

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dublin 2

14 June, 2017

Mr Ken Foxe

Our Ref: FoI/Req/17/086

Dear Mr. Foxe,

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 submissions made to the Minister at your Department using the e-submissions system (or whatever relevant/similar system is in place at your Department) in the period 1 February 2017 to the date of receipt of this request.

I refer also to the acknowledgment of your request which was sent to you on 24th May

I have identified one record which falls within the scope of your request. The record sets out submissions made by individual business units within the Department and at this time I have part-granted access to that record. Redactions to the record have been made by virtue of Sections 28, 29, 30, 33 and 37 of the Act.

I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the record in full in terms of the right of the public to have access to information. Under Section 37 I have removed the names of private individuals who met with Minister Flanagan in that capacity. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release. I have also refused access to information under Sections 29 and 30 of the Act. I have considered the source and nature of the records and the right of the public to have access to information. The public interest arguments I have considered in favour of release of the records include the public need to be better informed about the decision making processes of the Department and to scrutinise that decision making. The arguments considered against release of the records include avoiding damage to workings of the Department and the negative impact premature release would have without any countervailing benefit to the public. On balance I have decided that the public interest would be best served by not releasing the information at this time.


This Department manages relations between Ireland and 178 countries, operating in a complex and diverse international environment. In a variety of locations and under varying local laws and customs. In order to effectively carry out its role, the Department must maintain trust and confidence between governments and other interlocutors. If the Department does not maintain the mutuality of trust, its ability to protect and promote Ireland's interests could reasonably be expected to be adversely affected. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release and I have refused access to certain information under Section 33.

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@dfat.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@dfat.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



Helen Dennis
Secretary General's Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade