



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/2020/181

12 October 2020

Dear Mr. Mahon,

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:

- Correspondence from Asia Matters to the minister or principal officers responsible for asian countries from January to present. Any response to Asia Matters on same correspondence. Internal correspondence created as a result of any request made by Asia Matters.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 22 September.

I have identified 33 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

The decision to part-grant the records has been taken in correspondence with Section 37(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. While Section 37(1) Personal information is a mandatory exemption, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information, which includes names, addresses, email addresses etc., would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private. The personal information which I have redacted does not have any bearing on the substance or detail of the records, and does not diminish or alter the views expressed, and as such, I am satisfied that on balance the decision to partially redact the records and remove identifiable information is correct.

As you will see from the records released, the vast majority of correspondence between Asia Matters and this department relates to requests for ministerial or official attendance at public events and general updates/reports of Asia Matters activities. In 2020, the Department became a corporate member of Asia Matters for the first time. Subscription to this membership is in line with our efforts to support closer ties between Asia and Ireland, and

provides the Department with insights into Ireland-Asia economic links. As the released records state, this membership is subject to annual review.

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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. 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 "Sarah Finn". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Sarah Finn
Desk Officer, Asia Pacific Unit