



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/16119

Mr. Eamonn Patterson

9 September 2016

Dear Mr Patterson,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (Act) for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- 1) *The number of emergency out- of-hours calls received at each Irish Embassy in the years 2014, 2015 and to-date in 2016.*
- 2) *The date each Ambassador was posted to their current Embassy and the date when each Ambassador term at the Embassy finishes.*
- 3) *The number of Passport Applications that were received in each Irish Embassy and were subsequently forwarded to Dublin for processing in the years 2014,2015 and to-date in 2016.*

I have identified 2 records that fall within the scope of your request which correspond to parts 2 and 3 of your request. The records are listed in the schedule below.

Record Description		Granted/Part-Granted/Refused
1.	The date of appointment as head of mission.	Granted
2.	Passport Applications registered at missions between 02/01/2014 and 30/07/2016	Granted

I have made a decision to grant the records. Record 1 relates to head of mission appointments which are generally made for a period of four years although, in certain circumstances, this can vary. Typically rotations of head of missions take place at this time of year and where a new head of mission is soon to succeed the incumbent the name of the successor has been included in the record. Record 2 details the passport applications registered at each of the listed missions. Passports for those normally resident in Great Britain are registered through the Passport Office in London. In addition, certain missions register passport applications on behalf of other missions. You will find further information on passport numbers on <https://www.dfa.ie/passports-citizenship/passport-express/passport-statistics/>.

With regard to the number of emergency out of hours calls received at each Irish Embassy in the years 2014, 2015 and to-date in 2016 I regret that I must refuse this part of your request under Section 15. (1) of the Act as the record concerned does not exist.

Concerning consular assistance, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade offers a 24-hour phone service to citizens. Our diplomatic and consular network abroad operates a similar out-of-hours service for Irish citizens in distress abroad and they are supported by our worldwide network of 95 honorary consuls. In the first seven months of 2016, the Dublin-based duty officer received 1,065 calls for assistance out-of-hours. This compares with 936 calls for the last 8 months of 2015.

In 2015 consular assistance was provided to over 1,500 Irish citizens and, in a significant number of cases, this assistance was provided over an extended period of time. The number of recorded consular assistance cases for 2016 to date is 1,536. This represents a projected increase of 30 per cent in consular assistance cases for the calendar year. For major consular emergencies the Department mobilises a Crisis Response Centre to facilitate a swift and co-ordinated response to major crisis that arise abroad which are likely to have a significant Irish involvement.

In May of this year Minister Flanagan launched TravelWise an innovative App which allows access to important travel advice including customised crisis alerts, entry requirements, health and emergency contacts for 200 countries and contact details for Ireland's diplomatic and consular network. The Department also maintains a citizen's registration facility on our website <https://citizensregistration.dfa.ie/> whereby those travelling or living overseas can register their contact details to facilitate speedier contact in case of emergency.

#### 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



Frances Kiernan