



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/193

17 October 2017

Dear Requester,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- Records held by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade concerning the visit(s) in 2017 by Mr Rory O'Neill, aka Panti Bliss, to the Irish Embassies in Mozambique and South Africa including records in relation to any financial costs incurred by the department in relation to the visit(s).

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 6 October 2017.

In addition to the webstory which was published on the Irish Aid website on 30 May 2017, and which you included in your request, I have identified two additional records relating to this visit, which fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant access to all of these records. Both records contain an attachment/annex detailing costs incurred by the Department in relation to this visit.

Further information

The Embassies of Ireland to the Republic of South Africa and Mozambique, jointly invited Rory O'Neill/Panti Bliss to visit South Africa and Mozambique in May 2017. The purpose of the visit was threefold and interlinked across the objectives of the Embassies. The visit also represented an example of innovative and joint collaboration across the region in the promotion of our interests and our values.

In South Africa and Mozambique, Mr. O'Neill's visit:

- Promoted our interests by showcasing the film industry in Ireland through the screening of the Irish made documentary on Rory's life 'Queen of Ireland' as part of the EU Film Festival.
- Promoted our values by supporting the promotion of human rights and equality and our current development assistance programme, highlighting our focus in country on

tackling discrimination and violence based on gender or sexual identity and stigma against those living with HIV and AIDS.

- Helped to demonstrate the modern, open society which Ireland is today, a nation which values and promotes equality and diversity.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely



Peter Neary
Africa Unit
Development Cooperation Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade