

AAATE General Assembly Nicosia, Cyprus, September 2025

## Elections Package

By the AAATE Nomination Committee:  
Luc De Witte, Renzo Andrich and Klaus Miesenberger

### **Positions for election for the term 2026 – 2027, currently held by:**

|                                         |                               |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| President:                              | Pedro Encarnação (P)          |
| President Elect:                        | Dominique Archambault (FR)    |
| Past President:                         | Georgios Kouroupetroglou (GR) |
| Treasurer:                              | Silvio Marcello Pagliara (IT) |
| Secretary:                              | Tone Øderud, (SE)             |
| Project Officer:                        | Maurice Grinberg (BG)         |
| External Communication and Information: | Emma Smith (IE)               |

### **Candidates proposed by the board in office (following the election by-law):**

|                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| President:       | Dominique Archambault (FR)    |
| President Elect: | Silvio Marcello Pagliara (IT) |
| Past President:  | Pedro Encarnação (P)          |

**Candidates for four board positions (allocation of the Treasurer, Secretary, Project Officer, and External Communication/Information roles in the board will be agreed on by the new board)**

Lorenzo Desideri (IT) (new candidate)  
Maurice Grinberg (BG) (re-candidate)  
Merita Hoxha (ALB) (new candidate)  
Reinhard Koutny (AT) (new candidate)  
Tone Øderud (NO) (re-candidate)  
Melanie Schaur (AT) (new candidate)  
Emma Smith (IE) (re-candidate)  
Annalu Waller (GB) (new candidate)

### **Two positions as auditors for the term 2026 – 2027, currently held by:**

Jan Engelen (BE)  
Susanne Dirks (DE)

#### **Candidates for the two auditors**

Susanne Dirks (DE) (re-candidate)  
Jan Engelen (BE) (re-candidate)  
Reinhard Koutny (AT) (new candidate)  
Melanie Schaur (AT) (new candidate)

**Three positions in the Nomination Committee for the term 2026 – 2027,  
currently held by:**

Renzo Andrich (IT)  
Klaus Miesenberger (AT)  
Luc de Witte (NL)

**Candidates for the three positions in the Nomination Committee**

Renzo Andrich (IT) (re-candidate)  
Klaus Miesenberger (AT) (re-candidate)  
Luc de Witte (NL) (re-candidate)

## Nomination for Past President

### Pedro Encarnação



Pedro Encarnação is a Senior Affiliate Professor at CATÓLICA-LISBON - Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP). He received the B.Sc. degree in 1994, the M.Sc. degree in 1998, and the Ph.D. degree in 2002, all in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the Universidade de Lisboa, in Portugal. In the area of Rehabilitation Engineering, Pedro has been involved in research projects exploring the potential of robots as assistive technologies to support manipulation for children with neuromotor impairments, enabling these children to play and to participate in academic activities that require manipulation. He served as co-chair of the COST Action LUDI - Play for Children with Disabilities ([2014-2018](#)), a pan-European network of more than 100 multidisciplinary researchers and practitioners working towards

enabling play for children with disabilities. Pedro co-edited the books "Guidelines for supporting children with disabilities' play. Methodologies, tools, and contexts." (DeGruyter Open Access, 2018) and "Robotic Assistive Technologies: Principles and Practice" (CRC Press: 2017). With Jan Polgar, Emma Smith, and Al Cook, Pedro is a co-author of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the seminal book "Assistive Technologies. Principles and Practice" (Elsevier, 2025). He published several articles in the main Rehabilitation Engineering journals and conference proceedings. He serves on the editorial boards of *Assistive Technology* and *Technology and Disability*. Pedro received the RESNA Honorary Fellow Award in 2025. A member of AAATE since 2009, Pedro co-chaired the AAATE 2013 Conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

## Nomination for President

Pr. Dominique Archambault



Pr Dominique Archambault is Full Professor in Computer Sciences at Université Paris 8-Vincennes-Saint-Denis. He is leading the team THIM (Technologies, Disabilities, Interactions, Multimodalities), part of CHArt laboratory (EA 4004, Human and Artificial Cognition), where he is conducting research on non-visual human-computer interaction and accessibility to complex documents. The domains of application of his research works are multimodal access to mathematical expressions, allowing collaborative works between sighted and non-sighted persons and accessibility to multimedia

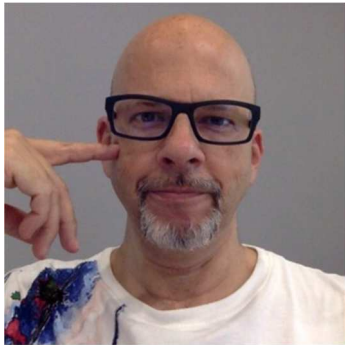
games. He has been the director of the Master MIASHS "HANDI" (Mathematics and Computer Sciences Applied to Human and Social Sciences) since 2015, and of the speciality "Technologies and Disabilities" (<http://master-handi.fr>), where he teaches especially Computer Programming, Assistive Technologies and Software Accessibility. From 2011 to 2019 Pr Archambault has been the General secretary of IFRATH (<http://ifrath.fr>), an Institute which regroups French research teams working on Assistive Technologies. He is an elected member of the board of AAATE (Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technologies in Europe – <http://aaate.net>) since 2013 and he is Associate Editor of the Scientific Journal "Technology and Disability" since September 2015.

Pr Archambault has about a hundred publications including papers in international journals and conferences (<http://www.mendeley.com/profiles/dominique-archambault>).

He started to work with students with disabilities in 1988 and he was one of the creators of the French national association of professionals supporting handicapped students in higher education and used to be its Vice-President. He participates in several working groups from the French ministry of higher education, including the organisation of vocational training for staff of support centres for students with disabilities.

## Nomination for President Elect

Silvio Marcello Pagliara



I'm Assistant Professor, research fellow at the University of Cagliari and Senior Research Fellow at Warwick University.

My main focus is on the use of AT and ICT to design and build inclusive contexts.

My background in electronic and biomedical engineering, PhD on Special Pedagogy and Didactic about the use of ICT and Assistive Technology in learning environments. My main work, as senior researcher, has been focused on technology assessment in terms of accessibility, independent life and universal design.

Strong knowledge on home and building automation, automatic speech recognition and Human Computer Interaction. Continues to carry out research and study of innovative technology solutions at affordable cost and foster the autonomy and inclusion of persons with disabilities in their context with the use of technology. He is author of several publications on the use of ICT for the Inclusion in Italy and abroad. He is a consultant of various Public Entities and Institutions, national and international entities and companies operating in the field of the use of ICT for the quality of life. Keynote and invited speaker in several universities in Italy and abroad. I've been in AAATE since 2010 and after being active in different groups (AAATE Position Paper 2012, etc) I've been elected as Board Member at AAATE from 2020 – 2021 and 2022 – 2023 with the role of Treasurer.

I strongly believe in supporting the Association playing an important role to build a fully inclusive society.

I'm former Vice President and actual advisory of the Board of GLIC – The Italian Network of AT Centres.

Email: [silvio.pagliara@centroausili.org](mailto:silvio.pagliara@centroausili.org)

## Nomination for Board Position

Lorenzo Desideri, PhD, PsyD  
Sigmund Freud University, SFU (Milan)



I am a researcher and consultant dedicated to advancing the role of assistive and digital technologies in improving people's lives, with a particular focus on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and social robotics. My work centers on the evaluation, implementation, and policy integration of assistive technology.

For over ten years, I served as an assistive technology consultant in a public service in Italy, supporting people with disabilities in accessing appropriate solutions. I currently teach at Sigmund Freud University in Milan, where I explore the relationship between technology, environment, and cognition. In recent years, I have

been involved in international projects with UNICEF, the World Health Organization, and UNESCO IITE, focusing respectively on assistive technology for inclusive education, the measurement of the impact of assistive products, and the use of artificial intelligence in education and inclusion.

I hold a PhD in Technology in Care from Maastricht University, a master's degree in Applied Cognitive Psychology, and a specialization in Health Psychology from the University of Bologna.

I have been actively engaged in AAATE activities for several years and am committed to contributing further to its mission.

## Nomination for Board Position

Maurice Grinberg



Professor Maurice Grinberg co-founded ASSIST— Assistive Technologies Foundation and has worked to promote and disseminate assistive technologies for augmentative and alternative communication in Bulgaria since 2014. He is a professor of psychology at the Research Center for Cognitive Science at the New Bulgarian University and has done research in high-tech assistive technology, social and moral dilemmas, cognitive modelling, and usability of e-learning systems. He teaches courses in high-tech AAC in the Bachelor program for SLP and the vocational training program “Ergotherapy for inclusive education”. He has been

coordinator of several projects related to the introduction and use of high-tech AAC and access to computer AT funded by UNICEF Bulgaria and ECARO, the European Social Fund, EASPD and others. He co-authored two books and several publications on augmentative and alternative communication. He has co-organized the Bulgarian Annual International Conference on AAC for five years. Maurice Grinberg is member of the BUILD AAC committee of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) and is the national contact person for the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) for Bulgaria.

## Nomination for Board Position

Merita Hoxha, PHD

University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences



My name is Merita Hoxha, and I am a university lecturer, researcher, and teacher trainer at the University of Elbasan “Aleksandër Xhuvani” in Albania. I hold a Ph.D. in pedagogy and am deeply committed to advancing inclusive education as a means of promoting equity in learning.

I have been actively engaged with AAATE, serving as the national contact point for Albania, and have contributed to its conferences and collaborative outputs—including white papers, reports, and peer-reviewed articles focused on assistive technology and inclusion.

My international experience includes leading roles in European research initiatives, most notably as a Working Group Leader and Management Committee member in COST Action CA19104 – “advancing Social inclusion through Technology and EmPowerment (a-STEP)”, from 2020 to 2024. Currently, I am a research assistant at the University of Oslo, working on projects funded by the Research Council of Norway.

Beyond academia, I actively contribute to my local community as a member of the Rotary Club of Elbasan. One of my most recent volunteer initiatives was recording an audiobook for individuals with visual impairments, in collaboration with the Institute VISUM for the Blinds as part of the project “Donate Your Voice.”

## Nomination for Board Position

Reinhard Koutny

Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria



I am a researcher and lecturer specializing in the accessibility and usability of digital technologies, with a focus on inclusive design for people with disabilities. I have a background in Computer Science as well as Elektrotechnik and Electronics and hold degrees in Software Engineering and a Bachelor's degree in Technical Informatics, both from the University of Linz. My work explores dynamic and adaptive user interfaces, aiming to create environments where technology is responsive to individual needs and abilities.

Since 2011, I have been working at the Institute for Integrated Studies at Johannes Kepler University Linz, initially as a Junior Researcher and, since 2015, as a Senior Researcher and Lecturer. My research and project work span a range of topics, including accessible web and software development, navigation and communication systems for people with disabilities, and Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) technologies with a particular emphasis on supporting older adults. I am also involved in developing assistive technologies for individuals with dyslexia, reading and writing difficulties, and cognitive or motor impairments.

I teach courses on these topics at both JKU Linz and the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria in Hagenberg. In addition, I serve on the steering committee of WACA (Web Accessibility Certificate Austria), where I have been a member and auditor since its founding. My consulting work includes contributions to national monitoring bodies for digital accessibility, including the FFG and SMS, supporting the implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) and the European Accessibility Act (EAA) in Austria.

I have been an active member of the AAATE community for several years, contributing to conferences, workshops, and international projects. I am strongly committed to the association's mission of improving access to assistive technologies. Therefore, I would now like to take a more active role by joining the board. If elected, I will bring both research and practical experience, and technical perspective from software as well as hardware side, with a particular focus on inclusive digital systems and assistive technologies for people with disabilities across Europe.

## Nomination for Board Position

Tone Øderud



My name is Tone Øderud and I am a senior researcher at SINTEF Digital, Department of Health in Oslo, Norway. My background is M Sc in Cybernetics, Norwegian University of Science and Technology and M Phil in International Community Health, University of Oslo. I have been working in the field of assistive technology (AT) and disability for 35 years, mainly in Norway, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

I have been developing AT for children and adults in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) for over two decades and been involved in various European projects in the field of AT and robotics.

My experience is mainly within mobility, hearing, and cognition. I am also working on implementing digital home care for elderly persons, using GPS for locating persons with dementia, and utilising wearable sensors for persons with disabilities. I am an expert member of WHO Technical Advisory Group on the use of digital technologies to enhance access to assistive technology.

I have been an AAATE Board member for 4 years and an AAATE member since the beginning. I highly value the work that AAATE is doing, and I am excited to experience that AAATE has taken a leading role in the advancement of AT in Europe and outside Europe in a global perspective collaborating with WHO, UNICEF, GAATO and other international organisations. As a member of the AAATE Board I will do my best to contribute to the enhancement of AT in Europe and globally.

