

Crowds Gather to Protest Russia's WTO Entry

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 02, 2012



Protesters at Sunday's demonstration hold a sign with the Russian acronym for the WTO and the words "One-way ticket" written in front of a sinking oceanliner

Discontented Muscovites gathered on Ploshchad Revolyutsii on Sunday to demonstrate against Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization and decry a new wave of liberal reforms.

Event organizers, which included the left-leaning Essence of Time movement, Trade Union of Russian Citizens and Union of Orthodox Citizens, decried policies they said would destroy Russia.

Organizers told the Rosbalt.ru news portal that 4,000 protesters attended the event, adding that the protest's main goal was to highlight the damage that WTO entry, new laws on juvenile punishment and increasing utilities tariffs would cause.

Police did not immediately give an estimate of how many attended the protest event.

In particular, WTO membership would lead to the closure of thousands of factories and make millions unemployed, organizers said.

The Communist Party is also planning rallies to protest Russia's upcoming WTO vote.

"On July 3, across the whole country, protest events will be held against WTO entry," Communist Duma Deputy Ivan Melnikov told Interfax.

The United Russia-controlled State Duma is set to vote July 10 to ratify the agreement on WTO membership, from where it will pass to the Federation Council.

President Vladimir Putin must sign the agreement, which took nearly two decades to negotiate, before July 23 or negotiations must start from scratch.

Original url:

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