



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

Ms. Valerie Flynn
The Sunday Times
1st Floor,
The Watermarque Building,
Ringsend Road,
Dublin 4

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2017/241

26 January 2018

Dear Ms. Flynn,

I refer to your recently submitted request for information, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

In relation to Ireland's bid to host the European Medicines Agency, please can I have records dealing substantively with this issue from 23 June 2016 to 20 November 2017. These records may include correspondence, research for preparing Ireland's bid, briefing notes, speaking notes and minutes of meetings.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 1 December 2017 and our subsequent communication.

I have identified 158 records that fall within the scope of your request. These records are listed in the schedule attached.

I have made a decision to grant access to 9 of these records, part-grant access to 2 of these records and refuse access to 147 records.

Records to which I have granted full or partial access include briefing material prepared for the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and for the Minister of State for European Affairs. There was engagement with all Member States as part of Ireland's bid to host the European

Banking Authority and the documents being released are representative of the briefing provided for such engagements.

Records to which I have refused access or partially granted access have been exempted under *Security, Defence and International relations* Sections 33(2)(b)(i), 33(2)(b)(ii), and 33(3)(c)(ii) of the Act. These are mandatory exemptions under the FOI legislation and I am obliged to refuse access to records falling under those sections of the Act.


Records to which I have refused access or partially granted access have also been refused under Section 33(1)(d) of the Act. I have considered the possibility and likelihood that the release of the records could result in negative consequences for Ireland's international relations. This Department is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 27 other EU member States, in a complex and diverse environment. Successful diplomatic relations depend upon the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between governments. Based on the Department's direct knowledge and expertise in international relations, its strongly held position is that the mere granting of access to records will adversely affect the State's relations by introducing major doubts with regard to the security and confidentiality of our diplomatic communications and could substantially impair the good relations we have with another State. It is important to maintain that mutuality of trust to protect and promote Ireland's interests internationally. On balance, I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

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 access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact the 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,



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