



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Human Rights and Democracy Department**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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14 October 2016

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0772-16**

Thank you for your email of 10 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

- 1. Any official statement or document from the Foreign Commonwealth Office related to the human rights and democracy projects funded in the financial year 2015-2016. I found the projects for the year 2014-2015 (attached) but not the one for the most recent financial period.*
- 2. The official document for the project "Strengthening the Venezuelan National Assembly's institutional capacity to promote a more democratic, transparent, and effective parliamentary culture" approved in May 2016 through the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy.*

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.

In 2015/16 the FCO supported Human Rights and Democracy projects across various funding streams and through contributions to international institutions. The majority of the FCO's direct support to Human Rights projects was through the dedicated Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy, which delivered £5.5m of funding to support 75 projects in over 40 countries. The programme supported civil society organisations to build capacity, press for change and engage in constructive dialogue on Human Rights with host governments. The annual FCO Human Rights Report (link to the report: [2015 Human Rights Report](#)) details the FCO's contribution to Human Rights causes, and sets out the strategy for future years.

The FCO will be releasing further details on the FCO's specific human rights projects from 2015/16, including the Venezuela project, of in Official Development Assistance designated countries later this year. We will also be releasing the FCO's Annual Human Rights Report in 2017, this will detail the FCO's contribution to Human Rights goals in 2016. The information you have requested relating to specific project work in Venezuela is therefore exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act as the information is intended for future publication. Section 22 provides that:

- 1 Information is exempt information if -
  - (a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),

The exemption under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act recognises that it must be reasonable in all the circumstances to withhold the information until the date of publication. Given

the necessary preparation and time required to collate our human rights projects from 15/16 and administration involved in publishing the information, which includes liaison with the our local posts, policy teams, the project implementers, and submission of the information to Ministers, we consider that our publication timetable is reasonable.

Although we are unable to provide any further details currently, the FCO remains committed to supporting Human Rights and Democracy projects and civil society organisations around the world. In 2016/17 the FCO doubled funding for the Magna Carta Fund to £10.6m. The programme intends to support over a 120 projects internationally during this financial year.

Yours sincerely,

Programme Manager, Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy



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