



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Human Resources Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

26 June 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0227-17

Thank you for your email of 3 March asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I would like to narrow the scope of the request to cover only the years since 2000.

I would also like to challenge the suggestion that the information cannot be released under sector 24, when the most recent data - and therefore the most sensitive, has been released in a parliamentary answer on November 15.

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2016-11-01.HL2911.h&s=foreign+office+russian+speakers#gHL2911.r0>

Central records confirm the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)** has 163 employees with some level of **Russian**, language skills, ranging from basic **Russian** to operational (equivalent to degree level).

Russian is a priority language for the FCO, and since 2010 we have increased the number of **Russian**-language **speaker** positions in our **Russian** and former Soviet Union Posts by 30% and increased the minimum duration for **Russian**-language training from 10 to 14 months.

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.

Language skills are a priority for the FCO. The ability to communicate with others in their own language is vital to the FCO's delivery of the Government's foreign policy priorities and enables diplomats to connect and do business around the world. We want to ensure officers posted overseas have the correct skills to be effective in their role.

Russian is a priority language for the Foreign Office. In 2010 an exercise on language positions overseas indicated that there were 36 Russian language positions in Russia and the Former Soviet Union. As of April 2017 this number has risen to 46.

Central records only retain figures for the past five years. As a result, the information you have requested is available from 2013 to present. The number of Russia language posts during the period in question is:

| | Russia | FSU Posts |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| 2013 | 25 | 33 |
| 2014 | 21 | 21 |
| 2015 | 25 | 26 |
| 2016 | 23 | 26 |
| 2017 | 21 | 25 |

Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



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.