



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/351

7 January 2020

Dear Mr Murphy,

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:

- *Information on the itinerary of all Department of Foreign Affairs officials, and other state agencies (such as the Defence Forces) associated with the recent deportation of Lisa Smith from Turkey - this should include information on how many officials were sent to Turkey, their names and job titles, how long they stayed in Turkey, etc.*
- *I would also like information of all the costs associated with the deportation of Lisa Smith from Turkey to Ireland, including copies of all invoices for flights, accommodation, etc, and a breakdown of the cost per person associated with the trip, including Lisa Smith herself.*

I would like to request the information by email.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 12 December 2019.

Regarding the itinerary of all Irish officials who travelled in association with the deportation, I can confirm the following:

- 4 individuals travelled from Dublin to Istanbul on November 29: one official from the Department of Foreign Affairs and three personnel from the Defence Forces.
- The official and personnel travelled from Dublin to Istanbul on 29 November and returned to Dublin on 1 December.
- The official and personnel spent two nights in an airport hotel – November 29 and November 30.
- Two officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs travelled from Ankara to Istanbul on the morning of November 30 and returned to Ankara later on the same day.
- One official from the Department of Foreign Affairs travelled within Turkey on a one-way flight from Ankara to Istanbul on November 30.

- 7 individuals travelled from Istanbul to Dublin on December 1: the Department of Foreign Affairs official and three Defence Forces personnel who had travelled from Dublin, one official from the Irish Embassy to Turkey, the Irish citizen and her young child.
- One official from the Department of Foreign Affairs returned from Dublin to Ankara on December 9.

I have decided to refuse the release of the names and job titles of those who travelled as this is exempt under Section 32(1)(b) and Section 33(2)(a).

The information is refused release under Section 32(1)(b) of the Act as I believe their release could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or safety of an individual. While this is a mandatory exemption, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to information in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. In the main, the information redacted relates to the identity of individuals and does not significantly affect the substance of your request. I have particularly considered whether releasing the information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their safety protected and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

The information is refused release under Section 33(2)(a) as it contains information that relates to the tactics, strategy or operations of the Defence Forces in or outside the State. I believe that the release of this information would prejudice the future operations of the Defence Forces outside the state, which would have a major impact on the Department's ability to cooperate with the Defence Forces in assisting citizens overseas where required in the future. I believe that it is of vital importance that the Department and Defence Forces maintain the ability to provide this assistance in the future where required.

Regarding the costs associated with the deportation, I can provide the following information. The information is provided in Turkish Lira, with an estimate given of the approximate corresponding overall euro value based on historical exchange information available at www.xe.com.

The overall combined costs in Turkish Lira come to 31,842.72 TRY, which has a combined approximate Euro value of €5028.60 based on historical exchange rate information for November 29 (1 TRY = 0.15792 Euro). This includes the costs for the following:

- Flight from Dublin to Istanbul, November 29: Four tickets – 6,595.52 TRY
- Airport hotel, November 29: Four rooms – 3,486.78 TRY
- Airport hotel, November 30: Five rooms – 4,343.28 TRY
- Return flight from Ankara to Istanbul, November 30: Two tickets – 1475.96 TRY
- One-way flight from Ankara to Istanbul, November 30: One ticket – 299.99 TRY
- Flight from Istanbul to Dublin, November 30: Seven tickets – 13,957.49 TRY (Note: the original booking was for a flight on November 30. This was changed to December 1 by Turkish officials at no extra cost).

- Flight from Dublin to Ankara, December 9: One ticket – 1683.70 TRY

I have decided to part-grant the release of 7 records in relation to the request for copies of invoices relating to flights and accommodation.

In relation to the release of 7 records, the release of which has been part-granted, information has been redacted from all 7 under Section 32(1)(b) for the reasons outlined above.

In relation to the release of 7 records, the release of which has been part-granted, information has been redacted from 2 records under Section 33(2)(a) for the reasons outlined above.

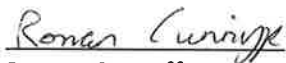
In relation to the release of 7 records, the release of which has been part-granted, personal information has been redacted from all 7 under Section 37(1). While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. In the main, the information redacted relates to personal contact and personal financial information and does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

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. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.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



Ronan Cunniffe
Consular Directorate