

# Working together

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## **Cuban doctor in Lombardy.**

By María Josefina Arce.

In March 2020, the first Cuban medical brigade arrived in Italy to help in the confrontation of COVID 19. Thus, a new page was opened in the long relationship between the two peoples, which in the health sector has been expanding its horizons.

At that time, the European country was going through a difficult epidemiological situation, given the advance of the disease caused by the new coronavirus. Aware of the solidarity tradition of the Greater Antilles and the high level of preparation of its professionals, the National Association of Italy-Cuba Friendship recommended requesting their help, a request that was joined by other organizations and people from different sectors.

Cuban health workers, who left an indelible mark in that region, were sent to Lombardy, at that time the epicenter of the pandemic in the European state, and were sent away as heroes and above all as friends.

The doctors and nurses of the second brigade that worked on Italian soil, who were assigned to the city of Turin, in Piedmont, received the same gratitude and expressions of respect and admiration.

As expressed by President Miguel Díaz Canel, the Cuban doctors who worked in the old continent represented the victory of life over death and solidarity over selfishness.

Now, health cooperation continues to be strengthened for the benefit of both peoples. The Cuban Soberana Plus vaccine against COVID 19 is the subject of an observational clinical study.

The Cuban Finlay Vaccine Institute and the Amedeo Di Savoia Hospital, in Turin, are taking part in the trial aimed at proving its efficacy as a booster dose in people vaccinated with any of the immunogens authorized in Italy, or in people convalescing from the disease.

To this end, the research participants provided blood samples for analysis in Cuban institutions, a procedure repeated 28 days later in the Microbiology and Virology Laboratory of the Italian hospital center.

The bilateral collaboration has been close and transparent, which the Italian experts have also described as very instructive and stimulating because of the results obtained so far.

The Cuban vaccines, with which Cubans are successfully protected, have shown their high efficacy and safety. They have also been applied to the pediatric population, which did not present any serious adverse reaction.

Cuba and Italy have begun to walk a new and fruitful path in their long-standing friendship, which will benefit both peoples.

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