

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

His Excellency Stavros Lambrinidis
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United States
2175 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20037

Dear Ambassador Lambrinidis:

We write to you to share our deep concerns about the ongoing interference of Russian national Yevgeniy Prigozhin in the domestic politics and elections of the United States and our Western allies, as well as the myriad of other malign activities he carries out on behalf of the Russian President Vladimir Putin. His track record as an agent of malign Russian influence around the world cannot go unanswered. The United States has placed strict sanctions on Mr. Prigozhin for his role in interfering in the 2016 presidential elections. As our colleagues in the United States Senate expressed earlier this month, we urge the European Union to join the United States in increasing its economic pressure on Mr. Prigozhin.

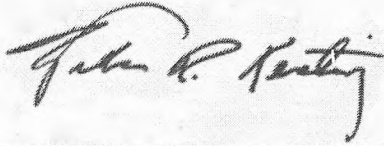
Mr. Prigozhin, nicknamed “Putin’s chef” and a close companion of the Russian President, has been and continues to be a leading actor in exporting malign Russian influence around the world, including in Europe, the United States, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and more. He has done so primarily through his affiliated companies and organizations, including the Wagner Group private military company and the Internet Research Agency (IRA). The Wagner Group was involved in Russia’s illegal military invasion and occupation of Ukraine’s Crimea region, has provided military support to the brutal regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria—including a direct attack on U.S. soldiers in the region, and has supported other despicable strongmen like Nicolas Maduro. The IRA has been indicted and sanctioned by the United States for interfering in the 2016 presidential election. It also meddled in elections across Europe, using disinformation and trolls supported by the Russian intelligence services. Given Mr. Prigozhin and Russia’s history of exporting malign influence and destabilizing democracy around the world, it is not surprising that they too have taken aim at the 2020 U.S. presidential election, setting up online troll farms in Africa to target U.S. social media audiences.

We in the Congress continue to value the close partnership and friendship between the United States and Europe. Our shared respect for democracy and individual liberty are what have allowed that partnership to flourish, as well as our coordinated policies and approaches to many of the 21st century’s toughest challenges. It is for this reason that we call on the European Union to join the United States in using the economic tools at your disposal to push back on Mr. Prigozhin and his associates. We must thwart his malign global activities done at Putin’s behest and ongoing efforts to interfere in the domestic politics of democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. By working together and coordinating our sanctions policies against common adversaries, we can present a united front that stands for our shared values and deters further Russian attempts to subvert Western democracy.

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We look forward to working together with you on these and other efforts in the future.

Sincerely,



William R. Keating
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia,
Energy, and the Environment



Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Republican Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Eliot L. Engel
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee



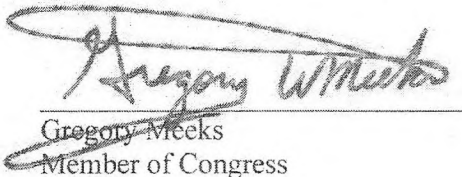
Adam Kinzinger
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia,
Energy, and the Environment



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress




Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress