests

appropriate for use with all subpopulations, professionals have urged the Professional Board of Psychology to allow professionals to use tests not registered by the Human Sciences Research Council (Paterson and Uys, 2005). Practitioners may use tests not registered by the Board if they can justify their use as meeting professional standards. Some also advocate for the development of a Code of Fair Testing Practices to assist this effort (Foxcroft, 1997). A recently accepted Scope of Practice adopted by the Professional Board for Psychology addresses many practices within psychology and has the potential to facilitate collaboration and cooperation across registration and training level boundaries.

#### *Regulation and control of test development and use.*

The Health Professions Act led to the establishment of the Health Professions Council of SA and the Professional Board for Psychology, which includes a Psychometrics Committee. The duties of this Committee include the classification and revision of South African—developed as well as imported assessment methods used to evaluate emotional, behavioural, and cognitive processes. This committee reports to the Professional Board for Psychology, which advises the Minister of Health on matters within the scope of the Health Professions Act. This Act emphasizes professional practice, democracy, transparency, equity, and accessibility (Mauer, 2000). Tests used in the context of work are controlled by various laws, including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995), and the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998). These impact the Health Professions Act (56 of 1974) (Mauer 2000).

*Rethinking the current paradigm underpinning test development.* South Africa has been unable to develop alternatives to Eurocentric theories and positivist methodologies within the 15 years following the demise of apartheid (Sehlapelo & Terre Blanche 1996). The profession of psychology adheres to a quantitative (positivist) approach as seen in its practitioners and their training. Furthermore, despite radical post-apartheid policy changes, professional counselling is more concerned with addressing the needs of individuals rather than groups (e.g. as is promoted by the *ubuntu* philosophy that is characterised by a culture of sharing).

The introduction of a theoretical framework that combines facets of a quantitative approach with career construction post-modern approaches has become essential in South Africa (Amundson, 2003, 2006; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). Such a framework could promote counselling in traditional South African societies where the focus is on the group, story telling, and *ubuntu*, thus intended to encourage counsellors to assist individuals within groups to achieve self-completion and to contribute socially through work (Savickas, 2007a,b). The realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should dictate assessment strategies and guide client-feedback. The time for applying a test-and-tell approach in isolation has passed.

#### *The way forward*

Some (Paterson and Uys, 2005) believe testing practices are changing as more practitioners realise the value of sound assessment practices, improvements occur in test development, and culture fair tests are adopted and implemented. The renewed focus on testing, the adaptation and norming of international tests by the distributing companies referred to above, as well as test development expertise at universities hold promise for change (Foxcroft, 2004).

Nevertheless, test development and use are constrained by national and regional financial, professional, and institutional (e.g., high counsellor-student ratios) limitations as well as policy makers reservations. The development of different measuring instruments and assessment techniques for each cultural group is unachievable (Owen, 1998, p. 84). Some suggest changes within the country's education system to an outcomes-based approach could lead to more relevant curriculum-based tests (Owen, 1991). The use of dynamic assessment methods also is being considered.

Highly regarded international tests need to be adapted consistent with the International Test Commission (ITC) guidelines along with new tests developed that cater to SA's unique societal composition and ensure quality and international comparability. An open, empathetic, 'best practice' approach that is in the best interests of all concerned seems to be the best option. The Psychological Society of South Africa, a full member of the ITC, has the added benefit of "being able to shape international guidelines related to testing and test use and stay in touch with

the cutting-edge issues in testing and assessment” (Annual Report of the Psychological Society of South Africa 2007, p. 9).

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**Report from the IV Brazilian Conference of Psychological Assessment  
and Meetings with Brazil's Institute of Psychological Assessment  
Thomas Oakland  
USA**

Barbara Byrne, Jose Muniz, and I (ITC Committee members) had the pleasure of attending the above named conference attended by approximately 850 registrants in Campinas, Brazil in late July 2009. Barbara and I attended the conference, in part, to explore ways the Institute of Psychological Assessment, a conference co-sponsor and leading association of persons engaged in test development and use in Brazil, and the ITC may work together to address regional and international issues that impact test development and use.

The Institute was formed 12 years ago to help address and promote test development and use in Brazil. Until somewhat recently, psychology in Brazil was theory-driven. Empirical work received less emphasis. The work of the Institute as well as the Federal Council of Psychologists, Brazil's national association of psychologists, has had a material and positive impact on test development and use. Policies and guidelines promulgated by the ITC have had a strong and important impact on these efforts. Brazil has the most advanced infrastructure for test development and use among countries in the Americas below the US. As a result, the work of Brazilian psychologists may serve as a springboard to stimulate the growth and development of testing practices in these other countries. Discussions with the Institute's officers identified ways our two associations may work together to achieve mutual goals. Additionally, ways to advance ITC's missions also were identified. These recommendations are summarized below.

The Institute of Psychological Assessment and ITC should consider co-sponsoring a regional conference in 2011 to be held in Brazil. This conference could impact Brazil as well as serve as a magnet to attract persons from other South American as well as Central American countries. The Institute's conferences are co-sponsored by the Portuguese Psychological Association. Many colleagues from Portugal attended the conference. Members of an association from Argentina also are likely to participate in the 2011 conference. The Institute of Psychological Assessment and ITC should consider co-sponsoring an international conference in 2016 on an important regional theme. Various comments found under the previous recommendation are applicable here. Our two respective web sites should be linked. Ideally, information should be in both Spanish and Portuguese. This link would serve to promote the visibility of both associations and thus may attract Brazilian members to the ITC. Efforts to translated ITC documents into Portuguese and/or Spanish would help these efforts.

The Institute would welcome efforts to improve its journal, *Psychological Assessment* ([http://pepsic.bvs-psi.org.br/scielo.php/script\\_sci\\_serial/\\_lng\\_en/pid\\_1677-0471/nrm\\_iso](http://pepsic.bvs-psi.org.br/scielo.php/script_sci_serial/_lng_en/pid_1677-0471/nrm_iso)), one published three times yearly. Efforts to change its name of the Inter-American Journal of Psychological Assessment may have desired outcomes. Institute leadership would welcome ITC members contributing articles to the journal and serving as reviewers of manuscripts submitted to it, in part to assist in editing them to proper standards and providing suggestions that lead to acceptable levels of scholarship.

The ITC should consider Brazilian resources upon which the ITC can draw when doing its work. For example, Brazilians who have been engaged in test adaption practices could serve as consultants to or participate as members of ITC committees engaged in the development or revision of its guidelines. Thus, the involvement of colleagues from Latin America could have a mutually beneficial impact. The Institute could assist by linking the ITC with the Federal Council of Psychologists, resulting in the Council's membership in the ITC as well as further efforts to improve national standards for test development and use following a review and recommendations from our association. Exchange information from our respective newsletters. Additionally, encourage ITC and Brazilians to write for each other's newsletter. ITC members may need to assist in working with Brazilian scholars to ensure the English is suitable. Although our Brazilian colleagues have made important advances in developing tests, they have not developed an infrastructure to market tests in Brazil. Knowledge of available tests often occurs by word of mouth. For example, the development of a yearly catalog of tests may provide an

important professional and public service. Methods that increase the visibility of tests are likely to help promote test development, sales, and use. ITC members can assist in this important effort. Two other issues important to the ITC's efforts internationally, including those in Brazil, are summarized below.

The ITC should consider ways to enable people to obtain access to needed information on issues important to our association (e.g., ways to properly develop, administer, score, and interpret tests) through the use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology. Most people who use tests have, at best, meager knowledge and understanding of these issues. Moreover, the ITC has access to professional resources that could have an instrumental impact on these issues in Brazil and elsewhere internationally.

The use of on-line, video, on-demand, teleconferencing, and other methods should be explored that allow persons who often do not have access to this information nationally or even locally (e.g., they live in rural or other isolated areas). For example, the development and provision of modules that range from basic test and measurement information through SEM and IRT and other more advanced methods could make a valued impact far beyond that currently provided by the ITC. Consider developing guidelines on test use cross-nationally. Persons interested in using them and those who have used them may exchange information through our web site. The following publication may serve as a partial platform for the development of these proposed guidelines: Byrne, B.M., Oakland, T., Leong, F.T.L., van de Vijver, F.J.R., Hambleton, R.K., Cheung, F.M., & Bartram, D. (2009). A critical analysis of cross-cultural research and testing practices: Implications for improved education and training in psychology, *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*. 3, 94-105.

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### **Test development and practice in Estonia**

Mairi Männamaa and Eve Kikas  
Estonia

Estonia, a small country in the northern part of Europe and a member of the European Union, has a population of 1.4 million and its official language is Estonian. Psychology has been a licensed profession for the last four years. As of spring 2008, Estonia has 110 licensed psychologists among whom 47 are clinical psychologists, 27 school psychologists, 18 psychotherapists, 13 clinical child psychologists, four clinical neuropsychologists, and one forensic and correctional psychologist. However, many more individuals have received a degree in psychology and work as psychologists. Professional licenses are issued by the Estonian Chamber of Professions based on recommendations from the Qualification Committee of the Estonian Union of Psychologists.

Among psychologists, clinical psychologists are most likely to use psychological tests, especially those who work with children in large clinics that service somatic and psychiatric disorders. Tests are used less by school psychologists and psychotherapists.

Tests are used for diagnostic purposes to assess general aptitude, cognitive profile, various cognitive processes or special abilities, emotional states, behavioral characteristics and personality. Tests also are used to evaluate changes and dynamics in illness-related conditions, plan interventions and to conduct research.

Licensed psychologists who work in large institutions typically use well-established tests from other countries. These include the following developmental scales and aptitude tests: Bayley Scale of Infant Development, Griffiths Mental Developmental Scales and Psychoeducational-Profile-Revised, as well as Wechsler's and Kaufman's test batteries; scales for assessing cognitive functions: A Developmental Neuropsychological Assessment, Delis Kaplan Executive Function System, Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer's Disease, Test of Memory and Learning, Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery, and the Brief Repeatable Battery of Neuropsychological tests; tests for the assessment of particular cognitive functions/skills: Rey tests (Auditory verbal learning or Complex Figure Test), Bender

Gestalt test, Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration, and the Stroop Color-Word Interference Test; scales that assess emotions: Beck Depression Inventory and the Children's Depression Inventory; behavioral assessment questionnaires: Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist, Yale Children Inventory, and Conners' Rating Scales; as well as personality tests: Cesarec-Marke Personality Scale, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Schedule for Nonadaptive and Adaptive Personality, Neo Personality Inventory.

Estonia lacks a unified system or organization for adapting and standardizing well-established tests from other countries. The large amount of work required to adapt and standardize tests in comparison to the small number of potential users of these tests constitutes a chief obstacle for creating a unified system. Thus far, Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III, Neo Personality Inventory and Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer's Disease have been adapted and published under a contract with a publisher. The use of tests that have been translated along with their norms or the development of new norms usually is better among pertinent specialists when the tests that are available free of charge (mostly neuropsychological tests). Some test authors have been contacted directly with a request to translate their tests, thus bypassing the publisher. The development of new tests typically occurs in the context of conducting a study. They typically do not become widely used.

Practitioners and theorists would be interested in organizing the development of original tests or adaptation of existing tests at the national level. The creation of a test center is needed, one based in one or more universities and with support from the Estonian Union of Psychologists, that specializes on adapting and developing tests and working in other ways to help ensure their quality and application of a research-based approach, including training in their use. A test center that mediates access to well-established and well-known tests and methods could take into account the number of potential users when establishing contracts and specifying conditions.

The adaptation and use of well-established methods are absolutely necessary for various reasons. They permit psychologists to examine the development and results of Estonian children and adults in relation to other countries. Well-established methods are based on large-scale studies for which small nations lack needed resources. The adaptation and validation process helps validate locally created original tests.

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**Write a review of test development or issues in YOUR country,  
or any general articles, news or reviews**

**Submit for consideration to the Editor of Testing International,  
Jan Bogg, jbogg@liverpool.ac.uk**



### NEW ITC INITIATIVE

The ITC would like to assist Brazilian scholars by reviewing manuscripts prior to their submitting them to the International Journal of Testing, in order to advise authors on the style, content, methodology, and other critical publication features. This effort could elevate the work of our Brazilian colleagues as they publish in their journal, the International Journal of Testing, and other journals.

If you are interested in assisting with this important work, please contact Carlos Nunes [carlosh-nunes@mac.com](mailto:carlosh-nunes@mac.com), the president of the Brazilian Association of Psychological Assessment President or Solange Wechsler [wechsler@lexxa.com.br](mailto:wechsler@lexxa.com.br), the Association Past President.

### Got a question?

Do you have a question you would like to ask and receive an answer from an expert in the area? Send your answer to with the TI Editor, Jan Bogg ([jbogg@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:jbogg@liverpool.ac.uk)) with TI FAQ in the message header. Your question will be forwarded to an expert and may feature in a future issue of TI.

### TI Regional reporters Required

TI would like to recruit regional reporters to write about issues in their country and to solicit content from their country. Reporters would also help to review any submitted drafts and liaise with the TI Editor, Jan Bogg. If interested contact Jan Bogg outlining your interest and experience.

### The ARTS Program

Three workshops will be held during **July 2010 in Melbourne** in conjunction with the International Congress of Psychology. Topics include cultural and social cognitive neuroscience research, discourse analysis, and test development and adaptation.

Each program can accommodate 15 participants. Accommodation and meals are provided, and participants are allocated a partial travel stipend to assist with travel expenses. Each ARTS participant will supplement this support with funds secured from their own institution or national psychology organization. Each ARTS participant will be expected to attend the international Congress of Psychology or the International Congress of Cross Cultural Psychology. Although registration fees for these congresses are waived for ARTS participants, accommodation, subsistence and travel are not covered. Preference will be given to those applicants who (a) are from a developing or low income country; (b) have never participated in an ARTS; (c) are early career / younger than 45 years; and (d) are in a position to develop and disseminate the ARTS experience (through teaching, research or scholarship).

**ARTS application deadline March 1, 2010. Decisions to be made by May 1, 2010.**

Information: <http://www.am.org/iupsys/arts/ARTS10-app-instructions.html>

Additional program information <http://www.am.org/iupsys/arts/artsann-2010.html>

**Get the Guidelines on Internet and CBT Testing**  
**[www.intestcom.org](http://www.intestcom.org)**

## DIF MONOGRAPH

The monograph on *Differential Item Functioning* (Osterlind & Everson, Sage, 2009) is the 161st entry in the popular Sage series *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*. The monograph opens with descriptions of several interlocking terms, including differential item functioning (DIF), test bias, and test fairness along with a brief discussion of their importance to and relative place in mental measurements.

The monograph focuses on DIF. DIF is a growing and evolving collection of statistical techniques useful for detecting systematic differences in performance by subgroups of a population at both the test and item levels. The monograph discusses overarching statistical facets of DIF (e.g., measurement error and systematic differences, conditioning criterion, purification of data) and other important considerations (e.g., statistical bias versus unfairness, whole-test characteristics versus operating features of individual items) as well as number of statistical techniques and strategies.

DIF techniques are organized into two groups: those primarily based on classical test theory or on assumptions item response theory (IRT). This classification scheme is not absolute as some of the statistics can be appropriately applied to either test underpinning. Techniques include Mantel-Haenszel, non-parametric approaches (e.g., Doran's standardization) and other methods based on IRT assumptions and maximum likelihood statistics, including those useful to investigate DIF in polytomous items, translated tests, and computer adaptive testing; personalized testing. Future trends in DIF use also are discussed, including employing the validity argument, hierarchical linear modeling, and structural equation modeling in reference to test equivalence.

### Reference

Osterlind, S.J. & Everson, H.E. (2009) *Differential Item Functioning (Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences #161)*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

### LATEST ISSUE

#### **International Journal of Testing, Volume 9, Issue 4, 2009**

##### **Conspiracies and Test Compromise:**

**An Evaluation of the Resistance of Test Systems to Small-scale Cheating**

*Jing Guo, Louis Tay, and Fritz Drasgow*

##### **A Range-Null Hypothesis Approach for Testing DIF under the Rasch Model**

*Craig S. Wells, Allan S. Cohen, and Jeffrey Patton*

##### **Differential Item Functioning Analysis Using Rasch Item Information Functions**

*Adam E. Wyse and Raymond Mapuranga*

##### **Latent Trait Theory Approach to Measuring Person-Organization Fit: Conceptual Rationale and Empirical Evaluation**

*Oleksandr S. Chernyshenko, Stephen Stark, and Alex Williams*

##### **The Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire: Testing for Measurement Invariance and Latent Mean Differences in Spanish and Portuguese Adolescents**

*Isabel Castillo, Inés Tomás, Isabel Balaguer, António M. Fonseca, Cláudia Dias, and Joan L. Duda*

## CONFERENCES

### DIARY DATES 2010

#### **27th International Congress of Applied Psychology**

**July 11-16, 2010**

**Melbourne**

**Australia**

<http://www.icap2010.com>



#### **The 7th Conference of the International Test Commission Challenges and Opportunities in Testing and Assessment in a Globalized Economy**

**July 19-21, 2010,  
Hong Kong**

<http://www.itc2010hk.com>

The conference will be hosted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in the English language, and will take place right after the 27th ICAP conference in Melbourne, Australia. Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world to visit, English is widely spoken, and travelling and accommodation are easy and comfortable. We invite you to attend ITC's 7<sup>th</sup> conference in this very dynamic part of the world, where the field of psychological and educational testing and assessment is moving forward rapidly.

#### **5th International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences**

**Cambridge University**

**United Kingdom**

**2-5 August, 2010**

<http://www.SocialSciencesConference.com/>

The International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences examines the nature of disciplinary practices, and the interdisciplinary practices that arise in the context of 'real world' applications. It also interrogates what constitutes 'science' in a social context, and the connections between the social and other sciences.

#### **DIARY 2012**

**Amsterdam**

The 8th Conference of the International Test Commission will take place in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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