Mister Chairman,

The militarization is a major concern and threat not just to my country, but to the security of the entire Black Sea region. The trend of increased militarization by the Russian Federation in Georgia has not been reversed, to the contrary, it persists and in some respects has even accelerated its pace and scope.

This Committee is well aware, that for more than ten years now, the two occupied regions of Georgia are heavily militarized.

Russian illegal Military Bases stationed in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region are under Command of RF’s Southern Military District. They actively participate in Russian military drills, including large-scale exercises. Both military bases are well armed and equipped with advanced and offensive military equipment, including tanks, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, launch rocket systems, anti-aircraft systems, EW (Electronic Warfare) and SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) capabilities and UAV’s (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), all having the wider range coverage across the whole Caucasus and entire Black Sea. In addition to that 4500 military and 1300 FSB personnel are illegally stationed in each of the regions.

All of this is happening in violation of the commitments of the Russian Federation undertaken by the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement, which clearly calls for the withdrawal of Russian forces to their
lines of deployment prior to 7 August 2008 and requires granting access of international monitors to the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. To the contrary, the Russian Federation continues its military buildup and its so-called "border guards", constantly deny the European Union Monitoring Mission access to fully exercise their mandate and enter the regions for monitoring and verification purposes. Ironically, several days ago occupation regime even briefly detained a patrol of the EUMM in the Chorchana-Tsnelisi area, where the so-called process of "borderization" is being forced in full swing.

Uncontrolled situation in the occupied territories creates opportunity for illegal and criminal activities and constant provocations – including detention of local population and denying access to the agricultural lands - that is taking place at the occupation lines and are aimed at creating unstable and fragile environment, further deteriorating the security situation on the ground.

Mister Chair,

In conclusion, let me note that the above observations reflect the trend not only in Georgia. Since 2014 we have witnessed clear violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation, including through the closure of the large parts of the Black Sea, with serious implications for the security of the entire region.

We thus call upon the Russian Federation to comply with its international commitments and the UN Charter to ensure the respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty of its neighbors.

I thank you.