



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/19/313

Date: 10th December 2019

Dear Mr Mahon,

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 correspondence between Enda O'Coineen and the minister for foreign affairs in the last 6 months.

Any internal correspondence, memos, presentations, documents generated as a result of the correspondence between Enda O'Coineen and the department.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 12th November.

I have identified 7 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to part-grant these records.

In relation to information refused under Section 29 of the Act, Deliberations of FOI Bodies, I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the records in question in terms of the right of the public to have access to information and the need for transparency in the decision making process. However, given the nature of the records, I am satisfied that on balance the public interest would not be best served by releasing the information.

With regard to information refused under Section 35 of the Act, Information received in Confidence, this relates to information given in confidence on the understanding that it would be treated as confidential. I am satisfied that releasing the information would impair future sources of such information and impair the workings of this Department without any countervailing benefit to the broader public interest.

Certain records have been withheld as they fall under the scope of Section 36 of the Act, Commercially Sensitive Information. This exemption has been used to protect information relating to Atlantic Youth Trust that is commercially sensitive and could reasonably be expected to prejudice their competitive position.

Although Section 37(1) Personal Information of the Act is a mandatory exemption, I am still 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 personal information which I have redacted does not have any bearing on the substance or detail of the records, and does not diminish or alter the views expressed, and 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@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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eoin Egan', written over a horizontal line.

Eoin Egan
Ireland, United Kingdom and Americas Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade