



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

Ken Foxe

Right to Know

21 August 2020

### **FOI/Req/20/154 Funding provided to the Ancient Order of the Hibernians by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017-2020.**

Dear Ken,

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 all records held referring or relating to the provision of funding by DFA to the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). This part of the request to cover the period 1 Jan 2020 to date of receipt of request.**
- **A record of how much in funding DFA has awarded to AOH in each of the years 2017 to 2020.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 06 August 2020.

I have identified a total of 12 records that fall within the scope of your request and have listed same in the attached schedule (Annex 1). I have made the decision to grant 1 and refuse 11 of these records (Annex 2).

In February 2020, following a call for grant applications under the Emigrant Support Programme, the department received three applications from the Ancient Order of the Hibernians and the Ladies Ancient Order of the Hibernians. The three applications concerned are still in the final stages of processing and no decision has been yet communicated to the organisations in relation to the applications concerned.

In this regard, it is envisaged that a final decision will be communicated to the organisation in relation to these three applications in quarter 4 of 2020.

I agreed, however, to release a list of all funding given to the Ancient Order of the Hibernians by this department between the years 2017 and 2020.

As required by the Freedom of Information Act 2014, I am obliged to make specific considerations as regards the public interest where access has been refused under specific sections of the Act.

### **Section 29 Deliberations of FOI bodies**

For records exempted under Section 29 (1) (a) and (b) of the Act, I am satisfied that the premature release of the Emigrant support applications made to this department by the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, US Mission assessment sheets, Irish Abroad Unit assessment sheets and draft letters of offer under the Emigrant Support Programme might impair the integrity and viability of the decision making process.

I have considered the right of the public to have access to information and the need for an open and accountable civil service. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release in relation to the 11 records refused at this point of time.

In weighing these adverse consequences against the public interest, I have again considered the right of the public to have access to information; the need for an open, transparent and accountable civil service and the need for decision-making processes to be adequately scrutinised. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release on this occasion.

### **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

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Abdul Wahab Al Dakar  
Deputy Director  
Irish Abroad Unit