



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/2018/291

Date: 17th December 2018

Dear Ms. Novais,

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:

'What are the salaries of the Ambassador, First Secretary and Second Secretary? Also if they receive any allowances'.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 16th November 2018.

Salaries

The roles referred to in the request can be filled by officers from a number of different grades. For example, the current Ambassador in Washington is an Assistant Secretary while the current Ambassador in Copenhagen is a Counsellor etc.

Diplomatic grades are as follows;

<u>Diplomatic</u>	<u>Equivalent pay scale</u>
Counsellor	Principal Officer
First Secretary	Assistant Principal Officer
Third Secretary	Administrative Officer

Salary scales of all civil servants are available in the public domain and can be accessed at the following link: <https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2018/16.pdf>.

Please note that the First Secretary salary scale is equivalent to Assistant Principal Officer salary scale. Second Secretaries are known as Third Secretaries in the Irish diplomatic service who are on the Administrative Officer salary scale.

Foreign Service Allowances

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. They also support Irish culture and enhanced visibility for Ireland overseas. In partnership with the State Agencies missions advance Ireland's trade, tourism, education and investment objectives. They are instrumental to the organisation and conduct of Ministerial-led Trade missions and the Saint Patrick's Day programme of promotional visits and events both of which are crucial in maintaining contacts and influence with business and political leaders. Promotional opportunities help to cement our values and extend our influence on matters of interest to us, enhancing our global visibility and outreach.

Maintaining a permanent corps of officers experienced in international affairs is vital to derive the maximum benefit from Ireland's international engagement. In relative terms, the Irish foreign service is modest in size: 63% of Ireland's offices abroad have one to three diplomatic officers. In addition to the Department's own staff who undertake postings, we oversee the posting of officers from all Government Departments and other offices to Ireland's mission network. The number of Irish officials posted to our diplomatic missions as of December 2017 was 397.

As indicated above, all our diplomats are civil servants; they are paid by the State according to the salary scales determined by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and, as PAYE workers, are subject to the normal tax and social security obligations of civil servants.

In addition, and in common with most diplomatic services, this Department supports officers who are assigned abroad to serve the State in an official capacity. The system of Foreign Service Allowance is to assist officers in defraying the additional costs to officers and their families of moving and living abroad. Allowances are based on independently sourced data. In line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform sanction, Foreign Service Allowances are required to be reviewed once a year, or more often in locations that experience substantial fluctuation in key economic indicators on currency and exchange rates. The components of the allowance system are:

Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), which is designed to estimate and defray costs associated with a higher cost of living at the post abroad. The Department uses the services of an independent firm to provide cost of living indices for the various locations required. COLA only becomes payable at posts with a higher cost of living index than Dublin.

Local Post Allowance (LPA), which assists mainly with the additional indirect costs arising from the representational role of officers. This allowance which varies according to marital status and grade is payable at all locations abroad. Officers serving in designated "hardship" posts may also be currently entitled to a hardship allowance as part of their LPA.

Children's Foreign Allowance (CFA), which compensates an officer for the additional costs incurred with regard to qualifying children at post.

I have identified one record that falls within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to refuse release of the record.


This record is exempt from release under section 37 (1) – Personal Information. Given the level of information in the public domain regarding staff and their assignments, providing a list of allowances specific to individual roles could jeopardise the right to privacy of the individuals concerned, particularly as we only have one posted officer in a number of countries.

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


Oonagh O'Reilly
Workforce Planning
HR-HQ