



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2

Our Ref: Fol/Req/18/301

17 January 2019

Dear Mr O'Connell,

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 correspondence relating to government business to and from the private email account or accounts of Ministers in the department from the period 01 January 2018 to 03 January 2018.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 19 December, and your agreement regarding the extension of the deadline to 17 January.

I am the responding officer in this case. I can confirm that in the case of the Tánaiste and the Minister of State for European Affairs no such records exist.

I have examined the correspondence to and from the private email accounts of the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, in so far as it relates to the role of the Minister of State in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In order to facilitate the Minister of State in the discharge of his public role, from time to time speeches and speaking points were sent to his mobile device. At times they were sent to his private email account enabling the Minister of State to both receive and, if necessary, amend material in real time, typically shortly before the speech was due to be delivered.

197 records have been identified that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 67 records, part-grant 31 and refuse access to 99 records.

Access has been refused to those 99 records on administrative grounds under Section 15(1)(d) of the Freedom of Information Act, as the information contained therein is already in the public domain. I have provided you with links to view those records in the schedule provided.

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.

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 to protect the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private is correct.

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



Anne Griffin
Private Secretary