



## Key correspondence between Web Summit and Irish Government

### Key Persons in Correspondence:

Paddy Cosgrave, CEO and Founder, Web Summit

John Callinan, Assistant Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach

Nick Reddy, Taoiseach's Private Secretary

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### Four appendices

## **Paddy Cosgrave to Nick Reddy - August 21, 2015**

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>

Date: 21 August 2015 at 20:20

Subject: Web Summit

To: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie

Cc: David Kelly <david@websummit.net>

Nick,

As requested by the Taoiseach please find attached a concise overview of the offerings from a number of other countries. Our absolute preference is to stay in Ireland. We've had an incredibly positive experience over the last five years and I know the Taoiseach is adamant that any offer can be matched.

I want to highlight a few issues which we first raised in 2013: the costs of hotels and wifi in particular have become highly uncompetitive as compared to elsewhere in Europe, and this year have risen more than ever before. Furthermore, the facilities in the RDS require such significant additional build by us that the true costs of the venue are substantially greater than elsewhere in Europe where state of the art facilities are standard.

I've cced my co-founder David who is leading on this.

Many thanks,

Paddy

## Paddy Cosgrave to Nick Reddy - August 24, 2015

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>  
Date: 24 August 2015 at 21:12  
Subject: Web Summit: Urgent  
To: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie  
Cc: David Kelly <david@websummit.net>

Nick,

We are very determined to make Web Summit work in Dublin in 2015 and again in 2016. We want Web Summit to remain in Dublin long into the future.

But by 2016 Web Summit will be too big to hold in Dublin without coordination from the State and it's various agencies.

We haven't heard from you since last week. We believe it's essential to keep communications open and constant and would be open to a call or meeting at any point.

Without a clear traffic management plan, for instance, Web Summit will be too big for Dublin as is in 2016.

Without a clear proposal from the city and from Government, something we have asked repeatedly for over 2 solid years, we will have no option but to move to a city that has a plan for 2016.

We understand Dublin does not host other international business conferences at the scale of Web Summit. We understand Dublin may not have an off the shelf plan, but as we have stated for over two years we are more than happy to work with you to build that plan. It's a plan that could be used to attract other large conferences from around the world. It would help for instance to put traffic calming measures in place similar to sports events. We know it's possible.

We will as previously discussed be announcing our decision on September 23rd.

Many thanks,  
Paddy

## Nick Reddy responds to Paddy Cosgrave - August 24, 2015

From: <Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie>  
Date: 24 August 2015 at 21:39  
Subject: Re: Web Summit: Urgent  
To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>

Paddy, have this and the document received on Friday. Will be back to you. Nick

Sent from my iPhone

## **Paddy Cosgrave responds to Nick Reddy - August 24, 2015**

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>

Date: 24 August 2015 at 21:58

Subject: Re: Web Summit: Urgent

To: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie

Much appreciated. P

# Paddy Cosgrave to Nick Reddy - September 1, 2015

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>  
Date: 1 September 2015 at 22:36  
Subject: Web Summit Urgent  
To: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie  
Cc: David Kelly <david@websummit.net>

Nick,

Without even a basic plan for Web Summit 2016, Web Summit will be forced out of Dublin in the coming weeks. We don't want a penny, we just want a plan for public transport, traffic flow management, wifi and hotels.

We're more than prepared to turn down incredible offers that address all of these concerns and more from many other cities around Europe, in return for even an outline of a plan. But it's been nearly two weeks since I explained to the Taoiseach that we couldn't wait any longer and would need to make a decision in early September.

I've had no response.

Web Summit is tied to Dublin in so many ways. We're an Irish company, we weave Irish culture, music and food into Web Summit, and most importantly it's our home. But without even a basic plan, Web Summit will be too big, too unmanageable, too risky for Dublin. We need your engagement.

As we've stated consistently at meeting after meeting, we need the following issues addressed, even in a small way, otherwise Web Summit will simply be too big for Dublin by 2016:

1. **Traffic:** A proper traffic management plan, similar to that for soccer and rugby matches, or the Horse Show. We can share traffic data from 2014. The city came to a standstill, in particular all roads leading to and from the RDS.
2. **Public Transport:** A clear plan for increasing the frequency of public transport to the level needed, combined with traffic calming measures, similar to those for soccer and rugby matches, or the Horse Show. Leaving international attendees stranded at the RDS with no hope of public transport or taxis, caused incredible frustration for attendees in 2014. Thankfully it didn't rain.

3. Hotels: A clear plan that allows hotels to make hay, but not to gouge at 600%+ markups. This is possible in every city that has approached us across Europe. The price gouging is a major issue for attendees.
4. Wifi: Finally, the RDS are blocking a simple wifi solution in the RDS. They need to understand that putting up barriers that increase the cost to over €1 million this coming year, when it's free and reliable in other cities, just adds significantly to the pressures forcing us out of Dublin.

We absolutely want to make Web Summit work in Dublin in 2016, and we know it can work. We've now grown conferences in other cities in Asia and the United States, working closely with cities. We've also attended conferences far larger than Web Summit in cities far smaller than Dublin. We know a plan is possible. But only you can put that plan in place.

We've tried so hard, over so many meetings, to push through a comprehensive plan for 2015, but I have major concerns once again around traffic, public transport, wifi and hotels.

The Taoiseach stood on stage last year at Web Summit and announced that his Department had calculated that the immediate economic impact of Web Summit was €105 million to Ireland.

Whatever the value to the city, we're not looking for a penny in return. We want to stay in Dublin, but without a plan for the city we cannot stay in Dublin.

We would be happy to give IDA and Enterprise Ireland exhibition stands to the value of €1,000,000 in 2016. We could expand our schools and student summits to cater to twice the 11,000 that attended free on two of the evenings of Web Summit 2014. We could give also free tickets to 300 or more Irish startups.

Finally, we've shared in confidence the extent to which other cities are going to persuade us to move out of Dublin. We've met with prime ministers, mayors, deputy prime ministers. They've presented incredibly detailed plans for their cities to host Web Summit. They feel very strongly that Web Summit would be of incredible value to their city. But we don't want to go to another city. We want to stay in Dublin far into the future. We don't want a penny, we just need even the most basic traffic flow management plan and resolution to the wifi situation in the RDS. We can't make that plan. Only you can.

I hope we hear from you.

Thank you,  
Paddy

## **Nick Reddy responds to Paddy Cosgrave - September 3, 2015**

From: <Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie>  
Date: 3 September 2015 at 09:16  
Subject: Re: Web Summit Urgent  
To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>

Paddy, in France on trade mission at moment. I will be back to you. Nick

Sent from my iPad



## **Paddy Cosgrave responds to Nick Reddy - September 3, 2015**

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>  
Date: 3 September 2015 at 14:48  
Subject: Re: Web Summit Urgent  
To: "Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie" <Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie>

Any sense of timing? This is the 3rd holding email? It's been a full two weeks and still nothing. What does coming back actually mean?

We need even a basic plan. We're not looking for a penny.

I'm sorry to appear pushy, but I've tried every other option over 3 years. Quietly working every avenue behind the scenes, never once publicly highlighting the situation, bar a single outburst on stage about wifi, which in a sense is unrelated to Government.

I realise everyone across Government is very busy but we seem to be able to maintain daily calls with other governments at a ministerial level across Europe, both from large and small nations.

We've never succeeded in getting a single meeting with Dublin's City Manager, nor been invited to one, yet we're invited constantly to sit down with Prime Ministers across Europe. Over five years, we've been invited to more meetings in Number 10 Downing Street than to meetings in Leinster House.

I'm about to board another flight to Lisbon to meet once again with a number of ministers, and the PM's right hand. I will then spend Friday and Saturday in the Netherlands finalising their plan for 2016, having previously met with the Prime Minister, Minister for Finance, Minister for Economic Affairs, Mayor of Amsterdam and all other relevant stakeholders.

I cannot stress enough that we don't want a penny to stay, just a plan. Far smaller cities than Dublin host far larger conferences than Web Summit. But it requires a coordinated plan for Dublin City that only Government can put in place. We know it's possible.

Even an indicative plan and we would stay. But after 3 years of asking and asking we still don't have even one single page outlining even a basic committed plan for the city. What little is being done for this year is unfortunately disorganised, uncoordinated and in many instances not guided by evidence.

Moreover, no Minister has ever attended a meeting yet they all show up for photos at Web Summit. Meetings for 2015 have been left to committed civil servants, who realistically without real political will are powerless to initiate significant change.

Last year, for example, the person appointed to coordinate the city, with whom I met numerous times, publicly denied he was coordinating anything a few days before Web Summit. It's was a pretty unbelievable situation, but it clearly underlined that there was no real coordination, arguably because there was no real political buy in.

At present for whatever reason there is clearly no appetite for real political engagement, no appetite to use Web Summit as a platform for Irish companies, as every other nation we work with sees it.

As an example of the lack of real political engagement and coordination, last year due to a complete lack of any plan for public transport and traffic calming measures, congestion was so significant that Gardai had to be pulled in last minute from across Dublin to try and resolve the situation. Which they did a great job doing and should be commended for. We were left with the bill, which to be honest I was happy to pay as it was not their fault in the slightest and they did a great job ameliorating the situation in some way. But they could have been doing more important work in Dublin if there had just been even a basic traffic management plan similar football matches.

Are you aware of Prince Charles' involvement, or No. 10 Downing Street, or the Chairman of the Conservative Party? I've detailed it privately over and over again, but it seems not to resonate.

If it isn't clear already, I'm now piling on the pressure because I can't understand why even a single page plan for 2016 isn't possible.

Without a plan for 2016, we will be forced to leave. Web Summit is larger than the RDS. It takes over the entire city. While we can control, to a point, what happens inside the RDS - bar the wifi it seems yet again this year - what happens outside is down to the city and national Government.

Finally, you're on a trade mission to France. So here's another way of thinking about Web Summit. Almost every other Government in Europe sends trade missions to Dublin for Web Summit. Why? Because significant business is being done. Somehow, and don't ask me how, the British government are more active at Web Summit than the Irish.

Last year a British cabinet minister, who was also chairman of the Conservative party, found two days in his busy schedule to quietly hold innumerable bilateral meetings in Dublin. In that time not a single Irish minister to our knowledge held a single bilateral meeting with a high level attendee. If that sounds a little unbelievable, it's because it is a little unbelievable.

We don't even invite a British Minister to Web Summit. He just showed up. His team had figured out who they wanted to meet.

To make matters even more unbelievable, we organised the largest showcase of Irish food in the history of the state last year in partnership with Good Food Ireland and Darina Allen. We attracted a long list of leading companies and investors in this space from around the world. Did the Department of Agriculture engage a single person that flew to Dublin? No. Instead of the Irish Minister for Agriculture holding meetings it was left to Prince Charles to extend invitations to key delegates to fly from Dublin to Bristol to meet with him on his country estate, Highgrove, to discuss the future of British food and agriculture over an afternoon. Some of that group also visited No. 10. The group then flew back to Cork to be hosted by Darina Allen in Ballymaloe.

In fact throughout the week of Web Summit, while no Irish minister held a single bilateral in Leinster House, the doors of No. 10 Downing Street were wide open to business. Delegations of key investors and business people flew from Dublin to London and back again.

In Dublin, while press secretaries constantly reached out to our team requesting photo and speaking opportunities for Ministers, the British government had a cabinet minister quietly getting on with business in Dublin. No photos required. He wasn't looking for votes, he was drumming up business for British companies and the British economy at large.

It all sounds a bit surreal. But it all happened, and will happen again this year and to a greater extent next year without a plan.

I've never once knocked the Government, never once spoken out, never once committed a single word to paper. Not once. But you're operating in a parallel universe where a jobs announcement or a photo opportunity at Web Summit is the biggest opportunity you see. Meanwhile other governments are cleaning up under your nose.

How can you be outplayed by the British government in your own back yard? Or by the Dutch, the French, the Danes. It's surreal.

We need a plan for Dublin City. We don't want a penny. We'll give IDA and EI their stands for free up to €1,000,000, expand our school and student summits to give free access to 20,000 young people to Web Summit each evening, and give 300/400/500 free tickets to startups across Ireland.

Did we do something wrong bringing all these people to Ireland? Is there a problem bringing more than 1,000 media from the worlds leading outlets to Dublin? Is there a problem organising the largest gathering of investors anywhere in the world in Dublin? Or the largest gathering of startups? Is there a problem bringing c-level execs from leading Fortune 500 companies to Dublin?

Why go on a trade mission to France at huge expense, when you're not prepared to go on a trade mission down the street at no expense?

Clearly, I'm despondent that we are literally being forced out of Ireland just for the lack of some very basic things like a plan for traffic management and public transport similar to sporting events.

Sent from my iPhone

## Nick Reddy responds to Paddy Cosgrave September 10, 2015

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie>

Date: 10 September 2015 at 16:03

Subject: Web Summit.

To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>

Dear Paddy,

Hope all good with you. I had promised to come back to you following your recent mail.

The Taoiseach has asked me to respond to your recent emails regarding the Web Summit.

The Taoiseach is confident that a sensible and effective plan can be prepared for 2016 but it would seem wise that this Plan for 2016 be informed, to the greatest extent possible, by the preparation and delivery of arrangements for this year's summit particularly given the increased numbers travelling for the event this year.

In this context, as you know there has been extensive engagement between various Government Departments and Agencies with your Web Summit team across a wide range of issues, with the Department of the Taoiseach coordinating role to ensure full engagement across Government and Dublin City Council coordinating engagement around the logistical issues.

The Taoiseach understands that this engagement has resulted in good progress on a range of issues, including traffic management for the event, increased public transport, airport registration, signage, access to city venues and other supports for the event. He understands also that discussions and negotiations are continuing on a number of these and other issues and is hopeful that these can also be progressed to satisfaction with the support of the public sector, where appropriate.

In this context it has to be said that some of the logistical concerns that you have raised are, fundamentally, contractual matters between you and your venue and/or service providers, where there is limited if any role for the Government. That said, the Department of the Taoiseach has worked to ensure that all relevant parties understand and appreciate the full benefits to themselves, to Dublin and to Ireland of the Web Summit taking place here, both this year and into the future.

The Taoiseach also understands that there have been initial discussions in terms of Government engagement with the programme for the event and associated side events, and with attendees/speakers/international media. While we would not agree with the view that there has been no such engagement in the past, we can see opportunities for even greater engagement this year.

The Taoiseach has asked his officials to put greater attention on this now, as the programme begins to crystallise and the scope to work with you on these aspects becomes clearer. In addition to this work being done at official level, the Taoiseach intends for this be the subject of discussion at ministerial level in the near future.

It is acknowledged that you are having discussions with other countries/cities, some of whom may be in a position to make particular facilities available to you. For his part, the Taoiseach is fully committed to ensuring that, within the obvious constraints that arise from hosting an event of the size and scale of the Web Summit in Dublin, the Government and its officials help to make the event as successful and sustainable as possible.

While it may not be possible to resolve every last issue, or to match every offer on every issue that you may have from other locations, the Taoiseach is confident that, building on the discussions currently under way, that the relevant public sector bodies can continue the work on a solid plan to help Web Summit 2015. The Taoiseach is also committed to ensuring that all the relevant public sector bodies work quickly with you to build, at an earlier stage, a plan for 2016 which takes full account of the experience of this year, both in terms of the preparation and the actual running of the event. While it would be best to use experience of this year to inform a detailed plan for 2016, work on developing a template for such a plan can certainly be progressed in the meantime, if that would be helpful.

The Taoiseach looks forward to continued engagement with you and your team, to a successful Web Summit 2015, and hopefully to the summit continuing to take place in Dublin each year long into the future.

With best wishes,

Nick

Nick Reddy  
Private Secretary to the Taoiseach  
**Department's E-mail Disclaimer:**  
View the [Department's Mail Disclaimer](#)

## Paddy Cosgrave responds to Nick Reddy September 17, 2015

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>

Date: 17 September 2015 at 22:42

Subject: Web Summit

To: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie

Nick

Many thanks for your email.

To begin I want to say that I have incredible respect for the work the Taoiseach and his Government have done for Ireland over their term. I have incredible respect for the many dedicated and hardworking civil servants and advisors I have met over the course of meetings over the last four years. They have helped turn Ireland around. While there's much still to be fixed, Ireland in many areas has made huge strides forward.

Web Summit, as compared to the enormity of the challenges that still face Ireland, is a tiny dot in the ocean of priorities that truly matter in this country. But I hope you would acknowledge that Web Summit has delivered some value. It is within that context that I want to address each of your points in turn so that there can be clarity as to what has happened behind the scenes for more than four years. And, most importantly, why we may have to decide to move Web Summit out of Ireland, if it comes to that, in the coming weeks.

1. You wrote: *"While it may not be possible to resolve every last issue, or to match every offer on every issue that you may have from other locations..."*

As regards "every offer", to reiterate yet again: We are not looking for a penny, just a plan. Without a plan for Dublin city, even an indicative one page plan for 2016, we cannot remain in Dublin. There is no question of matching anything. Web Summit is an Irish event, run by an Irish team from an Irish city. We just want a plan, not a penny.

In our previous correspondence, in return for a plan we offered to cover all the costs Enterprise Ireland and the IDA currently incur for exhibiting at Web Summit, subsidising them up to €1,000,000 per year for

five years. We also offered to open the doors every night of Web Summit in 2016 and beyond to 20,000 college and secondary school students. We also offered 300 free tickets to Web Summit for Irish startups.

At times there perhaps seems to be some sort of confusion as to whether we are subsidised financially by the Government or state agencies. First, we have never sought a single grant or subsidy, nor have we received one. Second, we have consistently refused to collect on Failte Ireland's subsidy for foreign delegates at conferences. Third, Enterprise Ireland, the IDA and others have only ever paid to exhibit or host dinners, just as other governments including Britain, Austria, Israel, France, Belgium and Portugal during Web Summit.

As regards "every last issue" we have only identified 4 issues in our correspondence. We have also stressed repeatedly in previous correspondence that if these 4 issues were addressed "even in a small way" we could remain in Dublin.

Restated below for reference are the 4 areas we raised in our previous email to you:

As we've stated consistently at meeting after meeting, we need the following issues addressed, even in a small way, otherwise Web Summit will simply be too big for Dublin by 2016:

1. Traffic: A proper traffic management plan, similar to that for soccer and rugby matches, or the Horse Show. We can share traffic data from 2014. The city came to a standstill, in particular all roads leading to and from the RDS.
2. Public Transport: A clear plan for increasing the frequency of public transport to the level needed, combined with traffic calming measures, similar to those for soccer and rugby matches, or the Horse Show. Leaving international attendees stranded at the RDS with no hope of public transport or taxis, caused incredible frustration for attendees in 2014. Thankfully it didn't rain.
3. Hotels: A clear plan that allows hotels to make hay, but not to gouge at 600%+ markups. This is possible in every city that has approached us across Europe. The price gouging is a major issue for attendees.



4. Wifi: Finally, the RDS are blocking a simple wifi solution in the RDS. They need to understand that putting up barriers that increase the cost to over €1 million this coming year, when it's free and reliable in other cities, just adds significantly to the pressures forcing us out of Dublin.

You also wrote: *“The Taoiseach is confident that a sensible and effective plan can be prepared for 2016 but it would seem wise that this Plan for 2016 be informed, to the greatest extent possible, by the preparation and delivery of arrangements for this year’s summit particularly given the increased numbers travelling for the event this year.”*

This is a reasonable suggestion, but I just want to underline three issues which I hope will make clear why we’ve asked for a plan for three years running. And also why almost four weeks ago we made it clearer than ever that if we did not have a plan for 2016, we would have to move.

The first issue is scale. There is so much involved in the preparation for an event of 30,000+ international attendees, that we now need far more than 12 months planning and preparation. We're already cutting 2016 very tight.

The second issue is assurances. Following traffic and public transport issues in 2013, we were assured they would be adequately addressed in 2014. The primary issue, just to be clear, was increasing the frequency of public transport and introducing some traffic calming measures similar to sporting events. This didn't happen, and perhaps upwards of 10,000 international attendees had no option but to walk from the RDS back across Dublin to their hotels each evening. Following the even greater public transport, traffic, hotel and wifi issues in 2014, we were told these core issue would be addressed in 2015 as best they could. I fully understand the limitations of any Government, but in reality, not even public transport issues has been adequately addressed. Yes it has been discussed and there has been a small number of additional buses laid on, but it has been limited, uncoordinated and inadequate.

The third issue is one of our experiences in other cities: Other cities in Europe have presented us with detailed plans for hosting Web Summit in 2016, without the experience of even a single year hosting Web Summit. This is by no means the first year we have been presented with detailed plans by cities with no experience of Web Summit. In the case of Dublin, Web Summit has taken place here for 5 years, yet we

still don't have even a single page plan for public transport for example. This is the case despite the fact that *"there has been extensive engagement between various Government Departments and Agencies with your Web Summit team across a wide range of issues"* as you correctly point out. In fact, there has been "extensive engagement" between more than a dozen Government Departments and Agencies with Web Summit every year, for four years, and the extensive engagement only ever amounts to tinkering at the edges.

Our frustration last year was heightened when the person appointed by the Government to coordinate Dublin city during Web Summit denied publicly shortly before Web Summit that he in fact had anything to do with coordination. It was one of the stranger moments for our team, considering even I'd attended a meeting with this individual in his office on the basis of him being the point person for coordination.

It should also be noted that cities far smaller than Dublin host events larger than Web Summit and that Dublin is proposing to host an event far larger than Web Summit. Ireland, from what I read, is attempting to host the Rugby World Cup in 2023. I believe it can and will. But I also believe you should think of Web Summit as a mini Rugby World Cup for Technology. Just as you are working on plans for Dublin's infrastructure to host such a huge sporting event, far larger than Web Summit, you could apply a similar mindset to hosting a very large business conference.

That business conference, Web Summit, to quote the Taoiseach, contributed €102 million to Dublin City during a single week in 2014. I realise the Rugby World Cup is expected to bring €1 billion to Ireland in 2023, and Web Summit is a dot in the ocean compared to it. But perhaps over the next 9 years, if Web Summit stays in Dublin it can contribute something close.

For four years, publicly, we've always praised the Government and State agencies, even if we were dealing with fallout from issues outside our control and very much in your control. We've repeated this practice, year after year, in the hope that the four issues I've outlined could be addressed in "even a small way".

Nearly four weeks ago we raised in the strongest possible terms the need for a plan for 2016. We repeated that we were not looking for a penny. I wrote to you twice, I spoke with you by phone, and I spoke with the Taoiseach by phone.

Since that time I've received a single email, which took nearly three weeks. During that period I've had two trips across Europe meeting with other nation's Ministers, senior civil servants and relevant state agencies. We've also been in near daily contact with these countries by phone and email working through detailed plans to potentially host Web Summit in 2016.

But we are where we are. I hope that even in these last days that the sort of coordinated response we have sought can be delivered.

This is a great country, filled with great people, who have and will continue to achieve great things. But doing great things requires careful planning, coordination and the desire to do things differently and better. And that's all we're ultimately asking for.

Based on what I've heard privately, I'm more hopeful than ever that in the coming days we'll reach a positive place and Web Summit will remain in Ireland. And for our tens of thousands of attendees, including over 1,000 international journalists and the CEOs of many of the world's most important technology companies, Dublin will continue to be that annual place of pilgrimage each year for the global tech community. A place the tech world calls home for a week.

Thank you for your time. I know there have been many other more pressing priorities over the last four weeks for you, but I look forward to hearing from the Government over the coming days.

Best,

Paddy

## Nick Reddy responds to Paddy Cosgrave September 18, 2015

From: <Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie>  
Date: 18 September 2015 at 18:05  
Subject: Re: Web Summit  
To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>

Paddy,

Got that and will revert.

Nick

Nick Reddy  
Private Secretary to the Taoiseach

## **Paddy Cosgrave to John Callinan September 21, 2015**

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>

Date: 21 September 2015 at 14:30

Subject: Web Summit

To: John.Callinan@taoiseach.gov.ie

Cc: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie

John,

For 4 years we've requested a plan. In the last 4 weeks, and in the strongest possible terms, we've requested 4 times in writing, and twice by phone to both the Taoiseach and his private secretary, Nick Reddy. We've repeatedly asked for even a one page indicative plan for 2016 that addresses in some "small way" the 4 issues we've highlighted: traffic calming measures, increasing the frequency of public transport, hotels and wifi.

We have met, spoken and emailed perhaps more than 100 times over the last number of years. Despite all those meetings and conversations, we still don't have even a single page plan for even 2015, never mind 2016. Nothing regarding traffic management or public transport has been placed in writing for this year, despite promises following the many disasters that arose in 2014. Remember the person appointed to coordinate Dublin in 2014 by the Government denied just before Web Summit 2014 that he was coordinating anything. As bizarre as that way, this general pattern has repeated itself for at least 3 years now.

I do hope you can understand how a complete lack of coordination places us in a very difficult situation where we are left with little option but to leave Dublin for one of the many cities that has presented us with a plan.

I appreciate your suggestion of yet another meeting, but given that these many meetings have produced nothing in the past, could we please ask that you present us with even a one page plan for 2016?

As we've repeatedly stated we're not looking for a penny. Web Summit contributed, according to the Taoiseach, €102 million to the economy in a single week last year. Surely, given all that you are doing to bid for the Rugby World Cup, something is possible for Web Summit, even a single page?

We've been presented with hundreds of pages of incredibly detailed plans by other cities who have no experience hosting Web Summit. Yet after five years in Dublin and over 100 meetings, phone calls and emails, we still don't even have a single page plan for Web Summit in Dublin.

Despite, it should be added, the many issues related to traffic and public transport last year, and the many promises and assurances made in the aftermath.

We've always kept to private channels. For four years, publicly, we've always praised the Government and State agencies, even if we were dealing with fallout from issues outside our control and very much in your control. We've repeated this practice, year after year, in the hope that the four issues I've outlined could be addressed in "even a small way".

I'm still hopeful that something is possible, but we need to see something in writing. We are now completely up against it in terms of time.

We feel we've done all we can.

Best,

Paddy

## John Callinan responds to Paddy Cosgrave, September 21, 2015

From: <John.Callinan@taoiseach.gov.ie>  
Date: 22 September 2015 at 11:53  
Subject: Re: Web Summit  
To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>  
Cc: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie, Andrew.McDowell@taoiseach.gov.ie,  
MaryClare.O'Sullivan@taoiseach.gov.ie

Paddy

many thanks for your email.

As indicated in Nick Reddy's recent email to you, we felt it made more sense to focus on 2015 as best we can before mapping out for 2016, not least as there would undoubtedly be useful learning for all from the 2015 experience. As you know, various people have been working on different aspects for 2015, so it is simply incorrect to say that "many meetings have produced nothing in the past".

I agree that there is (always) room for greater coordination, though I think it is also easy to underestimate just what is involved in that. You will appreciate that there are many different agencies involved, each with their own reporting/governance structures.

That said, I now attach a draft framework for engagement which could be the basis for further discussion - in any event for such a framework to be meaningful it will need to be elaborated jointly. It is also difficult to disentangle the various actions under way for 2015 - mentioned in the attached and regardless of how fully they address all of your concerns - from preparing and implementing a sensible and effective plan for 2016. The attached draft document will, in any event, require further engagement with the many departments and agencies involved, to work it up more fully.

As indicated yesterday, I believe a further meeting would be helpful.

Best regards

John

## Paddy Cosgrave responds to John Callian, September 22, 2015

From: **Paddy Cosgrave** <paddy@cilabs.com>

Date: 22 September 2015 at 19:20

Subject: Re: Web Summit

To: John.Callinan@taoiseach.gov.ie

Cc: Nick.Reddy@taoiseach.gov.ie, Andrew.McDowell@taoiseach.gov.ie,

"MaryClare.O'Sullivan@taoiseach.gov.ie" <MaryClare.O'Sullivan@taoiseach.gov.ie>

John,

Your response and one pager is misleading, and deliberately so in our view.

We don't want IDA or EI support nor have we ever received their support. They have only ever, as have many other Government agencies from across the world, paid to exhibit or host dinners or related events. If they have "supported" us, then they have supported us no more than the Israeli or British Governments who are also exhibitors and hosts of dinners and side events.

We have never asked nor applied for a support. We have never once collected on the Failte Ireland overseas delegate support.

As I have made clear repeatedly we will give the IDA and EI their exhibition stands for free in 2016, 20,000 free tickets to secondary school and college students to our evening Summits, and 300+ free tickets for Irish entrepreneurs to the Web Summit.

As we have repeated by email over and over again, and by phone, we don't want the things you have prioritised. How many times do we need to stress this. Why do you keep putting these things in email to us? We have specifically and repeatedly stressed only 4 issues: frequency of public transport outlined; traffic calming measures detailed; hotels and wifi.

We are looking for 4 specific issues to be specifically addressed in some "small way". What you have sent is not a plan, but a plan for a plan. There are no specifics:

*"Arrangements put in place for 2015 will be reviewed with a view to identifying what further measures may be appropriate/possible for deployment in 2016, in terms of available capacity, reassessment of Leap Card proposal, etc."*

Public transport and traffic calming are the two most essential issues inside your control and outside of ours. Why is there no point person named; why can't you specify in a single line what will be done; how many buses there will be; is there a ratio or a limit to how many buses for example; what specific traffic calming measures; is there again a limit to what's possible? Is 40,000 people too



much for Dublin city to cope with? How are specific answers to all these questions and more possible in every other city that has approached us, but not in the city we call home.

Yesterday my head of production attended a meeting around transport. No one from across the state was prepared to lead the meeting. There was no leadership. No coordination. No specifics. A complete absence of any minister. We have decided in light of this reality to just take the lead and write the plan for you based on what we've seen in other cities. It's a bizarre situation.

Returning to your one page proposal, your plan is no less specific than anything that's been discussed for 3 years and completely sidesteps most of what we have outlined in repeated emails to your office and in calls with the Taoiseach and his advisors.

*"Arrangements will be put in place to provide an effective traffic management plan taking account of the experience of Web Summit 2015, the volume of attendees, time specific factors (e.g., for this year, LUAS works) and the need to balance competing needs and concerns."*

Again the above is not an indicative plan. It's a plan to have an indicative plan. And represents no material change since we started this process all those years ago.

Finally, we've stressed repeatedly that without a plan for 2016 we need to make a decision on September 23rd. Web Summit is now so large it requires far more than a single year's planning.

We have yet to be presented with even a plan. What you sent was not a plan. I'm not even sure why you sent what you have sent.

Can I confirm that this is it? That while other countries can prepare highly detailed proposals with no experience hosting Web Summit, the Irish Government cannot even present an indicative one page plan for Web Summit 2016. To repeat we are not asking for a penny, just a plan primarily for transport and traffic management. Can I confirm that the only way you can really provide us with a plan is by "taking account of the experience of Web Summit 2015"?

I'm sorry to be so pushy, but it just seems like a bizarre situation that no attempt has been made by the Government to meet with us, talk with us or ultimately address these issues. When at the same time we can successfully meet, discuss and ultimately address all these issues and more with other governments across Europe.

Best,

Paddy

## John Callinan responds to Paddy Cosgrave, September 23, 2015

From: <John.Callinan@taoiseach.gov.ie>  
Date: 24 September 2015 at 09:06  
Subject: Re: Web Summit  
To: Paddy Cosgrave <paddy@cilabs.com>  
Cc: Mike Harvey <mike.harey@cilabs.com>

Paddy

By the time you sent me this email I had already been informed of the decision to move to Lisbon and that you would be announcing it with the Deputy PM of Portugal in Lisbon the following morning.

I am disappointed that you would accuse me of being deliberately misleading. I can assure you that is not the case. You say "we don't want the things you have prioritised": to be clear, the issues in the document are all things that you or your colleagues asked for, or asked for assistance with. They were not listed as "priorities" - simply as areas where help was sought, and given.

In any event, while I am naturally disappointed with your decision to go to Lisbon next year, I wish you and your colleagues well with this next phase of the Web Summit.

We will continue to work with your team in relation to this year's event - assuming that such assistance is still wanted - and I hope Web Summit 2015 will be a big success notwithstanding the decision to move next year.

Regards

John

## Appendix 1 - October 22, 2015, John Callinan, at Department of the Taoiseach, provides first draft plan to Paddy Cosgrave

DRAFT - CONFIDENTIAL

### Web Summit 2016 – Framework for Engagement

The Web Summit and F.ounders are now international events of renown and they have had a positive impact on the perception of Ireland and Dublin in particular as a technology hub. Government and the enterprise development agencies recognise the value of the Web Summit and F.ounders events, particularly as mechanisms to promote Ireland as a location for investment and entrepreneurship.

Since its inception, the Government and relevant agencies have supported the holding and evolution of the Web Summit in Dublin.

Building on successive years of engagement and involvement, in 2015 this support includes:

- Financial support through Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland and other supports of events around the Web Summit (Including Enterprise X, F.ounders, VIP event etc)
- Using the Web Summit opportunity to engage across a range of sectors including facilitating engagement between client companies, buyers, VCs, etc. and a range of side events for this purpose.
- Hosting an Ireland Pavilion at the Summit.
- Facilitating access to and use of State and City venues.
- Arranging top level political discussion of optimal engagement with and participation in the Web Summit and associated events.
- Provision of signage/banners around Dublin City.
- Airport facilities, including airport-based delegate registration facility, IDA airport promotion strategy, examination of possible dedicated immigration/visa channel (INIS).
- Offer of Leap Cards at a discount rate of €10 each (c. 50% discount on normal discounted rate) and Leap Card purchase facilities at RDS and airport. (Not activated by Web Summit – can be reviewed for 2016).
- Provision of additional buses by Dublin Bus, and branded shuttle buses.
- Engagement with RDS to examine scope to address WiFi issues (recognising that this is a commercial matter between Web Summit and RDS).
- Engagement with Irish Hotel Federation on development of a value charter in response to concerns about hotel pricing.
- Engagement with Garda Siochana to devise appropriate traffic management arrangements in light of current/real time developments e.g. Luas Works, final attendee numbers etc.
- Facilitating cross-Government engagement with Web Summit and point-of-contact engagement to tackle specific issues that arise.

The Government is committed to continuing to work with the Web Summit to build on the positive engagements to date, and to seeking ways to improve further the holding of the Summit in Dublin in future years.

Government welcomes the opportunity to engage with Web Summit to explore all options for development of the event in Ireland in 2016.

A draft framework for this continued engagement is set out overleaf.

DRAFT - CONFIDENTIAL

### Framework for Engagement – Web Summit 2016

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key Depts/Agencies</b>
<b>Maximising the Benefit of Web Summit to Ireland</b>	Recognizing the opportunity presented by the connection between the Web Summit and Dublin – Government through the enterprise development agencies will put in place a plan to assess and maximize the value of Web Summit to Dublin and Ireland.	IDA, EI, other relevant Depts and Agencies
<b>2. Overall Co-ordination</b>	A High Level Task Force will oversee and coordinate arrangements for support/engagement, with sub-groups/mechanisms as needed for different strands such as logistics, engagement with attendees, political involvement etc. An initial meeting of the Task Force will take place in November 2015 to assess, in particular, the 2015 experience and identify what worked well, what could be improved and what might need a new approach.	Relevant Government Departments, Dublin City Council, IDA, EI, Fáilte Ireland, Dublin Convention Bureau, An Garda Síochana, Dublin Transport Authority, Dublin Airport Authority, Dublin Bus and others as appropriate
<b>3. Traffic management plan</b>	Arrangements will be put in place to provide an effective traffic management plan taking account of the experience of Web Summit 2015, the volume of attendees, time specific factors (e.g., for this year, LUAS works) and the need to balance competing needs and concerns.	Dublin City Council An Garda Síochana
<b>4. Transport strategy</b>	Arrangements put in place for 2015 will be reviewed with a view to identifying what further measures may be appropriate/possible for deployment in 2016, in terms of available capacity, reassessment of Leap Card proposal, etc.	Dublin Transport Authority, Dublin Bus, Dublin Convention Bureau, Iarnród Éireann
<b>5. Accommodation issues</b>	Government will engage further with the Hotel Federation to encourage fair pricing and the need to take account of the wider benefits to the economy, including the hospitality sector, from the Web Summit taking place in Dublin.	Failte Ireland Dublin Convention Bureau
<b>6. Airport aspects</b>	The arrangements for 2015 will be reviewed to assess whether they worked satisfactorily and whether any improvements or adjustments are required.	Dublin Airport Authority, IDA, Failte Ireland D/Justice/INIS,

<b>7. Venue and WiFi</b>	Following the 2015 approach, where Web Summit brought in their own wifi provider, work with Web Summit to review performance/cost etc and explore all possible options for delivery of reliable Wi-Fi service in 2016.	Relevant depts. and agencies
<b>8. Availability of public buildings/venues &amp; signage</b>	The arrangements for 2015 will be reviewed to assess whether they worked satisfactorily and whether any improvements or adjustments are required.	OPW, Dublin City Council, and other public bodies as required
<b>9. Ministerial and High Level Engagement</b>	Greater engagement by Government Ministers and senior officials is anticipated for 2015. This will be repeated in 2016, in consultation with Web Summit.	Enterprise Agencies, D/Taoiseach and other Depts/ Agencies as required
<b>10. Promotional and communications activity</b>	Government Departments and Agencies will work with Web Summit to develop and implement a programme to help promote the Web Summit, particularly via Irish Embassies and the overseas offices of relevant agencies.	Enterprise Agencies, D/JEI D/Taoiseach. DFAT, Tourism Agencies, Bord Bia, SFI
<b>11. Participation of Enterprise Agencies</b>	The relevant agencies will engage with Web Summit to assess best options, taking account of Web Summit offer of €1m worth of exhibition space, tickets for client companies, student access etc.	EI, IDA, others as appropriate

**Appendix 2 - Summary of what other nations were offering shared by Paddy Cosgrave with Nick Reddy on August 21**

## **WEB SUMMIT 2016**

### **Bid Document**

#### **Host Contributions**

##### **1.Venue**

Costs for the venue which would include the following:

- Full venue rental
- 
- Costs of any additional temporary structures
- Wi-Fi infrastructure and bandwidth costs
- Auxiliary services to be included as part of venue:
  - *Power/Lighting: Temporary electrical set ups*
  - *Security: Signage and customization*
  - *Staffing and Management Medical Services*
  - *Air Con Ops Cranes/Forklifts etc.*
  - *Storage facilities*
  - *Waste Disposal*
  - *Dilapidations*
  - *Plumbing*
  - *Minor Repairs*
  - *Cleaning*

##### **2. Local Authority Support**

- Dedicated city liaisons for the event from the each department of the government
- Dedicated areas and staffing at Airport for registration
- of attendees
- Branding opportunities across the city - Signage, Billboards, Airport Branding (to include areas like Curbside, Check-in / Immigration / Customs / Security, Commercial Zones, boarding gates, among others)
- Cost of Airport branding
- 
- Public marketing spend for online promotion of event
- 
- Exclusivity and closed streets for certain events
- Open and free public transport for attendees
- 
- Public venues for receptions each night

- Public venues for city parties and state receptions each night

### **3. Accommodation and Hotels**

- Pop up and fixed accommodation costs for attendees
- 10,000 hotel rooms (or equivalent accommodation) per night
- VIP hotels accommodation for guests
- Hotel room prices do not increase above normal inflation rate

### **4. Transport**

- Dedicated and free public transport arrangements for attendees and staff
- Special pickups and drops for VIP guests
- Shuttle Buses in city from official hotels
- Traffic Management System and Manpower

### **5. Financial Contribution**

- A contribution of €100 per foreign attendee from the city

## **Technical Requirements**

### **1. Dates**

- Event dates: 1st week of November 2016 (Tuesday to Friday)
  - Build Days: 14 days pre event
  - Event days: 4
  - De Rig: 4 days post event

### **2.Space**

- Floor: 80,000 sqm (of combined floor space) within a 1 km radius

### **3.Arenas/Stages**

- 10-15 individual stages
- 

Capacity ranging from 500 - 6,000 pax

### **4.Catering**

- No exclusivity on catering contractors and suppliers
- Ability to use existing infrastructure along with alterations to suit the events requirements

### **5.Technological infrastructure**

#### **Wi-fi/network requirements:**

- 3 Gbps bandwidth primary internet connection
- 3 Gbps bandwidth primary internet connection
- 400 Mbps backup internet connection on a diverse infrastructure (preferably separate supplier)
- Estimate 2.5 devices per delegate
- Wi-fi SSIDs to be broadcast on both 2.4Ghz and 5Ghz

- 5Ghz compatible devices should be pushed to the 5Ghz SSID
- No splash/registration screen - internet access should be available immediately on connection to the network
- Wifi/network provider must have on site support during the event

**Hard-wired connections:**

- Dedicated allocation of bandwidth to a wired connection will be required in a small number of cases
- Specific wired connection configuration including but not limited to a static IP may be required for a small number of exhibitors
- 6 per stage (to allow for on-stage & AV control desks)
- 1 per registration device/station - 150 stations (subject to change)
- Production office requirements - 30 points in total (subject to change)
- 1 per General Event Information Point - 60 points in total (subject to change)
- 1 per startup exhibitor - 2,000 exhibition stands in total (subject to change)
- 1 per commercial exhibitor - 300 hard-wires required (subject to change/ please note multiple wired connections may be required by some commercial exhibitors)
- 1 per Media desk - 800 desks in total (subject to change)
- 100 Miscellaneous (subject to change)



**Appendix 3 - List of Asks developed by WS for Dublin City Council convened Action Group meeting for relevant stakeholders on May 29 2015**

Dublin Web Summit - Dublin City Council

Wish List

Web Summit Nov 3-5, 2015

Asks Granted Previously

1. Suspension of parking permission on the perimeter roads for the duration of the build and break of the Summit events in Herbert Park. Waive associated fees.
2. Access to banners around Dublin City to promote the event.

New Asks

1. Anglesea Road closed to allow attendees free access between venues for the days of the event. As per the RDS Horse Show.
2. Dedicated shuttle buses provided by Dublin Bus for Web Summit attendees at peak times in the morning and evenings, to and from the RDS/City Centre, circulating to key hotels. Agree appropriate bus branding.
3. Temporary Dublin bike stations.
4. Access to the event space within Herbert Park and, in addition, to the (non-event space) Playing Fields located closest to Anglesea Rd. We would look to build marquees on these and reinstate the ground after insofar as we reasonably can

5. Grant road closures for Dame Court, South William Street and Fade Street for parts of our Night Summit. Waive associated fees.
  6. Grant us suspension of parking permission on the above roads for the duration of the road closures. Waive associated fees.
  7. Entrance to city venues - complimentary rental of venues such as City Hall and Wood Quay. Venues within the City.
  8. City Centre branding for Web Summit for two weeks leading up to event and during Outside direct responsibility
1. Access to Garda Escort services for specific VIPs at specified times during the event. Estimated 10 such VIPs during the event. Movement, not security.
  2. Airport registration of all attendees. Large space required for two/three days before the event and during the event.
  3. Hotel agreement - suggested voluntary anti-gouging code limiting differential from usual pricing scales.
  4. Leap Cards for all attendees for their stay in the City

**Appendix 4 - Email from Peter Finnegan, Director of International Relations, Dublin City Council, sent 22 May 2015 to attendees of Action Group meeting scheduled for May 29.**

22  
May

**Peter J Finnegan**  
<[peterj.finnegan@dublincity.ie](mailto:peterj.finnegan@dublincity.ie)>

to caitriona.oken., Brendan, Bernard, Ursula,  
Leslie, Naghmeh, Niall, Paul, Gerard,  
aseery, Garda, johnhurley, sjohnston,  
john.oflynn, me, john.hurley, Owen,  
Brendan, paddy

Dear Colleagues,

The Web Summit is one of the most significant and the largest events that takes place in Dublin. The organisers have successfully grown this event from relatively humble beginnings to an event that attracted last year some 30000 plus to the RDS. The event not only contributes to the Dublin and Irish economy by way of delegate spend on hotels , shopping, and entertainment, but also presents a positive image globally of Ireland . Its focus on technology and the digital future draws many of the world's leading lights to Dublin. It provides a platform to showcase and promote new Irish and International talent in the small business and innovation sectors. In short it has become one of the best global "adverts" for Dublin and Ireland as a world centre of excellence for technology and innovation.

It is therefore in all our interests to do our utmost to assist the organisers, the Dublin Web Summit. With this in mind and following discussion with Enterprise Ireland and the IDA who contribute financially to the Summit I discussed with Paddy Cosgrave and his team their needs. In that discussion it was agreed that it would be valuable to convene an Action Group of relevant agencies who could respond to these needs. Having discussed the matter with our CEO Owen Keegan I agreed to convene this Action Group. The advantage of a multi-agency action group is that it facilitates the web summit in having one platform of engagement around what are sometimes multi-agency responsibilities.

The first meeting of this Group will be held in our offices **3 Palace Street** on Friday May 29<sup>th</sup> at 8.30am. The meeting will conclude no later than 10am. Our office is beside City Hall on Dame Street, the entrance is on Palace Street which leads into the lower yard of Dublin Castle. My mobile phone number as contact is 086 2341494.

The relevant agencies include Dublin City Council(various depts.) , EI, IDA, Gardai, Tourism Ireland , Failte Ireland, DAA, and the NTA. The web Summit will also attend.

I attach the document outlining the modest “asks” from the Web Summit Team. I have indicated the actions sought. **Time is valuable to all of us and I would appreciate it if you could review the requests in the attached document and come with proposals for action/response. If you cannot make the meeting yourself I would appreciate it if you could send someone senior with decision making powers.** I would hope that this one meeting would be sufficient to agree actions and establish a direct liaison with the Web Summit on deliverables. For our part the City Council would facilitate the interaction necessary to secure these deliverables.

**Can you please confirm attendance by next Thursday by response to this email. You have my mobile number should you wish further clarification.**

Many thanks

Peter

Peter Finnegan  
Director  
International Relations  
Dublin City Council  
3 Palace Street  
Dublin 2  
peterj.finnegan@dublincity.ie  
Tel: 00 353 1 2222159

end