



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2 - D02 DX45

4th of December, 2017

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/222

Dear Mr. Robinson,

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

Copies of all records, to include files, letters, emails, briefing notes and other correspondence between the Spanish Government and/or the Spanish Embassy in Dublin and the Minister or DFA officials relating to the situation in Catalonia for the period 01/09/2017 to 03/11/2017.

I also refer to the acknowledgment of your request sent to you by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade FOI Unit on the 9th of November 2017.

I have identified 8 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to part-grant 1 of the records, grant 2 of the records, and refuse 5 of the records.

For records exempted under Section 33(1)(d) – *Security, defence and international relations*, as referenced in the schedule, 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 178 countries, 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.

In addition, I have also redacted the names and details in one of the records under section 37 of the Act – *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@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,

Darragh Higgins