



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: FOI Req 201/38

Date 16 March 2021

Dear Mr McDonagh,

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:

'All internal and external correspondence and memos held by the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade relating to Russia's Sputnik V vaccine from August 11, 2020 to the present day.'

Timeline: August 11, 2020 – February 3, 2021

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 10 February.

I have identified 23 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant one record, part-grant 1 record, and refuse 21 of the records.

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under Section 33 (1) (d) and Section 36 (1) (b). Section 33 (1) (d) relates to records, the release of which in the opinion of the responding officer, could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the state. Section 36 (1) (b) relates to commercially sensitive information, the release of which could prejudice the competitive position of a person in the conduct of his/her profession or business.

Records 1-8, 11-13, 15-19, and 21-22 are communications between the Department and diplomatic missions of the State and as such are exempted from release under Section 33 (1) (d) of the FOI Act.

I have made a decision to refuse the release of records 9, 10 and 14 under Sections 33 (1) (d) and 36 (1) (b) of the FOI Act. The bulk of these records do not fall within the scope of your request. An annex to records 9, 10 and 14 includes information that the Department pays for from a contractor and its release could prejudice the competitive position of the contractor. Accordingly, it is refused under 36 (1) (b) of the FOI Act. Additionally Record 9 also contains information communicated to Headquarters from diplomatic missions and is exempted from release under Section 33 (1) (d) of the FOI Act.

Record 23 is part-granted, with all of the section related to the request released and the remainder which is not related to the request exempted under Section 33 (1) (d) and Section 31 (1) (c) (ii) (II) regarding the international relations of the state and the opinions, advice, recommendations, or the results of consultations, considered by a committee appointed by either House of the Oireachtas.

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 01-4082618.

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,

Cathal McMorrow
European Neighbourhood Unit
EU Division
Department of Foreign Affairs