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# Chicago Expands Business and Cultural Relationships in Russia

April 30, 2012

A delegation representing World Business Chicago (WBC) and Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI) traveled to Moscow this month to establish relationships with Russian companies and spur new business development opportunities. The trip was in conjunction with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's (CSO) performance at the Moscow Conservatory.



"Promoting Chicago outside the United States is a key focus of my administration," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel before the trip. "This effort and others like it will show everyone else what we already know – that Chicago is the most American of American cities and a jewel for the world to enjoy."

The delegation's partnership with the CSO marked the first time that WBC has partnered with a cultural institution and traveled to showcase Chicago's business opportunities. WBC and CSCI promoted the city as a desirable location for Russian businesses and strengthened Chicago's sister city ties with Moscow.

The group presented Chicago's advantages to Russia's Green Building Council at the Moscow office of Baker & McKenzie (Arthur George, Senior Counsel at Baker & McKenzie in Chicago and member of CSCI's Moscow Committee was a part of the delegation). There, the Chicago group highlighted the Moscow Committee's upcoming Green Building Business Forum that will take place June 13-14 in Chicago.

The delegation also presented WBC's business advantages to more than 30 Russian business leaders at the U.S. Minister Counselor for Commercial Affairs John McCaslin's residence. The presentation was well-received, and attendees were intrigued by Chicago's attributes.

The group visited a leading software developer at a tech business park in outer Moscow, and had valuable discussions regarding Chicago's business advantages, and its financial services sector in particular. The Chicago delegation also interacted with business group Delovaya Russia, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial group OPORA Russia.

The delegation also attended an American Chamber event, which representatives from U.S. companies including Abbott Laboratories and Motorola attended, as well as Mayor of Moscow, Sergey Sobyenin. Members of the delegation also attended an event at U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul's home.

The group's visit finished with a meeting at Moscow City Hall, where the delegation met with the Minister, Head of Economic and International Relations and his key staff. They discussed Moscow's ambitious expansion and infrastructure plans and potential opportunities for Chicago architectural, civil engineering and logistics firms. In addition, they discussed a potential follow-up visit by Moscow city officials to learn about Chicago's tech, healthcare and finance sectors.

The joint delegation is the result of the formal collaboration between WBC and CSCI announced earlier this year by Mayor Emanuel. The trip is an example of how this new partnership advances each organization's mission, expanding Chicago's global footprint, while facilitating business connections.

Delegation members included: Samuel C. Scott III, chairman, Chicago Sister Cities International and board member, World Business Chicago; Leroy R. Allala, executive director, Chicago Sister Cities International; Dennis Vicchiarelli, managing director, World Business Chicago; Tom Bartkoski, director of international business development, World Business Chicago; Aleksandra Efimova, president, Aleksandra Enterprises, Inc. and chair, Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International; and Arthur George, partner, Baker & McKenzie and business co-chair, Moscow Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to work together to promote Chicago as a global business hub and establish new relationships with Moscow businesses, while deepening our cultural ties and relationship with our sister city," said Scott. "This business mission is a great example of the valuable role each of our organizations play in fostering new international business and cultural opportunities for the City of Chicago."

Approximately 50 Chicago-area companies have a presence in Russia, and there are a number of Russian steel companies with operations in the Chicago region. The Chicago Customs District reported \$273 million in goods exported to Russia in 2011, primarily in machinery/computers, medical/instruments, and electronics (a 144.3% increase in 2010-11). Chicago imported \$99 million in goods from Russia in 2011, primarily in iron and steel, rubber, and machinery/computers (a 37.6% increase in 2010-11). Total trade between Chicago and Russia accounted for \$373 million last year.

Chicago has shared a Sister City relationship with Moscow since 1997. The Moscow Committee of CSCI has been at the forefront of cultural, educational and business exchanges between Chicago and Moscow.