



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Finance Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building
London SW1A 2PA

Mr John Robertson
Email: request-53182-ace773bc@whatdotheyknow.com

23 December 2010

Our Ref: 1108-10

Dear Mr Robertson,

Thank you for your emails of 30 November, 4 December and 13 December 2010 asking for the following information for financial year 2009-10:

- 1) What is a simple breakdown of the reported €761,000 costs to UK taxpayer of the embassy to the Holy See? I hope for few dozen lines of cost like staff, buildings, travel, and a breakdown of staff costs.
- 2) What is the equivalent breakdown of costs of representation to San Marino?
- 3) What is the equivalent breakdown of costs of representation to Sark?
- 4) Please confirm that there is zero-budget for representation to other popes without micro-states attached: the two orthodox popes and the Coptic.
- 5) If the cost of representation to the Holy See is greater than that to San Marino or Sark, please provide a copy of the latest written review of this arrangement that's available to you.

I am writing to confirm that the FCO does hold some of the information relevant to your request.

- 1) In 2009-10 the cost of the British Embassy in the Holy See was £675,101 (excluding impairment charges resulting from the revaluation of the Holy See estate). The figure of €761,000 reported in our earlier FOI response was an approximation.

Please see table below for selected items of expenditure:

Category	Cost (£)
Hire of Plant and Machinery	660
Vehicle Costs	388
Estate expenditure	220,327
Consultancy and Professional fees	20,099
Other External/ Contract Services	145
Freight and Courier Cost	11
Telecommunications costs	161
Stationery	754
Other Purchased Goods and Services	3,738
Central Overhead Expenditure	102,226
Management and Support	107,967
Other costs/ income	218,625

Notes

- i. The central overhead expenditure figure represents a share of the costs of central departments in London (such as Human Resources, Finance, Procurement and IT) whose work supports the FCO as a whole.
- ii. In posts with five staff members or fewer we do not disclose staff costs. Although we do hold this information we consider it to be exempt from disclosure by virtue of s.40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This is because the requested information constitutes personal data and to disclose it would be unfair and therefore a breach of the first data protection principle (Schedule 1 Data Protection Act 1998 refers). In such circumstances s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is no public interest test to apply.
- iii. "Other costs/ income" covers items such as staff salaries, wages, pensions, subsistence and allowances, medical charges and overhead income. The overhead income has been offset against the other items of expenditure.

Our Embassy acts as a bridge between the UK Government and the Holy See and works with the Holy See on a wide range of policy issues including international development, climate change and disarmament. For more information on the Holy See and the work of the Embassy, please see the [Country Profile](#) on the Embassy Website and the [Ambassador's speeches](#).

- 2) Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Italy is accredited to San Marino, as is the British Consul, Florence, who is responsible for HMG business conducted with the San Marino authorities. In 2009-10 there were four visits made to San Marino by officials based in Florence and Rome. The direct cash costs incurred for these visits totalled £925.04. We are unable to provide an equivalent breakdown of other costs incurred as our accounting system does not produce a separate report for San Marino.
- 3) We do not hold information on the cost of representation to Sark. We would advise that you contact the [Ministry of Justice](#) as they handle the UK's relationships with the Crown Dependencies.
- 4) The FCO is represented by a [network](#) of over 260 Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and missions to international organisations. It is not possible to identify the cost of any representation to the aforementioned Popes without incurring disproportionate costs. We estimate that to locate, retrieve and extract this information would exceed the appropriate limit of £600 or 3.5 days. This limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. Section 12 of FOIA makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit.
- 5) As mentioned above, we are unable to make a comparison between the cost of representation to the Holy See and the cost of representation to San Marino and Sark as the figures are not readily available.

I hope you are satisfied with this reply. However, if you wish to make a complaint or if you would like a review of our decision, please write to the Information Rights Team at The Old Admiralty Building, Room SG 120, London, SW1A 2PA. E-mail: dp-foi.img@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may then apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

We continually strive to improve our service, so we would welcome your feedback and comments. If you would like to provide feedback on our service, please email our Information Rights Team, again at: dp-foi.img@fco.gov.uk

You can also find out more about the FCO and freedom of information issues at our Access to Information website: <http://foi.fco.gov.uk/en>

Yours faithfully,

Desk Officer
Financial Management Group



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.