

9<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Mr. Ken Foxe

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2016/063

Dear Mr Foxe,

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:

- 1. Copies of all invoices and receipts relating to any travel undertaken by an officeholder, Minister or Minister of State for St. Patrick's Day 2016. Copies of all invoices and receipts relating to a spouse or partner if they travelled with the officeholder, Minister or Minister of State. A copy of the Itinerary for the above trip.**
- 2. Copies of any records relating to the repayment of expenses for mileage or any other expense category by an office holder, Minister or Minister of State at your Department to cover the period 1 January 2014 to date of receipt of this request. This request excludes any such records already released to me.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

I am the deciding officer for your request. I have identified the records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant all of the records. **The records you requested for 2014 were released to you in reply to your request in February 2015. (FoI/Req/15/014 refers).**

The choice of location for Ministerial travel reflected the State's economic and trade promotion priorities and the presence of diaspora hubs. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charles Flanagan T.D., covered St. Patrick's Day programmes in Washington and New York which provided valuable opportunities for economic promotion, messaging, engagement with local communities, including key members of the Irish American community & business leaders, as well as affording media opportunities throughout the duration of the visit. The Minister's spouse did not accompany him.

All official travel undertaken by the Minister or Ministers of State is in accordance with the central aims of the Department's travel policy, which is based on the travel policy for all Government Departments laid down by the Department of Finance (circular 11/81 and letter on foreign travel dated 31/3/1998), which is to minimize official travel costs and to achieve value for money for expenditure necessarily incurred, consistent with the effective discharge of official duties. Hotel accommodation at moderately priced hotels is reserved for the Minister or Ministers of State in the city where the official business is to be transacted. 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.

## **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.

Yours sincerely

Sally Keogh,  
Finance Division,  
Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade,  
76/78 Harcourt Street,  
Dublin 2.