



ARD-GHONSALACHT NA HÉIREANN

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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

345 PARK AVENUE, 17TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10154-0037

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/026

Mr. Ken Foxe

3rd March 2017

Dear Mr. Foxe

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

*“- a table of costs for all entertainment events held at the Consul General’s residence in New York for the period 2015-2016, broken down where possible according to line item: food, drink, entertainment etc.
- copies of all invoices related to such functions held at the Consul General’s residence in New York for two sample months: May and June 2016.”*

I have identified two records which fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

I have made a decision to grant both records.

A table of promotional opportunities hosted or facilitated by the Consulate in the Consul General’s Residence is provided for 2015 and a separate table is provide for 2016. The date, promotional opportunity, number of guests in attendance, costs for food, beverages, entertainment, flowers, firewood and parking are all listed.

Officers engaged in purchasing beverages always have regard to value for money considerations when obtaining the most advantageous price available consistent with quality and fitness for purpose. In line with all expenditure practices in the Department, the purchase of new stock is assessed carefully and kept under continuing review to ensure value for money The Consulate maintains a stock of beverages to facilitate provision of a range of suitable wines for official events at a significant discount from the cost of purchasing them from caterers. As a result, these costs are not invoiced to the Consulate per promotional opportunity at the Residence, except in instances where beverages are provided by the catering company directly (those particular costs are listed in the tables accordingly).

The Consulate hosted and facilitated forty one promotional opportunities in the Residence of the Consul General in 2015. The figure for 2016 was ten such promotional opportunities.



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In January 2016, the Consulate relocated the Residence of the Consul General to a smaller property which has a maximum capacity of forty guests. The large number of promotional opportunities which have guests over this capacity are now hosted and facilitated at the Consulate itself, located in Ireland House on 345 Park Avenue.

The Residence of the Consul General is utilised for promotional opportunity occasions for smaller numbers of guests and these opportunities maximise the potential for substantive discussion on Ireland's bilateral relations with the six States for which the Consulate has responsibility.

The core objective of the Consulate is to protect and promote Ireland's interests in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware and West Virginia. Promotional opportunities hosted and facilitated by the Consulate at the Residence are a key component of its strategic engagements in furtherance of this objective.

Such opportunities enable the Consulate to convey the Government's key messages, in particular on trade and the economy. The Consulate partners on many of these opportunities with IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and Tourism Ireland, which are all also located in Ireland House in New York. The Consulate also partners with many other organisations within its area to advance their work in supporting the Irish community and enhancing trade relations. Where possible and practicable, the costs for these opportunities are carried by the organisation.

Promotional opportunities hosted and facilitated at the Residence of the Consul General also showcase Irish music and culture, which not only enhances the promotion of Ireland in general but also complements the Consulate's overall economic agenda.

Costs are listed in United States Dollars in all cases as the exchange rate fluctuates regularly; the particular rate used to calculate costs in Euro is updated on a monthly basis.

Invoices

The Consulate facilitated two promotional opportunity events in the Consul General's Residence for the two sample months of May and June 2016. These are listed in the table of costs for 2016. However, for both events the full costs were paid by the organisation which the Consulate was supporting and partnering with. As a result, the Consulate was not invoiced directly for these promotional opportunities and therefore does not hold these 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@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30.00. For methods of payment, please contact the FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie or on 01 408 2857.



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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

Shane Cahill
Deputy Consul General
Consulate General of Ireland in New York