



**10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA**

foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

18 January 2022

Dear David Clews

Our ref: FOI2021/24136

Thank you for your email of 21st December in which you make a request for information about the World Economic Forum. Your full request, which is attached in the Annex, has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 14(1) of the Act says that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the request is vexatious. Under the Act, such a concept includes requiring a burdensome and disproportionate amount of resources. After careful consideration we have concluded that your request falls within this category, for the reasons set out below, and we are therefore refusing it under section 14(1) of the Act.

In reaching this decision we have worked through the Information Commissioner's guidance on vexatious requests which provides examples of a number of indicators of a request for information which could be considered vexatious for the purpose of section 14(1) of the Act. The Information Commissioner's guidance is available at:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/1198/dealing-with-vexatious-requests.pdf>

In particular paragraph 91 of the Information Commissioner's guidance states: *'If a public authority has reason to believe that several different requesters are acting in concert as part of a campaign to disrupt the organisation by virtue of the sheer weight of FOIA requests being submitted, then it may take this into account when determining whether any of those requests are vexatious.'* The Commissioner's guidance continues at paragraph 91 that requests could be considered as forming a 'campaign' if they fulfil any of the below examples:

- *‘The requests are identical or similar.*
- *They have received email correspondence in which other requesters have been copied in or mentioned.*
- *There is an unusual pattern of requests, for example a large number have been submitted within a relatively short space of time.*
- *A group’s website makes an explicit reference to a campaign against the authority.’*

Since late December 2021 this Office has received a very high volume of identical and similar requests concerning communications with the World Economic Forum (WEF). Because of the nature, the identical and similar wording and unprecedented volume of the requests, we consider that they form a ‘campaign’ as defined by the Information Commissioner above. We have determined that your request is one of many such requests.

Taking into account all the circumstances of this case we are not obliged to comply with your request under section 14(1) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

NICHOLAS HOWARD

David Clews

Annex

RE: *Freedom of Information Request*

This Freedom of Information Request is in relation to all communications between Boris Johnson and the World Economic Forum between the 1st of January 2020 and the 21st of December 2021. I look forward to receiving this information at your earliest possible convenience



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If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from this office in relation to any aspect of your request, you may ask for an internal review.

You should contact:

Tarley Smith
Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire

SK9 5AF