



**European-American Business Council**  
*"Investment ~ Innovation ~ Integration"*

**October 25, 2011**

Ambassador Ron Kirk  
United States Trade Representative  
Washington, DC

Mr. Karel De Gucht  
Commissioner for Trade  
European Commission  
Brussels, Belgium

**Re: Russia WTO Accession and ITA Membership**

Dear Ambassador Kirk and Commissioner De Gucht,

**The European-American Business Council is writing to urge the Office of the United States Trade Representative and the EU Commission to work together to convince Russia to commit to joining the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) as condition of accession to WTO.**

The ITA is a WTO zero-tariff agreement that has dramatically accelerated innovation, job creation, and economic growth globally. World trade in products covered by the ITA has grown by over 10 percent annually since the agreement was established in 1996.

The United States and Europe have played significant roles in ensuring the success of the ITA by pursuing a trade policy that requires new WTO members to join the ITA. Since 1997, countries acceding to the WTO that have joined the ITA as part of their accession are: Albania, China, Croatia, Georgia, Jordan, Kyrgyz, Moldova, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Today there are 73 ITA signatories.

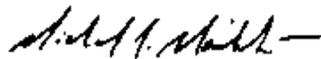
In 2006, Russia agreed to join the ITA as part of its WTO accession commitment. Yesterday, October 24, Russia stated its continued intent to join the ITA. However, Russia has not made a binding commitment in the WTO Working Party Report. Allowing Russia to join the WTO without also committing to become an ITA member would have an immediate negative impact on US and EU companies operating in the expanding Russian market and would set a very bad precedent for future WTO

accession negotiations and the ITA. Once in the WTO, Russia will likely not sign the ITA under domestic protectionist pressures. The irony, of course, is the elimination of Russian ICT tariffs will benefit Russian companies and workers. ICT tools are productivity drivers, allow for success in global markets, and create jobs.

The European-American Business Council asks the United States and European Union Governments to continue their support of the ITA by insisting that Russia join the ITA as a condition for WTO accession and ensuring that this commitment appears in the WTO Working Party Report.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of the ITA. If you have any comments or questions, please contact me at [m@maibach.us](mailto:m@maibach.us), or call me at 202.828.9101. Thank you for your consideration of this recommendation.

Sincerely yours,



**Michael C. Maibach**  
**President & CEO**  
**European-American Business Council**