



Are aviation personnel protected when reporting UAP?

Yes, aviation personnel are protected by several laws and regulations when they want to report UAP.

At the moment it seems that there is no law or regulation that needs to be changed, however this needs to be discussed with a law firm which specializes in EU privacy laws.

Laws and regulations which are relevant;

Regulation (EU) No 376/2014 Implementing Rules

Regulation (EU) No 376/2014 on occurrence reporting

Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 on Aircrew

Directive (EU) 2016/681 on the Use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data

EU Whistleblower Protection Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/1937)

GDPR Regulation (EU) 2016/679

Practical Considerations:

Stigma and Professional Repercussions:

Despite legal protections, aviation professionals might fear professional stigma or informal repercussions, such as being perceived as unreliable or having their credibility questioned. Even though Just Culture within aviation organizations is well established, UAP are not pro actively mentioned or discussed.

Reporting Mechanisms:

While formal channels exist for reporting safety occurrences, aviation professionals not always feel confident that reports of UAP will be taken seriously, or lead to constructive follow-up actions. The novelty and ambiguity surrounding UAP can complicate how these reports are handled.

Awareness and Training:

Pilots and aviation staff need to be adequately trained and made aware of the protections available to them when reporting UAPs or other unusual phenomena.

Organizations should ensure that there is a clear process for handling such reports and that staff are encouraged to use these processes without fear of negative consequences.



Conclusion:

While it seems that the current legal framework provides a solid foundation for protecting aviation professionals who report UAP, practical challenges remain. Effective protection requires not just robust laws but also a supportive organizational culture, clear reporting mechanisms, and ongoing education about rights and protections. Therefore, although the existing regulations offer significant protections, enhancing awareness and addressing cultural factors are crucial to ensure pilots feel fully supported when reporting UAP.

UAPCNL Contact details:

UAP Coalition Netherlands

Founder & Chairman: Joachim Dekkers



Email: voorzitter@uapcoalitienerland.nl

Website: <https://uapcoalitienerland.nl/en/>

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