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Tagairt }
Reference }



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
Dublin 2

Martin Grant
Irish Independent,
Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street,
Dublin 1

Our Ref: FoI/Req/15-081

Dear Mr Grant,

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:

Copies of mileage expense claims submitted by the Minister or Ministers of State at your Department for the period since Government entered power to the date of receipt of this letter. I am seeking the actual claim forms submitted.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 7th September, 2015.

I would point out that in regard to Cabinet Ministers, it was estimated in 2011 that the saving to be achieved in not supplying State cars to Cabinet Ministers was in the order of €4m per annum. These estimates were based on the average cost of each State car including the cost of Garda drivers at €280,000 per annum. In the case of Ministers using their own cars, including the cost of two civilian drivers, it was calculated that the cost was in the region of €120,000 per annum per minister. Following a review in 2012 it was found that the cost of the new system was lower than calculated and is in the order of an average €100,000 per annum. This represents a saving of 65% on the previous transport system in place prior to May 2011 and supports the view that in value for money terms, the new transport arrangements are more cost effective than the previous system.

Ministerial mileage expenses are paid in accordance with rates and regulations set down by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Mileage expenses are a monthly total and reflect business related travel across Ireland during the respective month, and incorporate deductions for any personal related travel.

Tánaiste Gilmore was provided with a State car and Garda drivers and as such no mileage claims were made for the Tánaiste.

I am the deciding officer for your request. I have identified 9 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed on the attached schedule. I have made a decision to grant all of the records.

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



Gerry Gleeson
Finance Division