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London stalling?

As the recession bites, can the capital retain its status as a global hub? **Analysis** Page 7

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Italy has a history of discrimination against foreigners

From Mr David Petrie.

Sir, Fearful of strikes against Italian workers exercising their rights to equal treatment, Emma Marcegaglia, chairman of Confindustria, the Italian employers association, warns against "each country folding in on itself and forgetting the freedoms of the single market" ("Britain must not go wobbly on the free market", February 10).

Italy provides the best example of legally proven mass systematic discrimination based on nationality in the history of the European Union. In up to 20 Italian universities, hundreds of non-Italian lecturers from all over the EU have been denied single market rights over the past 20 years. Over that period, six judgments have come out in favour of the foreign lecturers in the European Court of Justice.

Italian universities, bankrolled by their paymasters in the Italian state, continue to force hundreds of non-Italian lecturers into the labyrinth of the Italian legal system to seek minimum pay levels already established by law, increments for years of service, access to employment and their pensions. If Ms Marcegaglia feels Britain is in danger of going wobbly on the free market, how would she describe Italy's position?

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