

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

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

Sean Defoe

Newstalk Newsroom  
Marconi House  
Digges Lane  
Dublin 2

Our Ref: FOI/Req/16/178

16 December 2016

Dear Mr Defoe,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to information held by this Department, as follows:

- A list of all incoming and outgoing bilateral meetings with EU counterparts at which Brexit was discussed in the period from 24 June to 28 October and details of Ministerial travel expenses incurred for those meetings, where available.
- A list of FAC meetings which Minister Flanagan attended period from 24 June to 28 October and details of Ministerial travel expenses incurred for those meetings, where available.

I refer also to the acknowledgment of your request which was sent to you on 15 November 2016.

I am the deciding officer for your request. I have identified two records which fall within the scope of your request and I have made a decision to grant release of all information requested. The records are detailed in the Schedule below.

**Schedule**

	Record Description	Granted/Part-Granted/Refused
1.	List of all incoming and outgoing bilateral meetings, including phonecalls, with EU counterparts and FAC meetings at which Brexit was discussed in the period from 24 June to 28 October	Granted
2.	Details of Ministerial travel expenses incurred for those meetings, where available	Granted

Following the vote of the British electorate to leave the EU, it is critically important that our partners in the EU are aware of Irish priorities in the negotiation process. Our priorities remain the same: to protect the interests of our citizens with regard to Northern Ireland - the peace process, border and

citizenship issues; the Common Travel Area; our economy and contributing positively to the future of the EU itself.

To that end, the Taoiseach is in regular contact with EU leaders, Minister Flanagan has spoken with each of his EU Foreign Minister counterparts and recently began a further round of consultations which will continue in the weeks ahead, and Minister of State, Dara Murphy T.D. has been active in reaching out to EU partners, at Council meetings in Brussels, and in bilateral exchanges. Senior officials are also actively engaging in meeting their counterparts in EU Member States and the EU institutions. Before the end of year, there will be further high level engagements and this intense activity will continue into the New Year in the run up to the Article 50 negotiations beginning.

Official travel is an important aspect of the role of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. Regular meetings with Ministerial counterparts are scheduled far in advance. These provide opportunities to address the priority issues of the day, including Brexit, as well as a range of other agenda items. In order to provide a meaningful response to your request, I note the following important points:

- None of the meetings listed in the Schedule covered only Brexit-related issues.
- The list of meetings presents only a partial picture of the level of Ministerial engagement on these issues in light of the regular telephone contacts and written correspondence that have taken place between Ministers.
- In the period covered, Minister Flanagan engaged in meetings with ministerial counterparts in other fora, including UN General Assembly and the Asia-Europe Meeting, in which Brexit was discussed.

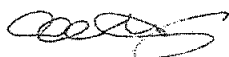
All official travel undertaken by the Minister is in accordance with the central aims of the Department's travel policy, which is based on the travel policy for all Government Departments laid down by the Department of Finance (Circular 11/81 and letter on foreign travel dated 31/3/1998), which is to minimise official travel costs and to achieve value for money for expenditure necessarily incurred, consistent with the effective discharge of official duties. Hotel accommodation at moderately priced hotels is typically reserved for the Minister in the city where the official business is to be transacted.

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



Cormac Hynes

EU Division