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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
CEO of Meta
1 Meta Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

We write to express our appreciation that Meta representatives met with the Moldovan Central Election Commission (CEC) in June ahead of the country's upcoming September 28 parliamentary elections. We urge you to remain engaged with the CEC and devote sufficient resources to prevent Russian-backed disinformation and political financing from accessing your platforms during the pre-election period in Moldova.

President Maia Sandu has already warned that "the Russian Federation wants to control the Republic of Moldova" and has a plan to use online platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, to spread anti-democratic messages. Independent non-governmental organizations concur with her assessment, with premier civil society group WatchDog.MD identifying 146 anonymous Facebook pages affiliated with U.S.-sanctioned oligarch Ilan Shor, which he reportedly uses to purchase political advertisements. While those pages appear to be the most problematic, WatchDog.MD assesses that more than 2,000 Facebook pages are Kremlin backed. Unfortunately, in a small country, this type of campaign can have an outsized impact. Engagement during the pre-election period is critical to ensure that elections are not just free, but also fair.

Russia's attempt at interference in Moldova's 2024 presidential election and referendum on European Union membership previewed the Kremlin tactics, which should inform our efforts ahead of the upcoming elections in September. Despite being sanctioned, Ilan Shor spent approximately \$546,000 on Facebook ads between 2022 and 2024. We urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that he cannot continue to use your platforms to spread propaganda.

While we must be agnostic to the results of Moldova's elections, we cannot be indifferent to foreign powers' efforts to put their thumb on the scale for parties or candidates. Moldova is on the cusp of European Union membership. Ultimately, whether to join the European Union will be a decision for the Moldovan people – but we must do our part to ensure that it is indeed for them to decide.

The United States, Canada and the United Kingdom have all recognized the grave threat that Russian actors' disinformation efforts pose to Moldovan democracy. We urge Meta to use this moment to help ensure Moldova's elections remain free and fair.

Sincerely,

Senator Jeanne Shaheen



Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Thom Tillis



United States Senator