



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

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2020/166

Date: 25 September 2020

Dear Stephen

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:

Copies of any invitations to events sent by email or by post to the office of the Minister and junior minister(s) at the department since their appointment in June. I am also seeking the release of any correspondence sent in response to these invitations, either by the minister(s) themselves or their secretary.

I have identified 22 records that fall within the scope of your request and these are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to part-grant access to 22 records. These records have been part-granted as follows:

Records refused/part-granted under Section 37 of the Act – 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 the records 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. In the main, the refusal of access or part-grant records is due to those records relating to personal identifiable information and much of it does not affect the substance of the record. I have particularly considered whether releasing the personal information would provide any additional benefit in this regard. I have weighed this against the right of individuals to have their personal information remain private and have found that there is a clear prerogative for this information to remain private.

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. 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 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 cursive script, appearing to read "S. Pollock", is written above a horizontal line.

Shirley Pollock
Office of the Minister
for Foreign Affairs