



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

15 August 2017

Our Ref: FoI/Req/17/136

Mr Craig Farrell
Irish Sun

Dear Mr Farrell

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 gifts given and received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to foreign dignitaries for each of the following years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 to date, including the name of the person who received/gave the gift and the cost of the gift, a description of the gift.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 31 July 2017.

Attached is an excel document setting out the gifts given by successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs, who they were for and the cost and description of each gift, since January 2014.

Under section 15 of the Ethics in Public Office Act (1995) gifts presented to office holders valued in excess of €650 are deemed to be gifts to the State and must be recorded accordingly following valuation through the Office of Public Works. No such gifts were received by successive Ministers for Foreign Affairs in the period under review, that is, since January 2014. There is no requirement to retain lists of token gifts of the type customarily presented to officeholders of this Department.

Therefore your request for a list of gifts received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs for each of the following years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 to date, including the name of the person who gave the gift and a description of the gift, falls to be refused under Section 15 (1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act – the record does not exist.

Exchange of modest gifts is standard international practice in the context of Ministerial and other High-Level visits. Gifts are sourced in Ireland or are of Irish interest and are purchased on the basis of the most economically advantageous cost savings arrangements, value for money and high quality products. The presentation of gifts plays a worthwhile role in the promotion of Irish goods, talent and craftsmanship internationally and in addition it helps to strengthen the economic and cultural links with the countries involved. Also care is taken on the type of gift given to ensure that it respects the culture and other relevant requirements of the recipient. This is reflected in the nature of the gifts given by the Ministers of this Department.

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 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, 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



Cecily McKenna
Protocol Division