

Poland Asks EU to Complain to WTO About Russia Food Ban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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WARSAW — Poland has asked the European Commission to lodge a formal complaint to the World Trade Organization, or WTO, over a Russian ban on EU food products that has hit Poland particularly hard, the Polish Economy Ministry said on Tuesday.

The commission has so far been cautious about taking the embargo case to the WTO, with lawyers in Brussels advising it could escalate a trade conflict with Russia over Ukraine.

Russia has banned imports of EU food products including fruit and vegetables from Poland, whose total food exports to Russia were worth about \$1.5 billion last year.

The ban was imposed in response to Western economic sanctions against Russia over its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and a pro-Russian rebellion in eastern Ukraine that Western capitals accuse Moscow of fomenting.

Poland's Economy Ministry told Reuters it had sent the request to European Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht, who represents EU members in all WTO cases.

After a meeting with the commissioner on Tuesday, Polish Agriculture Minister Marek Sawicki said that preliminary EU consultations were currently under way and that first decisions on the lawsuit could be made as soon as Sept. 12.

"The U.S.'s, Australia and Canada's opinion will also be important," Sawicki was quoted as saying by Polish state news agency PAP. "I believe Deputy Prime Minister [Janusz] Piechocinski will engage in talks with those countries."

The WTO, should it rule in favor of any commission complaint, could fine Russia for violating regulations on open markets. But Sawicki said Russia was not responding to pressure from the EU or the U.S.

The EU argues its sanctions have been imposed in defense of Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia argues it is playing no role in arming, advising or promoting rebellion in eastern Ukraine.

On April 8, the European Commission opened a WTO dispute against the Russian embargo on EU pork imposed earlier this year.

See also:

[Poland to Contest Russia's Food Import Ban at WTO](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/08/19/poland-asks-eu-to-complain-to-wto-about-russia-food-ban-a38511)

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