



Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2

25 March 2014

Mr John McGuinness T.D.
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Houses of the Oireachtas
Kildare Street
Dublin 2



Dear Mr Chairman,

At my recent appearance before the Committee, I undertook to supply further information on a number of issues raised during the course of the review of expenditure by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2012 under Votes 27 (International Cooperation) and 28 (Foreign Affairs), and Chapter 13: Overseas Development Assistance.

I have received also the Committee Secretariat's letter of 11 March elaborating the issues of interest to the Committee.

I am pleased to attach notes on the following:

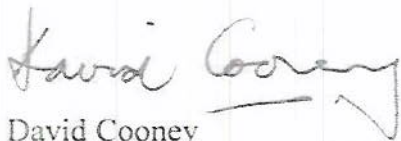
- a) Foreign Service Allowances and staff numbers abroad, with appendices (your queries nos. 1 to 5, and 8, refer);
- b) The provision of emergency passports; (your query no. 7 refers); and
- c) Overseas election monitoring missions. (your query no. 9 refers).

I understand that a hard copy of the Value for Money report on the work of Ireland's bilateral diplomatic network in the other EU member states was handed over to the Committee at the conclusion of our meeting on 6th March last (your query no. 6 refers). Additional copies may be obtained via the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.dfa.ie/news-and-media/publications/publicationarchive/2014/january/value-for-money-review-of-eu-missions/>

Finally, I would like to record my appreciation to you, Mr Chairman, and to the members of the Committee for your interest and for allowing my officials and me the time to explain in detail the work that is undertaken by the Department.

Yours sincerely,



David Cooney
Secretary General

Foreign Service Allowances and Staff Numbers Abroad (your queries 1 – 5 & 8 refers)

Numbers of Staff Posted Abroad

As of March, 2014, the current staff complement in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is 1,371.6. Of these, 763.6 are based in offices in Dublin, Limerick, Cork and Balbriggan, 17 are based in Northern Ireland while the balance of 591 are working in our missions abroad.

Of those working abroad, 294 are Dublin based but posted abroad¹ and 297 are locally recruited chancery staff who perform a range of duties in support of Mission's objectives.

At present, 284.5 officials serve in Ireland's diplomatic service in the following grades: Third Secretary (equivalent to the general service grade of HEO), First Secretary (AP level), Counsellor (PO level) and Assistant Secretary and higher. As career diplomats, they are obliged as a condition of their employment to serve overseas for a substantial portion of their working lives and any given time approximately 60% of them are based overseas. The normal length of assignment is 3 to 4 years. However, this can vary depending on the business needs of the Department. They are often joined abroad by general service colleagues from DFAT or other Departments (particularly in Brussels) or by technical/specialist staff such as Development Specialists from Irish Aid.

In considering the Department's numbers abroad, it is worth noting that we maintain a network of 73 missions overseas to oversee diplomatic relations with 176 states. 41 missions or 56% of the network are staffed by 2 or less diplomats: 9 missions are single diplomat missions while 32 missions are 2 diplomat missions.

Foreign Services Allowances

Before dealing with the specific issues relating to the Department's expenditure on Foreign Service Allowances, it would be useful to clarify the background to the allowance system.

All diplomatic grades are paid civil service salary scales at the same rate as their equivalent general service grades. There is no increase in the basic salary scale in respect of being on posting abroad. Likewise, all our officers posted abroad are deemed to be tax resident in Ireland and pay the same tax rates as all Irish public servants.

The current system of Foreign Service Allowances (FSA) was established in 2002, following detailed research and several years of negotiations with the Department of Finance. The aim was to replace an outdated, comparatively *ad hoc*, system with one which was evidence based, used objective criteria, was adaptable to changes in the local and domestic environment and in line with best practise used by other foreign ministries.

¹ This figure includes 40 officials seconded from other Departments but considered for the purposes of our Vote and the Employment Control Framework to be DFAT core numbers. A further 57 staff from other Departments are also based at missions abroad. However, costs related to these posts are met by their parent Departments and are not counted towards our ECF or a charge on the DFAT budget and are therefore not counted in the figures provided in subsequent sections of this reply

The system of FSAs was subject to review and adjustment in the 2012 review of allowances undertaken by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

Foreign Service Allowances cannot be classified as allowances in the nature of pay. The purpose of the system of Foreign Service Allowances is rather to defray certain additional expenses which officers may experience as a consequence of serving abroad at an Irish diplomatic mission. These additional expenses may be due to a higher cost of living at the post abroad, or to indirect representational costs incurred in the performance of duties abroad. Through a system of indexation, the system of allowances aims to make adjustments to officers' Dublin salaries in order to meet these costs. As the basis of the indexation is subject to ongoing changes, our Human Resources Unit reviews the allowances at periodic intervals. The most recent review of FSAs was completed in February 2014. There is no element of the FSA which aims to purely compensate an officer for being based outside of their home country. It should also be noted that FSAs are not reckonable for pension purposes.

The table attached at Appendix A provides an overview of all the programmes which officers serving abroad might have recourse to. It is an update of the PQ referred to by Deputy Nolan during the hearing.

In light of the interest expressed by Deputy Nolan and the Committee's follow up letter of 11 March, further detail is set out below in respect of three main FSA, namely: the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA); the Local Post Allowance (LPA) and Children's Foreign Allowance (CFA). The table at Appendix B sets out a breakdown by grade of payments made under these headings in 2013.

Cost of Living Allowance

The Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) would be better described as a cost of living adjustment as it is only paid in cases where data sourced from our independent consultants, Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) demonstrates that the cost of living index at the post is higher than in Dublin. The Department maintains 73 missions in 69 locations overseas. For 2013, COLA was paid in 48 locations. For 2014, 45 current locations will receive a COLA as will 3 of the 8 new missions scheduled for opening later this year. Details of those who received COLA in 2013 are as follows:

| Year | 2013 |
|---|------------|
| COLA Payment | €2,940,722 |
| Numbers who received COLA throughout 2013 ² | 337 |

² The number of officers in receipt of COLA or LPA in any given year will be higher than the number of officers serving abroad due to the annual rotation of posts. For example, a 3rd Secretary who finishes his posting in Athens in August 2013 will be replaced by a colleague meaning two officers received COLA and LPA (pro-rated for the amount of time they were on the post) for Athens in 2013.

Calculating the COLA for each location requires a series of inputs from a range of external bodies including the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA). The key components are:

- Civil Service salary scales, in particular a grade's Net Mean of Scale (NMS);
- the "home spendable" portion of an officers salary (as set by the D/PER); and
- cost of living indices at post (sourced from ECA data) and Dublin (index is always 1).

Once these figures are collated, the COLA for each location is calculated as follows:

$$\text{COLA} = \text{Home Spendable NMS} \times (\text{COL index on post} - \text{Dublin COL index})$$

I can confirm that among the items not included in the ECA index is accommodation/rent, car purchase, holidays, school fees and furniture.

ECA is a leading international human resources information and data service with over 1,500 member and client companies (including the Foreign Ministries of Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, UK, South Africa and New Zealand as well as a number of Irish semi state bodies).

As a member of ECA International, the Department can source cost of living indices for all locations surveyed by ECA Members each year. Through a dedicated client manager, ECA also provide information on a range of issues including exchange rates, inflation, local staff salary and conditions, rents, employment legislation and custom and provide access to a range of reports and research vital to ensuring the efficient and cost effective management of our international assignments in over 70 countries. The cost of our membership of ECA for 2013 was €39,635.

As a number of structural issues make it impracticable to tender for the service provided by ECA, our engagement with ECA is included in the Department's annual return of contracts over €25,000 awarded without competitive process as required by Department of Finance Circular 40/02. The Foreign Service Allowances (FSA) system is a specialised bespoke arrangement specifically tailored to Departments' particular needs which was put in place in 2002 following a detailed exploration of alternative approaches and close consultation with the Department of Finance. Market research, including monitoring of systems in place by other countries, has not revealed any alternative suitable operator capable of delivering this specific service.

Local Post Allowance

The Local Post Allowance (LPA) is designed to cover various indirect representational costs which an officer is deemed to incur in the performance of his/her duties abroad. These costs, which vary according to marital status and some of which are grade specific, have been

sanctioned in respect of the following nine elements³: additional clothes; additional motoring; representational maintenance costs; additional social activities; domestic help; utilities; household effects; travel and communications.

A specific sum under each of the above nine headings was sanctioned by D/PER from 31 January 2012 as a constituent element of LPA. The total of these constituent costs, adjusted for changes in Irish CPI, gives a "Dublin based" LPA. The cost of living index for the post abroad is applied to the Dublin rate of LPA where the index is positive.

While all posts attract a level of LPA, the amount due to officers is dependent on marital status and role. For example, posted staff who have no formal representational function would receive a lower LPA as would Heads of Mission who have accommodation provided on the basis that their utilities are covered elsewhere. In many cases, the LPA of a Third or First Secretary may often be higher than that of an Ambassador.

Officers serving in designated "hardship" postings may also be entitled to a hardship allowance as part of their LPA. In September 2011, the Department introduced new criteria, again based on objective data sourced externally from the ECA consultancy, to determine the hardship categories of designated posts. This new system facilitates the review of the hardship designation on an annual basis. Where payable, the hardship element takes into account factors such as personal security and political tension, health and environmental factors, climate and isolation. In 2013, 28 posts were designated hardship posts. Details of those who received LPA in 2013 are as follows.

| Year | 2013 |
|---|------------|
| LPA Payment (including hardship LPA) | €5,091,125 |
| Numbers who received LPA throughout 2013⁴ | 401 |

Child Foreign Allowance

Children's Foreign Allowance (CFA) is paid to all posted officers with children under 21 in full time education to cover the additional costs associated with bringing a child up while on posting. As a separate stand alone allowance, it is not impacted by an officer's COLA or LPA.

The allowance is calculated on a notional Irish cost of this additional expenditure which is then adjusted, where appropriate, using the COL index. It does not include an element for education costs. Details of those who received Children's Foreign Allowance in 2013 are as follows:

³ reduced from an original 11 separate elements following the D/PER review of allowances in 2012.

⁴ The number of officers in receipt of COLA or LPA in any given year will be higher than the number of officers serving abroad due to the annual rotation of posts. For example, a 3rd Secretary who finishes his posting in Athens in August 2013 will be replaced by a colleague meaning two officers received COLA and LPA (pro-rated for the amount of time they were on the post) for Athens in 2013.

| Year | 2013 |
|---|-------------------------------|
| CFA Payment | €746,055 |
| Numbers who received CFA throughout 2013 | 285 children of 143 officers. |

School Fees Assistance Programme

As noted above, education costs are not covered in the COLA, LPA or CFA schemes. In general, where language, educational standards and curriculum at local public schools are comparable to Ireland, children of posted officers attend such schools. However, in certain circumstances, officers can apply for school fees assistance where an officer's accompanying children must attend fee-paying schools at post in order to get a similar level of education to that provided by the state in Ireland. This assistance is to enable children to have continuity of education throughout and to prevent difficulties arising due to differences in educational systems as families move between a range of countries throughout an officer's career. The scheme also fulfils the State's obligations in respect of the rights of children enshrined in Irish constitutional law.

To avail of the School Fees Assistance Programme, officers must satisfy the Department that it is necessary for the child to attend a fee-paying school at post and that the tuition fees are reasonable. The number of those in receipt of support under the programme in 2013 was as follows:

| Year | 2013 |
|---|-----------------------------|
| School Fees Assistance Programme Payments | €1,191,334 |
| No of Children/Officers who received assistance under the School Fees Assistance Programme | 100 children of 57 officers |

*Corporate Affairs Division
D/Foreign Affairs & Trade
March 2014*

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|---------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) | To defray costs associated with a higher cost of living index at the post abroad. Payable to all officers serving in locations where the cost of living on a posting is deemed (based on data sourced from our independent consultants) to be higher than in Dublin. In 2013, COLA was sanctioned at 48 locations. | COLA is dependent on a number of variables including grade, status on posting ² and the cost of living indices on post and in Dublin. <u>COLA = Home Spendable Net Mean of Scale x (Cost of Living index on post – Dublin Cost of Living index)</u> | 337 officers | €2,940,722 |
| Local Post Allowance (LPA) | LPA covers various indirect representational costs in nine specific areas which an officer is deemed to incur in the performance of his/her duties abroad. While all posts attract a level of LPA, the amount due is dependent on status on posting, grade and role (e.g. officials who have no formal representational function would receive a lower LPA as do Heads of Mission who have accommodation provided on the basis that their utilities are covered elsewhere). Officers serving in designated "hardship" postings may also be entitled to a hardship allowance as part of their LPA. | A specific sum has been sanctioned for each of the nine LPA headings. The total of these constituent costs, adjusted for changes in Irish CPI gives a "Dublin based" LPA. The cost of living index for the post abroad is applied to the Dublin rate of LPA where the index is positive. Hardship posts fall into one of 5 categories. A – E with E being the lowest level. Starting with Category E, the allowances corresponding to each category are, in ascending order, 8%, 12%, 16%, 20% and 24% of the net mean of salary scale of an officer's grade. | 401 officers | €5,091,125 (includes hardship LPA) |

¹ excluding staff seconded from other Departments

² Married Accompanied, Married Unaccompanied or Single

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Child Foreign Allowance (CFA) | CFA is paid to all posted officers with children under 21 in full time education to cover the additional costs associated with bringing a child up while on posting. | CFA is calculated on a notional Irish cost of the additional expenditure which is adjusted, where appropriate, using the COL index. It does not include an element for education costs | 285 children of 143 Officers | €746,055 |
| Foreign Service Allowance Other | Paid to all officials serving in the Joint Secretariats in Belfast and Armagh. | Sanctioned rates based on grade and marital status. | 19 | €89,000 |
| Rent Refund Scheme | The Rent Refund Scheme enables officers serving abroad rent suitable residential accommodation, if required. It is generally payable to all posted officers with the exception of postings where residential accommodation is provided by the Department (e.g. for Heads of Mission) or for short term assignments. | Rent ceilings are determined by Human Resources Unit with regard to local market conditions and family circumstances. The refund is paid on a vouched basis within pre-sanctioned rent ceiling. | 329 officers | €7,567,767 |
| Furniture Refund Scheme | To assist with the purchase of items which are required for the effective carrying out of an officer's duty but which, in the normal course of events, an officer might not be expected to own and which may be of use in subsequent postings Refunds can only be claimed in respect of qualifying items purchased during the first twelve months of the posting by eligible officers i.e. those on their first posting or | 100% of the vouched outlay, subject to a limit of €4,000 for officers of Third Secretary/HEO and equivalent and upwards, and €2,000 for all other officers. | 28 DFAT officers (costs for all seconded officers are covered by parent Department) | €47,820 |

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | who have not have benefited from the current or previous similar scheme on earlier postings. | | | |
| School Fees Assistance (SF/A) Programme | <p>Officers who are provided with official residential accommodation furnished by the State are not eligible for the scheme nor are those on assignments abroad which are intended to be of less than two years.</p> <p>SF/A aims to assist with tuition fees in locations where language, educational standards or curriculum at local public schools mitigates against children of posted officers attending such schools in order to get a similar level of education to that provided by the state in Ireland. This assistance enables children to have continuity of education and to prevent difficulties arising due to differences in educational systems as families move between a range of countries throughout an officer's career. The scheme also fulfils the State's obligations in respect of the rights of children enshrined in Irish constitutional law.</p> | <p>Vouched cost of tuition fees only provided the officer satisfies the Department of the necessity for the child to attend a fee-paying school at post and that the fees are reasonable.</p> <p>Officers who choose to place their children in boarding school in Ireland may be refunded 100% of the tuition fees while abroad. In order to support continuity of education, Diplomatic Officers whose children attended boarding school in Ireland, while their parent was on posting and who may be posted again within a short timeframe can apply to have 50% of boarding school fees paid by the</p> | 100 children of 57 officers | €1,191,334 |

