

# LETTER

**GraSPP**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

Contents

- 1: Sciences Po & GraSPP Joint Talk Event & Me as a Bridge between Two Schools (Cultures)
- 2: Let's Build a Closer Alumni Network Together / A reflection on homecoming during ASEAN & South Asia Youth Mission to Japan
- 3: Student Interview
- 4: APEC Voices of the Future / GraSPP Entrance Exam Information



**Adrien Bunel, MPP/IP Year 1**

## Sciences Po & GraSPP Joint Talk Event & Me as a Bridge between Two Schools (Cultures)

On the 16th of November, Dean Yann Algan from Sciences Po's School of Public Affairs came to Tokyo and gave a lecture on the state of the economy and Europe and how that relates to the rise of populism. He teaches macroeconomics at Sciences Po, and was my professor when I was an undergraduate student at Sciences Po. The main takeaways from his lecture were the facts that the economic crisis is over and that all EU countries including France are recovering, and that there are strong correlations between changes in unemployment over time within a given country and the

rise of populist parties. He showed that regardless of the absolute level of the unemployment rate in a country, changes were positively correlated with populist votes in elections. In other words, if one looks at the differences in employment level across countries, there is no convincing link to be made with populism, because countries differ in their structural and conjunctural economic circumstances so that agents adopt different strategies to cope with the standard state of the economy. What matters, though, are changes occurring within one country over time. Concretely speaking, from the mere fact that Spain has a higher level of unemployment than Germany, we should not conclude that populism is stronger in Spain than in Germany, because given their context, agents in both countries adjust their expectations and their behavior. But when unemployment increased in Spain, that coincided with a surge in populist votes. In the end, his idea was that although political and cultural explanations of the rise of populism should not be completely disregarded, the main drive is more likely to be a more pragmatic, economic factor. Therefore, if European leaders want to combat populism, their best strategy would be to deliver efficient economic policies.

Aside from the lecture, Yann Algan also introduced the dual degree between the Sciences Po's School of Public Affairs and GraSPP. I am myself enrolled in this dual degree with two other friends of mine, Omaro and Théo, and after having spent one year at Sciences Po in Paris we are spending our final year here at the University of Tokyo (UTokyo). I chose to apply to this dual degree programme because during my studies I became increasingly interested in Japan – its language, society, economy and geopolitics – and my ambition was to work in the field of relations between Europe and Asia, and more specifically between France and Japan. I felt that in order to be able to work in Japan, graduating from a Japanese university would be an important asset; at the same time, I still wanted to get a master's degree from my country and my school. This programme gives us the opportunity to earn a master's degree in both countries' most renowned institution in this field. The two universities are quite different: Sciences Po's campus is rather small and right in the center of Paris, while the University of Tokyo is very large. I got lost the first time I came here. Both universities also differ in terms of student population. I would say that Sciences Po is more international for about half of the students come from abroad – the remaining half being French students. But UTokyo is rapidly becoming more international ... I would not be here if that were not the case! Apart from that, the academic approach is not fundamentally different. A nice feature of this programme is that both universities offer the chance to follow their course entirely in English, but also in French at Sciences Po and in Japanese at GraSPP. I think this adds to the cultural enrichment, which is a great strength of this dual degree. Paris and Tokyo are both amazing cities even though – or perhaps because – they offer completely different experiences in terms of architecture, heritage, atmosphere or way of life. In Tokyo, the metro is so clean I could picnic on the floor; in Paris, you will probably not have this temptation; in Paris, buildings along the streets are harmonious; in Tokyo, it is a complete patchwork; in Paris, there is a monument at every corner; in Tokyo, there is a shrine at every corner; in Tokyo, I can shop 24/7; in Paris, people are always on holiday.

I am extremely grateful and happy to be given such a great opportunity to learn in two of the world's most distinguished graduate schools of public policy and two of the world's most amazing cities.





**Kunro Hino**  
**6th President,**  
**GraSPP Alumni**  
**Association**

With the proportion of overseas students in the GraSPP Alumni Association growing year by year, I am looking forward to a future in which the association is open to the world.

The GraSPP Alumni & Student Day 2017 held on October 21 last year was attended by 170 people in total, of whom 48 were graduates from ASEAN and southern Asia for the first time as part of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs invitation program. Please see a report of this event which has been posted on the website (<http://www.pp.u-tokyo.ac.jp/news/2017-12-18-12410/>). The general session, entitled “GraSPP’s Past, Present and Future”, recounted GraSPP’s progress to date and included a discussion with those present about how we can make the alumni association even better in the future.

