

Germany inspects Lithuania

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Appointed as Federal Minister of Defence of Germany in January, B. Pistorius will conduct his first visit to Lithuania on March 7. According to the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, he will meet with his troops deployed with the NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battalion Battle Group Lithuania. The Ministers will bilaterally discuss the progress on the implementation of decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Madrid and stepping up Germany's military presence in Lithuania. In other words he comes with inspection to check how Lithuania fulfills its promises and what else Vilnius could suggest.

As it was reported earlier, deployment of allied forces in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, the development of new infrastructure expanding accommodation, training and storage continue to be one of the main priorities of the Ministry of National Defence.

Thus, a very important and complex project is the development of new long-term infrastructure between Lithuania and Germany in Rukla. It develops new infrastructure for the Mechanized Infantry Brigade Iron Wolf Artillery and Logistics Battalions and the Combat Group of the NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battalion Battle Group.

Lithuania declared the aim to improve the conditions of support and training of the host country for the allies arriving in Lithuania.

From the very beginning, further expanding military infrastructure was not a subject to discussion and debate for Lithuanian society. Though NATO activity always causes great discomfort for the local residents. Many exercises are held right in the cities. People complain about columns of armored vehicles on the roads and shooting near private houses,

kindergartens, schools and hospitals. In addition, locals are very unhappy with environmental pollution.

As it appeared, there was no chance to change the taken decisions. Though the locals expressed great dissatisfaction with the new military projects and purchases law-abiding taxpayers.

Lithuania's Defence Ministry at the end of February launched a new initiative and proposed simplifying the existing procedures for taking private land for public needs to develop military infrastructure.

According to the explanatory note to the package of bills, the existing land takeover procedures are too long and can take up to three years. It also states that the need for a faster and more efficient land takeover procedure is based on the current regulatory framework and the "urgent need to meet allied needs".

The ministry says that once the legislation is adopted, the simplified land takeover procedure will apply to the development of priority military infrastructure, the list of which is approved by the government.

The draft bills also propose to broaden the concept of a project of special national importance.

Lithuania has stepped up the development of infrastructure to accommodate a larger number of allies since February 2022.

Once again, Lithuanians have no chance to influence this new political initiative. In near future we should expect further expansion of military infrastructure. Lithuanian leadership does not pay attention to the locals' interests and concerns.

Unfortunately, negative attitude to the expanding military training grounds, deforestation, as well as reprobation of presence of NATO troops cannot influence the process. It is

obvious, that there is a huge gap between population's and authority's perception of reality.

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