



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

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

Our Ref: FoI/Req/17/004

Gordon Deegan

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10 February 2016

Dear Gordon,

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:

*'The amount spent by embassies at Washington, Paris, London, the Permanent Representation to the EU Brussels and the Consulate General New York on entertainment in 2016 and the individual spend by each embassy.'*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

I have identified one record that falls within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant access to this record.

Our missions abroad perform a wide range of functions in pursuit of Ireland's foreign policy interests, including advancing government policies, in particular with the EU and the UN, and providing frontline consular services to Irish citizens overseas. Embassies also support Irish culture and enhanced visibility for Ireland overseas. Representational opportunities help to promote our values and extend our influence on matters of interest to us, enhancing our global visibility and outreach.

As part of their economic remit our Embassies frequently host events to promote Ireland's offering in a range of sectors, including agri-food, tourism, education, research and development, and investment. In partnership with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and other State Agencies our Embassies advance Ireland's trade, tourism, education and investment objectives. For example, they actively contribute to the organisation and conduct of Enterprise Ireland Ministerial-led Trade missions and the Saint Patrick's Day programme of promotional visits and events, which are crucial in maintaining contacts and influence with business and political leaders. Representational opportunities and hospitality are an important element of these activities and underpin the State's promotional efforts in overseas markets.

The success of collaborative promotional activities conducted in priority markets is illustrated by the impressive growth in relevant trade figures over recent years. For example, it is estimated that the Irish food and drink sector grew by 2% in 2016 to reach €11.5bn, representing growth of over 41% since 2010. Total overseas visitor numbers have grown every year since 2010 and last year grew by 10% to a record 9.5 million visitors. Exports by



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Enterprise Ireland client companies have also shown impressive growth in recent years surpassing the €20bn mark for the first time last year.

Representation and promotional expenditure is incurred within clearly defined Departmental guidelines, which are subject to regular review. They are refunded on the basis of receipts for costs incurred. Representation and promotional spending, like all Departmental spending, is subject to rigorous internal controls as well as external audit. Allocations are shared between Heads of Mission and other diplomatic staff with varying amounts assigned to individual officers according to the business priorities of the mission. Expenditure on representational and promotional work varies from location to location in line with the staffing complement at each mission, as well as the local cost of living. All representational expenditure should be viewed in that light.

In 2016 Ireland's mission network organised a diverse range of commemorative and celebratory events as part of the Ireland 2016 Global and Diaspora Programme and to mark other important anniversaries as part of the Decade of Centenaries. In particular, our Missions in New York, Washington and London played a leading role in a range of high profile events. In addition our Embassy in Paris hosted a number of events connected to the European Championships.

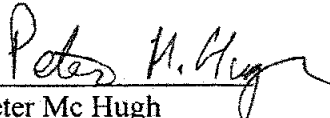
As indicated, Embassies and Missions are allocated promotional budgets for the purposes of promotion and outreach, this expenditure is not considered entertainment. As such there are no records which meet the scope of your request. However, I am happy to provide the promotional expenditure for the missions you requested; Embassy Washington spent €120,409, the Consulate in New York €148,895; the Embassy in London €91,099, the Embassy in Paris €76,800 and the Permanent Representation in Brussels €82,221.

**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

  
Peter Mc Hugh