

Asylum crisis: “The answer is 100% ‘No’”

Belgian asylum minister Maggie De Block (Flemish liberal) has asked the seaside resort of Koksijde once again to welcome asylum seekers in a reception centre, but for the time being the request is being met by a firm rebuttal from the local authorities.

The dossiers of asylum seekers staying at a reception centre in another resort, Bredene, are taking too long to be processed and accommodation for more asylum seekers needs to be found.

In 2016 Koksijde housed some 300 asylum seekers in empty buildings at the air force base. Today accommodation for 400 people is being sought. The local mayor understands that extra accommodation is needed, but points to security issues. The mayor says it's above all extra work for the police and they are already overworked.

Mayor Marc Vanden Bussche (Flemish liberal): “We’ve noticed a big increase in the number of migrants heading for the UK. 35 people were hauled off the tram recently. We’re so close to France.”

“Brexit too will mean extra work. Koksijde is on the smugglers’ route between Zeebrugge and Calais. Moreover, the air force base is being converted. The municipality has plans for the building earmarked for the asylum seekers.”

The mayor also points to the problems that surfaced in 2016: “Despite screening the asylum seekers included people traffickers and wanted persons. We will discuss the issue in the New Year, but at present, the answer is 100% ‘No’. I regret the fact that the asylum seeker distribution plan was never implemented.”

Source:

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