



# OPORA RUSSIA

ALL - RUSSIAN PUBLIC ORGANIZATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM BUSSINESS

September 3, 2008

## **An appeal to the partners of “OPORA RUSSIA,” entrepreneurial unions and business associations in the US and Europe**

1. The General Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises (Confederation General des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises, France)
2. The OSEC Business Network (Switzerland)
3. The Slovak Agency for the Development of Investment and Trade (SARIO)
4. The Federation of Finnish Enterprises (FFE)
5. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE, US)
6. The US Small Business Administration (SBA)
7. The Confederation of Industrialists of Italy (Confindustria)
8. The Lombardy Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PROMOS, Italy)
9. The Russian-German Export Chamber
10. Delta Capital (US)
11. Kauffman Foundation (US)
12. The Federation of Austrian Industry
13. The Department for Development and Support of Small and Medium Business of the Turkish Republic (KOSGEB)
14. The Federation of Small Business (FSB, UK)
15. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
16. Business Europe

Dear colleagues,

Recent events in the Caucasus, it seems, have seriously changed our world. Without going into details about right or wrong, we feel it is necessary to appeal to our colleagues and partners in the US and Europe: let us not reduce, but increase, our cooperation. Why is this so important? Business, by nature, is adaptable; it reacts flexibly and quickly to various circumstances, whether or not they directly concern the entrepreneur's activities. But no laws, prohibitions, competition, barriers or sanctions can stop private initiative. New businesses will appear in spite of such difficulties. Regulations outside of the market realm are the only obstacles that can slow, or even stop, entrepreneurial activity. We cannot allow for a situation in which business is given orders about with whom to deal, or with which countries' companies to work, or in which economies it may invest. Such limitations would spell the end of free entrepreneurship, and that, perhaps, would be the main sign of the destruction of democracy.

According to the OECD, globalization is driving the growth of competitiveness. Should we instead live by the law of the jungle – each for oneself? Such a policy would lead to the stagnation of the world's economy, an economy which today cannot be imagined without Russia. Hundreds of thousands of foreign firms are active across our country. Huge investments have been made. Russian companies – including small and medium-sized enterprises – are entering

foreign markets. They are learning modern management within a market economy. To stop such a dynamically developing process would damage domestic economies and hurt consumers. If today, we entrepreneurs stand on the sidelines, keeping silent, then tomorrow, we will reap the fruits of such a conciliatory position. The next day, when emotions have calmed, we will be forced to forge new relationships “from scratch.”

OPORA is counting on the understanding and support of its US and European partners. Dear colleagues, we carry a monumental mission on our shoulders. We have the power to prevent a new “iron curtain” from dropping. Business is one of the most explicit and organic manifestations of freedom. We cannot lose that freedom.

Sincerely yours,



President  
Sergey R. Borisov