



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

Mr Ben Haugh  
Irish Mail on Sunday,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
Embassy House,  
Herbert Park Lane,  
Ballsbridge,  
Dublin 4.

07 March 2016

Our Ref: Fol/Req/16/017

Dear Mr Haugh

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:

***How much was spent on taxis in 2011/12/13/14/15 broken down by year, supplier and amount paid to supplier.***

When considering the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's taxi expenditure it is important to recognise that, given the particular demands of the Department's work, officers of this Department are regularly required to work outside normal hours to service briefing and meeting requirements. Taxi usage in these circumstances is an unavoidable business need of the Department. Taxi usage is monitored closely and officers are advised that judicious use of taxis should be exercised at all times. It is further advised that taxis should be used only when public transport is either not available, or feasible.

Up to this year, the Department's Procurement Section invited companies to tender for the taxi contract specifically for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Department moved to the OGP Framework for taxi services in February of this year. The company, Lynk, formerly Global Taxis, was awarded the contract by OGP for all government departments together with other bodies and institutions and was selected by OGP on the basis of value for money.

I have made a decision to grant your request. Below is a table with information extracted from the Department's Financial Management System giving the specific details of your request.

#### Taxi costs for the years 2011 to 2015

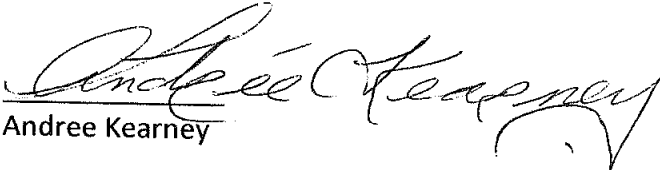
<b>2011</b>	Murray's Chauffeur Drive €52.00 National Radio Cabs €27,709.00 VIP/ACE Taxis €25,619.00	<b>€53,380.00</b>
<b>2012</b>	National Radio Cabs €44,876.60 VIP/ACE Taxis €97.60	<b>€44,974.20</b>
<b>2013</b>	National Radio Cabs €80,502.50 VIP/ACE Taxis €30.40	<b>€80,532.90</b>
<b>2014</b>	National Radio Cabs €56,106.10	<b>€56,106.10</b>
<b>2015</b>	National Radio Cabs €63,325.60 Cork Taxi Co-op €270.00	<b>€63,595.60</b>

Note: In 2012, Ireland held the Chairmanship of the OSCE which included the hosting of a Ministerial meeting in December. High profile attendees included UN Special Rapporteur on Syria, Lakdar Brahimi, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. During the first 6 months of 2013, Ireland held the Presidency of the EU. 13 European Council Ministerial meetings, attended by the relevant ministers from all 27 EU member states and several other high level meetings were hosted in Dublin during that period. You will see a spike in taxi fares in the 2013 figures. There are two reasons for this: Invoices relating to the OSCE Ministerial of December 2012 were sent for payment in early 2013 and the rise in taxi usage during the six months of the Presidency. Both of these events required D/FAT staff to work extra and long hours to service the organisational, logistical and operational elements of these meetings.

#### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

  
Andree Kearney