

# The PTC Solver

## User Manual

### Version 2.1.1

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#### Abstract

The PTC Solver is a constraints solver over path traversal conditions in Pascal, C, Ada, Java Bytecode like programming languages without pointers. It can be used for a variety of purposes in the area of software program analysis.

**Keywords:** constraint logic programming, program analysis

## 1 Introduction

The PTC Solver described here is primarily intended for program analysis purposes. It roughly covers types and expressions that can be encountered in the Pascal programming language. Constraints over integers, rationals, enumerations, boolean organised into records and arrays can be submitted. The solver adds constraints to its own internal constraint store for evaluation. A satisfiable set on constraints can be sampled and the solver generates actual values which reduces the system of constraints to true.

To use the PTC Solver to its full potential a knowledge of the Prolog programming language is necessary.

The PTC Solver is open source at <https://github.com/echancrure/PTC-Solver>

## 2 Referencing

The main reference for the PTC solver is Christophe Meudec, ATGen: Automatic Test Data Generation using Constraint Logic Programming and Symbolic Execution in Software Testing, Verification and Reliability Journal June 2001, Vol 11, pp. 81-96.

## 3 Installation

The PTC Solver uses the ECLiPSe constraint logic programming environment. Therefore it will not work unless you install the latest version of ECLiPSe on your machine. ECLiPSe is free for non-commercial purposes and can be downloaded once the license agreement has been signed from <http://eclipseclp.org/>. ECLiPSe is available on the Windows and Unix platforms.

The way to load the solver depends on your programming environment (Prolog, C/C++, Tcl/Tk or Visual Basic) as explained in the relevant sections below.

The PTC Solver has been primarily developed for the Windows family of operating systems. It should be directly portable to Unix platforms using the appropriate ECLiPSe Unix version. However the embedding and interfacing issues discussed in this manual are mostly only applicable to Windows.

## 4 PTC Solver Basics

Here we describe briefly the fundamental concepts of the solver by examining some of its most simple interface calls.

You can declare real, integer, enumeration, record and array variables and impose constraints on them. The solver handles linear as well as non-linear constraints. On submitting a constraint the solver adds it to its existing store of constraints and can then:

- fail, the system of constraints was unsatisfiable, the system of constraint remains as it was before the addition of the latest constraint (the solver backtracks automatically)
- succeeds, the system of constraints may be satisfiable (if non-linear constraints are present the solver may fail to detect their unsatisfiability at this stage)

A satisfiable system of constraints can be sampled to generate actual values which reduces the set of constraints to true.

## 5 Limitations, Issues and Characteristics

We list here intrinsic limitations of the PTC solver as well as issues and characteristics all users should be aware of.

### 5.1 Floating Point Numbers Imprecisions

Floating Point numbers are imprecise by nature and are prone to rounding errors. Internally the PTC Solver encode reals using floats: the usual limitations associated with floats apply.

For example, do not expect perfect arithmetic truth when manipulating floating point numbers. In practice, but depending on the context, the handling of small floating point numbers is accurate to many digits after the decimal point. Constraints over very large floating point numbers decrease their precision.

### 5.2 Logical Connectors Priorities

In the PTC Solver the priority of the logical connectors is different than what is commonly expected. See the *Constraint Syntax* subsection for details.

### 5.3 The 'or' Constraint

The 'or' constraint has two modes of behaviour, which can be set during initialisation using the `ptc_solver_set_flag(or_constraint_behaviour, Value)` predicate where Value is one of the following ('pure' is the default value):

- 'pure', in this case the 'or' constraint behaves as a true constraint. In other words, as much as possible is deduced from the constraint and it remains latent in the system until more information can be deduced automatically.
- 'choice', in this case the 'or' constraint is broken down and its components submitted to the system one by one during backtracking. The extra induced backtracking on failure must be tackled appropriately at a higher level. Thus on backtracking the 'or' constraint returns different ways in which it can be satisfied. Formally the constraint 'A or B' can be satisfied by 'A and not(B)', 'A and B' and 'not(A) and B'.

### 5.4 Non-Linear Constraints

Non linear constraints can be handled by the PTC Solver. However, unlike linear constraints, non-linear constraints typically do not get resolved immediately: i.e. adding non-linear constraints delays the satisfiability check of the set of constraints posted so far. Typically, the satisfiability or otherwise of non-linear constraints is only resolved at the labelling stage.

