



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/213

Date: 05/10/2021

Dear Mr. Shortall,

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:

- *Internal guidelines (all versions extant in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021) pertaining to the use of mobile phones issued by the Department to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.*
- *Internal guidelines pertaining to the use of mobile phones issued by the Department to the Secretary General.*
- *All communications (letter, email, minutes of meetings, SMS, Whatsapp, Signal, iMessage, Viber etc.) from 1 August 2020 to 7 September 2021 between the Department and any other Foreign Affairs Department (or equivalent) of any member state of the European Union relating to the 'hacking' of Minister Simon Coveney's mobile phone in August 2020.*
- *All communications (letter, email, minutes of meetings, SMS, Whatsapp, Signal, iMessage, Viber etc.) from 1 August 2020 to 7 September 2021 between Minister Simon Coveney and any other Foreign Affairs Minister (or equivalent) of any member state of the European Union relating to the 'hacking' (or phishing) of Minister Coveney's mobile phone in August 2020.*
- *All communications (letter, email, minutes of meetings, SMS, Whatsapp, Signal, iMessage, Viber etc.) from 1 January 2020 to 7 September 2021 between Minister Simon Coveney and Minister Paschal Donohoe containing the word "Zappone".*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 16/09/2021.

I have identified 5 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 2 records and refuse 3 records.

Where access has been refused, 2 of the records are exempt from release under section 33 (2) (b)(i) of the FOI Act which allows for the refusal to release a record that;

“contains a communication between a Minister of the Government or his or her Department or Office and a diplomatic mission or consular post in the State or of the State or a communication between the Government or an officer of a Minister of the Government or

another person acting on behalf of such a Minister and another government or a person acting on behalf of another government”

The records in question are communications made in confidence between the Minister and a foreign minister of another state.

1 of the records are exempt from release under section 33 under section 33(3)(c)(iii):

“Information communicated in confidence (whether generated in the State or elsewhere) in the possession of a public body in relation to planning for, or responses to, threats or incidents in respect of network and information security. “

The records are confidential internal communications sent in response to a network security incident.

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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082618.

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

Robert Drummond

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