Mr. Chairman,

Excessive militarization of war and conflict-torn regions, represent a major threat to the regional, as well as global peace and security. In this sense, I would like to bring to your attention the situation in the Black Sea region, which today is particularly exposed to threatening wave of militarization in flagrant violation of all international rules and standards.

Since its military aggression against Georgia and Ukraine, Russia has used a combination of military and political tools to compromise the sovereignty of its neighbours. Russia’s recent massive military build-up in and around Ukraine, destabilizing activities in the Black Sea and increased military presence in the South Caucasus, significantly undermine the security of the wider Black Sea region and has serious global implications.

This Committee is well aware, that for more than a decade, the two Russian occupied regions of Georgia – Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, have been subject to continuous militarization. Russia’s two fully-fledged military bases in these regions, with over 10,000 troops, are heavily armed and equipped with modern, sophisticated offensive military equipment.
Russia’s military vessels and reconnaissance planes are in a constant movement in the vicinity of the Abkhaz section of Georgia’s territorial waters. Whereas, Russian UAVs and military helicopters frequently violate airspace that is under control of the Georgian government.

In addition, Russia does not allow any international control mechanisms in the occupied regions of Georgia, which further compromises the regional security environment, since there is no international verification of the processes and illegal activities on the ground.

Moreover, as a part of hybrid aggression tactics against Georgia, Russia numerously implemented massive cyber attacks against Georgia’s public and private institutions. This issue was discussed in the UN Security Council, as well as other formats including the OSCE.

Mr. Chairman,

Ongoing occupation, excessive militarization and regular military drills in the occupied regions of Georgia violate the fundamental norms of the international law, the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, as well as Russia’s own obligations taken under the EU-mediated Ceasefire Agreement of 12th of August 2008. These actions are nothing but a continuous pattern of a creeping annexation of the Georgian territories.

The recent judgment of the European Court of Human Rights clearly establishes Russia’s legal responsibility for violation of international law and human rights during the August 2008 war and in the period of continued occupation of the regions of Georgia. The court judgment is yet another unequivocal attestation of illegal occupation of the internationally recognized territories of Georgia by the Russian Federation.

Mr. Chairman,

This continued occupation, excessive militarization and reckless behavior in the occupied territories of Georgia and Ukraine are not confined within the boundaries of our region, but bear wider implications on the global security. Therefore, we believe this is the major challenge for the International Community, which needs to be addressed with resolute and consistent strategic response and enhanced international engagement.

I thank you.