



Minutes to the 12th EHF Conference of Presidents

- Date/Time:** 14 November 2015/09:00 - 12:30hrs
- Venue:** Intercontinental Hotel Bucharest,
Bucharest, Romania
- Participants:** National Federation Representatives
Invited Guests, Executive Committee,
Commission Members and EHF Office
(approx. 125 participants)

1. Welcome

President Brihault opened the 12th Conference of Presidents by mentioning that the meeting was taking place in a time of turmoil, and our only defence in such circumstances was to refuse to be terrorised and to encourage understanding between people, between groups, between creeds. It is a privilege and responsibility in sport that people can 'get together and play ball' regardless of who and what they are; that we can challenge each other on the basis of rules that have been all agreed upon. With the news of the atrocities in France on the evening of 13 November 2015, the handball Federations of Europe held a moment of silence to honour of all the victims.

Mentioning the absence of Alexandru Dedu, President of the Romanian Handball Federation, and wishing him a full recovery, Brihault introduced the RHF Vice President Narcisa Lecusanu, who would give the welcome on behalf of her Federation. In the name of President Dedu, Lecusanu warmly welcomed the EHF, its Member Federations, and its distinguished guests to the weekend of events, which Romania was delighted to host; stating that although he was unable to be present, the thoughts of President Dedu were with the EHF and its members on this day. Personal greetings were extended to President Brihault and also to Dr. Hassan Moustafa, President of the International Handball Federation.

The presence of the EHF and its Member Federations in Romania is a reminder of how important the work is and validation that Romania is a country with a long handball tradition. Lecusanu said that it was a good moment to receive the representatives of the handball world as guests as Romanian handball is in the process of moving forward with several projects and there has been a marked increase in the quality of the teams on a national team and a club level. She expressed that cooperation and a stable development is essential for the sport of handball and that the planned conferences and the results thereof shall be a good basis for the coming activities of European handball, and that Romanian handball and its leadership is ready to contribute to this positive development and prepared to be challenged, involved, and inspired.

Lecusanu then gave the personal message, which President Dedu had specifically prepared for the 12th EHF Conference of Presidents and the 12th Extraordinary EHF Congress warmly welcoming all the participants to Bucharest. As much as he wished to be in Bucharest, he would be, on this occasion, a 'virtual host', but they would have the opportunity to meet his team representing him and Romanian Handball Federation. He wrote of the efforts undertaken by the Romanian Handball Federation over the past two years to change the way handball is played and perceived in the country, and following a path to the deep modernisation both on the level of sport and management, as well as marketing, which has become an integral part of the sport. He sincerely hoped that all the attention involving the detail of this meeting should be perceived by all of the participants. He extended his thanks to



the EHF Office staff for the efforts toward the objective of attaining successful results in the meeting, and the external Romanian agency for their participation in the organisation. He wished the participants a pleasant stay in Bucharest, and encouraged them to support their ideas with passion and enjoy the debate. In closing, she introduced Mr. Alin Petrache, the President of the Romanian Olympic Committee for his words of welcome.

Taking the floor, Mr. Petrache welcomed the participants to the Bucharest, and stated that it was an honour and privilege to be at the Conference and an honour for the Federation to host such a meeting. With reference to the sport, he underlined Romania's handball tradition and made a reference to the medals won in the past as a source of pride for the country and one of the reasons why the Romanian National Olympic Committee is an important partner of the Romanian Handball Federation. He stressed that the Romanian Olympic and Sport Committee supports the bid of the national team on the road to Rio 2016.

Continuing Petrache also mentioned that handball was among the top five sports in Romania and said that he was pleased to be working with Mr. Dedu and his team; although there is a lot of work ahead for the Romanian Handball Federation, they have a powerful ally in the Romanian NOC. He also expressed his hope that the Romanian handball would be at its highest level in Rio. In closing he wished the guests all the best for the Conference and the Congress and hoped to see them once again in Romania.

In welcoming Dr. Hassan Moustafa to the stage, President Brihault expressed his thanks to the President of the International Handball Federation for being present in Bucharest to attend the Conference of Presidents.

IHF President Dr. Hassan Moustafa reiterated the welcome to the participants and thanked the EHF for the invitation extended. He continued underlining the importance of the European Federation and said that if European handball is healthy, then world handball will be healthy. Turning his attention to recent difficulties faced by other international federations, he emphasised the point that handball is a very 'clean' sport and continues to work together for to achieve this despite the actual negative reputation of international sport federations. Giving examples, Dr. Moustafa made it clear that the International Handball Federations works to high standards; he intoned that the main objective was to keep working together for the promotion and development of handball, not only in Europe, but also on a global level. Such a case of togetherness was seen in undertaking of the Emerging Nations Championship, hosted by the Handball Federation of Kosovo, to which he extended the thanks of the IHF; as a follow-up to that event, an evaluation is currently being undertaken.

Concluding his speech, IHF President Moustafa made reference to the relationship between the IHF and the EHF in the early years, and praised the close relationship that currently exists that is based on regular meetings and the willingness to sit together to solve common issues. Highlighting that stability within the EHF was essential for the IHF, he also complemented handball in Europe. He urged the attendees to support stability and wished them all the best for the Conference.

2. EHF Report

Opening the EHF Report, President Brihault said that the Conference of Presidents is a special moment in the democratic life of the EHF. The advantage of holding this meeting every second year meant that immediate decisions did not need to be taken and that discussions were not followed by a vote; thus opinions and arguments on important issues concerning European handball could be shared openly. This means that there is time before the next Congress which allows for concepts to be refined and technical work can be conducted before any decision is made.



In the past, the Conference of Presidents several times has been combined with an Extraordinary Congress, as is the case on this occasion. The Conference of Presidents was used to accelerate the foundation of the Women's Handball Board and due to the understanding goodwill of the Member Federations a delay of four years was avoided and the WHB was subsequently introduced into the Statutes at the EHF Congress in Monaco in 2012. Brihault stated that the Conference of Presidents was an opportunity for direct democracy through the inputs of the participants. He reminded the National Federation representatives of concepts that were now approaching their conclusions that began with such inputs such as the expansion of the EHF EUROs to 24 teams, which will be continued when the topic of the qualifications returns later in the agenda; the request for broader and less expensive YAC events, the final model will also be presented to the Member Federations; and other initiatives such as the branding strategy.

Referring to the intervals between the initial steps to the final proposal when a decision is made when dealing with such mandates, work takes place internally and also with the stakeholders; Brihault underlined the quality of the dialogue with the stakeholders. Mentioning the introduction and the subsequent cooperation with the Professional handball Board, he noted that it was an extremely productive body and conveyed his thanks to all those involved.

Brihault continued by describing the work of the European Handball Federation with those organisations outside the sport such as the European Teams Sports, the European Olympic Committees specifically mentioning the EYOF convention. He referred to the relationship concerning the European Games and the negative response from indoor handball in view of participation was received in a positive way due to the quality of the communication between both organisations. In closing, Brihault mentioned his appointment (together with Patrick Hickey and Snežana Samardžić-Marković) to the European Union High Level Group on Sport Diplomacy to represent European sport and the upcoming Congress to follow in the afternoon session where a separate introduction is foreseen. With no comment or questions to the report, the Conference moved to the next agenda point.

3. Competition Matters

3.1. Younger Age Category Events – Report

The Chairman of the Competitions Commission, Leopold Kalin gave the status report on the topic of Younger Age Category events for the period 2016 to 2019 –this was based on the decision of the 2014 EHF Congress to introduce a new system for this category of competition. Kalin gave a short summary of the former system and the reasons and the processes that led to the change. Concerning the 2016 Men's 18 and Men's 20 EHF EURO and European Championships, the dates and the locations of the events, as well as information on further qualification were reiterated. Furthermore, the application procedures and schedule for the 2017 Women's 17 and Women's 19 EHF EURO and European Championships, were also given. Due to technical difficulties, it was not possible to present the overview during the report; however, it had to be sent to the Federations before and it was presented to the participants prior to the qualification draw.

3.2. Men's EHF EURO 2020 Qualification – Presentation and information exchange

President Brihault recalled the 2014 Congress, where the Congress voted in favour of introducing a 24-team EURO in 2022, but due to the goodwill of the Norwegian, Austrian, and Swedish handball Federations who bid to co-host the event, it was possible to envisage a 24-team event in 2020. Brihault thanked the three organisers for all their efforts so far, and the joint approach. Continuing, he stated that the challenge that now faces the EHF is to organise a qualification process as a sufficient number of registrations, currently 38, but more are needed. He underlined that this event provides new opportunities for all nations in Europe.



