



Call for Evidence – ERA Act: Addressing Stigma as a Barrier to Scientific Freedom and Innovation

10 September 2025

The ERA Act aims to create a unified, resilient, and inclusive European Research Area. UAP Coalition Netherlands fully supports these goals and wishes to contribute a key perspective: **the role of stigma as a systemic barrier** to freedom of inquiry, researcher mobility, and knowledge valorisation.

Emerging and interdisciplinary research fields such as Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) often face reputational stigma. This has tangible consequences: researchers are discouraged from applying for funding, interdisciplinary collaborations are hampered, and valuable data remains siloed across institutional domains. Ultimately, this undermines Europe's capacity to support frontier science and address strategic challenges.

In May 2025 we provided similar feedback¹ to the Commission on the Call for Evidence for the European Strategy for Research and Technology Infrastructures. We strongly encourage the Commission to explicitly recognise **stigma as a structural obstacle** in the ERA legislative package. Doing so aligns directly with the ERA's stated objectives:

- Ensuring scientific freedom, equality, and integrity;
- Promoting open science and FAIR² data sharing;
- Facilitating researcher mobility and career attractiveness;
- Increasing the EU's competitiveness and ability to attract talent and investment.

¹ [Feedback on the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures - Addressing UAP and Stigma in Emerging Research Fields](#)

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FAIR_data



We propose the inclusion of specific measures:

- Promote open-minded scientific inquiry as a guiding principle in EU R&I policy;
- Develop anti-stigma guidelines and best practices for evaluators and funding agencies;
- Support exploratory research in controversial or marginalised fields through Horizon Europe, ERC³, EIC⁴, and EU space programmes;
- Foster inclusive and interdisciplinary research networks;
- Ensure access to research infrastructures for scientists working in emerging fields, regardless of topic perception.

Europe must lead by example in defending academic freedom and openness. Let us ensure that European science remains guided by curiosity, not by stigma.

UAP Coalition Netherlands remains at the disposal of the Commission, Parliament, and Council to provide further expertise and support.

This feedback on the ERA Act is supported and endorsed by the following persons, who wish to highlight the importance of addressing stigma to research and innovation in Europe:

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³ <https://erc.europa.eu/homepage>

⁴ https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en



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