

# COMPETITIONS COMMISSION MEETING

**Friday, 29 August 2025**

**European Handball House**

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**CC:** Bozidar Djurkovic / Chairman  
Jan Kampman / Member Men's Competitions  
Päivi Mitrunen / Member Women's Competitions  
Gaël Pelletier / Member Men's Club Competitions

**Excused:** Dragan Nachevski / Member Refereeing  
Thomas Hylle / Member Women's Club Competitions

**Office:** Markus Glaser / EHF CSO  
further members of staff according to the agenda

## **Minutes**

### **1. Welcome**

Chairman Djurkovic opened the meeting, welcoming all CC members to the last meeting before the 17<sup>th</sup> Ordinary EHF Congress 2025 (19 and 20 September 2025). Since the congress is electoral and the commission composition may change afterwards, Djurkovic thanked all commission members, as well as Markus and the remaining EHF office staff, for their time and contributions over the past four years. Glaser also welcomed the participants and clarified that only the chairman and the two congress elected members responsible for competitions (Mitrunen and Kampman) have been invited to the congress. The club competition members (Hylle and Pelletier) will not attend, as these positions are defined by the Men's/Women's Forum Club Handball, not via the congress. Pelletier was already confirmed during the latest FCH meeting in June. A successor for Hylle still needs to be named, as he did not stand for another term.

### **2. Minutes and Reports of Meetings and Task Groups**

No remarks were made.

### **3. Information on Meeting of Technical Delegation / CAN**

Chairman Djurkovic summarized the key topics discussed two days prior. The TD notes from that meeting will be made available to all CC members for reference.

### **4. Club Competitions**

#### **4.1. Review Men's and Women's Club Competitions 2024/25**

Tækker summarized that the previous season ended successfully, with no major issues during the Final4s. The floor issue at the Lanxess Arena during the final weekend in Cologne is still under investigation.

#### Men's Champions League Final4

1. SC Magdeburg (GER)
2. Füchse Berlin (GER)
3. HBC Nantes FRA)
4. Barça (ESP)

#### Women's Champions League Final4

1. Györi Audi ETO KC (HUN)
2. Odense Håndbold (DEN)
3. Team Esbjerg (DEN)
4. Metz Handball FRA)

#### Men's European League Finals

1. SG Flensburg-Handewitt (GER)
2. Montpellier Handball FRA)
3. THW Kiel (GER)
4. MT Melsungen (GER)

#### Women's European League Finals

1. Thüringer HC (GER)
2. Ikast Håndbold (DEN)
3. JDA Bourgogne Dijon Handball (FRA)
4. HSG Blomberg-Lippe (GER)

#### Men's European Cup Final

1. HC Alkaloid (MKD)
2. AEK Athens HC (GRE)

#### Women's European Cup Final

1. Valur (ISL)
2. Conservas Orbe Zandal Bm Porrino (ESP)

For the first time the EHF introduced the EHF Youth Club Trophy for Men's U18 during the the 2024/25 season. Barça, HC Eurofarm Pelister, GOG, Veszprém Handball Academy qualified for the tournament in Dormagen/Cologne (GER). The semifinals were played in Dormagen on the same day as the TruckScout24 EHF FINAL4 2025 semifinals. The 3<sup>rd</sup> place match and the final were held the following day in the Lanxess Arena. GOG defeated Veszprém Handball Academy, whereas Barça took the 3<sup>rd</sup> place against HC Eurofarm Pelister. According to a post-tournament questionnaire, all 16 participating teams were very satisfied, and appreciated the opportunity to watch the TruckScout24 EHF Finals after their matches.

#### **4.2. Preview Men's and Women's Club Competitions 2025/2026**

No irregular issues appeared in the build up to the Men's Club Competitions with all registrations and draws taking place according to schedule.

At the beginning of August with all schedules the Women's Champions League already published, HB Ludwigsburg publicly declared bankruptcy and therefore resigned from participation. Following a thorough examination by the EHF, Sola HK (NOR) was awarded with the available place in the Champions League. Sola HK had previously submitted an upgrade request for the Champions League but was not considered by a narrow margin. Due to this unexpected change, the playing system in the EHF Women's European League had to be adjusted. Tertnes Bergen (NOR), as the next Norwegian club in line, replaced Sola HK in the group phase of the EHF Women's European League.

A clear long-term strategy for Women's Handball is still lacking and must be addressed as soon as possible, Glaser pointed out. Tækker further explained that there has been a tendency over the last years with a decreasing number of women's clubs with only 109 registering for the 2025/26 season which is by seven clubs less than in the previous season.

Glaser explained that France (Championnat de France féminin de handball) is considering reducing the number of teams from 14 to 12 to maintain league quality. Clubs struggling at the start of last season or this season, came from established handball nations: FRA (Neptunes de Nantes), NOR (Vipers Kristiansand) and GER (HB Ludwigsburg). HB Ludwigsburg has been licensed by the German Handball Bundesliga (HBF) for the 2025/26 besides the later financial difficulties. If clubs from well-established nations struggle financially, clubs from smaller handball nations may face even greater challenges. The main issue is probably the player's contracts. Pelletier commented that approximately 70% of the overall clubs budgets are allocated to player salaries. Kampman highlighted difficulty in selling out halls and larger arenas for women's handball matches, resulting in lower ticket revenue compared to men's competitions.

Mitrunen remarked that the current challenges in women's handball are also visible in many other sports. From her experience, many women place a stronger focus on education, which can make it difficult to fully commit to their athletic careers. Bebetos highlighted a negative trend in the number of female referee pairs, indicating similar structural challenges in officiating.

Glaser referred to the UEFA Women's EURO 2025 in Switzerland that took place over the summer. UEFA publicly declared the tournament a big success in general, despite incurring significant financial losses. With 29 out of 31 matches sold out, the event set new standards for women's football. Glaser acknowledged that UEFA has a different financial background compared to the EHF and other sports, however, raised the question of whether a similar spectator and visibility success could be achieved in handball even if it requires financial investment.

#### **4.3. Inputs from Club representatives and further topics**

No remarks were made by the commission members.

