



PRESS RELEASE

European Commission IPv6 Task Force Releases

IPv6 Call for Action at EU level

Brussels, November 5, 2003 – The European IPv6 Task Force, in its second phase, mandated by the European Commission, has released today a new report addressing the deployment Status of the new Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) including a renewed Call for Action at the European Union level.

This roadmap report is a follow-up on the previous set of recommendations, released in January 2002, in accordance with the request of Commissioner Erkki Liikanen: *"Our objective is to ensure that Europe's competitiveness in wireless technology is not jeopardised by the lack of a clear roadmap towards IPv6"*.

IPv6 is a new version of the Internet Protocol and is a key element in the move towards a New Generation Internet. The European Union, through its IST Programme, is a major supporter of this new networking technology. The IST Programme provides the funding of the IPv6 Task Force Steering Committee project (<http://www.ipv6tf-sc.org>), which coordinates the IPv6 Task Force effort.

‘IPv6 is a critical technology enabling the convergence of the Internet with mobile communications, an area where Europe leads the world,’ said Erkki Liikanen, European Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society. ‘The importance of IPv6 to European competitiveness in general cannot be overestimated. Europe needs to match its first-class research with political commitment to make IPv6 happen.’¹

“Keeping the momentum and monitoring the deployment roadmap progress of IPv6 proves to be a monumental task. Achieving set objectives needs leadership substantiated with genuine support from key business and technology players such as the European ISP and ASP community and industry at large to make this undertaking really happen.” stresses Latif Ladid, Chairman of the European IPv6 Task Force.

The new report of the IPv6 Task Force, now issued (<http://www.eu.ipv6tf.org>) puts forward a number of actions at EU level, to:

- Take all required actions aiming at the continuation of the work already performed within the “IPv6 Task Force”, focused in the short-term deployment.
- Create a new panel of experts, led by the IPv6 Task Forces for the in-depth investigation of non-technical deployment barriers.
- Promote the creation of a research-led centre of excellence, to drive forward IPv6 research and deployment in Europe.
- Promote the adoption of IPv6 by governments, schools, universities and the European Commission, including deployment in web sites and other infrastructure.
- Benchmark IPv6 deployment progress in Europe.

¹ Commission takes step Towards the Next generation Internet
(http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/02/284|0|AGED&lg=EN&display=))

- Reinforce the strategic need of IPv6 to accomplish the eEurope 2005 objectives together with broadband for all, security and Ambient Intelligence.
- Public and private organizations should require IPv6-capable devices and software in their procurements.
- Promote the adoption of IPv6 by the Top-level national NICs (those responsible for holding the root DNS infrastructure for every country).
- Promote the creation of an extended IPv6 Task Force portal and ensure that the achievements and the deployment progress are widely disseminated.
- Ensure the collaboration among all the actors.
- Create a European competition on best IPv6 deployment practices, including a European IPv6 Task Force prize for IPv6 innovation.

Given the necessity for a concerted and timely effort to enable the overall competitiveness of Europe to be strengthened in this strategically important area, the report of the IPv6 Task Force, advocates that its recommendations be brought to the attention of the European Council.

BACKGROUND

In February 2002, the European Commission adopted the Communication entitled 'IPv6: Priorities for Action'². The Communication calls for a European action plan to accelerate the rollout of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) - a key technology for the Next Generation Internet. The current generation of the Internet does not have sufficient 'Internet addresses' for the long-term future of the global Information Society. IPv6 provides a huge increase in the number of Internet addresses available.

ABOUT IPV6

IPv6 is an upgrade to the data networking protocols that power the Internet. The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) developed the basic specifications during the 1990s after a competitive design phase used to select the best overall solution. The primary motivation for the design and deployment of IPv6 is to expand the available 'address space' of the Internet, thereby enabling billions of new devices (PDAs, cellular phones, appliances, etc.), new users (countries like China, India, etc.), and new, 'always-on' technologies (xDSL, cable, Ethernet-to-the-home, fibre-to-the-home, PLC, etc.).

While the existing protocol, IPv4, has a 32-bit address space that provides for a theoretical 2^{32} (approximately 4 billion) unique globally addressable hosts, IPv6 has a 128-bit address space that can uniquely address 2^{128} (about 340 sexillion³) hosts. In practice, the number of global IPv4 addresses that can be used is far less, due to inefficiencies in their allocation and use. IPv4 simply cannot support an Internet scaling to many billions of globally connected hosts. Network Address Translation (NAT) has extended IPv4's life in conjunction with private IPv4 addresses. However, NAT complicates application deployment and, more importantly, cannot support new Internet growth areas including those 'always-on' and 'peer-to-peer' services that require connections be established to devices in home networks.

Further information is available on the EU IPv6 Task Force website (<http://www.eu.ipv6tf.org>). Also the press coordinating team can be contacted directly through:

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² http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0096en01.pdf

³ Actually 340,282,366,920,938,463,463,374,607,431,768,211,456 addresses.