

U.S. Chamber Applauds WTO Procurement Accord, Accession of Russia

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Chamber of Commerce today welcomed the news that U.S. and international negotiators have reached an agreement on a more robust Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which will also take up the accessions of Russia, Samoa, and Montenegro.

“We’re delighted the WTO is continuing to play its vital role in securing open markets around the globe, as underscored by this strong procurement agreement and the accession of Russia, the world’s 11th largest economy,” said Chamber Senior Vice President for International Affairs Myron Brilliant. “The U.S. business community needs the WTO not just to survive but to thrive, so this news is very welcome.”

The product of more than 10 years of negotiations, the revised GPA will open procurement opportunities for U.S. companies in dozens of countries in more than 150 central and sub-central government entities, such as Canada’s provinces. Additional sectors are being opened as well, and countries will enhance transparency by bidding for contracts through electronic methods.

“With ‘buy local’ mandates proliferating around the globe, the expanded GPA will help avoid a protectionist spiral and keep foreign procurement markets open to U.S. firms,” added Brilliant.

“The Chamber is also delighted that Russia will join the WTO on commercially strong terms,” continued Brilliant. “In the year ahead, 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.”

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. “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 growing Russian market.”

The Chamber is represented at the WTO Ministerial by Ralph Carter (FedEx) and Richard Holwill (Amway), who co-chair its Trade Task Force, and by senior director for international policy Christopher Wenk, who is [blogging](#) from Geneva.

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.