The Defensive Concept of Berlin - Responsibility for European Defense

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It is no longer just a matter of economy: Germany has decided to become the military center of gravity of the Old Continent. With the strategic plan **"Responsibility for Europe"**, presented on April 22, 2026, the German government has taken decisive action, charting the course to transform the Bundeswehr into the most powerful conventional force in Europe by 2039.

From "Tail" to "Head": The paradigm shift

For decades, Germany has been criticized for its timidity in military spending. Today, Minister Boris Pistorius has reversed the narrative. The new strategy identifies **Russia as an existential threat** and positions Germany not just as a mere contributor, but as the **logistical and operational engine of NATO**.

The three pillars of the "New Course":

- **Integrated Defense:** Overcoming the distinction between regional theaters. For Berlin, the security of the Indo-Pacific and the Middle East is now inseparable from that of European soil.
- **Technological Firepower:** No more just counting tanks. The focus shifts to **deep precision strike** (long-range precision attacks), defense against **hypersonic missiles** and swarms of drones.
- **Goodbye Bureaucracy:** The **EMA26** plan aims to streamline the military apparatus with artificial intelligence, making the army a machine ready for immediate use.

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A mass army for the 21st century

Germany aims for an unprecedented mobilization since the end of the Cold War. The goal is to create a shock force of nearly half a million men.

- **Professionals:** Increase to **260,000** active soldiers.
- **Strategic Reserve:** A force of **200,000** reservists, equipped and trained on par with elite units, ready to defend the national territory and manage allied flows to the east.
- **The return of duty:** If voluntary recruitment is not enough, the law approved in January 2026 allows for the immediate activation of **mandatory conscription**.

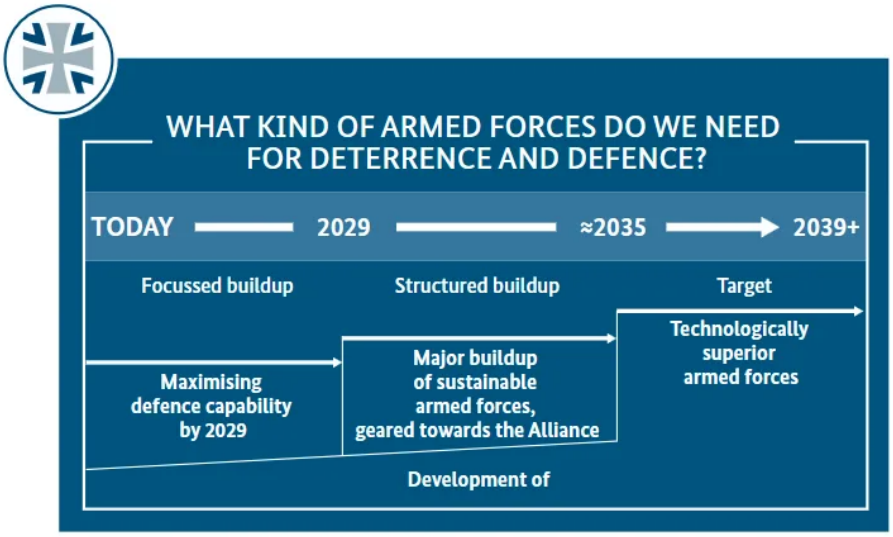
Germany as NATO's "Hub"

The heart of the strategy is geographical: Germany proposes itself as the **logistical hub** for the entire Alliance. In the event of Russian aggression against the Baltic States or Poland, it will be Germany's responsibility to ensure that troops, supplies, and ammunition flow smoothly to the front.

> *"The reserve is the hinge between the army and civil society" — **Boris Pistorius**, Minister of Defense.*

The challenges: Between ambition and reality

Despite the determination, the road is uphill. The global competition for defense systems (with very high demand from the Middle East) risks slowing down deliveries. However, the political message sent to allies and Moscow is unequivocal: **Germany has accepted its destiny as a leading power.**



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1. **Phase 1 (until 2029):** Rapid reconstitution of ranks and stocks.
2. **Phase 2 (until 2035):** Expansion of cutting-edge technological capabilities.
3. **Phase 3 (2039):** Full operational capability as the dominant army in Europe.

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