In particular, note that inequalities are non-linear constraints: if you post `<>` constraints the satisfiability problem is usually delayed until the labelling step.

## 5.5 Randomness

As much as possible the PTC Solver behaves non-deterministically. You may not get twice the same result on the same example on different runs. Labelling may be non-deterministic, even the 'and' constraint will not behave always the same way as to the order of the sub-constraints that are submitted to the system.

For debugging and traceability purposes the ECLiPSe Prolog seed/1 predicate maybe used to impose determinism.

## 6 Interfacing

The PTC Solver is written in Prolog using the ECLiPSe programming environment. ECLiPSe has itself interfacing capabilities to C/C++ and Visual Basic. Therefore you can implement your application:

- in Prolog using ECLiPSe
- in C/C++
- in Visual Basic, Tcl/Tk or Java

The solver provides a number of Prolog predicates which defines its interface. These are detailed in the final section of this manual.

### 6.1 Using the solver via ECLiPSe Prolog

This is probably the most straightforward way of using the solver as the interfacing is then seamless.

As an example consider the following program compiled by Eclipse.

```
:- import ptc_solver.                                %the solver is compiled and imported

example(A, B) :-
    ptc_solver__clean_up,                            %to start in a clean environment
    ptc_solver__default_declarations,                %solver initialisations
    ptc_solver__variable([A, B], integer),           %A and B are declared as integers
    ptc_solver__sdl(A>45 and B-5=A*A),               %constraints are imposed
    ptc_solver__label_integers([A,B]).                %a unique random solution is generated
```

ECLiPSe typical answer:

```
?- example(A, B).
A = 77
B = 5934
More (0.00s cpu)
```

All labelling predicates generate alternative values on backtracking.

### 6.2 Using the C/C++ Interface

Here we can write a C/C++ program and use the standard interfacing capabilities of ECLiPSe. In order to use this facility it is strongly recommended that you familiarise yourself with ECLiPSe's Embedding and Interfacing Manual.

The examples given here are available in the `ptc_embed_solver.cpp` and `ptc_embed_sessions.cpp` files.

What follows is only applicable to the Windows operating system. Embedding of the PTC Solver on a Unix platform has not been attempted. The reader is referred to the ECLiPSe's Embedding and Interfacing Manual for embedding in a C/C++ application in a Unix environment.

For Windows, and despite the official ECLiPSe documentation, it has proved impossible to embed the PTC Solver in a C/C++ application other than by using the Visual C++ compiler. In particular the reader is to be warned that the embedding capabilities of ECLiPSe seem incompatible with the Borland family of compilers.

The embedding examples given here are therefore to be compiled with a Visual C++ compiler. If a different compiler is preferred for the development of the application then it is suggested that a simple Visual C++

interface be created and that a Windows DLL be generated. The application can then interact with the solver via this DLL compiled using Visual C++.

The reader must refer to ECLiPSe's Embedding and Interfacing Manual to follow the examples given below. Other modes of interactions than given in the examples are feasible through the implementation of auxiliary C/C++ functions.

### 6.2.1 Simple Example

To facilitate the submission of constraints to the PTC Solver from C/C++ a special predicate of the PTC Solver interface is available: `ptc_solver__submit_string/1`. It allows the posting of constraints and declarations in a string format. Variables must be Prolog like (for example they must start with a uppercase letter). This predicate is easily called using the auxiliary C function: `submit_string` whose code is given below.

Note that the use of strings for constraints submission is not absolutely necessary: developers can declare Prolog like variables in their C/C++ code and construct goals to be posted to the PTC Solver using ECLiPSe's interfacing `term` function. Refer to ECLiPSe's Embedding and Interfacing Manual.

```
// adds a constraint in string format to the current store of
// constraints and returns EC_succeed on success and EC_fail otherwise
int submit_string(char *s)
{
    post_goal(term(EC_functor("ptc_solver__submit_string", 1), s));
    return EC_resume();
} //submit_string
```

A basic embedding example is then:

```
#include <eclipseclass.h> //necessary for embedding ECLiPSe into C/C++
#include <stdio.h>
void main()
{
    ec_set_option_ptr(EC_OPTION_DEFAULT_MODULE, "ptc_solver"); // initialisation of
    ECLiPSe
    ec_init();

    post_goal(term(EC_functor("lib", 1), "ptc_solver")); // loading of the solver
    printf("ECLiPSe and the PTC Solver are being loaded ...\n");
    if (EC_resume()==EC_succeed) printf("The PTC Solver has been loaded\n");
    else printf("Error: The PTC Solver did not load properly\n");

    submit_string("ptc_solver__clean_up,
                  ptc_solver__default_declarations"); // initialisations of the
    solver
    printf("The PTC Solver is initialised\n");

    submit_string("ptc_solver__variable([A, B], integer),
    submit_string("ptc_solver__sdl(A>45 and B=5=A*A)");
    submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([A,B])");

    //auxillary C function to retrieve and display the values of all the variables
    display_all_vars();

    ec_cleanup(); //Unloading ECLiPSe and tidying up

    printf("ECLiPSe and the PTC Solver have been unloaded\n\n");
}
```

The auxiliary `display_all_vars()` C function, retrieves and displays the value of all submitted variables. It should be modified to suit your application.

### 6.2.2 Backtracking

Even when embedding the PTC Solver into a C/C++ application we can make the most of its backtracking capabilities. The following example illustrate this.

Imagine that we want to generate tests to cover in its entirety the control flow graph of a simple program code fragment. Instead of submitting constraints individually we can undo the last constraint submission using the backtracking facility of the PTC Solver, which in this regard behaves in an ordinary Prolog program manner.

It is however slightly more difficult than using Prolog directly. We use tell-tale variables to indicate whether a submitted constraint has failed or succeeded. If a constraint is submitted that fails then the solver backtracks automatically. The auxiliary `check_success` C function has been especially written to check the values of those tell-tale variables.

```
//Demonstration of search in a control flow graph
//Corresponds roughly to the code:
// if X>2 or Y>2 then blah; //Condition 1
//   else blah;
// if X<2 then blah;        //Condition 2
//   else blah;
// where blah does not change the values of X and Y
// we check the paths in the following order:
//     1 true, 2 true
//     1 true, 2 false
//     1 false, 2 true
//     1 false, 2 false
void session3()
{
    fprintf(log, "___STARTING SESSION 3___\n");

    //X and Y are declared as integers
    submit_string("ptc_solver__variable([X, Y], integer)");

    //The general format for constraints submission that can
    // backtrack is "Si = 1, Constraint ; Si = 0"
    submit_string("S1 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X>2 or Y>2) ; S1 = 0");
    //The values of the variables Si indicate if the constraint has
    // been successful (1) or not (0)
    submit_string("S2 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X<2) ; S2 = 0");
    //Check_success should return 1
    fprintf(log, "S2 is %i\n", check_success("S2"));
    //Check_success will return -2 as S10 does not exist
    fprintf(log, "S10 is %i\n", check_success("S10"));
    //A sample is generated for X and Y
    submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y], !");
    //The values of current variables are displayed. Should satisfy: X<2 and Y>2
    display_all_vars();

    //We backtrack one level on purpose: the constraint X<2 is undone (S2 will now
    be 0)
    submit_string("fail");
    //Check_success should return 0 for S2
    fprintf(log, "S2 is %i\n", check_success("S2"));
    submit_string("S3 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not(X<2)) ; S3 = 0");
    submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y], !");
    display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X>2 or (X=2 and Y>2)

    submit_string("fail"); //We backtrack on purpose S3 = 0
    submit_string("fail"); //We backtrack on purpose S1 = 0
    //S2 has fallen out of scope: check_success returns -2
    fprintf(log, "S2 is %i\n", check_success("S2"));
```

```

submit_string("S4 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not(X>2 or Y>2)) ; S4 = 0");
submit_string("S5 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X<2) ; S5 = 0");
submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X<2 and Y<=2

submit_string("fail"); //S5 = 0
submit_string("S6 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not(X<2)); S6 = 0");
submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X=2 and Y<=2

fprintf(log, "___END SESSION 3___\n");
} //session3

```

### 6.2.3 Controlling Backtracking on Failure

Of course sometimes a submitted constraints will fail. Below is such an example and illustrates how to control the backtracking in this circumstance.

```

//Demonstration of search in a control flow graph with failure of
// one of the path
//Corresponds roughly to the code:
// if X<=2 and Y<=2 then blah;
//           else blah;
// if X<=2 then blah;
//           else blah;
// where blah does not change the values of X and Y
void session4()
{
fprintf(log, "___STARTING SESSION 4___\n");
submit_string("ptc_solver__variable([X, Y], integer)");

submit_string("S1 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X<=2 and Y<=2) ; S1 = 0");
submit_string("S2 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X<=2) ; S2 = 0");

submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy : X<=2 and Y<=2

//We backtrack one level on purpose: the constraint X<=2 is undone (S2 will now
be 0)
submit_string("fail");
//This should fail as (X<=2 and Y<=2) and X>2 is a contradiction;
// X>2 could not be added indicated by S3 = 0
submit_string("S3 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not(X<=2)) ; S3 = 0");
submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X<=2 and Y<=2

submit_string("fail");

submit_string("S4 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not (X<=2 and Y<=2)) ; S4 = 0");
submit_string("S5 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(X<=2) ; S5 = 0");
submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X<=2 and Y>2

submit_string("fail");
submit_string("S6 = 1, ptc_solver__sdl(not(X<=2)); S6 = 0");
submit_string("ptc_solver__label_integers([X, Y]), !");
display_all_vars(); //Should satisfy: X>2

fprintf(log, "___END SESSION 4___\n");

```

```
}//session4
```

#### 6.2.4 Conclusion

The interactions described above are difficult to trace and therefore debug.

If the behaviour is not as expected, an attentive manual trace of the posted goals and an examination of the tell-tale variables should be undertaken. For debugging interfacing using Prolog is probably the most effective solution.

### 6.3 Using the Visual Basic, Tcl/Tk or Java interface

The reader is entirely referred to the ECLiPSe embedding manual for embedding the PTC Solver into those environments. This has not been attempted by the author of the PTC Solver.

## 7 The Interface

Here we describe in full the Prolog predicate that can be called once the solver is loaded.

### 7.1 Terminology

**Type\_mark** designate the name of a type definition (e.g. speed, money), it should start with a lower case letter.

**Min, Max** expressions designating the minimum (resp. the maximum) in a range for integers or reals.

**Literal\_list** is an ordered Prolog list of literals for enumeration types (e.g. [mon, tue, wed, thu, fri, sat, sun])

**Field\_list** is an ordered Prolog list of elements of the form (Field\_name\_list, Type\_mark) and Field\_name\_list is a list of field\_names (e.g. [[father, mother], parent\_type), ([age], integer)). field\_names should start with a lower case letter.

**Index\_list** is an ordered Prolog list of integer or enumeration Type\_marks or Subtype\_marks. The range of each element of the list designate the range of the corresponding index in the array (e.g. [name\_t] : implies one dimensional array index from ptc\_solver\_\_first(name\_t) to ptc\_solver\_\_last(name\_t). [name\_t, name\_t] implies a two dimensional array.)

**Component\_type\_mark** synonym of Type\_mark

**Subtype\_type\_mark** synonym of Type\_mark

**Identifier\_list** a list of identifiers. Identifiers must respect the following BNF format (taken from the Eclipse user manual): (UC | UL) ALP\* where UC denotes all upper case letters, UL is the underline character, and ALP is (UC | UL | LC | N) where LC denotes all lower case letters and N is any digits. (e.g. \_ry784A, A\_676, Money)

### 7.2 Initialisations

```
ptc_solver__clean_up
  Erases all previous declarations
  e.g. ptc_solver__clean_up.
```

```
ptc_solver__version(Ver)
  Returns as a string the version of the PTC solver in use
  e.g. ptc_solver__version(Ver) returns Ver = "2"
```

```
ptc_solver__default_declarations
  Declares the following default types: integer : -100000000..100000000 float : -10 * 1012.. + 10 * 1012
  and Boolean
  e.g. ptc_solver__default_declarations.
```

```
ptc_solver__set_flag(Flag, Value)
```

Allows the PTC Solver to be customised. The following flags are provided:

- `or_constraint_behaviour`, where Value must be 'choice' or 'pure', the default is 'pure'. See the subsection on the 'or' constraint in the Limitations and Issues section. This flag should be set once and only once, after the call to `ptc_solver__clean_up` but prior to anything else.
- `enumeration_start`, where Value is an integer, the default is 1. This flag indicates the starting point for the numbering of enumeration literals. It can be set as many times as wanted prior to the definition of an enumerated type.
- `debug_mode`, where Value is 'on' or 'off'. The default is 'off'. Enables the printing of verbose messages to stdout.
- `epsilon`, where Value must be an integer between 0 and 1. The default is 0.001. This is used during the labeling of floats and indicates the minimum precision required. This is a very technical area and users are warned that requiring a very low minimum precision may drastically increase run time. This value is directly used by the underlying ECLiPSe IC library and works with the propagation threshold.

e.g. `ptc_solver__set_flag(or_constraint_behaviour, pure)`

## 7.3 Declarations

### 7.3.1 Types

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, real)`

Declares a real type

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(balance, real)`

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, real, range_bounds(Min, Max))`

declares a real type bounded between Min and Max

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(speed, real, range_bounds(0.0, 165.0))`

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, integer, range_bounds(Min, Max))`

declares an integer type bounded between Min and Max

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(year_t, integer, range_bounds(1900, 3000))`

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, enumeration, Literal_list)`

declares an enumeration type

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(name_t, enumeration, [mon, tue, wed, thu, fri, sat, sun])`

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, record, Field_list)`

declares a record type

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(date_t, record, [[name], name_t], [[day], day_t], [[month], month_t], [[year], year_t])`

`ptc_solver__type(Type_mark, array, Index_list, Component_type_mark)`

declares an array type of dimensions determined by Index\_list and whose elements are of type Component\_type\_mark

e.g. `ptc_solver__type(week_t, array, [name_t], date_t)`

### 7.3.2 Subtypes

`ptc_solver__subtype(Subtype_mark, Type_mark)`

Declares a subtype for the type\_mark

e.g. `ptc_solver__subtype(argent, money)`

`ptc_solver__subtype(Subtype_mark, Type_mark, range_bounds(Min, Max))`

Declares a subtype of the type Type\_mark with new range Min, Max



e.g. `ptc_solver__subtype(week_day, name_t, range_bounds(mon, fri))`

`ptc_solver__subtype(Subtype_mark, Type_mark, range(_))`

TODO

e.g.

`ptc_solver__subtype(Subtype_mark, Type_mark, range(_, _))`

TODO

e.g.

### 7.3.3 Variables

`ptc_solver__variable(Identifier_list, Type_mark)`

Declares all the variables in Identifier\_list to be of type Type\_mark

e.g. `ptc_solver__variable([NEXT_DATE, DATE], date_t)`

## 7.4 Ranges

`ptc_solver__variable_range(Identifier, Min, Max)`

Returns the minimum and maximum of the range of an Integer or Real variable. Based on the linear constraints imposed on the variable.

e.g. `ptc_solver__variable_range(Child, 0, 21)`

`ptc_solver__first(Type_mark, Min)`

Returns Min the smallest value defined by the type, Type\_mark

e.g. `ptc_solver__first(day, mon)`

`ptc_solver__last(Type_mark, Max)`

Returns Min the largest value defined by the type, Type\_mark

e.g. `ptc_solver__last(day, sun)`

## 7.5 Constraint Submission

`ptc_solver__sdl(Constraint)`

Adds Constraint to the current constraint store. Fails if the constraint store becomes unsatisfiable.

A constraint is a Boolean expression which must respect the syntax defined below.

e.g. `ptc_solver__sdl(X > Y and X/2 = 5)`

`ptc_solver__arithmetic(Expression, Result, Type)`

Expression is an arithmetic expression (without Boolean operators and relational operators), Result is a variable representing the operation denoted by Arithmetic, Type is r for real, i for integer, e for enumeration, record for record, array for array, boolean for Boolean

e.g. `ptc_solver__arithmetic(X*Y, Z, Type)` Usage is not recommended in normal circumstances, use `ptc_solver__sdl` instead

`ptc_solver__relation(Relation, Left, Right)`

Relation is a relational operator, Left is its left operand and Right is its right operand

e.g. `ptc_solver__arithmetic(>, X*Y, Z)` Usage is not recommended in normal circumstances, use `ptc_solver__sdl` instead

## 7.6 Constraint Syntax

Expressions and Constraints must respect the following syntax.

Note that the priority of the logical connectors is different than what is commonly expected (it is in fact Ada-like here). In particular the operators **and**, **or** and **xor** have the same priority. Thus Boolean expressions must be written with brackets as in *A and (B or C)*.

Most of below is self explanatory for users with knowledge of programming.

Mixed type arithmetic (i.e. expression involving reals and integers) is handled in C fashion. So an integer expression involving mixed arithmetic will evaluate to an expression of type real.

To avoid mixed constraints the **conversion** constraint can be used to convert reals into integers (the value of the flag `float_to_int_convention` controls the behaviour of this transformation), or to convert integers into reals. For example `ptc_solver__sdl(B = 2.6)` where B is an integer will fail but `ptc_solver__sdl(B = conversion(integer, 2.6))` results in B becoming 2 if the `float_to_int_convention` flag is set to its default value : `truncate`.

The constraint **eq\_cast** allows the modelling of C 'assignments' (but calling it an assignment is somewhat misleading). It is similar to the `=` constraint except whenever in C an integer is assigned a float. For example `ptc_solver__sdl(eq_cast(B, 2.6))` where B is an integer results in B becoming 2 if the `float_to_int_convention` flag is set to its default value : `truncate`. In effect **eq\_cast** automatically performs the implicit type conversion from float to integer when necessary as would be performed during the assignment of a float expression to an integer variable in C. **eq\_cast**(X, Y) is to be interpreted as X is equal to Y with Y being implicitly converted to the type of X. Thus **eq\_cast**(X, Y) has not the same meaning as **eq\_cast**(Y, X). In C, unless all implicit casting can be eliminated using the **conversion** constraint, assignments (`=`) should be modelled using the **eq\_cast** constraint, while equality (`==`) should be modelled using the `=` constraint. Languages such as Ada, and Java Bytecode are more reasonable and do not allow implicit casting: there is no need to use **eq\_cast**.

The **round** constraint rounds a real to its nearest integer so that `ptc_solver__sdl(B = round(2.6))` results in B becoming 3.

The **reif** constraint takes in a Boolean expression and a integer tell-tale variable between 0 and 1. The tell-tale variable can be used to add the constraint itself to the current system of constraints (if set to 1) or its negation (if set to 0). If the constraint cannot be negated the tell-tale variable will be set to 1 automatically. If the constraint itself is not satisfiable the tell-tale variable will be set to 0.

Informally, the **cmp** constraint takes in two float expressions and an integer expression. The constraint behaves as follows: if the first argument is larger than the second then the third is 1, if the first argument is smaller than the second then the third is -1, if the first argument is equal to the second then the third is 0.

The **element** manipulator returns the element of an array as indexed by the expression. The **field** manipulator returns the element of a record as indicated by the field identifier. The **up\_arr** update, returns a new array with the element at the position indexed updated to the expression given. The **up\_rec** update, returns a new record with the indicated field updated by the expression given.

constraint : exp | **reif**( exp , *variable\_identifier* ) | **eq\_cast**( exp , exp ) | **cmp**( sum , sum , sum )

exp : negation { ( **and** | **and\_then** | **or** | **or\_else** | **xor** ) negation }

negation : [ **not** ] relation

relation : sum [ ( = | <> | < | > | <= | >= ) sum ]

sum : [ - ] term { ( + | - ) term }

term : factor { ( \* | / | **mod** | **rem** ) factor }

factor : primary | primary \*\* primary

primary : *variable\_identifier* | literal | natural | float | rational  
| *constant\_identifier* | function\_designator | ( exp )

natural : digit { digit }

float : natural . natural [ ( e | E ) natural ]

rational : natural \_ natural

function\_designator : attribute | constructor | manipulator | arithmetic\_function

attribute : **first**( type\_mark ) | **last**( type\_mark )

| **succ**( exp ) | **pred**( exp )

| **pos**( type\_mark, exp ) | **val**( type\_mark, exp )

arithmetic\_function : **conversion**( type\_mark , sum ) | **round**( sum ) | **abs**( sum )

| **bw\_not**( exp , encoding\_length , encoding\_scheme )

```

| bw_and( exp , exp , encoding_length , encoding_scheme )
| bw_or( exp , exp , encoding_length , encoding_scheme )
| bw_xor( exp , exp , encoding_length , encoding_scheme )
| left_shift( exp , exp_amount , encoding_length , encoding_scheme )
| right_shift( exp , exp_amount , encoding_length , encoding_scheme )
encoding_length : 8 | 16 | 32 | 64
encoding_scheme : signed | unsigned
constructor : mk_record | mk_array
mk_record : agg(record_type_identifier , [argument_list])
argument_list : positional_argument_list | named_argument_list
positional_argument_list : exp { , exp }
named_argument_list : association { , association }
association : ([field_identifier] , exp)

mk_array : agg(array_type_identifier , [element_list])
element_list : positional_element_list | named_element_list
positional_element_list : exp { , exp }
| exp { , exp } , ([others] , exp )
named_element_list : ([others] , exp )
| assign_list
| assign_list , ([others] , exp )
assign_list : assign { , assign }
assign : (index_list , exp)
index_list : [index { , index}]
index : exp | range_bounds(exp , exp) | range(type_mark)

manipulator : element | field | update
element : element(array_expression , simple_index)
simple_index : [exp { , exp } ]
field : field(record_expression , field_identifier)

update : array_update | record_update
array_update : up_arr(array_expression , simple_index , exp)
record_update : up_rec(record_expression , field_identifier , exp)

```

## 7.7 labelling

Labelling strategies can make a dramatic difference in the time needed to label the variables according to the current system of constraints. Here are a few recommendations:

- It is essential that all variables of the same type be submitted all at once to the appropriate labelling predicate. This allows the predicate to select the most promising variables first.
- The default labelling predicate for integer is deterministic, its variant may be non-deterministic (although this may be controled using ECLiPSe Prolog seed/1 predicate for debugging and traceability purposes). In its random version it can yield vastly different runtimes on different runs: sometime random-based labelling can get lucky and return quickly, sometime it will get bogged down and take many order of magnitude longer to return.
- Labelling of integer variable is exhaustive i.e. all integer values in the constrained range will be tried. If there is no solution to the current store of constraint (e.g. because of non-linear constraints) labelling will typically take a long time and eventually fail. If the integer labelling fails it is because there are no solution.
- Labelling of real variables in non exhaustive (it couldn't be otherwise), thus, if real labelling fails it does not follow that the system of constraints is unsatisfiable.
- It is impossible to decide without knowing the details of the current constraints the order in which labelling should be performed. Sometime labelling integers before reals will be optimal, at other time the inverse will be true.

- If your labelling gets bogged down there are a number of strategies you can use short of writing your own labelling predicates. First a timer can be set to stop a given labelling predicate and then start again. Another solution worth a try is to change the labelling order (e.g. try labelling reals first and then integers, or vice versa). A combination of both tips can also be implemented.

`ptc_solver_label_integers(Identifier_list)`  
 Shortcut for `ptc_solver_label_integers(Identifier_list, 'indomain_middle')`  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_label_integers([X, Y, Z])`

`ptc_solver_label_integers(Identifier_list, ChoicePoint)`  
 Instantiate the integer variables in `Identifier_list` to values consistent with the current constraint store according to the choice method `ChoicePoint`. `ChoicePoint` can be `'indomain_middle'` (which is the default used in `ptc_solver_label_integers/1`) in which case the behaviour is deterministic and labelling starts in the middle of the domain (which is 0 for signed variables centred on 0). or `'indomain_random'` in which case labelling is random (this may lead to vastly different runtimes depending on how lucky labelling gets). The randomness can be tamed and become deterministic through the use `ECLiPSe Prolog seed/1` predicate. Fails if no solution exist. An exhaustive search is performed so that on failure it can be concluded that the store of constraint was inconsistent.  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_label_integers([X, Y, Z], 'indomain_random')`

`ptc_solver_label_reals(Identifier_list)`  
 Instantiate the float variables in `Identifier_list` to values consistent with the current constraint store. Can fail if no solution is found. The search is not exhaustive so that on failure it cannot be concluded that the store of constraint was inconsistent. Do note that the variables are unified with breaks (which are encoded with a lower and upper bound). If you need actual floats to be outputted you may use the standard Prolog `float/1` predicate or use the `ptc_solver_label_reals/2` predicate instead  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_label_reals([Speed, Altitude])`

`ptc_solver_label_reals(Identifier_list, Float_list)`  
 Identical to `ptc_solver_label_reals(Identifier_list)` but also outputs a corresponding list float solutions  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_label_reals([Speed, Altitude], [SpeedFloat, AltitudeFloat])`

`ptc_solver_label_enums(Identifier_list)`  
 Instantiate the enumeration variables in `Identifier_list` to values consistent with the current constraint store. Fails if no solution exist. An exhaustive search is performed so that on failure it can be concluded that the store of constraint was inconsistent. Boolean should be labelled using this predicate since Booleans are treated as enumeration variables.  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_label_enums([Next_day, Today])`

`ptc_solver_sample_enum(Identifier)`  
 Instantiates `Identifier` which is an enumeration variable to a sample value.  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_sample_enum(Day)` Usage is not recommended in normal circumstances, use `ptc_solver_label_enums([Identifier])` instead

## 7.8 Useful for Embedding

`ptc_solver_submit_string(String)`  
 Allows the submission of goals using strings. See the embedding via C/C++ section of the user manual  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_submit_string("ptc_solver_sdl(X>Y*Y+Y and Y<5)")`

`ptc_solver_get_single_variable(String, Variable)`  
 Retrieves the actual variable of a variable submitted in a string using `ptc_solver_submit_string(String)`  
 e.g. `ptc_solver_get_single_variable("S1", Value)` Returns -2 if the Identifier is out of scope

`ptc_solver__get_all_variables(Name_variable_list)`

Retrieves the list of Name, Variable couples for all variable submitted via a string using `ptc_solver__submit_string(String)`. See the auxillary C function `display_all_vars`  
e.g. `ptc_solver__get_all_variables(Var_list)`

## 7.9 Miscellaneous

### 7.9.1 Type testing

`ptc_solver__is_enum(Identifier)`

Succeeds if Identifier is an enumeration variable, fails otherwise  
e.g. `ptc_solver__is_enum(Today)`

`ptc_solver__is_record(Identifier)`

Succeeds if Identifier is a record variable, fails otherwise  
e.g. `ptc_solver__is_record(Date)`

`ptc_solver__is_array(Identifier)`

Succeeds if Identifier is an array variable, fails otherwise  
e.g. `ptc_solver__is_array(Marks)`

`ptc_solver__is_integer(Identifier)`

Succeeds if Identifier is an integer variable, fails otherwise  
e.g. `ptc_solver__is_integer(RPM)`

`ptc_solver__is_real(Identifier)`

Succeeds if Identifier is a float variable, fails otherwise.  
e.g. `ptc_solver__is_real(Speed)`

### 7.9.2 Internal Declaration Manipulation

`ptc_solver__get_frame(Type_mark, Basetype_mark, Identifier)`

Given a Type\_mark, this predicate will return its basetype and a variable Identifier of type Type\_mark. Basetype is one of the following: real, integer, base-enumeration, record, array(Component\_type\_mark) or Type\_mark which then denotes that Type\_mark is a subtype of Basetype\_mark. Note that this predicate is very slow whenever a lot of types have been declared.  
e.g. `ptc_solver__get_frame(money, B, Frame)`

### 7.9.3 Retrieving components

`ptc_solver__get_array_index_elements(Identifier, Index_element_list)`

Given an array variable Identifier, returns its Index\_element\_list. Index\_element\_list for an array of dimension 1..3, 1..2 is of the form: `[[[1,1], el1.1), ([1,2], el1.2), ([2,1], el2.1), ([2,2], el2.2), ([3,1], el3.1), ([3,2], el3.2)]` where `el*.*` denotes the actual variables in the array  
e.g. `ptc_solver__get_array_index_elements(Marks, List)`

`ptc_solver__get_record_field_values(Identifier, Field_value_list)`

Given a record variable Identifier, returns its Field\_value\_list. Field\_value\_list is of the form `[(field1, value1), ..., (fieldn, valuen)]`  
e.g. `ptc_solver__get_record_field_values(Date, Fields)`

#### 7.9.4 Enumeration Variables Manipulations

`ptc_solver__enum_get_literal(Type_mark, Value, Literal)`

Returns the Literal of a Type\_mark corresponding to Value

e.g. `ptc_solver__enum_get_literal(week_day, 2, tue)` succeeds

`ptc_solver__enum_get_position(Identifier, Value)`

Returns the possible values of an enumeration variable without knowing its base type

e.g. `ptc_solver__enum_get_position(Tomorrow, Value)` Usage is not recommended in normal circumstances.

`ptc_solver__enum_get_basetype(Identifier, Basetype)`

Returns the Basetype of an enumeration variable Identifier

e.g. `ptc_solver__enum_get_basetype(Today, weekday)` would succeed

#### 7.9.5 Error Messages

`ptc_solver__error(Message)`

Outputs the string Message as an error message and aborts the solver

e.g. `ptc_solver__error("problem line forty_two/2")` Usage is not recommended in normal circumstances. Write your own error reporting predicate