



# What's Wrong With France? Discussion with Laurent Cohen-Tanugi and Adam Gopnik

As the world around France changes, more and more people inside France's borders and beyond raise the question of whether France's days of glory are indeed a thing of history. France remains committed to playing a significant role on the global stage and maintaining its generous social programs at home, but as other nations look forward, France remains stubbornly committed to the systems and institutions of its past.

President François Hollande, whose election accompanied a sweeping shift from right to left, accompanied by a promise for change, has seen the continuation of high unemployment and quickly found himself suffering historically low approval ratings. Meanwhile, support for the far-right Front National party continues to rise, in large part a rejection of the nation's political system and State institutions all together.

This raises a number of fundamental questions, as international lawyer and author **Laurent Cohen-Tanugi**, who was a French-American Foundation Young Leader alongside President Hollande in 1996, raises in his new work, *What's Wrong With France*.

Are French leadership and the institutions of the Fifth Republic themselves incompatible with the dynamics of a global world? Can France encourage economic growth and entrepreneurship, while adapting its social contract to acknowledge the changing nature of work in the twenty-first century? Compared to other industrialized countries, is France capable of addressing globalization and other forces shifting the world order?

The French-American Foundation is pleased to convene an open discussion between Cohen-Tanugi and Foundation Board Member **Adam Gopnik**, *The New Yorker*, to look at Cohen-Tanugi's new work and address these fundamental questions about France's current situation and what steps France can take to reinvent itself.



**Thursday, September 24 / 6:30 PM**  
**Baker & McKenzie LLP /**  
**452 Fifth Avenue (entrance on 40th Street)**  
**New York City**



**ADMISSION: \$25**  
Space is limited and a reservation is required. Please purchase tickets to this event [here](#).  
Copies of the French version of *What's Wrong With France?* (Grasset 2015) will be available for

purchase at the event. An English translation of the work remains in process.



### Laurent Cohen-Tanugi

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A member of the Paris and New York Bars, Laurent Cohen-Tanugi is the founder and managing partner of Laurent Cohen-Tanugi Avocats, a boutique international law firm focusing on strategic corporate assignments in the areas of cross-border mergers and acquisitions, arbitration, and corporate governance, including anti-corruption compliance.

Over a career of thirty years, Mr. Cohen-Tanugi has been a partner at major international law firms such as Skadden Arps (2005-2007) and Cleary Gottlieb (1991-2003), and Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the French pharmaceutical group Sanofi (2004). In 2007-2008, he headed a task-force on the future of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy for the French presidency of the EU, sponsored by then French Economy Minister Christine Lagarde.

Mr. Cohen-Tanugi is a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Sciences-Po Paris, and the Paris and Harvard Law Schools. He is the author of numerous influential books on the rule of law, European affairs, transatlantic relations and globalization, including *Le droit sans l'État, Sur la démocratie en France et en Amérique* (PUF, 1985) and *The Shape of the World to Come, Charting the Geopolitics of a New Century* (Columbia University Press, 2008.) He is a regular columnist and international lecturer, and a visiting lecturer at Stanford Law School.

### Adam Gopnik

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Adam Gopnik has been writing for The New Yorker since 1986. During his tenure at the magazine, he has written fiction and humor pieces, book reviews, Profiles, reporting pieces, and more than a hundred stories for The Talk of the Town and Comment.

Gopnik became The New Yorker's art critic in 1987. In 1990, he collaborated with Kirk Varnedoe, the former curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, on the exhibition "High & Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture," and co-wrote the book of the same name. In 1995, Gopnik moved to Paris and began writing the Paris Journal column for the magazine. An expanded collection of his essays from Paris, *Paris to the Moon*, appeared in 2000. While in Paris, he also wrote an adventure novel, *The King in the Window*, which was published in 2005. Gopnik has edited the anthology *Americans in Paris*, for the Library of America, and has written introductions to new editions of the works of Maupassant, Balzac, Proust, and Alain-Fournier.



His most recent book, *Through the Children's Gate: A Home in New York*, (2006), collects and expands his essays about life in New York and about raising two children here. It includes the essays "Bumping Into Mr. Ravioli," about his daughter's imaginary friend, and "Last of the Metrozoids," about the life of Kirk Varnedoe and the year before his death, in 2003.

Gopnik has won the National Magazine Award for Essays and for Criticism three times, and also the George Polk Award for Magazine Reporting.

## ABOUT THE FRENCH-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

Founded in 1976 and building on more than two centuries of shared ideals between France and the United States, the French-American Foundation-United States works to enrich a transatlantic relationship that is essential in today's world. With its sister foundation, the French-American Foundation - France, the Foundation brings together leaders, policymakers, and a wide range of professionals to exchange views and share experiences in areas of mutual concern for mutual benefit.

The Foundation addresses several current policy issues including education; immigration; security and defense; business and the economy; energy and the environment; urban development and renewal; health care; and cultural policy. Programs include its signature Young Leaders program, conferences, high-level professional exchanges, and study tours for leaders in government, business, academia, media, and culture, creating a rich network of people and ideas for action.



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