

# *European Union Reaffirms Its Commercial Interest in Cuba at FIHAV 2015*

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Havana, November 6 (RHC)-- The ambassador and head of the European Union delegation in Cuba, Herman Portocarero, has reaffirmed interest in increasing economic ties with the island as one of the main trading partners of the country.

During a press conference held at ExpoCuba exhibition hall on Wednesday, site of the International Trade Fair, Portocarero said that there is a well-established and mature relationship between the EU and Cuba, with cooperation projects in different sectors like agriculture, environment and culture.

He pointed out that 11 European States with hundreds of business executive are participating in FIHAV 2015. However, he stressed that there are still challenges at achieving an increased number of economic exchanges, among them accessing credits, legal aspects related with employment in joint ventures, currency unification and connectivity in the Caribbean nation.

The ambassador emphasized that there are great possibilities for Cuba to attract capital in the pharmaceutical sectors and tourism, specifically in the renewable energy area which needs foreign capital to obtain long term benefits.

Referring to relations between Cuba and the U.S., he stressed that the process of normalization has awakened curiosity among European business people and that it is an advantage for the diversification of the trading partners.

Alain Bothorel, Advising Minister for the European Community pointed out the objective of opening paths for the private and state sectors. Export Helpdesk was created which is a data base that will allow Cuban and foreign exporters to find markets, learn about tariffs and other useful tools.

During the inauguration of the EU Stand at FIHAV 2015, Ileana Nuñez, Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Investment, highlighted Cuba's interest in strengthening political ties in addition to cooperation for development and trade.

She highlighted the valuable cooperation of the European Union since 2008, mainly in the food security sector and in projects to support the prevention of natural disasters.

The deputy minister added that Cuba is currently negotiating the Political Dialog Agreement with the EU, whose 6th round of talks is scheduled for early December.

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