ParisTech

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CHRISTIAN LERMINIAUX
President of ParisTech

EDITORIAL

This year our network celebrates its 30th anniversary, and to mark the occasion we are pleased to present an interview with Jacques Lewiner, one of the founding members of the "Grandes Écoles d'Ingénieurs de Paris" association that was set up in 1991 and later became ParisTech.

We reflect on the origins of the network and the strengths that allow it to continue to shine despite the pressures of an increasingly competitive and changeable environment. The interview is an extract from a book that we are working on to celebrate this important milestone for ParisTech – look out for its publication at the end of the year.

Moving on, we extend a warm welcome to Marie de Boni, the new director of our office in Asia. We would also like to thank outgoing director Laura Villette for her valuable work in this role, and wish her every success for the future.

FEATURE

ParisTech turns 30!

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JACQUES LEWINER
Professor and Honorary Scientific Director at ESPCI Paris – PSL, and former Dean of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Université PSL

Could you tell us a little about how GEI Paris – the group that later became ParisTech – came to be founded in 1991?

The late 1980s saw the launch of the European Erasmus programme, which gave higher education students the opportunity to study abroad for part of their course. At the time, I was Scientific Director of ESPCI. One day, I received a phone call from the director of a leading UK university. He explained that he would like to send a group of his students to our school under the Erasmus scheme, and host some of our students in return. I told him that was an excellent idea! He then asked how many students we would want to send each year. He had me stumped there, so I turned the question back on him. How many students would he send us? A hundred! At that point, we had 72 students in each year group, so sending a hundred students abroad every year was simply impossible. I sat at my desk puzzling over the question and thinking about what we could do. Finally, I picked up the phone and called Jacques Lévy, Director of the École des Mines de Paris. "I've got a bit of a problem." "Same here," he said. "In fact I think I know what you're going to say." We realised that despite their prestige, our schools were microscopic when compared to the top institutions in other countries. We talked things over with Jacques Lagardère, Director of the École des Ponts et des Chaussées, and that's how the Grandes Écoles d'Ingénieurs de Paris – or the Group of Engineering Institutes of Paris – was born. Our goal was to enable France's top engineering schools to adopt a more united front, in particular in an international context.

Where did the name ParisTech come from? How did you choose it?

I was never very convinced by "GEI Paris" as a name. I got used to it, but I didn't think it was particularly effective from a marketing point of view. We therefore decided to find something better. I really liked the name MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, so we started off by considering "Paris Institute of Technology". The acronym "PIT" wasn't great though. After some more brainstorming, we came up with ParisTech. I rushed off to check that the name hadn't already been trademarked… success! It was ours to use. The network officially became ParisTech in 1999. It's a name that reflects everything the network stands for. Almost all of the schools were in Paris – an attractive destination in its own right – so including "Paris" in the name was an obvious choice. The "tech" part of the name highlights the network's focus on excellence and innovation.

What are the strengths of the ParisTech network?

The network brings together schools that complement one another and provide top-class education in their fields, but that are too small – as individual institutions – to compete on the world stage. If you look at the top-ranking American universities, you'll see that they have impressive departments of electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, computer science and so on. Each of the ParisTech member schools is equivalent to one of these departments, offering an excellent standard of education in a specific field.

The ParisTech network also benefits from a strong international reputation thanks to its office in Asia and partnerships established in recent years with key countries such as China, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina and Russia. Moreover, the joint international recruitment campaigns allow each school to attract top candidates each year – something they would struggle to do alone.

Each member of ParisTech is firmly committed to teaching and research, and being part of a network makes it easier for the schools to collaborate on topics that are of mutual interest. This is a real asset because science and technology increasingly span multiple fields. By pooling their expertise and skills, the schools can tackle interdisciplinary projects.

The network opens up other international opportunities too. Together, the schools have enough students to take part in international exchange programmes, and can form partnerships and set up initiatives with top institutions in other countries.

PORTRAIT


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MARIE DE BONI
Director of ParisTech in Asia

Marie de Boni took over from Laura Villette as director of the ParisTech office in Asia on 10th September 2021. Based in Shanghai, she will help implement and develop the joint projects run by the ParisTech schools across Asia, and strengthen the schools' ties with their partners in Asia.

Why did you want to join the ParisTech network?

For me, joining the ParisTech network is a way of helping the seven member schools showcase the French engineering education system as a model of excellence. The schools share a number of values that are particularly important to me. Moreover, the role gives me the opportunity to put my two areas of professional experience – engineering and teaching – to good use in a stimulating and rewarding international context.

Could you tell us a little about your background?

I did a scientific *baccalauréat*, and then went on to do a Master's in biology at the École normale supérieure. I pursued my studies at doctoral level, obtaining a DEA in molecular biology, and then joined AgroParisTech as I was keen to work in the industrial sector. After qualifying as an engineer, I worked in the Food Safety & Quality department of the Biscuits division of Danone France. I remained in the agri-food sector for five years, working on a range of topics, including the security of supply of raw materials, and quality coordination for new product launches. I then embarked on a second career as a teacher in Japan, and have since taught mathematics, physics and life and earth sciences at French high schools in Tokyo, Shanghai and Mumbai, and French at a Chinese public school in Shanghai.

What are your main objectives at the ParisTech Asia office?

As Director of ParisTech in Asia my main objectives are to:

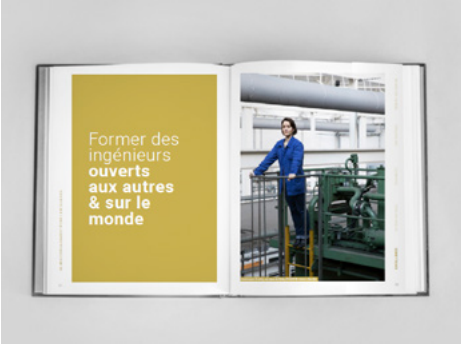
- Develop strong partnerships with universities and other institutions, in line with both Asia's ambitions and the standards of excellence that characterise French schools. This is particularly important now that the ParisTech International Admission Programme is open to other countries in Asia as well as China;

- Strengthen the network and raise the profile of ParisTech within local networks (e.g. trade associations, networks of Chinese graduates returning from overseas);

- Reinforce partnerships with French and international companies operating in Asia, to help them fulfil their specific training and recruitment requirements.

THE LATEST FROM PARISTECH

COMMUNICATION



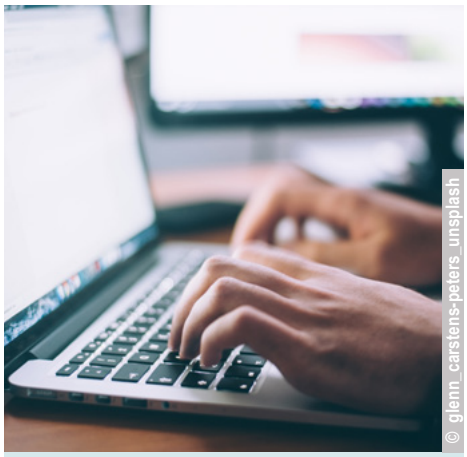
ParisTech turns 30 this year, and the network is putting together a book to mark the occasion and celebrate the shared desire of the member schools to showcase France as a centre of excellence for engineering education. The book is split into four chapters – excellence, internationalisation, diversity and innovation, reflecting the four core values that brought the schools together and that continue to underpin all of the network's decisions and activities today.

DIVERSITY

The ParisTech/ENCPB "*Ambition Sciences*" programme (part of the "*Cordées de la réussite*" mentoring scheme) is running for the second year in a row, headed up by the Lycée Pierre-Gilles de Gennes (ENCPB).

This time, AgroParisTech, Arts et Métiers and Chimie ParisTech – PSL, are joined by l'ESPCI Paris – PSL, and no fewer than ten secondary schools have signed up for the adventure! Around forty tutors from the four participating ParisTech schools will tutor and support students enrolled in ENCPB's *prépa* classes to boost their chances of passing the *grandes écoles* entrance exams and getting one step closer to their dream career.

TEACHING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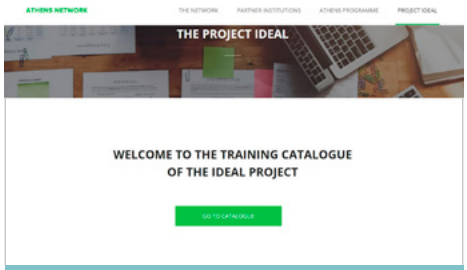
On 23rd July, the ParisTech teaching support and innovation network (RACINE) was awarded a €60,000 grant under a French government scheme that funds training in digital technologies for teaching staff. The money from the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) will be used to develop and expand the use of hybrid teaching formats. The team plan to create a series of online self-study modules on concrete issues relating to the increasing use of digital technologies in the classroom. The aim is to give teaching staff a comprehensive understanding of the tools available so that they can incorporate them in their teaching methods. A fantastic achievement and lots to look forward to – bravo!

INTERNATIONAL



The IDEAL project (European Soft Skills for PhD: enhancing transversal skills through innovative doctoral courses) is entering its final year. The project is financed by Erasmus+ and aims to develop doctoral students' transversal skills. The members of the consortium, most of whom belong to the ATHENS network, have already published an online training catalogue, and the first course, "Creative Thinking: Techniques and Tools for Success", was organised by Istanbul Technical University in May/June 2021.

On the 2021/2022 programme: 2 new training courses, 1 MOOC, 1 pilot course, publication of the results.

