



Meet Prof. Dr. Ronald Boellaard: Candidate for EANM Scientific Liaison Officer

This year, EANM is electing the **EANM Scientific Liaison Officer 2027–2028**. Two highly qualified candidates are standing for this important position. Only one of them will be elected by the EANM Members' Assembly. Read their interviews below to get to know their motivations and perspectives before casting your vote.

1. Could you quickly walk us through your journey into the nuclear medicine field?

My name is Ronald Boellaard, and I am currently working in Amsterdam and Groningen as a full professor on quantitative molecular imaging. I started my academic career after finishing my MSc degrees in Biology and Physics in 1994 at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Already back then, I had a strong interest in medical physics and applying physics in medicine. In 1994, I started my PhD project at the radiotherapy department of the Antoni van Leeuwenhoek Hospital. However, I was really interested in a more biology-oriented medical discipline, and I was fortunate to get a position in Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging at the VU Medical Center. I strongly believe that nuclear medicine is about imaging biology and giving patients the best diagnosis and/or treatment by imaging and targeting the biological characteristics of a disease. I initially started working as medical physicist and over the years I got the opportunity to build an academic career. At the moment, I am heading the nuclear medicine physics research team in my department. My research focusses on PET pharmacokinetic modeling, standardisation and harmonisation of PET studies, quantitative imaging, use of AI in nuclear medicine and, more recently, large axial field of view PET/CT. I am the first author of the EANM oncology FDG PET/CT guidelines, scientific leader of the PET accreditations programme of EARL and coordinator of the PREFERENCE consortium on large axial field of view PET.

2. Before running for a Board position, you have been involved with EANM. Could you share how you first became aware of EANM and the ways you have contributed to our community so far?

My first experience with EANM was when the EANM Annual Congress was in Berlin in 1998 after I just started my position as medical physicist in nuclear medicine. As part of my training in this field I could attend this meeting. I remember that I really enjoyed the meeting, learnt a lot and became even more enthusiastic about nuclear medicine. After some years, I joined the EANM Physics Committee, first as member and later as chair, as well as the EANM Neuroimaging Committee. Around that time, I was involved in a multi-center study in The Netherlands and we discovered that there was a large variability in image quality and quantitative reads. In these years, I performed the first studies on understanding the cause of these variabilities and how we could address them. This has eventually resulted in drafting the first EANM guideline on PET/CT in oncology. Also within EARL, I founded the PET accreditation programme for the harmonisation and standardisation of PET/CT performances. Currently, I am the scientific chair of the PET accreditation programme and within EARL the programme has expanded, including several isotopes and a brain accreditation programme. I have been and I am still very much involved with EANM and EARL, and I am a strong believer that currently nuclear medicine is a rapidly evolving field for both patient care and research. EANM is the right place to promote the field, to educate new nuclear medicine experts, and to stimulate research. It would be a great honour for me to serve as EANM Scientific Liaison Officer to support the aims and ambitions of EANM.

3. The EANM community is diverse, with members from different disciplines, countries, and career stages. What do you think is the most important quality of a Board member when representing such a diverse community?

I believe the most important quality of a Board member is the ability to listen to all viewpoints and make balanced recommendations that serve the interests of the whole EANM community. Our association brings together people with different backgrounds, expertise, and perspectives, and from different areas across Europe. This also means to make sure that the interests of underrepresented groups, being disciplines, countries or European regions etcetera, are being considered. A Board member should be approachable, open to discussion, and willing to consider different viewpoints. At the same time, it is important to keep the long-term interests of the association in mind. Trying to reach consensus and being transparent, even if recommendations and decisions cannot serve all interests at the same time, helps create trust across the community. In the end, representing a diverse membership is about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute and that decisions are made fairly and in the best interest of EANM and the nuclear medicine field.