



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

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2017/159

13 September 2017

Dear Mr. Cole,

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. List of the delegation accompanying the president of Croatia in April 2017 and all protocol division emails with the Croatian authorities regarding the schedule.

2. List of the delegation accompanying the prime minister of Canada in July 2017 and all protocol division emails with the Canadian authorities regarding the schedule.”

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 24 August 2017.

I have identified 39 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedules attached. For the reasons set out below, I have made a decision to grant 5 of the records, part-grant 2 records and refuse 32 records.

Where access to records have been part-granted or refused, the records are subject to one of more of the following parts of the Freedom of Information Act. In each case, I have identified on the schedule the sections that I have applied:

Section 32(1)(a)(iii) and relate to methods, systems, plans or procedures for ensuring the safety of the public and the safety or security of persons and property

Section 32(1)(a)(ix) relating to the security of an aircraft

Section 33(1)(d), relating to the international relations of the State

Section 33(2)(b)(i). That is, they are records of another state containing information the disclosure of which is prohibited by that state.

Section 37(1) relating to personal information about individuals

In relation to the use of Sections 32(1)(a)(iii) and (1)(a)(ix), these relate to safety and security matters; a number of the records contain information about processes and procedures used to ensure the safety and security of VIP visitors to Ireland. I have considered the public interest in ensuring the resources of the taxpayer are used effectively however on balance I have decided that not granting/part-granting these records outweighs this interest in terms of not disadvantaging this Department and other public bodies in the discharge of their security responsibilities.

In relation to the use of Sections 33(1)(d) and 33(2)(b)(i), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 178 countries. In order to effectively carry out this role, the conduct of international relations depends upon the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between governments. An important tool in creation and maintenance of this trust is the manner in which communications between States are treated by both interlocutors. By maintaining trust as a recipient of such information the Department can reasonably expect that other States will treat with equal confidence communications from this Department. Not maintaining the mutuality of trust with regard to communications between States could reasonably be expected to adversely affect the international relations of the State. For these reasons, I consider that the public interest not granting access to these records outweighs the public interest in releasing them. For records exempted from release under section 33(2)(b)(i) please note this is a mandatory exemption and I am obliged to refuse access to these records.

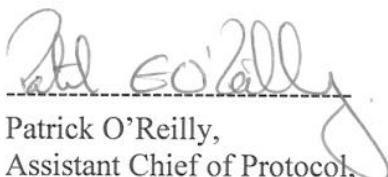
With regard to information exempted under Section 37 –personal information and taking into consideration the public interest in releasing such information I have decided on balance the information should not be released in order to protect the privacy of the individual to whom the information relates.

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



Patrick O'Reilly,
Assistant Chief of Protocol,

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade