



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/302

14th November 2019

Dear Ms Colgan

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:

- 1. Copies of correspondence sent by members of the public to the Department of Foreign Affairs concerning US President Donald Trump's visit to Ireland in June 2019.*
- 2. Copies of correspondence sent by members of the public to the Department of Foreign Affairs concerning the US Vice President Mike Pence's visit to Ireland in September 2019.*

I also refer to the acknowledgment request that was sent to you previously.

I have identified six records that fall within the scope of your request. I have decided to partially release five records and withhold in full one record. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

Where access has been only partially granted, the cases relate to section 37(1) Personal Information of the FOI act. Where access has been refused, the case relates to 32. (1) Law enforcement and public safety.

Section 32 – Law enforcement and public safety

The Department shares a duty of care with regard to the safety and security of individuals, including members of the public and foreign dignitaries, when planning an event of this scale and type. I took this duty of care into account when considering exemption under Section 32 (1) (a) (iii). I believe that the merits of releasing the records, for example, to ensure the resources of the taxpayer are used effectively or to enable the public to assess the merits and shortcomings of practices; are outweighed by the negative security and operational effects of releasing this sensitive information. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

Section 37 – Personal information

While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. In the main, the information redacted relates to personal identifiable information and does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

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,
James Rowan

*Americas Unit
Ireland, UK and Americas Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*