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## MINUTES TO THE 161<sup>ST</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

**Date:** 28 January 2022

**Time:** 09:00 – 13:00

**Venue:** Hotel Marriott Budapest | Boardroom View

**Executive:**

Michael Wiederer	President
Predrag Bošković	First Vice President
Henrik La Cour	Vice President Finances
Božidar Djurković	Chairman Competitions Commission
Pedro Sequeira	Chairman Methods Commission
Gabriella Horvath	Chairwoman Beach Handball Commission
Stefan Lövgren	Member
Francisco V. Blázquez Garcia	Member
Franjo Bobinac	Member
Bente Aksnes	Member
Xavier O’Callaghan	Chairman Professional Handball Board
Marta Bon	Chairwoman Women’s Handball Board

**Excused:** Mark Schober Chairman Nations Board

**Office:**

Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General
Bernhard Binder	Chief Finance Officer
Andrea Moser	Finance Projects
Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
Vesna Lazić	PA to the President
Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison

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### 1. Welcome, Programme and Agenda

President Wiederer welcomed the Members of the Executive Committee (EXEC) to the first meeting of the year on the fringes of the Men’s EHF EURO 2022 Final Weekend and noted the excused absence of Member Schober. No changes or amendments to the agenda or weekend programme were recorded.

### 2. Minutes and follow-up

#### 2.1. Executive Committee 11/2021

The EXEC adopted the minutes without additional comment.

#### 2.2. Circular decisions

It was reported that leading up to the Men’s EHF EURO 2022 in Hungary/Slovakia, the situation concerning the ongoing pandemic had changed in a significant way at the beginning of January; this led to a circular decision being taken on the adaptation of the Hygiene Concept concerning the release of players after five days with the advice of medical consultants, and a further decision to open the Official Squad List to grant the national teams the necessary flexibility.

### 2.3. 14<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary EHF Congress

The Executive Committee took note of the minutes which were sent to the National Federations and will be tabled at the next Congress. Reflecting on the exciting weekend, President Wiederer extended his gratitude to those persons who contributed to the event. He emphasised the social atmosphere, which played an important role, despite having to relocate the Gala evening at short notice. It was mentioned that the Extraordinary Congress was a short and uncomplicated event that was nonetheless carried out formally.

## **3. Finance Delegation 12/2021 and 01/2022**

### 3.1. Minutes and overall report

Introducing the agenda point, Wiederer mentioned the meeting that took place in December on the fringes of the Women's IHF World Handball Championship in Spain – he congratulated Member Blázquez and the Spanish Handball Federation for their efforts in successfully hosting a major event. No additional comments were raised to the meeting that took place in Barcelona.

The most recent meeting of the Finance Delegation (FD) took place mid-January in Bratislava, Slovakia during the Main Round of the current EURO and mainly dealt with the actual event-related financial questions. Wiederer underlined that due to the nature of the meetings, topics raised are also reflected in the agenda of the current EXEC meeting; the members of the Executive Committee took note both the protocols from the meetings in December 2021 and January 2022.

Presenting the overall report, Vice President Finances, Henrik La Cour summarised the content of the recent meetings which included, but was not limited to, the actual status of National Federation accounts, the 2022 YAC events, Transfer income, and compensations. Additionally, at the meetings, the status of the 2021 final accounting and a preview of the 2022 budget were also given. The new European House of Handball is a standing topic on the agenda, and the discussions with the relevant partners are well on track; the FD also dealt with the ongoing matters of the European Handball Foundation and the I&D contract situation, which are also listed on the current agenda.

### 3.2. Final Accounting – Status

With the 2021 forecast at hand that shows the deviations to the budget presented at the Congress, La Cour reported a slightly improved picture of the revenues based on increased entry fees from both club and national team competitions, increased transfer fees, and the additional shares for the EURO 2020. Thus compared, the budget was improved by EUR 1.98M, also showing an improvement to the previous forecast.

Taking reference to the expenses La Cour mentioned that the categories of 'Compensation', 'Congress & Meetings' were adapted to reflect the actual expenditure that was below the November 2021 estimation. Personnel costs, after dotation of legal reserves, are below forecast and in line with the budget. The line item 'Office & Infrastructure' has been adapted to clearly define the separation between running costs (including digital infrastructure), IT expenses, and the building of the European House of Handball including provisions. Continuing, La Cour spoke of the EUR 1.2 Mio. dotation for the new office building; these funds are to cover consultation (legal, tax) and planning (project development) costs as well as a reserve. Thus, compared to the November forecast, expenses have been reduced by EUR 390K.

Commission activities will be left unchanged in the future despite currently being below budget. Development expenses exceeded the last forecast but remain below expectations as this includes the provision for the Masterplan activities as presented at the Extraordinary Congress, as well as the I/D digital investments in accordance with the agreement. It was also mentioned that competition expenses are currently below the forecast, this is due to media expenses being separated from the line item 'Club Teams', as well as decreased outgoings for injury compensation.

Closing out the report, it was stated for the 2021 business year, a total loss of EUR 837K is to be expected; this will be ultimately compensated by the forecasted surplus of EUR 2.3 Mio. in 2022.

#### **4. Business Report**

##### **4.1. Business activities**

The 2021 Business Report was published online on 23 December; the print publication was distributed in January 2022. All EXEC members received a hard copy of the report; Wiederer mentioned that the report covered all the sporting activities including the outcome of the Women's IHF World Championship and noted that the publication also served as a symbolic close of the 2021 business year.

To supplement the report at hand, Secretary General, Martin Hausleitner continued with a briefing to the ongoing activities and events including the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General to be held in March in Berlin, which will encompass the draw event for the 2024 EHF EURO Qualifiers. Member Lövgren reported on the 'Respect Your Talent' Camps organised for 27 female (December) and 15 male (January) young players; the camps were well received by the participants. The topics included European sports law, media, and anti-doping; Lövgren emphasised that only 3 from 15 male participants had partaken in anti-doping education within their Federation. An assessment of the RYT Camps will take place. Hausleitner added that the RYT App will be released mid-February and with free content for interested parties upon registration. The app will also encompass several levels of information and also access to former players.

Concerning the 'Player of the Year' initiative constructed via the Beach Handball Commission was viewed from the global perspective and assessed on various internal levels. Following the evaluation of the 'Player of the Year' project (and considering the current event) contact to the layers is crucial. It was determined that the project must incorporate both indoor and beach handball and involve all relevant stakeholder groups, to determine how the project can be executed by finding balance between the stakeholders. Following the EXEC meeting, the various groups will be approached to seek for the answers concerning, among other things, categories as well as suitable dates. The Executive Committee will be kept informed on further developments.

Continuing with the report, Hausleitner also mentioned the next steps to be taken in view of the EHF Masterplan (NF survey), the new agreement signed with TikTok and its use during the EHF EURO, as well as cooperation with the partners and the schedule meetings (Gerflor, Hummel, Select) during 'Partner Weekend' activities. The Hummel merchandising project (incl. volunteer clothing) was initiated and is progressing well.

Work continues on the upcoming EURO events in 2022 and 2024 with the Organising Committees with partners in relation to brand, set-up, ticketing and merchandising is ongoing; the OC SMM EURO 2022 held a promotional event on 11 January where the event ambassadors were unveiled, and the political and economic network had an opportunity to meet based upon the invitation. The OC GER EURO 2024 released the event brand and slogan at different event at the beginning of January.

The CRM project continues to benefit the system, and the added support at the EHF EURO 2022 has resulted in more contacts (approx.: 350k) and has enabled streamlined targeting of stakeholder groups (i.e.: information to Final weekend participants), which in turn supports ticketing sales. At this time, there are four different (and targeted) newsletters, and the technical tool supporting the system is developing as more data is gained.

The cooperation with ticketing partner 'eventim' has proven beneficial and have shown to be an excellent service provider; the processes are running smoothly, and the service level has increased i.e.: having VIP invitations / tickets sent directly to the guests. Member Horvath supported the statement giving an example of the cooperation having overcome the challenges at the start of the event and two new arenas to deal with; she concluded that it would be a good system going forward.

Mentioning the I/D cooperation in relation to the EHF EURO, Infront achieved sales above estimation and the activation of the partners has also proven beneficial i.e., 114 countries and markets, as well as TikTok and Facebook in markets where 'traditional' sales could not take place. Closing the report, Hausleitner also provided the EXEC members with a snapshot of social media figures i.e., 80k new subscribers to the EHF TikTok channel, 50k downloads of the app, 40k clips provided to the National Federations, etc.

As the activities mentioned cross various areas and are also reflected in different parts of the agenda, the EXEC took note of the report.

#### 4.2. Legal Management

Adding to the overview of the report that was submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting, Wiederer noted that the document could be amended with the 18 cases that have arisen during the EHF EURO. There are now many open cases, which is not uncommon during a championship, but it also implies that other cases are on hold for the duration of the event.

Wiederer also mentioned a difficult case currently being dealt with by ECA and subsequently the ECA Council (ECC) concerning a lifetime ban. Upon a full briefing, this case identified an untenable situation with the ECC, and the Executive Committee directly mandated the EHF President and Secretary General to manage the sensitive situation to release the Chairman of the ECA Council from his function due to the fact that he is not able to understand and communicate in English, and therefore not competent to fulfil his duties on the basis of documents. Further steps in regard to the nomination process have to be followed in order to secure the necessary procedures and the involvement of the elected persons.

