

Moscow Considers Suing U.S. Over Sanctions

By [The Moscow Times](#)

April 14, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

Russia is looking at the possibility of filing a lawsuit against the United States in the World Trade Organization over sanctions hitting Russian banks, Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev said on Wednesday, according to Russian news agencies.

St. Petersburg-based Bank Rossiya was sanctioned alongside its chairman and largest shareholder Yuri Kovalchuk in March as part of punitive measures by Washington over Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Russian bank SMP was also indirectly affected as co-owners Boris Rotenberg and his older brother Arkady fell under U.S. sanctions. SMP chief executive Dmitry Kalantyrsky has said that an estimated 9 billion rubles (\$249 million) had been withdrawn after the sanctions were imposed.

"The WTO gives us some additional possibilities," Ulyukayev was quoted by Interfax as saying on Wednesday. "We at the WTO council in Geneva talked about the possibility of filing lawsuits against the U.S. over the sanctions against Russian banks and we hope to use the mechanism of the WTO to keep our partners in check regarding this issue."

In an April 9 bulletin on its website detailing a meeting regarding the council for trade in goods, the WTO said that Russia had expressed concern about a recent Executive Order signed by U.S. President Barack Obama regarding "listed persons of Russian Federation whose bank accounts were blocked".

Russia was "closely monitoring the effect of this measure on Russian operators and on the potential violation of WTO Agreements" and "urged other members not to be drawn to political motivations when it comes to trade," the WTO statement said.

The U.S. State Department said on Tuesday it anticipates more Ukraine-related sanctions on Russia but suggested no action was likely before a diplomatic meeting in Geneva this week.

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