

10 March 2022

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Tēnā koe Adam Irish

I refer to your email of 25 February 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

I request under the Official Information Act if New Zealand has explored options to expand its defence alliance and join the NATO alliance.

New Zealand has not explored the option of joining the NATO alliance as a member country. NATO's founding Treaty limits new membership to European states only.

However, New Zealand readily engages with NATO alongside a range of countries referred to as "Partners across the globe". This involves cooperation with NATO in areas of mutual interest, including emerging security challenges, and contributions to NATO operations where appropriate.

New Zealand makes valuable contributions to NATO-led efforts, and has been engaged in dialogue and cooperation with NATO since 1996. As partners, New Zealand and NATO continue to stand together and underscore the values we share in common, including a commitment to upholding democracy, human rights, respect for international law, and the international rules-based system.

More information about New Zealand and NATO, including specific initiatives that New Zealand has contributed to, is available on the NATO website: [NATO - Topic: Relations with New Zealand](#).

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Julie-Anne Lee
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade