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U.S. Chamber Welcomes Russia's Progress Toward WTO Accession

'The Chamber Will Work Hard to Ensure American Companies and Workers Can Sell their Goods and Services to Russia on a Level Playing Field,' Says Brilliant

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Chamber of Commerce today welcomed the news that U.S. and international negotiators have reached agreement on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), with approval expected at the organization's ministerial conference on December 15-17.

"While we are still studying the details, this agreement opens the door to Russia's entry into the global rules-based trading system on commercially strong terms," said Myron Brilliant, U.S. Chamber senior vice president for International Affairs. "If our hopes are confirmed, the Chamber will work hard to make the case to Congress to approve permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) for Russia so that American companies and workers can sell their goods and services to Russia's 150 million citizens on a level playing field."

The Chamber has been an active proponent of Russia's accession to the WTO since the early 1990s, conferring regularly with trade officials, legislators, and business leaders from both countries. Throughout the process, the Chamber has pushed for Russia to accede on the strongest possible commercial terms.

For U.S. companies, workers, and farmers to benefit from Russia's accession, Congress must grant Russia PNTR status and repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment, a cold war relic dating to the 1970s.

"We will continue to work closely with the U.S. and Russian governments to ensure that commitments on market access, intellectual property protection, and services liberalization are fully implemented," Brilliant added. "If today's promise is fulfilled, Russians can look forward to stronger economic growth and reap the benefits of fair competition while U.S. companies will be able to tap the opportunities of doing business in the world's 11th largest economy."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations.