



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

**Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Department**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

12 January 2017

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1117-16

Thank you for your email of 5 December 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

Information concerning the International Russian Conservative Forum in St Petersburg, Russia, in 2015.

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. Please find attached the information that the FCO can release to you. Some information has been withheld using the following exemptions:

Section 27 – International Relations

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 relating to domestic politics could negatively impact our relationship with Russia.

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 Russian politics. 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. The disclosure of information on the internal affairs of another country could potentially negatively impact the bilateral relationship between the UK and Russia. This would reduce the UK government's ability to protect and promote UK interests through its relations with Russia, 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.

Section 40 – Personal Information

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.

Yours sincerely,

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.