

From: [FOI](#)  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [FOI](#)  
Subject: FOI 178/17 - EC Investigations - Response  
Date: 07 December 2017 14:58:40  
Attachments: [Letter from Arron Banks.pdf](#)

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Dear [REDACTED],

**Our Ref: FOI 178/17**

Thank you for your letter to the Electoral Commission dated **09 November 2017**.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

- 1. How many times did Mr Bradshaw meet the Commission in the run up to the announcement of this investigation?**
- 2. We would also like to request copies of the email correspondence between the Commission and Mr Bradshaw.**
- 3. What evidence did the EC have to start the investigation with, other than the sources mentioned above?**
- 4. Why hasn't the Commission announced investigation(s) into the Vote Leave and Stronger IN campaigns where media and public interest is equally strong?**

We hold the information you have requested.

The investigation referred to in the request is an investigation into Better for the Country Limited and Mr Arron Banks, announced by the Commission on 1 November 2017.

Our response is as follows:

1. No meeting with Mr Bradshaw MP was held in the run up to the announcement of this investigation.
2. There is no email correspondence between the Commission and Mr Bradshaw in the run up to the announcement of this investigation.
3. Section 30(1) of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act provides for exemption from disclosure of information which has been held at any time for the purpose of conducting an investigation of a potential offence.

As you are aware, the Commission currently has an active investigation concerning whether or not Better for the Country Limited (BFTCL) and/or Mr Arron Banks breached campaign finance rules in relation to donations at the 2016 EU referendum.

Information which falls under the scope of your request, and is held as part of this investigation, has been exempted under section 30 of the FOI Act.

The exemption under section 30 is subject to the public interest test. Under the circumstances whereby the investigation is ongoing, and that investigation is, in the Commission's view, a matter of importance and public interest the potential harm to the investigation caused by releasing the information outweighs the public interest in releasing it. Consequently, we are satisfied that it is not the public interest to disclose this information in response to your request.

You may wish to note that as a matter of routine the Commission publishes the outcomes of all its investigations, once they are concluded.

4. The Commission announced investigations in respect of Britain Strong In Europe and Vote Leave on 24 February 2017. A further investigation in respect of Vote Leave and other campaigners was announced on 20 November 2017. These announcements can be seen here:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/journalist/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-donations/details-of-major-campaign-spending-during-eu-referendum-published-by-electoral-commission>

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/journalist/electoral-commission-media-centre/news-releases-donations/electoral-commission-statement-regarding-vote-leave-limited,-mr-darren-grimes-and-veterans-for-britain-limited>


Since the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU the Electoral Commission has published the conclusions of investigations into campaigners for both the 'leave' and 'remain' outcomes. The outcomes of these investigations are available on our website. The conclusions of our investigations in respect of Vote Leave's and Britain Stronger In Europe's referendum spending returns to be published in due course.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-i-make-an-foi-request>

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

  
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