
MINUTES TO THE 173RD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN COLOGNE, GERMANY

Date: 27 January 2024
Time: 09:30 – 12:00
Venue: Pullman Hotel | Room Belvedere

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
Franjo Bobinac Member
Francisco V. Blázquez Garcia Member
Bente Aksnes Member
Mark Schober Chairman Nations Board
Xavier O’Callaghan Chairman Professional Handball Board
Leonor Mallozzi Chairwoman Women’s Handball Board

Office: Martin Hausleitner Secretary General
Bernhard Binder Chief Finance Officer
Markus Glaser Chief Sports Officer
Marsha Brown Corporate Liaison (Minutes)

Excused: Vesna Lazic PA to the President

Guests: Andreas Michelmann DHB President (partly)

1. Welcome, Programme, Agenda

President Wiederer opened the traditional session on the occasion of the Men’s EHF EURO; he noted the presence of the top representatives at the opening press conference, the attendance at many meetings, and praised the excellent picture presented to the outside.

Taking the floor, Andrea Michelmann, President of the German Handball Federation expressed his gratitude to the EHF Executive Committee for being in Cologne, as well as the opportunity to host the EHF EURO 2024. He hoped that the opening match was enjoyable for all; up until the day it was not known how it would turn out, but after the opening match it can be said that it was a good idea to hold the opening match in the football stadium. It was a special moment to see so many German fans in the various event locations as well as in Cologne.

DHB Managing Director, Mark Schober, responsible for the organisation of the event, continued stating that the cooperation with the EHF as well as the German Cities have been good for the event, especially in terms of finding solutions to the challenges such as transportation strikes and adverse weather conditions. Schober confirmed that in the end, the arenas have been full, and highlighted the significance of the success of the opening match and the fact the result of the home match could have changed the outcome of the entire tournament. In closing,

Schober underlined the importance of the event for the National Federations and thanked the EHF once again for the positive cooperation.

Thanking DHB President Michelmann and MD Schober for the address to the Executive Committee, President Wiederer mentioned that he will address President Michelmann and the DHB at the Gala evening later in the day.

Moving into the agenda, it was noted that since the last working session in December a few new topics have arisen, though there is still work to be done.

2. EXEC 12/2023 – Minutes / Follow-up

The minutes to the meeting held in Herring, Denmark were adopted with no additional comment or questions.

3. Business Reports

3.1. Secretary General

With the comprehensive report at hand covering the daily EHF business activities, the Secretary General opened with a special report on the preparation and execution of the EHF EURO 2024.

- **Personnel | EHF Office:** the recruitment process in several departments is ongoing; however, in the last quarter there were no personnel exits. In late December, the EHF held the yearly office seminar (Kick-Off 2024), and the presentations were sent to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting.
- **2024 Activities:** many activities are currently in planning; this includes the meetings of the Technical Commissions in February, the Conference of Secretaries General in March, the meetings of the Stakeholders, the Final Tournament Draw of the Women's EHF EURO 2024 in April. The activities will continue throughout the year including the Club Finals and the summer activities and then culminating with the Final Weekend of the Women's EHF EURO 2024, where the new EHF Office will be officially opened, the Conference of Presidents and the second edition EHF Excellence Awards will also take place within this period. The list was made available to the Executive Committee.
- **2024 YAC Events:** the summer EURO events are organised with TV production; the awarding of events will follow under agenda point 6.
- **Sustainability Strategy:** the project continues, and the newly installed Board will convene for the inaugural meeting on 28 January 2024, where the focus will be on the implementation of the sustainability strategy.
- **EHF EURO 2024 Framework Activities:** the Grassroots Convention was executed according to plan with satisfactory results; the learnings of which will be discussed at the next meeting of the Methods Commission. The Leadership Conference, organised by the German Handball Federation, was deemed a great event dealing with many business topics, and well received by the participants.
- **Business Development:** it is noted that with contracts (equipment suppliers) due to nearing expiration, the organisation has re-entered into negotiations with specific partners.

