

Ceremony of signature of the Agreement Establishing an International Research Group (GDRI)  
"South Caucasus Geosciences"  
Speech of Marc Sosson co-ordinator of the GDRI

Ms the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia  
Ms the Minister of State for Higher Education and Scientific Research of France  
Mr the Rector  
Mr the President of the National Academy of Science of the Republic of Armenia  
Mr the President of the State Committee for Science of the Republic of Armenia  
Ms the representative of the President of the Shota Rustaveli National Sciences Foundation  
Distinguished professors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Since the Spitak earthquake in Armenia in 1988 had place, the collaborations between French laboratories in Earth Sciences research and partners from the South Caucasus have been initiated:

- 1) from 1989 the laboratory Geosciences of Montpellier with Armenia (Pr Hervé Philip and then JF Ritz and his team) work with the support of CNRS/INSU programmes as PICS LIA.
- 2) In 2003 the laboratory Géoazur of Nice Sophia Antipolis (my laboratory), started working with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (supported by European programme INTAS, and Middle East Basins Evolution and then DARIUS programmes: a consortium of eight oil companies, including the french company TOTAL, and University Pierre and Marie Curie Paris 6, CNRS/INSU). In 2012 Geoazur began collaborate with a new partner - Ukraine,
- 3) at the same time, in 2003 laboratory Geosystem of Lille 1 (Pr Danelian) have been working with Armenia (with the support of DARIUS programme and the European Erasmus Mundus Programme IANUS),

These three french laboratories: the laboratory Géoazur of Nice Sophia Antipolis, the laboratory Geosciences of Montpellier, and the laboratory Geosystem of Lille 1, are involved now in the International Research Group "South Caucasus Geosciences".

This Group has been created in 2010 with the view of joining forces of France and South Caucasus countries to solve the unsettled Earth Sciences questions in the Lesser and Greater Caucasus regions. This mountains belt shows a high potential in Earth Sciences researches due to its geographical location and geological settings. It passes

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through Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia countries which appear to be a promising area in focusing on several research projects in Earth Sciences topics.

From 2010 to 2013 the Group was aimed to solve 5 following tasks:

1. Geodynamic processes
- 2. Basins and mountain belts structures in surface and subsurface
- 3. Origin and significance of magmatism: Lithosphere Asthenosphere interaction during the main stages of the geodynamic evolution. Metallogeny related to these magmatisms
- 4. Localization of active faults, seismology: impact on basin structures and on the risks
- 5. Paleomagnetism

The first stage of the project (during 2010-2013) was realized in the best conditions regarding both: the quality of the field scientific data and the local scientific knowledge and facilities as well.

Since this project has been taken place we already obtained some important results:

- Through the joint cooperation we gained a deep understanding of the mountain belt structures, that is the basic issue in solving problems of natural resource exploration in this region of the world. At this stage we can partially reconstruct the motion of the tectonic plates responsible for the creation of these mountains 150 million years ago. Then, what is important to note, regarding people, the location of the main active faults has been updated by our researches, which enables to create the maps of seismic risk of the South Caucasus during the second period of this project.
- Unfortunately, because of the difficulties faced by Ukraine, our colleagues can't be present with us today. We just started our collaboration, and despite much remained to be done, this work is going to be promising and fruitful, and as an example: the results we obtained already, forced now to reconsider the concept of the geology of the Crimean Mountains.

During 4 years, 26 joint publications in the international editing were done due to this cooperation.

Also, I'd like to stress on Researcher Exchanges which win back the important role in IRG. Exchanges provide the integration of research and favor the development of Science to the International level.

Mobility of researchers gives birth to a new generation of scientists able of doing the research in the good tradition of the French geological school (I think to Master, PhD, post doctoral position).

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What we want to do after the signing the second stage of the project for the period of 2014-2017? During this time two main objectives regarding significant social interests intend to be highlighted. First - based on natural resources (ore deposits, hydrocarbons) whereas the second one - deals with seismic risks.

Uniqueness of this project is that it brings together the experts from five countries as partners.

France brings to the south Caucasus countries the opportunity of knowledge European network with providing of educative, methodological, and research facilities

But at the same time, the collaboration with the south Caucasus countries gave to France:

- A broad amount of new research due to the unique geological features of these mountains,
- also, inestimated source of information
- and excellent opportunity of sharing know-how.

Thereby, this project makes sense to continue as it provides:

- The new Growth Points in the Earth Science which motivate to a new research and lay the foundation of strong knowledge;
- joint research in the field of geology gives a deeper understanding of the processes and mechanisms of the dynamics of the Earth
- Exchange of researchers provides a balanced development of science and performs an educational function, responsible for the transfer of knowledge to a new generation of researchers.
- And an evaluation of hazard to the people

Consequently, signing the project, we continue close cooperation between researchers and so make our contribution to the development of Earth Sciences for the benefits of people which live in these regions (of the South Caucasus countries and Ukraine).

Finally, I would like to thank for the supports of: the CNRS, especially the National Institute for Earth Sciences and Astronomy (more particularly Jean-François Stephan, Michel Diament, Elisabeth Kohler), and also the Office of European Research and International Cooperation, Francesca Grassia and more particularly Martine Bonin, without her help this project would have never appeared.

Thank you also to my co-coordinators and their teams:

Arkady Karakanian of the Institute of Geological Sciences of the National Academy of Science of the Republic of Armenia

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Talat Kangarli, of the Institute of Geology of the National Academy of Science of Azerbaijan

Pr Vasif Babazadhe, University of Baku of Azerbaijan

Pr Shota Adamia, of the Tbilisi State University of Georgia

Pr Academician Vitaly Starostenko of the Institute of Geophysic of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine.

Thank you also to the Embassies of France in these countries which help us a lot, especially for the mobility of young scientists.

Ladies and Gentlemen thank you for your attention

DIDI MADLOBA