



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: FoI/Req/22/307

Date: 26 January 2022

Dear Mr. McDonagh,

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:

“(a) copies of emails, letters, memos and other records relating to a gathering of the UN Security Council campaign team at Iveagh House on June 17, 2020

(b) copies of credit card statements and other records relating to expenses incurred in connection with the gathering at Iveagh House including but not limited to the purchase of champagne and other alcohol produced at the event

(c) copies of emails, letters, memos or other records relating to public health guidance in relation to the Iveagh House gathering before or after the event, to include any reviews or guidance that followed the gathering

(d) copies of any briefing notes or other correspondence for/to the minister for foreign affairs and trade in relation to the gathering at Iveagh House.”

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 7 January 2022.

The Department will shortly publish records in relation to 17 June 2020. Many of these records fall outside the scope of your request. However, in advance of their publication, a schedule of these records is attached and the records themselves are available at the following link for 30 days: <https://dfa-ie.sharefile.eu/d-s81bf72c98c2a40888bb52a119eb8809e>

I have identified no records that fall within the scope of parts (b) and (d) of your request above. Therefore I have decided to apply Section 15 (1) (a) “A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken.”

I have identified 22 records which fall within the scope of points (a) and (c) of your request.

I have carefully considered the content of all the records identified in the context of the relevant legislation and in consultation with the Department’s Freedom of Information Unit.

I have made the decision to grant 9 records, listed as numbers 4, 5, 17, 27a, 28, 38, 44, 45 and 46 in the schedule.

I have made the decision to part-grant 13 records, listed as numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 21, 25, 26, 27, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43 in the schedule.

In accordance with section 37(1) of the Act, I have redacted personal information from records 1, 2, 3, 6, 21, 25, 26, 27, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43. While Section 37(1) 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 considered whether releasing the very limited amount of redacted personal information would provide any additional benefit to the public. 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.

In accordance with section 32.(1).(a).(ix) of the Act, I have redacted information from record 42 containing the floorplans of meeting rooms in Department of Foreign Affairs office buildings, namely Iveagh House, and offices on Clonmel Street, Clare Street, Harcourt Street and Hatch Street, and in Limerick. In my opinion, the disclosure of the material could be reasonably expected to impair the security of these buildings. I have considered whether releasing the ten floorplans in question would provide any additional benefit to the public, and it is my opinion that security concerns outweigh any such benefits.

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, 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, (€10 for medical card holders). A copy of the medical card should be provided to avail of the reduced fee. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082618.

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



Nicola Brassil
Political Division