

BALTIC INTERNATIONAL SECURITY CENTRE

German Media · Press Briefing | 18 September 2026

Reporting period: 11–17 September 2026

Baltic Security in the German Press

- **14–17 September 2026** — NATO jets down an armed drone over Lithuania · Pistorius orders mandatory personnel measures for Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen" · Four German Eurofighters to secure Latvia's election · Martin Herem takes over Estonia's defence ministry

NEWS HOTSPOT

Drone shoot-down over Lithuania — NATO operation coordinated via CAOC Uedem

- On the night of 15 September, **a drone from Belarus entered Lithuanian airspace** and was **shot down by Italian Eurofighters** — per military sources the first such case over Lithuania; coordinated by **CAOC Uedem, NATO's air operations centre in Germany**. Defence Minister Robertas Kaunas added that **the explosive charge on board had been defused**. Lithuanian authorities identified a Russian "Gerbera" type. President Nausėda considered **a deliberate attack on Lithuania the less likely explanation** — the drone was probably meant for Ukraine and deflected by jamming.

BOUQUETS THIS WEEK

- ★ **ntv, 15 Sep** (interview, Pavlo Zvenyhorodskyy from Carnegie) — the only piece asking how long NATO air defence holds if dozens of drones arrive: an interceptor costs a multiple of the drone it destroys
- ★ **MDR AKTUELL, 15 Sep** (Kristin Kielon) — the only outlet linking Germany's national defence plan concretely to Baltic defence

BRICKBATS THIS WEEK

- ▲ **Telepolis, 15 Sep** (guest essay) — assumes structural NATO superiority and makes German rearmament, not Russia's conduct, the primary risk; omits this week's documented threat picture

WEEKLY SUMMARY

How the German press covered the Baltics this week

Extract — see the German briefing for full analysis, quotes, and media-by-media breakdown.

Coverage — Success story, not stress test. The sample adopted the thanks of Nausėda and Foreign Minister Budrys as the core message. Attribution and presumed intent were rarely distinguished; the role of CAOC Uedem stayed hidden behind "NATO fighter jets". Few pieces asked about scalability or cost.

Secrecy rather than alliance question. After the AfD's Saxony-Anhalt win, the dispute over Germany's national defence plan (**FAZ, 14 Sep**) was handled as a matter of classification and party politics. Yet it is the master plan for civil-military cooperation in crisis and war, part of the NATO Crisis Response System, governing Germany's hub function — host nation support, military mobility, critical infrastructure — and thus a precondition for reinforcement reaching the Baltics. Only MDR AKTUELL made that link (BISC assessment).

From promise to obligation. Pistorius and Chief of Defence Breuer ordered the first mandatory personnel measures for Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen"; the ministry cited roughly 80% volunteers (**tagesschau, 14 Sep**), **BILD, 14 Sep** up to 1,000 affected at 60%. Commentary focused on what is reasonable to ask of soldiers, not on whether Germany can sustain its commitment.

Gaps — A joint LRT/DW/Czech/EBU investigation (**LRT, 14 Sep**) traced a GRU-run sabotage network behind 2024 arson attempts on Ukraine-bound equipment in Siauliai — unreported in the German sample, although DW took part. Lithuania's vote to lift its nuclear-hosting ban appeared once (**Frankfurter Rundschau, 17 Sep**); brief mentions only for Estonia's new defence minister (**junge Welt, 17 Sep**) and the Eurofighter deployment for Latvia (**stern, 16 Sep**).

SOURCES

- n-tv: "Das Risiko ist enorm, dass die Nato-Flugabwehr überfordert wäre" (15 Sep)
 - MDR AKTUELL: "Im Ernstfall gilt der Nato-Operationsplan Deutschland" (15 Sep)
 - LRT: "GRU-Operation in Litauen" (14 Sep, mit DW/CT/EBU)
- Accessed 17 Sep 2026.