



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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9 February 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0017-16

Thank you for your email of 8 January asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

A comprehensive list of all newspapers, magazines and journals purchased and subscribed to with Foreign & Commonwealth Office departmental money since May 2009, including a breakdown of [how] many copies were purchased and the amount spent broken down for each publication.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

I enclose an electronic spreadsheet which is based on information supplied by external journals and newspaper subscription agents. It includes the following sections:

- A page containing a list of journal titles that have been centrally purchased by the FCO between May 2009 and 2016, with the cost of each title. Please note that the FCO does not distinguish between magazines and journals;
- A page containing titles of newspapers purchased by the FCO between January 2014 and December 2015, with the total cost of procurement stated for this period;
- A page containing titles of newspapers subscribed to since 2009 which are available to all FCO staff electronically.

This information relates to journal subscriptions that have been procured centrally by the Knowledge Management Department (KMD) on behalf of the wider FCO. To keep costs to a minimum, procurements are made through a Third Party subscription agent under

government wide arrangements. The costs are provided by our subscription agent in the Autumn each year and are accurate at the time of presentation, but can sometimes increase.

Subscriptions may also be taken out with publishers directly because they are unable to deal with Third Party subscription agents. The FCO has done this with the publishers of *Eurocomment* from 1 January 2016 at a cost of £500.84 per annum.

Wherever possible journals are purchased in electronic form and made accessible to all staff. KMD uses a subscription model which allows multiple members of FCO staff to access a single electronic version at any given time which ensures the best value for money.

KMD also procures electronic newspapers centrally on behalf of the wider FCO in electronic format. Costs are given for these in the enclosed spreadsheet. In the case of the Economist Newspaper, a single electronic version is accessible by all staff who using the FCO office system, and access to the The Times Online and the Financial Times is via user accounts administered centrally. Although the cost of key electronic newspapers has risen over the six year period, the cost is offset by the considerable savings gained by cancelling equivalent paper copies over the same period. The following examples illustrate savings currently made by allowing the FCO global network electronic access to the following publications:

- FT. Cost £66,318 in the current year compared to a cost of £245,916 to provide the equivalent access in paper format to the same number of regular users;.
- Times Online. Cost £45,240 in the current year compared to a cost of £334,000 to provide in paper format to all FCO electronic account holders;
- Economist. Cost £70,816 compared to £78,000 to provide in paper format to the FCO staff who access this newspaper using mobile devices, and without considering those in the UK and 270 overseas posts who also have access to it. One copy per week for each post would add a further £70,200 to this cost.
- In 2010 the FCO implemented widespread cancellations of newspapers across the whole network, saving £100,000. A switch to centrally-provided electronic copies in 2011 saved a further £100K.
- The costs of journal subscriptions has remained relatively static (declining somewhat in real terms), due both to rigorous cost control and by ensuring that our subscriptions are relevant and aligned with the FCO's business priorities.

Providing electronic copies of newspapers and journals centrally to the whole FCO network also carries considerable economies of scale in terms of staff time spent administering subscription accounts.

Yours sincerely,

Knowledge Management Department



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.