



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/127

Date: 2 July 2021

Dear Eamonn Patterson,

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:

1) The date each Ambassador and Consulate General is located and when each Ambassador post is due to be changed eg Irish Ambassador to Germany has been in place since 1 January 2019 and term is due to finish on 31st December 2022 etc in tabular form as of 7th June 2021

2) The date each DFA employed staff by job title normally based in HQ, Dublin that are deployed to Irish Embassies and Consulate General Office and when each staff member term is due to be finished and are due back to Ireland eg 1st Secretary post in the Irish Embassy in Washington DC started on 1st January 2020 and is scheduled to return to Ireland on 31st December 2023 etc in tabular form as of 7th June 2021

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 24 June 2021.

The records you are seeking are not held by the Department of Foreign Affairs in tabular form. Accordingly, I am obliged to refuse your request on administrative grounds under Section 15 (1) (a) of the FOI Act, which states that;

“A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where —

(a) the record concerned does not exist. . . “

However, by way of general information, the following may be of interest to you;

- The normal duration of postings for the grade of First Secretary and above is four years, and for Third Secretaries and below, three years.
- An extension of one year may be considered where mutually agreeable to the officer, the Mission, and the Human Resources section.
- Decisions on extensions are taken in consultation with the officer in advance of the time of postings circulation.

- Postings to most hardship locations (which are given this designation on the basis of such factors as climate; health; air pollution, language and culture; goods and services; isolation; social network and leisure; housing, utilities and education; personal security and political tension) are generally for three years, with an option of a fourth year if agreeable to the officer, the Mission, and the Human Resources section.
- For officers in the highest hardship locations, postings will generally be for two years with the option of a third year.

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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082618.

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,

David Ormond
FOI Unit
Department of Foreign Affairs