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**U.S. Insurance Industry Stresses Russia's  
Benefits from Sectoral Liberalization**

WASHINGTON – The Insurance Committee of the Coalition of Services Industries (CSI) issued today a letter to Russian Trade Minister Aleksey Kudrin rejecting protectionist arguments against insurance trade liberalization as part of Russia's WTO accession. The letter was prepared in response to the All-Russia Insurance Association communication to Minister Kudrin of October 11, in which the Association argued that opening the insurance sector would be detrimental to Russia's economic interests.

"We believe ... that broad market access and national treatment commitments would benefit Russian economic growth and Russian consumers," says the letter signed by CSI Insurance Committee Chairman David Snyder, and Vice Chairs Coletta Kemper and Brad Smith.

The Committee's letter stressed that foreign competition in Russian insurance would improve the quality and variety of services offered to Russian consumers and businesses, and strengthen loss prevention practices.

The Committee suggested that Russia eliminate market limitations, such as capital and equity caps, and restrictions on commercial presence, which are a significant deterrent to Russia's accession to the WTO and foreign investment. "Foreign insurers offer security needed for business expansion and provide capital for investment in Russian enterprises and critical infrastructure," said the letter.

The Committee also underscored the importance of securing acquired rights for existing operations.

"From the industry point of view, WTO accession negotiations are a valuable opportunity to improve on existing offers and promote further services liberalization," said CSI President Bob Vastine. "We have obtained commercially meaningful commitments from newly acceded countries, and we expect no less ambitious commitments from Russia."

*CSI is the leading business organization dedicated to reducing barriers to U.S. services exports and mobilizing support for domestic U.S. policies, including tax policies, which enhance the global competitiveness of its members. CSI was formed in 1982 to ensure that U.S. trade in services would become a central goal of U.S. trade policy and trade negotiations. CSI's knowledge of the process of services trade negotiations, its ties to the WTO and its network of relationships with governments and industry in other countries are unmatched. For a complete list of CSI members, visit our website at [www.uscsi.org](http://www.uscsi.org).*

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