

U.S. Chamber of Commerce



1st Annual Eurasia Conference

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce **Eurasia Business Platform** recently concluded the 1st Annual Eurasia Conference on “*Growth Imperatives and Regional Responsibilities*”. The program featured key speakers including Tom Donohue, President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, Turkish and Kazakhstani officials, and a number of leading experts from the business and think tank community. The network of Chamber affiliated **American Chambers of Commerce** from the region sent a delegation of 19 private sector members from Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. In addition, the International Road Union’s (IRU) Moscow delegate participated in the Eurasia Conference.

Through a series of panel discussions during the conference and subsequent follow on meetings with a number of U.S. government officials the next day, the Eurasia Business Platform succeeded in putting a number of critical issues on the agenda including;

1. **Secure Trade Facilitation** in Eurasia is paramount to the successful development of the region’s economies and integration in the greater global trading system.
2. **Regional Cooperation** among the trading partners is essential to developing the full potential of the geostrategic space between China and Europe.
3. **The Eurasia Business Platform** is a value added asset for the U.S. government as the only true link between the private sector and the USG for the region, especially with the capacity brought to bear by the regional American Chambers of Commerce.
4. **The Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA)** discussions for the Central Asia countries represents one of the important potential avenues to create the kind of public-private partnerships needed to create the conditions in the region that nurture economic diversity and increase investment.
5. **The WTO** accession talks with those nations in the region not yet in the WTO must continue to produce results. Having the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus part of the WTO is one of the best steps forward to seeing true regional integration.

2008 will be an important time for this strategic region. The Eurasia Business Platform will move ahead with a series of initiatives to further develop the key elements identified during this conference. For example, the EBP will release the results of a regional investor survey which will further define the pressing business issues of the region. Moreover, the EBP will publish the results of a study which aims to offer concrete solutions and mechanisms to implement the trade facilitation and security requirements envisaged in important global agreements such as the WCO SAFE agreement. Armed with the results, we plan to further engage the National Security Council, members of Congress, USTR and the Departments of Homeland Security, State and Commerce in Washington, D.C. and through our AmCham affiliates and others in the region.