



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Ref: 21/081

Date: 1 June 2021

Dear Mr. Tony Oliver,

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:

All electronic records, held by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and/or the Embassy of Ireland in France, created on or after 1 January 2015, relating to:

- the DFA's financial support for the Centre culturel irlandais (CCI) in terms of capital investment, including maintenance, improvements, renewals and development of facilities
- the DFA's financial support for the CCI's running costs, overheads and other current account expenditure
- the annual budgets earmarked for cultural events/programmes at the CCI
- any report, evaluation or analysis that has been completed in respect of the DFA's financial support for the CCI.

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 30 April 2021.

I have identified 30 records that fall within the scope of your request. The records are listed in the schedule attached. I have made a decision to grant 19, part-grant 6 and refuse 5 of the records.

Where access has been refused, the records are exempt from release under Sections 35 & 36 of the Act.

Under Section 35(1)(a) of the Act, a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned "contains information given to an FOI body, in confidence and on the understanding that it would be treated by it as confidential [...] and, in the opinion of the head, its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the giving to the body of further similar information from the same person or other persons and it is of importance to the body that such further similar information as aforesaid should continue to be given to the body". I have refused 4 records and part-granted 5 records under this Section of the Act, on the basis that said information was given in confidence to the Department. This is notably the case with

information given by the CCI to the Ambassador of Ireland in France in her capacity as a member of the Board of the CCI.

Section 36(1)(b) of the FOI Act states that “a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains [...] financial, commercial, scientific or technical or other information whose disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in a material financial loss or gain to the person to whom the information relates, or could prejudice the competitive position of that person in the conduct of his or her profession or business or otherwise in his or her occupation [...]”.

Section 36(1)(c) of the Act states that “a head shall refuse to grant an FOI request if the record concerned contains “information whose disclosure could prejudice the conduct or outcome of contractual or other negotiations of the person to whom the information relates”. I have refused 5 records and part-granted 5 records under Sections 36(1)(b & c) of the Act on the basis that they contained commercially sensitive information relating to the CCI or the *Fondation Irlandaise* and/or its partners.

While these are not records held by the Department, you may be interested in consulting the financial accounts of the *Fondation Irlandaise*, which are published on the French Government’s Official Journal and can be found here - <https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/associations/recherche/>

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, (€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,

Liam O’Flaherty