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Housing ministers flown out to champagne party in Cannes – at a cost of £100,000

Published time: 28 Mar, 2018 12:12

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Housing ministers flown out to champagne party in Cannes – at a cost of £100,000



© Reuters / Global Look Press

UK housing officials spent almost £100,000 (\$141,400) jetting out to a meeting in the French Riviera – to meet with other Brits.

A staggering £98,687 bill was picked up by the taxpayer for 15 government housing officials to attend a champagne-fueled property conference in picturesque Cannes.

Ministry of Housing officials, along with 11 from Homes England – which is funded by the Ministry of Housing – flew to the MIPIM bash this month. Entertainment included stilt walkers and a live band, while attendees were treated to unlimited free alcohol and canapes.

The average rent price for a family home across the UK is £1,000 (\$1,415) per month, although this is much higher in major cities. The amount splashed on the overseas shindig could therefore have paid for one family home for eight years and four months – or housed 100 families for a month. The trip has been slammed by fellow MPs.



John Healey MP

@JohnHealey_MP

15 Government officials go to Cannes to discuss answers to UK housing crisis [mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/u...](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/u...)

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Build... some... council... houses? <https://t.co/CHXw0pDBGn>

— David Lammy (@DavidLammy) [March 28, 2018](#)

Shadow Housing Secretary John Healey said: *“If civil servants need to ‘engage’ with council leaders, a train to Manchester or Sheffield would do just as well.”*

However, those who attended the party defended the expenditure. Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said: *“MIPIM is attended by most cities and combined authorities in the UK. [It] presents an opportunity for government to engage with these local and combined authority leaders, and support them in promoting the opportunities that exist to global investors.”*

"South East gains have been obliterated by housing costs"



A written parliamentary question from Healey asked how many staff attended and how much it had cost. Wheeler responded: *“The Ministry of Housing contributed £50,000 (\$70,730) and spent approximately £2,789.44 (\$3,947) on staff transport, accommodation and subsistence. The cost to Homes England was £45,898.20 (\$64,945).”*

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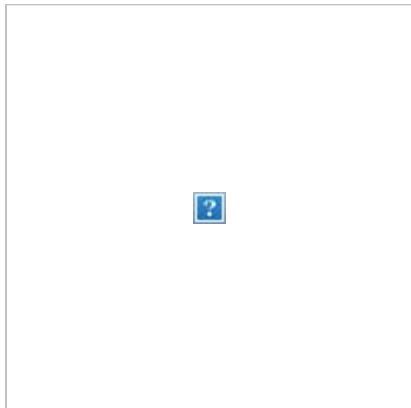
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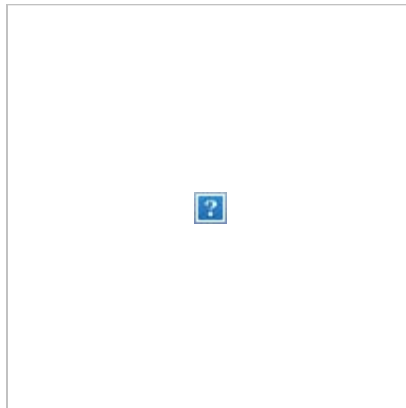
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NEWS

UK housing officials jet off to French Riviera on Cannes 'networking' junket costing taxpayer £100,000

Delegates from the Ministry of Housing and Homes England flew to Cannes for a property conference this month



By [Andrew Gregory](#) Political Editor
22:40, 27 MAR 2018 | UPDATED 08:58, 28 MAR 2018



The bill for the trip was footed by the taxpayer (Image: Valentin Desjardins/MIPIM)



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Taxpayers footed a £98,687 bill for 15 housing officials to go on a jolly to the French Riviera – to network with British bodies.



Four delegates from the Ministry of [Housing](#) and 11 from Homes England flew to Cannes for the MIPIM property conference this month.

There was a welcome bash with champagne, stilt walkers and a live band. And all delegates had access to unlimited free alcohol and canapés, and could join cocktail parties at sundown.

Defending the jaunt, Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said: "MIPIM is attended by most cities and combined authorities in the UK.

LOADING

A general view of the MIPIM conference in Cannes (Image: S.d'Halloy/MIPIM)

LOADING

There was champagne and stilt walkers at the bash (Image: S.d'Halloy/MIPIM)

"[It] presents an opportunity for Government to engage with these local and combined authority leaders and support them in promoting the opportunities that exist to global investors."

But there was an outcry as the junket came amid a shortage of affordable homes caused by years of Tory austerity.

Record numbers are being put up in temporary accommodation – costing taxpayers £1billion a year.

LOADING

Shadow Housing Minister John Healey has criticised the trip (Image: Trinity Mirror)

Shadow Housing Secretary John Healey said: "If civil servants need to 'engage' with council leaders a train to Manchester or Sheffield would do just as well."

He had asked in a written parliamentary question how many staff attended MIPIM and what the cost was.

Mrs Wheeler responded: "The Ministry of Housing contributed £50,000 and spent approximately £2,789.44 on staff transport, accommodation and subsistence. The cost to Homes England was £45,898.20."

Homes England is an executive non-departmental public body funded by the Ministry of Housing.

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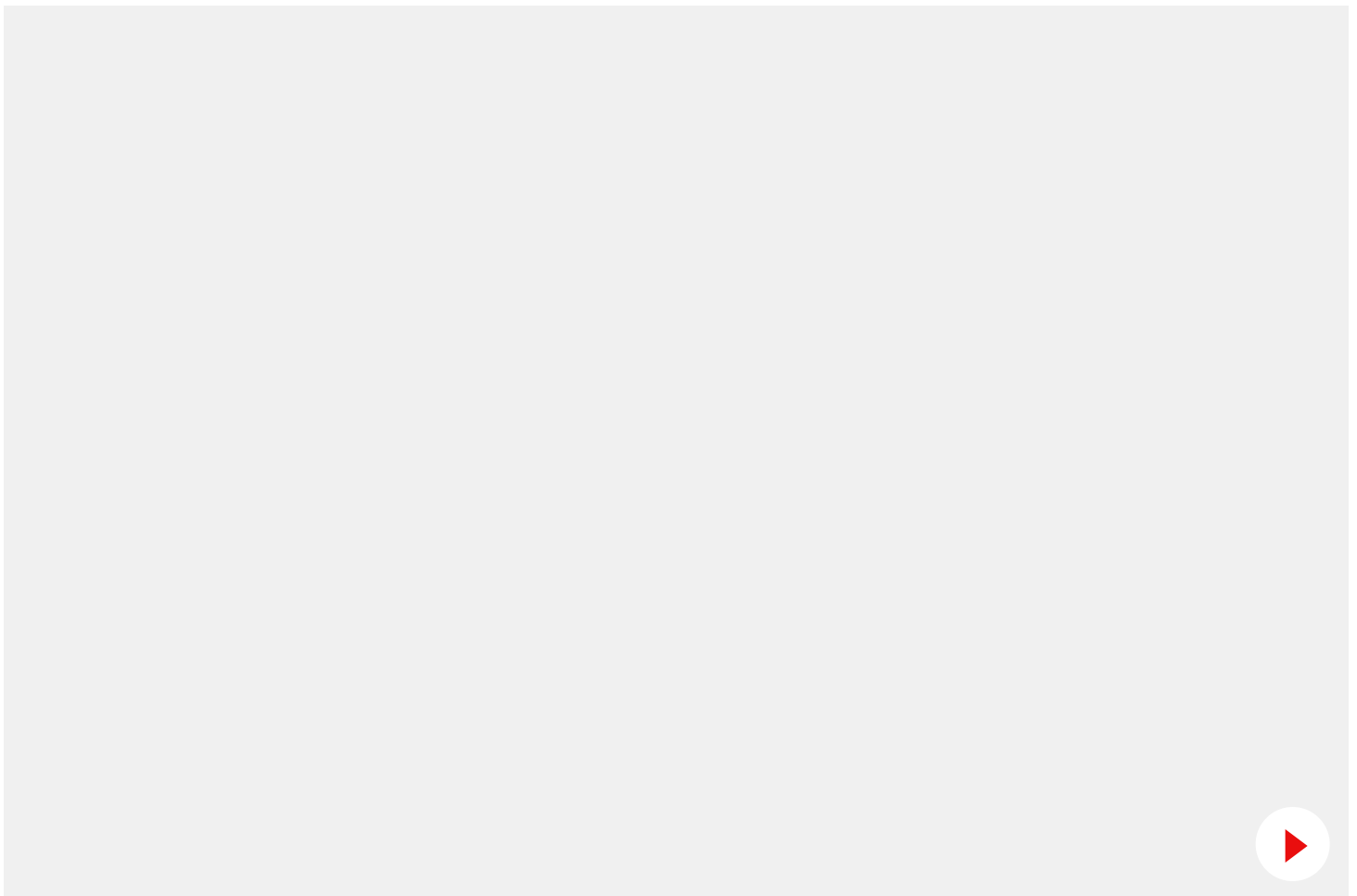
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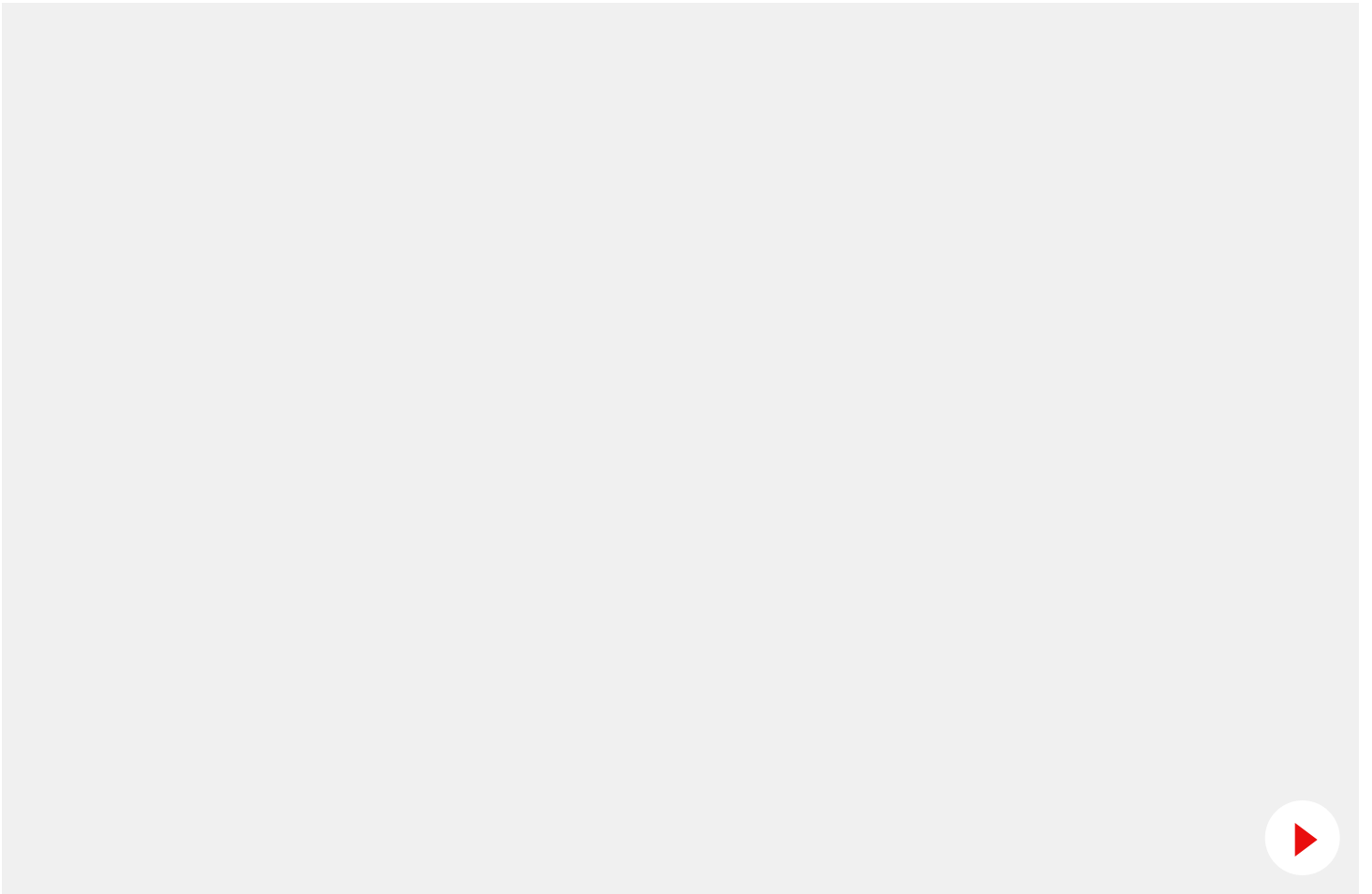
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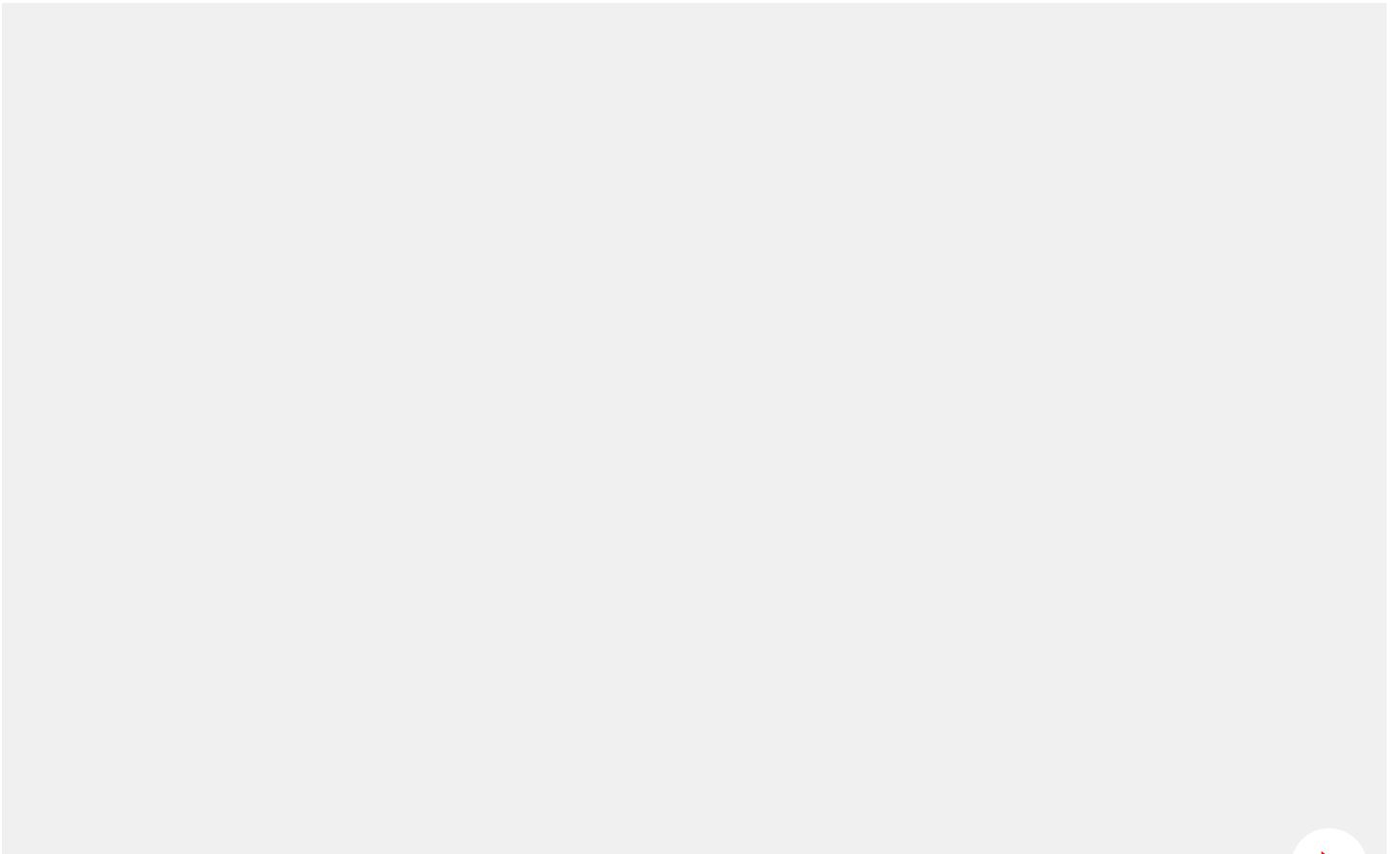
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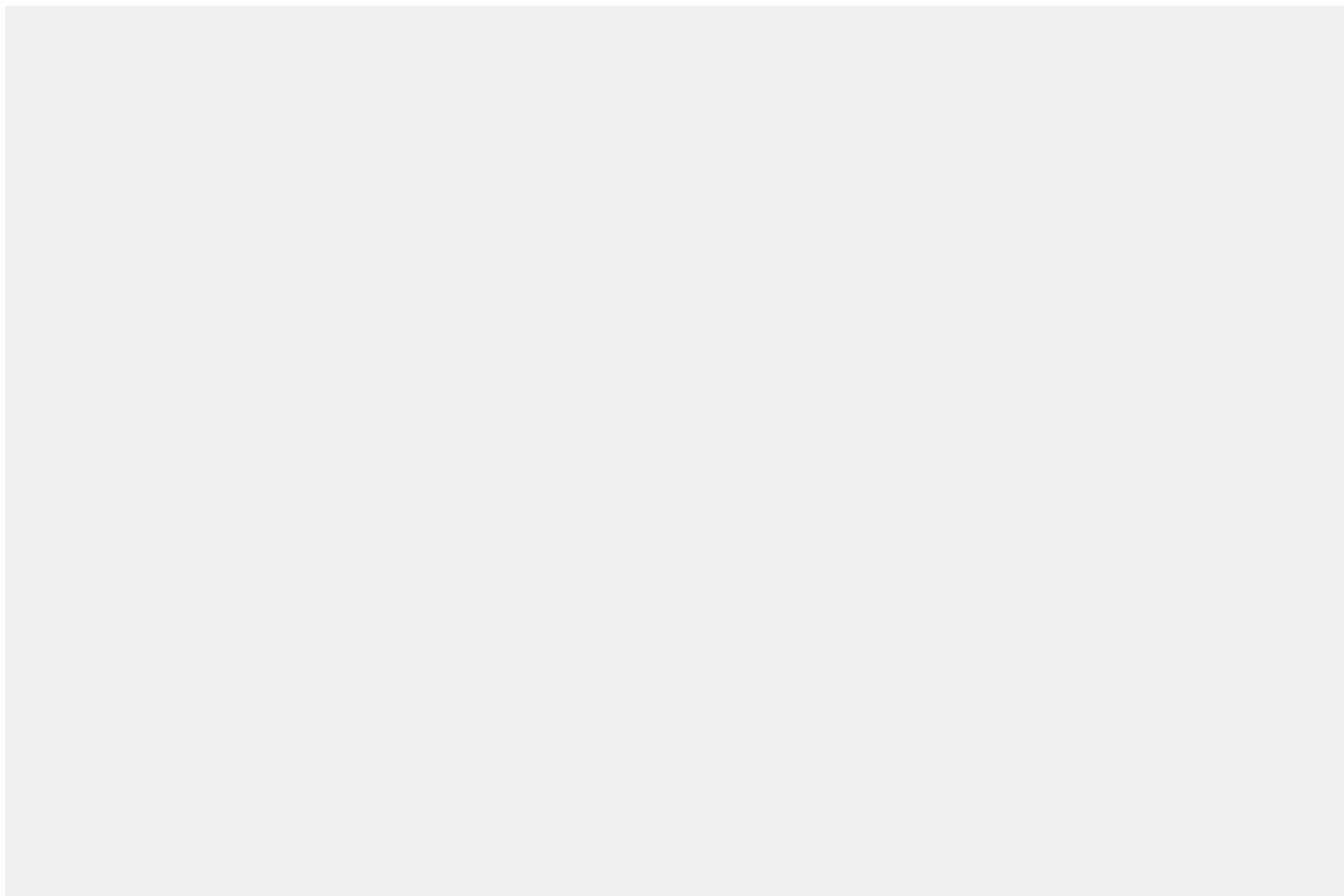
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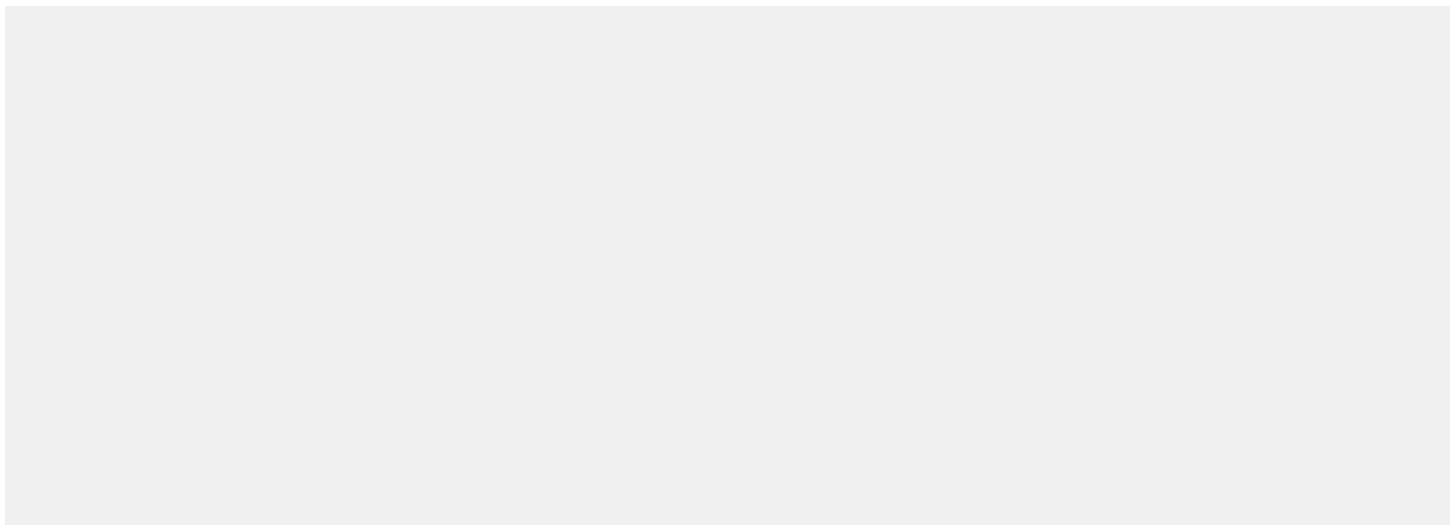
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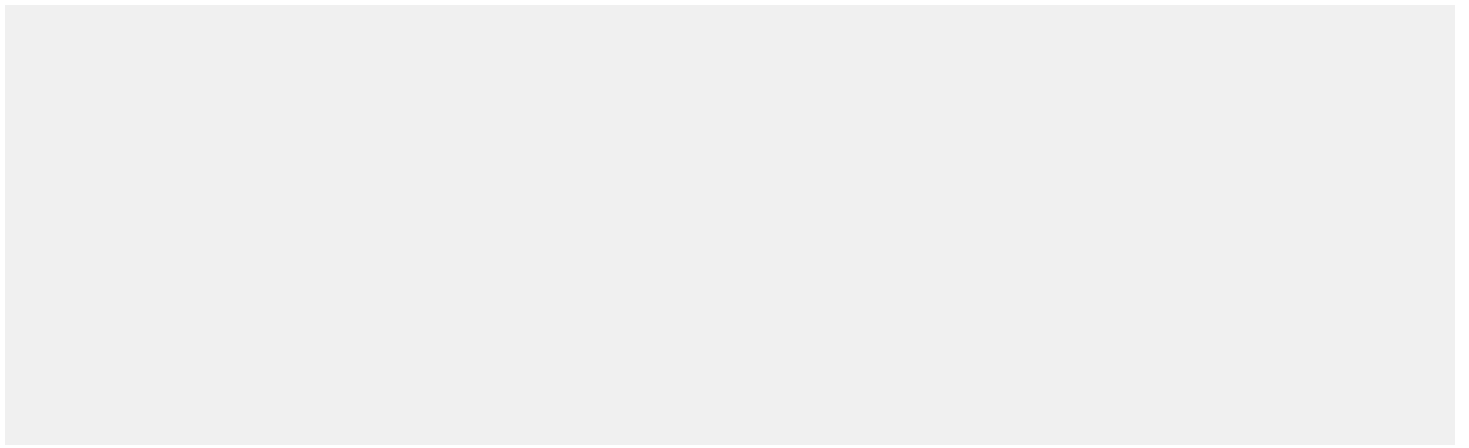
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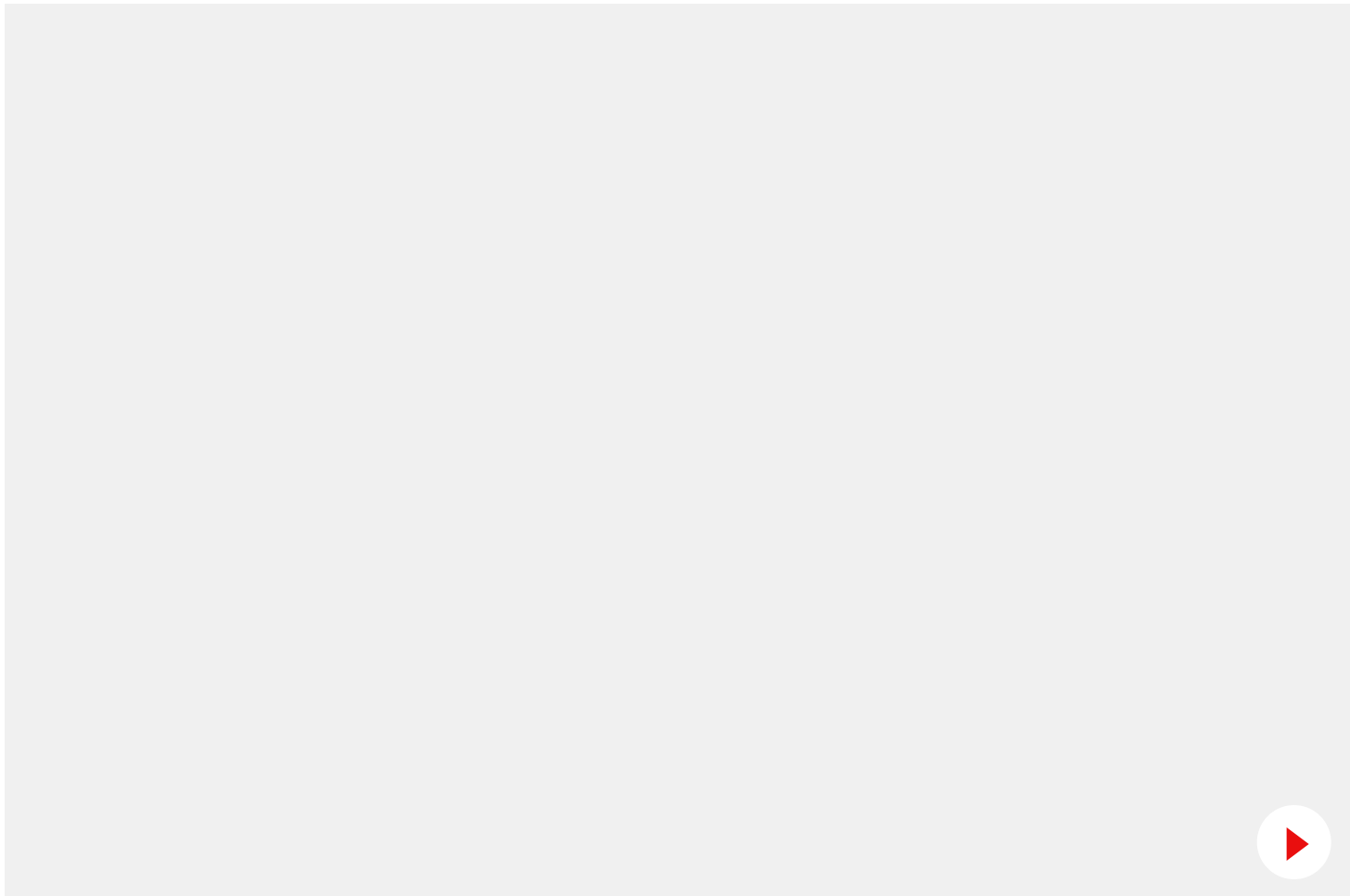
