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Mr Charles Ghose

request-666090-  
24281835@whatdotheyknow.com

17th September 2020

Dear Mr Charles Ghose,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI2020/15098**

Thank you for your email of 22nd July asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

1. *How many British honorary Consuls are there in the world?*
2. *In which countries are there British honorary consuls?*
3. *Which countries have a honorary consuls in the U.K?*
4. *Which countries do not have a British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*
5. *Which countries do not have any Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*
6. *Which country has the smallest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*
7. *Which country has the largest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*
8. *Which country has the smallest Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*

*9. Which country has the largest Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*

*10. Which country was the first to have an Embassy in the U.K?*

On 20<sup>th</sup> July you wrote to us for an update on the reply. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July we apologised for not acknowledging your original request and asked you for further clarification on Qs 6, 7, 8 and 9. We asked you to clarify if you were requesting the total number of staff. You replied on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

*'I can confirm that the total number of employees is that my questions relate to.'*

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. Please note that, as your request was made to the former FCO, i.e. prior to the creation of FCDO, our reply only takes into account any relevant information held by the FCO at the time your request was received.

Questions 1, 2, and 3 are exempt under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act. Under section 21, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Some of the information is already available to you within the public domain. In order to assist your research we have provided the following links and explanations of the information available to you.

*1. How many British honorary Consuls are there in the world?*

*2. In which countries are there British honorary consuls?*

While Honorary Consuls are considered consular officers under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, they are individual volunteers and are not based in FCO premises. The data for questions 1 and 2 is covered by the following link which details Foreign Office Honorary Consulates.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-foreign-office-honorary-consulates#history>

*3. Which countries have a honorary consuls in the U.K?*

The data for question 3 can be found at the following link which details Honorary Consulates within the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk>

*4. Which countries do not have a British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*

We do not hold a list of those countries who do not have a UK Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? However, the data for Q4 can be determined by using the following links which include countries i) all Embassies, High Commissions and Consulate overseas and ii) all Foreign Office Honorary Consulates.

- i) <https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies>
- ii) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-foreign-office-honorary-consulates#history>

*5. Which countries do not have any Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*

We do not hold comprehensive information on States which do not have Missions, Consulates, High Commissions or Honorary Consuls in the UK. The following link includes those States with Honorary Consulates within the UK and Consular Offices outside London.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk>

*6. Which country has the smallest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*

*7. Which country has the largest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*

I can confirm that the FCO holds information relevant to questions 6 and 7 of your request. We had originally considered Section 38 of the FOIA (Health & Safety) for this information. However, we no longer consider Section 38 applies and I now consider some of the more detailed information you have requested for questions 6 is exempt under Section 24 (1) of the FOIA (National Security).

Section 24 is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test. I acknowledge the public interest in the breakdown of staffing at the FCO, and the wider interest in openness and transparency in government. However there is a clear public interest in ensuring that the FCO is able to safeguard national security. I consider that release of the information concerned could undermine the effective operation of the FCO's network, and thus adversely affect the UK's security. I therefore consider that, in this case, the public interest in withholding the material outweighs that in its release.

We are able to provide the following information which lists countries within the smallest and largest size band categories. Staff totals are based on UK based and locally engaged staff. Staff working for other government departments in overseas locations are not counted (Please note this data was collated at the date your request was received, prior to the creation of FCDO).

*6. Which country has the smallest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*

**UK Mission:** (Fewer than 10 staff headcount) France

**Consulate or Consulate General:** (Fewer than 10 staff headcount) Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Vietnam.

**High Commission or Deputy High Commission:** (Fewer than 10 staff headcount) Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Eswatini, Grenada, India, Lesotho, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu.

**Embassy:** (Fewer than 10 staff headcount – other countries are withheld under S24 of the FOIA) El Salvador, Haiti, Holy See, Iceland, Maldives, Mauritania.

**Honorary Consuls:** Covered by link in Q4 part ii. Honorary consulates are individuals.

*7. Which country has the largest British Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul?*

**UK Mission:** (Countries with staff headcount between 160 - 179) Belgium

**Consulate:** (Countries with staff headcount between 100 - 119) Turkey

**High Commission:** (Countries with staff headcount between 280 - 299) India, Pakistan

**Embassy:** (Countries with staff headcount between 220-239) Sudan

**Honorary Consuls:** Covered by link in Q4 part ii. Honorary consulates are individuals.

*8. Which country has the smallest Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*

*9. Which country has the largest Mission, Consulate, High Commission, Embassy, or honorary consul? in the U.K?*

We do not hold comprehensive data on the total number of staff employed by foreign Missions, Consulates, High Commissions, Embassies and Honorary consulates in the UK; however, the total numbers of diplomatic staff in the UK is already publicly available on our website via the London Diplomatic List.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-embassies-in-the-uk>

10. Which country was the first to have an Embassy in the U.K?

We have consulted with FCO Historians to provide a response to question 10 outside of the Freedom of Information Act. They have provided the following information:

We are aware of a reference in the *English Historical Review* (No.428, July 1993, pp 589-609: "Pro Expensis Ambassatorum: Diplomacy and Financial Administration in the Reign of Henry VII") to Royal hospitality extended to the French Ambassador Jean Guerin in 1487; and to the existence of established emissaries from France, Spain, Scotland, Brittany and Flanders in London at that time. Additionally ordinances of 1324 referred to English exchequer responsibility for English ambassadorial missions, so it is likely that ad-hoc foreign missions (not permanent ones) were both travelling abroad and visiting London and elsewhere (wherever the Royal Court was) for negotiation of treaties etc. at that earlier time, and probably before.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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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 FCDO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, or online at: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Yours sincerely,

**Information Rights Unit**



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