

Francois Hollande to Travel to Cuba in May for First Visit by a French President



Paris, March 4 (RHC) -- French President François Hollande will travel to Cuba on May 11th, according to an announcement issued by Elysee Palace, the French presidential residence.

"The visit of the president to the republic to Cuba will constitute the first time a French head of state has traveled to that country," said the French President's Office in a statement. Hollande's visit will come as part of a tour he will make to visit French territories in the Caribbean between May 8th to the 11th.

The announcement comes as Cuba and the European Union will hold a third round of negotiations this week in a bid to normalize their relations. Government sources emphasized that relations between France and Cuba have strengthened since 2010 "and particularly since 2013." The sources added that "France wants to have a role with an eye toward a rapprochement" between Brussels and Havana.

The French secretary of state for foreign trade, tourism and French citizens abroad, Matthias Fekl, will travel to Cuba from next Thursday to Saturday to prepare Hollande's visit with Cuban authorities.

Before arriving in Cuba, the French leader will preside at a regional summit in Martinique on May 9th to prepare for the Paris conference on climate change, which will be held at the end of this year.

A day later, he will be in Guadeloupe to inaugurate the ACTe Memorial, a Caribbean center dedicated to recalling human trafficking and slavery.

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