



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

Our Ref: Fol/Req/20/005

29th January 2020

Dear Mr Brennan,

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:

- 1. All correspondence between the Australian, Austrian, UK, American, and Canadian embassies and the Department, regarding children of citizens of those countries being taken into care in Ireland, without their relatives in those countries being informed, dated between 1st October 2019 and the current date*

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

Refusal in this instance relates to section 33 (2) (b) (i) Security, defence and international relations.

Section 33 – Security, defence and international relations

While Section 33. (2) (b) (i) Security, defence and international relations, is a mandatory exemption I feel it is warranted that I give reasoning to why it has been used. 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 these records could result in negative consequences, and prejudice the ability of this Department to effectively discharge its functions and to continue to engage with outside interlocutors and stakeholders. To do otherwise would risk compromising the State's capacity to engage with international partners through diplomatic and other channels. This is particularly the case where records relate to analysis, actions and information obtained in confidence from external interlocutors who are engaging on a sensitive issue.

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,
Doireann O'Brien

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