



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/114

4th April 2019

Dear Mr. Foxe,

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:

A6ART ITEMS OF ARTISTIC VALUE (& ancillary costs - ASU) 16/04/2018 € 24,600
Property Management Unit SHANE HOLLAND DESIGN WORKSHOPS LTD

A6ART ITEMS OF ARTISTIC VALUE (& ancillary costs - ASU) 22/08/2018 € 15,890
Property Management Unit CEADOGAN RUGMAKERS

A6ART ITEMS OF ARTISTIC VALUE (& ancillary costs - ASU) 14/12/2018 € 11,303.81
Property Management Unit CLAIRE MCGOVERN/RHYME STUDIO

A2HOTEL HOTEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS 31/10/2018 € 10,000 Training Mission
Shearton

A2HOTEL HOTEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS 14/08/2018 € 9,282.19 WELLINGTON

A2MOVE REMOVAL / STORAGE COSTS 18/07/2018 € 77,000 Human Resources FRANK
GLENNON LTD

A3OTHERENT OTHER/DIVISIONAL ENTERTAINMENT 30/01/2018 € 20,977 Strategy and
Performance Unit

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 21st March 2019.

I have identified 7 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant access to all of the records.

Record 1

Record 1 is an invoice from Shane Holland Design Workshops for €24,600. This invoice relates to the purchase of 16 new escutcheons showing the Irish harp for DFAT. As the Department is currently expanding its worldwide network of missions, the Department required 16 new escutcheons for use as a representational feature at the exterior of both mission offices and official accommodation buildings. Escutcheons also had to be replaced at a number of premises as the original ones had suffered from degradation over a number of years.

Record 2

Record 2 is an invoice from Ceadogán Rugmakers for €15,890. This invoice relates to the purchase of two Irish designed and produced rugs for the Ambassador's official accommodation in Bratislava. The mission network is used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to promote Irish design, arts and crafts and offers an opportunity to showcase Irish furnishings in support of this goal.

Record 3

Record 3 is an invoice from Claire McGovern / Rhyme Studio Inc. for €11,304 (\$12,840). This invoice relates to the purchase of two rugs, spun using pure Irish wool and fabricated by hand in Ireland, for the Ambassador's official accommodation at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, New York. The mission network is used by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to promote Irish design, arts and crafts and offers an opportunity to showcase Irish furnishings in support of this goal.

Record 4

No invoice exists as this is a fictional training payment that was processed on the Financial Management System as part of financial training given to an officer. This transaction was charged to a training cost centre to distinguish it from normal expenditure. The transaction was immediately cancelled by a corresponding credit. Our Finance Division has provided a copy of the entry of the transaction to show that no expenditure was incurred.

Record 5

Record 5 is an invoice from Boulcott Suites for €9,282.19 (NZ\$15,450). The Department was still in the process of identifying an official residence when Ireland's new Ambassador to New Zealand arrived to take up his position in Wellington. This invoice relates to temporary accommodation for the Ambassador and his family (total four persons) in a serviced apartment for four weeks.

Record 6

Record 6 is an invoice from Frank Glennon Ltd. for €77,000. This payment relates to the annual premium for Marine Transit Insurance which provides world wide insurance cover for staffs personal household effects being transported to and from various diplomatic missions worldwide.

It also covers insurance of officer's household effects held in storage for the duration of their overseas posting and for a period of up to six months on their return.

Record 7

Record 7 is an invoice from With Taste for € 20,977.66. This invoice relates to all costs associated with catering during the course of the 2018 Departmental Heads of Mission Conference which was held from the 16th to 18th January 2018 in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

As part of the Conference, Heads of Mission from across Ireland's network of Embassies, Consulates and Representations gathered with key partners including the State Agencies to discuss priorities, policies and challenges for Ireland in the year ahead.

Irish missions abroad perform a wide range of functions in pursuit of Ireland's foreign policy interests, including advancing government policies, in particular with the EU and the UN, and providing frontline consular services to Irish citizens overseas. Embassies support Irish culture and enhanced visibility for Ireland overseas. In partnership with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and other State Agencies our missions advance Ireland's trade, tourism, education and investment objectives. For example, they actively contribute to the organisation and conduct of Enterprise Ireland Ministerial-led Trade missions and the Saint Patrick's Day programme of promotional visits and events, which are crucial in maintaining contacts and influence with business and political leaders.

In 2017, the value of total exports (good and services) reached a record level of €282 billion, an 11% increase over 2016, and 57% over 2012. In 2017 agri-food sector exports increased by 13% (€1.5bn) to €13.6bn. In 2018, revenue from overseas visitors to Ireland grew by almost +6%, an additional €275 million for the Irish economy compared with 2017.

The conference of Heads of Mission together and with senior management at the beginning of the year is an important component of the Department's strategic planning. It facilitates discussion for business planning and goal setting in the year ahead as well as direction and priority setting for the missions overseas.


Heads of Mission also take this opportunity to hold a number of meetings in Ireland to assist and support them in delivering priority actions and objectives, not least the promotion of Ireland's offering in a range of sectors, including agri-food, tourism, education, research and development, and investment.

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. 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



Peter Downes

Freedom of Information Office