

Our Ref: FoI/Req/18/013

Simon Carswell
Irish Times,
24-28 Tara St
Dublin 2
D02 CX89

Dear Mr. Carswell,

I refer to your request of 8 January which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

Copies of all letters and emails between Fine Gael TD John Deasy, the Government's special envoy to the United States Congress, and Department of Foreign Affairs officials concerning Mr Deasy's work for the undocumented Irish in the US since his appointment in June 2017 along with any records relating to his estimate that the number of undocumented Irish in the US is closer to 10,000 as he stated in August 2017.

5 records have been identified that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. It has been decided to grant access to 3 of the records.

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under sections

33.1 (d)

I have exempted 2 records under Section 33- Security, defence and international relations. This Department manages relations between Ireland and 178 countries, operating in a complex and diverse international environment, in a variety of locations and under varying local laws and customs. In order to effectively carry out its role, the Department must maintain trust and confidence between governments and other interlocutors. If the Department does not maintain the mutuality of trust, its ability to protect and promote Ireland's interests could reasonably be expected to be adversely affected. I feel release of the information would have a significant adverse impact on the effective conduct of the functions of this Department. I have considered the right of the public to have access to information and the need for an open and accountable civil and foreign service. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

30. (1) (c)

I have exempted 1 record under Section 30 – Functions and negotiations of FOI bodies. The release of this information would disclose positions taken by the Department. I feel release of the information would have an adverse impact on the effective conduct of the functions of this Department including ongoing negotiations and discussions with organisations or persons mentioned in this record. I have considered the right of the public to have access to

information and the need for an open and accountable civil service. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal of access rather than release of this record.

35. (1) (a)

I have exempted 2 records under Section 35 – Information obtained in confidence. Under this section, I have an obligation to refuse to grant an FOI request when the records concerned contain information given in confidence, on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential, and in cases where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the sharing of similar information in the future. I have considered the public interest concerning access to information and the need for an open and accountable civil service. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal of access rather than release of this record.

Please note that regarding the above granted records on the schedule, email addresses which are not public and do not fall within the scope of the request have been removed.

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@dfat.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@dfat.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

Jack McCormack,
Assistant Director, U.S & Canada
Americas Unit
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade