

# *Cuba and European Union strengthen relations*

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Havana, September 9 (RHC)-- The European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, ratified on Monday the bloc's interest in deepening cooperation ties with Cuba.

At a press conference in the Cuban capital following the 2nd EU-Cuba Joint Council, the Italian diplomat stated that the EU is Cuba's largest investor and trading partner.

"We have tripled our investment in Cuba in the last two years and we have gone from 50 million euros to 140 million," she said.

The agreement between the two parties - explained Mogherini - has generated greater exchange and more opportunities, and we have already held five political dialogues on issues of mutual interest such as human rights, unilateral coercive measures and sustainable development.

"We have talked about trade and investment, and the EU firmly rejects the application of Title III of the US Helms-Burton Act, because it is illegal, as other unilateral extraterritorial and coercive measures", denounced Mogherini.

She warned that the EU will resort to all appropriate measures to protect the legitimate interests of its citizens and businesses.

For his part, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez considered the evolution of the dialogue between the two parties to be positive.

"It has been demonstrated that it is possible to build a space for cooperation in mutual benefit, respecting differences," Rodríguez stated.

He commented that the EU is an important actor with which Cuba carries out relevant projects, such as the development of renewable energy sources, agriculture, tackling climate change and the modernisation of the economy.

"There are potentialities that can be exploited for mutual benefit in sectors where we share common interests and objectives," said the head of Cuban diplomacy.

He also highlighted the island's appreciation of the EU's traditional position of rejection of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for almost 60 years.

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