



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA
AGUS TRÁDÁLA
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
Dublin 2

23 March 2015

Mr. Mark Tighe
Sunday Times

Our Ref:Fol/Req/2015/027

Dear Mr. Tighe

I refer to your request for information made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 in which you requested:

"I request records from embassies that reported on the effects on Ireland's reputation of the closure of a number of language schools in 2014. I want all reports on damage to the sector or complaints about schools.

I refer to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 26 February, 2015. I am the deciding officer in this case and after reviewing the records, I have identified a total of 13 records. I have made a final decision to grant 10 and to part-grant access to 3. I have carefully considered both the nature and source of these records and I am satisfied that, on balance, the public interest is best served in part-granting access to Records 1, 3 and 11. In the case of Records 1 and 3 I have redacted certain information as I believe its release could have adverse business consequences for the organisations referenced and negative knock-on effects for the Irish economy. Information redacted in Record 11 is the personal information, including visa reference numbers, of students. The withheld parts of the records are exempt from release under the following sections of the Freedom of Information Act 2014;

Financial and economic interests of the State

40. (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request in relation to a record (and, in particular, but without prejudice to the generality otherwise of this subsection, to a record to which *subsection (2)* applies) if, in the opinion of the head

—(c) access to the record could reasonably be expected to have a negative impact on decisions by enterprises to invest or expand in the State, on their research activities or on the effectiveness of the industrial development strategy of the

State, particularly in relation to the strategies of other states,

Commercially sensitive information

36. (1) Subject to *subsection (2)*, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains—

(b) financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation, or

(c) information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates.

Personal information

37. (1) Subject to this section, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if, in the opinion of the head, access to the record concerned would involve the disclosure of personal information (including personal information relating to a deceased individual).

In the case of Record 7, the first part of the document related to a matter outside the scope of your request and so for the purposes of your request the second part of that message is the Record.

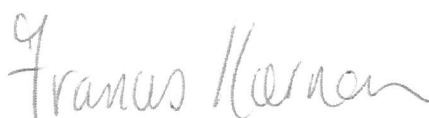
The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through its Trade and Promotion Division, geographic units and our Embassy network, continues to promote Ireland as a destination for international students. This includes support to education-focussed trade missions to priority markets, raising Ireland's profile as a destination, assisting Irish universities with individual partnerships, supporting alumni networking, and working with decision-makers on bilateral agreements and access to Government-funded scholarship programmes.

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 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, 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



Frances Kiernan
Corporate Services Division