

# German minister: Refugees who rely on smugglers have no future in Europe

EU funding for Libyan camps would make returns possible, says Thomas De Maizière.

Asylum seekers who rely on people smugglers have “no prospect of staying” on the Continent, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière said in an interview published Thursday.

To put a stop to the criminal networks that profit from the refugee crisis, officials need to send a strong message, the minister told the Passauer Neue Presse.

De Maizière called also on the European Union to send funding to refugee camps in Libya. If living conditions at the camps are improved, “rescued migrants could be brought back,” the minister said, adding that the U.N. refugee organization UNHCR should also be granted access to the camps.

De Maizière also commented on Wednesday’s ECJ ruling, which will force Hungary and Slovakia to accept refugees under the EU relocation scheme.

He expects the countries to cooperate, he said, but called on the Commission to launch infringement procedures if they do not.

“If [Hungarian] President [Viktor] Orbán doesn’t back down, the European Commission will be within its rights to take action via infringement procedures,” De Maizière said.

Threatening to reduce EU funds to countries that don’t accept the redistribution of refugees would not help resolve the dispute, De Maizière said.

“If we have to cut EU funding to force the implementation of judgments, it would be a sign that the EU really is in a bad state,” he said, adding that the move would be counterproductive at a time when the bloc needs to create a new, solidarity-based asylum system.

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Source: <http://www.politico.eu/article/german-minister-refugees-who-rely-on-smugglers-have-no-future-in-europe/>

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