

Debt deal in Paris: more leeway for Havana



Ricardo Cabrisas (left) and Bertrand Dumont in Paris (Source: [Cubadebate/Al-scaled](#))

Cuba's government has reached an agreement with the [Paris Club](#) to restructure the country's debt repayment terms. The accord, signed Friday in Paris, is designed to give Havana more breathing room as it works to meet its debt obligations during the country's current difficult economic situation.

A high-level delegation led by Cuba's experienced chief negotiator and Vice Premier Ricardo Cabrisas held talks with representatives of the 14 creditor nations on January 16 and 17. Negotiations were led by the President of the Paris Club, Bertrand Dumont, and ended with the signing of a new agreement.

“During the meeting, the delegation of the Republic of Cuba described its country’s complex economic and financial situation and its underlying factors, and the main policies and measures implemented and to be implemented for a continued execution of its development plan” states the [final memorandum](#) published on the organization's website. The exact terms of the agreement were not disclosed, but the debt restructuring will offer Cuba “better conditions to deal with its economic and financial difficulties in the next few years,” according to the final statement.

In an interview with Cuban media, [Cabrisas](#) emphasized that the US economic blockade, which has been in place for more than 60 years, is the main obstacle to the country's development. He thanked the creditors for their understanding and sensitivity during the negotiations. Cabrisas particularly emphasized the role of the European Union in the talks, especially that of the host country France.

At the same time, Cuba's Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed his country's commitment to meeting its financial obligations and to making the necessary efforts to do so. The next step, he said, was to sign the bilateral agreements with the individual creditor states as quickly as possible. The co-chair of the Paris Club, William Roos, also drew a positive conclusion from the talks. Accordingly, the negotiations took place in an atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding.

The Paris Club includes the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

The current agreement with Cuba's main Western creditors continues the [agreements of 2015](#) and 2021, after Cuba ran into massive payment difficulties and had to temporarily suspend debt service as a result of the current economic crisis in recent years.

The agreement reached should give Cuba some breathing space. In addition to the effects of US sanctions, the island is suffering from an acute shortage of foreign currency as a result of a drop in tourism revenues and bottlenecks in the energy supply. ([Cubaheute](#))