Minutes of the AAATE General Assembly 2026

Date/time: Tuesday, 22nd of September 2026, at 17.30-19.00 CEST

Place: Online: https://zoom.us/j/9056550031

Agenda

1. **Welcome and opening**
2. **Minutes of the last General Assembly**
3. **Report from the treasurer and the auditors. Relief of the Board**
4. **AAATE activity report and highlights**
5. **Short Announcements of members**
6. **Any other business**
7. **Meeting closed**

Members present

Katerina Mavrou
Hanna Usatenko
Uta Roentgen
Merita Hoxha
Kamil Goungor
Raimund Schmolze-Krahn
Sabine Lobnig
Pedro Encarnação
Dominique Archambault
Renzo Andrich
Tone Øderud
Susanne Dirks
De Maesschalck Lieven
Gerrit Van den Breede
Sanela Slavković
Gerald Craddock
Annalu Waller
Lorenzo Desideri
Marion Hersch
Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf

No proxy forms were submitted.

Minutes

1. Welcome and opening

The President-Elect, Silvio Marcello Pagliara, opened the General Assembly and welcomed the participants, on behalf of President Dominique Archambault who had announced a small delay in connecting due to teaching obligations.

2. Minutes of the last General Assembly

The minutes of the last General Assembly were approved, one member abstained.

3. Report from the treasurer and the auditors. Relief of the Board.

The Treasurer, Annalu Waller introduced the financial report for 2025 and handed over to the previous Treasure for 2025, Silvio Marcello Pagliara.

The financial reporting has been updated and improved reflecting the discussions from the previous General Assembly. The new format allows for comparison between the years, clarifies operational costs versus project-related flows and reflects the accrual of project funding to be spent and funding still to be received. The figures for the financial report come directly from the accounting software used by the Office at JKU, Linz. The new format makes it easier to assess the result.

There is a positive surplus for 2025. The surplus includes a positive result from the biannual AAATE 2025 conference in Cyprus, biannual membership paid in 2025 and reduced costs for Secretary General and communication team.

The balance complies with regulations and has been audited by elected and external independent auditors.

The Treasurer, Annalu Waller and the previous Treasure, Silvio Marcello Pagliara closed the financial report together.

The reports by auditors Susanne Dirks and Jan Engelen, confirming the soundness of the accounting and the overall financial situation, were made available to and appreciated by the General Assembly.

The financial report was approved by the General Assembly with 18 favorable votes, no votes against and no abstentions.

Relief of the Board.

The Past-President, Pedro Encarnação, thanked European University Cyprus (EUC) and Prof. Katerina Mavrou for the very good result from the AAATE 2025 conference.

He also thanked the auditors Susanne Dirks and Jan Engelen for their effort and excellent audit.

Budget

The budget for 2026 up to September 2026 was presented. It indicates reduction of income from member fees due to the biannual membership paid in 2025, reduction in costs for Board meetings and reduction in costs for Secretary General and staff members.

The Treasurer, Annalu Waller, presented the provisional budget for 2027.

The budget for 2027 was approved by the General Assembly with 13 favorable votes, no votes against and no abstentions.

President Dominique Archambault presented the membership status by 09/ 2026:

- Institution members: 42

- Individual members: 223

Biannual membership is preferred by 60+% of institutions and individual members.

4. AAATE activity report and highlights 2025-2026

The presentation of the activity report was structured around the following points:

- Strategic development (President Dominique Archambault**)**
- National Contact Persons (Past-President Pedro Encarnação**)**
- Project participation (Secretary-General Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf)
- GAATO collaboration (Secretary-General Evert-Jan Hoogrwerf)
- Communication affairs (Communication officer Lorenzo Desideri)
- Publication affairs (President Dominique Archambault)

Strategic development

President Dominique Archambault presented the strategic development, framed within the objectives defined in the AAATE strategic development plan edition 2026-2027, which was discussed and reaffirmed by the Paris Board Meeting on 08.01.2026, Paris Board Meeting.

President Dominique Archambault informed about strategic activities:

- International Workshop “Innovative Assistive Technologies and Accessibility in Higher Education”, 12–13 November 2026, Kraków, Poland. Organised by AGH University of Krakow, in cooperation with AAATE.
https://aaate.net/activities/workshops/workshop-2026/
https://dostepnosc.agh.edu.pl/en/workshop

- The 19th International Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE) will take place in Mechelen (Belgium), at Thomas More University of Applied Sciences from September 8 to 10, 2027. The timeline for the conference will be published on AAATE website
https://aaate.net/activities/conferences/
https://aaate2027.eu
There will be two major pillars:
  - Research including scientific presentations
  - Inclusion forum including Policy sessions, Educational session and Innovation Area

Dominique Archambault motivated the members to become reviewers for the AAATE 2027 Conference

- Newsletter 2025-2026 issues: 27/03/2025, 27/06/2025, 06/10/2025, 19/01/2026, 19/03/2026, 16/06/2026

- Aperitivi 2025-2026 events: 10/02/2025, 26/05/2025, 20/08/2025, 27/11/2025, 02/07/2026, 20/10/2026 (tbc), 15/12/2026 (tbc)

- New partnerships:
  - European Disability Forum (EDF)
  - European Network of Independent Living (ENIL)

- Initiative for implementing three new Special Interest Groups (SIG's).
  - AI in AT (Dominique Archambault and Annalu Waller)
  - AT in humanitarian crises (Tone Øderud and Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf)
  - AT policy (Pedro Encarnação and Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf)

Interested members are welcome.

