Cuba and France to deepen relations, say Foreign Ministers

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Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs and his French counterpart Laurent Fabius, stated today in Paris the interest in deepening and expanding bilateral relations between the two countries.

As part of the official visit Rodríguez makes to France, the two foreign ministers held a press conference in which they reported that during the talks they addressed different aspects of the international agenda.

They discussed preparations for the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP21), to be held in Paris next December and issues related to international migration.

Prensa Latina adds that they also addressed issues related to the preparation of the planned visit to Cuba next May of President Francois Hollande, which they described as historic, especially because it will be the first time a French head of state will visit the island.

Fabius said that during his 2014 trip to Havana, the two sides expressed the desire to strengthen relations. Therefore, he added they are working to enhance cooperation and dialogue in all fields.

Cuba and France share the same concern about numerous causes: we are very attached to our independence and we will find solutions to international conflicts, he said.

Our economic, academic and cultural relationship is developing, he added.

On the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the US government to Cuba for more than 50 years, Fabius stressed that his country has always opposed to this measure and urged the northern nation to lift it.

For his part, Rodríguez Parrilla noted that relations with France have historically been a priority for the Cuban government. There are very deep, essentially cultural, links, he stated.

He said that the wide horizon of economic, cultural, academic and scientific relations, the presence of a growing French tourism on our island, as well as the levels of bilateral cooperation in many areas constitute a solid basis for further expanding and deepening ties.

Rodriguez added that relations between the EU and Cuba advance and thanked the French leadership when considering it crucial in this regard.

About Hollande's upcoming visit to the island, he stated that "it will surely be appreciated by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States as an expression of the priority that France attaches to its relations with our region."

The Cuban minister concludes today a two-day official visit to this nation as part of a European tour that will also take him to Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.