

PLCforum Summit Declares Increasing Support of the European Commission for Power Line Communication (PLC)

Mannheim, 12th December

The 12th PLCforum General Assembly took place in Mannheim, Germany, on December 11th and 12th 2002, addressing the latest advances in Power Line Communications (PLC) technology and the existing commercial deployments.

Power Line Communications allows the transmission of data and voice over the electrical cables and enables to provide broadband services using existing infrastructure.

The PLCforum is composed of 54 members from 17 countries, including major power utilities and the main PLC technology manufacturers and stakeholders.

The PLCforum General Assembly was hosted by Power PLUS Communications AG (PPC), a joint venture of MVV Energie AG, ABB and the Israeli powerline manufacturer Main.net. PPC is a market leader for PLC business enabling in Germany and Austria, and is currently conducting more than 25 PLC projects including commercial rollouts in cities such as Mannheim, Dresden and Linz.

MVV Energie, the power utility of Mannheim, has currently one of the world's largest commercial PLC rollout with thousands of end users that may benefit from Internet services from any socket in their home. Participants of the PLCforum received a unique opportunity to visit the implementation of the PLC technology on the Low and the Mid Voltage electric networks and to learn of the commercial possibilities of the PLC technology.

In a workshop on the 10th of December, hosted by PPC, a representative of the European Commission expressed the EC's support for powerline communications and pointed out that this technology enables to fulfill the EC's efforts in opening up the competition in the telecommunication sector and bridging the digital divide.

As the result of the meeting, the General Assembly of the PLCforum made the following official announcements:

During the last years, PLC technology has improved, and has reached the industrial maturity required to become one of the few commonly available alternative broadband access and in-home LAN technologies

The increasing support of the European Commission, as well as the state of the art PLC technology, is providing the power utilities and telecom operators with the required confidence

for deploying PLC on a commercial basis thus assuring that some of the past concerns for PLC deployment can now be safely dealt with on a national or regional basis.

In order to further drive standardization on a worldwide basis, the PLC Forum is determined to increase its ties with other international organisations such as the US based PLCA (Power Line Communications Association) and the HomePlug Alliance.

The PLCforum has also called for interested parties, such as Power Utilities, telecom operators, and manufacturers to join the PLCforum and be part of the group that is shaping the future of the PLC market.

Leading power utilities in Europe and in particular in Germany are successfully operating and expanding their commercial activities by providing PLC services. Currently, there are more than 60 PLC sites in the world with thousands of paying customers connected. ENEL, EDF (Electricité de France), Endesa, Iberdrola, EDP (Electricidad de Portugal) and other leading utilities expressed their strategic interest in the fast deployment of PLC for the mass market using equipment supplied by leading manufacturers such as Ascom, DS2 and Elcon and Main.net Communications and others.

The PLCforum is actively working at further development of PLC systems and standards to address the PLC market demands.

About the PLCforum

The PLCforum, established in March 2000 by fifty-four founding members from seventeen countries in three continents, is uniting and representing the interests of players engaged in Power Line Communications (PLC) from all over the world. The target of the meeting was to exchange experience with PLC between manufacturers, vendors, suppliers, service providers, and utilities, to discuss market opportunities of PLC and increase as well as marketing strategies and regulatory issues.

The PLCforum membership currently consists of:

ABB New Ventures; Alcatel; Actima; Ambient; Amperion; Ascom Power Line Communications; Atanvo; Cetecom ICT Services; d-Holding; Datasoft ISDN Systems; Dimat; DS2; EasyPlug; EDF; Eichhoff; ELCON; EnBW; Endesa; Enditel; ENEL; Enikia; EPRI; EVN; EWE TEL; Iberdrola; Ilevio; Inova Tech; Intellon; International Turnkey Systems; Itran; LANenergy Limited; Main.net Communications; Mitsubishi; Mosenergo; NAMS; NEC; Nuon; ONITelecom; Phonex; Polytrax; PPC; Promax Electronica; Philips; Sainco; Schaffner EMV; Sener; SP Telecommunications; SSE Telecom; Sydkraft Bredband; TIWAG; TEPKO and Union Fenosa.

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