



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

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2019/324

4

December 2019

Dear Mr. Hughes,

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:

**A list of submissions submitted to the Minister through the e-submissions channel.
I wish for my request to cover the period from 01/10/2019 – 04/11/2019.**

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

I have identified one record which falls within the scope of your request. The record sets out a list of the e-submissions titles made by business units within the Department. Redactions to the record have been made by virtue of Sections, 28 (1) (a), 29, 33 (1) (c) and 33 (1) (d).

I am refusing elements of this record under Section 28 (1) (a) as these are listings of Government Memoranda which have been or are proposed to be submitted to the Government for consideration by the Cabinet and were created for that purpose.

In relation to Section 29, I have considered the source and nature of the e-submissions titles and the right of the public to have access to information. The public interest arguments I have considered in favour of release of the records include the public need to be better informed about the decision making process of the Department and to scrutinise that decision making. The arguments considered against release of the e-submissions titles include avoiding damage to workings of the Department and the negative impact premature release would have without any countervailing benefit to the public. On balance I have decided that the public interest would be best served by not releasing the information at this time.

I have refused access to certain information under Section 33 (1) (c) and 33 (1) (d) of the Act – Security, Defence and International Relations and I have exempted a number of e-submissions titles under this Section. This Department manages relations between Ireland and 192 countries, operating in a complex and diverse international environment, in a variety of locations and under varying local laws and customs. In order to effectively carry out its role, the Department must maintain trust and confidence between Governments and other

interlocutors. If the Department does not maintain the mutuality of trust, its ability to protect and promote Ireland's interests could reasonably be expected to be adversely affected.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julita Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julita Gallagher
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade