

Swiss to Mediate Russia-Georgia WTO Talks

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Switzerland will mediate between Russia and Georgia on joining the World Trade Organization, Alexander Lukashevich, a spokesman at the Russian Foreign Ministry, told reporters in Moscow on Thursday.

The Swiss helped arrange three-party talks on Russia's WTO entry that are scheduled to take place in Bern on Thursday.

Russia, the largest economy outside the trade arbiter, rejects "politicization" of WTO accession talks by Georgia, Lukashevich said.

"As for the accession of Russia to the WTO, the Russian president stressed the impermissibility of politicization of this issue and the attempts of Georgian officials to debate elements unrelated to WTO membership conditions," he said.

The matter was also discussed between Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in their meeting Thursday. Biden did not give any direct promises to Putin to facilitate a solution to the "Georgian problem," Putin's deputy chief of staff, Yury Ushakov, said following the meeting.

The Americans talked with Georgian representatives about a positive solution to the question of Russia's WTO accession, Ushakov said

Russia's entry has faced opposition from WTO member Georgia, with which it fought a five-day war in 2008 over the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Georgia has cited disputes over customs checkpoints in South Ossetia and Abkhazia as reasons to withhold its approval.

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