



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála

Oifig na bPasanna, Teach Knockmaun, 42-47 Sráid an Mhóta Íochtarach,
Baile Átha Cliath 2 D02 TN83

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Passport Office, Knockmaun House, 42-47 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2 D02 TN83

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2019/008

Ms. SORCHA POLLAK.

7 February, 2019.

Dear Ms. Pollak,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

1. Copies of all correspondence between your department and the Department of the Taoiseach regarding:

- Concerns over the significant rise in applications for Irish passports, particularly since the Brexit referendum
- Concerns around the value and image of the Irish passport given this surge in applications
- The eligibility criteria for Irish passports and possibility of new restrictions

2. Copies of all correspondence between your department and the Irish Embassy in London regarding the rise in applications for Irish passports since the Brexit referendum.

3. DFA briefing material on:

- Eligibility criteria for Irish passports
- The administrative burden as number of passport applications continues to rise

4. I am also requesting copies of all internal correspondence within your department relating to the above topics.

I also refer to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 14th January, 2019.

It should be noted that entitlement to Irish citizenship /passports is unchanged as a result of the Brexit referendum. Entitlement to Irish citizenship is governed by Irish law and in particular the Irish Nationality and Citizenship Act 1956, as amended. The Passport Office issues passports to Irish citizens who make applications for a passport. In order to meet the requirements of the Passports Act 2008, each applicant must demonstrate their Irish citizenship in their application.

I am the Deciding Officer in this case. There are no records of correspondence relating to point 1 of your request and therefore point 1 of your request falls for refusal under Section 15 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 which states that an FOI request may be refused if:

‘the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken’

With regard to points 2, 3 and 4 of your request I have identified 35 records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant 30 of the records, part-grant 4 records and refuse 1 of the records. The 35 records are itemised in the attached schedule of records. Exemptions applied under the FOI Act 2014 are also shown. Granted/part-granted records are attached.

Access has been refused to record 30 which is exempt from release under section S29 (1) (a) and (b) (Deliberative Process) of the FOI Act 2014. I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the record in question in terms of the right of the public to have access to information. Given the nature of the records I am satisfied, on balance the public interest is best served in refusing access to this record.

Redactions were applied under Section 37 (1) (Personal Information) of the FOI Act 2014 to parts of records 28, 29, 33 and 34.

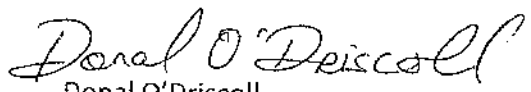
Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76 – 78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie or 01-4082857.

If you wish to, you should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate

circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donal O'Driscoll". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'O'.

Donal O'Driscoll

Passport Service