



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req 2020/43

19 March 2020

Dear Mr. Foxe,

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:

Under the FOI Act 2014, I am seeking copies of the invoices/receipts associated with the following transactions and an information note on what each of them related to if possible:

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 13/02/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 243179
1318118.23*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 01/08/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 256537
264982.22*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 01/08/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 256537
61981.34*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 17/05/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 250233
60876.65*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 28/05/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 250953
34569.59*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 04/02/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 242419
33458.83*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 19/11/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 266268
30727.5*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 25/11/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 266654
29220.22*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 12/04/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 248559
27313.4*

*A6 DFA PREMISES - MAJOR MAINT 19/09/2019 I5202 Property Management Unit 260538
23725.08*

I would prefer to receive this information electronically, ideally in its original electronic format.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 27th February 2020.

The Embassy network is used by the Department in pursuit of its goals on behalf of the State. They consist of offices and official accommodation which provide platforms for our Missions to promote Ireland's political, economic and cultural interests and values, provide services to our citizens, develop strategic stakeholder relationships and represent Ireland in international organisations. The Department must ensure that security and health and safety standards are met, as well as providing universal access facilities as part of our duty of care to staff, their families and visitors to our buildings. The Department maintains appropriate health, safety and security in our missions and any additional international standards depending on location.

Differences may be caused by currency fluctuations, possible higher local costs, and the need for expert advice and specialist contractors, in conjunction with the particular refurbishment needs of the mission.

All refurbishment at Embassies are conducted in line with the Department's procurement obligations under Government public tendering and contracting rules, including both National and EU Public Procurement thresholds.

I have identified 10 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached and I have made a decision to part grant 4 of the records.

Record 6 Relates to the required necessary repair to the representational space of the Official Accommodation and Embassy of Ireland in Washington, a State owned asset. It concerns improvements to the outdoor event area for use for engagements with key interlocutors in Washington.

Record 7 Relates to necessary air conditioning works at Rome Chancery. Extensive upgrades were required to the air conditioning system in order to provide a suitable work environment for staff and improve facilities for engaging important contacts in the local area.

Record 9 Relates to required improvement works at the State owned Official Accommodation in Copenhagen necessary for creating an improved environment for promotional and representational events.

Record 10 Relates to the required necessary refurbishment of the new annex to the Official Accommodation and Embassy of Ireland in Washington, a State owned asset, including, health and safety works, fire protection and security related works.

Records 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 are not being released to you at this time. They are not being granted under section 36 (1)(b) of the 2014 Act – Commercially Sensitive Information. The records relate to commercial information where disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information related or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of her/his profession/business/occupation.

I have considered the public interest in releasing this information as the public have an interest in how the Department spends tax payer's funds. However, on balance, I believe that the public interest is best served by not disclosing commercial information where it could prejudice the competitive position of the Department. The Department is open to considering granting access to this record on conclusion of this project. This is expected to conclude at the end of the second quarter of 2020. The records which are not being released relate to ongoing capital and refurbishment works.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Carr', written in a cursive style.

Kevin Carr