

2026 DONDENA LECTURE

The Market for Ideas – Then and Now

**27 OCTOBER
2026**

6:00 - 7:30 pm

Bocconi University
Aula Franceschi
via Sarfatti 25
Milano

WELCOME ADDRESSES

Francesco Billari

Rector, Bocconi University

Guido Alfani

Director, DONDENA Centre, Bocconi University

SPEAKER

Joel Mokyr

Professor of Economics and History at Northwestern University, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences, 2025

ABSTRACT

The concept of a “Market for Ideas” is a popular one among economists, reflecting the competition between people who propose new ideologies, insights, or discoveries and who wish to persuade others and gain influence. The way this market works can be seen by looking at the supply side, the demand side and the operational structure of the market itself. The importance of this market for scientific and technological progress is self-evident. How did this market work during the Renaissance and Scientific Revolution compared with its working today? The significance of its operation to economic growth is addressed in detail.

Registration required.

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Joel Mokyr is the Robert H. Strotz Professor of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Economics and History at Northwestern University. He specializes in economic history and the economics of technological change and population change. His most recent book is *Two Paths to Prosperity: Culture and Institutions in Europe and China, 1000-2000* (joint with Guido Tabellini and Avner Greif), published by Princeton University Press. Together with Philippe Aghion and Peter Howitt, he was awarded the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for pioneering research on innovation-driven economic growth. Mokyr's contribution was to identify the prerequisites for sustained growth through technological progress; he also emphasised that sustained innovation requires societies to be open to new ideas and receptive to change.

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