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FOUNDATION FOR INTELLIGENT PHYSICAL AGENTS	Dublin
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Dublin Press Release

AGENTS SEEN AS LEPRECHAUN IN DUBLIN

Members of FIPA were in Dublin from the 12th to the 17th of July 1998 to hold their 10th meeting. This is the penultimate meeting of FIPA before the next set of specifications are released in October. Broadcom, a dynamic new technology company in Dublin, hosted this European meeting of FIPA. Most of the work carried out in Dublin by the members was concerned with the set of standards that will form FIPA 98 specifications. These specifications are concerned with:

- adding functionalities to the Agent platform specified in FIPA 97;
- ensuring that the platform will support various types of agent mobility
- address the security management issues for the platform supporting FIPA agents
- examine the ontology support services for FIPA agents
- specify the minimum requirements for communication between humans and FIPA agents

On Wednesday the 15th of July, FIPA had organized an open meeting to address the problem of ethics related to agents, their social impact and the legal and regulatory framework that might be needed once many agent based applications begin to appear on the market. The meeting was addressed by ethicists, lawyers, journalists and new media promoters. The purpose of the meeting was to reflect upon ethical and legal issues and anticipate these in standards specifications where relevant. The fact that this meeting has taken place demonstrates that FIPA cannot ignore social impact and will revisit this topic again in the future when required.

FIPA usually discusses a range of relevant issues at all its meetings. For example, there is a regular slot for a Special Interest Group where relations with other closely related forums are discussed. At this meeting, FIPA resolved to continue close collaborations with AgentLink, a European network of excellence dealing with theory and applications of software agents. The Special Interest Group also resolved to make a contribution at the Object Management Group meeting that will examine the support for software agents.

The current concern of FIPA is to prepare for its October meeting that will take place in Research Triangle Park in Durham, North Carolina starting on October 19th. That meeting will be the one where not only the new set of specifications will be released, but there will also be a call for the specifications to be produced in 1999. FIPA members are beginning to think what kind of work should receive attention during 1999.