The EXEC members were also informed on a situation concerning MKD club teams not fulfilling their financial obligations i.e.: non-payment of outstanding claims. In the first case of HC Metalurg, it was proposed that the Club, which did not follow the legal decision of ECA

for almost one year, be formally suspended until a time that all non-payment claims are settled; the MKD Federation would be informed accordingly and for implementation of the suspension. In the second case of HC Vardar, information was presented and, due to the ongoing processes, no additional action would be taken at this time, but the EXEC members were warned that the situation had the potential to become a major case. Nonetheless, in the light of the upcoming EHF EURO, it was stated that the situations within MKD have to be clarified by the latest in June in order to avoid any impact on the event in December.

Wiederer provided insight to a politically charged situation concerning a non-recognised handball federation in Northern Cyprus. On the side of the EHF, the information process has been carried out in a correct manner with all parties involved. At this time, no further action will be taken.

In closing, the report from the Initiator of Proceedings was mentioned; it cements that the 'Whistle-Blower' platform is functioning as it should and highlights the form of cases reported. The EXEC took note of the report in the knowledge that the system is performing as expected.

#### 4.3. European Anti-doping Unit (EAU)

The EAU recommenced activities in August 2021 based on the agreements signed with the IHF. In a new WADA development, National Federations can now upload ('Whereabouts') information directly to the ADAMS system which now offers one central solution to which all relevant parties gain access. Finally, Anti-Doping Education will restart (having been put on hold due to a lack of agreement) in light of the upcoming 2022 YAC events.

#### 4.4. Office and Personnel

Senior Director Helmut Hörtsch will retire from his post after 29 years; a career to be proud, he contributed greatly to the system and will be recognised for his lifelong contribution at the upcoming meetings of the Technical Commissions. His departure will result in a distribution of his tasks – both longstanding and new in relation to the Masterplan, this is now being discussed.

#### 4.5. European Handball House

Opening the report, Hausleitner reported on the regular meetings concerning the planning of the house and the latest plans. The contracts – one to build the house and one to own the land – are in the finalisation phase. The EHF is in constant exchange with the architects, as well as the externally engaged consultant for other technical details. In accordance with the statutes, the EHF leadership will be able sign them when ready.

Prior to the meeting, CFO Bernhard Binder provided a term sheet containing the key financial data; for the benefit of the members, he gave a verbal reiteration of the points listed that included but was not limited to the total maximum investment (approved by the EXEC 07/2021) that stood at EUR 30.45 Mil including VAT, which already includes a building reserve (approx.: EUR 900K). In addition to that, a reserve of EUR 1 Mil. for furniture, wiring, etc. was built up within the final accounts for the year 2021.

The signing of two contracts will allow for the organisation to take advantage of the tax situation i.e.: the purchase of the PLC through a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA). Also, the PLC concludes the building contract with the project developer. This already allows a

reduction of VAT due to office rent by EHF which amounts to EUR 1.57M. Further property taxes (up to EUR 1.3M) will not accrue. The financing of the transactions is to be concluded by using existing funds of EHF and EHF. For the entire project, the debt financing will not exceed EUR 15M and will safeguard the project, and with three offers currently under consideration, any transaction will include an early repayment clause.

The yearly cost for EHF is approximated at EUR 542K in the first full year of utilisation and will reduce to EUR 378K in the year 2043 (after the payback of the EUR 15M loan).

Vice President Finances, La Cour confirmed that the process is moving forward in a good way in accordance with the timeline and the reporting is clear; the project is getting closer to finalisation.

Upon request, the EXEC gave the formal mandate for the two contracts to be signed (PLC purchasing agreement and construction agreement) based on the information provided in the term sheet and the negotiations undertaken. With this mandate, the EXEC can only confirm what is presented at the meeting. The integrity and transparency of the process was underlined by the leadership.

First Vice President Predrag Boskovic assumed the Chairmanship of the meeting for the following points.

## **5. Technical Commissions – Update Reports**

### **5.1. Competitions Commission**

Member Djurkovic, Chairman of the Competitions Commission (CC), delivered the report in brief covering club competitions where many events and matches have taken place since the last EXEC meeting. All men's matches took place as scheduled with the exception of one game which was rescheduled accordingly and will be played on 8 February. The situation with women's matches proved more demanding as several matches across two competitions had to be rescheduled; it was noted that it would be a challenge to complete all matches by the intended date. Therefore, this matter will be covered in a motion under AP6 regarding Club Competitions 2021/22.

