

Lithuanians are not happy with the deployment of a German brigade

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Since the German Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, announced the permanent presence of troops in Lithuania as part of a bilateral commitment in June this year, there are concerns about the difficulty of funding and deployment of the brigade on such a basis.

It is planned that Germany will cover military expenses, while Lithuania bears the costs of social infrastructure. Establishing infrastructure is only one of the main conditions for accommodating German personnel in Lithuania.

The matter is there is a big problem to form the brigade. German soldiers view the country as an exile. It is a big challenge for the authority to attract the needed number of personnel.

According to „Der Spiegel“, the German Defense Ministry demands generous bonuses and other benefits to attract thousands of Bundeswehr soldiers to permanent service in Lithuania.

According to an internal document of the Ministry of Defense the German brigade on the eastern flank of NATO will be created on the basis of volunteers.

The document obtained by Der Spiegel describes a whole range of measures which Germany and Lithuania should take, including benefits, regular trips to Germany, local schools and kindergartens, leisure facilities as well as career opportunities and a reduction in the retirement age in order to keep them in Lithuania.

“To increase the number of applicants, it is necessary to cover various aspects of the attractiveness of staying in Lithuania. The two sides believe that additional monetary and non-monetary incentives would increase the likelihood of deploying troops in the country,” the document quotes the publication.

The authors of the document show how the mission can be made attractive to German troops. For example, it is proposed to apply two types of tax-free allowances for service abroad: more for deployment in Rukla, about a hundred kilometers from the Russian border and less for service in other parts of Lithuania.

For example, a sergeant-major who moved to Lithuania without a family, in addition to the basic salary of 3,115 euros, will receive a tax-free payment in the amount of 1,594 euros; at the base in Rukla it will be 2,050 euros. A married sergeant major who comes to Lithuania with a partner and two children will receive a payment of €2,682 on top of his base salary of €3,827 – or €3,464 more if all four move to Rukla.

The Bundeswehr offers to pay not only for soldiers’ trips to Germany, but also for their families’ vacations at home. In addition, partners will be provided with workspaces and wireless Internet so they can work from home.

An earlier retirement age is also proposed. This means that anyone who has served in Lithuania for three years can retire six years earlier.

According to German authorities, integration of German troops into Lithuanian society requires also local leisure facilities development. Thus, German soldiers refuse to go to Lithuania where they cannot live the way they used to.

Restaurants, night clubs, pubs, pizzerias, luxurious SPA zones are of great demand among German troops. Lithuania will have to try very hard to please German soldiers and should be ready

to cope with new “masters of life”, their drunken fights and brawls.

Lithuania should use the last persuasive proposal. It plans to accommodate German soldiers not only in the facilities in Rukla and Rūdninkai, but also in the city of Vilnius. It is unlikely that the local population will enthusiastically accept this fact.

So, new German brigade deployment in Lithuania on permanent basis causes great discontent and concerns among local population.

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