The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Russia Threatens to Sue EU at World Trade Body For Ukraine Perks

May 29, 2014

Russia is considering suing the European Union through the World Trade Organization for engaging in preferential trade with Ukraine in the absence of a free trade agreement, Russian Deputy Economic Development Minister Alexei Likhachev said on Thursday.

"The European Union has unilaterally given one country [Ukraine] trade preferences," Likhachev said, Ria Novosti reported. "If Russia were to unilaterally have trade preferences without notifying the WTO of an agreement on a free trade zone, we 100 percent would have had lawsuits against us by now."

Likachev said that Russia had previously warned the EU about such a suit, but had no received an answer from the bloc.

In March, the European Union granted Ukraine trade preferences, which included the reduction or abolition of duties on a range of industrial and agricultural products, in advance of an expected trade deal with the country. EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht announced that the benefits, which represent nearly 500 million euros ($680 million), would

remain in force until at least November, Reuters reported at the time.

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