#### **4.4. Update on Club Competitions in the future**

During the spring 2025 the EHF organized from 09 to 10 April the Men's Competitions Conference and from 12 to 13 May the Women's Competitions Conference. Since 2008 these were the first conferences of its kind. Major stakeholders had been invited to Vienna to discuss the future and further development of handball. Both conferences were considered a big success and generated

a range of potential ideas and strategies. The EHF and stakeholder groups have since been working on evaluating the input and developing possible approaches and solutions. From the point of view of Infront the success of national team events is seen as well established, whereas the club competitions still have room for improvement.

Glaser pointed out that an additional EXEC meeting has been scheduled on 21 October in Vienna. The reason, the EHF Congress in September (AUT) includes elections, and as the composition of the EXEC will change, important decisions must be taken before the originally scheduled meeting in December (Rotterdam). Key topics there from the Competitions area will be possible amendments of the Competition systems in the seasons to come.

Kampman highlighted the importance of the number of home matches for clubs, as this directly impacts profitability. Glaser explained that this was the reason behind the creation of the Champions League group phase (2 groups of 8 clubs). Unlike football, where TV contracts are the major source of income, some handball clubs depend heavily on ticket sales for revenue.

Tækker brought up that, on the occasion of the Men's Competition Conference in spring, Forum Club Handball proposed establishing an additional fourth club competition. She raised concerns as smaller clubs may lack funds to play more matches. Focus should not only remain on the Champions League, but also on strengthening the other competitions. Before launching a new competition, it must be clear whether smaller clubs can financially support full participation. Kampman noted that e.g. smaller Danish clubs are generally against international competitions due to high travel costs.

The European League (particularly on the men's side) is relatively successful, but not yet as established as it should be, Glaser remarked. Some clubs eligible for the European League decline participation, preferring not to play the group phase due to travel expenses. Tækker confirmed that several clubs request downgrades from the European League to the European Cup for cost reasons, which, due to the competition system can not be granted in all cases.

## **5. Refereeing topics**

### **5.1. Status of referee pairs in EHF for the 2025/26 season**

Referee pool: At the start of the 2025/26 season, 131 EHF referee pairs are active — 109 male (84%) and 22 female (16%). The minimum target range for EHF pairs remains 130 (with an ideal target closer to 140), although actual availability may fluctuate (e.g., weekday matches).

There has been a net decrease of 13 referee pairs versus last season, mainly due to retirements and voluntary withdrawals. However, the intake of new pairs from summer candidate courses has offset these losses, keeping the overall number of EHF pairs stable and within the target range (minimum 130 pairs).

Female refereeing remains an ongoing sensitive area, with 6 pairs lost and 3 others temporarily unavailable due to "time-outs," pregnancies, and similar reasons.

Additionally, the NFs of CYP, HUN, ITA, and ROU have retained referees or pairs over the age of 50, who will continue serving as EHF referees following the recent increase of the international referee age limit from 50 to 55 years.

## **5.2. Review EHF Referee Candidate Courses in 2025**

Two candidates' courses were organised during the summer of 2025: the European Open in SWE and the Women's 19 Championship in GEO. In total, 13 pairs participated, of which 11 successfully passed the course (BIH, FRA, GER, ITA, LTU, SRB, GRE, GBR, ISR, POR, SLO). The two pairs from EST and UKR did not pass, as they need to further improve their English proficiency; they will be retested at a later stage once ready for a new language assessment.

Looking ahead, the preference is to hold at least one candidates' course earlier in the year (in place of the European Open), in order to ensure a greater number of EHF pairs are available for the YAC EUROs and/or Championships. In addition, dedicated support measures and an extra mid-season course for female candidates are planned.

For the 2025/26 season, the total number of candidate pairs stands at 25: 16 male, 6 female, and 3 mixed.

## **5.3. YRP status and activities in 2025**

The YRP events held over the summer included the EYOF in MKD, the EUSA Championships in POR, and the Sparkassen Cup in GER. A total of 22 YR pairs took part, representing mixed levels of experience, with no major issues reported. Feedback from EHF Referee Experts at these YRP events indicates a steady improvement in the overall quality of the programme.

The TRC has agreed to maintain the current YRP structure for the 2026 registration period, with a continued focus on balancing gender participation. A recommendation has also been made to introduce "mentoring" sessions with active EHF top-level referees during YRP events to further support development.

The total number of YRP pairs for the season 2025-26 is 48 (30 male, 18 female).

## **5.4. General review YAC competitions 2025**

During the summer, seven EHF YAC events were staged, including W19 and W17 EUROs, their respective Championships, the European Open. In addition to this there were YRP courses at the EUSA Games and EYOF. Two of these events (the European Open in SWE as well as the W19 Championship in GEO) featured referee candidates instead of established EHF pairs. In total, 68 referee pairs and 42 delegates were nominated, with all refereeing reports available and overall feedback on performance remaining positive, despite the demanding calendar.

Ensuring a sufficient pool of young referees for these events remains challenging, not only due to parallel IHF nominations to World Championships and summer vacation periods, but also because several pairs had to be replaced at very short notice after failing the physical test before their respective events. Additionally, referees who failed the on-site theoretical test (EHF

Glossary on regulations and rule test) during the W19 and W17 EUROs were excluded from officiating decisive matches.

Cooperation with the IHF, particularly the joint appointment of female pairs from BRA and TUN at the W19 and W17 EUROs, was highlighted as a positive experience. The TRC recommends continuing and expanding such integration of non-European pairs into EHF YAC events, conditions would need to be clarified with the IHF if the project is to continue.

### **5.5. Men's EHF EURO 2026 – preparatory activities**

#### **Referee Nominations & Preparation**

Referees for the Men's EURO 2026 will be nominated after the EHF Congress, with quality remaining the TRC's top priority over any other criteria. Consideration will also be given to the possible nomination of two pairs from the same federation and gender. Preparation for referees and delegates will combine online lectures, fitness monitoring, training, and mental coaching support.

