

# Ex-Newsnight Presenter Dr James Bellini to Chair EU Referendum Debate

Submitted by: The UK200Group

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Dr James Bellini (<http://www.jamesbellini.com/>), futurologist, author and ex-Newsnight presenter, will bring his considerable experience and expertise to a high-profile debate on Wednesday 11 May between leading proponents of the 'Brexit' and 'Remain' camps.

Dr Bellini spent 25 years in the broadcasting industry presenting programmes such as The Money Programme, Newsnight and Panorama, and as a studio presenter with Financial Times Television and Sky News.

Prior to this, he gained a Masters from Cambridge, a PhD from London School of Economics and then became a university teacher, before becoming the first British member of the renowned US-headquartered futurology 'think-tank' the Hudson Institute.

Dr Bellini's academic and professional background, and his experience in using the perspectives of history to explore possible futures, give him a unique insight into the consequences of an 'In' or 'Out' result in the EU Referendum, to be held on 23 June.

The debate is organised by the UK200Group (<http://www.uk200group.co.uk/>), the UK's leading membership association of quality-assured independent chartered accountancy and law firms. The UK200Group's members provide accountancy and legal services to over 150,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the body is seeking to provide unbiased guidance to the SME community – a group whose importance to the UK economy cannot be understated.

The debate is at the centre of the UK200Group's 'Campaign for Clarity', and will be live-streamed from Coventry University London Campus (<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/culc/>), University House, 109-117 Middlesex St, City of London E1 7JF from 4.30PM to 6.30PM (debate itself 5.00PM to 6.00PM) on 11 May.

Dr Bellini said, "Objective and unbiased information about the potential consequences of the EU referendum can be difficult to find, and the UK200Group must be commended for their foresight in setting up an event to clarify the arguments of both campaigns in a friendly and professional environment.

"By covering the main topics from a business point of view, the group is providing its members with the tools to confidently advise their SME clients, and give them the information they need to make decisions that are in the best interests of their businesses."

James Abbott, President of the UK200Group, said, "We are thrilled that James Bellini is chairing the 'Campaign for Clarity' debate, and his unique skill-set will be invaluable.

"The aim is to work through the issues that affect our members and their clients, asking broad questions but also focusing in on specific industries such as agriculture, education, construction, charity and healthcare."

Dr James Bellini will be joined by the following speakers:

Yvette Cooper MP (<http://www.yvettecooper.com/>) will make the case for remaining in the EU. One of the most respected members of the Labour Party and a former Shadow Home Secretary, Yvette is the Member of Parliament for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford.

Lucy Thomas, Deputy Director of Britain Stronger in Europe (<http://www.strongerin.co.uk/>), will also be arguing the case for continuing our membership of the EU.

Making the case for exiting the EU will be David Davis MP (<http://www.daviddavismp.com/>), the Member of Parliament for Haltemprice & Howden, and an important and consistent voice at the right wing of the Conservative Party.

Douglas Carswell MP (<http://www.douglascarswell.com/about-douglas/>), Member of Parliament for Clacton, is also arguing the case for Brexit. Douglas was the first elected member of the UK Independence Party, in a by-election triggered by his high-profile defection from the Conservative Party in 2014.

Although the UK200Group remains impartial and unbiased, a poll of its members' views will be taken before and after the debate, giving a unique indication of the success of the speakers' arguments and the views of the UK SME community.

This will officially launch the UK200Group's referendum survey, which will continue to provide real-time analysis of the changing views of SME leaders in the UK. It will continue until the referendum on 23 June.

The UK200Group, which was established in 1986, represents a group of trusted, quality-assured business advisers – accountants and lawyers – who have over 150,000 SME clients in total. As such, the UK200Group acts as the voice for 1,500 charities, over 10% of all registered academies, more than 3,700 farms, 800 healthcare businesses and over 500 property and construction professionals.

Where: Coventry University London Campus, University House, 109-117 Middlesex St, City of London E1 7JF  
When: 4.30PM to 6.30PM (debate itself 5.00PM to 6.00PM) on 11 May

#### Useful links:

The UK200Group: <http://www.uk200group.co.uk/>

UK200Group on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/uk200group>

Coventry University London Campus: <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/culc/>

Dr James Bellini: <http://www.jamesbellini.com/>

David Davis MP: <http://www.daviddavismp.com/>

Yvette Cooper MP: <http://www.yvettecooper.com/>

Douglas Carswell MP: <http://www.douglascarswell.com/about-douglas/>

Britain Stronger in Europe: <http://www.strongerin.co.uk/>

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High-resolution imagery is available. Dr Bellini will be available for interviews in advance of the debate.

The event is by invitation only. Journalists are welcome to attend the event, but must be accredited beforehand.

Media information provided by Famous Publicity. For further information, please contact George Murdoch at [george@famouspublicity.com](mailto:george@famouspublicity.com) or 03333 442 341 or Tina Fotherby on 07703 409 622 or [tina@famouspublicity.com](mailto:tina@famouspublicity.com).

About the UK200Group:

The UK200Group was formed in 1986, and is the UK's leading association of independent chartered accountants and law firms, with connections around the world.

The association brings together around 150 member offices in the UK with more than 500 partners who serve roughly 150,000 business clients. Its international links in nearly 70 countries give our members access to expertise across the globe.