The event also featured the announcement of the GraSPP Alumni Association Portal (GraSPP Portal) (<https://www.grasppalumni.com/>), one of the key measures being adopted to invigorate our alumni network. As GraSPP graduates can be found working in a variety of different countries and regions after graduation, they often lose touch with other alumni. Also, current students find it difficult to obtain information about the career paths followed by their predecessors. GraSPP Portal is a website for exclusive use by past and current students and by teaching staff. Being searchable by parameters such as year of graduation, course, work history, type of work, and place of residence, it provides a simple way to connect to other GraSPPers. With diversity being a feature

of GraSPPers, I believe there are major benefits by connecting GraSPPers who now work at the forefront of a wide variety of different fields. As we also plan to use the GraSPP Portal to post information on internships, job fairs and other gatherings, I strongly recommend you to register.

A number of country-specific alumni groups have also been established, and Japanese graduates have been organized not only by year of graduation but also by factors such as workplace or industry. Our aim is to establish a multi-layered, global alumni network. We are also looking for anyone who would like to get actively involved in running of the association; please don’t hesitate to get in touch with us. Next year’s Homecoming Day will again be held in October. I hope you will all take advantage of the new website to help us forge a closer GraSPP alumni network.

## A reflection on homecoming during ASEAN & South Asia Youth Mission to Japan

### GraSPP Alumni & Student Day 2017



It has been a dream for those of us who have returned to our home countries, which are far from Japan, to revisit our professors, classmates, university campus, as well as the places where we used to stay, visit, and have fun.

With the support from Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GraSPP alumni from 10 countries in ASEAN & South Asia were given the opportunity to join the ASEAN & South Asia Youth Mission to Japan to attend a series of activities, including GraSPP Alumni & Student Day on October 21, 2017 and site visits to learn about disaster prevention and environmental conservation experiences in Japan.

I found that all of the participants were very joyful to reunite with former classmates, professors, and staff of GraSPP. We also had the opportunity to make new friends, reconnect with GraSPP alumni, brainstorm ways we could contribute to strengthening GraSPP alumni networks for a more effective collaboration, and help recruit future GraSPPers from within our home countries. We were glad to see that GraSPP had made significant progress from year to year in receiving wider recognition as one of the best public policy schools in the world as a result of the efforts by our dedicated professors and staff.

Throughout our stay, we not only had the chance to revisit long-standing ties with former classmates and teachers, but also participated in educational and cultural activities. We learned about Japan’s experiences in disaster prevention and environmental conservation. Additionally, we enjoyed a great performance by the world-renowned martial art drumming entertainment team DRUM TAO.

On behalf of all the delegates of ASEAN & South Asia Youth Mission to Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for GraSPP and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for giving us such a wonderful opportunity to reunite ourselves with Japan with warm hospitality.



**Raksmeay Srean**  
**Class of 2007**



Yumi is on the left

— **I understand you graduated from a university in Poland.**

I graduated from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, the oldest university in Poland. Among its alumni is the 16th century astronomer Copernicus.

Prior to that, I was a student at the Department of French Studies of Sophia University. I had wanted to study abroad ever since senior in high school, but my parents told me I needed to graduate from a Japanese university first. The reason I chose to study French was because I loved Cambodia so much. I had heard that Professor Yoshiaki Ishizawa (former President of Sophia University), who is famous for work on protecting the ruins of Angkor Wat, was a graduate of the Department of French Studies and I decided I wanted to follow in his footsteps. However, when I attended a working camp in Iceland during the winter holidays of my first year at university and saw how everyone was pursuing their own interests, I realized that I didn't really enjoy French all that much and that I should instead do what I wanted to do. With that, I resolved to quit my studies.

Next came a frantic search for an overseas university. As Europe offered the opportunity to visit all sorts of different countries on the same land mass with their culture intertwined, I narrowed my search accordingly. By September, I had moved to Poland. I have a fondness for the unusual, and since the faculty that deals with international relations and regional studies had never had any students from Japan before, I decided I was going to become their first ever Japanese graduate. Unfortunately, my parents were dead set against it. I only had to put up with a month or so of cold war with my mother, but my father wouldn't speak to me in the lead up to my departure for Poland.

Once I commenced my studies, I discovered I was the only person from East Asia, let alone Japan (although there were students from India and Uzbekistan). The level of English education in Poland is high and it was rare to have any difficulties due being unable to communicate in English. While I love Poland now, the remnants of socialism remained strong at that time and I worried during my first year about whether I had made the right decision to come, spending half of the year at Sciences Po Lyon under the Erasmus Plus Programme. But having moved to France I found myself impatient to get back to Poland. I felt accepted and at ease in Poland where people treated me without preconceptions, not

No. 26  
**Student Interview**

## Yumi Yoshida (MPP/IP Year 1)

putting a label on me on the basis of my being Japanese.

There were students from a wide range of different countries. My first dorm roommate was from the Ukraine. The Ukraine is not a member of the EU and corruption is widespread. Seeing no value to be had from education in their own country, the wealthy send their children to be educated in the west (meaning Poland). My next roommate, with whom I have continued to keep in touch, was from Turkey. The Turkish are famous for their hospitality and she was very generous in sharing her cooking. If I declined because I was already full from my own meal, she would get indignant and demand to know why (Turkish cooking is delicious, but it is very oily and made me put on weight). I also made friends with a student from Nigeria. She had gone to an international school in Nigeria and what she told me about it left me surprised; they didn't learn about things we were taught in elementary or junior high school in Japan. Nigeria is in political turmoil and she didn't intend to go back to her country. She got a job and stayed on in Poland after graduation. As she was able to bring her mother across to be with her, I expect they will be moving further west.

— **Are there any countries other than Poland that left an impression on you?**

I love to travel and must have visited about 30 countries after coming to Poland, but most of all it was Eastern Europe! One time when I traveled alone by overnight train from southern Ukraine to a town on the Polish border, the train conductor neglected his duties to keep coming to see me. He even brought me a beer! I was worried about how his work was getting done.



# APEC Voices of the Future

Kaoruko Kobayashi, MPP/IP Year 2



Five students from GraSPP attended the APEC Voices of the Future event held in Da Nang, Vietnam from November 5 to 11, 2017 as part of the Japanese delegation. This event is held each year to coincide with APEC Leaders' Week with the aim of providing a forum for the youth of the 21 member nations and regions. Under this year's theme "Creating New Dynamism, Fostering a Shared Future", we drafted the youth declaration, which is to be presented to the leaders of the member nations and regions.

Prior to attending the Summit, our delegation had the privilege to have meetings with members of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), Mr. Kanji Yamanouchi, Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau, and representatives of the APEC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This helped us gain a deeper understanding of Japan's role in APEC and the Asia-Pacific region and the significance of APEC to both government and the private sector. We also received advice on our speech that was presented during the program on behalf of the

Japanese delegation. Such experience enabled us to have a strong sense of our mission as representatives of Japan.

There were two things about the program I found fascinating. The first was that as youth delegates, we had the opportunity to attend the APEC CEO summit and to be present during the speeches by the attending national leaders, cabinet ministers, and business leaders. This year's event included speeches by political and business leaders such as Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump. It was a significant experience to be in the presence of these leaders who appear frequently in the news, and to be able to see and hear them for myself. At the same time, we were able to meet investors attending the summit and listen about their business and this made me aware of the high level of attention being directed toward AI and mechanization. Under such conditions, the meeting with Mr. Masamichi Kono, the Deputy Secretary General of OECD, who was one of the panelists in the APEC CEO Summit session on the theme "Future of Work," particularly left a strong impression on me where he talked about the policies regarding "robotification" and the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its influence on Japan. The second thing I found fascinating was how I was able to have a better understanding of the circumstances and challenges different nations and regions face through discussions with other delegates and visiting the host nation and region. For example, I was astonished to hear from the delegates of Papua New Guinea that a large amount of their population still does not have access to the Internet and smartphones. Also during my stay in Vietnam, I saw how the beautiful city of Hoi An was heavily affected by flooding.

This program provided me the opportunity to learn firsthand the concerns of political and economic leaders from around the world and enabled me to broaden my perspective through discussions with youth delegates from around the world. Despite our different backgrounds, I learned that we all share the same passion for trying to make the world a better place. I am certain that the friendships we have developed over the past week will continue, and I hope someday that we will be able to work together in the future.

## GraSPP Entrance Exam Information

### Professional Degree Programs AY 2019 intake (TBC)

- \* As of February 2018
- Programs taught in Japanese (details to be published in May 2018)  
Applications: Around early August 2018
- International program (details to be published in August 2018)  
Applications: Around mid-October to late December 2018

### Doctoral Program Second intake for AY2018/2019

- Applications: From Mon. April 9 to Mon. May 21, 2018
- Announcement of Candidates to be interviewed: Fri. June 8, 2018
- Oral examinations: Mon. June 18 to Tue. June 19, 2018
- Announcement of Admitted Candidates: Fri. June 22, 2018

## Editor's Postscript

This will be my final postscript as editor. I have been in the job for exactly 10 years, having taken over from my predecessor for Vol 8 (which came out on January 31, 2007). The opportunity to ask the questions I wanted to ask and to meet the students I wanted to meet was an irreplaceable experience (although there were times when I felt I could have done without the editing work that came afterwards). It was also one of the perks of the job that I was able to get news of past teachers and students from GraSPP. I would like to give my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the newsletter and helped make it what it is. (Editor)

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