



U.S. Chamber of Commerce



AmCham Regional Roundtable Summary Moscow, Russia

Background:

On May 24, 2007, representatives from AmChams in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey (ABFT and TABA), Ukraine, and Russia participated in a roundtable discussion organized under the auspices of the Eurasia Business Platform. This 2nd EBP AmCham roundtable highlighted two of the cross-cutting regional themes from the November 2006 Istanbul Roundtable: IP protection / Anti-counterfeiting and regional transport development / trade facilitation. A future EBP conference in Washington was also discussed.

1) IPR / Anti-counterfeiting:

Recap Situation in Each Country:

- Turkey: Some of the problems include: lack of implementation of laws; overload in the courts; poor cooperation with Customs authorities; warehousing of counterfeit goods. But, things are getting better and Turkey is harmonizing legislation with EU. EU pressure has led to positive changes.
- Georgia: There is little or no legislation protecting IP rights. Legislation needs to be in place to allow companies to 'police the processes.
- Ukraine: The focus is on education and illustrating the dangers of counterfeiting. Ukraine is harmonizing legislation with EU.
- Azerbaijan: Lack of political will is the biggest hurdle. 95% of counterfeit goods come from Russia. Expect increased attention to the issue because the Azeri government now seems committed to the WTO accession process. Improved diplomatic relations with the U.S. also has positive a positive impact.
- Kazakhstan: Things are improving as Kazakhstan is on the brink of WTO accession. Implementation across the board is the biggest issue.
- Armenia: Legislation does exist and there is enforcement but it could be improved.

Proposed Future Joint Action:

- Develop score card of best practices around the region comparing: legislation, enforcement, customs, education/PR campaigns, and consumer attitudes. AmChams to work with member companies who might already have access to these comparisons.
- Create a regional economic impact study similar to the one done for Russia
- Recognizing that the transit of counterfeit goods across borders is something that all the countries have in common: explore possible regional customs training opportunities with WCO.
- U.S. Chamber to ensure that officials traveling to the region are armed with the right messages.
- AmChams to identify the opinion leaders in each of their countries on this issue.

2) Transport Development and Trade Facilitation

Recap of regional activities:

- U.S. Chamber commercial feasibility study (Ramboll report) continues to garner interest, e.g., Professor from Adelaide Australia cited the report in a recent UNDP presentation; inclusion by World Bank of Ramboll study in ‘Transport Perspectives in South Caucasus region’ conference CD.
- June 14-15, IRU will hold their 4th Eurasia Road Transport Conference—U.S. Chamber will present EBP and results of Ramboll study.
- OSCE conference in October 2007 in Dushanbe on ‘Prospects for Development of trans-Asian and Eurasian Transit Transportation through Central Asia’.
- IRU is launching New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) as a follow on to the Ramboll study. The NELTI will find some companies and transport operators to participate in a special pilot project which will truck goods across the ‘Silk Road’ in order to get better cost, time and infrastructure information.
- A customs timing project was completed in Georgia which demonstrates quantitatively the customs / border problems. As a result the Government of Georgia has re-written the customs code and the study acts as a tool for customs authorities.
- Railway project and Azerbaijan and oil/gas pipelines are working examples of transport cooperation in the region.

Proposed Future Joint Action:

- Create a working group among the interested AmChams facilitated by AmCham Georgia.
- Consider using the Georgian customs timing project as a model for the region and look for an IFI or other funding sponsor for the project
- U.S. Chamber to keep the issue focused and on the EU and other key international agendas.
- Find a good graphic representation of all the various transport links (all modes) in the region.
- Look at the UN transport conventions that need to be adopted and implemented in each EBP country.

3) Eurasia Business Platform – 1st Annual Conference in Washington, DC

- All AmChams support the plan of holding a conference in Washington, DC.
- AmChams to send to Kristal their suggestions of an overall theme and panel themes keeping in mind the need to balance the realities of garnering high-level interest in Washington and relevant regional topics. That is, the Washington audience will be interested in a ‘problem’ or policy challenge—not a ‘come invest in x’ theme.

4) Leveraging EBP messages:

- AmChams to look at conferences and roundtables that are being held in each of their countries over the next 6-12 months and send this information to Kristal. Look for ways to help shape panels that could highlight the Eurasia Business Platform.
- AmChams agreed that an EBP dedicated website is necessary. ABFT and AmCham Georgia offered to explore possibility of setting up a site.