

U.S. Accuses Russia of Flouting WTO Trade Rules

By [The Moscow Times](#)

December 23, 2014



Delegates arrive for a special meeting of the General Council Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation at the World Trade Organization (WTO) headquarters in Geneva.

WASHINGTON — Russia is starting to backslide on its commitments to become a fully-fledged member of the global economy and trading community, the United States' trade office said on Monday.

An annual scorecard of Russia's compliance with global trade rules said Moscow's actions over the last year had dented hopes the country would become a constructive member of the World Trade Organization, which it joined in 2012.

Relations between the United States and Russia are at their lowest since the Cold War because of Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine last March and its support for pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, which prompted Western sanctions.

"Russia's use of unjustified and retaliatory trade measures against many of its neighbors, as well as against the United States, rejects the core principle of open trade based on the rule of law that sustains the WTO," the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said in the report.

"In addition, many of Russia's protectionist tendencies appear to have gained momentum," the report said.

Russian Embassy officials in Washington were not immediately available to comment.

The USTR said it would not hesitate to take WTO action against Russia if warranted. So far, the only WTO cases against Russia have been brought by the European Union and Japan.

The office said the United States would continue to monitor Russia's administration of a one-year ban on some farm imports, which Russia says is based on national security concerns.

The report said tariff reductions, for example on pork and beef, meant U.S. exports to Russia had increased by 14 percent from 2013 to 2014. But it listed a range of ongoing concerns in the trade relationship, worth around \$40 billion a year.

Russia might be using food safety regulations to restrict U.S. farm imports, and some technical barriers, such as taxes on cinema royalties, might discriminate against foreign providers, the USTR said.

It also flagged concern about enforcing intellectual property rights, especially online piracy and sales of counterfeit goods, pointing to unlicensed streaming services, pay-per-download websites and video game hacking sites.

"Information currently available suggests that overall enforcement of [intellectual property rights] has decreased, rather than increased, in the past two years," the USTR said.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/23/us-accuses-russia-of-flouting-wto-trade-rules-a42537>