

IN MEMORIAM:

Richard Descoings, the late Director of Sciences Po Paris

by Jessica Larsson and Yvonne Guo



On 7 May 2012, the French Ambassador, Olivier Caron, hosted a memorial ceremony at his home for the alumni and friends of Sciences Po in Singapore to pay homage to Richard Descoings, the late Director of Sciences Po, who passed away on 3 April 2012.

A total of 45 guests were present, including three representatives of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, NUS, and four Sciences Po students currently studying at the school.

Olivier Caron, Ambassador of France in Singapore, Delphine Grouès, Dean of the Sciences Po campus in Le Havre, and Stavros N. Yiannouka, Executive Vice-Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, spoke passionately about the work of Descoings in opening Sciences Po to the world.

Descoings made Sciences Po, a training ground for the French elite, a truly international institution by developing more 350 partnerships and 32 dual degrees with internationally renowned universities, and by setting up six campuses dedicated to the study of different geographic regions.

Descoings also brought greater social and ethnic diversity to Sciences Po by recruiting academically outstanding students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Several alumni and students shared their testimonials about Descoings, describing him as a man with a vision who was highly committed to his institution, and a warm and friendly director who was close to his students.

The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Sciences Po have had a double degree programme since 2007. Under this programme, 30 students have graduated with degrees from both institutions. [GIA](#)

A tribute to Richard Descoings

by Stavros Yiannouka

“I feel truly humbled by the invitation to say a few words in memory of Richard Descoings whom I had the privilege of knowing from 2006 onwards. The Ambassador and the Director have spoken of Richard’s work to reform and internationalise Sciences Po and by extension French higher education. These remain admirable efforts for which Richard has rightly earned global acclaim. Indeed he may hold the distinction of being the only Frenchman to date to have united the *Financial Times* and *The Guardian*, two British newspapers from opposite ends of the political spectrum, in unequivocal admiration of his work.

I last met Richard in Paris in January of this year at a lunch he hosted for a small group of Sciences Po’s closest international partners. I found his reformist zeal undiminished as he enthusiastically explained to us his plans to create a professional school of government at Sciences Po to challenge the all-powerful *École Nationale d’Administration*. In other words, I found him to be still very much a man on a mission.

The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at NUS was very much a beneficiary of Richard’s efforts to internationalise Sciences Po. Under his leadership Sciences Po, together with the LSE and Columbia University’s School of International & Public Affairs, founded the Global Public Policy Network. This was conceived as an alliance of University-based institutions dedicated to advancing research, education and dialogue on policy issues of global concern. In 2007 the LKY School was invited to become the fourth member of this prestigious grouping after concluding double degree programmes with each of the three founding members including of course Sciences Po. These double degrees allow students who enroll in one partner institution to spend their second year at another and in so doing graduate with two degrees. To date, around 30 students have graduated with a double degree from Sciences Po and the LKY School. I would therefore like to think that in this way a small part of Richard’s great legacy lives on here in Singapore. And I believe that Sciences Po and the LKY School can further honour Richard’s memory by strengthening our collaboration through the Global Public Policy Network.”