



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

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

23 October 2014

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2014/079

Mr Colin Coyle  
The Sunday Times  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2

Dear Mr Coyle,

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:

**“1 I wish to request, under the Freedom of Information Act, copies of any reports / memos / circulars regarding the use of frequent flyer points by government employees created since 2007.**

**2 I also wish to request, under FOI, any internal correspondence in relation to the use of frequent flyer points since 2007.**

**3 I also wish to request, under FOI, details of all first class flights sanctioned by the Department in 2013 and 2014, including details of the justification given relating to each flight.”**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 7 October 2014.

I have identified 3 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant all of the records.

The policy in relation to frequent flyer points accrued by government employees in the course of travel on official business is governed by the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour (Department of Finance Circular 26/2004 refers). Section 16.2 of the code which deals with the receipt of gifts by civil servants states “that benefits under frequent flyer schemes may be retained by individual civil servants in recognition of the fact the official travel is disruptive to personal and family life”. The use of frequent flyer points by government officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is consistent with this policy.

Frequent flyer points are awarded direct to individual travellers by airlines in accordance with their various rules to which this Department's travel provider, Club Travel, is not privy.

There is no current facility by Airlines through which frequent flyer points could be harnessed for use by the Department.

It is the responsibility of each Head of Mission or Divisional Travel Officer to ensure that frequent flyer points do not influence individual decisions taken in relation to the carriers used for official business travel.

No first class flights have been sanctioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the year 2013 and to date in 2014.

### **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



Julie O'Brien  
FOI Officer

Schedule of Records:

1. Department of Finance Circular 26/2004: Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour – available at [www.circulars.gov.ie](http://www.circulars.gov.ie)
2. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Circular 02/2009: Revised Travel and Subsistence – attached
3. Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Foreign Travel Policy Guidelines 2009 - attached