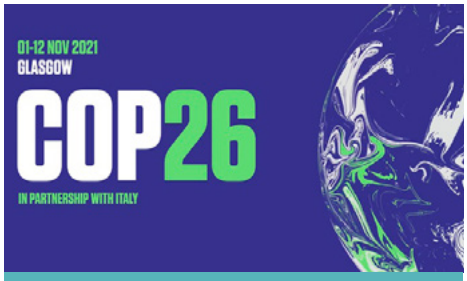
Find out more.

In 2021, ParisTech signed an agreement with the European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in Alicante as part of the Pan-European Professional Traineeship Programme. Under the agreement, students from the ParisTech schools can apply to do an internship in the field of intellectual property. Two engineering graduates, Baptiste Borowczak (Chimie ParisTech – PSL) and Brice Tayama (AgroParisTech), successfully secured a placement and recently began a one-year internship in Munich. Congratulations! Applications for the next cycle open at the start of 2022.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Agreements
Renewal of framework agreement with UNAL (Colombia)
Addendum to the double-degree agreement with UNAL (Colombia) – new departments added
Renewal of double-degree agreement with PUC Javeriana (Colombia)
Signature of a framework agreement with Xi'an Jiaotong University (China)

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

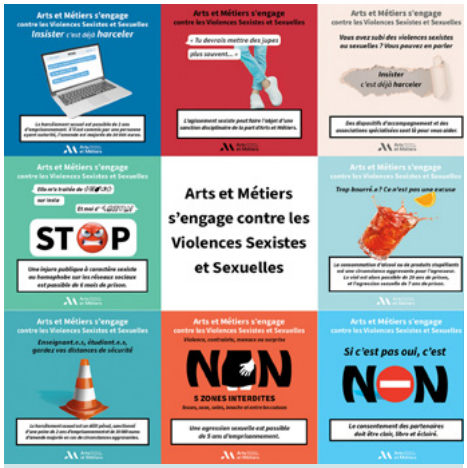


AgroParisTech

AgroParisTech to attend COP26

COP26, the 26th United Nations climate change conference, is taking place from 1st to 12th November 2021 in Glasgow. This year's summit is hosted by the United Kingdom in partnership with Italy.

For the first time in its history, AgroParisTech has been selected as an observer organisation and will be sending a delegation of eight students to the international event to represent their institution. As observers, the students will attend the negotiations on climate change, and will have the opportunity to share their views on the process.



Arts et Métiers

Combating sexist and sexual violence

Arts et Métiers has implemented additional measures to combat sexist and sexual violence and support victims. Alongside its confidential support and counselling service, the school is raising awareness through workshops and has launched a poster campaign with the help of student volunteers.

Arts et Métiers takes a three-pronged approach to tackling sexist and sexual violence: provide information, raise awareness, and offer support.

Chimie ParisTech – PSL

Johanne Ling wins 2021 thesis prize from the Société Chimique de France

Dr Johanne Ling, who completed her PhD at Chimie ParisTech – PSL, as a student of Sorbonne Université, has been awarded a prize by the Île de France branch of the Société Chimique de France for her thesis in organic chemistry.

Dr Ling carried out her doctoral work as a member of the CSB2D team of the Institute of Chemistry for Life and Health Sciences (i-CLeHS) lab, under the supervision of Dr Maxime Vitale. Her work focuses on how to make chemistry greener and uses the concepts of catalysis and atom economy to develop innovative and efficient ways of obtaining key scaffolds of bioactive molecules. The goal is to make the process of creating valuable chemical compounds quicker, easier and more cost-efficient, and to do so in ways that generate less waste and use abundant, low-toxicity raw materials.

École des Ponts ParisTech

A new book has been published by Jean Carassus, professor at the École des Ponts ParisTech and Dominique Naert, head of the school's Advanced Master's in Sustainable Real Estate and Building. Entitled "*Immobilier et bâtiment durables : réussir la transition carbone et numérique*", the book shares expert insights and practical ways of transitioning to a low-carbon and digital future and making real estate and building more sustainable. The book is published by Eyrolles and is currently available to pre-order.

MINES ParisTech – PSL

Offshore wind farms: how Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) can help

Paula Pérez-López and Mélanie Douziech, researchers at MINES ParisTech – PSL, are taking part in the LIF-OWI project organised by France Énergies Marines, to investigate the environmental impacts of offshore wind farms. As experts in Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methods, they will help to identify crucial points for the eco-design of offshore wind farms.

The purpose of an LCA is to identify and quantify the physical materials and energy used for or by a product or system throughout its life cycle, and to evaluate both environmental and social impacts using various indicators.

ParisTech, the major engineering schools network

The complementary nature of the areas of excellence of the various schools provides our students, researchers and partners (academic and corporate) with an exceptional consortium that offers unique transdisciplinary opportunities. ParisTech also has strong international teaching and research links via its many partnership agreements.

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