

CLIENT ALERT

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No European Telecoms Market Authority

The European Commission's proposal to create a European Telecoms Market Authority did not survive negotiations at the most recent EU Telecoms Council, held in Luxembourg, on 12 June 2008.

The plans to set up a new regulator, which would cooperate with the Commission and the national regulatory authorities and would act as the Commission's main advisor on regulatory affairs, faced strong opposition from the telecommunication ministers. One of the most criticized features was the merger of the new authority with the European Network and Information Security Agency (Enisa).

The proposal to create a new regulator was part of the reform package concerning the regulatory framework of the European electronic communications, presented on 13 November 2007. Withdrawal of the proposal has been seen as a strategic move by EU Telecoms Commissioner, Viviane Reding, to win support for other regulatory measures. Indeed, certain other proposals were endorsed by the Council, including one giving regulatory authorities the power to require telecommunication operators to separate network infrastructure from services provision.

In place of the new regulator, the Council has proposed strengthening the powers of the European Group of Regulators (EGR). This response is consistent with that of the European Parliament, which also called for a stronger EGR (to be renamed the "Body of European regulators in Telecoms") in place of the new authority.

Links:

- <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/08/384&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
- http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=4181

- http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecom/todays_framework/index_en.htm

The European Commission calls for action in order to prepare for the transition to IPv6, the next generation Internet Protocol.

Given the increasing number and range of networked devices that use Internet addresses (from PCs and mobile phones to RFID readers and in-car devices) Europe needs to prepare in order to address the growing demand for internet addresses. In a Communication adopted on 27 May, 2008 the European Commission set Europe a target of 25% of EU industry, public authorities and households to use the latest Internet Protocol (IP version 6 or IPv6) by 2010.

Introduction

IPv6 offers a massive increase in address space, much in the same way as telephone numbers were lengthened in the 20th century. IPv4, used since 1984, provides 4.3 billion addresses, of which only about 700 million or 16% remain free and available for new connections. The new Internet protocol, IPv6, will make an almost unlimited amount of IP-addresses available (3.4×10³⁸ addresses or roughly 4 billion x 4 billion x 4 billion x 4 billion) allowing more kinds of networks and a whole range of new innovative services and applications. Significant steps towards IPv6 would boost innovation in Europe and secure a competitive advantage in world markets.

Commission calls for action

The Commission is calling for concerted action from all relevant parties to stimulate IPv6 accessibility. Member States are called to enable IPv6 on public sector websites and Government services and make IPv6 a condition for public procurement. They should also raise awareness of businesses and organizations and help them with the transition. Moreover, at least 100 top European website operators, such as broadcasters or online news services should provide full IPv6 service to their users by 2010. Businesses embracing IP technology in their core business should consider IPv6 as their primary platform for developing applications or appliances (such as sensors, cameras etc). The EU's own website "europa.eu", managed by the Commission, will be IPv6 accessible by 2010.

Europe on schedule

In 2002 the European Commission launched its action plan to prepare for the migration to IPv6, including the development of a large pool of experts. As a result, European research networks are IPv6-ready and the European network GEANT is the world leader in the deployment of IPv6.

Links: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=4133

For more information, please contact the professional(s) listed below, or your regular Crowell & Moring contact.

Thomas De Meese

Partner – Brussels

Phone: +32.2.282.1842

Email: tdemeese@crowell.com