



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála**  
Baile Átha Cliath 2

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**  
Dublin 2

24 September 2018

Laura Larkin

Irish Independent

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2018/235 & FOI/Req/2018/236

Dear Ms. Larkin,

I refer to the requests which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, which you subsequently agreed to their treatment as one composite request, as follows:

*“Minutes of all meetings re the Papal visit held in 2018”, and “Copies of correspondence between the Department and representatives of the Catholic Church and the Vatican dated January 1 to August 27 in relation to the papal visit to include but not limited to copies of emails, faxes, letters, notes of phonecalls (sic), copies of SMS messages etc.”*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 29 August 2018.

I have identified **116** records that fall within the scope of your request.

I have made the decision to grant 20 records, grant a part of 13 records and deny access to 83 records. With regard to those 13 records being partially granted they have been edited to only remove personal details of the individuals concerned under Section 37(1) of the Act, Personal Information.

I have refused access to 83 records under Section 32(1)(b) dealing with the life and safety of individuals; Sections 33(1)(d) of the FOI Act, Security, defence and international relations;

Section 35(1)(a) covering information provided in confidence and Section 42(h) which restricts the release of records relating to, in this case, the President.

I am satisfied that the disclosure of these records could result in negative consequences for Ireland's international relations with the Holy See. Successful diplomatic relations depends upon the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between States.

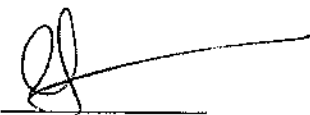
As required by the FOI Act 2014, I am obliged to make specific considerations as regards the public interest where access has been refused under specific sections, in this case Section 35(1)(a) of the Act. My decision not to release certain information given in confidence is on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. I am satisfied that releasing the information would impair future sources of such information and impair the workings of this Department without any countervailing benefit to the broader public interest.

#### 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,



Eoin Bennis

Deputy Director

EU Division