

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2015/036

Ben Haugh
Irish Mail on Sunday
3rd Floor
Embassy House
Herbert Park Lane
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4.

Dear Mr Haugh,

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. How much has the department spent on social media from 2010-2015, broken down by year? Please include details of how many social media pages the department has, how many staff are responsible for maintaining them and their salaries, details and cost of any training courses that staff were sent on (including number of staff who attended, date of training course, company who provided it etc) and the cost of any software purchased in relation to social media. Please also include any other costs relating to social media which are not mentioned above.**
- 2. Please send me your social media guidelines issued to staff and details of how many people are blocked on each account.**
- 3. How much did the department spend on PR in 2014 and so far in 2015? Please break the total costs down by month. Please also break the costs down into as many categories as possible (photographers, marketing campaigns, makeup, social media, moneys paid to external PR companies etc).**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 2nd April 2015.

I have identified 2 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

- Table of costs incurred on social media 2010 – 2015
- Department Social Media Policy

In relation to your third question, for 2015, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade did not incur did not incur expenditure on external public relations and communications services. Over the years 2011 to 2014, this information is already available in the public domain as it was issued as a Parliamentary Question (Ref No: 1450/15) and is available [here](#).

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade uses social media as a tool to communicate, interact, inform, and engage with the Irish public, our citizens abroad, and other international bodies and partners. Social media is particularly useful in terms of providing advice about our services, including passports and travel advice; raising awareness of the work of missions and

the Department more broadly and highlighting Irish events, associations, and companies worldwide.

The Department aims to expand its social media interaction in order to provide the best possible array of information to Irish and international audiences. The Department sees great potential in social media and uses its tools in order to advance the key priorities of the Department as recently outlined in "*The Global Island: Ireland's Foreign Policy for a Changing World*"; Our People, Our Prosperity, Our Values, Our Place in Europe, and Our Influence.

The guidance and oversight of the Department's social media rests with the Press Section of the Communications Unit. Press Section has 5 members of staff - none of whom work solely on social media (One Assistant Principal, three Third Secretaries, and one Clerical Officer). There are seven Twitter accounts at Headquarters and one YouTube account. There are 17 Twitter users blocked on the Department's Twitter account.

Ireland currently has 80 Diplomatic and Consular offices worldwide – 42 of these have Twitter accounts while seven have Facebook accounts. Nine Ambassadors/Consuls General have official Twitter accounts. Responsibility for the maintenance of these accounts is shared among staff members. No staff member works solely on social media.

The Department sent one staff member on a half day training course on "Social Media and Legal Risks", provided by Public Affairs Ireland.

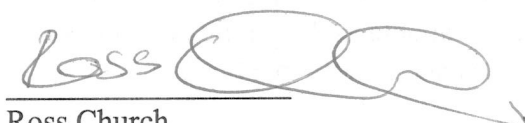
Training to Embassies and Consulates is provided in-house by the Communications Unit via video link for zero cost.

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@dfat.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@dfat.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



Ross Church