

Baltic Security in the German Press

● **3–8 October 2026** — Latvia votes with Bundeswehr Eurofighter reinforcement; Kulbergs' United List wins · Lithuania's parliament votes to delete its ban on WMD and foreign bases (first vote) · Armed masked men at the Latvian–Belarusian border · Lithuanian troops to the Kaliningrad border

NEWS HOTSPOT

Lithuania seeks to enable and finance a permanent US military base

● Lithuania's parliament voted **106 to 18** with 6 abstentions to delete **Article 137 of the constitution** (ban on weapons of mass destruction and **foreign military bases**); a second, final vote is scheduled for **12 January 2027**. Prime Minister Mindaugas Sinkevičius offered to bear the **costs of a permanent US base**. Per **LRT, 6 Oct**, Lithuanian officials stress there are currently **no plans** to deploy nuclear weapons; Defence Minister Robertas Kaunas called it a **response to Russia's aggression**.

BOUQUETS THIS WEEK

★ **WELT, 7 Oct** (*Carolina Drüten*) — report from Šiauliai air base with NATO interviews: shows the tension between US expert Wilson Beaver's expectation that Europe handle hybrid attacks itself and NATO air defence's reliance on US tankers and reconnaissance (NATO-supported trip disclosed)

★ **ZEIT, 2 Oct** (*interview, Daniel Sagradov*) — Lithuanian security expert Margarita Šešelgytė explains Baltic threat perception and deterrence options, from frozen Russian assets to a possible NATO response to serious hybrid attacks; "Baltic paranoia", she says, proved justified in 2022

BRICKBATS THIS WEEK

▲ **Berliner Zeitung, 8 Oct** (*opinion, Rupert Koppold*) — claims politics and mainstream media have fused into a "propaganda machine"; criticises anonymous sourcing yet relies on an anonymous airport worker's second-hand account; cites misdirected Ukrainian drones over Estonia and presumably Latvia to question Russian responsibility elsewhere

▲ **ZEIT, 2 Oct** (*column, Michael Thumann*) — says Latvia's culture minister "decreed" an end to all Russian-language public broadcasting; in fact parliament decided the day before, after a Constitutional Court ruling, to limit it to emergencies and refuting disinformation that threatens the state (**LSM, 1 Oct**)

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 — An election read as a security signal. Bundeswehr Eurofighters reinforced airspace protection for Latvia's election at Riga's request (**ZDFheute, 3 Oct**). PM Andris Kulbergs' United List win was read as a signal of continuity in security and Ukraine policy (**FAZ, 4 Oct**); **WELT, 4 Oct** quoted Linas Kojala (GSSC Vilnius) on the political costs of higher defence spending. Costs of living also mattered (**tagesschau.de, 3 Oct**).

Border pressure, contested authorship. dpa stressed the unusual aggressiveness of armed masked escorts at the Belarusian border; **WELT, 7 Oct** framed it as Belarus testing NATO. Latvian officials disagree on authorship (state services vs. organised crime); dpa (**SZ, 7 Oct**) carried only the latter.

Lithuania binds its allies. Chancellor Merz confirmed the German brigade will be fully stood up by end-2027 (**Tagesspiegel, 5 Oct**); a day later Sinkevičius offered to pay for a new US base. Only two outlets in the sample covered the constitutional vote, via wire and partner copy (**Tagesspiegel, 6 Oct**; FR).

Gaps — Estonia's brigade HQ move to Jõhvi reached readers only via the Financial Times; **Berliner Zeitung, 5 Oct** set it against an unchanged threat assessment, **Tagesspiegel, 6 Oct** rebutted Duma claims of escalation. In BISC's view, attention followed the German angle more than strategic weight.

SOURCES

- LRT English: "Lithuanian parliament backs removing constitutional ban on nuclear weapons" (6 Oct, Lithuanian primary source)
 - Tagesspiegel: "Putin erhöht Spannungen in der Region: Litauen ebnet Weg für Atomwaffen und wirbt um US-Stützpunkt" (6 Oct, Reuters/AFP)
 - WELT: "Die neue Nato-Luftverteidigung an der Ostflanke – und ein großes Fragezeichen" (7 Oct, Carolina Drüten, *paywall*)
 - LSM: "Dombrava rosinās precizēt likumu par dienestu tiesībām izmantot ieročus un speciālos līdzekļus uz robežas" (7 Oct, Latvian primary source)
- Accessed 8–9 Oct 2026.