

Russia Considers Suing U.S. Over Sanctions Through WTO

By [The Moscow Times](#)

April 16, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

Russia is considering filing a lawsuit against the U.S. with the World Trade Organization, or WTO, over sanctions against Russian banks, Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev said.

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 SMP chief executive Dmitry Kalantyrsky has said that an estimated 9 billion rubles (\$249 million) had been withdrawn after the sanctions were imposed.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 said Wednesday, Interfax

reported. "At the WTO council in Geneva we 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."

The WTO said that Russia had expressed concern about a recent order signed by U.S. President Barack Obama regarding "listed persons of Russian Federation whose bank accounts were blocked," a statement on its website said.

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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