



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/17/101
Fol/Req/17/109
Fol/Req/17/123

Date: 12 July 2017

Dear Mr. Carroll,

I refer to the requests which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, in which you requested:

- ***The appointment process of honorary consulates in Spain?***
- ***The remuneration and expenses of Spanish honorary consuls?***
- ***How honorary consulates offices are financed?***
- ***The date of appointment, criteria of appointment and details of the appointment procedure of each honorary consul in Spain?***
- ***The official procedure for the appointment of Irish Honorary Consuls to the consular network of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs?***
- ***The procedure, how and to who an Irish citizen applies to for consideration in relation to the role of Irish Honorary Consul?***
- ***Who appoints and considers candidates for Honorary Consul positions?***
- ***Who has the power to dismiss an Honorary Consul?***
- ***Who monitors their performance how is it measured and who are they accountable to?***

On the Irish Honorary Consul in Barcelona:

- ***The number of consular cases handled by the consul in 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016?***
- ***The total amount of fees generated by the handling of these consular cases for each of these years?***
- ***The total amount of fees retained by the Honorary Consulate in relation to the execution and handling of these consular cases over each of these years?***

Further to our e-mail correspondence of 23 June, which agreed the narrowing of the scope of your request, I have identified three records that fall within the amended scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant all of the records. I am also providing some general background information on the

management of the Honorary Consuls, including the financial management of the Department's Honorary Consuls in Spain.

Ireland currently has 98 honorary consuls or honorary consuls general throughout the world. While the roles and functions performed by Honorary Consuls can vary, they are generally appointed to provide consular services and assistance to Irish citizens in their area of accreditation. They also support local Irish community (particularly in counties where there is no resident mission) and they also assist with trade promotion and arrangements for VIP visits, in consultation with their supervising mission.

1. Procedure for Appointment of Honorary Consuls

Decisions on the establishment of Honorary Consulates are taken by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade having regard to our objectives to; (i) provide consular services and/or assistance to Irish citizens; (ii) support local Irish community efforts; and (iii) assist in the development of trade and economic relations with the country or region concerned. Appointments of honorary consuls are always subject to the approval of the host country Government, having regard to its rules and procedures.

The internal guidelines document which forms part of the schedule of records granted provides guidance to Missions on areas including identifying the need for an Honorary Consul, identifying potential candidates and the detailed appointments procedure for an Honorary Consul Officer.

2. General Financial Position of Honorary Consuls

The appointment of an Honorary Consul is an honorary one, unsalaried and non-pensionable. Each honorary consul is entitled to an honorarium (currently €1,125 per annum). Honorary Consuls may also retain half of the consular fees they collect, to offset the cost of providing such services and can reclaim certain communications costs incurred as part of their service delivery.

3. Terms and Conditions for Honorary Consuls and their Supervision

Honorary Consuls are appointed subject to terms and conditions. The terms and conditions require Honorary Consuls to submit a set of accounts to Finance Unit every six months (June and December for some honorary consulates and March and September for others). They are also required to submit an annual report of their activities and comply with Irish data protection guidelines.

Supervising Missions are required to discuss terms and conditions in detail with new appointees.

Primary responsibility for supervising the activities and performance of Honorary Consuls rests with the mission accredited to the country or region in which the Honorary Consul is located. All issues which an Honorary Consul may have should in the first instance be addressed to the supervising mission with relevant support from the Consular Directorate or relevant sections at Headquarters.

4. Termination of Honorary Consul Appointments

An appointment may be terminated for any reason by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade upon the giving of three months' notice of termination in writing to the appointee and no compensation will be payable on such termination. The appointee may resign the appointment by giving three months' notice of resignation in writing to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The appointment may also be suspended with immediate effect by the Minister for failure or inability on the part of the appointee to discharge effectively his/her functions as Honorary Consul, if he/she is charged with a criminal offence or for conduct which, in the opinion of the Minister, is unbecoming of an Honorary Consul. Such suspension is without prejudice to the right of the Minister to terminate the appointment for any reason by giving the appointee three months' notice in writing of termination of his/her appointment.

5. Consular Assistance Cases dealt with by the Honorary Consulate General in Barcelona between 2013-2016

As part of your request, you have sought the number of consular cases handled by our Honorary Consulate General in Barcelona and the revenue generated from them. I attach these details below.

The figures outlined below relate to consular assistance cases only and does not include the work carried out by the Honorary Consulate General in other areas such as the issuing of certificates, processing of passport applications, issuing of emergency travel documents as well as visa queries and many other general queries. In addition, our Honorary Consul General in Barcelona also carries out representational work on behalf of Ireland.

Year	Total Number of cases	Fees generated
2013	15	Nil
2014	14	Nil
2015	26	Nil
2016	34	Nil

6. Additional Funding provided to certain Honorary Consulates in Spain

Much of the work carried out by our Honorary Consuls in Spain is in the area of consular assistance, which does not generate any fee income for the Honorary Consulates. Many of our Consulates in Spain have a very heavy consular assistance caseload and in recognition of this, a financial contribution is provided to some of the busiest Honorary Consulates in Spain as outlined below, subject to a number of conditions. A standard letter to Honorary Consulates in receipt of additional funding detailing the terms and conditions pertaining to said funding is attached as part of the schedule of records.

Certain Honorary Consuls in Spain in receipt of additional funding employ a Consular Assistant during working hours to deal with the high volume of work, and at their own expense.

Honorary Consul	Additional Funding provided (per year)
Gran Canaria	€9,000
Malaga	€6,000
Barcelona	€6,000
Alicante	€4,000
Tenerife	€4,000
Lanzarote	€4,000
Palma de Mallorca	€4,000

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,

Ciara McGaughey
Consular Directorate