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Convergence in telecommunications is not new. According to Pita Barros, convergence in technologies and services has been talked about for at least the last ten years. Furthermore, the importance of both technological convergence and light regulation has already been discussed.

So what has changed?

There have been advances in convergence, but these have not been as rapid as had been thought. For its side, regulation has also changed, but the envisaged phase of deregulation has not turned out as expected. Pita Barros concluded therefore that the factors of ten years ago still exist, with a very similar framework.

What do we have?

The current context of convergence is fundamentally that of horizontal convergence, especially at a technological level, existing alongside corporate differences, in view of the fact that companies provide different offers, with and across the different technologies and with different prices. This contributes to the promotion of competition. On the other hand, the current reality in electronic communications is marked by vertical convergence associated with the integration of infrastructure and services in the same companies,

which at an extreme, could lead to issues associated with the need to set certain limits.

Also from a regulatory point of view is the challenge of knowing if we should evolve in the direction of convergence. At this level, the main problems are connected to the structure of the regulators and with the possibility of there being "super-regulators". In the opinion of Pita Barros, if the problems are different at a content and infrastructure level, so there will have to be different regulators, or in other words different regulators for different problems.

What's the future?

Without engaging in futurology, no significant change to the current environment is envisaged. Basically, there does not appear to be a need for a revolution of regulatory principles. What is needed is an adjustment of these principles, where justified, to the new realities. The traditional areas of regulation should be maintained (numbering, licensing/ operator registration, universal service definition, interconnection, prices and competition). Currently innovation constitutes a motive for lighter regulation. Regulation does not predict the future, but technological convergence by itself does not justify regulatory convergence.

Pita Barros concludes that the main challenge is to avoid thinking of a revolution in the regulatory paradigm. The main challenge is to reflect on the opportunities spawned by technological convergence, above all from a consumer point of view.