## Nomination for Board Position

Melanie Schaur

Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria



My name is Melanie Schaur and I am a senior researcher and lecturer at the Institute for Political Science and Social Policy and the Institute Integriert Studieren at Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria. Having a background in Social Economics and Comparative Social Policy and Welfare, my work centres on disability policy, comparative social policy research, innovations in service provision and assistive technology.

I have participated in various interdisciplinary projects at national or international level that address digital accessibility and the use of assistive technologies to promote participation in education, higher education and lifelong learning.

Alongside my academic work, I have been supporting the development and advancement of disability support services, working directly with disabled people in personal assistance. Furthermore, I have served as chair of the doctoral student representation at JKU and contributed to institutional governance at university level.

I am a member of the AAATE community and have actively contributed through conferences, workshops, and collaborations in international projects. This ongoing engagement has deepened my commitment to the association's mission of advancing access to assistive technologies. Therefore, I would now like to actively contribute as a board member, to support and further advance the goals of the association. If elected to the board, I will bring a perspective rooted in both research and practice, with a particular focus on inclusive policy development, digital participation, and support systems for persons with disabilities across Europe.

Email: [melanie.schaur@jku.at](mailto:melanie.schaur@jku.at)

## Nomination for Board Position

Dr. Emma Smith, PhD, MScOT, ATP/SMS

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Research Fellow, Maynooth University, Ireland, RESNA Fellow



I, Emma M. Smith, am an occupational therapist, assistive technology professional, and researcher in assistive technology policies and systems, currently working as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Research Fellow at Maynooth University in Ireland, and as an Assistive Technology Specialist for the WHO Regional Office for Europe. I have worked in a range of clinical practice settings prior to the completion of my PhD in Rehabilitation Science (2019) and have been engaged in evaluating and supporting assistive technology policy throughout Canada, Europe, and Africa

in partnership with local governments and civil society organizations. I will bring a range of voluntary sector leadership and Board experience to AAATE, including experiences on the boards of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA), Irish Association for Powerchair Football, and Vancouver Resource Society. Further, I have held roles as Editor in Chief of the Assistive Technology Journal, Chair of the RESNA Student Design Competition and Developers' Showcase, member of the Committee on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Education and Vice Chair of the RESNA Professional Standards Board. Through these and other experiences, I have extensive experience in conference planning and coordination, board governance, and strategic planning. I have been recognized for my contributions to the field of Assistive Technology with the award of RESNA Fellow. As both a clinician and researcher, I believe I am well positioned to represent multiple stakeholders in the field of assistive technology, and to help move the agenda of AAATE forward.

## Nomination for Board Position

Prof. Dr. Annalu Waller OBE

Chair of Human Communication Technologies, School of Science and Engineering, University of Dundee



Professor Waller directs the Dundee Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ATAAC) Research Group, a world leading research group developing intelligent and multimodal AAC technologies. She trained as a rehabilitation engineer at the University of Cape Town (MSc) after graduating with a BSc Hons in Computer Science. Annalu established the first AAC assessment and training centre in South Africa in 1987 within a special

school. Her doctoral research at the University of Dundee focused on conversational narrative, demonstrating the need to support extended conversation for people who use AAC. Her primary research areas are human computer interaction, natural language processing, personal narrative and assistive technology. In particular, she focuses on empowering end users, including disabled adults and children, by involving them in the design and use of technology. She manages a number of interdisciplinary research projects with academics, industry and practitioners from rehabilitation engineering, special education, speech and language therapy, and health. In 2021, she launched the unique interdisciplinary MSc degree programme in Educational Assistive Technology, delivering interdisciplinary training in digital Assistive Technology to teachers, therapists and technologists working in the education and care sector. Annalu has spearheaded the integration of AT and AAC awareness training into undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in computing, medicine and dentistry. She is on the editorial boards of several academic journals and sits on the boards of national and international organisations representing disabled people. She was awarded an OBE in the 2016 New Year's Honours List for services to people with Complex Communication Needs and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists in 2017. Annalu has been a member of AAATE for over 25 years, first presenting at the AAATE conference in 1997. If elected to the board, she would bring over 30 years of research and teaching in AT and AAC as well as her lived experience of cerebral palsy.