

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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/16072

27 June 2016

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:

'All records concerning the grant scheme for Short and Long Term Irish Election Observers, including records of its establishment, rules and regulations and precedent cases including refusals of payment.

Full details of payment of this grant to Core Team Mission consultants and whether any steps have been made to recover such grants paid

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 13th June 2016

I am the responding officer in this case.

Officials of the Department have already engaged in correspondence with you on this issue. As I understand it in this scenario a grant payment was made to the Irish nominee who was officially nominated on a mission as an Irish observer. Subsequently, the nominee was also selected by the EU as a core team member. This Department took the view that the person was entitled to the grant as they had commenced making preparations to go on the mission.

Having carefully considered this request, the responses already issued to you on the matter and previous requests for access to records related to the election monitoring roster I am refusing this request under section 15(1)(g) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014

- 15. (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where - (g) the request is, in the opinion of the head, frivolous or vexatious or forms part of a pattern of manifestly unreasonable requests from the same requester or from different requesters who, in the opinion of the head, appear to have made the requests acting in concert.

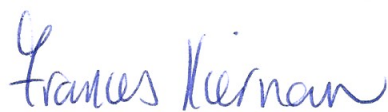
Since 2013 colleagues in the Civil Society and Development Education Unit of Irish Aid have strived to provide you with access to classes of records on various themes around the Election Observer Roster under Freedom of Information legislation, the decisions on which have been upheld by a number of OIC and Ombudsman endorsements. In addition, I understand they have also responded to Parliamentary questions, ministerial representations and other request for information putting a significant administrative burden on what is a very small section. Irish Aid has also moved to greater transparency on the operation of the election roster by significantly increasing the level of available information on the Irish Aid Website in line with a commitment given to the Office of the Information Commissioner. In that light, I hope the greater proactive publication of information on the Irish Aid website and the considerable number of records and information you have already received has addressed all gaps in your quest for information regarding the election monitoring roster.

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



Frances Kiernan

Freedom of Information Officer