



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha**  
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref FOI/Req/22/024

Date: 20 January 2022

Dear Gerard Down,

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:

“I am submitting an FOI request under the Act to the department, or any relevant department, for a record being a declaration of interest by Minister Simon Coveney that (1) for the purposes of discussion by the Government, or any relevant Minister, of the financing of RTE, and (2) discussions by the Government and any relevant Minister, of RTE's use of bogus self employed contracts, that Minister Coveney is a brother of Mr Rory Coveney who is RTE's Strategic Director and has been a member of the RTE Board and that, therefore, Minister Coveney has or had a personal interest in the outcome of the aforementioned discussions.”

I refer also to the email exchange of 13 January with the FOI Section in which you confirmed that the record you are seeking pertains to Government discussions concerning RTE, and is a declaration of interest by Minister Coveney regarding a family relationship with RTE's Director of Strategy, Rory Coveney.

I wish to advise that the Department of Foreign Affairs does not hold records in relation to this request and I am therefore obliged to refuse your request on administrative grounds under Section 15(1)(a) of the FOI Act, which states that:

*15. (1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where—*


*(a) the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken.*

### 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](mailto: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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie), or 01-4082618.

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

  
Andrew Guyett