



Dr. Ulrika Östlund, Sweden

Being an EONS board member for the last four years has been a great learning experience. Among lots of other things, I have developed my understanding of cancer care throughout Europe and across the world. I have also learned a great deal about project management, and my English has really improved! As a board member, I have had the opportunity to participate in conferences in many different parts of the world, representing EONS and getting involved in organizing and supporting EONS nursing programmes. Perhaps most importantly, I have made links with many new colleagues from across Europe, some of whom have become friends for life. These fantastic benefits have not come for free, however! Engaging in the interesting and important work of EONS takes a lot of time and energy. As a non-native English speaker, keeping up with all the communication has been challenging because there is so much going on at once! But, it has been worth it and it is with a “heavy heart” that I am stepping down from the board after rethinking my priorities in life. I do feel good that my leaving will give other European cancer nurses the opportunity to challenge themselves, and to develop their skills and experiences as a new member of the board.



Mr. Dimitrios Papageorgiou, Greece

Being a member of the Board has been a great experience for me. In the last two years I have met some inspirational nurses from both clinical and academic areas. I have had the opportunity to exchange views, ideas and concerns with cancer nurses from all over Europe, and have had some really interesting discussions about the present and future of Oncology Nursing. Being a board member is demanding, but seeing the progress made in cancer nursing as a result of EONS work brings genuine rewards. If you would like to be a real part of this progress, I would recommend that you put yourself forward as an EONS Board member.



Mrs. Kay Leonard, Ireland

Although I had been on the National Executive Committee and served a 3-year term as President of the Irish Association for Nurses in Oncology I wasn't sure what to expect or what was expected of me when I was elected to the EONS board in September 2007. I quickly realised that in addition to attending board meetings, four per year, there is a lot of other work going on behind the scenes, which varies depending on the sub-committees and projects with which you are involved and whether or not you hold an officer role such as Treasurer or Secretary to the Board. This work usually happens via email or teleconference but in some cases it is necessary to attend additional project meetings or represent EONS at meetings or conferences.

During my four year term on the EONS board I have been fortunate to have had many opportunities, which have helped me personally and professionally to gain experience in presenting at international conferences, participating in international research projects and writing articles for newsletters/cancer journals. To me, the most important benefit of being an EONS board member has been the opportunity to meet and network with colleagues across Europe. Although there are many differences in cancer nursing across Europe, when you talk to colleagues you find that the same issues and problems exist all over Europe. Despite the work that is involved, there is an important social dimension to being on the EONS board. I have made friends not just with other board members but also with colleagues I have met through Advisory Council meetings and participating at EONS events. Although EONS board members do not represent their National Oncology Society I think being a Board member is mutually beneficial as it improves communication between the National Society and EONS. I was fortunate to have the support of my family and my hospital to facilitate me to be an EONS board member.



Past President – Prof. Sara Faithfull, UK

I have been a member of EONS for the last ten years and for seven of those I have worked on the Executive Board, which means being a trustee of the charity. It is therefore hard to remember a time before EONS was part of my life!

The work of a past president is partly about supporting the current president, either by giving advice or by representing them when they are unable to attend meetings or events. At the same time, the past president also helps to provide mentorship to the president elect, who may be new to the work of EONS. Most importantly, the past president provides stability and ensures that knowledge is transferred so that ongoing projects continue and relationships are sustained.

As trustees of EONS, members of the Board have responsibilities to EONS members. Being a president (past or present) requires a substantial amount of work and commitment, maybe 2 days a week, although this varies over the course of a year. Around the time of conferences or EONS events, life is particularly busy! In ‘quieter’ periods there is still a constant stream of EONS email, which tends to require daily attention as there are many enquiries to deal with and decisions to be made. As an EONS president, I have needed to use all my skills in planning, co-ordination and management, as there are many projects to run and events to organise. Although I already had many of these skills when I became an EONS member, I have learnt a huge amount more about EU policy and advocacy. In particular, I have realised how important leadership and visibility can be in influencing health care agendas. This learning has been beneficial in many ways - for me as a person and as a cancer nurse and academic, but also for my home organisation.

My husband always asks “When will you stop going away for EONS events?!” I hope that will never happen, as I have made such good friends and developed so many European networks that I will really miss those contacts. I have been glad to give my time to EONS over the last seven years, but I am also looking forward to having a bit more time to myself in the future!