



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/137

Date: 28 July 2021

Dear Julius Bailey Aungalistas,

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:

I would like to know:

- The total number of Foreign Birth Register (FBR) applications currently waiting to be processed.
- How many applications are currently being processed each day (as at end June 2021 - early July 2021)
- How many staff members are currently processing FBR applications.
- Why the processing of FBR applications has been deprioritised.
- Why have DFA staff been redeployed away from processing FBR applications.
- Why does the DFA consider it acceptable to not provide applicants with any word of an update on their application?
- When does the DFA plan to resume the normal processing of FBA applications?
- When the normal processing of FBA applications resumes, approximately how many how many applications would be processed each day?
- I would also like transcripts of yesterday's live chats with Josh and Olga in relation to the above application.
- Why is there currently no update online as to when normal FBR processing will resume?
- Why is it apparently deemed acceptable to only expedite FBR applications for expectant parents?
- Given that many people have continued attending their workplaces throughout the pandemic, why could DFA staff not do the same?
- Without any tangible information how are FBR applicants supposed to have any confidence that their applications are or will eventually be processed?
- What information do you currently hold on Application: 0000284500?

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 13 July 2021.

In relation to your request for a transcript of your live chat with members of our webchat team, I have identified one record that fall within the scope of your request. The record is listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant this record.

As advised to you by email of 7 July 2021, the remainder of your request falls outside of the FOI Act. Our FBR Section has drafted a separate response, outside of the Act, to the questions you raise, and this is being issued to you as an attachment in the email response to this request.

The FOI Act provides for a right of access to records held by an FOI body. Requests for information or for answers to questions, as opposed to requests for records, are not valid requests under the Act, except to the extent that a request for information or for an answer to a question can reasonably be inferred to be a request for a record containing the information or answer sought.

Accordingly, I have made a decision to refuse the remainder of your FOI request on administrative grounds under Section 15 (1) (b) of the FOI Act.

Section 15 (1) (b) of the FOI Act states that;

“A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where — (b) the FOI request does not comply with Section 12 (1) (b)”

The requirement under Section 12 (1) (b) of the FOI Act is that the request must contain “sufficient particulars in relation to the information concerned to enable the record to be identified”.

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.

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

Fergal O’Flaherty
Passport Office
Department of Foreign Affairs