MOVING FORWARD WITH IPv6

The IPv6 Task Force was established in April 2001 by the European Commission. The principal mandate of the Task Force was to map out a strategy for achieving the validation of the technical case for IPv6. This was achieved by a global and collective consensus calling on experts from the technical community from equipment manufacturers, ISPs, telecom operators and research and education sector (including members from ETSI, Eurescom, IETF, ISOC, IPv6 Forum, ITU, etc.). The net results of this consensus have been summarised in the five recommendation documents published Jan 30, 2002 and listed in the IPv6 Task Force web page: www.ipv6tf.org:

- Main Recommendation Report

- Wireless Solutions Reports

- Fixed Networks Reports

- Next Generation Applications Report

- Testbeds Recommendations Report

The findings of this task force were clearly advocating the adoption of IPv6 as it's today the only viable solution designed over the past ten years by the IETF (www.ieft.org) and no new protocol is foreseen to come in the future to change it drastically. IPv6 is the protocol of choice to cater for scalability, flexibility, robustness, return to simplicity, restoration of the end-to-end model, end-to-end security and privacy, low cost network administration, mobility and many other features built in this architecture.

Members of this IPv6 Task Force were instrumental in setting-up two large-scale European testbeds with the prime objective to verify and validate the findings, features and benefits, IPv6 holds as a promise. Details of these projects can be found under:

- Euro6IX : www.euro6ix.org

- 6NET : www.6net.org

New initiatives have been proposed to take IPv6 forward. A recently launched IST project named Eurov6 focuses on deployment of IPv6 with pre-commercial IPv6 applications in the peer-to-peer areas, home networking and car industry to name just a few. This initiative is global in its nature as a co-operation with the Japanese IPv6 Promotion Council (www.v6pc.jp/library/tasks_e.html) and similar bodies is being set-up.

The IPv6 Task force was also instrumental in preparing the ground for policy initiatives namely the Commission Communication on the "Next Generation Internet – priorities for action in migrating to the new Internet protocol IPv6" (February 2002), that puts forward a number of recommendations to the EU Member States and the Industry at large (ftp://ftp.cordis.lu/pub/ist/docs/ka4/mb_com_parlipv6.pdf).

This was followed shortly thereafter (June 2002) by the position taken by the European Council of Telecommunications which adopted a series of conclusions on "the transition to Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6)" that complement the statements of the European Council of March 2002 that recognised IPv6 as a priority issue.

(http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=MEMO/02/141|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

IPv6 is also a key aspect of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan as adopted by the European Council in Sevila, (http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/news_library/documents/eeurope2005/eeurope2005_en.pdf).

In its Communication and with the support of the Council, the European Commission has called for the renewal of the mandate of the "IPv6 Task Force, as a platform for debate on critical issues concerning the deployment of IPv6. Indeed, the need is acutely felt for a platform that enables an exchange of views amongst all economic and industrial sectors likely to be impacted by IPv6, including the consumer and white goods sector, research institutions, and independent data protection authorities as well as representatives of national or regional IPv6 Councils and appropriate representatives from candidate countries.

On the basis of the Communication of the Commission, the mandate of the Task Force should include:

- Ensuring a working liaison with standards and Internet governance bodies such as ISOC, IETF, ICANN, ITU, RIPE NCC, 3GPP, ETSI, IPv6 Forum, Eurescom, ETNO, UMTS Forum and GSM Europe.

- Providing a regularly updated review and plan action ("the European IPv6 Roadmap") on the development and future perspectives of IPv6 in order to co-ordinate European efforts on IPv6.

- Establishing collaboration arrangements and working relationships with similar initiatives being launched in other world regions.

In line with the Communication of the Commission and the Council conclusions, this second phase of the IPv6 Task Force, to start with its first meeting September 12th, 2002, will take the original recommendations a step further and will in particular take action regarding the:

- Creation of Regional / Country IPv6 Task Forces for field deployment and proximity work with all actors at large.

- Promotion of development of applications that will make the real business case for IPv6 in seeking endorsement by the peer-to-peer sector, Home service sector and transportation industry (Airbus, Car industry)

- Launching of high level awareness activities through briefings to European industry CEO/CTOs and government officials.

Naturally, the initiatives to be taken would relate to:

- Increased support towards IPv6 in public networks and services,

- Launch of educational programmes on IPv6,

- Promotion of IPv6 through awareness raising campaigns,

- Further stimulation of Internet across Europe,

- Creation of a stable and harmonised IPv6 policy environment,

- Strengthening of IPv6 activities in the 6th Framework Programme of R&D

- Strengthening of support towards the IPv6 enabling of national and European Research Networks,

- Acceleration of contributions towards IPv6 standards work,

- Integration of IPv6 in all strategic plans concerning the use of new Internet services.

With the launch of the second phase of the IPv6 Task Force, a unique opportunity is offered to the IPv6 stakeholders to contribute to a competitive and fast growing market, to participate in the shaping of future development of IPv6 in Europe and beyond, notably by ensuring that its deployment responds to the market demand, that high transition costs are avoided and that relevant and tested implementations are offered in the market place.

IPv6 Task Force Steering Committee and the European Commission