

## Downes Peter HQ-FOI

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**From:**  
**Sent:** 28 May 2016 08:16  
**To:** Kiernan Frances HQ-FOI  
**Cc:** Downes Peter HQ-FOI  
**Subject:** Re: Election Observation Grant

Dear Frances,

As you may be aware the Department provides a grant of €600 once in a 12 months period for Short and Long Term Irish Election Observers that go overseas to observe elections.

My research indicates that the grant is now also being paid to Core Team Mission consultants. I see no earthly justification for grant aid being paid to consultants earning excellent fees and believe that this is contrary to the public interest. In the light of these concerns I wish to make an FOI request for all records concerning the grant scheme, including records of its establishment, rules and regulations, precedent cases including refusals of payment, full details of payment of this grant to Core Team Mission consultants and whether any steps have been made to recovery such grants paid.

I understand that the knee jerk reaction is to refuse information citing 'personal information' exemption but I would argue that public accountability for the proper use of taxpayers money trumps that. Further I say no one that receives grants from the State has any expectation that this is a secret transaction, indeed details of grants paid out are routinely provided in response to PQ's from time to time, see for example:

<https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2015-10-14a.263>

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There are also concerns whether the payment of such a grant to just Irish Core Team consultants is contrary to EU law and exposures Ireland to possible examination and sanctions.

I wish to receive the records in an electronic format by email.

I make this request under the FOI Act 2014. Please let me know if you require anything further.

Kind regards,

