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EU Requests WTO Ruling on Russian Tariffs on Imported Vans

By The Moscow Times

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GENEVA — The European Union wants the World Trade Organization to rule on its dispute with Moscow over tariffs on vans exported from the EU to Russia, the WTO said Monday.

The EU originally took the dispute to the WTO in May, seeking to force Moscow to scrap the duties on vans from Germany and Italy.

Russia said the vehicles are being dumped — illegally sold at unfairly low prices — and imposed duties of 29.6 percent on German vans and 23 percent on Italian imports last year. The EU said Russia is illegally protecting its own producers.

Under WTO rules, a new dispute is followed by a 60-day period where the parties to the dispute can try to settle things by talking. The EU told the WTO those direct "consultations," held on June 18, had not resolved the dispute, so it was asking the WTO to set up a panel of adjudicators to rule on the case.

Taking a dispute to the WTO is considered a last resort — a failure to resolve a disagreement through diplomatic means.

The request from the EU marks another facet of the trade tensions between Brussels and Moscow that have festered since conflict broke out in Ukraine. Both sides have imposed new sanctions in the past two months.

So far, no new disputes have been opened at the WTO to challenge the restrictions on trade and other economic activity.

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