

# *Francois Hollande Presides over Cooperation Accords between Paris and Havana*

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Havana, May 12 (RHC) — The President of France, Francois Hollande, who paid an official visit to Cuba on Monday, attended the signing of cooperation agreements between French universities and Cuban research centers, signed at the Main Lecture Hall of the University of Havana.

Present at the ceremony were Cuba's First Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel and University of Havana's rector Gustavo Cobreiro.

The National Center for Scientific Research of the French Republic established its framework for cooperation with the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA), while the University of Havana signed agreements with the Paris-Sud and Paris 1 Universities and with the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in France.

As announced by the European head of state, these agreements are a preview of others that are expected to be signed soon between both nations.

The Pasteur Institute and the Finlay Institute, the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB) and Aviva Labs and medical universities of the two countries would be some of the institutions that would be linked.

Hollande recalled that the extraterritorial measures of the blockade imposed by the U.S. on Cuba have been detrimental for exchanges between French and Cuban institutions of higher studies, but they have not stopped them, because it is possible to hold back the exchange of goods, but not ideas.

The French president said that his country will continue strengthening cooperation, seeking that joint thesis in subjects like science, agronomy, physics and environmental management, especially research at the masters and doctoral level.

He said that France is working on the mutual recognition of university certificates and noted that only 150 Cuban students are taking postgraduate courses in France, pledging to try to increase that figure in the future.

The program of the first French president to visit the island included a lecture at the Main Lecture Hall of the University and the opening of the new headquarters of the French Alliance in Havana, an institution with more than 12,000 students.

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