CSO Markus Glaser presented the topic by mentioning that in 1994 the European Championship was hosted with twelve teams initially, before being increased to 16 teams in 2002. Over the course of the competition, registrations have remained stable; 2012 saw the introduction of Qualification Phase 1, 2014 saw a system for the best ranked team implemented and the removal of automatic qualification for the defending champion, which will continue in 2016 as well. The aim of a new qualification system is to increase the number of teams and to secure a steady improvement in the qualification to the EHF EURO competition. Glaser then presented the three qualification models (see enclosure) – Model 1: a new system involving as many registrants as possible; Model 2 – the current system; and Model 3: implementing the Emerging Nations Tournament as part of the qualification process.

Following the presentation, Brihault noted that using the Emerging Nations Tournament would contribute to making it a step in the global process of qualification leading up to the World Championship and the Olympic Games. Speaking of the technical possibilities, this would mean a fully integrated system. For nations with low budgets, such financial support is essential. He noted the willingness of the IHF to become involved in the technical discussion. Upon request of the Attila Ballai (Marketing Director – HUN) for clarification, Glaser underlined that the organiser(s) are not involved in the qualification process and that in the case of joint organisers; the qualification would be adapted accordingly and the flexibility of the system would support this. For 2020, the directly qualified participants consist of the defending champion and the three organisers.

Joel Delplanque (President – FRA) complimented the organisation model and raised the question of standards in view of a homogenous presentation. EHF Secretary General responded that the basic idea was to increase the standard, while being aware that the conditions of venues are not the same in all countries. For marketing purposes of the sport, good conditions are needed for the away teams (TV broadcasts). This specific matter would be tabled at the Conference for Secretaries General (April 2016) to have an exchange of information with those dealing with the topic of venues in the daily business. The next step will be to seek solutions for the direct qualification round to ensure that there is a sellable product. Brihault underlined that the competition for 2020 could start as early as 2017 depending on the model chosen and a final decision must be taken in spring 2016 due to calendar reasons.

3.3. Compensation for referees and delegates

Martin Hausleitner (Secretary General – AUT) made reference to the motion of the Faroe Islands tabled (and subsequently withdrawn) at the 2014 EHF Congress concerning the fees for referees and delegates. Hausleitner spoke of the fact that the fees for delegates had not been changed in over ten years, and also of the challenges faced by referees and delegates such as acquiring the time to undertake nominations, and pointed out that the tasks and responsibilities of officiators had increased. In a gesture, in order to keep referees and delegates motivated for this job, he requested that a task force be installed to deal with the matter and to create a motion to be presented at the next congress. This request was answered in the affirmative, and the originator of the motion (FAR) would be involved in this task force.

3.4. Draw M20 EHF EURO 2016 – Qualifications

3.5. Draw WU20 World Championship – Qualification Europe

The Senior Manager for National Team Competitions, Peter Sichelschmidt, conducted the two draws for the qualification events before and after the coffee break with the assistance of the CC Chairman, Leopold Kalin, Morten Stig Christensen (DEN) and Andrey Lavrov (RUS); the draw results were published via eurohandball.com.



4. Handball and its market position

4.1. Presentation

Opening the agenda point, Wiederer described how the role of the Secretary General had changed throughout the years, mentioning humble beginnings to the coordination of experts. The role now encompasses the coordination of competences on an office level and the inclusion of external experts into the world of handball. Due to the topic being linked, not only on a marketing level, but also on the level of the various stakeholders, Secretary General Wiederer gave the first part of the presentation, which contained four specific points that would inform the attendees on the current state of affairs, as well as where the EHF wanted to be with the matter in the future in terms of media, advertising, equipment, and new business fields (reference can be taken to the enclosed slides of the Conference of Presidents screen presentation).

The participants were informed on the EHF partners and the historical development and duration of commercial partnerships and contracts. Wiederer also gave the corresponding information in relation to EHF Marketing GmbH (partnerships, etc.). Describing the current situation, Wiederer referred to the European handball Study that took place in 2011, the initiatives regarding branding and event standards, as well as the origination of competences to which relevant facts were given. Speaking of the objectives of a proactive strategy, Wiederer also told of the soon to be organised media conference, and the communication strategy that comprise of three reports (communication, Information Technology, and Digital Media). The situation with contracts running until 2020 and therefore the necessity of developing a master plan as of 2016 for the upcoming negotiations as of 2017 was described. Also, Henry Blunck (EHF Office) presented detailed information on digital media to the Conference participants. This presentation (see enclosure) covered four key aspects and objectives of the current activities on this level – the approach, the websites, social media, and ehfTV.com.

