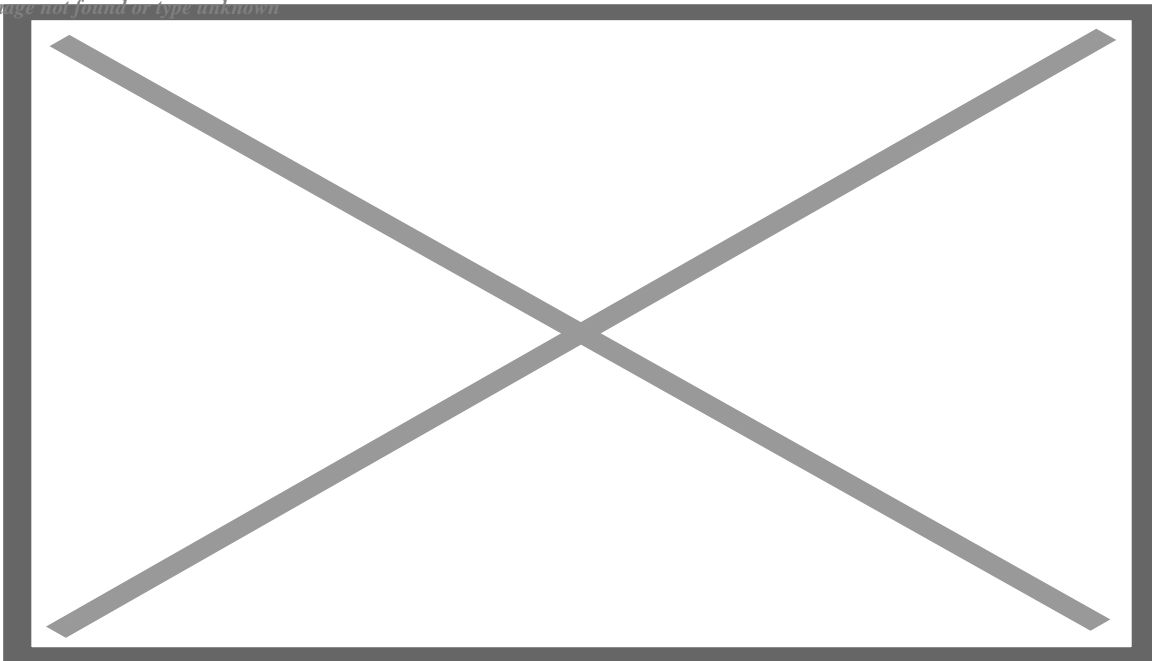


Venezuelan president calls meeting to normalize relations with Colombia successful

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Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro described as successful the meeting on Thursday between the Bolivarian Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Faria and Colombia's Foreign Minister-Designate Alvaro Leyva Duran.

Caracas, July 29 (RHC)-- Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro described as successful the meeting on Thursday between the Bolivarian Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Faria and Colombia's Foreign Minister-Designate Alvaro Leyva Duran.

"It was a successful and extraordinary meeting... Colombia and Venezuela meet again, in peace and love, looking to the future," President Maduro said, and thanked Colombian President-elect Gustavo Petro for sending his future foreign minister to the meeting that took place in Venezuela.

During their meeting, Faria and Leyva Duran addressed 14 topics, among which was the analysis of the opportunities that the normalization of diplomatic and commercial relations open up for the border areas of both countries.

“We are sister nations and we have to march together and united to seek peace and integration,” Maduro said, commenting on the progressive opening of the land border between Colombia and Venezuela.

Over the last two decades, relations between these South American countries have been tense due to the animosity of the Colombian right-wing governments towards the Bolivarian Revolution.

A bilateral crisis began in 2015 after Venezuela deported Colombians who were implicated in the attack on Bolivarian soldiers and in smuggling activities in the state of Tachira. This decision led the closure of the border crossing through the Simon Bolivar International Bridge.

After the Colombian presidential elections in June, Gustavo Petro and Nicolas Maduro spoke of their mutual interest in reopening the borders and resuming the cordial history of economic, political and cultural relations between their countries.

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