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Dr. Gielen holds a PhD in biophysics and worked at Northwestern University, UCLA, and University Utrecht before being appointed as Full Professor of Biophysics at Radboud University Nijmegen (1988) with a chair in both the science and medical faculties. From 2010 to 2016 he served as dean of the Faculty of Science.

Dr. Gielen's research focuses on neuroscience, using approaches from physics, mathematics, computer science, neurophysiology and neuroimaging. He has been president of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) since October 2016 and was one of the founders and first director of the Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behavior (https://www.ru.nl/donders/).

His research into human brain function has led to several new insights and also to commercial applications in artificial intelligence. The latter resulted in the launch of SMART Research BV (https://www.smart-research.nl/).

Dr. Gielen is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and also of the Koninklijke Hollandse Maatschappij der Wetenschappen (KHMW).

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