

Contribution of the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania to the 9th Annual Global Symposium for Regulators

Convergence is a natural process reflecting new emerging technological capabilities and their implications on networks and services. There are lots of surrounding factors having influence on blurring boundaries among different ICT markets, services and technologies, but by the very essence convergence is a market-driven process, not requiring an active state engagement towards its promotion.

Definitely governments can (and should) play an active role in ICT markets development, but “convergence” should not be perceived as an aim and final destination within this permanent daily action. While concentrating on smooth functioning of telecommunications networks, proper delivery of services to end users, reducing entry to the market barriers and promoting self-regulatory schemes - “convergence” is that wonder, which awards the regulator for hard work and clear vision on future development.

The best, what state and their authorities can do for indirect convergence promotion, is creation of an enabling regulatory regime that fosters innovation, application of new technologies, investment into infrastructure and affordable access for all to ICT resources with sufficient data transmission speeds. These also include:

1. The establishment of a transparent regulatory process - an effective regulator legally distinct from and functionally independent of all organizations providing electronic communications networks, equipment or services, clearly delimited from political interference to daily functions.
2. Removal of unduly regulatory barriers (administrative burden) to competition and free flow of information with the objective of enabling end users and network/service providers to migrate to succeeding generations of technologies when the market demands.
3. Forward looking regulatory flexibility, with the particular attention to authorization regime, with the only criterion of technological neutrality, without scrutinized description of all elements, supporting technical and service evolution.
4. The establishment of risk-averting regulation while protecting consumer interests. Focusing on raising awareness of the benefits of technological progress for the market and consumers, whilst at the same time carefully considering issues as personal and data protection, protection of minors, protection of end-users from the malware.
5. The creation of regulatory certainty for both the incumbent and competing/alternative service providers, their equal footing with regard to competitiveness, thus diversifying available products and services. The encouragement to consider issues based on specific market conditions, relating to what obstacles need to be addressed and remedied to sustain competition between incumbent operators and alternative/competitive providers.
6. The encouragement of regulators to look for a possible ways for achieving appropriate regulatory results through closer collaboration with industry and other stakeholders, employing self-regulatory and co-regulatory measures to the widest extent feasible.