



Max Wilkinson MP
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Penny Young
Deputy Chair
UK Statistics Authority
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

By email

Friday 24 October

Dear Penny

I am writing to raise concerns about suggestions by the Government with reference to the number of people claiming asylum in the UK, when compared with other European nations.

On 22 October, The Sun published a comment piece by the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, headlined “The truth is that migrants come to Britain because they believe we are most generous country in Europe”, in which she claimed:

“We will slash the entitlements that refugees receive – to bring us in line with other European countries, ensuring we are no longer the destination of choice.”

The Home Secretary suggests that the UK is the “destination of choice” for refugees who have entered Europe. Readers will infer from that statement that the UK is the number one destination for refugees, i.e. more come here than to any other European country. I therefore ask that you investigate the statement and offer your guidance on whether it accurately reflects the publicly available data and trends. Can the UK Statistics Authority confirm, based on arrivals to this country and other European countries, where the UK stands in the league table of arrivals? Is the UK, as the Home Secretary suggests, at the top of such a league table?

We must stop the dangerous channel crossings that put so many lives at risk, bring the criminal gangs to justice and ensure that our asylum system regains the confidence of British citizens. However, in pursuing the government’s goals on immigration and asylum, and in seeking to gain the confidence of British people, the Home Secretary has a duty to use language that reflects the facts.

I trust you will be able to provide clarity via the supply of appropriate statistics.

Yours sincerely

Max Wilkinson MP
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Home Affairs

max.wilkinson.mp@parliament.uk



Max Wilkinson MP
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Notes:

- The article in The Sun can be found at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/37094652/shabana-mahmood-small-boat-migrants/>