



GSOC Ref: CEPS-020-19
Your Ref: PAC32-I-1439

Ms. Éilis Fallon
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

11 September 2019

Re: Request for Information Note

Dear Ms. Fallon,

I am writing in relation to your letter dated 15 May 2019 in which you sought an information note concerning the inquiry regarding EU funds for training purposes in relation to the Garda College, Templemore. Under the provisions of Section 81 (4) (a) (x) of the Garda Síochána Act, 2005 (as amended), the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission wishes to make the following information available to the members of the Committee of Public Accounts in response to the request.

GSOC's public interest investigation is ongoing, although it is at an advanced stage. There are two separate strands to the investigation, both of which originate from the concerns expressed by the Head of the Garda Internal Audit Section. One relates to the issues raised before the Committee of Public Accounts regarding the administration at the Garda College, Templemore. The other strand relates to the administration of funds, largely sourced from the European Union, for a number of policing programmes.

During the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on the 9th of May 2019, Deputy Alan Farrell made reference to "*European funds in a bank account, which I understand were for training purposes*". These funds received from the European Union were to allow An Garda Síochána, through various units within the organisation, to run seminars and conferences. These seminars and conferences related to criminal matters affecting European Union states and were designed to see if solutions could be brought forward to combat same.

A member state, upon being selected to manage a programme, would invite representatives from other member states to attend seminars and conferences regarding the topic, and at the conclusion of the programme, a report would be furnished to the relevant department within the European Union. An example of some of the programmes that were managed by An Garda Síochána included 'Organised Crime Gangs Operating in Multiple Member States', 'Drug Trafficking Offences', 'Human Trafficking Offences', 'Cybercrime and Fraud', to name a few.

The various European programmes were applied for by a unit attached to Garda Headquarters through the Department of Justice and, if successful, funding was received. The Department of Justice would have co-funded the projects, as part of the grant agreements between the Garda Síochána and the European Union. A bank account, sanctioned by the Department of Justice, was opened at AIB Templemore and administered by a person attached to the Garda College. It should be noted that although the funds were administered from the Garda College, the management of same was completely separate from the operation of the College.

During its investigation, GSOC has obtained a significant amount of documentation from the Garda Síochána, Department of Justice & Equality, financial institutions and from the European Union itself. As this is a criminal investigation, GSOC is limited in what information it can release at this time, but as stated above the investigation is now at an advanced stage.

I trust this is satisfactory but please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Louise O'Meara

Head of Policy & Secretariat