

The EU's coming ERA Act and the Fifth Freedom: Advancing Science in and for Europe

September 29th, 2026. Aula Europa

Headquarters of the European Union in Barcelona

(Passeig de Gràcia, 90. 1st floor) – hybrid event

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88690648645>

Organized by:

Academia Europaea-Barcelona Knowledge Hub
European Commission Representation in Barcelona

In 2024, former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta published a report on the Single Market, commissioned by the EU Council during Spain's presidency. In this report, the Fifth Freedom – the “Freedom of Knowledge” – is described as an important instrument for completing and boosting the Single Market. At the same time, this Fifth Freedom has long been considered crucial for creating a fully integrated European Research Area. What is the Fifth Freedom? Why is it needed now? What barriers exist for Open Access to knowledge, and for full and equal researcher mobility, irrespective of national citizenship among EU countries? What other elements will the Commission's upcoming ERA Act contain? And how can the Fifth Freedom and the ERA Act strengthen the European knowledge society and democratic values? This event aims to inform scientists and the public about the ERA Act's elements and goals, their implications, the steps to be discussed over the next years, and to inspire citizens to become engaged in Europe's ambitious new science policy.

12:00 Welcome by:

- Jaume Bertranpetit, Academic Director at the AE-Barcelona Knowledge Hub.
- Laura Rahola, Head of Communications at the European Commission Representation in Barcelona.

Presentations:

12:10 The ERA Act: Plans and Progress for the next years

- Manuel Aleixo, Cabinet expert, European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation. On-line.

12:40 Barriers to the Fifth Freedom in Europe: The results of the ECAS survey

- Giulia Sandri, Research and Development Manager at the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS). On-site.

13:10 The Fifth Freedom and the right to science (UDHR Art. 27):

How could Europeans share in the advancement and benefits of science?

- Thomas Sturm, ICREA Research Professor at Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). On-site.

13:40 Questions and answers.

13:55 Closing remarks

- Andreu Mas-Colell, Steering Committee member of AE-Barcelona Knowledge Hub.

14:00 End of session and lunch break.