- **Media:** the success of the EHF EURO 2024 media campaigns were highlighted; 22 platforms generated 115k followers. The strength of social media (TikTok, etc.) revealed the top videos that garnered over 120 - 400 million views. The event also resulted in a 25% increase in APP use, 1000 accredited journalists, with over 300 coming from the host broadcasters. The EURO also successfully implemented LAV services for the hearing and visually impaired. The documentary on the handball legend, Stefan Kretschmar reached 60.000 viewers with its debut. The event has reached new heights across the markets with the market share ranging between 40% to 60% across different regions; a positive example was the AUT v GER match beating skiing on the Austrian market. The EHF EURO 2024 reached a new historic milestone of having a spectator figure of 1 million across the venues for the duration of the event; the support of so many international visitors to the event created an “unbelievable atmosphere” and the presence has been impressive.
- **Information Technology:** the list of the current IT projects was submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting.

3.2. Legal Management

With the report at hand, the Executive Committee took note of the information provided therein. It was made clear that during a major competition, the legal report can be constantly updated and the most recent case out of the event was noted as example. To the ongoing competition, many of the cases at the start of the event were centred around clothing violations, and the aggravating factor of a (non-communicated, but implemented) change within the IHF regulations, but which is expected to be confirmed at the next council meeting. As a consequence, the Executive Committee agreed to rest the financial penalties issued in two cases.

In relation to the ongoing case concerning the CC Member Refereeing, the case is still with the first instance. To the case concerning the club ‘Famagusta’ and the non-fulfilment of requirements, the Executive Committee members were in full agreement with the recommendation of the EHF to determine the legal steps and to send a clear statement formulated to protect the competitions.

3.3. European Anti-Doping Unit

The submitted report provides an overview of the doping controls carried out in 2023; across 15 club and national team competitions 456 tests were conducted. Of the 28 tests that were not carried out reasons included incorrect information submitted on whereabouts forms (SVK), local state legislation (NOR, SWE), and conflict (ISR) were mentioned. There were no adverse analytical findings. Moreover, the educational activities continued, and AD was a programme focus for the RYT participants in Vienna; 39 National Federations have nominated a NADR (National Anti-Doping Responsible) and the first meeting took place in October 2023.

At the time of the Executive Committee meeting, 84 samples have been taken during the Men’s EHF EURO 2024 and 8 samples collected in the women’s club competitions. The Executive Committee took note of the report.

3.4. EHF Services & Infrastructure GmbH

During the seasonal break, construction ceased on the new building; however, the topping out of the building will be completed in February. The internal construction starting with the cabling has begun. Decisions on interior design are to be taken (décor and furniture). Many meetings with the contractor and other companies are scheduled, and the project is proceeding accordingly and remains in line with the budget. The EHF SI continues to seek for public resp. external funding. It was underlined that there have been no deviations since the last meeting.

3.5. EHF Marketing GmbH – General Assembly / Advisory Board

The Executive Committee took note of the written report at hand concerning the Advisory Board meeting held prior to the 12/2023 session of the Executive Committee. The importance of the EHF Advisory Board was highlighted as the financial report of the daughter company has a direct impact on the EHF finances.

Closing the agenda point, President Wiederer spoke briefly on the EHF/M meeting held with the leadership of Infront, and in the presence of the Club Representative Janos Szabo on the occasion of the EHF EURO 2024 opening match in Düsseldorf. At this time, there are no changes to the agreement and the parties are supposed to meet again in 09/2025 to review the agreement as scheduled. The Steering Board that oversees the progression of the agreement will meet in March 2024 prior to the spring session of the stakeholder meetings.

4. Finances

4.1. Finance Delegation 01/2024 – Minutes and Decisions

The minutes to the meeting held in early January were submitted to the Executive Committee. Vice President Finances, Henrik La Cour, highlighted the information pertaining to the transfer income and the status of the federation accounts, as well as information on the latest initiatives in the area of Erasmus+ activities.

Moreover, the Finance Delegation recommended that the organisation undertake an evaluation to see if the status of a quasi-international or international association in Austria can be attained; CFO Binder added information for the understanding of the Executive Committee. Also, it was noted that the Advisory Board of the EHF Services & Infrastructure GmbH took place on the fringes of the Finance Delegation.

4.2. Accounting 2023 / Budget 2024

Continuing the report, La Cour remarked on the final result of 2023 where small adaptations might still be possible until the start of the external audit in mid-February. The 2023 result currently stands at EURm -3,84; this result reflects an improvement of EUR 200k.

Looking to 2024, the organisation can expect an increase in revenues from the EHF EURO 2024 ticketing share; the EHF has also added to a reserve for competitions. At this time, budgeted expenses in 2024 currently stand at EURm 28,67. Consequently, the expected result would reflect a surplus of EURm 4,08. Thus, for the two-year period 2023-2024, a surplus of EUR 234k can be expected. La Cour stated that despite the current rate of inflation, the financial activities of the EHF remain in line with the budget.

In closing, the Executive Committee members were informed on, and subsequently discussed, the matter of payment (match fees) for referees; it was understood that the discussion did not pertain to the daily allowance, which is governed by a congress resolution. Following a group action by the nominated referees onsite at the EHF EURO 2024, the difference between the IHF rate and the EHF rate was challenged. Bringing the matter to a resolution within the EHF EURO environment, the match fees were increased in line with the IHF levels. Consequently, following the EHF EURO 2024, the organisation will arrange for a full evaluation of the topic (remuneration for nominated EHF officials). As part of the evaluation it was noted that it is to be determined which decisions lay in the realm of the Executive Committee and which lay in the responsibility of the EHF Congress.

5. Commissions – Reports and Decisions

With no meetings of the Technical Commissions within the last quarter, the reports from the Chairpersons of the bodies were kept brief and summarised below.

5.1. Competitions Commissions

Chairman Bozidar Djurkovic informed on the progression of the current season; the women's club competitions continued throughout January; the men's club competitions will resume in February. At the national team level, with the matches of LUX and ISR concluded, the draw for next phase of the competition will take place on the afternoon of 27 January.

Additionally, the M18 Qualification Tournaments concluded in early January; the awarding of the YAC Championship events will be dealt with under AP6.2.

In the area of officiating, the most recent activities within the Young Referee Programme took place in Hungary parallel to the EURO; the next meeting of the TRC is scheduled for the end of February.

5.2. Methods Commission

Chairman Pedro Sequeira opened his report with a focus on the area of Education and Training giving the final figures from the EHF Webinar campaigns of 2023 (24 Webinars, 8200 participants from 91 countries, delivered by 43 experts). Continuing, Sequeira spoke of opening of the 2024 EHF Master Coach PRO License Course in Hamburg welcoming the 23 participants, five of which were funded upon proposal by the WHB. Sequeira noted that all the lectures were recorded and available for delayed viewing. In the area of Youth, School, and Non-Competitive Sports, the EHF Grassroots Convention took place on 14 January in Munich, 26 topics from the various areas of development were covered by 33 experts speaking to 111 participants. The feedback to the event was positive.

5.3. Beach Handball Commission

BC Chairwoman Gabriela Horvath spoke of the 20th ebt season that began on 1 December 2023, whilst some events are still in the preparation phase, two tournaments in NED and CZE have already been played. The organisation of the YAC 16 Beach Handball EURO and the Men's and Women's Beach Handball EURO in Varna, Bulgaria in July is proceeding accordingly with the arena currently under construction. Horvath also mentioned that the international calendar of beach handball events was set by the IHF; however, there remains calendar conflicts with European and global events. The BC looks forward to the outcome of the online working group and hopes for a positive solution that works for the sport in the future.

