Royal Caribbean's First Cruise to Cuba Docks in Havana

Havana, April 1 (RHC-Xinhua) -- U.S. cruise company Royal Caribbean docked its first ever ship in Cuba on Friday and became the fourth American cruise operator to sail to the Caribbean state after the two countries reestablished diplomatic relations in 2015.

The ship "Azamara Quest" docked at Havana's harbor about 8:30 a.m. with more than 650 passengers on board. For this first voyage to the Cuban capital, many Royal Caribbean executives traveled to the island, including the company's CEO, Adam Goldstein.

"The ships of our company visit almost 500 ports around the world. But there has been exactly one place where we have been wanting to go to for 50 years and that is Havana, Cuba. This really fills in an opportunity that we have wanted to provide to our guests for decades," Goldstein told reporters.

Cruise tourism to Cuba grew almost 400 percent in 2016 as companies from Russia, Spain, Turkey and the United States began operations or increased their routes to the island.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, around 75,000 tourists arrived on cruises last year and more than 110,000 are expected in 2017.

Radio Habana Cuba