Turning to the national team events, Phase 1 Men's WCh 2023 as well as Relegation Round Euro 2024 were played, and concluded, in January 2022. The subsequent Qualification Europe Play-Off Draws for the 2023 WCh was scheduled for 29 January. To the summer 2022 YAC events, both M20 Championships will be hosted in Varna, Bulgaria in July. Following the initial workshop with all the organisers of all the events, the draw event for the M20 EURO was announced for 18 February in Portugal, and the draw for the M18 EURO and all Championships is to take place in Vienna on 24 February.

In the area of officiation, the various activities that took place within the framework of the EHF EURO will be analysed and evaluated by the TRC and CC in February. The first impression of referee performance in Hungary and Slovakia is positive as not many interventions or discussions have resulted. Furthermore, the return to the traditional system of all referees arriving together at the beginning of the event (independent of the necessary additional nominations) seems to work better than the system used two years ago with a nomination only for a certain part of the EURO; this will also be analysed at the next CC meeting in Vienna on 24 February.

## 5.2. Methods Commission

Member Sequeira, Chairman of the Methods Commission (MC), opened his report by reiterating the success of the Scientific Conference and added that among the 125 participants from 27 different countries there were representatives of other sports; this reflects the continuing external interest in the conference. In addition to the 35 presentations, there were 9 additional articles, and despite the conference being a wholly online event, it was clear that the presenters were used to the online systems. Following the conference, all documentation (including presentations and articles) was distributed and made available online.

In the area of ‘Methods and Coaching’, the MC adapted and finalised the process of the qualitative analysis of EHF EURO events; the new way of conducting the analysis will be applied beginning with the Men’s EHF EURO 2022. Upon completion, the findings will be distributed to the relevant stakeholders. It was mentioned that from the last YAC cycle many qualitative analyses were not submitted by the responsible national federation; this omission is part of the reason for the new approach.

The Kinexon cooperation is functioning as expected; the system is now in place and the initial difficulties have been resolved and information is received accordingly via the CRM system. The MC looks forward to how the data will be used by the national federations bearing in mind the new approach concerning, and the importance of, the data for developing the sport.

Turning to ‘Education and Training’, the National Federations of Georgia and Ukraine joined the RINCK Convention in 2021. As is standard practice, the signatory nations are required to submit a yearly report; for 2021 the reports are due by 31 January. The new cycle of Master Coach course (open to all national federations) began in January and during the EURO in Hungary with participation from 24 coaches; initial reports have shown that the first module has exceeded expectations. The second module will be hosted in Portugal and the third module will be held in Slovenia; thus, the class of 2022 will be completed within the year. Furthermore, the class of 2022 shows for the first time, the system being used to promote the dual career, as there is a participant who is also an active player. The player is supported by a tutoring system, and this is an important way to show that it is possible to start this education whilst continuing to play.

Concerning ‘Youth, School, and Non-Competitive Sport’, Sequeira highlighted the current situation concerning the first official European and World Wheelchair Handball Championship especially regarding accommodations (i.e.: EU law statutes on disabled access in hotels); thus, it is important that such aspect be considered further. Furthermore, following the meeting with the Special Olympics movement (11/2021) it was stressed that the process is important for handball and the EHF should be involved at some level; here, further discussion is necessary. Therefore, it is wished by the MC to host a presentation to handball players with disabilities during the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General in Berlin in March.

Closing the report, before moving on to the motions of the MC, Sequeira mentioned that in light of the EHF Master Plan, the existing development programmes are to be revised in order to contribute to the EHF Master Plan; the MC has planned a development questionnaire as the basis for defining the details of the revised, and new, projects. Continuing, he also mentioned the EHF Experts’ Group (EHF Lecturers) system that also required revision and

the MC delivered a new manual to this end. The agreement with Global Sports Innovation Centre (GSIC) was signed and the platform will be made available to the EHF Member Federations at the end of March. The 7<sup>th</sup> MESGO edition will start in August 2022, the EHF Member Federations have been informed on the details as well as the application process. Additionally, the EHF granted its MESGO scholarship to the Handball Federation of Luxembourg for their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

#### **MC MOTIONS:**

Motion 1: 2022 World & European Wheelchair Handball Championships – Implementation of daily rate for participating teams.

Motion 2: Confirmation of including activities for ID (Intellectual Disabilities) Handball to the EHF agenda.

- Motion 1 and Motion 2 are postponed from the agenda as additional time for consideration of both matters is requested by the Executive Committee.

Motion 3: SMART ALB

- Following a revision and finalisation of the programme, and being in line with the EHF guidelines, the EXEC confirmed MC motion 3.

