



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: FOI/Req/19/141

Date 24/04/2019

Mr. Luke Ming Flanagan
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear Mr. Flanagan,

I refer to the request which you have made, dated 27 March 2019, under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- 1. All documents related to the decision taken in 2013 to send Irish Defence Forces members to contribute to the European Union Training Mission in Mali.*
- 2. Any documents related to the subsequent decisions to extend the Irish Defence Forces mission in Mali.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 3 April 2019.

Having conducted a search of the Department's electronic and paper records I have identified 52 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

I have made a decision to refuse access to all 52 records on the basis that at least one of the following exemptions provided for in the 2014 Act apply to all the records in question. The basis for exemption is listed in the schedule alongside each record for ease of reference.

Section 28 – Meetings of the Government

(Applicable to all scheduled records with the exception of 1,5,13-14, 18, 43,46)

Under **Section 28 (1)(a)** I may refuse the request:

If the record concerned has been, or is proposed to be, submitted to the Government for its consideration by a Minister of the Government or the Attorney General and was created for that purpose,

and under Section 28 (1)(c):

If the record concerned contains information (including advice) for a member of the Government, the Attorney General, a Minister of State, the Secretary General to the Government for use by him or her solely for the purpose of the transaction of any business of the Government at a meeting of the Government.

Under Section 28 (2) (a) I am obliged to refuse the request:

If the records concerned contain the whole or part of a statement made at a meeting of the Government or information that reveals, or from which may be inferred, the substance of the whole or part of such a statement.

Section 33 - Security, defence and international relations

(Applicable to all scheduled records)

I may refuse the request under Section 33 (1) (d) if I consider that releasing the records "could reasonably be expected to affect adversely...the international relations of the State".

Under Section 33(2)(a) and Section 33(2)(a)(ii), I am obliged to refuse access to records that contain:

Information that relates to the tactics, strategy or operations of the Defence Forces in or outside the State;

Analysis, opinions, advice, recommendations and the results of consultations or information the release of which, in my opinion, could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the State.

Under Sections 33(2)(b)(i) and 33(2)(b)(ii), I am obliged to refuse the request where:

records contain a communication between a Minister of the Government or his or her Department or Office and a diplomatic mission or consular post in the State or of the State or a communication between the Government or an officer of a Minister of the Government or another person acting on behalf of such a Minister and another government or a person acting on behalf of another government:

Where such information was communicated in confidence or relates to negotiations between the State and the other state in question or in relation to such a state, or

Where a record contains analysis, opinions, advice, recommendations and the results of consultations or information the release of which, in my opinion, could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the State

Under Section 33(3)(c)(i) & 33(3)(c)(ii), I am obliged to refuse access where records contain information communicated in confidence:

From or to any person in or outside the State and relating to the international relations of the state;

From, to, or within an institution or body of the European Union, or relates to negotiations between the State and such an organisation.

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.

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 the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely



Erin Swan
Desk Officer
International Security Policy Unit
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade