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

Baile Átha Cliath 2
Dublin 2

14 September 2015

Mr. Gordon Deegan

Email: ;

Our reference: FoI/Req/2015/074

Dear Mr. Deegan

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records of memos, reports and correspondence (internal and external) from 1 May 2015 concerning the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade decision to end selling Certificates of Irish Heritage.

As you are aware the Certificate of Irish Heritage was introduced in 2011 to recognise descendants of previous generations of Irish citizens in an official way and give greater practical expression to the sense of Irish identity felt by many around the world.

Rather than administering the system itself, it was decided that the Department would engage an external company to administer the scheme, on a concession basis, process applications and issue certificates for a fee to applicants. FEXCO was awarded the contract to administer the Certificate of Irish Heritage following a competitive process in 2011.

The uptake of the Certificate of Irish Heritage has been considerably less than anticipated. From its launch in 2011 until 6 August 2015, 2925 certificates were purchased.

In line with the provisions of the contract, FEXCO notified the Department in June this year of its intention to terminate the agreement with effect from 3 September 2015. Since then the Department and FEXCO have worked closely on the logistics associated with the termination of the agreement.

Arrangements are being considered by the Department to allow the presentation of Certificates of Irish Heritage to continue. The Department is also conducting further analysis on how members of the Irish Diaspora seek to assert their identity. This analysis will inform any future decisions on initiatives in this area.

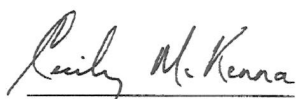
I have identified 20 records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant full access to 13 records, part grant 6 records and refuse 1 record. The records are listed in the schedule attached.

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



Cecily McKenna
Irish Abroad Unit

Tel: 01 4082375