I’d like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to join your deliberations today.

My name is Marco Pancini and I lead YouTube’s public policy work in Europe, Middle East and Africa. I have over a decade of experience in online safety issues and am centrally involved in our work to keep users safe every day.

This Committee’s work over the last year has addressed a range of critical topics -- from privacy, to misinformation, to election integrity, and more.

In our last testimony before this Committee, we outlined Google’s commitment to information quality and how continued collaboration improves the ways we all address harmful content online.

Today, I will focus on YouTube’s efforts and outline improvements we have made to address misinformation on that platform. I will also highlight opportunities for greater collaboration among companies, government, and civil society to tackle this challenge.

YouTube’s Approach to Responsibility

YouTube is an open platform, where anyone can upload a video and share it with the world. The platform’s openness has helped foster economic opportunity, community, learning, and much more. Today, millions of creators around the world have connected with global audiences and many of them have built thriving businesses in the process.

At the same time, YouTube has always had strict community guidelines that make clear what is - and what is not - allowed on the platform. We design and update our systems and policies to meet the changing needs of both our users and society.
Today, videos that violate those policies generate a fraction of a percent of total views on YouTube, and we are always working to decrease that number. In fact, over the last 18 months, we have reduced the number of views on videos that are later removed for violating our policies by 80%.

Our approach towards responsibility involves four letter “R”:

● We REMOVE content that violates our policy as quickly as possible.
● We RAISE UP authoritative voices when people are looking for news and information, especially during breaking news moments.
● We REDUCE the spread of borderline content and harmful misinformation.
● And finally we set a higher bar for what channels can make money on our site by REWARDING trusted, eligible creators.

Progress on Misinformation

Over the last several years, we have used these four approaches to address misinformation. While we remain vigilant against new threats, we’re proud of the progress we’ve made.

● We have raised up quality content by, among other things, implementing two cornerstone products: the Top News shelf in YouTube search results and the Breaking News shelf on the YouTube homepage. These products highlight authoritative sources of content, and are now available in over 40 countries.
● We have worked especially hard to raise up authoritative and useful information around elections. For instance, earlier this year, we launched Information Panels in YouTube search results for official candidates running for seats in the European Parliament to help users in their search for authoritative information.
● We have continued our strict enforcement of YouTube’s policies against misleading information and impersonation. From September 2018 through August 2019, YouTube removed over 10.8 million channels for violation of its spam, misleading, and scams policy, and more than 56,000 channels were removed for violation of its impersonation policy. We have also undertaken a
broad range of approaches to combat political influence operations, which we have regularly reported on over the course of the past two years. For instance, in September, we provided an update about disabling 210 channels on YouTube when we discovered channels in this network behaved in a coordinated manner while uploading videos related to the then-ongoing protests in Hong Kong.

- We have also worked to reduce recommendations for content that is close to a policy line but does not violate it, including attempts to spread harmful misinformation. Thanks to changes we’ve made over the last year, this type of content is viewed as a result of recommendations over 50% less than before in the U.S. YouTube has begun experimenting with this change in the UK, Ireland, and other European markets and will continue to bring it to more countries over time.

These are just some of the efforts we’ve taken to address misinformation on YouTube. We recognize that our work on these issues is never done. That is why we work with law enforcement, industry, and third-party experts around the world to continue to evolve our efforts.

**Opportunities for Greater Collaboration**

And with that in mind, I’d like to close by discussing opportunities for greater collaboration going forward.

First, the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation is an important foundation that we can all build on. Launched just over a year ago, the Code was developed in light of work that we and others had been pursuing with experts and publishers worldwide to elevate quality information online and support news literacy. As part of the process, we have provided regular reports on our efforts to address disinformation, and we have been continuously incorporating recommendations from the Commission and other stakeholders. In that way, it has helped us collectively understand each other’s needs and constraints and find ways to better the fight against disinformation together.
Second, we must continue to support collaborative research efforts. For instance, we have invested in research on the detection of synthetic media – often referred to as ‘deep fakes’ and have released datasets to help researchers around the world improve the state of the art of audio and video detection. We have also made the data from our election advertising Transparency Report available so that researchers and others can run their own analyses. Governments, industry, and others can work together to support effective research of this sort.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we strongly believe that addressing harmful content online is a shared responsibility, which is why we are so committed to convenings and collaborations like these. We are committed to doing our part and we look forward to answering your questions today and working with each of you in the future.