

ECONOMIC RECOVERY, TECHNOLOGY AND A NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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La week I commented on the blog about the case of [Silicon Roundabout](#) and mentioned that [David Cameron](#), British Prime Minister, has set his sights on this area, to send a strong signal of how it intends to **drive economic recovery** through digital technologies (you can find the [full speech here](#)):

"We're not just going to back the big businesses of today, we're going to back the big businesses of tomorrow. We are firmly on the side of the high-growth, highly innovative companies of the future. Don't doubt our ambition."

"Right now, Silicon Valley is the leading place in the world for high-tech growth and innovation. But there's no reason why it has to be so predominant. Our ambition is to bring together the creativity and energy of Shoreditch and the incredible possibilities of the Olympic Park to help make East London one of the world's great technology centers. I want to show you how we can get there."

"For the past few weeks and months, we have had dozens of meetings with technology companies and venture capital investors from across the world. We said to them: 'Here's our vision for East London tech city - a hub that stretches from Shoreditch and Old Street to the Olympic Park. This is what local businesses are saying they need. What part can you play in making it happen?'" I have to say: the response has been overwhelming."

These statements coincide almost in time with the publication of a report, [The connected Kingdom](#), which places the importance of this technological sector in British industry as a whole, highlighting its important contribution in the creation of new jobs in the country despite having a relative weight in number of companies. It is the [6% vital to the UK economy](#), point from [NESTA](#). [Juan Varela](#) echoed a few days ago also that last report, reflecting the reality of the Spanish delay:

In one of the comments to the post [Andrés Martínez](#) rightly pointed out that these things -the existence of the Silicon Roundabout - **cannot be planned**. Of course not. But in addition to entrepreneurial capacity in society, a social culture that values risk and that honors scientific knowledge and a trained citizenry, someone needs to make things easy. That someone is the "planner", a Public Administration (under the leadership of David Cameron, in this case) that does something on its part. And putting something on your part does not imply so much formal decisions from the bottom up, putting your finger on the map and saying "we will do it here" or injecting a few billion euros. Well, even that may be fine, but it's not the deciding factor. Much more important is to create what we could call a **framework of conditions**. A framework that makes life easier for entrepreneurs who want to take risks with projects with a high technological content, for scientists who want to develop their research projects. A framework that simply allows things to be possible, that doesn't get in the way. And, for example, we are ranked 49th in the ease of doing business ranking, which means that there are still too many obstacles.

Here it seems that we are busy with other things and not really laying the foundations for a new economic model. In [awards for science and innovation cities](#) and at [13,000 million euros wasted](#), for example, but of leadership and long-term vision on how to create the foundations of a solid economy, not a trace. We have been busier in the [great infrastructure scandal](#), embarrassing even for the [foreign media](#). While countries like Denmark or Finland spent the last decade at least consolidating a strong educational system and a technological commitment central to their economic development strategy, we were doing other things. And, I am very afraid, there is no **political leadership** in sight that makes us hope that things will change, at least from that part of society. But, despite everything, despite short-termism and political mediocrity, technological

projects exist in companies and technology centers and, although [science asks for help](#) before [cuts that are coming](#), it will be necessary to [invent another economy despite all this](#).

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