



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/18/251

11<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Dear Mr. Murray,

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:

*Correspondence in August and September between the DFA and the US Embassy, US State Department and the White House regarding the visit and then postponed visit from Donald Trump to Ireland.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

I have identified 1 record that falls within the scope of your request. This record is listed in the schedule attached and I have made a decision to part release this record.

The record has been redacted under section 33. (3) (c) (i) Security, defence and international relations and section 37. (1) Personal information.

### **Section 33 – Security, defence and international relations**

I have considered section 33(c)(i), of the Act in making my decision to redact this document. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade operates in a complex and diverse international environment. A mutuality of confidence exists in the communication between this Department and our interlocutors. This is particularly the case in respect of diplomatic communications. I have considered the possibility and likelihood that the release of this record could result in negative consequences, and prejudice the ability of this Department to effectively discharge its functions. To do otherwise would risk compromising the State's capacity to engage with international partners through diplomatic and other channels.

While there may be arguments in favour of releasing records such as showcasing transparency and the process of informed reporting, I have had to take into account the potential harm or detriment that could occur. This is especially the case in this instance where the visit of the US President has been postponed and where the Department would not wish to prejudice or

adversely affect the potential or planning for a future visit of the US President to Ireland. As such, and on balance, I have decided to redact this record with this view in mind.

### **Section 37 – Personal information**

While Section 37(1) Personal Information is a mandatory exemption I am still obliged to consider whether the public interest would be best served by releasing this record 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, which includes names, addresses, email addresses etc., 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 record and as such, I am satisfied that on balance the decision to redact 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](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. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto: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,

James Rowan

*Americas Unit  
Ireland, UK and Americas Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*