

The creation of the European Telecommunication Standards Institute : New ways for the european Standardization.

The first ETSI (European Telecommunication Standards Institute) General Assembly took place at Sofia Antipolis, the 29 th and 30 th of March. The meeting concentrated on the constitutional issues relating to the creation of the ETSI.

The setting up of ETSI has been decided by the CEPT administrations in order to implement the principle strongly stressed by the Green Paper of EEC and relating to the distinction between operational and regulatory functions in the telecommunication field.

This very quick reaction of the CEPT to the "Green Paper" which is only a working paper and not a recommendation is note worthy. It is obvious that the CEPT wanted to take some advance in order to avoid unforeseeable decisions of the EEC. The existence of a certain competition between CEN CENELEC more controlled by EEC, on one side, and CEPT, on the other side, is, perhaps, also an explanation of certain fears of the CEPT.

160 delegates joined the meeting. Which was attended by national delegations, that is to say representatives of the telecommunication administrations of the countries members of CEPT and also by representatives of the Telecommunications industries, particularly representatives of the EFMA, ECTEL and SPAG and representatives of the user's associations, grouped on a national (AFUTT, ABUT, CIGREF, TMA, NVBTG,...) or european (INTUG Europe, ECTUA) basis. Finally, were also present representatives of the EEC (D.G. XIII).

The election of the chairman and vice chairman of the General Assembly was quickly done. The unique candidates were Mr LOENBERG (DK) from C.E.P.T. and Mr WEISS (Germany) from ECTEL. The users claim for having also a seat of vice chairman. The General Assembly approved unanimously this request.

As the Statute of the ETSI did not give reason to any modification request, the agenda of the meeting focused principally on the approval of the Rules of Procedure prepared by a special Committee of the CEPT. Certain questions have been hardly discussed and the final text will be, undoubtedly, substantially different from the former text.

Four kinds of members are distinguished by the Rules of Procedure national : administrations, excluding supranational administrations, public networks operators, manufacturers including private service providers (that is to say, enterprises which provide telecommunication services to third parties).

In this respect, one major problem was discussed without finding an immediate solution : the problem of grouped participations on a national or european basis. Two different situations were concerned by this question : the possible representation by national or european association of their members on the one hand, and the question of enterprises located in various countries, on the other hand. The Rules of Procedure recognize also two special status without the right to vote : the status of observer available for european organisations entitled to become members but which do not wish to do so and for european organisations, the status of counsellors, which seems to be reserved to experts or research bodies.

The structure of ETSI is complex. Beyond the General Assembly, the Institute shall consist of a secretariat, a Technical Assembly, Technical Committees and Project Teams.

If the consensus about proposals for draft standards can not be reached, these proposals may nevertheless be submitted to the technical Assembly (T.A.) for decision. Finally, one has to mention the existence of Project teams created by the T.A. for well defined task and composed only of small numbers of experts. The role of the Project teams is to prepare the technical specifications for the elaboration of the proposals.

The rules distinguish two types of Project teams, certain are working in the context of the programme agreed by the Technical Assembly and with the financial means so provided, but others can be created on a voluntary basis by certain members with their own budget.

The voting procedures have been hardly discussed at the first meeting of the General Assembly. The draft proposed two different procedures : the national weighted voting and the individual vote.

The General Assembly has different functions relating to the administration of the institution in itself : appoint the director, rule questions concerning membership, adopt the budget and determine the general policy of the institute. The role of the Director, who has not been appointed yet, seems important : he has management functions, proposes the budget and the agenda of the meetings, analyzes how to solve disputes arising within the Technical Assembly. The same executive functions are given to the director in respect to the Technical Assembly.

The Technical Assembly is defined under the Rule of Procedures as "the highest authority within the Institute for the production and approval of technical standards". The draft standards are submitted to this Assembly by the Technical Committees. Before voting, the T.A. has to ensure that a public consultation has been carried out.

Pursuant to the definition given by the Rules, the Technical Committees "will provide a forum for consensus building among european technical experts in developing relevant new standards. They will also be the forum of harmonising a european view for worldwide standards organisations ...".

The national vote is available in all the cases except the question of the budget. In this procedure, the vote of each national delegation, pursuant to the draft, shall be cast by the administration Member, which has to take into account of the views of the other members of that delegation. A such solution has been given up by the administrations themselves or, rather, by the public carriers but no clear alternative solution has been proposed. Therefore, it seems that each national delegation has to find its own way.

The questions relating to the elaboration, approval and implementation of Standards called European Telec. Standards have been ruled as follows. A negative and not positive commitment of Standstill is requested from the members : "Members agree not to support national standardisation or to develop their own standards conflicting with ongoing work within the Institute". In order to be translated into ETS, draft standards must be

submitted to a public consultation. A status similar to the one granted to the EN or ENV will be given to the ETS. The uncertainties about the deal of competences between ETSI and CEN-CENELEC and their mode of cooperation in the context of ITSTC have to be ruled. Great concern about unsatisfactory relations between ETSI and CEN/CENELEC was expressed by user representatives and E.E.C.. A first proposal has been made by ETSI in a separate draft and a working group has been set up.

The relationships with other bodies as TRAC and EWDS within Europe will be improved. "The Institute and the other European standards bodies shall coordinate viewpoints via the ITSTC thus consolidating the views of the major industrial and networking operator throughout Europe, and facilitating the long term integration of standardisation activities". Finally, a close coordination between the Institute and the CEPT, considered as independant body will be established.

The problem of the financial commitments of the members has been hardly discussed, as certain members, as users have not the same direct economic interest in the standardization even if this standardization can influence their activities very deeply. A draft budget for the first year was submitted. The total amount 1 M. ECU provided for the appointment for 10 permanent staff members and common operating costs for up to 15 project teams. The total number of shares is 263 and the contribution per unit is fixed at 3,8 K ECU .

In the absence of a complete agreement for the adoption of revised Rules of Procedure, the following compromise was reached: Prof. GAGLIARDI will lead the preparatory works for the improvement of the proposal until the next meeting of the General Assembly.

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