



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

6 February 2018

Our Ref: FoI/Req/18/014

Mr Jack Horgan-Jones
Chief Reporter
The Sunday Business Post
jhorganjones@sbpost.ie

Dear Mr Horgan- Jones,

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. Correspondence with Vatican officials relating to the Papal visit for the years 2016, 2017, 2018.*
- 2. Internal records, to include correspondence, meeting minutes, briefing notes, etc. relating to the Papal visit.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 22 January 2017.

Your request has been taken to refer to a Papal Visit to Ireland. At this time there is no confirmation of a Papal Visit to Ireland and therefore any records on the subject are on the basis of contingency planning.

Dublin has been chosen by Pope Francis to host the next World Meeting of Families from 21-26 August 2018, on the theme “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”. The World Meeting of Families is the largest Meeting of Catholic families in the world and has been convened every three years since 1994.

It is understood that Pope Francis is strongly considering attending the World Meeting of Families in Dublin. However, his programme is not normally announced until a few months before any event. In the meantime, you may wish to contact the World Meeting of Families Office directly at the contact details below.

World Meeting of Families 2018 Office

Holy Cross Diocesan Centre,
Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3,
Ireland, Eircode D03 P2E7.
Tel.: +353 1 567 6800
Email: info@worldmeeting2018.ie

I have identified 11 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. It has been decided that all except one record will be refused.

10 records have been refused under Section 29 of the Act, Deliberations of FOI bodies. I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the records in question in terms of the right of the public to have access to information. Given the nature of the records I am satisfied that release would negatively impact on the decision-making processes of this Department and would substantially impair the good relations we have with another State. On balance the public interest would not be best served by releasing these records.

With regard to the 7 records refused under Section 32 of the Act, Law enforcement and public safety, I am satisfied that the significance of any potential adverse consequences to public safety and the security of individuals outweighs the right of the public to access to the records at this time.

Further, I have refused 9 records under Section 33, Security, defence and international relations.

This Department manages relations between Ireland and 178 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. I feel release of the records would have a significant adverse impact on the effective conduct of the functions of this Department. I have considered the right of the public to have access to the information and the need for transparency. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal of the records.

The information redacted from the record being part-granted is refused under Section 35, Information obtained in confidence and Section 37, Personal Information.

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



Cecily McKenna
Protocol Division