UAP Coalition
The Netherlands

Feedback on the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures: Addressing UAP and Stigma in Emerging Research Fields

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Summary

UAP Coalition Netherlands' feedback supports the European Commission's goals for improving research and technology infrastructures but emphasizes the need to address stigma, which hinders progress in emerging fields like UAP research. The feedback argues that stigma limits funding, discourages researchers, restricts access to resources, and impedes collaboration.

To counter this, the Coalition proposes additional actions for the Commission:

- Promote open-minded inquiry.
- Foster interdisciplinary networks.
- Develop best practices for data handling.
- Allocate funding for exploratory research.
- Organize workshops and conferences.
- Support public outreach and education.

By integrating these measures, the Coalition believes the Commission can create a more inclusive research environment, fostering innovation and discovery.

What is UAP Coalition Netherlands?

UAP Coalition Netherlands[1] is an independent non profit foundation that represents the interests of professionals within aviation, armed forces and law enforcement who observe(d) Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena. We promote support, research, awareness, cooperation and regulations regarding UAP.

What are Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena?

Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) is anything in space and air, on land, and in the sea that cannot be identified. In the past, the term Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) was used but as improved sensor platforms started detecting more phenomena in other domains (in particular the sea), a new acronym and definition was adopted.

Why UAP Coalition Netherlands?

The Coalition was created out of necessity because professionals within aviation, armed forces and law enforcement do not feel safe and heard if they have experience with UAP.

The positive developments of legislation, regulations and research in countries outside the EU show that the European Union cannot lag behind on the topic of UAP. UAPCNL wants to inform, advise and support the EU government and involved organizations in the EU about UAP.

[1] https://uapcoalitienederland.nl/en

UAP Are Real

As technological progress increases, observations[2] are increasingly supported by a range of sensors and measuring instruments including radar, infrared, cameras and other sensor platforms. This is why it becomes more difficult to dismiss UAP as fiction.

Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena appear to demonstrate a particular focus on energy infrastructure, with a worrisome frequency of sightings reported near atomic facilities[3], nuclear-powered vessels, and military sites housing nuclear weapons[4].

France has an official government organization[5] (GEIPAN) that collects, analyzes, and reports on UAP. It operates under the French Space Agency[6] (CNES) and focuses exclusively on cases within France.

Former United States Presidents such as Barack Obama, current US President Donald Trump and other prominent figures have publicly spoken about UAP. In various interviews[7] they confirm the existence of objects that cannot be explained and that these are observed in American airspace and around the globe.

On 22 July 2022 the United States Pentagon created a department (AARO[8]) where government personnel can report their UAP sightings. So far over 1600 cases have been filed and AARO releases a report[9] every year on their findings. Several hundred are still not explained.

Since 2022 the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics has a special committee[10] dedicated to improving aerospace safety by increasing scientific knowledge about UAP and reducing stigma and barriers to the study of UAP.

On September 14, 2023, the NASA Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Independent Study Team published its final report[11] with a series of recommendations on how the agency can advance their understanding of UAP. NASA promised to continue their research on UAP and appointed a special UAP Research Director.

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygB4EZ7ggig

[3] https://www.explorescu.org/post/uap-indications-analysis-1945-1975-united-states-atomic-warfare-complex

[4] https://www.ufohastings.com/book

[5] https://www.cnes-geipan.fr/en

[6] https://cnes.fr/en

[7] https://youtu.be/xe4PecCSizk

[8] https://www.aaro.mil/

[9] https://media.defense.gov/2024/Nov/14/2003583603/-1/-1/0/FY24-CONSOLIDATED-ANNUAL-REPORT-ON-UAP-508.PDF

[10] https://aiaauap.org/

[11] https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/update-nasa-shares-uap-independent-study-report-names-director/

On December 14, 2023, legislation was passed[12] by the United States Senate specifically for UAP. In terms of content, the law is mainly about transparency and research.

On January 25, 2024, the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General released[13] a UAP report. The conclusion is *"We determined that the DoD has no overarching UAP policy and, as a result, it lacks assurance that national security and flight safety threats to the United States from UAP have been identified and mitigated"*.

On 13 November 2024 a joint US congressional subcommittee held a hearing[14] to explore a variety of observations and allegations regarding UAP. Four witnesses provided testimonies. The hearing provided a comprehensive exploration of evidence, concerns, and revelations about UAP and their implications for science, safety, and national security. Congress gave bipartisan support for legislative measures, including: a proposed Safe Airspace for Americans Act which encourages civilian pilots to report UAP without fear of stigma and a proposed UAP Disclosure Act that seeks to declassify UAP materials and establish oversight mechanisms.

Furthermore, many advocates for UAP transparency are urging the Trump administration to take swift action, calling for an urgent investigation and greater government accountability[15].

A **special note** which must be mentioned is that China[16] and Russia[17] both take the UAP topic very seriously and consider UAP a security threat and flight safety risk. For example China uses artificial intelligence to conduct research into UAP.

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12 https://douglasjohnson.ghost.io/content/files/2023/12/UAP-pages-only--final--from-NDAA--HR-2670--and-Joint-Explanatory-Statement-12-6-23.pdf

13 https://www.dodig.mil/In-the-Spotlight/Article/3656428/press-release-evaluation-of-the-dods-actions-regarding-unidentified-anomalous-p/

14 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kT2iWKZr0qA

15 https://www.liberationtimes.com/home/trump-administration-urged-to-act-on-unknown-craft-that-defy-conventional-knowledge-calls-for-investigation-and-transparency

16 https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3136078/china-military-uses-ai-track-rapidly-increasing-ufos

17 https://tass.com/russia/1463895

Introduction

UAP Coalition Netherlands welcomes the European Commission's initiative to develop a European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures. We believe that strengthening Europe's research and innovation ecosystem is crucial for addressing current and future challenges. However, we wish to emphasize the importance of addressing the issue of stigma that hinders progress in emerging or unconventional research fields, such as Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP).

This stigma creates a challenging[18] environment where scientists who choose to study UAP often face ridicule or are shunned[19] by their colleagues negatively impacting their professional standing, access to funding and resources, and in some cases even their personal[20] well-being. We believe that addressing this issue is crucial to allow for legitimate scientific inquiry and to foster a research environment where all areas, including emerging ones, can be explored.

Moreover, on 5 May 2025, during the “Choose Europe for Science” event, President Ursula von der Leyen delivered a compelling call to the global scientific community. In her speech[21] she emphasized the word "freedom" no fewer than seven times, calling on Europe to remain a Union where *"scientific freedom is protected, where research talent is nurtured, and where innovation can flourish."*

This vision is inspiring and we share it. But it also invites a necessary question: *How can the EU truly claim to uphold scientific freedom, if stigma continues to marginalize certain fields of inquiry and exclude researchers based on perception?*

Key Challenges for UAP Research

- **Reputational Barriers**: UAP studies often carry a “fringe science” label, deterring talented researchers and funders.
- **Bias in Review Processes**: Topic stigma can lead to premature dismissal during proposal evaluation.
- **Data Fragmentation**: Relevant datasets (radar, sensor, eyewitness reports) remain siloed across civilian, academic, and defense sectors.
- **Lack of Interdisciplinary Hubs**: Absence of coordinated platforms bridging f.e. atmospheric science, aerospace engineering, human factors, and data analytics around UAP.

[18] https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-024-03351-4
[19] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLcoBLmfLXU
[20] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3rQKy5liaE
[21] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_25_1130 and https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_1221

Feedback on Questions

Feedback on Question 1: Do you agree with the identified main problems and needs?

We broadly agree with the identified problems and needs, particularly the need for improved coordination, funding, and access to research infrastructures. However, we believe the document should explicitly acknowledge the challenge of stigma that affects research into certain emerging or unconventional fields like UAP research. This stigma can lead to:

- Difficulty in securing funding for legitimate scientific inquiry.
- Reluctance among researchers to pursue such research for fear of reputational damage.
- Limited access to data and resources due to a lack of institutional support.

Feedback on Question 2: Are there any additional challenges faced by research infrastructures and technology infrastructures that a European strategy should address, especially in relation to Europe's main competitors?

Yes, the challenge of stigma is a significant impediment to progress in several areas of research and technology development but specifically UAP research.

- **Lack of standardized data collection and reporting**: The absence of standardized protocols, partly due to stigma, hinders the ability to compare and validate data, making it difficult to draw robust conclusions.
- **New methodologies and theoretical frameworks**: these are needed in research areas such as the use of artificial intelligence for data analysis, fundamental physics, astronomy, advanced materials, technologies for energy and transport, and human health effects.
- **New Data Collection**: Adapting research infrastructures to facilitate new data collection is a critical challenge. This necessitates developing systems for multi-modal sensor integration (e.g., camera, radar, sonar) across different environments (atmosphere, marine, space) and the capacity for processing the resulting large and complex datasets. This is essential for emerging research areas that require advanced and integrated data acquisition.
- **Limited access to advanced sensors and data**: Research into unconventional phenomena often requires access to specialized sensors and data analysis tools. Stigma can limit investment in and access to these crucial resources.
- **High investment needs**: new data collection requires high investment for new research infrastructure.
- **Brain drain**: The stigma associated with certain research can deter talented researchers from entering or remaining in those fields, leading to a loss of expertise for Europe.
- **Reduced international collaboration**: Stigma can also hinder international collaboration, as researchers and institutions may be reluctant to partner with those involved in certain studies.

Illustrative Use-Case: Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) Research and the Need for Inclusivity

To illustrate the critical need for the Strategy to address stigma and foster inclusivity[22], consider the field of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) research. While often sensationalized, UAP represent a class of observations that, when rigorously studied[23], may reveal novel scientific insights or potential security[24] threats for the European Union.

History reminds us that transformative discoveries have often begun on the margins of scientific respectability. Alfred Wegener[25] (1880–1930) was mocked for proposing continental drift, now a foundation of modern geology. Galileo Galilei[26] (1564–1642) was condemned for promoting heliocentrism, which later became scientific consensus. More recently, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren[27] were ridiculed for suggesting bacteria caused stomach ulcers—until they won the Nobel Prize for it in 2005. These cases clearly show how stigma and premature dismissal can obstruct vital breakthroughs.

Today, researchers investigating UAP frequently face similar barriers: ridicule, professional ostracization, and limited access to funding and infrastructure. This not only harms individual careers but also restricts Europe's ability to explore potentially important phenomena.

The Commission's Strategy must, therefore, explicitly promote an environment where unconventional research areas—even those perceived as controversial—are welcomed and supported.

This requires not only addressing the tangible needs of research infrastructures, such as funding and access to technology, but also the intangible barriers of stigma and prejudice that can stifle scientific inquiry.

By fostering a culture of open-mindedness and rigor, the Strategy will ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of scientific discovery, capable of exploring even the most challenging and unconventional frontiers.

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22 https://commission.europa.eu/about/service-standards-and-principles/modernising-european-commission/diversity-and-inclusion_en

23 https://science.nasa.gov/uap/

24 https://www.dodig.mil/In-the-Spotlight/Article/3656428/press-release-evaluation-of-the-dods-actions-regarding-unidentified-anomalous-p/

25 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Wegener

26 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_Galilei

27 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barry_Marshall

Feedback on Question 3: Does the proposed set of actions adequately address these issues? Would other actions be needed at EU level?

While the proposed actions are a good starting point, they do not explicitly address the issue of investment on UAP research and of stigma. To adequately tackle this challenge, we propose the following additional actions:

- **Include UAP in EU research priorities and funding programmes**
  There are many opportunities for EU funded research on UAP within the *European research infrastructures*[28], which is addressed within this call for feedback but in addition also within the *European Research Council*[29], the premier European funding organisation for excellent frontier research, the *European Innovation Council*[30], Europe's flagship innovation programme to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and game changing innovations and the *EU Space research programme*[31], which promotes smart and coordinated investments in cutting-edge technologies, innovation, applications and skills.
- **Promote Open-Minded Inquiry:** The Commission should explicitly encourage open-minded scientific inquiry into all phenomena, including those that are unconventional or poorly understood. This could be articulated in the Communication as a guiding principle.
- **Foster Interdisciplinary Networks:** The Commission should actively foster the creation of interdisciplinary networks that include researchers from diverse fields to study complex phenomena like UAP. This will help to break down silos and encourage collaboration.
- **Develop Best Practices for Data Handling:** The Commission should support the development of best practices for data collection, analysis, and reporting of unconventional phenomena. This will enhance the rigor and credibility of research in these areas. This includes the promotion of 'Open science' in Horizon Europe[32] and the use of the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).
- **Organize Workshops and Conferences:** The Commission should organize workshops and conferences to bring together researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities in studying unconventional phenomena, including ways to address stigma.
- **Public Outreach and Education:** The Commission should support public outreach and education initiatives to promote a more informed and balanced understanding of scientific inquiry into unconventional phenomena.

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28 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures_en and https://www.esfri.eu/about

29 https://erc.europa.eu/about-erc/erc-glance

30 https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en

31 https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-space/research-development-and-innovation_en

32 https://rea.ec.europa.eu/open-science_en and https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/open-science_en

Conclusion

UAP Coalition Netherlands believes that addressing the issue of stigma is essential for fostering a vibrant and innovative research ecosystem in Europe. By incorporating the proposed measures into the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures, the Commission can help to create an environment where researchers feel free and empowered to explore all avenues of scientific inquiry, leading to greater knowledge and societal benefit for the European Union.

Ultimately, the success of this strategy will be measured by its impact on the EU's ability to generate new knowledge and address complex challenges. We pose this question to the Commission: *Will this strategy champion a spirit of open-mindedness, ensuring that potentially transformative areas of research are not prematurely dismissed due to stigma or lack of conventional acceptance?*

We thank the Commission for the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to further engagement on this important matter.

Document credits

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Annex - Addressing UAP in the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures

Research on UAP is challenging because the topic has been ridiculed and there is a stigma associated with the topic. It is a new area of research, which requires new innovative methodologies, theoretical frameworks and data collection e.g. through new sensor systems. High investment is required in order to perform robust and scientifically sound research. Many research funding organisations at national and EU level have little knowledge and understanding of the importance, relevance, challenges and needs of the emerging field of UAP research. It is currently very difficult for UAP researchers to put forward proposals to EU research programmes that have a chance of being accepted.

These issues were also raised in the call for action on UAP by the EU, submitted to the European Parliament by 15 European civil society end of 2024 [33].

Despite all these challenges recently several UAP research organisations and scientific journals were established, privately funded. Also a few scientists within universities and research institutes, in the EU and beyond, have been able to find private funding for UAP research. We are aware of only one recent case where funding was possible through a governmental grant in Sweden[34].

So far no funding has been possible through any EU research funding programme. We believe the European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures, the work of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures[35] and other related EU programmatic activities provide a unique opportunity to prioritise funding for UAP research and the required research infrastructures. This will allow access for UAP researchers to cutting-edge facilities and services that support scientific and technological excellence and industrial competitiveness. It will help to put the EU at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements in this important new research area.

Below a short summary is provided of recent UAP research activities, to show that the topic is increasingly taken seriously by renowned scientists. These activities can be seen as a good starting point for developing and implementing UAP research within EU research funding strategies and programmes.

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[33] https://uapcoalitienederland.nl/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/UAP-at-EU-level-A-Proposal-for-Action.pdf

[34] https://nordita.org/news/nordita-researchers-beatriz-villarroel-and-ralf-eichhorn-awarded-vr-grants/

[35] https://www.esfri.eu/forum

The Galileo Project from Harvard University uses a range of observation techniques such as telescopes and cameras[36]. In France UAP observations are scientifically investigated, working with professionals from aviation and space[37]. In Germany research is done by using an autonomous camera system to detect anomalies[38]. Swedish researchers detected anomalous high-altitude flashes of light that appeared and disappeared within minutes in photos from 1952 and other years before satellites existed[39]. Since the eighties systematic observations were done in Norway at Hessdalen, through cameras, radar detections, and magnetometer readings[40].

Better and more exploration of UAP through instrumented field studies and also using astronomical techniques is essential[41]. Proposals have been published for better UAP detection, characterization, and evaluation using a variety of sensor systems, including a focus on enhancing aviation safety[42].

The Scientific Coalition for UAP Studies[43] regularly organises scientific conferences and has published a range of reports, including for example an analysis of UAP observations close to US nuclear weapons facilities. The Society for UAP studies[44] has started a scientific journal on UAP research[45]. Research is promoted the SoL Foundation[46], for example through a white paper on UAP in the oceans.

In Jan 2025 a new comprehensive scientific overview document was published on 'The New Science of Unidentified Aerospace-Undersea Phenomena (UAP)'[47], prepared by a range of highly experienced scientists from various countries, including European. The document highlighted that UAP are a long-standing global phenomenon, observed and studied by professional engineers, scientists and astronomers and that there exist a number of serious efforts to scientifically study UAP.

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[36] https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/galileo/home
[37] https://www.3af.fr/fr/groupe/sigma2-phenomenes-aerospatiaux-non-identifies-43 and https://www.geipan.fr/en
[38] https://www.informatik.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/space-technology/research-topics/uap-seti-research/
[39] https://vascoproject.org/
[40] https://www.hessdalen.org/
[41] https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/92682-exploring-unidentified-aerospace-phenomena-through-instrumented-field-studies-historical-insights-current-challenges-and-future-directions and https://limina.scholasticahq.com/article/92684-investigating-uap-events-using-astronomical-techniques
[42] https://aiaauap.org/detection-characterization-evaluation
[43] https://www.explorescu.org/
[44] https://www.societyforuapstudies.org/
[45] https://limina.uapstudies.org/
[46] https://thesolfoundation.org/
[47] https://www.arxiv.org/abs/2502.06794