

Georgia Sends Letter on WTO Talks

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GENEVA — Georgia's ambassador in Geneva has taken the unusual step of writing to all members of the World Trade Organization to warn them about the rocky state of its talks with Russia on Moscow's bid to join the global trading club.

Georgia has an effective veto over Russian membership of the WTO and has said it will not be bullied into letting its giant neighbor join if the terms are not fair, despite pressure from Moscow, Washington and Brussels for a deal this year.

In the confidential letter, which was circulated on Aug. 12 and obtained by Reuters on Thursday, Georgian Ambassador Zurab Tchiaberashvili said talks with Russia on Aug. 9-10 had failed to achieve any breakthrough on the issue of border controls between the two countries.

"To the dismay of Georgia, the Russian Federation has so far refused to satisfy any of the key elements of Georgia's request. Therefore, bilateral negotiations have not yet resulted in any deliverable whatsoever," he wrote.

He reiterated Georgia's unhappiness with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's decision

to ask the State Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament, to ratify a customs agreement with the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia.

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