STARTING A BUSINESS IN SAN FRANCISCO

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A week in Silicon Valley and San Francisco goes a long way . To meet many entrepreneurs willing to conquer the world, to make contact with investors looking for the next technological phenomenon, to soak up a contagious illusion to create technology and innovation; to undertake.

Seeing first-hand how big tech companies work is certainly invaluable, and the San Francisco and Silicon Valley region is one of the best places to do it. But for me the most interesting thing about San Francisco is its entrepreneurial ecosystem.

If you go to San Francisco I recommend you go to places like RocketSpace, where the SpainTechCenter, or PariSoma, places where some of tomorrow's best tech companies may be incubating. When you are in these business spaces you can breathe an inspiring atmosphere. I have never seen such a number of engineers, technologists, designers, marketers... dreaming and striving to build innovative products. I had never seen so much passion for technology, so much dynamism.

Back in Spain, reflecting on the enormous differences between Spain and Europe and the US, I realize something very important. After a whole week in the US talking about entrepreneurship, the creation of start-ups, technology and innovation, I had not heard a single word about public aid programs, business support programs or subsidies. Not even one. Nor had I seen beautiful buildings designed by renowned architects destined to "innovate", so common in Spain. Above all, he had seen people excited and determined to create companies and he had seen optimism, something scarce in Spain and in Europe lately. Undertaking is nothing more than that: people and enthusiasm.

While in Europe there is a lot of talk about the entrepreneur (and rather little is done) and how to support them with public money. In the US they talk about technology, innovation, global markets and business opportunities. There is no better support than a product that is sold in a global market. Once today tell an entrepreneur that creating a company you have to flee from public money. It seems that in the US they have learned that lesson.

I never heard of infrastructure either. How we like them in Spain: science and technology parks, beautiful and even intelligent buildings... we bury all our budgets in bricks over and over again and then we have nothing left to "move" what has to go inside.

When I return to Spain, I see that the biggest barrier that exists to undertake is not professional preparation -from my point of view at the same level as in the US-, nor public support, nor the lack of investment -I do not want to say that it is not important -, nor of course the lack of spaces; This is a major cultural barrier. It gives me the feeling that in Europe we are still anchored to a world that no longer exists, trying to protect a space of comfort that is crumbling. I get the feeling that we have a defensive strategy in the face of global changes that are throwing us off balance and, it seems to me, that we look at the world around us with fear. Instead of looking at the opportunities, we fear the dangers that these changes bring us and we become more and more closed off.

That is why there are few entrepreneurs, and little ambition. The word ambition even has pejorative connotations in Europe. Our values are stability, comfort and safety and these values are precisely what make us less stable and what are leading us, inevitably, to lower levels of comfort.

Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, recently said that the only strategy that ensures failure is not to risk. And here nobody wants to risk, we want security. There's nothing more insecure than sticking your head out the window while the world changes around you. If Spain and Europe want to continue leading the future, they have to empower the entrepreneur.

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