



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

Mark O'Regan
Irish Independent,
Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street,
Dublin 1

Our Ref: FoI/Req/16/201

12th January 2017

Dear Mr. O'Regan,

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:

..... A breakdown of all payments made above €10, 000 by the Department for refurbishing buildings and/or replacing furniture and fittings in 2015 and to date in 2016 – For buildings which are owned by the Department.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 19th December last.

As responding officer, I have identified 1 record which relates to this query and access to it has been granted.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade currently manages and maintains State-owned properties abroad. These properties are utilised 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.

Given the nature of the Department's business requirements associated with these buildings - and the changed international security environment in which we now operate - it is imperative that we maintain appropriate security in each mission. We are required to ensure that the buildings in which we operate are safe and secure; where necessary, we up-grade the existing building security to ensure that they provide a safe and secure environment for Irish Citizens, staff and visitors. In that regard, the Department keeps the security arrangements at our diplomatic and consular missions under review and carry out security assessments on an ongoing basis.

As part of the Department's duty of care to staff, their families and visitors to these buildings for meetings and functions, the Department must ensure that health and safety standards, as well as universal access facilities, are applied to all buildings used by the Department. The Department maintains appropriate health, safety and security standards in its properties overseas while also implementing any additional international standards of the location in question, as necessary.

Given the varied global locations, currency fluctuations, possible higher local costs, and the need for expert advice and specialist contractors, the expenditures associated with construction services will differ from location to location.

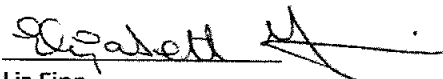
All refurbishment and maintenance at missions are conducted in line with the Department's procurement obligations under Government public tendering and contracting rules, including both National and EU Public Procurement thresholds.

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



Liz Finn

Architectural Services Unit
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade