From: FOI
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 117/18 - DUP and EC Interaction during the EU Referendum - Response
Date: 13 August 2018 12:59:37

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI 117/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **19 July 2018.**

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.

I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

NB: This FOI request concerns the dialogue and processes surrounding the DUP's relationship with the EC. However, it does not cover the identity of any DUP donors, or the EC's knowledge about the identity of donors.

1. How many meetings did the EC have with the DUP with regards to the EU Referendum campaign?

2. How many letters did the EC send specifically to the DUP with regards to the EU Referendum campaign (not including generic letters which were sent to multiple political parties)?

3. How many emails did the EC send specifically to the DUP with regards to the EU Referendum campaign (not including generic emails which were sent to multiple political parties)?

4. Can you confirm or deny whether the EC has begun or concluded any internal investigations or reviews regarding donations to the DUP during the EU referendum campaign? (NB: I am not requesting the subject or outcome of the investigations/reviews).

If any of these questions cannot be answered under the FOIA or PPERA, I would be grateful if the other questions could still be responded to.

Our response is as follows:

We can confirm that we did not hold any one to one meetings with the DUP with regards to the EU Referendum campaign. Representatives from the DUP attend meetings of the Northern Ireland Assembly Parties Panel and the EU referendum, including reference to campaigning, was discussed at these meetings. The minutes of these meetings can be accessed on our **website**.

With regard to the other information you have requested we cannot confirm or deny that we hold any information related to these requests. The Commission is prohibited by legislation from releasing this information. Section 71E of the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2000 (PPERA) places a duty of

confidentiality on the Commission in relation to information that relates to donation from Northern Ireland recipients or information relating to our function in this area. Section 44 exempts from disclosure any information if its disclosure is prohibited by any enactment. As stated, the information requested is specifically prohibited from being released by section 71E of PPERA. The ICO recently upheld the Commissions use of Section 71E of PPERA within the last 12 months. For further information on this case, please find the link below.

https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2017/2172946/fs50703027.pdf

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,

[redacted]

Access to Information Officer (FOI & DPA)
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

Twitter | **Facebook** | **Blog**