



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/18/009

6 February 2018

Cathal McCann  
Head of Communications and Research.  
The Labour Party,  
Leinster House.

Dear Mr. McCann,

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

All records both electronic and written, held by the Department related to the visit by the Taoiseach and the Minister of State Helen McEntee to Hungary on 4th January 2017, consisting of, or relating to communications between the Department of Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Irish embassies, and any other bodies related to the visit, and all records related to the preparations and advance planning by the Department for the visit.

I have identified 34 records that fall within the scope of your request. These records are listed in the schedule attached.

I have made a decision to grant access to 16 of these records and refuse access to 18 records.

Records to which I have refused access have been exempted under *Security, Defence and International relations* Sections 33(2)(b)(i) and 33(2)(b)(ii) of the Act. These are mandatory exemptions under the FOI legislation and I am obliged to refuse access to records falling under those sections of the Act.

Records to which I have refused access or partially granted access have also been refused under Section 33(1)(c) of the Act. I have considered the possibility and likelihood that the release of the records could result in negative consequences for Ireland's international relations. This Department is responsible for managing relations between Ireland and 27 other EU member States, in a complex and diverse environment. Successful diplomatic relations depend upon the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between governments. Based on the Department's direct knowledge and expertise in international relations, its strongly held position is that the mere granting of access to records will adversely affect the State's relations by introducing major doubts with regard to the security and confidentiality of our diplomatic communications and could substantially impair the good relations we have with another State. It is important to maintain that mutuality of

trust to protect and promote Ireland's interests internationally. On balance, I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

### **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](mailto: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 FOI Unit at [foi@dfat.ie](mailto:foi@dfat.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 'David King', written over a horizontal line.

David King  
EU Affairs and Coordination  
78 Harcourt Street  
Dublin 2