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | <p>The scheme also includes provision for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers who, to ensure continuity of education, choose to place their children in boarding school in Ireland; • Application of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme • Additional Irish language tuition abroad • English language tuition abroad where child being educated in (non-fee paying) local school system through language other than English • Extra tuition during first two years following return to Ireland where child is preparing for Junior/Leaving Cert. | Department while based in HQ. | | |
| Representational Fund | <p>This is not an individual allowance but rather a representation budget provided to each Mission in response to an annual business case. It is overseen by the Head of Mission.</p> | Reimbursed on the basis of claims submitted. | 73 Missions | €2,205,716 |
| Health Insurance overseas scheme | <p>It is open to all officers going on posting and eligible accompanying family members to take out membership of the Department's Vhi international healthcare policy. The contract for provision of this service is the outcome of a tendering process undertaken in 2012.</p> | <p>The cost of an individual's cover varies widely as it is based on age and location of post. Officers pay a contribution towards the cost of cover up to a fixed financial limit, benchmarked against the average cost of a number of relevant domestic health insurance policies.</p> | 313 officers and 313 accompanying family members (as at 01/03/13, numbers vary throughout the year.) | €500,225 |

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|--|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| | This scheme ensures officers can avail of suitable healthcare while on posting and continuity of cover so that they are not penalised on return. | Where the actual cost is greater than the benchmark figure, the Department pays a monthly top-up to Vhi to meet the additional cost. | | |
| Other Medical Expenses | To cover occasional situations overseas where a medical treatment or intervention abroad is not covered (or only partly covered) by the VHI International scheme e.g. vaccinations. Where such procedures would be available free or at much lower cost in Ireland, the Department pays the difference between the cost at post and the costs in Ireland. | Refunded on a vouched basis. | 39 officers/family members. Some payments were also made in respect of specific groups (e.g. Embassy or HQ staff) to cover vaccinations required for work in appropriate regions | €59,557 |
| Accommodation related expenses at start and end of posting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation costs on arrival: covers the cost of an officer's temporary accommodation at the start of posting while s/he is searching for permanent accommodation. • Detention Allowance: This is paid to cover the incidental expenses arising while an officer is living in temporary accommodation and seeking accommodation on taking up duty abroad • Return from Posting Expenses | <p>Cost varies in accordance with officer's family circumstances</p> <p>Payable for a limited period in line with Department of Finance subsistence rates</p> | 143 officers | €493,096 |

PAC response -- Appendix A

| Allowance | Purpose/ Beneficiary | Method of Calculation | No. of Recipients 2013 ¹ | Outturn 2013 Votes 27 and 28 |
|-----------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Scheme: a vouched scheme that replaced the previous Disturbance Allowance which was abolished following the 2012 D/PER review. | Paid on a vouched basis within sanctioned parameters | | |

PAC Response - Appendix B

| Breakdown by grade of expenditure on Foreign Service Allowances in 2013 (Votes 27 and 28) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Grade | COLA | | LPA | | CFA | |
| | Total spent in € | No. of officers in receipt of allowance | Total spent in € | No. of officers in receipt of allowance | Total spent in € | No. of officers in receipt of allowance |
| Ambassador* | 885,145 | 52 | 1,162,887 | 73 | 129,006 | 23 |
| Counsellor/PO | 229,046 | 27 | 403,873 | 27 | 48,013 | 8 |
| First Secretary/ AP/Senior Development Specialist/Development Specialist | 912,859 | 110 | 1,960,884 | 134 | 379,708 | 70 |
| Garda Liaison Officer | 32,741 | 4 | 70,806 | 4 | 18,223 | 3 |
| Third Secretary/HEO | 454,693 | 73 | 1,069,291 | 88 | 92,519 | 23 |
| Executive Officer | 98,836 | 15 | 82,791 | 15 | 7,249 | 2 |
| Staff Officer | 12,417 | 3 | 10,820 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Clerical Officer | 260,867 | 47 | 228,704 | 49 | 53,622 | 11 |
| Other** | 54,117 | 6 | 101,069 | 8 | 17,715 | 3 |
| Totals | 2,940,722 | 337 | 5,091,125 | 401 | 746,055 | 143 |

* includes Ambassadors at all grade levels ;

** includes payments to officers in a range of grades which at end 2013 remained to be recouped from other Government Departments

Provision of Passports: Premium Same Day Application Service (your query no. 7 refers)

The Passport Service has completed an initial examination of a new premium service which would allow applicants obtain a passport on the day the application is lodged. The pilot service will run through the peak season i.e. from late April 2014 to 30 September 2014 at which time a comprehensive review of the operation of the service will take place. It is proposed that the system would operate as follows:

1. Adults with their last expired passport in hand (approx 60% of all applicants) could generally be accommodated. (The Molesworth Street Passport Officer will exercise some discretion in this area i.e. in cases where travel is urgently required and where identity has been conclusively proved, a passport may issue in respect of one lost).
2. Only children with a previous passport and accompanied by their two parents who are both in possession of their passports would be accommodated. This is proposed to protect against child abduction. This is a more extensive service than that currently offered by the British Passport Service.
3. It is proposed that no changes in fees would apply for the duration of the pilot i.e. a ten year passport for an adult turned around as part of this new arrangement would be €150.
4. The service would operate only in Molesworth Street and only through the appointment service. As passports cannot be produced in Cork, a same day service could not be provided in that office.
5. There would be a finite number (approx 30) of applications received before 12.30 pm that could be turned around by 4pm. Of these, 20 appointments would be available to book online from 6pm the evening before. The 10 remaining appointments would be reserved for walk-ins on the morning and for specific cases brought to the attention of the Passport Officer.
6. The service would only be offered to those who have a proven need to travel in less than the three day service offering, which will continue to be provided.
7. Additional resources to establish a dedicated team will be put in place. The staff numbers required reflects the additional processes associated with operating the counter; scanning and checking the application and producing the application within very short time periods and reflect the finite number of applications which can be processed.

8. The revenue generated by such a premium service would fund the operation of the same day service.
9. The introduction of this service would have to be managed very carefully to avoid setting unrealistic expectations amongst the public and with public representatives. A message, which provides a valid and a clear explanation of what is possible within the resources available and why only certain categories of applicant can avail of this service, will be required. The substantial shift from counter service to passport express has shown that applicants move fluidly from service type to service type. In introducing the new premium service, there is a risk that demand will shift to the one day service and introduce unmanageable pressures on existing resources.
10. The service would operate on an initial 5 month pilot basis trialling the operation, Monday to Friday, for the 2014 peak season. The launch date of this pilot is dependent on the recruitment and training of the additional temporary staff required; and on the amount of time required to allow the necessary modifications being made to the appointment system. However, it is expected that the new service would be in place before the end of April.

Passport Office
March 2014

Note on the Election Observation Roster (your query no. 9 refers)

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade maintains a roster of 200 individuals who are available to participate in election observation missions at relatively short notice, organised in the main by the EU and the OSCE. In 2014, it is expected that Ireland will send up to 50 long- and short-term observers on five OSCE-led missions. Ireland will nominate observers to every EU-led mission where a request for national observers is made.

While the previous Election Observation Roster had been updated in 2008, it had been in operation for a considerable period of time and a review was carried out in 2013 to enable new members to join the roster and to strengthen its quality further. A call for new applications was issued in early 2013, with both existing roster members and new candidates being invited to apply. The call was issued on the Department's website.

Ireland has a good record in having nominees selected to participate in missions led by the EU and the OSCE. In order to ensure this continued success, it was regarded as important that the new roster contained the right mix of skills and experience, matching the specific requirements set by the EU and the OSCE. As a result, applicants to the new roster were asked to outline their experience/skills in four key areas: Language Skills; Experience of election observation; Knowledge of human rights and/or governance issues; and experience of living in challenging environments.

Specific, often difficult, language skills are frequently sought, for example, by the EU in organizing missions. In 2013, for example, Irish roster nominees took part in eleven election monitoring missions overseen by the EU. Six of those missions required fluency in a primary language other than English. In the case of the OSCE, while English is the primary language used on missions, knowledge of a second relevant local language is usually indicated as desirable for election observers. The trend for 2014 so far mirrors the 2013 experience. All applicants to the new roster were required to set out their language proficiency in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Arabic. Applicants could also indicate their proficiency in other languages. Candidates were asked to indicate their levels of proficiency, what formal study had been undertaken, and their usage of the languages. Although language skills were not tested orally, the EU carries out spot checks on language proficiency among candidates nominated to take part in election observer missions.

In terms of the selection of candidates for the new roster, the Information Note for Applicants stated that interviews would be held in the event that a large number of applicants met the minimum eligibility requirements. In the event, a total of 263 eligible applications were received for a roster to comprise of 200 individuals. Given that this number was not significantly higher than the number of places available on the roster, it was decided to confine the selection process to an assessment of the written applications and an interview stage was not included.

All eligible applications were scored independently by two assessors external to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade against the four criteria outlined. On foot of this, a new roster of 200 members was put in place and came into effect on 15 May 2013. A reserve panel of 10 was also created, from which 2 members have been drawn to date.

All unsuccessful applicants to the roster were invited to request feedback on their applications. Feedback has been provided on this basis to 18 individuals. A review process was also offered to unsuccessful candidates, to be conducted by a senior official who had not been involved in the roster review.

On foot of feedback received, two unsuccessful applicants requested a final review of their applications. In both cases, the reviewer was of the view that the scoring of the applications was fair and impartial. In one case, it was recommended that the applicant's score be adjusted marginally upwards. However, this did not make a material difference to the applicant's final score.

In terms of selecting current roster members for engagement in missions, when a request for election observation nominees is received, the Department contacts all roster members by e-mail seeking expressions of interest to participate in the mission. A list of suitably qualified observers is drawn up, taking into account the specific criteria for the mission, including language proficiency. In selecting the final nominees issues such as gender balance, regional/country experience and length of time since serving on a mission are also taken into account. In the case of EU-led election observation missions, the final selection of observers from the list of nominees submitted by the Department rests with the European Commission. In the case of OSCE-led missions, all the observers nominated by the Department are usually selected.

A list of all 200 members currently on the election roster is appended to this note.

Development Cooperation Division

18 March 2014

Appendix: Election Observation Roster 2014

Listing of Members

| First name | Surname |
|------------|------------------|
| Dermot | Ahern |
| Suhail | Ahmad |
| Les | Allamby |
| Chris | Andrews |
| Frances | Ball |
| Peter | Ballagh |
| Tania | Banotti |
| Patricia | Barker |
| Richard | Barrett |
| Leila | Blacking |
| Donal | Blake |
| Mary | Boland |
| Adrienne | Boyle |
| Michael | Boyle |
| Paul | Brennan |
| Caroline | Brennan |
| Damien | Brennan |
| Flonnuala | Brennan |
| Noel | Brennan |
| Andrea | Breslin |
| Gabrielle | Brocklesby |
| Catherine | Brophy |
| Gerard | Buckley |
| William | Bulman |
| Colm | Burke (Senator) |
| John | Burke |
| Elaine | Byrne |
| Eric | Byrne TD |
| Barry | Cannon |
| Philippe | Carr |
| Pat | Carroll |
| Anne | Choiseul |
| Michael | Cleary |
| John Paul | Coakley |
| Dermot | Cogan |
| Pauline | Conway |
| Sandra | Conway |
| Ciara | Conway TD |

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Peter | Cotter |
| John | Cousins |
| Michael | Coyne |
| Evanna | Craig |
| Kevin | Cronin |
| Marie | Cross |
| Mary | Cummins |
| Diarmuid | Cunniffe |
| John | Curran |
| Asa (Karl) | Cusack |
| Kieran | Dalton |
| Bernard | Daly |
| Eamonn | Daly |
| Thomas | Daly |
| David | Denny |
| Anne | Donnellan |
| Paddy | Donnelly |
| Patricia | Donnelly |
| Peter | Donovan |
| James | Doody |
| Mary | Dowling |
| Terence | Duffy |
| Mary | Dunne |
| Patrick | Durcan |
| John | Durnin |
| Thomas Faolán | Earlie |
| Peter | Emerson |
| Brian | Fagan |
| Colm | Fahy |
| Gerard | Finnegan |
| Annetta | Flanigan |
| Terence | Fleming |
| Marja | Foley |
| Michael | Gannon |
| Frederick | Gilligan |
| Fergus | Gleeson |
| Brendan | Gogarty |
| Michael | Good |
| Niall | Gormley |
| Patrick | Grant |
| Deirdre | Grogan |

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Kevin | Grogan |
| Munykwa | Hamadziripi |
| Dominic | Hannigan TD |
| Anne | Harris Hennon |
| Nuala | Haughey |
| Frank | Heslin |
| Sarah-Jane | Hillery |
| Edward | Horgan |
| Maca | Hourihane |
| Michael | Humphreys |
| Richard | Humphreys |
| Jas | Kaminski |
| Michael | Kavanagh |
| Patricia | Kearns |
| Cecilia | Keaveney |
| Cathal | Kelly |
| Patricia | Kelly |
| Thomas John | Kelly |
| Frank | Kennefick |
| Helen | Keogh |
| Maria | Kiernan |
| Emily | King |
| Ciaran | Kinsella |
| Dennis | Kirby |
| Tom | Kitt |
| Dorcha | Lee |
| Jimmy | Lenahan |
| Mark | Long |
| Grattan | Lynch |
| John | Lynch |
| Ruadhán | MacAodháin |
| Eithne | MacDermott |
| Fidelma | MacHale |
| Jean Celeste | Mackenzie |
| Brian | MacMahon |
| Desmond | MacMahon |
| Patrick | Maher |
| Elaine | Mahon |
| Joseph | Mangan |
| Anne | Marlborough |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Seamus | Martin |
| Raymond | Maxwell |
| Bernard | McCabe |
| Ellen | McCabe |
| James | McCarthy |
| Michael | McCarthy TD |
| Vincent (Pearse) | McCorley |
| Fergal | McCusker |
| Robert | McDaid |
| Ronan | McDermott |
| Donal | McDonald |
| Finola | McDowell |
| Padraic | McDunphy |
| Richard | McEvoy |
| Amy Rose | McGovern |
| Jean | McGrath |
| Una | McGurk |
| Peter | McMahon |
| Sheena Walsh | McMahon |
| Gerard | McNamara |
| Michael | McNamara TD |
| Peter | Miles |
| John | Minihan |
| Olivia | Mitchell TD |
| Andrew | Montague |
| John Martin | Moore |
| Alison | Moore |
| Rebecca | Moynihan |
| Siobhan | Mullally |
| Elizabeth | Mullan |
| John | Mulvihill TD |
| Karen | Murphy |
| Nicholas | Murphy |
| Ray | Murphy |
| Edward | Naessens |
| Willian | Nolan |
| Robert | Norris |
| Fiachra | O' Luain |
| (Joe) | O Murchu |

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Seosamh | |
| Ronán | O'Brien |
| Sean | O'Callaghan |
| Eimear | O'Casey |
| Shane | O'Connor |
| Charlie | O'Connor |
| Almha | O'Keefe |
| Geraldine | O'Neill |
| Anne | Ormonde |
| Aidan | O'Shea |
| Barbara | O'Shea |
| Mary | O'Shea |
| Paul | O'Shea |
| Finbar | O'Sullivan |
| Nora | Owen |
| Diarmuid | Peavoy |
| Ann | Phelan TD |
| John Paul | Phelan TD |
| Geraldine | Power |
| John | Purcell |
| Pat | Quinlan |
| Theresa | Reidy |
| Andrew | Richardson |
| Marion | Roche |
| Bill | Rolston |
| Paul | Rowe |
| Mary | Russell |
| Audrey | Ryan |
| Robert | Sampson |
| Joseph | Scanlon |
| Gisela | |
| Claire | Schmidt-Martin |
| Frank | Scott |
| Colin | Smith |
| Jimmy | Somers |
| Victoria | Somers |
| Traolach | Sweeney |
| Paul | Tighe |
| Michael | Verling |
| Brendan | Walsh |
| Eamonn | |
| Thomas | Walsh |

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Jacinta | Walsh |
| Emma | Warwick |
| Steve | Wrenn |

Ends