



23 October 2017

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2017/198

Dear Requester,

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

- *Details of who made the decision to send Rory O'Neill to VietPride 2017;*
- *How much it is costing; and*
- *Is Mr. O'Neill paying for his own flights*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 9 October 2017.

The Embassies of Ireland to Vietnam and to Thailand invited Rory O'Neill/PantiBliss to visit Vietnam and Thailand in September, 2017. The purpose of the visit was multi-fold and supported the promotion of Ireland's interests and values as set out in Ireland's Foreign Policy document, 'The Global Island'.

In Vietnam, Mr. O'Neill's visit:

- Supported and publicised the work of the Embassy and of the Irish Aid programme on the issue of equality, with a particular focus on sustainable development for ethnic minority communities, gender empowerment, the realisation of rights for people with disabilities and the promotion of LGBTI rights. The mission included a visit to Irish Aid supported programmes in ethnic minority communities and to civil society projects supporting equality issues.
- Highlighted the challenges LGBTI people are facing in Vietnam and around the world through participation in the VietPride festival in Hanoi.
- Facilitated an exchange and information sharing on equality and diversity in the workplace and broader society through participation in a round table on diversity with the private sector in Ho Chi Minh City.
- Supported Embassy efforts to build a broader and deeper understanding of Ireland in Vietnam.

In Bangkok, Mr O'Neill's visit:

- Promoted Ireland's interests by showcasing the film industry in Ireland through the screening of the Irish made documentary on Rory's life 'Queen of Ireland'.
- Promoted Ireland's values by supporting the promotion of human rights and equality.

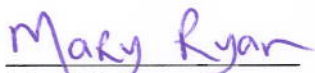
Mr O' Neill was accompanied by a Tour Manager responsible for the preparation, content, logistics, and media aspects of the visit. Both individuals very generously provided their time pro bono and the costs incurred by the Embassy covered economy flights and local accommodation for eight working days. A breakdown of the costs incurred by the Embassy is set out in the attached Annex.

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, D02 DX45 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



Mary Ryan

Civil Society and Development Education Unit
Development Cooperation Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade