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## FOREWORDS

**The Variscan orogeny** represents a field laboratory for study of orogenic processes for more than 150 years. This Upper Palaeozoic orogen occupies major part of Western and Central Europe and goes West through NW Africa to North America, and East towards the Middle Asia and Tian Shan. It formed as a result of prolonged convergence of Laurussia (Laurentia-Baltica assemblage), North-Gondwana and smaller scale terranes and microcontinents such as Armorica, Turan and others during Devonian and Carboniferous. As a consequence of this immense convergence the Variscan orogen extends over the 8,000 km making a large part of the Eurasian lithosphere and thereby providing a unifying research line between international geoscience communities.

**The aim of this conference** is to discuss a new concept of continental tectonics in large hot and super-hot orogens exemplified by Variscan Paleozoic belt. New observations from this belt indicate significant material transfers, far from plate boundaries, which are incompatible with the current concepts of collision tectonics. It is the complex mechanics of hot and weak orogenic roots that modify substantially the thermal, geometrical and kinematical evolution of the Variscan orogenic belt.

**To date**, orogenic conceptual and numerical models use 2D of oceanic/continental subduction controlling kinematically and geometrically deformation within overlying orogenic root systems. However, recent studies from the Western and Central Europe and Central Asia show, that it is only the earliest part of thermal and mechanical history of Variscan orogeny that are driven by oceanic-continental subduction. New paleomagnetic evidences show that major modification of plate configuration occurred later in Carboniferous and that application of new and remote far-field forces affected the collage of terranes and magmatic arcs assembled during Devonian. It is this two phase development of Variscan orogen and mechanic consequences derived from it, which can contribute to our understanding of mechanics of active and largest orogenic systems.

**In order to discuss** these important issues and to highlight the life contribution of Philippe Matte to the Variscan geology, the specialists from European, North American, African, Kazakhstan and middle Asian scientific communities from all branches of Earth Sciences are invited to Orleans in September 2007.

**The organizing committee**