



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/255

Date 17/9/2019

Dear Mr Blaney,

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:

I would like to request all records in the department relating to department spending on “pictures/art” which according to a previous Freedom of Information response is “only provided to minister’s bedroom.”

I understand that this allowance may also be applicable for ambassadors, consuls, officials, or any other State representatives working abroad, as allowed under the departments’ official “list of furniture for new official accommodation,” so I am seeking similar records relating to these expenses too.

I would like the response to include, but not be limited to, records, such as invoices, receipts or any other, for “pictures, art” for any of the persons in positions mentioned above:

- **Details of the total value of purchases for persons above for the years 2011 to 2019**
- **Details of the value of purchases by each location for the years 2011 to 2019**
- **Details of the individual items (descriptions) purchased from 2011 from 2019**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on the 29th of August 2019.

Having conducted a search of the Department’s records, I have not located any documents that fall within the scope of your request. Therefore your request falls for refusal on administrative grounds under Section 15(1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act, as “the record concerned does not exist”.

The Department has not purchased any pictures/art items specifically for the bedrooms referred to as Ministers bedrooms and items such as pictures/art are purchased for the Mission and not for any individual.

Irish missions abroad provide a platform for the promotion of Ireland's trade and economic interests and cultural heritage, while also serving as showcases for Irish arts, crafts and products. Irish artists are renowned globally for their artistic excellence. Promotion of Ireland's culture, arts and creative industries through our mission network is a key element of the Department's Statement of Strategy.

In the last year alone the Department has purchased pictures, prints, sculptures, pottery, hand fabricated rugs spun from Irish wool, ceramics and other art items from renowned Irish artists and is showcasing these works abroad as examples of Irish artistic excellence.

The Department further supports Irish arts through its support for the percent for art initiative, details of which can be found here.

<https://publicart.ie/main/commissioning/funding/per-cent-for-art-scheme/>

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



Kevin Carr