

Árd-Chonsalacht na hÉireann
Consulate General of Ireland



Mr. Eamonn Patterson

Our Ref: Fol/Req/2019/289

4 November 2019

Dear Mr Patterson

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

A copy of the diary of the Irish Consulate General in San Francisco, USA for the period of 1 January 2019 to 30 September 2019 inclusive.

I have identified one record that falls within the scope of your request. The record is listed in the schedule attached.

I am the deciding officer on the case and have decided to grant you partial access to the Consulate General's diary for the time period specified in your request. This decision to grant partial access features redactions, whose inclusion falls under Section 37 (1) (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

This Section of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 is a mandatory exemption. I am obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing the records in full.

I have taken into account the benefit to the public to be given access to correspondence in a manner which demonstrates transparency and accountability of the Department. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private.

The Consulate General of Ireland to the Western USA, based in San Francisco provides

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consular cover and support in thirteen states across the Western US and staff perform a wide range of duties in pursuit of Ireland's foreign policy objectives in this area.

The work ranges from cultural, trade and economic promotion of Ireland; political engagement in various state capitols; provision of passport and other consular services; provision of visas for persons travelling to Ireland to do business; support of and engagement with the Irish community and diaspora; among others.

The diary serves as a scheduling tool for this work, but also contains details of personal appointments and meetings of the Consul General, Vice Consul and other staff members. It is shared by all mission staff, outlining appointments and engagement to be undertaken by staff members with some rolling engagements and reminders of repeated events, not always necessarily attended by consulate staff.

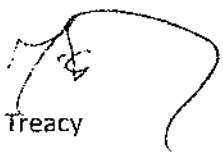
The personal information which I have redacted does not have any bearing on the substance or detail of the records, nor of the work undertaken in representing Ireland and Ireland's foreign policy goals. As such I am satisfied that, on balance, the decision to partially redact the records and remove identifiable information is correct.

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 the 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 making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a more senior member of staff of this Department.

With best wishes


Michael Treacy