



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Russia Team
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building
London SW1A 2AH

Website: www.gov.uk

5 January 2015

Dear

Your Freedom Of Information (FOI) Request: 0577-15

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 17 June. In your request you asked for;

'materials that relate to the 10th Congress of People's Deputies and the constitutional crisis in Russia (covering the period 21 September – 15 October 1993'

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

There is a large quantity of relevant information, unfortunately it is therefore not possible to send it to you electronically. I'd be grateful if you can confirm you would like the documents to be sent to the above postal address.

Some of the information has been withheld using section 27 – international relations. Section 27 is a qualified exemption and is subject to a public interest test. Section 27(1)(a) of the FOIA recognises the need to protect information that would be likely to prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and other states if it was disclosed. In this case, the release of information could harm our relations with the Russian Federation. The application of s.27(1)(a) requires us to consider the public interest test arguments in favour of releasing and withholding the information. We acknowledge that releasing information on this issue would increase public knowledge about our relations with the Russian Federation. However, s.27 (1) (a) recognises that the effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between governments. If the United Kingdom does not maintain this trust and confidence, its ability to protect and promote UK interests through international relations will be hampered, which will not be in the public interest. Furthermore, the disclosure of information detailing our relationship with the Russian Government could potentially damage the bilateral relationship between the UK and Russia. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests, which would not be in the public interest. For these reasons we consider that, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Other information you request is exempt under Section 35(1)(a) of the Act which also requires the application of a public interest test. It is recognised that there is public interest in the greater transparency in the decision making process to ensure accountability within

public authorities. However, for Government to succeed in upholding the public interest, Ministers and officials need to be able to consider, debate and understand implications of the policy and how it is presented. Their candour in doing so will be affected by their assessment of whether the content of such discussions will be disclosed in the near future. For these reasons we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Russia Team