#### **Officials' Conference & Officiating Line**

A two-day mini-conference is planned onsite before the start of the tournament, focusing on rule modifications, officiating guidelines, and the use of officiating technology. Clear guidelines in line with TRC recommendations and IHF standards will be distributed to teams, emphasising consistent interpretation of key aspects such as 7m decisions and punishments. Video clips prepared by the current TRC will highlight officiating priorities and be shared with both EHF officials and teams to ensure a common understanding.

#### **Referee Performance Evaluation (RPE)**

The established RPE system will be applied at the Men's EURO 2025 as in previous events, with pre-evaluations, home observations, and online debriefings scheduled during MCL matches to ensure proper coaching and consistency.

#### **Officiating Technology**

All EURO venues will use the VR system, continuing cooperation with FIFA VAR Manager Joao Capela. Functions already in place—such as the Video Referee Assistant (VRA) and arena cube production—will continue, with preparatory tests and VR operator refreshment training planned ahead of the Men's EURO. The referee camera, a new technology sponsored alongside VR by DEKRA, will be piloted at the EURO after testing in DEN during the Euro Cup in October in cooperation with EHF Media and RIEDEL. A new referee announcement protocol (short in-arena statements after VR reviews) will be trialled, and the VR table and monitors relocated directly behind the official table to shorten access time. The TRC also recommends integrating the Referee Observer into the referee communication loop and improving arena cube graphics on VR decisions through closer cooperation between the Officiating BU and the EURO Department.

#### **Onsite Task Distribution**

It is recommended by the TRC that each venue will have a TRC member onsite, with task distribution to be finalized following the nomination after the EHF Congress.

## **5.6. Activities in referee education and NFs' development support**

Video refereeing guidelines prepared by Togstad/TRC, focusing on the 7-metre line, offensive fouls, and punishments, will be distributed at the start of the season to both EHF officials and member federations. The material, developed with full transparency from two Final4 matches, includes updated educational presentations and video examples.

Proposals for cognitive testing have been presented to the EHF, with evaluation ongoing to determine target groups (e.g., Young Referees or others). The integrity certification course will be repeated and made mandatory for all EHF referees, in line with EHF Management's wish for the "Integrity Education" programme to continue until all indoor and referee pairs are certified as a prerequisite for participation in EHF events.

All support requests from member federations have been accommodated, with EHF Experts appointed to conduct pre-season referee and delegate seminars in KOS, BIH, CYP and LUX (Masterplan activity). In addition, plans are underway to stage a seminar for referee pairs from Emerging Nations following the Emerging Nations Conference held in Budapest during the last Women's ChL F4, with Vienna currently proposed as the venue.

## **5.7. Modifications to the Rules of the Game and competition regulations**

An update on recent changes and clarifications to the IHF Rules of the Game (effective 1 July 2025), along with corresponding adaptations to the EHF Competitions Regulations, was presented to the CC members. A comprehensive EHF letter summarizing all amendments has been sent to all EHF member federations and officials, including references and links to presentations for further information.

The modifications were introduced smoothly over the summer across all events, with all relevant information communicated to EHF member federations ahead of the new season.

Clarifications were provided regarding the roles of Team Officials (Letter "A") and Head Coaches (Letter "B"). The upward match timing format (0'-60') has been implemented in all EHF competitions.

## **5.8. Officiating technology – preview 2025/26 season**

Implementation of Officiating Technology – Champions League

The Video Replay (VR) system will be systematically used in all Champions League matches (men's and women's). Technical fine-tuning is ongoing, particularly regarding arena infrastructure and broadcast integration.

Training of Champions League Referees and Delegates

Online training sessions were conducted ahead of the season, covering practical VR use, communication protocols, and decision-making consistency. A total of 99 referees participated.

Future Steps & Development of Video Replay (VR)

- Lessons learned from the 2024/25 Champions League season and previous EURO events will serve as benchmarks.



- The role of the VRA has been successfully implemented.
- Implementation of referee cameras is ongoing and will be tested.
- The possibility of post-VR referee decision announcements in the arena is under review.
- Continued cooperation with the FIFA VAR Manager.

#### Video Clipping System – XPS Sideline

Positive feedback was received from EHF officials who used the system during the summer. Wider rollout is planned.

#### TV Referee Observers (TRO) Project

The TRO programme will continue into the 2025/26 season, building on positive feedback from the previous season. Additional referee experts are being considered to further expand the TRO group.

### **5.9. Referee nominations for friendly matches**

Increased tendency in the requests for EHF-nominated referee pairs to direct international friendly matches by the National Federations:

2021: 15 matches

2022: 22 matches

2023: 32 matches

2024: 41 matches

2025 (up to August): 23 matches

The CC members noted that Office-appointed pairs for international friendlies ensure transparency and fair competition.

### **5.10. Fitness & Wellness program**

Monitoring reports from the FitGood Pro partnership are ongoing.

#### Pre-Season Conditioning Testing - Feedback from National Federations (NFs)

Mixed results have been reported: while most NFs apply the test correctly, concerns remain regarding uniform execution standards and timely submission of tests to ensure referees' eligibility for nominations at the start of the EHF season. As of this season, FitGood Pro is reviewing all pre-season video tests submitted by EHF referees and providing technical feedback.

#### Feedback from the YAC EUROs

The fitness level of the younger generation has not been fully satisfactory; several referees did not pass the Shuttle Run test ahead of both YAC EUROs and had to be replaced.

#### 7.4 Mental and Conditioning Preparation for EURO 2025 Referee Pairs

Individualized programs will be prepared for nominated pairs. Mental coach support has been confirmed. Conditioning levels will be tested with pre-event tests, similar to previous EURO events, enabling timely replacement of non-fit pairs and/or training adjustments. Required fitness levels will be aligned with those of the IHF.



Cooperation with FitGood Pro in 2025–26

Continuation of the existing cooperation and contractual partnership.

Cognitive Test for Referees

Information was provided about a submitted proposal in this area. Implementation at EHF level is under consideration; the EHF is currently reviewing submitted proposals.

### **5.11. IHF matters**

The TRC expressed support for the continued participation of non-European referees in YAC events, which is supported by the CC. Challenges such as visas, equipment, and costs were noted, with lessons learned expected to improve for future arrangements. If there is a general confirmation of the EHF to continue this project, clarifications with the IHF on principle matter have to follow.

Several EHF referee pairs and delegates were nominated for IHF events last summer. Various TRC members were involved, receiving positive feedback. Reports highlighted effective headset use by delegates to support referees in accordance with strict regulations and criteria (e.g., countdown at the end of matches).

The TRC supports active involvement in the IHF PRC to contribute European refereeing expertise and ensure enhancements in rule development.

Six EHF pairs received the IHF Referee badge last summer, means the total number of European IHF pairs is 45. An additional two candidate pairs from Europe are invited to a course in Morocco in September.

The general Cooperation with IHF in officiating topics remains good and constructive.

### **5.12. Miscellaneous**

New Referee/Delegate Kits

New kits featuring the DEKRA sponsor logo have been introduced; distribution is ongoing.

Various

- The TRC supports the application of the newly developed IHF Referee Performance Evaluation Sheet once it has been stabilized and calibrated.
- Three scientific articles on video replay and officiating technology are scheduled to be presented at the EHF Scientific Conference in Zagreb, Croatia, in November 2025.
- The Coach's Challenge is undergoing final modifications but is not yet finalised.
- The next National Federations' Heads of Refereeing Convention, the biennial event held at EHF Headquarters, is planned for spring 2026.
- The current TRC mandate formally ends with the EHF Congress in September 2025; the EHF Executive Committee will decide on the future structure (size, nomination process, linkage to EHF bodies, etc.) after the Congress.

- TRC members agreed to continue practical preparations for Men's EURO 2025 during the transition period.

## **6. Delegate Topics**

### **6.1. Status of delegates for the 2025/26 season**

Delegate pool: Total number of delegates, incl. new ones from the 2025 candidate course, currently sufficient to cover upcoming seasons: 149 (male: 119 – 80%, female: 30 – 20%).

### **6.2. Debriefing of the 10<sup>th</sup> EHF Candidate Delegates' Course (Vienna, May 2025)**

The course took place in May 2025 in Vienna/AUT with 59 applicants, 20 candidates invited, 17 successfully completing (male: 13, female: 4). Positive gender balance and diversity of backgrounds noted. Several newly qualified delegates already nominated for YAC events during summer 2025. Early impressions are encouraging.

A comprehensive understanding of handball rules, game management, and proficiency in English for international communication was tested. Online applications were open to all eligible candidates, with the announcement shared widely to ensure accessibility.

For the first time, all English-language assessment interviews and the digital English test were conducted under the supervision of an academic linguistics expert. Drawing on his evidence-based research on ethics and fairness in language testing, he designed and conducted the interviews for the curated selection of candidate delegates. The results were positively received by both the EHF and the candidates, including those not selected.

### **6.3. Delegates' Licensing System**

The delegate licensing model is under preparation but has not yet been finalised.

## **7. National Team Competitions – Qualifications**

### **7.1. Review past competitions**

Men's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers (Phase 2)

ROUND	DAY	DATE
ROUND 1	Wednesday – Thursday	6/7 November 2024
ROUND 2	Saturday – Sunday	9/10 November 2024
ROUND 3	Wednesday – Thursday	12/13 March 2025
ROUND 4	Saturday – Sunday	15/16 March 2025
ROUND 5	Wednesday – Thursday	7/8 May 2025
ROUND 6	Sunday	11 May 2025, 18:00 CEST (unified throw-off time*)

24 teams qualified for the Men's EHF EURO 2026 (final tournament). Directly qualified were 4 teams: FRA (defending champion), DEN, NOR and SWE as organisers. The remaining 20 teams are: AUT, CRO, CZE, ESP, FAR, FRA, GEO, GER, HUN, ISL, ITA, MNE, NED, MKD, POL, POR, ROU, SRB, SLO, SUI, UKR

The EURO Cup has been played among the defending champion and the organisers:  
 Final Standing: 1. FRA 2. DEN 3. SWE 4. NOR

### 2025 IHF Women's World Championship Qualification Europe (Phase 2 Part 2)

Qualified nations as organisers:

- GER (7th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- NED (6th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)

Qualified nations as defending champion:

- FRA (4th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)

Qualified nations from the Women's EHF EURO 2024 (three best ranked teams):

- EUROPE 1 NOR (1st of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- EUROPE 2 DEN (2nd of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- EUROPE 3 HUN (3rd of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)

Qualified nations from the Qualification Europe Phase 2 Part 2 matches

- EUROPE 4 SWE (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against KOS)
- EUROPE 5 MNE (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against POR)
- EUROPE 6 POL (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against MKD)
- EUROPE 7 SRB (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against SLO)
- EUROPE 8 ROU (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against ITA)
- EUROPE 9 SUI (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against SVK)
- EUROPE 10 ESP (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against CRO)
- EUROPE 11 AUT (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against TUR)
- EUROPE 12 CZE (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against UKR)
- EUROPE 13 ISL (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against ISR)
- EUROPE 14 FAR (Winner of a Phase 2 Part 2 match against LTU)

The IHF awarded CRO with a Wild Card for the Final Tournament

Substitute nations:

- SLO (10th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- MKD (18th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- CRO (19th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- TUR (20th of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)
- POR (22nd of the Women's EHF EURO 2024)

ROUND:	DAY	DATES
1 <sup>st</sup> leg	Wednesday – Thursday	09. – 10.04.2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> leg	Saturday – Sunday	12. – 13.04.2025

## 7.2. 2026 Women's EHF EURO and EURO Cup

24 teams will participate in the Women's EHF EURO 2026 Final Tournament and 24 teams will participate in Phase 2 of the Women's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers. A total of 16 places are available at the Women's EHF EURO 2026 Final Tournament. POL, ROU, CZE, SVK and TUR are directly qualified as organizers together with NOR, DEN and HUN as the best 3 ranked teams of the Women's EHF EURO 2024.

### Match schedule Qualifiers:

ROUND	DAY	DATE
ROUND 1	Wednesday – Thursday	15/16 October 2025
ROUND 2	Saturday – Sunday	18/19 October 2025
ROUND 3	Wednesday – Thursday	4/5 March 2026
ROUND 4	Saturday – Sunday	7/8 March 2026
ROUND 5	Wednesday – Thursday	8/9 April 2026
ROUND 6	Sunday	12 April 2026, 18:00 CEST (unified throw-off time*)

The 5 hosting federations POL, ROU, CZE, SVK and TUR as well as the best 3 ranked teams of the Women's EHF EURO 2024 NOR, DEN and HUN will participate in the EHF EURO Cup. The EHF EURO Cup will be played within the periods planned for the Qualifiers. The group winners and runners-up will qualify for the "EHF EURO Cup Finals" which will be played in a Final4 format in September 2026.

### Women's EHF EURO Cup 2026:

GROUP A	GROUP B
NOR	DEN
POL	HUN
ROU	CZE
SVK	TUR

The draw for the Women's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers took place on 20 March 2025 in Cluj-Napoca, ROU. The draw result:

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5	GROUP 6
FRA	NED	GER	MNE	SWE	ESP
CRO	SUI	SLO	ISL	SRB	AUT
KOS	ITA	MKD	POR	UKR	GRE
FIN	BIH	BEL	FAR	LTU	ISR

Round 2 playing venue adaptations:

- ISR vs ESP in Bratislava (SVK)
- UKR vs SRB in Michalovce (SVK)

## 7.3. 2027 MWCh GER

A total of 37 nations registered for the Qualification Europe. 32 teams will play the final tournament with 14 places available for Europe. This number does not include the organizer

(GER) neither the defending champion (DEN). Besides the 4 best ranked teams (excluding DEN and GER) from the Men's EHF EURO 2026, which will qualify directly, 10 places will still be available for the continent of Europe. The following countries registered for the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Europe:

AUT, BEL, BIH, CRO, CYP, CZE, DEN, ESP, FAR, FIN, FRA, GBR, GEO, GER, GRE, HUN, ISL, ISR, ITA, KOS, LAT, LTU, LUX, MKD, MNE, NED, NOR, POL, POR, ROU, SLO, SRB, SUI, SVK, SWE, TUR, UKR

#### Qualification Europe Phase 1:

The 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 1 matches will be played in a KO-system with first and second leg matches in the National Team Week between 27 October and 2 November 2025.

Participants : CYP, GBR, KOS, LAT, LUX, TUR

The three winners of the Qualification Phase 1 matches qualify for the Phase 2.

LEG:	DAY	DATES
1 <sup>st</sup> leg	Wednesday – Thursday	29. – 30.10.2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> leg	Saturday – Sunday	01. – 02.11.2025

Alternative dates within the same week can be coordinated with the EHF.

#### Draw results for the Qualification Europe Phase 1:

1st LEG	2nd LEG
LAT vs LUX	LUX vs LAT
CYP vs TUR	TUR vs CYP
GBR vs KOS	KOS vs GBR

#### Qualification Europe Phase 2:

The six lowest ranked teams (excl. DEN and GER) of the Men's EHF EURO 2026 will qualify directly for the Phase 2 matches. In addition, Greece (GRE) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH), who are directly qualified for the 2027 World Championship Qualification Phase 2 based on the current Men's National Team ranking, will join this stage.

These teams will compete against Slovakia (SVK), Lithuania (LTU), Belgium (BEL), Finland (FIN), Israel (ISR), – all directly qualified for the 2027 World Championship Qualification Phase 2 based on the current Men's National Team ranking – as well as the three winners from Qualification Europe Phase 1.

The draw for the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Phase 2 is planned to take place after the Qualification Phase 1 matches and after the six lowest-ranked teams from the Men's EHF EURO 2026 are known.

The 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 2 matches will be played in a KO-system with first and second leg matches in the National Team Week between 16 and 22 March 2026 as follows:

LEG:	DAY	DATES
1 <sup>st</sup> leg	Wednesday – Thursday	18. – 19.03.2026
2 <sup>nd</sup> leg	Saturday – Sunday	21. – 22.03.2026

The winners of the Qualification Phase 2 play-off matches will qualify for the Phase 3.

#### Qualification Europe Phase 3:

The 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 3 will feature the eight winners from the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 2 and the two lowest ranked directly qualified for the Phase 3 teams from the EHF EURO 2026, competing against ten highest ranked teams from the Men's EHF EURO 2026 directly qualified for the Phase 3 teams of the Men's EHF EURO 2026 in Home & Away matches (note: host GER, defending champion DEN and four best ranked teams at the Men's EHF EURO 2026 are excluded).

The draw for the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship Qualification Phase 3 matches is planned to take place on the final weekend of the Men's EHF EURO 2026.

The matches will be played in a KO-system with first and second leg matches in the National Team Week between 11 and 17 May 2026 as follows:

LEG:	DAY	DATES
1 <sup>st</sup> leg	Wednesday – Thursday	13. – 14.05.2026
2 <sup>nd</sup> leg	Saturday – Sunday	16. – 17.05.2026

The winners of the Phase 3 matches will qualify for the final tournament of the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship in Germany.

#### **7.4. 2028 Men's EHF EURO ESP/POR/SUI**

##### Qualification Phase 1:

The EHF EURO 2028 Qualifiers Phase 1 took place in Varna, BUL from 10 to 12 January 2025. The National Federations of BUL, CYP, GBR and MLT participated in the tournament. CYP and GBR qualified for the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Promotion Round which will be held from 06 to 11 January 2026. BUL qualified via the IHF Emerging Nations Championship which took place in Varna, BUL from 11 to 16 March 2025.

##### Promotion Round:

The three lowest ranked teams of the Men's EHF EURO 2024 Qualifiers Phase 2 EST, LAT and TUR will face BUL, CYP and GBR (qualified via the Phase 1 and the IHF Emerging Nations) in the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Promotion Round matches.

The Men's EHF EURO 2028 Promotion Round matches will be played in a KO-system with first and second leg matches in the National Team Week between 5 and 11 January 2026 as follows:

LEG:	DAY	DATE
1 <sup>st</sup> leg	Wednesday – Thursday	07. – 08.01.2026
2 <sup>nd</sup> leg	Saturday – Sunday	10. – 11.01.2026

Draw results for the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Promotion Round:

1st LEG	2nd LEG
BUL vs TUR	TUR vs BUL
CYP vs EST	EST vs CYP
GBR vs LAT	LAT vs GBR

The winners of the play-off matches will qualify for the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Qualifiers starting with round 1 in September 2026 and finalizing with round 6 in May 2027.

## 7.5. Further topics / Miscellaneous

Sypkus explained that double matches will only be accepted in a competition's first phase. Further, it is under discussion if the ranking procedure should be published in the future. In view of the 2027 IHF Women's World Championship Qualification Europe, the announcement is planned to be sent between April and June 2026.

The CC members were asked to share their views on making the buzzer and video replay system mandatory for Qualifiers and EURO Cup matches. Mitrinen expressed concerns that this would be difficult for smaller nations to implement, whereas Kampman was in favour noting the procedure has been established at EHF EUROs for at least five years. Glaser stated that currently it is not mandatory, though warned of long-term issues if expectations differ between federations. He suggested a potential implementation goal to use it for the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Qualifiers, however staff training must be ensured in this case. Glaser added that women's national teams are not yet ready for this step. The outcome is therefore that EHF will not force to have this topic implemented.

## 8. National Team Competitions – Final Tournaments

### 8.1. Reports of YAC EHF events in 2025 and additional YAC topics

YAC EHF EURO playing schedule amendments:

Based on the learnings and experiences from the YAC EUROs 2025, two possible adjustments to the playing schedule are under evaluation:

1. Quarterfinals – teams from the same Main Round should not face each other in the Quarterfinals.



2. Intermediate Round – In the second match of the intermediate round, the two third-ranked teams should play against each other.

#### Player replacements at YAC competitions:

Current situation:

- YAC EHF EURO: 2 replacements per team in each phase → up to 6 replacements in total.
- YAC EHF Championship: 2 replacements per team for the entire event.
- This system creates extra administrative work for the teams.

Proposal:

- At the technical meeting, each team nominates 18 active players for the event.
- For each match, two players must be crossed out 1 hour before throw-off.
- Each team will be granted 2 replacements for the entire event.

#### Age category adjustment at EHF European Open:

Following a review of participation numbers in the current year and the survey feedback from federations, a change of the age category is proposed. It's proposed to return to the age category M17/W16.

The CC agrees on motions to the ExeC for all the above mentioned topics

#### Qualification pathway for M17/W17 EYOF & MU17/WU16 IHF World Championship – proposal:

It is proposed that team qualification will be based on the results of the M17/W16 EHF European Open. These results would serve as the basis for qualification to:

- The M17/W17 European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), and
- The MU17/WU16 IHF World Championship.

#### **M19 EHF European Open 2025 SWE**

Venue: Gothenburg, Sweden  
Time: 30 June – 4 July 2025  
Teams: 11 (10 European team and EGY)  
Matches: 6-7 per team, 41 in total

Final result: 1. ESP, 2. ISL, 3. CRO, 4. SWE, 5. POL, 6. EGY, 7. FAR, 8. EST, 9. LTU, 10. NED, 11. FIN

#### **W19 EHF EURO 2025 MNE**

Venue: Podgorica, Montenegro  
Time: 9 – 20 July 2025  
Teams: 24  
Matches: 8 per team, 96 in total

Final result: 1. GER, 2. ESP, 3. DEN, 4. AUT, 5. FRA, 6. MNE, 7. HUN, 8. CRO, 9. ROU, 10. CZE, 11. POL, 12. SRB, 13. SWE, 14. NOR, 15. ISL, 16. TUR, 17. NED, 18. SUI, 19. SLO, 20. FAR, 21. POR, 22. FIN, 23. MKD, 24. LTU

### **W19 EHF Championship 2025 GEO**

#### Final Tournament:

Venue: Telavi, Georgia  
Time: 12 – 20 July 2025  
Teams: 10  
Matches: 5 per team, 30 in total

Final result: 1. UKR, 2. SVK, 3. ITA, 4. BEL, 5. KOS, 6. LUX, 7. ISR, 8. GBR, 9. GEO, 10. BUL

### **W17 EHF EURO 2025 MNE**

#### Final Tournament:

Venue: Podgorica, Montenegro  
Time: 30 July – 10 August 2025  
Teams: 24  
Matches: 8 per team, 96 in total

Final result: 1. SVK, 2. CRO, 3. MNE, 4. ESP, 5. SUI, 6. DEN, 7. HUN, 8. FRA, 9. CZE, 10. SRB, 11. GER, 12. SWE, 13. NED, 14. SLO, 15. POR, 16. POL, 17. ISL, 18. NOR, 19. AUT, 20. LTU, 21. ROU, 22. MKD, 23. TUR, 24. FAR

### **W17 EHF Championship 2025 KOS**

#### Final Tournament:

Venue: Pristina, Kosovo  
Time: 4 – 10 August 2025  
Teams: 8  
Matches: 5 per team, 20 in total

Final result: 1. ITA, 2. FIN, 3. UKR, 4. BUL, 5. ISR, 6. LAT, 7. KOS, 8. GBR

## **8.2. Reports of additional EHF summer events 2025**




### **EHF Masters in Sevilla (ESP) from 19 – 22 June**

A total of 55 teams participated in six age categories. Basically, the event went really well, but the high temperatures in the hall were a real topic.

### **EUSA Games in Covilha (POR) from 22 – 28 July**

Teams: 12 (men) + 12 (women)  
Matches: in total 56 matches

Final result:

University	Country				Total
University of Côte d'Azur	FRA	1	0	0	1
Hungarian University of Sports Science	HUN	1	0	0	1
University of Leon	ESP	0	1	0	1
Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava	ROU	0	1	0	1
University Politechnica of Bucharest	ROU	0	0	1	1
University of Zagreb	CRO	0	0	1	1

### M17 EYOF 2025 in Skopje (MKD) from 21-26 July

Teams: 8

Matches: 5 per team, 20 in total

Final result: 1. ISL, 2. GER, 3. CRO, 4. HUN, 5. ESP, 6. POR, 7. NOR, 8. MKD

### W17 EYOF 2025 in Skopje (MKD) from 21 - 26 July

Teams: 8

Matches: 5 per team, 20 in total

Final result: 1. GER, 2. SUI, 3. ISL, 4. NED, 5. FRA, 6. HUN, 7. NOR, 8. MKD

## 8.3. IHF competitions summer 2025

### 2025 MU21 World Championship POL (18-29 June)

Final ranking (18 European teams):

1. DEN, 2. POR, 3. FAR, 4. SWE, 5. GER, 6. EGY, 7. SLO, 8. NOR, 9. ESP, 10. FRA, 11. AUT, 12. CRO, 13. SUI, 14. HUN, 15. ROU, 16. JPN, 17. SRB, 18. ISL, 19. POL, 20. ALG, 21. TUN, 22. MAR, 23. ARG, 24. KOR, 25. MKD, 26. USA, 27. BRA, 28. BRN, 29. KSA, 30. URU, 31. MEX, 32. CAN;

IHF Trophy: USA

### 2025 MU19 World Championship EGY (6 – 17 August 2025)

Final ranking (17 European teams):

1. GER, 2. ESP, 3. DEN, 4. SWE, 5. EGY, 6. ISL, 7. HUN, 8. NOR, 9. FRA, 10. SRB, 11. SUI, 12. CZE, 13. SLO, 14. JPN, 15. AUT, 16. KAS, 17. POR, 18. CRO, 19. FAR, 20. TUN, 21. BRA, 22. ARG, 23. BRN, 24. KOS, 25. KOR, 26. KUW, 27. ALG, 28. URU, 29. GUI, 30. MAR, 31. USA, 32. MEX;

IHF Trophy: KOS

#### **8.4. 2026 Men's EHF EURO DEN/SWE/NOR**

The playing venues for the event have been set as follows:

##### Preliminary Round:

- Group A: Herning, Jyske Bank Boxen (DEN)
- Group B: Herning, Jyske Bank Boxen (DEN)
- Group C: Oslo/Baerum, Unity Arena (NOR)
- Group D: Oslo/Baerum, Unity Arena (NOR)
- Group E: Malmö, Malmö Arena (SWE)
- Group F: Kristianstad, Kristianstad Arena (NOR)

##### Main Round:

- Main Round I: Herning (DEN)
- Main Round II: Malmö (SWE)

##### Final Weekend:

- Herning (DEN)

##### Arena Set-up:

The Unity Arena (NOR) is primarily a football stadium, but for the event it requires additional temporary stands to transform it into an arena-style setup, similar to the configuration used during the World Championship in January. The empty space behind the tribunes will also be utilized for a fan area. These temporary stands will already be in place before Christmas, as the Norwegian Organizing Committee (NOR OC) has requested the arena to be operational early in order to host a preparatory match between Christmas and New Year 2025.

##### Site visits:

- 19/20 May 2025 – Site visit Kristianstad
- 24 to 26 June 2025 – Final site visit Malmö, Herning, Oslo
- 1 to 3 June 2025 – Venue dressing site visit in Malmö and Herning
- 12 to 14 August 2025 – Venue dressing site visit in Kristianstad and Oslo
- 1-5 of September - TV & Partner Tour

##### Hotels:

The accommodation situation presents significant challenges due to limited capacity and logistical constraints, particularly for the final weekend. Current allocations are as follows:

- Team Hotel I: Scandic Regina, Herning (challenge: meeting room infrastructure).
- Team Hotel II: Radisson Blu, Silkeborg (challenge: greater distance from the arena).
- Officials Hotel: DGI Huset (challenge: congress centre).
- Guest Hotel (Final Weekend): Hotel Eyde, reserved for VIPs/guests (challenge: sufficient capacity for Final Weekend).

#### Match schedule:

Official match schedule is attached. The Groups of the Preliminary Round are as follows:

Group A:	GER, ESP, AUT, SRB
Group B:	DEN, POR, MKD, ROU
Group C:	FRA, NOR, CZE, UKR
Group D:	SLO, FAR, MNE, SUI
Group E:	SWE, CRO, NED, GEO
Group F:	HUN, ISL, POL, ITA

#### Further important dates:

- 1 to 5 September 2025 – TV & Partner Tour
- 26 September 2025 - Technical assessment match
- 7 to 9 October 2025 – Heads of Delegations Conference – Part 2
- 11 January 2026 – Arrival EHF Officials to Malmö
- 12/13 January 2026 – Officials’ Conference in Malmö
- 13 January 2026 – Tournament Management Meeting in Malmö
- 13 January 2026 – Officials Travel to their assigned venues
- 13 January 2026 – Test match in Herning
- 14 January 2026 – Technical Meetings Groups A+C
- 14 January 2026 – Test matches in Herning & Oslo
- 15 January 2026 – Technical Meetings Groups B,D&F
- 15 January 2026 – Test match in Kristianstad
- 16 January 2026 – Technical Meeting Group E
- 16 January 2026 – Test match in Malmö

#### Side events:

A reception of the host region is scheduled in Malmö on 12 January (evening). All officials will arrive in Malmö for the Officials’ Conference, chosen for travel convenience as Malmö is easily accessible via Copenhagen Airport. Following the conference, the main venue will shift to Herning for the remainder of the tournament. Since Malmö’s first match day is only on 17 January, the venue is unlikely to be fully set up in time to host a test match during the conference. Therefore, two test matches are planned in Herning to ensure proper operational readiness. The Officials’ Conference programme is currently in development.

#### Referees and Delegates Seminar:

Due to the late confirmation of nominations following the EHF Congress in September 2025, the Referees and Delegates Seminar will be conducted online. It is foreseen to take place in several sessions from November to December 2025, ensuring flexibility and broad participation despite the compressed timeline.

The following topics related to competitions have to be implemented:

- Substitution Area
  - Number of officials: 5
  - Seating capacity 16
- Coaching Zone
  - Precise marking/line of the coaching zone
- Video Replay (VR) Location
  - Video Replay Screen will be set-up in central position between the support table and the judge's table.
- Pre-Match Procedure
  - Adjustments planned for PR, MR, and FW – detailed procedure to be communicated in due time.
- Ball Kids
  - Concept to be finalized accordingly. The concept will be tested during the technical assessment match in Kristianstad on 26 September 2025.
- Scouting
  - Guidelines for the recruitment of scouters have been developed for the OC to ensure that the nominated scouters fulfil the required qualifications.

#### Nominations:

Nomination of EHF Officials and EHF Representatives will be finalised after the EHF Congress. The EHF Officials Info#1 will be shared immediately after the nominations have been published.

### **8.5. 2026 Women's EHF EURO in POL/ROU/CZE/SVK/TUR**

The playing venues have been defined as follows:

#### Preliminary Round:

- Group A: Oradea, ROU
- Group B: Cluj-Napoca, ROU
- Group C: Antalya, TUR
- Group D: Brno, CZE
- Group E: Katowice, POL
- Group F: Bratislava, SVK

#### Main Round:

- Main Round I: Cluj-Napoca, ROU
- Main Round II: Katowice, POL

#### Final Weekend:

- Katowice, POL

Katowice (POL) has been confirmed as arrival venue for all EHF Officials'. It will serve as main venue throughout the entire tournament. Some open points remain regarding the Officials' hotel in Katowice especially related to site events during the final weekend (e.g. Conference of Presidents). The arena in Brno is still under construction and not yet ready.

#### Site visits:

From 24 to 28 February 2025 the site visit in Bratislava (SVK) and Katowice (POL) was conducted. The visits in Antalya (TUR), Oradea (ROU) and Cluj Napoca (ROU) followed from 03 – 07 March 2025. In March 2025 a meeting with the construction company and architect took place in Brno Arena (CZE). A proper site visit is scheduled for February/March 2026, once the construction has advanced to a stage suitable for inspection.

#### Match Schedule:

The upcoming event will be the first EHF EURO played across three different time zones. All times in the official match schedule are to be understood as local times. The EHF is currently working on updated regulations to clearly define which deadlines must be communicated in local time, and which deadlines will be set in CET/CEST. The final tournament draw will take place on 16 April 2026 in Katowice (Silesian Museum).

#### Seedings:

Group A (Oradea):	Hungary
Group B (Cluj-Napoca):	Romania
Group C (Antalya):	Türkiye
Group D (Brno):	Czechia
Group E (Katowice):	Poland
Group F (Bratislava):	Slovakia

#### Further important dates:

16 April 2026	Final Tournament Draw
17 April 2026	HDC Part 1 – National Federations Workshop
April / May 2026	Partner Workshop
8-10 September 2026	HDC Part 2
29 November 2026	Arrival Day of EHF Officials
30 Nov - 1Dec 2026	Officials' Conference
2 December 2026	Travel Day Officials

### **8.6. 2028 Men's EHF EURO 2028 ESP/POR/SUI**

The overall concept is not yet finalized. The present schedule includes the following:

#### Preliminary Round :

- 2 Preliminary Round Groups in ESP (Madrid and Valencia) with the possibility of an opening match in Santiago Bernabeu.
- 2 Preliminary Round Groups in POR (Lisbon / Altice Arena)
- 2 Preliminary Round Groups in SUI (Zurich / SwissLife Arena)



#### Main Round:

- Main Round Group I in ESP (Madrid or Valencia)
- Main Round Group II in POR (Lisbon / Altice Arena)

#### Quarter Finals:

They shall be played in Madrid and Lisbon.

#### Final Weekend:

- ESP (Madrid)

The newly adapted match schedule might already be implemented at the Men's EHF EURO 2028. Discussions between the OC's and the EHF are ongoing with the abovementioned competition structure already focusing on this.

#### Site visits:

29 September – 3 October 2025	Technical Site Visit Zurich (Swiss Life Arena)
20-24 October 2025	Technical Site Visit Lisbon, Madrid & Valencia

The Qualifiers draw is currently foreseen to take place in Lisbon (POR) in March 2026, on the fringes of the Conference for Secretaries General and the National Federations Workshop (Heads of Delegations Conference – Part 1).

### **8.7. Further topics / Miscellaneous**

Women's EHF EURO 2028	NOR/DEN/SWE
Men's EHF EURO 2030	CZE/POL/DEN
Men's EHF EURO 2032	GER/FRA
Women's EHF EURO 2032	GER/DEN/POL

#### Women's EHF EURO 2030

A new playing schedule for the Women's EHF EURO 2030 has been approved by the EXEC in June 2025. The process of creating the Women's EHF EURO 2030 bidding documents is still ongoing.

## **9. Additional Matters**

### **9.1. International Calendar 2025/2026; 2026/2027; 2027/28**

Glaser reported that no changes have been made to the 2025/26 calendar. The 2026/27 has already been published and the 2027/28 is still pending due to potential competition-related adjustments. A clearer picture regarding both calendars (2026/27 and 2027/28) is expected after the EXEC meeting on 21 October.

### **9.2. EHF Anti-Doping Unit**

No positive case has been reported during any of the 2025 summer indoor competitions. However, one positive case was announced during a Beach Handball event and a provisional suspension was imposed. Anti-Doping testing has been initiated at the start of the club competition season.

### **9.3. Preview on EHF Congress September 2025**

Relevant information and updates have been provided to Commission Members by Lazic. During the 7th Ordinary EHF Congress no EUROs will be awarded, as the congress is solely electoral. Various reports are currently being prepared in relation to the congress.

### **10. Miscellaneous**

The next CC meeting is scheduled for end of February 2026. Glaser reported that the BC and MC are discussing the possibility of holding another meeting in between, but no decision has been made yet.

Djurkovic expressed his thanks to all CC Members before closing the meeting.

Vienna, 11 September 2025  
Minutes by: Competitions and EURO Department