

Flop Modello Germania: 300mila invitati, solo 500 reclutati



Draft in Germany: 300,000 letters to young people produce only 530 new recruits

Published on 17/08/2026

The German defense system is facing an unexpected obstacle: despite the government's attempts to strengthen the armed forces through voluntary recruitment, the initial results of the new registration system for eighteen-year-olds (*Wehrdienst*) show extremely low numbers.

Letters sent and enrollment below expectations

The German Ministry of Defense sent almost 300,000 questionnaires (approximately 298,200) to young people turning eighteen, divided between approximately 153,200 men – for whom the response is mandatory by law – and 145,000 women, involved on a voluntary basis.

- **The response rate:** Among boys, participation was high, with a response rate of 96%.
- **Initial interest:** More than one in five expressed some interest in military service on the questionnaire.

- **The selection filter:** After telephone interviews, approximately 1,500 people were called for medical visits and selection procedures, but ultimately **only 530 young people** formally committed to voluntary military service.

Field problems and NATO objectives

International analysts emphasize how Germany is struggling to find the personnel necessary to achieve the ambitious objectives agreed within NATO. Berlin aims to expand the *Bundeswehr* from its current approximately 186,000 active personnel to a long-term target of 260,000 soldiers and 200,000 reservists by the mid-2030s, in order to be able to mobilize up to 460,000 men if necessary.

However, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has repeatedly stated that recruitment remains the main thorn in the side for national security. Long bureaucratic procedures and extended decision-making timelines continue to deter many potential candidates, casting doubt on the effectiveness of a model based solely on incentives and informational questionnaires.