



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

5 December 2017

Our Ref: FoI/Req/17/225

Ms. Órla Ryan
The Journal

orla@thejournal.ie

Dear Ms. Ryan,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for details as follows:

- *gifts received by Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan and latterly Minister Simon Coveney and the Ministers of State at the Department by foreign dignitaries and heads of state to date in 2017;*
- *a breakdown of the gifts received and from whom they were given;*
- *a breakdown of gifts given by the Ministers or Ministers of State to foreign dignitaries and heads of state on their visits here or on trips made by the Minister or Ministers of State abroad to date in 2017.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 10 November 2017.

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 2017. There is no requirement to retain lists of token gifts of the type customarily presented to officeholders of this Department.

Therefore your request for details of gifts received by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministers of State of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade from foreign dignitaries and heads of state to date in 2017 falls to be refused under Section 15 (1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act – the record does not exist.

Attached is an excel document setting out the gifts given by Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministers of State of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, who they were for and a description of each gift, since January 2017.

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

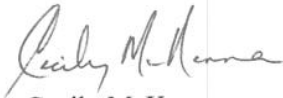
products. The presentation of gifts plays a worthwhile role in the promotion of Irish goods, talent and craftsmanship internationally and in addition it helps to strengthen the economic and cultural links with the countries involved. Also care is taken on the type of gift given to ensure that it respects 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