



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/18/120

Date: 11th June 2018

Dear Requester,

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 all submissions made to the Minister at your Department using the e-submissions system (or whatever relevant/similar system is in place at your Department) in the period 1 February 2018 to the date of receipt of this request.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 9th May 2018.

I have identified one record which falls within the scope of your request. The record sets out submissions made by individual business units within the Department. I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the record in full in terms of the right of the public to have access to this information, and at this time I have part-granted access to that record. Redactions to the record have been made by virtue of Sections 28, 29, 30, 33 and 37 of the Act.

In relation to Sections 29 and 30 of the Act, I have considered the source and nature of the records 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 processes of the Department and to scrutinise that decision making. The arguments considered against release of the records 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.

In making my decision I have considered Section 33 of the Act- Security, Defence and International Relations section of the Act and I have exempted a number of records under that Section. 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 am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release and I have refused access to certain information under Section 33.

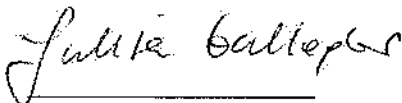
Under Section 37 I have removed the names of private individuals who met with Tánaiste Coveney in that capacity.

#### 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](mailto: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](mailto: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



Julita Gallagher  
Secretary General's Office  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade