SQLSTATE [HY000] [2006] Galera has gone away

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GALERA MARIADB OPEN-SOURCE LICENSING

An Error Message Made Real

`SQLSTATE [HY000] [2006] MySQL server has gone away` is one of the most recognized error messages in the MariaDB / MySQL ecosystem. Every DBA has seen it at least once. But in 2026, it is Galera itself that seems to have "gone away" — not because of a network timeout, but because of a strategic decision by MariaDB plc.

With the release of MariaDB 12.3 LTS, synchronous Galera replication is no longer included in the community edition. The component has been moved under a commercial license, a direct consequence of the acquisition of Codership, the Finnish company that has developed and maintained the Galera library since 2007.

Timeline of a Foretold Departure

The story unfolds in several acts:

June 2025 — MariaDB plc announces the acquisition of Codership. At this stage, the official messaging emphasizes continuity: Galera remains GPLv2 for the community; the acquisition aims to accelerate development and integration with MaxScale.

Late 2025 — The first MariaDB 12.x development branches appear without the `wsrep` plugin. Community contributors flag the change on mailing lists.

February 2026 — Version 12.3 LTS is released. Galera Cluster is officially absent from the community edition. A press release explains that the component is now reserved for MariaDB Enterprise Server, under a commercial license.

Why This Decision?

From MariaDB plc's perspective, the logic is understandable. Galera is a major differentiator against Oracle MySQL and PostgreSQL. It is one of the few synchronous multi-master replication technologies available for relational databases. And it is a powerful selling point for the Enterprise offering.

The problem is that Galera was also the primary reason to choose *community* MariaDB over MySQL or PostgreSQL. Thousands of production architectures rely on Galera in its open-source version. Tools like PmaControl, Percona XtraDB Cluster (which uses the same Galera library), and dozens of community Ansible playbooks are built around this functionality.

Community Reaction

The community responded with a mix of anger and resignation. Several voices emerged:

The pragmatists point out that the last community version with Galera (MariaDB 11.4) will be supported until 2029. There is time to plan a migration.

The worried highlight a pattern: MaxScale went from GPLv2 to BSL in 2016, then to a pure commercial license in 2025. Galera is following the same path. Which component will be next?

The optimists are betting on the MariaDB Foundation to maintain an alternative. The Foundation, which employs about twenty people and focuses on the community server, could theoretically fork the Galera code as it existed under GPLv2.

The realists note that maintaining a synchronous replication system as complex as Galera requires very specialized expertise and considerable resources. A community fork without funding would be hard to sustain.

Alternatives on the Table

Faced with this situation, several paths are available to users:

1. Stay on MariaDB 11.4 with Community Galera

This is the short-term solution. MariaDB 11.4 LTS will be maintained until 2029. That leaves three years to plan what comes next.

2. Migrate to Asynchronous Replication

MariaDB / MySQL semi-synchronous replication offers an acceptable compromise for many use cases. Paired with a proxy like MaxScale or ProxySQL, it enables automatic failover. But it does not guarantee the multi-node consistency that Galera provided.

3. Explore Percona XtraDB Cluster

Percona continues to offer a Galera solution under an open-source license for MySQL. However, the question arises: without Codership maintaining the underlying library, how long can Percona sustain its own integration?

4. Move to MariaDB Enterprise Edition

This is obviously the option MariaDB plc hopes users will adopt. The license cost must be weighed against the cost of a complete architecture migration.

5. Consider PostgreSQL

For new architectures, PostgreSQL with its clustering solutions (Patroni, Citus, or native logical replication) represents a credible alternative, albeit one with a different philosophy.

The Real Debate: Open-Source Sustainability

Beyond the Galera case, this decision reignites a fundamental debate. How do you fund the long-term development of complex open-source software?

The Open Core model — a free core surrounded by commercial features — is the dominant model. Redis, MongoDB, and Elasticsearch have all adopted it in various forms. MariaDB is simply following this trend.

But there is a crucial difference: Redis changed the rules of the game from the start with new features. MariaDB is removing a feature that has been free for over fifteen years. That is the

difference between never giving something away and taking back what was given.

Trust is at the heart of the open-source ecosystem. When a company removes a feature from the community edition, it sends a signal to all users: "what you use for free today could become paid tomorrow." This signal pushes architects to favor alternatives governed by foundations (like PostgreSQL via the PGDG) rather than commercial companies.

What This Means for DBAs

If you are a DBA managing Galera clusters in production, here is my advice:

1. **Don't panic.** Your MariaDB 11.4 clusters work and will continue to work.
2. **Document your Galera dependency.** Which use cases truly require synchronous multi-master replication?
3. **Evaluate alternatives.** For each use case, could semi-synchronous replication with automatic failover be sufficient?
4. **Plan ahead.** Three years is a long time, but a database migration takes time. Start the evaluation now.

Conclusion

`Galera has gone away` is not an error message. It is a change of era. The end of a model where the most advanced clustering technology in the MariaDB / MySQL ecosystem was accessible to everyone.

It is not the end of MariaDB, nor the end of Galera. It is the end of a certain idea of what "open-source" means in the context of enterprise databases. And it is a lesson for the entire community: when it comes to open-source, the only guarantee is the license. Read it, understand it, and plan accordingly.

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