



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

Our Ref: FOI/Req/21/004

2 February 2021

Dear Mr. Farrell,

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 the gifts presented by the Minister in 2020; please include a description of the gift, the cost, where it was purchased, and to whom it was given.’

‘A list of all the gifts received by the Minister in 2020; please include an estimated value of the gift (if possible), a description of the gift and who gave it.’

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 8 January 2021.

I have identified two records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant two of the records.

These include records which outline the gifts given and received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, a description of the gift and details of the recipients or the presenter of gifts for 2020 as requested. For gifts given, it also includes the prices and where the gifts were purchased as requested.

There is no requirement to retain lists of modest gifts of the type customarily presented to office holders of this Department. However, a list of gifts received by Minister for Foreign Affairs had been retained by his office from June 2018, which included a description of the gift and details of those who offered the gifts. The attached is a list of gifts received in early 2020. No record of modest gifts received has been maintained since that time.

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. The Minister for Foreign Affairs did not receive such gifts in the period requested.

It is standard practice to exchange modest gifts between Ministers and visiting dignitaries during ministerial and other high level visits. Gifts presented by Ministers of the department are sourced in Ireland or are of Irish interest and are purchased on a basis of the most economically advantageous cost savings arrangements, value for money and high quality products. The nature of the gift is given particular care to ensure that it respects the culture and relevant requirements of the recipient. The exchange of gifts provides a platform to promote Irish craftsmanship and goods internationally and helps to strengthen the economic and cultural links between the countries involved.

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, 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



Katrina Devine
Protocol Division