



COOL
BY NATURE

TERROIR MAP OF CIDER

Estonia · Latvia



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CIDER APPLES

SWEET SOUR



Pures Sidrābols
New Latvian variety for sweet cider with moderate tannins, rather early ripening



Dabinett
Classic bitter-sweet cider apple, in the Baltics may lack winter hardiness



H-4-03-21
Late ripening cider apple selection with low acid content and moderate tannins



H-17-05-22 (Slinkis)
Red-leaf columnar crab with delicate aroma and low acid content



Merrigold
Mild, delicious and aromatic autumn apple, sweet with some acidity



H-16-97-86
Late ripening dessert and cider apple with pleasant sweet-sour taste and low tannins



Auksis
Popular commercial apple with very good sweet-sour taste from September till March



Ritika
Estonian crab apple with high sugars and low to moderate tannins, original aroma



Kuku
Very sweet crab apple with low tannins, obtained in Estonia



Põltsamaa Taliõun
(Peltsamä)
Estonian landrace with mild sweet-sour taste and pleasant aroma



Sūgisjoonik
(Rudens svītrains)
Traditional Baltic variety, at proper maturity aromatic and good sweet-sour taste



Maimu
Late ripening Estonian variety with small, aromatic fruits, sour-sweet taste



Tellissaare
Late ripening dessert variety, firm and crisp, sweet with some acidity



Vidzemes Zelta Renete
(Liivi Kuldrenett)
Traditional Baltic variety with sweet, aromatic fruits, autumn ripening



Liivika
New Estonian variety similar to 'Liivi Kuldrenett', but smaller tree and longer storage



Cidross (Nr.19-97-154)
Scab resistant cider apple with balanced taste and moderate tannins, late ripening



Kerr
Late ripening crabapple with very aromatic, dark red juice and rather high acid content



Sīpoliņš
(Liivi Sibulõun)
Traditional Baltic variety with small, sweet, aromatic fruits, rather low juice outcome



Sinap Orlovsky
Commercial variety with large, juicy, late ripening fruits and sweet-sour taste at maturity



Pepin Shafranny
(Safrāna Pepiņš)
Widely in older orchards, firm, sweet-sour, smallish fruits with yellow flesh



Melba
Early ripening, mild and very aromatic dessert variety, sweet-sour taste



Bohnapfel
(Reinas Pupu ābele)
Traditionally grown variety, extremely late ripening, used for cider after freezing



Talvenauding
Estonian variety with good sweet-sour taste and pleasant aroma, ripens in autumn



Dobeles Sidrābols
(DI-93-4-14)
Late ripening cider apple with high acid content and moderate tannins



Auce
Red-leaf crab with delicious and attractive sour-sweet juice and moderate tannins



Veiniõun
Large-fruited Estonian variety with pink flesh, sour-sweet taste, selected for juice



Hyslop
Old crab apple variety with high sugar-acid proportion, high tannins, but low juice outcome



Remo
Late ripening sour-sweet juice apple popular in Germany; in the Baltics may lack winter hardiness



Quaker Beauty
Old crab apple variety, fruits with balanced taste and low tannins, but susceptible to bruises



Lietuvas Pepiņš
(Leedu Pepin, Glogierowka)
Ancient variety with very juicy, mild, sour-sweet fruits and balanced taste



Antonovka
Traditional variety with acid, aromatic fruits, ripens in autumn



Malus prunifolia Nr.9
(Yellow Chinese crab)
Selected clone of Prunifolia crab apple, high sugar and acid content



Raganas Sarkanais
Late ripening red-leaf crab with aromatic acid fruits and high anthocyanin content



Dzeltenais Skābais krebs
Late ripening crabapple with very high content of acids and polyphenols

MORE INFO
ON CIDER APPLE VARIETIES



FLAVOURS

We enhance our ciders with additional layers of flavour using only natural ingredients – whole berries and fruits, their juices, hops, meadow flowers, and carefully selected botanicals.

ORCHARDING

- From integrated management to no intervention
- Many orchards effectively organic, even if not certified
- Apples largely from home gardens
- All apples hand-picked

Apple trees for cider in Latvia and Estonia are typically grafted onto semi-dwarf or seedling rootstocks, creating orchards with a mix of vigorous old trees and newer, more compact plantings.

Common rootstocks: MM 106 and B 118 are most common in relatively young orchards. Older orchards mainly comprise vigorous trees on seedling rootstocks, most often 'Antonovka'.

Pruning is very light and not always annual. Fertiliser and plant protection are minimal, and some orchards are fully organic. Grass between rows is mown to maintain biodiversity, and older trees may be supported with props. This extensive, low-intervention approach helps apples develop rich flavours naturally, giving Baltic ciders their unique character.

SOILS

In Latvia and Estonia, soils vary from light sandy textures to richer clay and loam, mostly slightly acidic or neutral – ideal for growing apples for cider. In northern and western Estonia, limestone-rich soils add mineral depth and character, while gentle rainfall and natural leaching create well-drained, fertile soils across the region.

GEOGRAPHY

Coastal regions
In coastal regions, the milder climate allows the cultivation of less winter-hardy varieties and a longer growing season, though winter conditions there are more unstable and prone to thaws.

Inland regions
In continental inland areas, temperatures are more contrasting – with colder winters and hotter summers – while winter conditions are generally more stable, though lower air temperatures can be critical for certain varieties.

Despite the region's small size, local weather patterns vary widely, shaping each orchard's unique character.

TOPOGRAPHY

In the region, cider orchards are generally on flat land or gentle slopes facing south, south-east, or south-west. Latvia and Estonia both lie within the lowlands of the Northern European Plain, with gently rolling terrain rarely rising above 100 m.

- Estonia:** Average elevation is around 50 m, with 90% of the land below 100 m.
- Latvia:** 50% of the country lies below 90 m above sea level, and 74% is under 120 m.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

To capture the unique terroir of Baltic Cider, we collaborate with research institutes in Latvia and Estonia. Analyses of soils, fruit, juice, and ciders, started in 2024, lead us to the ideal Baltic cider profiles.

FINDINGS IN SHORT:

- Baltic ciders are naturally high in acids, especially malic acid, which gives the sharp, green apple character and freshness.
- Apple cultivar selection: varieties with high juice yield and higher sugar content are better suited for quality cider production.
- Key choices affecting aroma and fermentation success: yeast strain, fermentation temperature, and nutrient availability.
- Managing acidity through cultivar choice and possible malolactic fermentation can help balance the sharp malic acid character typical of Baltic ciders.

VEGETATION

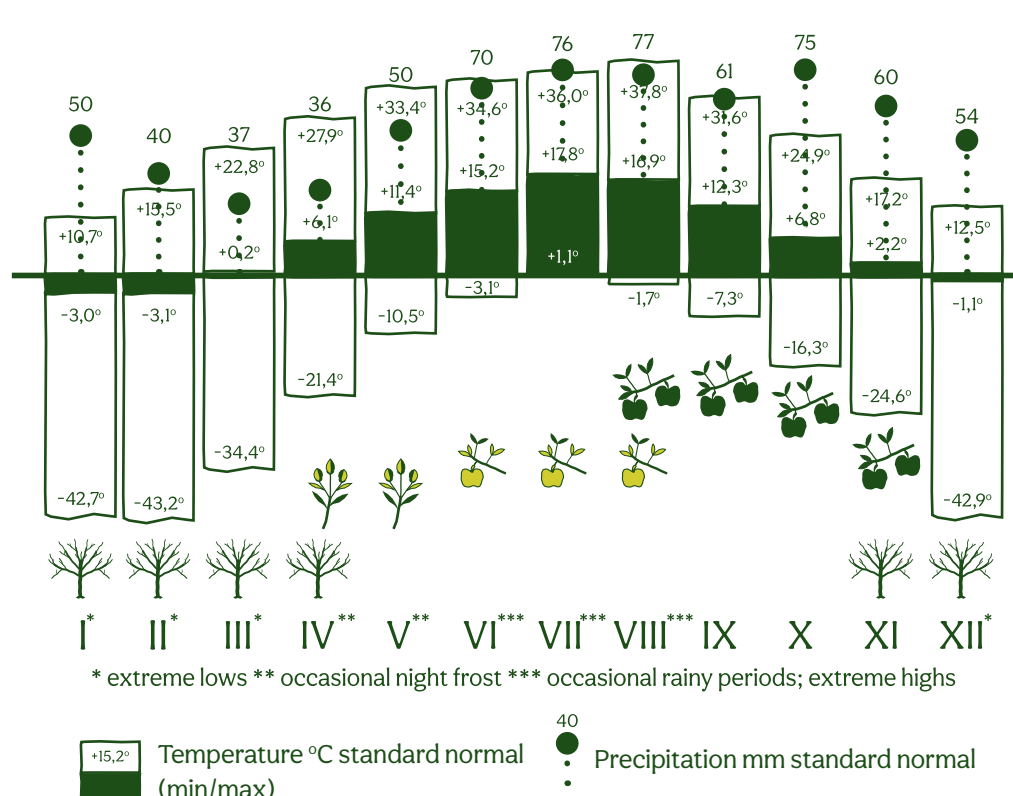
In the cool northern climate, apple trees grow well and produce abundant crops. The apples ripen slowly, developing complex flavours and aromas. Bud break takes place in April in the southern regions and in May further north, although night frosts may still occur in the orchards. Baltic summers are bright, short, and changeable – bursts of sunshine reaching +30°C alternate with refreshing rainfall, helping the fruit retain its freshness and character. The long autumns and extended dormant periods contribute to the slow development of fruit qualities essential for distinctive cider.

CLIMATE

The short vegetation period in combination with Low temperatures keeps the fruits accumulate less sugars, and acids remain high. In cool climate conditions, increased polyphenol accumulation occur due to temperature fluctuations and angle of the sunshine which enhance the cider aroma bouquet. Naturally lower sugar levels allow for a full fermentation process while maintaining a moderate alcohol content. Our ciders typically range from 4.5% to 5.5% ABV.

AVERAGE SUNSHINE HOURS PER YEAR: Estonia - 1830 Latvia - 1700-2000

OVERALL TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION:



APPLE TYPES USED FOR CIDER

- Traditional heirloom cooking and eating varieties
- European cider apple cultivars
- Baltic-origin cider apple varieties - new experimental orchards
- Crabapples
- Wild apples (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Wild seedlings

Natural cider is best made from sweet-bitter varieties with high soluble solids and moderate tannins. Varieties are often blended (cuvée) to achieve the desired juice balance; exceptional vintage cider varieties can be used alone.

Target juice composition:

- >14 °Brix
- polyphenols 50–200 mg/100 g
- acidity 0.5–0.7%
- tannins 0.05–0.25%
- sugar/acid ratio 15–16
- soluble pectin ~64 mg/100 g

BALTIC CIDER HIGHLIGHTS:

- APPLE VARIETY DIVERSITY:** We use cultivars less suited to dessert consumption and wild apples, creating unique flavor profiles.
- NATURAL ACIDITY:** Our cool climate helps develop natural crisp acidity in apples, while specially selected cider apple varieties contribute tannins and structure.
- DISTINCT AROMAS:** Aromatic compounds may set our ciders apart from traditional styles elsewhere.
- INNOVATION-FRIENDLY:** With no long-standing local cider tradition, we have the freedom to experiment, allowing each producer to develop a distinctive style through different fermentation approaches, ingredients, and production methods.
- NATURAL FLAVOURS:** We use only natural ingredients to enhance the character of our ciders.

This map was produced by the Latvian Country Tourism Association, Estonian Rural Tourism Organisation, Institute of Horticulture (Latvia), Polli Horticultural Research Centre of Estonian University of Life Sciences (Estonia). Apple varieties were selected and described in collaboration with cider producers; analyses were conducted by the participating research institutes.



TERROIR MAP OF CIDER

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WHAT IS BALTIC CIDER

Vibrant, refreshing, aromatic cider with crisp acidity and low sugar.

This map is the first attempt to capture the unique terroir of Baltic Cider, shaped by:



emerging
cider tradition



mixed apple
genetics



orcharding
traditions



bold
experimentation



cool climate

TERROIR REGIONS

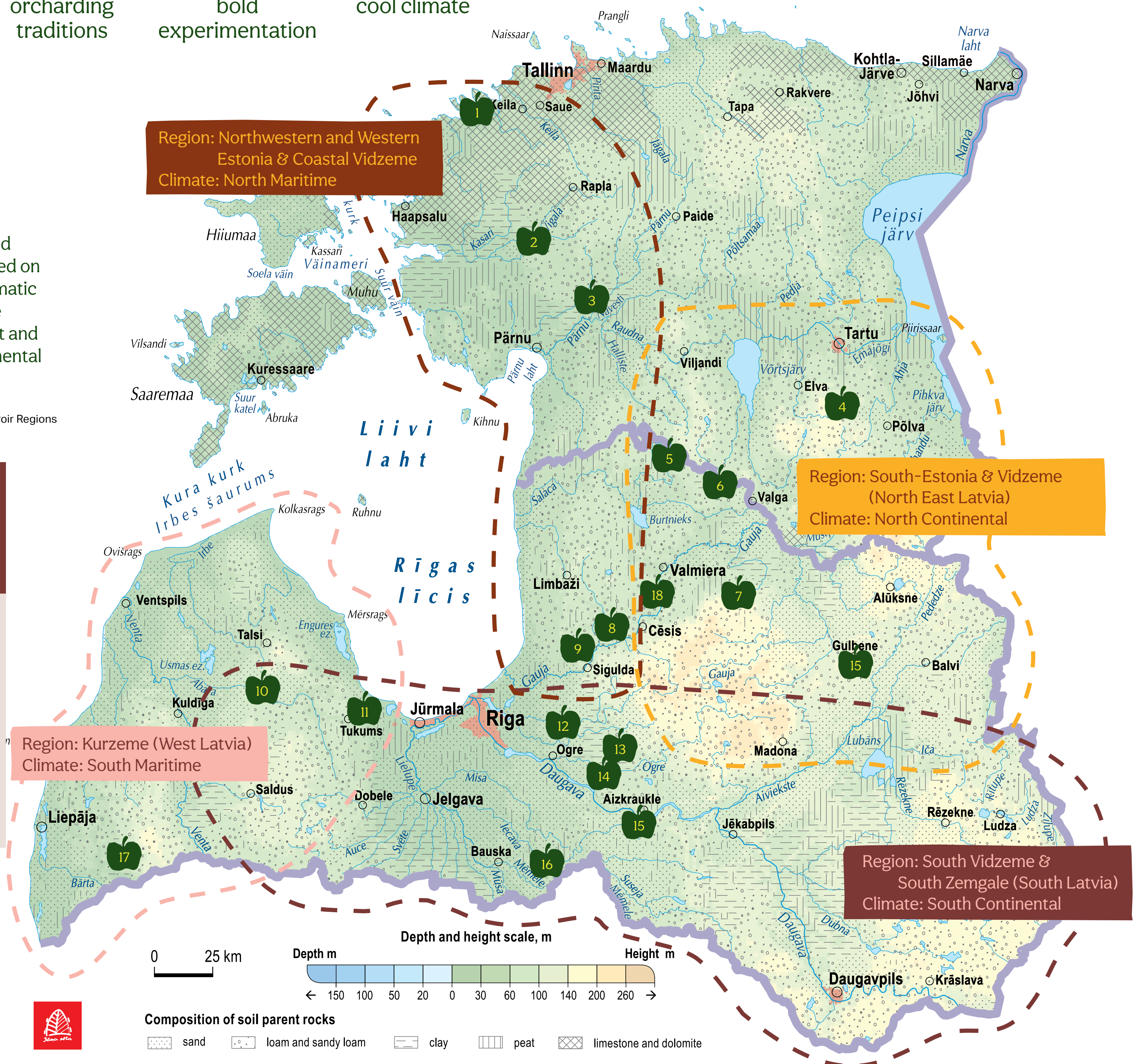


Cider terroir is divided into four regions based on geographical and climatic factors, primarily the north-south gradient and coastal versus continental climate.

Terroir Regions

	Northwestern and Western Estonia & Coastal Vidzeme North Maritime	Kurzeme (West Latvia) South Maritime	South-Estonia & Vidzeme (North East Latvia) North Continental	South Vidzeme & South Zemgale (South Latvia) South Continental
Mean air temperature, °C	5.9–6.8	6.8–7.9	6.1–6.5	6.7–7.2
Annual precipitation, mm	701–756	693–695	656–726	581–733
Precipitation, May–September, mm	330–345	303–343	332–370	304–362
Positive temperature sum, °C	2638–2867	2658–2950	2607–2696	2735–2826
Effective temperature sum, °C	2442–2670	2580–2748	2589–2621	2678–2730
Length of growing season, days	189–199	approx. 214	196–214	approx. 214
Active temperature sum, °C	2022–2255	2197–2301	2217–2243	2283–2316

Climate normals (1990–2020) from the nearest meteorological stations



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Co-funded by
the European Union

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