



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

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

3 May 2017

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/065

Dear Mr O'Connor,

I refer to your recently submitted request for information, made on 4 April 2017 under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

*All briefing documents, reports, memos, draft reports, speeches and draft speeches prepared by the Department in relation to the election in Northern Ireland.*

This covers material from 9 January 2017 to the date of your request. I refer also the letter of acknowledgement sent to you on 11 April 2017.

I have identified **32** records which fall within the scope of your request and are covered by the Freedom of Information Act. After consideration of the records and the relevant sections of the Act, I have made the decision to release **4** of these records.

This Department can neither confirm nor deny that it holds information relevant to some aspects of your request, as the duty to offer access to any record held by the Department under the Freedom of Information Act does not apply by virtue of the following sections of the Act: 28(5) (Meetings of the Government), 33(1)(c) and 33(4) (Security, defence and international relations). I am therefore unable to disclose whether such records exist.

In addition, Section 42 of the Act sets out the exclusion of certain records from the scope of Freedom of Information legislation which includes any record given by this Department to the Minister for use by him, in any proceedings in either Houses of the Oireachtas, see Section 42(j).

**1. Schedule of records**

A schedule of records is enclosed with this letter, which shows the documents relevant to your request.

**2. Reasons for decision**

The refusal to release the remaining records is based upon exemptions in the Act relating to the functions and negotiations of an FOI body [30(1)(c)]; security, defence and international relations [33(1)(c), 33(1)(d)] and information provided in confidence [35(1)(a)].

In relation to section 30 of the Act, my decision has been informed by consideration of the public interest in having access to the records. After consideration of the right of the public to

access information, I am satisfied that the public interest is better served by refusing these records.

In relation to section 33 of the Act, my decision has been informed by consideration of the potential for the release of this record to have a significant and adverse impact on matters relating to Northern Ireland, or to create difficulty in the conduct of relations between this country and another State, thereby prejudicing the effective conduct of international relations. In considering the exemptions provided for under sections 33(1)(c) and 33(1)(d) I have carefully considered both the nature and source of the record and am satisfied that the public interest is best served in refusing access to this record.

In relation to section 35 of the Act, the exemption is mandatory and I am therefore obliged to refuse to release the records to which it applies.

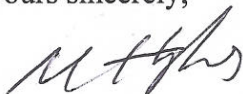
### **3. Rights of appeal**

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 on 01 408 2857.

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.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact me by telephone on 01 408 2283.

Yours sincerely,



Marie-Claire Hughes  
Ireland, UK and Americas Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade