



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

Ken Foxe

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Our Ref: Fol/Req/2016/125

16<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Dear Mr. Foxe,

I refer to your recently submitted request for information, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

***The monthly rent paid for the residence of the Ambassador/Consul General/diplomatic head for each of the following locations: Brussels Embassy, Brussels PR-EU, Bucharest, Geneva, Helsinki, Holy See, New York CG, OSCE - Vienna, Paris, Singapore, Tallinn, Tokyo, Vienna and Warsaw.***

***A copy of the rental agreement for each of the above.***

***An address for each of the above.***

***Copies of any reports, memos, recommendations, ministerial submissions regarding value for money and the cost of diplomatic rental properties in period 1 Jan 2012 to the current date.***

I have made a decision to grant two elements of your request in full and to refuse access to two elements.

- ***The monthly rent paid for the residence of the Ambassador/Consul General/diplomatic head for each of the following locations: Brussels Embassy, Brussels PR-EU, Bucharest, Geneva, Helsinki, Holy See, New York CG, OSCE - Vienna, Paris, Singapore, Tallinn, Tokyo, Vienna and Warsaw.***
- ***An address for each of the above.***

The table below contains the requested information. It should be noted in reviewing the costs associated with each official accommodation, that some of these locations are situated in cities which have high rental costs associated with them. This will account for the variance in monthly rent across the table.

| Location   | Monthly Rent | Location   |
|--|--------------|--|
| Official Accommodation \Brussels (Ambassador)                      | €7,250       | Avenue de l'Observatoire                                   |
| Official Accommodation \Brussels (PR to EU)                        | €7,550       | Rue de Crayer  |
| Official Accommodation \Bucharest (Ambassador)                     | €5,000       | Strada Buzesti   |
| Official Accommodation \Geneva (Ambassador)                        | €15,925      | Rue de Moillebeau  |
| Official Accommodation \Helsinki (Ambassador)                      | €10,333      | Tehtaankatu  |
| Official Accommodation \Holy See (Ambassador)                      | €5,400       | 00186 Roma   |
| Official Accommodation \New York (Consulate General)               | €20,870      | UN Plaza   |
| Official Accommodation \Vienna (OSCE)                              | €9,000       | Prinz Strasse  |
| Official Accommodation \Paris (Ambassador)                         | State owned  | Avenue Foch (Embassy & Residence located in same building) |
| Official Accommodation \Paris (OECD)                               | €6,931       | Rue de Varenne   |
| Official Accommodation \Singapore (Ambassador)                     | €20,050      | Peirce Hill  |
| Combined Chancery and Official Accommodation \Tallinn (Ambassador) | €11,925      | Rahukohtu (Embassy & Residence located in same building)   |
| Official Accommodation \Tokyo (Ambassador)                         | €46,220      | Moto-Azabu   |
| Official Accommodation \Vienna (Ambassador)                        | €8,964       | Theresianumgasse   |
| Official Accommodation \Warsaw (Ambassador)                        | €10,000      | Plac Trzech Krzyzy   |

- A copy of the rental agreement for each of the above

In my decision to refuse the copies of the rental agreements for the listed properties I have decided that as these records are commercial contracts, they come within the scope of Section 36(1)(c) of the Act "A head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates. As lease agreements are commercial contracts we are not in a position to provide copies of the agreements.

- Copies of any reports, memos, recommendations, ministerial submissions regarding value for money and the cost of diplomatic rental properties in period 1 Jan 2012 to the current date.

Extracts from the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure for 2012 – 2014 and 2015 – 2017 have been released. Full document is available on the website of The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform ([www.per.gov.ie](http://www.per.gov.ie) )

It is a requirement that Heads of Missions actively engage with Landlords or Agents to seek savings before a rental agreement is renewed thus ensuring value for money. Recent savings are listed below:

- Tallinn. The move of the chancery to share the residence property during 2015 resulting in a 30% reduction in accommodation rental costs per month from €17,235 to €11,925.
- New York. The move to a new residence for the Consul General at the beginning of 2016 resulted in a 27% reduction in rent per month from €29,022 (in 2015) to €21,319 (in 2016).

The total cost of diplomatic (residences) rental properties in the period from 1 January 2012 is as follows:

2012 - €3,993,588  
2013 - €4,387,804  
2014 - €4,289,867  
2015 - €4,050,803

Our missions abroad perform a wide range of functions in support of Ireland's foreign policy interests. These include frontline consular and passport services to citizens overseas; engaging with and supporting Irish communities; representing and advancing government policies with other states and economic and cultural promotion. They work very closely with the state agencies in the promotion of exports, tourism and inward investment. Economic diplomacy and the promotion of Ireland's economic interests overseas is vital to the domestic economy and our network of diplomatic missions is uniquely placed to influence key decision-makers and opinion formers around the world. The Department is committed to using its full resources, including official accommodation, to promote Ireland's economic and trading interests, cultural profile and reputation internationally. The choice of suitable accommodation for a head of mission is subject to inspection and vetting with regard to its suitability, adequacy, value for money from a representational perspective and its capacity to host promotional and official events. Given business and promotional requirements associated with residences they need to be situated in secure areas and, in general, close to the city centre.

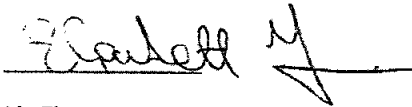
The complex international security environment in which we operate also requires that we ensure the protection of our staff, their families and visitors to the residences and is fundamental to the duty of care of this Department.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Finn', with a horizontal line underneath and a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Liz Finn  
Architectural Services  
Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade