

# *Cuba-Russia relations with remarkable potential*

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By Roberto Morejón

Strategic linkage, important partner and extraordinary development potential. These are some of the phrases used by leaders and spokesmen of Russia and Cuba when referring to the close ties, with 120 years of trajectory.

These points of view illustrate the depth of the exchanges, frequent at the political level, in many points coinciding, and at the economic level.

For Cubans, Russia and the former Soviet Union have always been attentive when the Caribbean archipelago went through crucial stages.

Major projects in strategic sectors such as energy, transportation, tourism, biotechnology and trade mark the Cuban-Russian imprint.

The Slavic country was consolidated in 2021 as one of Havana's transcendent trade partners, for its fifth place worldwide and second in Europe, based on transactions that increased 93 percent compared to 2020.

In a country with a difficult situation in the energy sector due to a deficit in electricity generation and dependence on oil imports, Cuba looks with hope at a bilateral project in the western province of Mayabeque.

The aim is to promote the oil field in the locality of Boca de Jaruco, in an effort to increase the production of heavy crude oil starting in 2020.

The work is being carried out by experienced Antillean technicians and the Russian company Zarubeshneft, with appropriate technology for the first horizontal well in flow mode.

There are also vast prospects in other areas such as agriculture, science, technology, environment, health, education and tourism, the latter awaiting the recovery of the important flows of Russian visitors to the Caribbean nation.

Of course, strategists are studying how to face obstacles in the execution of collaboration procedures.

While Cuba has been under a blockade for more than six decades and has even been arbitrarily placed by the United States on an alleged list of sponsors of terrorism, Russia is the target of increasing restrictions, both from Washington and from European allies.

It is no coincidence that Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Ricardo Cabrisas emphasized in Moscow the need to coordinate steps to neutralize the effects of selective policies and unilateral measures against both countries.

The important visit to Russia by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, the third in his capacity as Head of State, is contributing to the fulfillment of what has been agreed and to reaching new guidelines.

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