



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/17/178

3 October 2017

Dear Requester,

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:

- *All briefing material including memos, circulars, emails, background papers, minutes of meetings, reports, documents and publications provided to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to the Government's Plan 'Ireland's Global Footprint 2025' in the period June 1st 2017 to September 6th 2017.*
- *any correspondence between the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to the Government's Plan 'Ireland's Global Footprint 2025' in the period June 1st 2017 to September 6th 2017.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 15 September.

I have identified two records which fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule below. I have made a decision to grant the records.

Record Description		Granted/Part-Granted/Refused
1.	Draft letter from John Carroll, D/Taoiseach to Caitriona Fitzpatrick, D/FAT	Granted
2.	Letter from An Taoiseach to Minister Coveney	Granted

Ireland's diplomatic and consular network is comparatively modest in size and currently includes 61 Embassies, 7 multilateral Missions and 11 Consulates General and one representative office. In addition to their country of primary accreditation, many Ambassadors are also accredited to additional countries on a non-resident basis which enhances the cost-effectiveness of our external representation. Our missions abroad work very closely with the state agencies in the promotion of exports, tourism and inward investment. They also perform a wide range of functions in support of Ireland's foreign policy

interests. These include representing and advancing government policies with other states and in international organisations; economic and cultural promotion; frontline consular and passport services to citizens overseas; engaging with and supporting Irish communities and with programme management, particularly in Irish Aid priority countries and promoting our values.

The ambition set by the Taoiseach reflects the scale and complexity of the challenges facing us in the years ahead including from Brexit, growing protectionism internationally, the further diversification of markets for trade and investment and building alliances to promote justice, equality and peaceful international cooperation. A strengthened international presence will be part of our response to these challenges enabling us to harness new opportunities, to support Ireland's foreign trade, inward investment and promote our values internationally.

Following the Taoiseach's announcement, this Department has begun to examine options to expand our footprint and influence internationally. These include augmenting our existing diplomatic presence overseas, in some cases opening new missions where most impactful, and ensuring that the vital service and policy supports at headquarters are in place. Decisions will also be guided by "[Ireland Connected](#)" the whole-of-Government trade and investment strategy launched last March which provides strategic direction for trade and investment priorities to 2025.

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. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at 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

Frances Kiernan