



Freedom of Information Team

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14 November 2011

Thank you for your email of 12 September to Cyril Murie, Vice-Chair of the EU e-MOBIDIG working group; and also for your UK Freedom of Information (FoI) request in respect of my diary from 1 March to 14 October 2011.

e-MOBIDIG

This working group addresses mobile ID devices for immigration and police services. I have Chaired this group since November 2010 at the 6th meeting of the group at Eindhoven. Since then we have met at the EU Joint Research Centre at Ispra near Milan in April 2011 (7th meeting) and in Stockholm in September 2011 (8th meeting).

I work in UK Border Agency on identity management in a technical context but with a business focus. Cyril Murie to whom you emailed is a Gendarme working at the French National Secure Documents Agency (ANTS), so between us we cover immigration and policing interests in the leadership of the group, which is useful.

As you are aware, we have a website for the e-MOBIDIG group, www.e-mobidig.eu. This is kindly maintained for the group by ANTS.

The rationale for e-MOBIDIG is that mobile devices and mobile communications are undergoing rapid evolution and it is clear that these technologies have potential application to policing and immigration work, as they do for many other areas of work and home life. Bringing interested participants together (e.g. government, police, immigration, industry and standards bodies) is useful in sharing good practice and understanding strategy and what works well or not. You could say the worst outcome might be for many countries to work in isolation and repeat potentially expensive mistakes in their mobile solutions—we hope the group helps to avoid this.

You complimented the open approach that e-MOBIDIG has taken e.g. on publication via the website. That suits the way of working and the nature of the meetings we hold, but would not necessarily reflect circumstances of another working group—

each to their own context. It is easier to talk openly about broadly technical solutions in a **generic** context, and I believe information at that level is particularly useful to share; it might for example be less appropriate to share more **specific** details of individual solutions where it is essential to safeguard security protection of the system and confidential information it may hold. Be that as it may, we are following a path that seems right for our context. As you may have spotted from the website, we have responded to your encouragement and we have put presentations and a report of the meeting from the 8th meeting in September, in Stockholm onto the site.

Freedom of Information request

You asked for disclosure of some 6 months of my diary—1 April to 14 October 2011.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Home Office is not obliged to comply with an information request where to do so would exceed the cost limit.

We hold the information which you have requested but we have estimated that the cost of meeting your request would exceed the cost limit of £600 specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. We are therefore unable to comply with it. A working diary inevitably contains notes on social contacts not relevant to work (except to avoid clashes between work and home engagements); and names and contact details a large number of work colleagues. To release my working diary would therefore require a complete review, and I would need to agree disclosure with my contacts, or remove their details. Either way, this would be a significant undertaking.

The £600 limit is based on work being carried out at a rate of £25 per hour, which equates to 24 hours of work per request. The cost of locating, retrieving and extracting information and preparing the response can be included in the costs for these purposes. The costs do not include considering whether any information is exempt from disclosure, overheads such as heating or lighting, or items such as photocopying or postage.

If you refine your request, so that it is more likely to fall under the cost limit, we will consider it again. You may wish to request information over a reduced period or for a specific type or subject of meeting. Any new request will be judged on its merits.

Please note that if you simply break your request down into a series of similar smaller requests, we might still decline to answer it if the total cost exceeds £600.

We have also referred to the presence of personal information in the diary requested. The general policy of the Home Office is not to disclose, to a third party, personal information about another person. This is because we have obligations under the Data Protection Act and in law generally to protect this information. Your request for personal information has been considered in line with our obligations under the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act. However, we have concluded that the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FoI Act. This exempts personal data if disclosure would breach any of the data protection principles.

If it would help, however, I am happy to explain in more general terms what I do. I am a Deputy Director (Grade 6) in UK Border Agency, working mainly in central London and Croydon. I work on identity management and related issues. Identity management is an important area of UKBA's work, for example with the adoption in 2007/8 of universal fingerprint enrolment and checks for applicants for a UK visa; now with the ability to verify that someone arriving at the UK border with a UK visa in

their passport is the same person who applied for the visa abroad. This is an important safeguard against identity fraud.

My main work covers:

- Some work on the security of passport and card chips, including reading and authenticating the contents of document chips, and exchanging access permission with other EU states.
- Mobile devices and strategy—including use and strategy for mobile ID devices in UKBA, and as Chair of the e-MOBIDIG EU working group (above).
- Advice and contribution to the project to deliver a new biometric system for UKBA, the Immigration and Asylum Biometrics System (IABS).
- I also Chair 6-monthly meetings of the Technology Working Group of an organisation in Geneva called the InterGovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (the IGC). A major output from this group has been a Business Guide to Immigration Technology: a copy of the papers forming this guide can be found on the e-MOBIDIG website under the section ID information | IGC Working Group.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference 20358. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
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Ground Floor, Seacole Building
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As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

I hope this is helpful.

Regards, Frank Smith