



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/21/188

14 September 2021

Dear Mr O'Brien,

I refer to the request which you made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 on 17 August 2021 for access to records held by this Department as follows:

*"...any and all claims for the travel, accommodation, subsistence and other expenses submitted by Ms Katherine Zappone in connection with her role as a Special Envoy for Ireland's candidature for election to the UN Security Council. I understand Ms Zappone held the position from September 2019 until June 2020.*

*...details of the expenses claimed and the expenses approved in relation to this position, and with any details of any unvouched expense allowances that were paid to Ms Zappone in connection with the role?*

*...details of any remuneration paid in relation to the performance of the role, and copies of any dispatches or reports Ms Zappone sent to the minister or department of foreign affairs in connection as special envoy to the UNSC membership campaign."*

### **Context of appointment**

In September 2019 Ms. Katherine Zappone, then T.D. and Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, was appointed Special Envoy for the UN Security Council campaign, underlining the importance afforded to Ireland's candidature across the whole of Government.

Over the course of her nine months in the role, then-Minister Zappone campaigned extensively on the issue of Ireland's candidature, representing Ireland at several multilateral events and engaging in 25 bilateral meetings in New York, Dublin and in Nairobi.

The role was assumed in addition to Ms Zappone's existing responsibilities as Minister and was not remunerated. Travel and subsistence expenses relating to work on the Security Council campaign were provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs in line with regulations for the civil service as set out in the relevant circulars issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. I can therefore confirm that there are no records in relation to remuneration or unvouched expenses held by the Department of Foreign Affairs in connection with this role.

### **Release of records - summary**

I have identified 47 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant full access to 17 records, to partially grant access to 5 records and to refuse access to 25 records.

Where access has been partially granted or refused, exemptions apply pursuant to the following sections of the FOI Act:

Section 33(1)(d) – Security, defence and international relations

Section 37(1) – Personal Information

### ***Section 33 (Security, defence and international relations)***

Section 33(1)(d) stipulates that a head may refuse to grant an FOI request in relation to a record if, in the opinion of the head, its release could reasonably be expected to adversely affect international relations. Records 6-10, 16-22, 24, 33-43 and 45 have been refused on the basis that these records contain sensitive information in relation to the Department of Foreign Affairs's reporting on bilateral relations, foreign policy issues, and UN Security Council voting intentions.

I have weighed carefully the public interest test in applying the exemption and, on balance, the adverse effect that releasing this information could have on international relations – in particular the prejudicial impact it could have on Ireland's international relations – outweighs the public interest in releasing these documents.

### ***Section 37 (Personal Information)***

While Section 37(1) provides for the mandatory exemption of records, I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full. Under Section 37(1) a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if, in the opinion of the head, access to the record concerned would involve the disclosure of personal information.

The information redacted under this provision in records 1, 12, 25, 47 relates to personal contact information – viz. mobile telephone numbers of officials and the home address of an individual in the case of 47.

Otherwise the records are complete. I have considered the public interest in releasing these records in full against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and I am satisfied that the public interest is better served by providing partial access to the records in question.

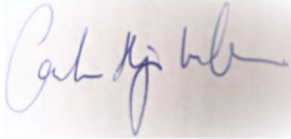
### **Right of Appeal**

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](mailto: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](mailto: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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Caitlín Higgins Ní Chinnéide". The signature is written in a cursive style on a light-colored background.

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Caitlín Higgins Ní Chinnéide  
Political Division