



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/043

8 March 2021

Dear Jade,

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) All correspondence, briefing documents, draft briefing documents, memos, meeting notes and other records associated with the following lobbying activities and meetings:

<https://www.lobbying.ie/return/65421/oxfam-ireland>

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 19 February 2021. I further refer to my email to you on 26 February 2021 in which I asked if you wanted me to include records of email exchanges seeking to establish a suitable time and date for a meeting and to your reply on 1 March 2021 in which you confirmed that such records could be excluded from the response.

Your Freedom of Information request refers to an entry by Oxfam Ireland on the Register of Lobbying which specifies that the lobbying activity was “Regarding UN binding treaty on business and human rights”.

Further the entry on the Register of Lobbying defines the “intended results” of the lobbying as follows: “As a co-signatory advocating for Ireland's support for the development of an UN binding Treaty on business and human rights.”

The entry further refers to letters sent as part of this lobbying activity to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, and the Minister of State with responsibility for EU Affairs, Thomas Byrne.

The entry on the Lobbying Register identifies Jim Clarken CEO of Oxfam Ireland as the person primarily responsible for lobbying on this activity, as part of the Irish Coalition on Business and Human Rights.

In addition to the records which you have consented to leaving out, I have identified 21 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 (2) of the records, to part-grant seventeen (17) of the records, and to refuse two (2) of the records.

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under Section 15(1)(d) of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014, that is to say, the information is already in the public domain and may be found here: https://www.trocaire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Irish-Coalition-on-Business-and-Human-Rights_Towards-a-Transformative-Treaty-on-Business-and-Human-Rights-1.pdf

I have carefully considered the content of all the records identified in the context of the relevant legislation and in consultation with the Department's Freedom of Information Unit. I have decided to make a number of redactions as follows:

- In accordance with section 37(1) of the Act, I have redacted personal information from all records with the exception of records #2, #3, #7 and #8.
- In relation to record # 5, #15, #18 and #21 redactions have been made on the basis of section 33 (1) (d) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, that is, it is my belief that

the records concerned contain information which if disclosed could reasonably be expected to affect adversely the international relations of the State.

- I have also redacted parts of record #5 and #15 that fall outside the scope of the request including an annex that is subject to section 42 (j) of the Act, and, as such, falls outside the scope of the Act on the grounds that it was created for use by a member of the Government for the purposes of any proceedings in either House of the Oireachtas.

In line with Government restrictions I am currently working remotely. I do not have access to the equipment required to carry out redactions in the normal way. As per the guidance provided by the central policy unit of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, I have made copies of the records to be redacted, included as an Appendix to this letter. Redacted material has been deleted and is clearly indicated.

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

Sarah Kavanagh

Deputy Director, Human Rights Unit

Department of Foreign Affairs