Red Hat’s Announcement &
The CERN IT Linux Strategy

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A Situation Recap

➔ Red Hat **announced** they stopped publishing RHEL sources (June 21, 2023)
  ➢ RHEL 8 & RHEL 9 affected, no changes for RHEL7 / CentOS7
  ➢ De-branded RHEL SRPMs were published on [git.centos.org](http://git.centos.org)
  ➢ Basis for RHEL clone rebuilds such as AlmaLinux and Rocky Linux
  ➢ Sources now only available to RHEL subscribers

➔ This move **directly targets the clone rebuilds**
  ➢ Red Hat “not under any obligation to make things easier for rebuilders”
  ➢ No perceived value (e.g. different arch or compiler flags)
  ➢ No contribution upstream (e.g. to CentOS Stream)

➔ Sound from a corporate perspective*, unfortunate for rebuild deployments

*To be fair: Red Hat contributed and contributes a lot to open source projects.
The Impact on Rebuilds and Deployments

➔ No SRPMs ⇒ Building “a bug-compatible” clone is more difficult

➔ The rebuilds took different routes to handle this for now
  ➢ Rocky Linux seems to mostly ignore the message (continues with RHEL SRPMs)
  ➢ Oracle also takes a more confrontational course (may deviate from RHEL)
  ➢ AlmaLinux complies with the changes (works with the CentOS Stream sources)

➔ Routes either legally risky or work-intensive … neither is sustainable

➔ For AlmaLinux, the additional complexity will affect the rebuild time
  ➢ The delayed release of a kernel RPM to fix CVE-2023-32233 is an example

➔ Uncertainty and RHEL / rebuild interdependence create risks for deployments
The Impact on CERN IT Users and Services

➔ CERN has a RHEL Academic Site License until 2029
  ➢ “Extended Research Network” (GDB Jan 2023)

➔ CERN IT Linux team supports RHEL and AlmaLinux
  ➢ Leverage the site license, but provide support/help for WLCG community
  ➢ Have one as the exit strategy of the other

➔ CERN IT services can use either
  ➢ ... and many do (a combination)
A Path Forward for CERN IT and WLCG

➔ Still in the “neutral zone”, closely following the evolution
  ➢ SUSE just announced to fork publicly available RHEL and fund it w/ 10M$
  ➢ Will there be timely updates and releases?
  ➢ What is the model how these are provided?
  ➢ CERN IT Linux team is in touch with AlmaLinux upstream

➔ Too early to revise our RHEL / AlmaLinux offering
  ➢ Clearly, we need clarity at some point … and likely a Plan B
  ➢ Next minor release of RHEL (autumn)?

➔ CERN IT committed to work with the WLCG community
Thanks!