BUNDESWEHR

PRESS RELEASE

Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen"

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Excercise "Freedom Shield 26-II": Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen" to test loitering munitions for the first time

Conducting its second "Freedom Shield" field training exercise of this year, Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen" will again prove its operational readiness to ensure deterrence and the defence of NATO's eastern flank. With a total of 3800 soldiers involved, this will be the largest field training exercise conducted by the Bundeswehr in Lithuania so far. For ten days, starting on November 17, the Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen" will be practicing river crossing operations across the Nemunas River and combined arms combat on the Rūdninkai training area. This exercise will also test new loitering munitions for the first time. To join the exercise, Panzergrenadierbataillon 122, an armoured infantry battalion based in Oberviechtach, reinforced by elements of Panzerbataillon 203, a tank battalion based in Augustdorf, will deploy to Lithuania by rail and sea. The two battalions will be permanently based in Rūdninkai from next year. The exercise will also be attended by the Rukla-based Multinational Battle Group Lithuania and one Lithuanian company – in all, a total of eight NATO counties (Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Czech Republic, Croatia, Belgium, Luxembourg and Lithuania) will be involved.

The exercise aims to continuously professionalize the still young brigade and, in particular, to provide the training of the soldiers in modern warfare, including the employment of drones and electronic warfare. A water-crossing of the River Nemunas south of Kaunas will form a key element of the exercise. The overall exercise will conclude with a six-day field training exercise in Rūdninkai in which, in addition to the employment of drones of all types and new loitering munition systems will be tested.

"Exercise Freedom Shield is another milestone on the way to a fully equipped, operational and combat ready brigade. This brigade combat exercise demonstrates, beyond any doubt, that we — as part of the 10 Panzerdivision — are fulfilling our mission, which underscores Germany's commitment to its allies regarding deterrence and — should the need arise — defence along NATO's eastern flank", explains Brigadier General Christoph Huber, Commander of Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen". "We train to get better. We train in order to improve. Through innovative approaches, we are consistently preparing ourselves for the demands of the future nature of warfare."

Advise to the media:

In parallel with Exercise "Freedom Shield", another armoured infantry brigade, Panzergrenadierbrigade 37 „Freistaat Sachsen", will deploy to join field training exercise "Grand Eagle 26". The Brigade is currently available to NATO as a rapid reaction brigade until Panzerbrigade 45 "Litauen" will be fully established by the end of 2027. The two exercises will be coordinated on the ground by the command post of 10 Panzerdivision to which the two brigades are subordinate. In all, more than 6000 soldiers will be training in the Baltic States.

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For the media coverage of exercise “Freedom Shield 26-II”, we would like to inform of our media day to be held on Friday, November 20, during the water-crossing exercise, for which we will issue a separate invitation.

Illustrations:



Figure 01:

Soldier of Augustdorf-based Panzerbataillon 203 launching a reconnaissance drone in a wooded area during Exercise “Freedom Shield” in June 2026 conducted by Panzerbrigade 45 “Litauen” on Pabradė training area, Lithuania.

Photo: ©Bundeswehr/Marco Dorow



Figure 02:

A Leopard 2 battle tank of Panzerbataillon 203 (Augustdorf) fitted with a drone-protective cage on the Pabradė training area during Exercise “Freedom Shield 26” in June 2026.

Photograph: ©Bundeswehr/Mario Bähr