



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Baile Átha Cliath 2**

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**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Dublin 2**

30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Mr. Ken Foxe

**Re: Fol/Req/2016/129**

Dear Mr. Foxe,

I refer to your recently submitted request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 in which you requested the following:

***'A list of all election observation mission overseas in the period between May 2013 to the current date for which the Department contributed staff, experts or volunteers. This list to include the country of the mission, the language of the mission, the date of deployment and return, the cost to the Department including expenses, the qualification and selection process of the staff / experts / volunteers deployed and copies of any feedback / reports received back on the Irish participants.'***

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on the 5th September 2016.

Set out in the attached table is a list of election observation missions undertaken between May 2013 to date and types of observers deployed, (broken down by year) the language of the mission, the date of deployment and return and the total cost of each mission to the Department. For clarity, I have set out in the attached table by way of footnotes, additional explanations for the information provided.

By way of background, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade maintains a roster of observers for election monitoring missions. The aim is to ensure that, when requested, Ireland is represented at an appropriate level in international observation missions for both elections and constitutional referendums. International election monitoring missions play an important role in the promotion of democracy and human rights, contribute to strengthening democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes, and help to deter fraud, intimidation and violence. Irish election observers participate primarily in missions organised by the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and on average, Ireland deploys observers to fifteen elections per annum. Additional data on the operation of the Irish Election Observation roster together with links to key documents and international institutions can be accessed at <https://www.irishaid.ie/get-involved/election-observation/>

For OSCE election missions, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade bears all of the costs incurred in sending observers on missions including allowances as set by the OSCE, flight costs,

insurance and once off pre-departure sum of €600, as appropriate. In the case of EU election missions, the only costs payable by the Department are the once off pre-departure sum of €600 and insurance as appropriate.

In terms of the qualification process for Electoral Observation Missions, the people nominated are those who are members of the Roster which was established in May 2013, following a public call for applications. Officials from the relevant geographic desks of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, on occasion, also participate in election monitoring to further enhance their understanding of the country or regions where elections are taking place. Election monitoring Focal Points sometimes participate as observers, to increase their knowledge of election monitoring and the work of election observers. Regarding the selection process for each election observation mission, the EU or OSCE set out their specific requirements for the relevant election and circulate it to all national Focal Points. This is circulated to all roster members who are invited to apply and on the basis of the expressions of interest submitted by roster members, the Department draws up a list of applicants.

In selecting nominees to be put forward, the specific criteria set by the EU or OSCE, including relevant local and regional experience and language proficiency, form the principal basis for decision-making. Issues of gender balance and length of time since serving on a mission are also taken into account. The EU make the final selection of observers for EU election observation missions. In relation to your query where you requested '*copies of any feedback / reports received on the Irish Participants*', I can confirm that we have received no such reports.

#### **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](mailto:foi@dfa.ie). A fee applies for non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment please contact [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie) or telephone 01 4082857.

You should make this appeal within four weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. This appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior officer of this Department.

Yours sincerely



John Crowe  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade