

Gentilissimo Dott. Matteo Renzi,
Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri,
Palazzo Chigi,
Piazza Colonna 370, 00187 Roma - ITALY

Onorevole Senatrice Stefania Giannini,
Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca,
Piazza J.F. Kennedy 20, 00144 Roma - ITALY

Cc: Chiar.mo Prof. Stefano Fantoni (ANVUR), Dott. Daniele Livon (MIUR)

21 March 2014

Re: Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale 2012, Storia Economica (13 C/1)

Dear Prime Minister, dear Minister

We would like to express our concern about the results of the National Scientific Qualification (*Abilitazione Scientifica Nazionale*) in Economic History (13 C/1). In particular, we are puzzled by the failure of a number of applicants with an outstanding track record to obtain the "qualification" (*abilitazione*) for Full Professor (*professore prima fascia*) or for Associate Professor (*professore seconda fascia*). These individuals are well known outside Italy for their publications, their conference and seminar presentations, their refereeing of papers for leading journals, and their collaboration in international research projects. For example, we refer to three extremely valuable colleagues, Mark Dincecco (University of Michigan), Alessandro Nuvolari (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies) and Giovanni Vecchi (University of Rome "Tor Vergata"), none of whom was awarded the qualification to Full Professor. It would be a terrible shame if these outcomes inhibited the full development of these scholars' research agendas; economic history would be the poorer for it.

Another troubling feature of these results is the fact that candidates with a very limited track record of research in terms of international publications have been awarded the qualification. This is not the direction in which Italian economic history should go if it wants to secure its rightful place at the research frontier in our field.

Yours sincerely,

Robert C. Allen (New York University Abu Dhabi)

Stephen Broadberry (London School of Economics)

Gregory Clark (University of California, Davis)

Nicholas F. R. Crafts (University of Warwick)

Jane Humphries (All Souls College, University of Oxford)

Deirdre McCloskey (University of Gothenburg and University of Illinois at Chicago)

Joel Mokyr (Northwestern University)

Douglass C. North (Washington University in St. Louis; Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences 1993)

Kevin O'Rourke (All Souls College, University of Oxford)

Leandro Prados de la Escosura (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid)

Jan Luiten Van Zanden (University of Utrecht)

Jeffrey G. Williamson (Harvard University and University of Wisconsin)