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Sommario/riassunto	Control mechanisms and management methods necessary to enable creation and operation of virtual links in Ethernet-based subscriber access networks are described. The key characteristics of the Virtual Link Control (VLC) mechanisms are: - The ability to transit Layer 2 bridges in a single IEEE 802 Media Access Control (MAC) domain to allow remote device management - Extensibility to accommodate new protocols and new types of devices - The ability to simultaneously send messages to multiple VLC-aware stations using broadcast or multicast addressing The message format, as well as processing operations at the stations participating in the VLC protocol, are described.