Closing the agenda point, Wiederer asked the National Federations of Europe to submit their input to the EHF in order to develop the overall position of EHF and EHFEM on the field of marketing.

5. EHF EURO 2016 in Poland

With less than 60 days until the start of the Men's EHF EURO 2016 in Poland, Marcin Herra, Vice President of the Polish Handball Federation, gave a presentation to the attendees of the 12th EHF Conference of Presidents. Information contained therein covered the ongoing organisation of the event and the cooperation with the European Handball Federation. Looking forward to the event in January, Herra underlined that the highest service for the participating teams, fair play and the spirit of the sport, as well as long-term development were among the top objectives of the Polish Handball Federation, which has already implemented a youth programme that has included over 300 schools and over 10,000 children. The POL OC has established many agreements of cooperation with the stakeholders (host cities), partners (PNiG), and sponsors (Suzuki); the planned test events were also successfully concluded.

To the work within the Polish Handball Federation, Herra informed on the various areas of organisation, as well as the different tasks being carried out by the team. He also spoke of the venue and ticketing situation underlining that two venues (Wroclaw and Krakow) are sold out. In the remaining phase prior to the event, a TV campaign will be launched in Poland as well as fan zones in the four venue cities; this follows on from the tour of the Championship Plate in Krakow. In closing, he assured that the attendees that everything was on schedule for the event in January.

President Brihault reminded that Presidents of the National Federations, that they would receive an invitation from the EHF for the final weekend of the Men's EHF EURO 2016 in Poland.



6. Further Items

❖ *Honouring Organisers of EHF Events*

The Handball Federation of FYR Macedonia was honoured at the 12th EHF Conference of Presidents for its efforts after having hosted three top handball events. Secretary General, Filip Miloshevski (MKD) accepted the award on behalf of his Federation.

❖ *Signing of the Rinck Convention*

With the assistance of the Methods Commission, Belgium became the 38th signatory nation to join the RINCK Convention. The official document was signed by Secretary General, Patrick Garcia (BEL) and EHF MC Chairman, Jerzy Eliaz.

❖ *Signing of the SMART Programme*

The emerging National Federations of Belgium, Estonia, and Lithuania became the most recent recipients of an EHF SMART Programme. EHF President Jean Brihault signed on behalf of the organisation and the Secretaries General, Patrick Garcia (BEL), Pirje Orasson (EST), and Miglius Astraukas (LTU) signed on behalf of their Federations.

❖ *Signing of the Foster Programme*

France and Belgium became the latest Federations to sign a Foster cooperation partnership between a developed and a developing nation. Such partnerships are supported by the EHF. Joel Delplanque (President – FRA) and Patrick Garcia (Secretary General – BEL) signed on behalf of the respective Federations; MC Chairman Eliaz signed on behalf of the European Handball Federation.

7. Summary and Closing

Closing the 12th EHF Conference of Presidents, Jean Brihault gave these final words:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been a long morning session and I really want to thank you for your concentration, your sense of discipline and the interest that you have shown in the various presentations. As I stated in my introduction, a presidents’ conference is a moment where we can supply each other with information. Today, it was mostly information coming from the EHF corresponding to missions that we had been awarded either by the previous presidents’ conferences or the previous Congresses. The presentation of our media and marketing approach was extremely detailed because we think that it is essential that you should know exactly what we are doing, so that your inputs can correspond to a strategy that has been depicted to you so that you know exactly where we are, because we are working in your names and on your behalf.”

At this time, the President of the French Handball Federation was given floor to inform the attendees that due to the emergency state in France at this time, all sports events in the Paris and Ile de France regions had been cancelled and that in other regions of the country, events would be held but under extreme safety conditions. Moreover, all European events (men’s and women’s) outside Paris are planned to be held. He expressed his thanks to the people present for their messages of support and for their concern.

Brihault officially closed the 12th Conference of Presidents following this statement.