

# *Turkish President Visits Colombia to Boost Trade, Cooperation*

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Bogotá, February 11 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged Tuesday to boost trade, defense and culture cooperation with Colombia in his two-day official visit to the nation.

The two countries aim to increase bilateral trade to 5 billion U.S. dollars a year by 2023, Erdogan said at a joint press conference after meeting with his Colombian counterpart Juan Manuel Santos.

"Ties have been clearly and forcefully strengthened," said Santos, noting Erdogan is the first Turkish head of state to visit Colombia. Santos became the first Colombian leader to visit Turkey in November 2011, shortly after the South American nation opened an embassy in Ankara.

The two signed a variety of agreements in matters of defense, trade and culture, including a memorandum of understanding between their Ministries of Commerce, Industry and Tourism respectively, and a letter of intent to promote the Turkish and Spanish languages in each country, and a three-year cultural cooperation program (2015-2018).

The head of state also announced that Turkey's leading carrier Turkish Airlines will launch direct flights to Colombia.

Erdogan reiterated his support for the peace talks between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group, which have been fighting with each other for more than five decades.

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