

Opposition Favors WTO

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization may be an issue that could turn Georgian-Russian dialogue onto a more positive track, Irakly Alasania, leader of the opposition party Free Democrats, told journalists Friday.

"Georgia wants to see Russia in the WTO. I think this would be beneficial to Georgia, to the international community, and to Russia," said Alasania, who earlier served as Georgia's ambassador to the UN.

"I think Georgia does not cherish the illusions that it could deploy its border guards or customs officers [at checkpoints in Abkhazia and South Ossetia], but a compromise is possible if controlling functions are delegated to a third party," he said.

Alasania said the negotiations could become the first step toward normalization of relations with Russia and called on the Georgian authorities to be more "concrete and creative" in the negotiating process. The next round of Georgian-Russian negotiations on Russia's WTO membership is scheduled for mid-September in Geneva.

(Interfax)

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