

Spanish Hotel Group Defends Its Operations in Cuba

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The Spanish hotel chain Melia defended its operations in Cuba and condemned the tightening of the economic sanctions imposed by the United States on the Caribbean nation, local media reported on Thursday.

In a communiqué quoted by several media organizations, the world-renowned tourist group referred to the decision made on Wednesday by the Donald Trump administration to activate Title III of the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 as of May 2.

Title III, which had been suspended until now, establishes mechanisms for US citizens to file lawsuits against companies that allegedly benefited from properties that were nationalized after the triumph of the Revolution in 1959.

After regretting the 'uncertainty and juridical insecurity created by the announced lifting of the suspension', Melia Hotels International assured that the measure does not imply 'any substantial alterations' in its activities.

The group underlined that 'it operates legitimately in Cuba and in 44 other countries, with an impeccable, professional and responsible performance for 30 years' in Cuba, an exceptional destination that should remain open to international tourism.

The Spanish group expressed gratitude for 'the staunch support and reaction promoted by the Government of Spain and the European Commission to the foreign companies affected by a law

that is considered extraterritorial'.

A legislation that will put us in the target just for being an economic actor dedicated to tourism, the firm stressed.

Melia expressed 'its willingness to continue to work for the development of a more sustainable tourist industry in Cuba,' the press release concluded.

In a communiqué, the social-democratic government of Pedro Sanchez expressed its 'categorical rejection' of the much-condemned decision by the US administration.

'The extraterritorial enforcement of the legislation violates international law,' the Spanish government denounced.

It warned that the measure will cause a spiral of lawsuits and counter-lawsuits that will affect transatlantic economic relations, without advantages or progress for either the US plaintiffs or the Cuban people altogether.

Spain noted that it is working actively with the member countries of the European Union and other international stockholders to adopt all appropriate measures at multilateral forums in order to defend its interests and the future of Spanish companies in Cuba.

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