- Contribution to WHO Roadmap for access to AT
- Contribution to EDF study on market barriers to AT in Europe
- Continuation Global Think Tank on Ageing and Technology

National Contact Persons

Past-President Pedro Encarnação presented the activities supporting the AAATE National Contact Persons (NCPs). AAATE currently has NCPs in 33 countries and aims to have NCPs in all European countries.

Past-President Pedro Encarnação welcomed the new NCP from Ireland, Thomas O'Shaughnessy, University of Limerick, and thanked Siobhan Long, Enable Ireland for her effort and long-standing services as NCP and AAATE Board Member.

Project participation

Secretary-General Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf presented an overview of AAATE's involvement in project activities.

Participating in European Project Activities is an important opportunity to strengthen the organisation and to create impact. AAATE can have a role in projects activities like dissemination and networking. Numerous AAATE members have actively supported the project development and implementation activities

Members were encouraged to consider AAATE as a possible project partner. See: https://aaate.net/activities/projects/

<u>Projects concluded in 2025</u>

- SEURO (Horizon 2020 Person-centred technologies for integrated care). Global Think Tank on Ageing and Person Centred Technology in care and support services has been part of the SEURO-AAATE-GAATO collaboration and will continue in 2026.

<u>Projects started in 2025</u>

- AI4HomeCarers - Artificial Intelligence for Home Carers - (Erasmus+ Project)

To improve the level of knowledge of informal caregivers about existing solutions based on AI for the daily caring activities. https://ai4homecare.eu/

- UPGRADE is a European platform for educators, youth workers and therapists who use video games to make a real difference. (Erasmus+ Project)

GAATO collaboration

Secretary-General Evert-Jan Hoogerwerf reported on AAATE's involvement in GAATO, the Global Alliance of Assistive Technology Organizations (GAATO).

AAATE is a founding member of GAATO, and AAATE continues to play a leading role in the development and coordination of GAATO's activities.

The GAATO General Assembly will be held online on October 19th, 2026, 13.00-14.00 CEST. The theme is Assistive Technology: advancing high-quality, sustainable local production of assistive products and speakers are Shona McDonald (Founder and Director of Shonaquip Social Enterprise) & Sisary Kheng (CEO, Exceed Worldwide)

All AAATE members are welcome. Registration is needed.

Other international collaboration

- AAATE and EASPD - European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities during AAATE2025

- ZEROProject and AAATE collaborated during the ZEROProject Conference 2025 and AAATE2025

- AAATE has strengthened its collaboration with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
- AAATE became an Associated Member of European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)
- ENIL became an Institutional Member of AAATE
- AAATE became an Ordinary Member of European Disability Forum (EDF)
- EDF became an Institutional Member of AAATE

Communication affairs

External Communication Officer Lorenzo Desideri presented an overview of AAATE's communication channels:

AAATE website: http://aaate.net/category/news/

- association news and members update via the blog
- members login => connect with the AAATE network
- resources (incl. Access to Technology & Disability journal)

Social media & emailings

- LinkedIn page (1146 followers) & group (783 members),
- LinkedIn AAATE Group and Page: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2094327/
- BlueSky: @aaate-net.bsky.social
- Regular updates via emailings

Quarterly newsletters: https://aaate.net/category/news/

AAATE Research Aperitivo

AAATE is launching a Research Aperitivo series: short, informal online sessions to foster high-quality exchange and strengthen dialogue between research and practice in assistive technology.

https://aaate.net/aaate-research-aperitivo/

Publication affairs

President Dominique Archambault informed about recent publications.

AAATE members have free access to the electronic version of Technology and Disability on: http://aaate.net/publications/technology-and-disability/
To access your free electronic version of the journal, you need to be logged in, then go to the members area (only available to logged in members) and there you will find the access page.

- Technology and Disability is indexed in EBSCO, Scopus and Web of Science holds an Impact Factor since 2023
- AAATE members were encouraged to register as reviewers for the journal and to consider submitting their work for publication in Technology & Disability.
- Submission information on https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/TAD
- Contacts:
  - Editor in chief: Luc de Witte (L.P.deWitte@hhs.nl)
  - Gabriela Ricci (Gabriela.Ricci@sagepub.co.uk)

6. Short Announcements of members

Gerald Craddock, informed about the 8th International Universal Design Conference (UD26) that will take place 4-6 November 2026 in Galway, Ireland and welcomed all to Galway. UD26 is an Associated Event of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026. https://ud26.ie/

There will be 260+ presentations and Keynote Speakers will be Inmaculada Placencia Porrero, EU representative on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Christopher Patnoe, Lead for EMEA Accessibility and Disability Innovation at Google and Per-Olof Hedvall, Professor in Design, Exploring Accessibility, Usability and Universal Design Beyond “Us and Them”.

Gerald Craddock informed about the International Conference on Smart Housing, Energy, and Urban Innovation (ICACCUS - 26) that will be held in Dublin, Ireland on 21st - 22nd October 2026 in both physical and virtual modes.

Kamil Goungor of ENIL presented the Freedom Drive 2026 campaign in Brussels end of September-beginning of October in Brussels.

https://www.enil-freedom-drive.com/

Raimund Schmolze-Krahn of Daaap Network, the Association for digital assistive technology in the workplace in Germany introduced himself. https://daaap.net/ They are new to AAATE and also to GAATO and look forward to collaborating.

Gerrit van den Breede, Belgium, introduced himself. He works for the Flemish government and is a consultant for aids for the blind and partially sighted.

Marion Hersh brought forward the importance of Eco-ableism and how climate change disproportionately impacts people with disabilities.

8. Any other business

No other business

9. Meeting closed

President Dominique Archambault thanked all participants, Secretary-General, the Board members and the auditors. The meeting was closed at 19.15 CEST.