Motion 4 EHF Experts' Group

- Motion 4 is confirmed in part only. The EXEC approved the content as to what concerns the profile of the experts – thus, a list can be built. However, all financial and monetary elements are not confirmed and thus postponed from the decision-making process. The matter must return to the MC/EHF for further consideration and coordination with other fields of compensations.

The comprehensive presentation on handball's relation to eSports, delivered by Member Sequeira, was summarised for the minutes.

*Despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, the handball sport continues to grow across Europe. Athletes, Coaches, Referees, Delegates, Officials and Managers need to have the best performance to maintain Handball, in all its variants (Indoor, Youth, Grassroots, Beach Handball, Wheelchair Handball...). Handball also needs a continuous increase in the number of fans and new players. Grassroots plays an important role to guarantee a sustainable growth of Handball. Young people have today a huge offer of activities and sport (and therein, handball) is only one of numerous offers.*

*Technology, specially gaming and esports, has had a tremendous impact on society within the last 20 years and it is believed that gaming has no turning point and will continuously increase throughout the years. And the youngsters that handball wants to attract to the sport and those the sport wants to retain will be attracted by gaming and eSports.*

*For the European Handball Federation (EHF) it is important to enter the realm of gaming/eSports for many reasons. The European Union (EU) has integrated the digital strategy as a target for 2030, and the values of handball are the best way to influence gamers for the importance of sport and education. The EHF is aware of the impact of the gaming/eSports in our society, especially among the younger demographic and it is important that the handball ecosystem is prepared to adapt to this change.*



*Gaming and eSports should be approached in three steps:*

- 1. The handball community (Federations, Clubs, Coaches, Team Managers, Parents) should have access to information about what is gaming/esports, the societal impact, challenges, and opportunities. It will also be important to include the gaming/eSports topics in formal Education Programs and Courses in the next years.*
- 2. Technological developments, together with gaming and eSports, are an education resource that should be used in the future. Handball has a very good link with technology. E-learning, online resource platforms, VAR, Kinexon, e-books and other tools are already present in EHF way of developing handball. Moreover, the gaming/eSports aspect as well as the VR possibilities will also for example, help the Coach and the Players to improve their skills.*
- 3. The use of technology, gaming and esports connected with handball throughout the handball community. This will lead to physical handball specific, mixed-reality sports, and a VR esports that is more dynamic.*

*The EHF Master Plan is very ambitious concerning the increase of the number of persons involved in handball, with priority for players and supporters. The existence of handball games for PC and for the different consoles will provide many young people with access to handball and its different stakeholders; thus, gamers will have the opportunity to know the game better, and this includes playing handball in different ways (the game itself, Handball Manager, VR Handball, etc.). An expected outcome will be many gamers transitioning to 'real' handball in a hall.*

*Digitalization was defined by EU as a priority for the next 10 years. This obviously includes Sport and all its Stakeholders. It is very important that the European handball community seizes the opportunity presented and refines its respective strategies to facilitate optimum decisions in this area.*

Following the presentation, and after a brief discussion within the Executive Committee, it was mentioned that the development of handball within eSports should also be viewed as a business development (think on corporations that already sponsor eSports) and related to the organisation as a whole, as partners may find interest in engaging fans in a growing market. It was made clear that a major challenge would be to determine at which point in time to merge with companies in this respect.

The EXEC took note of the MC report and the presentation and looked forward to the development of handball in the area of eSports.

### 5.3. Beach Handball Commission

Member Horvath, Chairwoman of the Beach Handball Commission (BC) supplemented the report at hand by highlight areas of focus. The EHF Beach Handball Education Courses in 2022 will be held on the fringes of two ebt tournaments and the preparation of the courses, targeted at referees and delegates, is ongoing. Online workshops were held, and site visits are scheduled to take place.

The EHF ebt Finals 2022 will take place in Isola delle Femmine, Palermo (ITA) from 9 to 12 June 2022. The online workshop was executed successfully and, due to having previous experience of the venue, no site visit is necessary. The YAC16 Beach Handball Euro 2022 & the European Championship (qualification tournament for BH EURO 2023) will take place in Moscow from 7 to 10 July 2022. The preparations are proceeding according to the planned timeline and a site visit will take place in mid-February.

The Champions Cup 2022 is still without a host country. Contacts to potential organisers exist and as the event will be tabled for evaluation at the next BC meeting in February, a solution is required. Subsequently, the intent is to submit a proposal for decision to the Executive Committee in April. Concerning the EHF Beach Handball EURO 2023 and the participation right for UKR, and due to the political climate in the region, UKR requested a direct qualification of both the men's and women's team to the BH EURO in 2023, effectively bypassing the qualification tournament. The request will be tabled and treated at the next BC meeting in February, and a proposal will be subsequently submitted to the Executive Committee for a final decision.

The EXEC took note of the report delivered by Member Horvath.

## **6. Competitions**

### **6.1. Organization of Events**

EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK: Hausleitner reiterated the challenges faced during the preparatory end stages leading into the start of the final tournament. The cooperation with the organisers, despite the partly surprising and challenging development in the area of the pandemic, was excellent in the face of a demanding environment, which included the understandable nervousness of the teams until the first games. Despite having many topics to resolve during the event, it is now down to the Final weekend; nonetheless, the image transmitted. The media figures continue to develop in a positive way (see AP4.1), and despite the difficulties of the pandemic, the event reached a new high of a remarkable attendance in the Budapest venue with more than 12K spectators; this is the best result of a Main Round phase without the host nation in that stage of the competition. The EHF praised all persons involved in the successful organisation and for all the efforts undertaken prior to and during the event, as well as the ability to adapt to new challenges sometimes on a daily basis. In addition to that, the cooperation with the federations of the participating teams proved to be valuable.

2022 Events: as previously reported, the preparations for nine Younger Age Category (YAC) events, two beach handball events, are ongoing; all organisational aspects are proceeding accordingly.

EHF EURO 2022 SMM: to the event that is scheduled to begin in November, the updated timelines are to be followed in relation to the planning of the draw, the execution of the Qualifiers that will conclude in April and the subsequent Final Tournament Draw event on the fringes of the Executive Committee meeting, as well as the final event preparation in the host countries of Slovenia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro.

EHF EURO 2024/2026/2028: the EHF is working in close cooperation with the German Handball Federation for the men's event in 2024 and has also established contact with the

Organising Committees of the events in 2026 and 2028 respectively. The details to all upcoming events were made available to the Executive Committee in a written report.

Supporting the earlier introduction by the Secretary General, President Wiederer gave additional insight into the challenges faced and overcome prior to and during the current EHF EURO competition. Wiederer spoke of the intensity of the business activities, the communication surrounding the event, the input and cooperation from various corners – specifically when dealing with the national authorities of the host country, as well as a thoroughly demanding Covid-19 testing regime. From this he underlined that, more than ever before and compared to all EURO events that have gone before, lessons have to be taken from this particular experience in anticipation of the upcoming Women’s EHF EURO 2022 that will begin in November, as the conclusions will bear more importance than ever before. It is expected that the three host countries will take different approaches to important topics; thus, it is important that the EHF take care when clarifying its position.

Member Bobinac expressed his gratitude as the host of the Final weekend in Slovenia. Bobinac stated that he wished to use the opportunity of the Final Tournament Draw event resp. Executive Committee meeting to bring the organisations together with the EHF to discuss topics of relevance to securing the event and mitigating risks.

#### 6.2. YAC Events in the Future

Based upon a previous decision of the EXEC to explore the area of YAC competitions in a general way, a ‘Think Tank’ was held on 27 January led by CC Chairman Djurkovic, and the current system (encompassing the age categories, the calendar, qualification (to WCH), and regulation as well as finances, etc) was reviewed. The panel also discussed the possibility of expanding the events from 16 to 24 teams; it was agreed that the YAC events should provide the participating national teams with enough matches at the corresponding level to enable them to progress. CSO Glaser underlined the complexity of the matter and will continue to work on the fields identified. The findings arising from the ‘Think Tank’ will be treated on the level of the Competitions Commission in February and presented to the respect stakeholder groups in mid-March, before having the findings presented to the National Federations at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General at the end of March in Berlin. Due to the scope of the topic, it will be listed on the April EXEC agenda for a decision-making process, and if necessary, it can also be tabled at the June meeting of the Executive Committee should any further decisions need to be taken.

Thanking CSO Glaser for the report, First Vice President Bošković underlined the importance of investing in, and developing, the YAC events for the future of handball.

#### 6.3. Club Competitions 2021/2022:

Due to the ongoing pandemic the Competitions Department continues to work on the unavoidable postponement of matches in the club competitions; the situation faced is similar to that faced current in the EURO with the men’s national teams. Despite a number of matches to take place over the weekend, CSO Glaser stated that it may not be possible to have all matches played according to the schedule. Thus, he requested to implement the measures for the current season as was used in the previous season should matches have to be decided off the court.

The EXEC confirmed the request and underlined that it was a continuation of a previous EXEC decision; the stakeholders already informed on the process are aware that such last resort measures are implemented in a responsible and competent way.

