

The Körber European Science Prize

Search Committee Life Sciences

Prof. Dr. Pascale Cossart

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Photo: Michèle Pelletier

After studying chemistry in Lille (France), Pascale Cossart obtained a master degree at Georgetown University, Washington DC, in 1971. Back in France she obtained her PhD in Paris, in 1977 working with G. Cohen in the Pasteur Institute where she is still now. Her thesis project was the amino-acid sequence determination of an *E. coli* enzyme. During her postdoctorate with M. Yaniv, she sequenced the gene encoding this enzyme, *thrA*, the first gene sequenced in the Pasteur Institute. In the early 1980's, she switched to the study of DNA-protein interactions and together with B. Gicquel, collaborated with J. Beckwith in Harvard to analyze the site-specificity of the *E. coli* cyclic AMP binding protein. In 1986, she started a group within the Unit of Génie Microbiologique headed by Julian Davies and embarked on her work on *Listeria monocytogenes*, an intracellular bacterium responsible for food borne infections that she had chosen as a model to study intracellular parasitism. Her work has used a combination of innovative approaches to unravel the mechanisms underlying *Listeria* infection. *Listeria* is now one of the most documented bacterial pathogens and a reference in infection biology.

Pascale Cossart is Professor at the Pasteur Institute, Head of the Unit "Interactions Bactéries-Cellules", Inserm Unit U604 and INRA USC2020. Since 2000, she is an international scholar of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Pascale Cossart has received a number of awards including the L'Oreal Prize for women in Science (1998), the Louis Pasteur Gold Medal of the Swedish Society of Medicine (2000), the Robert Koch Prize (2007), the Louis Jeantet Prize for Medicine (2008). She is an elected member of EMBO (1995), of the French Academy of Sciences (2002), of "Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina" (2001) and of the American National Academy of Sciences (2009).