



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2

Philip Ryan
Independent Newspapers
Independent House
27-32 Talbot Street
Dublin 1

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2014/112

30 December 2014

Dear Mr Ryan,

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:

‘Copies of the minutes of all management advisory committee meetings or similar meetings between high-ranking civil servants within the Department since March 2012.’

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 10 December 2014.

The Management Advisory Committee (MAC) is an advisory and decision-making forum that supports the Secretary General in the management of the Department. The Committee is chaired by the Secretary General, and membership comprises the Second Secretary General, Assistant Secretaries based in Ireland, and five officers at the Counsellor/equivalent grade and one Head of Mission. The Committee assists the Secretary General in the formulation and management of policies and programmes as well as in the development and improved performance of the organization. The Committee also decides on assignments within the Department, at home and abroad, other than at Assistant Secretary and Head of Mission level.

The Committee now aims to meet on a fortnightly basis if possible. Other Departmental Officials attend MAC meetings periodically to brief and participate in discussions on topical developments in their areas of responsibility.

The MAC also meets periodically with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to consider strategic policy and management direction. Such meetings are in addition to on-going interaction between Ministers, members of the MAC and other senior officials.

Further to your request, I have identified 41 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant access to 22 records and to part-grant access to 19 records.

Where access to a record, or part of a record, has been refused, the records are exempt from release under the following sections of the FOI Act:

Section 29 (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request—(a) if the record concerned contains matter relating to the deliberative processes of an FOI body

Section 30 (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request if access to the record concerned could, in the opinion of the head, reasonably be expected to— (b) have a significant, adverse effect on the performance by an FOI body of any of its functions relating to management; (c) disclose positions taken, or to be taken, or plans, procedures, criteria or instructions used or followed, or to be used or followed, for the purpose of any negotiations carried on or being, or to be, carried on by or on behalf of the Government or an FOI body

Section 32 (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request if access to the record concerned could, in the opinion of the head, reasonably be expected to—(a) prejudice or impair—(ix) the security of a building or other structure or a vehicle, ship, boat or aircraft

Section 33 (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request in relation to a record (and in particular but without prejudice to the generality otherwise of this subsection, to a record to which *subsection (2)* applies) if, in the opinion of the head, access to it could reasonably be expected to affect adversely— (c) matters relating to Northern Ireland; (d) the international relations of the State.

Section 36 (1) Subject to *subsection (2)*, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains – (b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation; (c) information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates.

Section 37 (1) Subject to this section, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if, in the opinion of the head, access to the record concerned would involve the disclosure of 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@dfat.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@dfat.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,



Eimear Friel
Responding Officer