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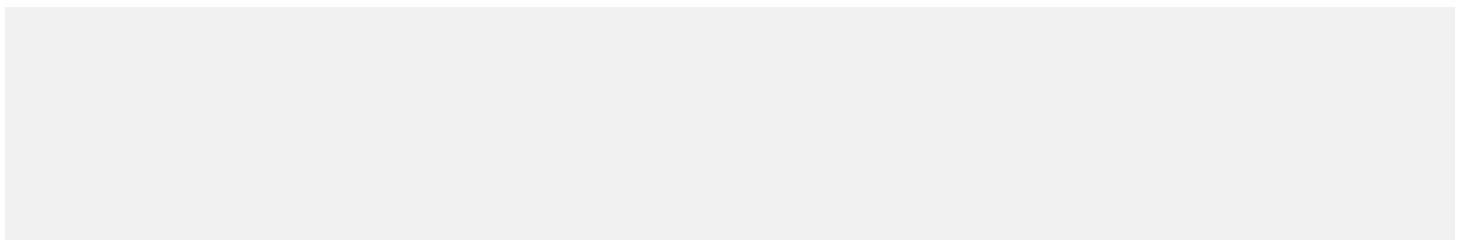
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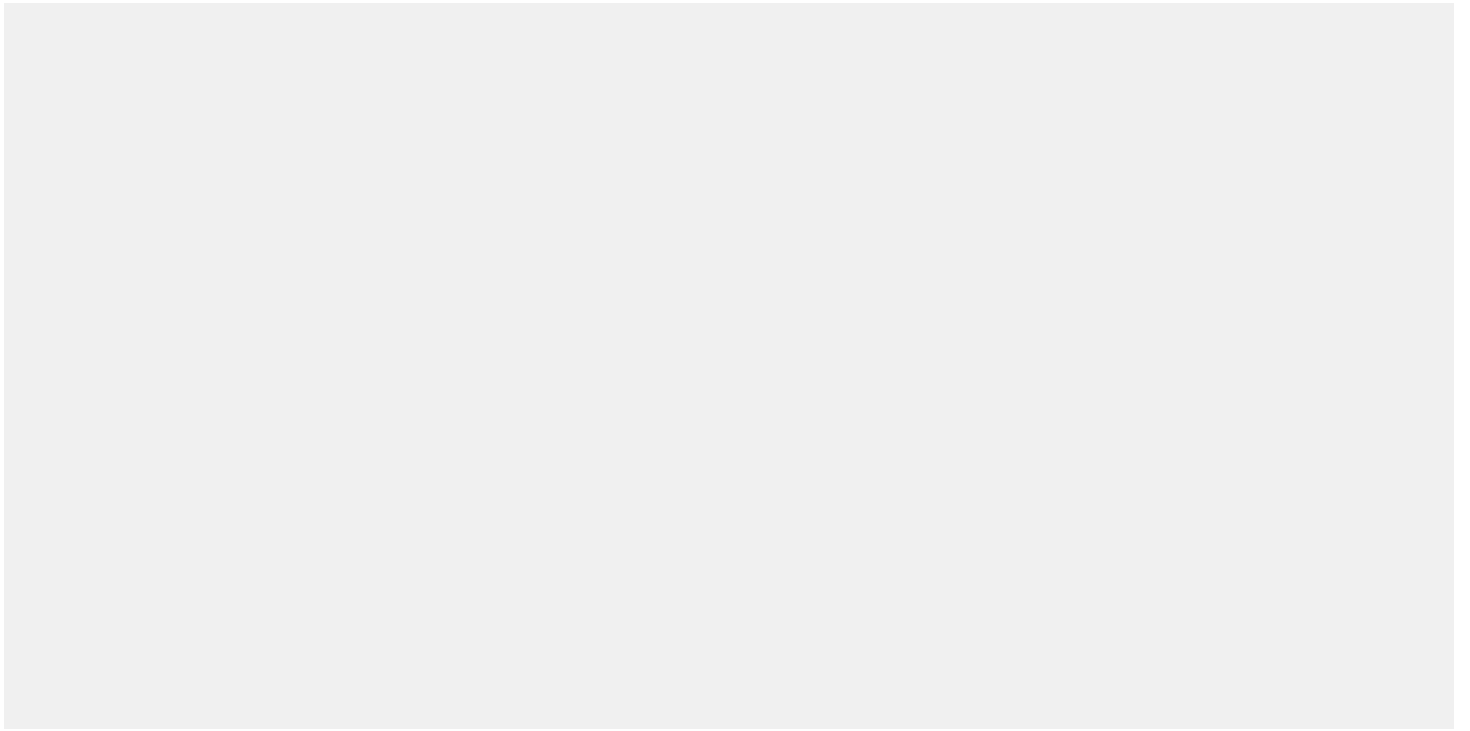
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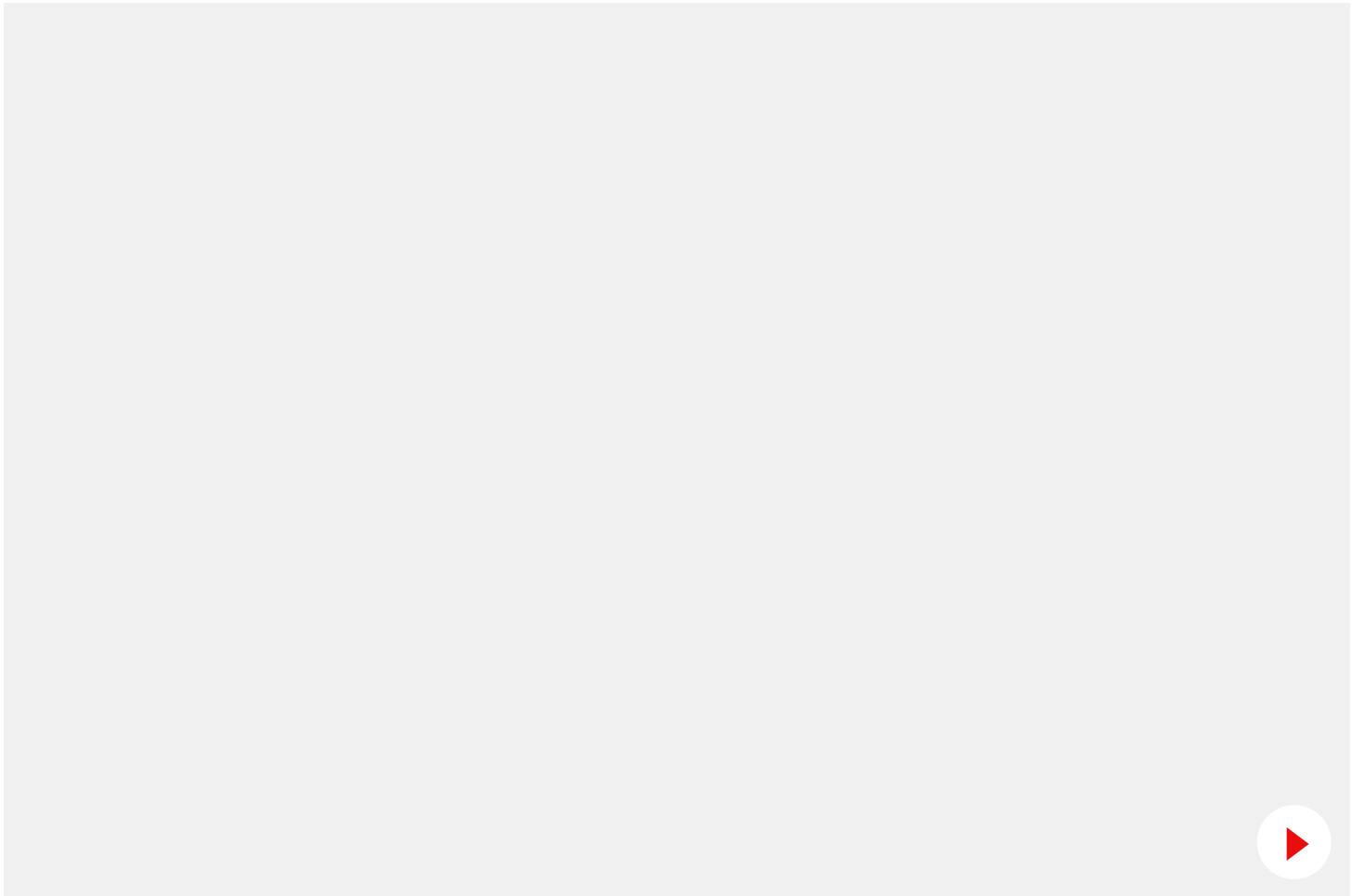
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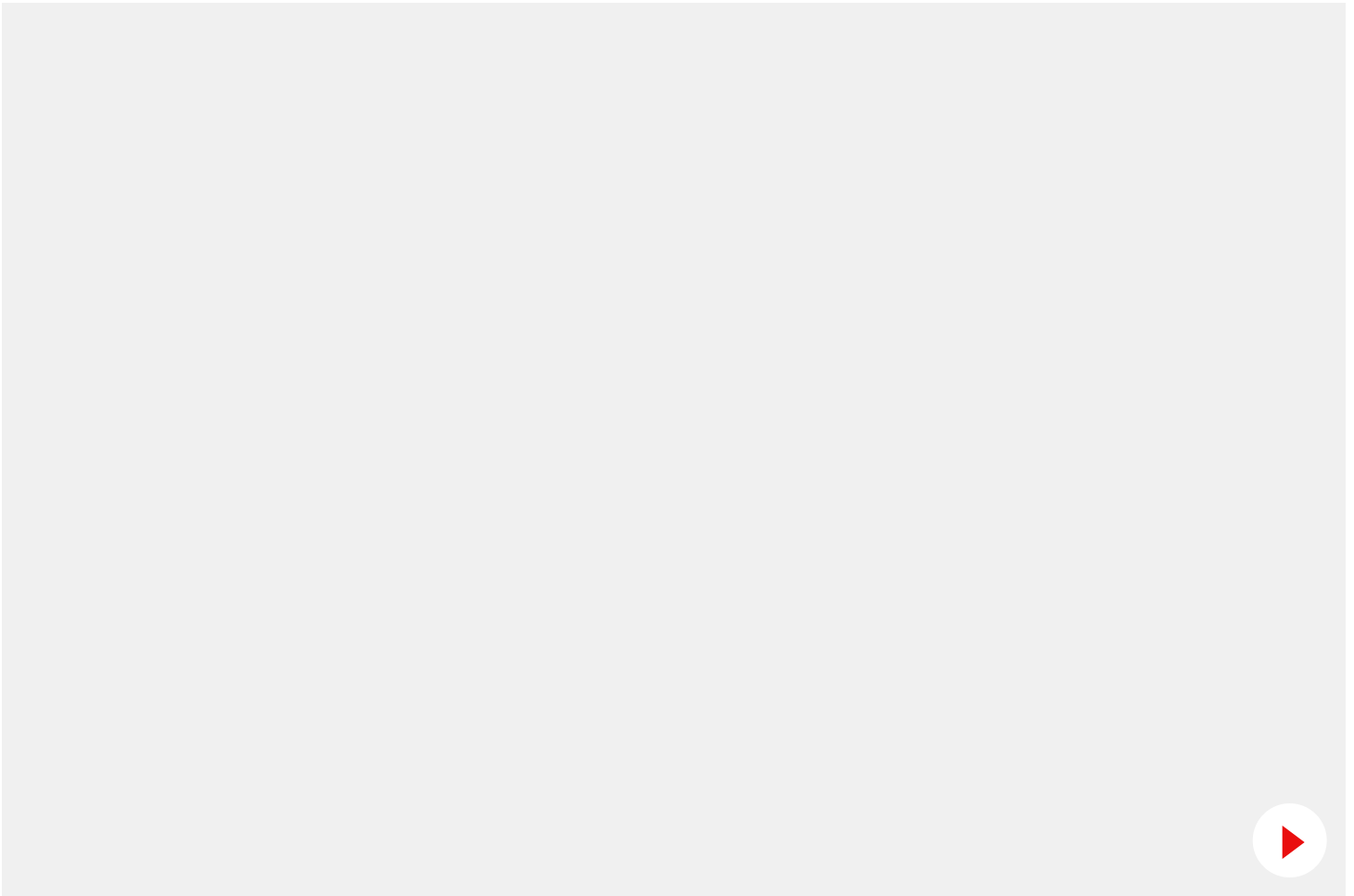
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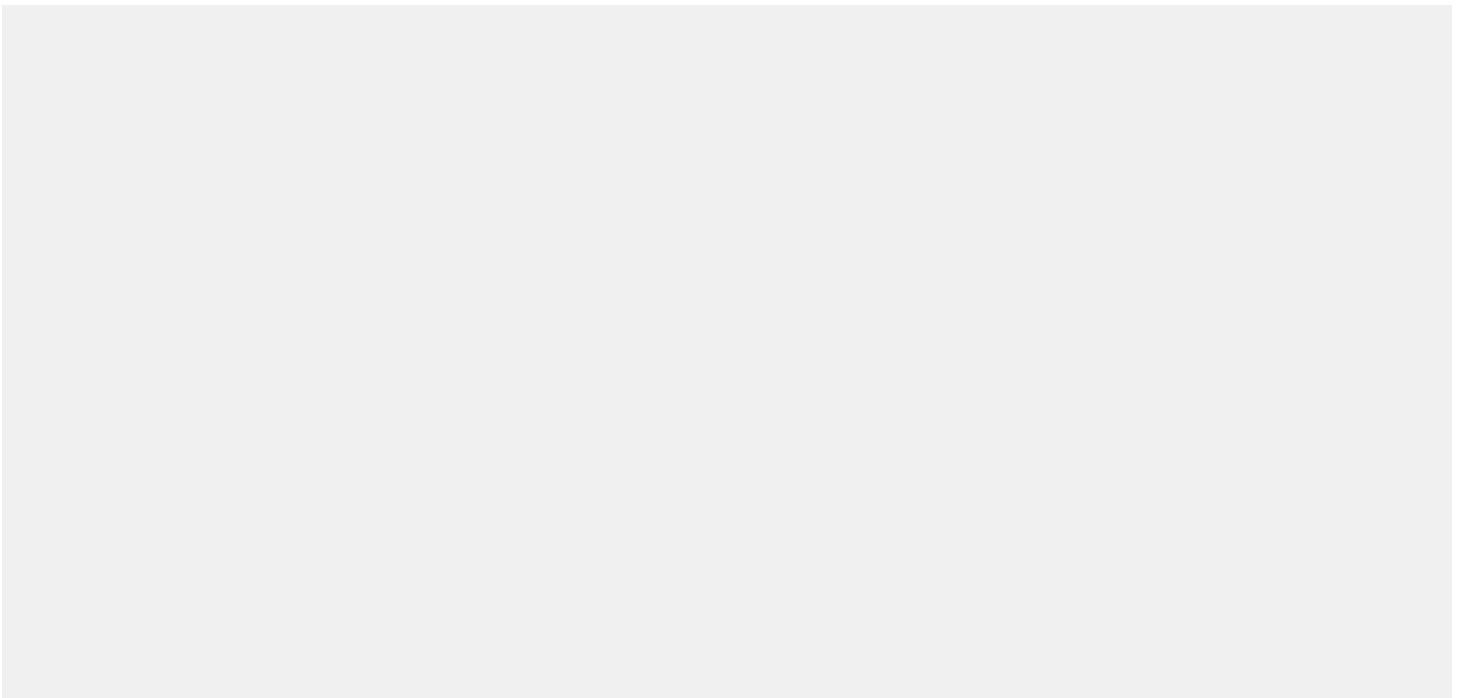
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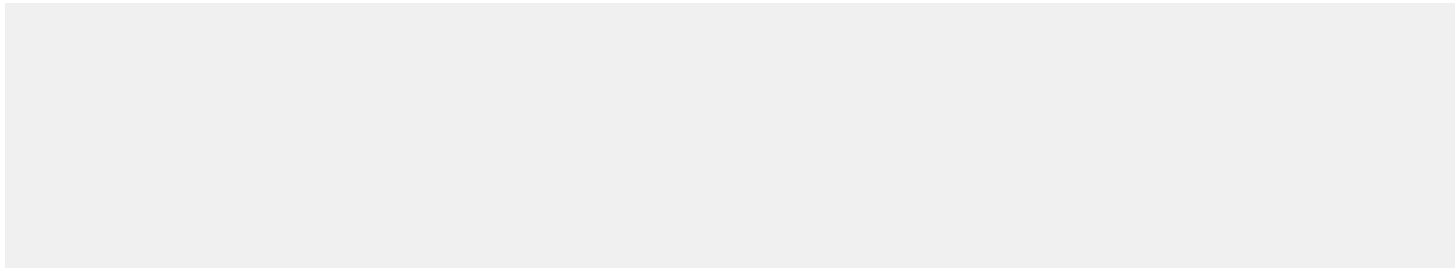
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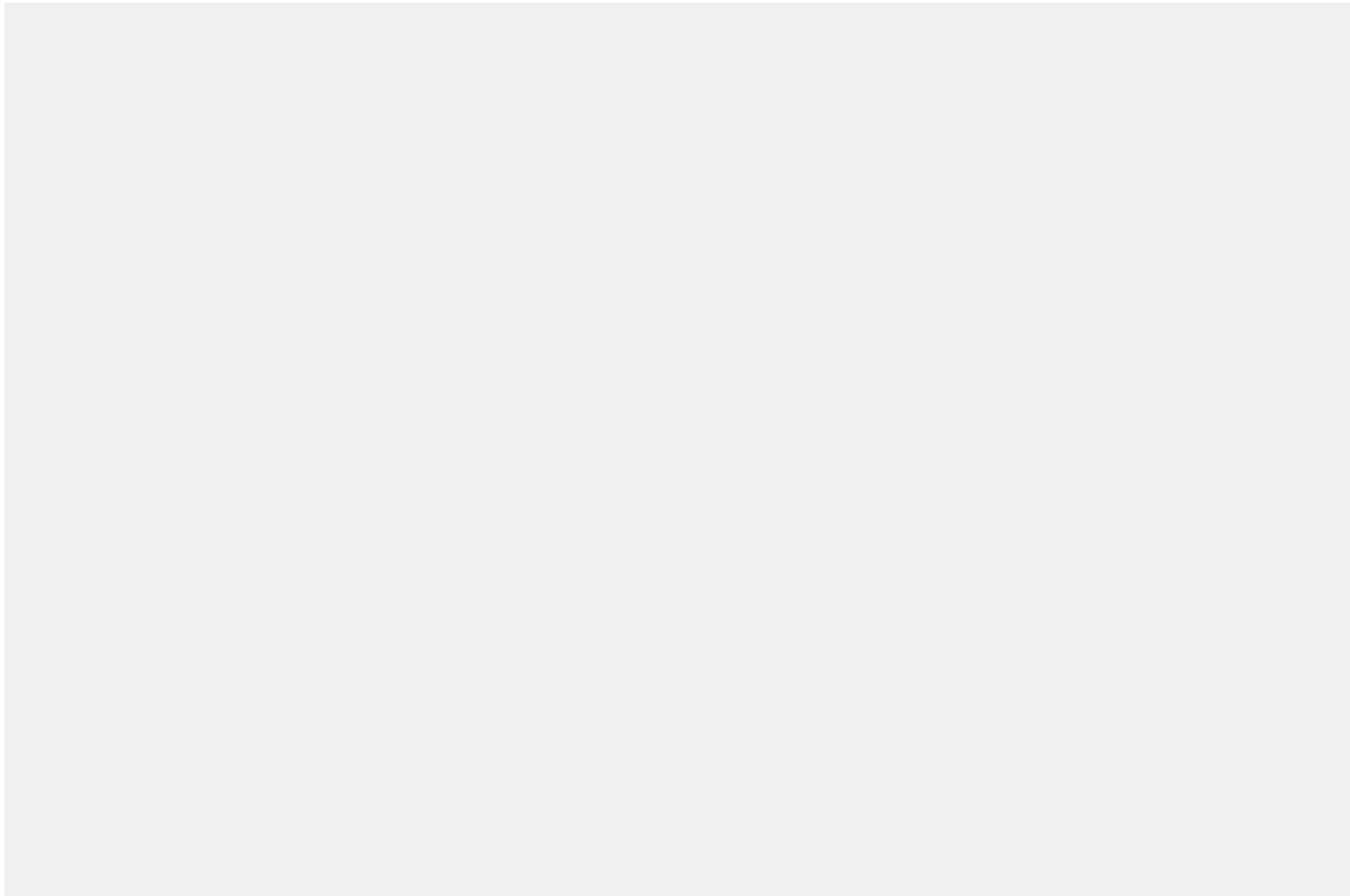
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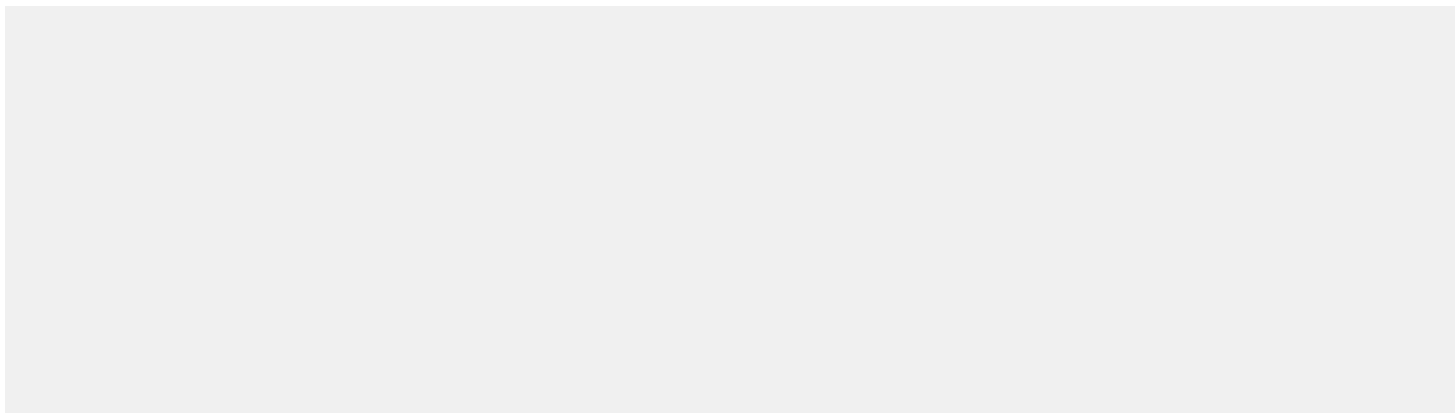
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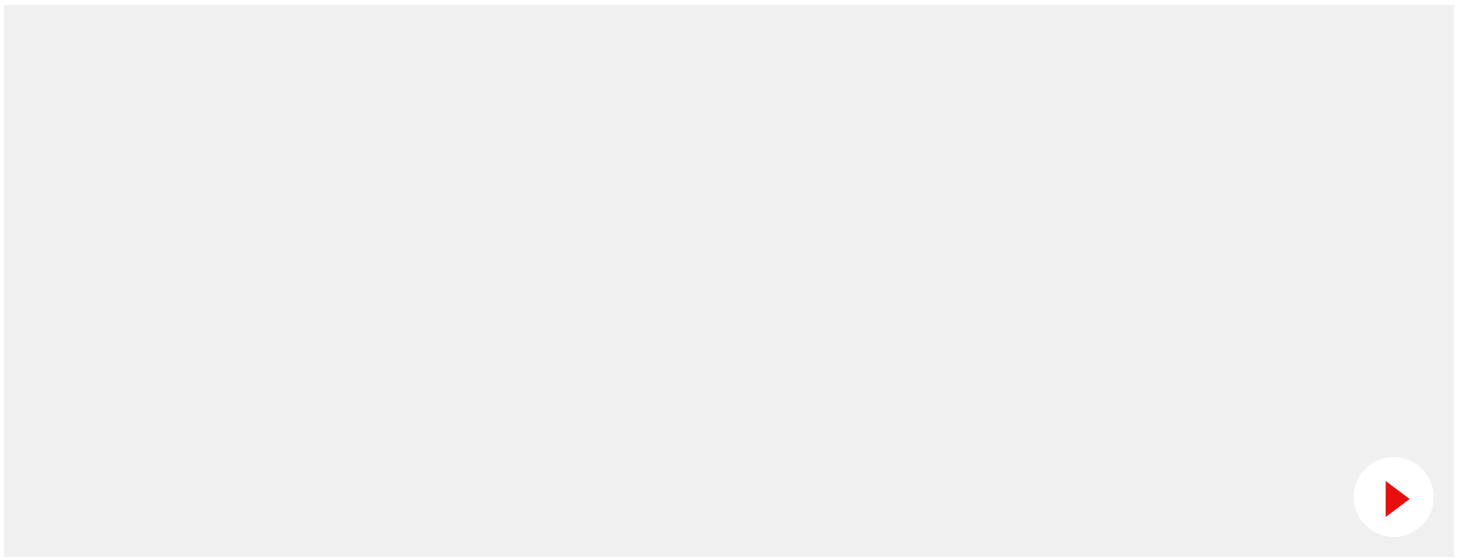
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