

CÁTEDRA
en Economía y Gestión de la Innovación

UAM Universidad Autónoma
de Madrid

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XXII BREAKFAST WITH INNOVATION: **“Innovation Policies in Spain: a critical** **review”**

Madrid, 25 March 2019

Charles Edquist analyzes Spain's innovation policies



Professor Charles Edquist (University of Lund, Sweden), the first Visiting Fellow of UAM-Accenture Chair, gave a critical analysis on the vision of Spain's policies put forth by notable figures in the public administration, in the 22nd Breakfast with Innovation.

Teresa Riesgo, Director of Research, Development, and Innovation in the Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities outlined the current state of innovation in Spain as compared to Europe as well as the rest of the world with the Ministry's most recent data. She also highlighted the initiatives that the current government has been carrying out over its 8-month mandate. She exposed the programs that Spain aims to implement that will make innovation one of the fundamental pillars of economic and social development of the country.

Professor Edquist responded by emphasizing the importance of interpretation of data collected on the topic. Although he pointed out the necessity of interpreting data from a comprehensive perspective, he warned of the risks of using an overgeneralized approach with indexes generated with aggregate indicators (as is the case with the European Scoreboard, which groups together 25 indicators in one single index) that may be projecting an image that doesn't necessarily correlate with reality. We must identify precisely the strengths and weaknesses to know where we should be focusing our efforts in the field of innovation policy.

The talk was further enriched with proposals put forth by other panelists with experience in the public as well as private sector.

According to José Manuel Leceta, Managing Director of RED.es until 2018, the strength to impulse innovation should come from a well-trained society that offers high school students tools in entrepreneurship, as innovation not only has a scientific character but also needs to be included in university education as companies are more and more keen on working with an ever more open and challenging type of innovation.

Francisco Martin, former director of the Center for Industrial and Technological Development (CDTI), launched several proposals which would allow innovation to have more private sector resources in addition to governmental ones. Among them was included the creation of an innovation investment fund which he believes would be quite profitable and fairly easy to implement. "Spain does not have a plan that incentivizes collaboration between private and public sectors in order to strengthen innovation".

With the active participation of students, alumni, and researchers, Professor Edquist shared several additional ideas which clarified the current situation Spain regarding innovation policy, and stressed the need to open up public procurement to innovative solutions, demanding not only specific goods and services but also solutions to social challenges to, in this way, encourage creativity. "These changes are not overly expensive to begin implementing them and the benefit would be immense," he explained.

He detailed how the resources set aside for innovation "must be focused on the beginning of the innovative process, since once an idea is already developed and proven effective, it is carried by its own weight; but in the initial steps resources need to be focused on strengthening innovation," he concluded.

Head of the UAM-Accenture Chair, Paloma Sánchez, closed the seminar by asking which measures should be used by the public and private sectors to evaluate the efficiency of innovation as well as the processes that lead to it. This opened a rich debate between the guests and the attendees at the XXII Breakfast with Innovation.