#### 6.4. Club Competitions in the future

Opening the short report, CSO Glaser underlined that this agenda point does not concern any current / ongoing competitions. Its focus is the club competitions in the future and the analysis of the new playing system that was implemented with the start of the I/D contract. A ‘Think-tank’ was held in November 2021 (the second year of the I/D agreement) with Club and marketing representatives to discuss the first issues. Work will continue on the topic following the EURO and together with EHF Marketing and the findings (depending on time need) will be reported to the PHB in March and submitted to the Executive Committee either at the April or June meeting. At the same time, there is an ongoing exchange of information with the relevant persons within I/D. It was stated that any changes resulting from the analysis would be implemented only in the 2023/2024 season.

#### 6.5. National Team Competitions

It was requested to adapt the ‘Play-Off 2’ draw (scheduled for 29 January) by ensuring that the winner of the UKR – tbd match would not be drawn against RUS. Such a pairing would result in significant challenges regarding location, match venue, etc., based on previous experience and due to the current political climate. The Executive Committee supported the request of CSO Glaser.

The EXEC was informed that the EHF is observing the current situation in UKR in view of the YAC event in the summer. If necessary, the matter will be tabled at the EXEC meeting in April if a decision needs to be taken regarding the venue.

Glaser also reminded the EXEC that match 3/4 on 30 January serves as a direct qualification to the EHF EURO 2024 Qualifiers; thus, the top three teams as well as GER (Org) qualify directly to the Men’s EHF EURO 2024 in Germany. Phase 1 of the qualification as well as the Relegation Round to Phase 2 of the EURO 2024 Qualifiers are completed; the Qualifier groups draw will take place at the end of March. The National Federations have to receive a valid version of the regulations together with the registration forms; thus, the CC prepared a motion covering seven topics all in relation to the areas of TV, media, and marketing. The Executive Committee were provided with the details prior to the meeting and approved the motion. It was underlined that for topic 1 (LED Boards) the wording should read ‘as long as venue conditions allow’.

#### 6.6. International Calendar

Lending to the draft proposal that also contained an introductory text submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting, CSO Glaser reiterated that the proposal has bearing on the Champions League for the 2023/2024 season where a potential conflict with the document remains as potential changes are still possible (resulting from the analysis mentioned in AP 6.4. combined with the request of the Federations to have the calendar for the period made available. The MCL placement in the calendar follows the current situation i.e.: all matches on a weekday, the same playing system, the same rounds, but – as already explained to the National Federations – any changes resulting from the analysis would have to be implemented into a calendar that would have been already approved. This information will be repeated at the relevant upcoming meetings. The rescheduling of the Men’s Final4

(one week earlier) is based on the scheduling conflict with the football Euro. Therefore, there will be two major club team events (WCL F4, MCL F4) on two consecutive weekends – a situation that is normally avoided.

The Executive Committee approved the calendar for the 2023/2024 season but took note of the possibility for change at a later date.

## **7. Boards and Stakeholder Groups – Preview Meetings 03/2022**

As there were no meetings in the last quarter, it was stated that a new cycle will start with the March meetings. After the EXEC meeting, the follow-up will begin on an EHFM board level followed by the EHF Committees and Boards in preparation of the next Executive Committee meeting in April in Ljubljana. The timetable is set and after the EURO, the organisational aspects (invitations, agendas) of these upcoming meetings will continue following a normal rundown.

## **8. EHF Marketing GmbH**

### **8.1. General Assembly 11/2021**

The minutes to the meeting are available; the General Assembly business year of 2020/2021 (including the financial result that has an impact on the EHF accounting) was successfully completed. The set-up and rundown of the current season was reiterated with all aspects confirmed. The EXEC took note of the information.

### **8.2. Report Business Year 2021/2022**

With information on the active competitions given under AP6, there was no specific report given. The EXEC was given an update on the EHFM Managing Director (D. Szlezak) who is currently in convalescence after his accident, and the newly installed Assistant Managing Director (N. Kernmayer). Daily business activities within EHFM are continuing without issue, and the major financial audit covering the years 2014 to 2021 (including payments to the clubs and tax liabilities) is ongoing but nearing completion.

### **8.3. Perspectives I&D Agreement**

The discussions with the media and marketing partners, Infront and DAZN (I/D) are ongoing with all parties wanting to see improvements. The EHF and EHFM have stated their position and have offered conditional concessions and continues to seek for the viable solution. The topic will return to the agenda at a point where additional information needs to be given or at a time when decisions have to be taken. Member Bobinac reiterated the point of legal safeguarding.

## **9. Masterplan – Status Update**

Following the introduction of the next steps to be taken in the project, the EHF sought, and seeks, cooperation opportunities with the National Federations. Additionally, based on the findings thus far, it was determined that an internal platform for the project be created, and a key person be responsible for the coordination between the respective departments i.e., Strategic Business – Business Development and Marketing – Sports and Game Services, (though it was underlined that the Masterplan touches all areas of the EHF business). The EHF distributed an advertisement inviting (internal and external) applications for the position. The focus of the appointment is, following research and evaluation of the information gathered from various sources, shall present finding to determine which fields to cultivate within a Federation in view of a long-lasting development. Further follow-up on the project will accelerate after the conclusion of the Men's EHF EURO 2022.

## **10. European Handball Foundation**

On 27 January a short presentation on the current status was given in a limited form due to the current situation. For the benefit of the EXEC, Wiederer stated that a formal decision on an external body to be built was deemed useful to the findings; from the analysis of the consequences of an external body with possible overlapping responsibilities within the EHF system and the external body, as well as to transparency as to what concerns the finances.

The EHF is able to build within its structure (analogous to the FD, CAN) a board structure which allows the EHF to handle the matter on an internal level, but still within the frame of the EHF which removes tax, legal, and registration liabilities. This will also allow the EHF to transparently demonstrate the money flow to the EHF Comptrollers. At the same time, it will be possible to integrate those from external sources bringing funding to the project including the system partners and their contracts in order to generate additional resources for the EHF Masterplan, which remains the overall objective.

Thus, a formal decision on an addition board body within the EHF system is currently not needed. As certain text areas are still to be defined, the project has not been finalised as yet; this is to be completed in the next step as the needs of the Masterplan are to be taken into consideration. The expected start date is 1 July 2022.

## **11. International Partners**

International Handball Federation: The minutes of the most recent IHF Congress and IHF Council meeting are available; however, several open points remain such as the definition of the IHF Commissions. Thus, was informed by the IHF President, who due to a professional engagement of the Asian Championship in Saudi Arabia was unable to attend the Final Weekend of the Men's EHF EURO, that a Council Meeting would take place in due course.

Member Blázquez briefly reported on the organisation of the 2021 Women's IHF World Championship and the cooperation at the international level. In the light of the ongoing pandemic, the large scale of the event (32 delegations), as well as the demands of the event, the Spanish federation were able to conclude the Championship successfully. The experiences gained, including the positive cooperation with the media, will serve the organisation process for the EHF EURO in 2028.

In acknowledgement of input from Member Bobinac, Wiederer underlined that the EHF would continue to contribute to the improvement of handball at a global level.

Furthermore, the EHF received a HFE (Handball Forum Europe) communication requesting more flexibility in relation to beach handball clothing following the decree of the IHF Council. Foremost, President Wiederer restated that the HFE has no formal standing in the structure; however, the EHF took note of the brief as the letter was signed by several European nations. To the topic, he echoed the process taken by the EHF on the matter from the open motion proposing a flexible solution and the justification of the motion.

EOC EU Office Report: Wiederer drew the attention of the EXEC to the latest EOC EU Office report specifically the discussion on private/independent leagues. The topic was dealt within the EU Parliament and the initial statement is not favourable to private leagues funded by private investments as they 'do not have a place in sport'. Afterwards the European Sport Minister confirmed the position in regard to the European Model of Sport. The EXEC members were encouraged to read the precise text in the report.

## **12. 2022 Events – Preview**

### **12.1. 13<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General**

The organisation of the conference is moving forward; the topics for the event will include Younger Age Category events, beach handball development around registration and transfers, the EHF digital landscape, as well as an update on the Infront/DAZN media and marketing agreement. On the fringes of the event in Berlin at the end of March, the Men's EHF EURO 2024 Qualifiers draw event will take place; a workshop for the participants will also be held. Following the conclusion of the conference, an evaluation of the topics presented will be submitted to the EXEC for approval where necessary; Member Bobinac reiterated that the Slovenian Handball Federation looked forward to hosting the EXEC meeting in April in Ljubljana.

### **12.2. 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Presidents**

The preparations are ongoing, and the event will take place in Luxembourg at the end of September. Further information on the content and rundown will be provided in April after the Conference for Secretaries General.

## **13. Miscellaneous**

In response to the draft proposal for summer nominations, the nomination of one member is to be refigured due to unavailability. Additionally, it was stated that the situation in UKR in respect to the YAC Championship would continue to be monitored.

On behalf of Mate Kocsis, President of the Hungarian Handball Federation, Member Horvath, delivered a message of welcome and gratitude for the trust that the EHF place in the Federation and the country to, despite the challenges, bring the first men's EHF EURO to the nation.

Concluding the agenda, President Wiederer thanked the participants for their contribution and closed the meeting.

Vienna, 4 February 2022

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