
Germany: Mgr Hesse (Archbishop of Hamburg), “security and protection of refugees are not opposed but go hand in hand”

The President of the Migration Commission of the German Bishops' Conference and Special Representative for Refugee Issues, Archbishop Stefan Hesse (Hamburg), intervenes in the ongoing debate on asylum in Germany: “In light of the terrorist attack in Solingen and the recent state elections, a heated debate on asylum is currently taking place in Germany. Of course, Islamic terrorism must be vigorously combated. This concern is shared by those who have fled war and terrorism. What helps no one, however, is the competition to tighten asylum laws. Emotional escalations and the appeal for seemingly simple solutions set in motion a dangerous dynamic: fears are nurtured, unrealistic expectations are raised, and in this way the democratic and constitutional culture of our country risks being damaged”. According to Mgr Hesse, “the European project will also be at risk if in the EU's largest member state people will simply be asked to ignore common law. What seems to be almost forgotten is that the EU has already agreed more restrictive rules with the reform of the European Asylum System, which are now being gradually implemented”. For the Archbishop, “one thing is certain: the principles of the rule of law and international obligations are valuable resources. Respecting them is the basis for finding responsible solutions. It is important to convince people through an objective policy, for example by effectively supporting municipalities, by reducing existing obstacles to a successful integration, and by streamlining bureaucratic procedures. The security and protection of refugees are not opposed but go hand in hand”.

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