Concluding the agenda point it was noted that no reports from the Chairpersons of the three stakeholder groups were foreseen and there was no wish to take the floor for a specific report.

6. Organisation of Events / Competition Topics

6.1. Update Report Events / Awarding of Events

- **Men's EHF EURO 2024 GER** | the progression of the event was praised; it was noted the Tournament Management met on multiple occasions where topics included but was not limited to the nomination of referees and delegates as well as the match schedule in relation to TV broadcast times. The good cooperation with the German Handball Federation was underlined. A detailed analysis both internally and with the partners will follow after the EURO.
- **Younger Age Category Events** | following the conclusion of the M18 EHF EURO 2024 Qualification Tournaments, the call for organisers for the M18 (and M20) Championships was announced and applications received. Please refer to AP 6.2.
Looking to the future of the 2025 YAC events and the application process it was underlined that daily fees in relation to these events was in the spotlight once again. The Chairman of the Nations Board was requested to list the topic of fees at the next meeting of the Stakeholders in March; it was also noted that the YAC events would be a focus topic at the next edition of the Conference for Secretaries General to be held in Denmark.
- **Women's EHF EURO 2026** | the complexity of the process to find a new organiser was mentioned. Interesting bids were received and evaluated; additionally, meetings were held with potential organisers in Vienna. However, it became apparent that no single bid was ideal in terms of infrastructure, venues, etc. Thus, the idea to have the event across a wider number of countries (4-5) was developed.
A communication conveying the idea of the EHF was sent to the applicants, and this will be followed by a meeting in February. Consequently, in the case that a collective understanding is reached, the matter will return to the Executive Committee for approval as a mandate was granted to continue negotiations in this vein.
- **EHF EUROs 2030 & 2032** | in the meeting room, a copy of the bid book was available to the Executive Committee members to peruse.

6.2. National Team Activities

Opening the agenda point, CSO Glaser took the floor to deliver the additional information to the motions to be decided. All motions were submitted to the members of the Executive Committee in written form prior to the meeting, thus, what follows is summarised for brevity.

- Motion I: NTC Senior Qualifiers - **Awarding of one open place in Men's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers** - dealing with the topic with the utmost sensitivity, President Wiederer outlined the situation of the countries when pertaining to international sport and the decisions taken by European and international governing bodies to date. The foreseeable consequences to the competition were aired and also discussed at length. Though in total agreement that this particular situation was unprecedented, some EXEC members felt that the decision has to be taken early to avoid the air of uncertainty for the other teams in the competition, whereas other members felt that it was acceptable to wait until the last

possible moment to see if there would be a change in the political environment. After having heard all members of the Executive Committee and in accordance with the ranking of Phase 1, Latvia will take the last remaining place in Phase 2 of the Men's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers. **The motion was adopted.**

- Motion II: NTC Senior Regulations 2026 - *Changes in the Men's EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers Regulations for Phase 2 and EHF EURO Cup* – this pertains to the LED advertising sequence and floor stickers specifically; the motion was crafted following input from the EHF media partner, Infront. **The motion was adopted.**
- Motion III: NTC Senior Regulations 2028 - *Changes in the Men's EHF EURO 2028 Qualifiers Regulations for Phase 1 and Promotion Round* - different requirements for halls (seating, LED), TV (camera numbers, production, and satellite booking) and marketing (floor stickers, LED/LCD) setup are recommended. **The motion was adopted.**
- Motion IV: NTC YAC Ranking Points - *Ranking Point Distribution Proposal for the YAC Events* – as a direct consequence of the expansion of the YAC events as of 2024 (M18 & M20 EHF EUROS have been enlarged from 16 to 24 teams, while M18 EHF Championship I is maximized with 8 teams), a new ranking point distribution is to be implemented. **The motion was adopted.**
- NTC YAC EHF Championship 2024 Awarding – the M18 Championship II (August 2024) and the M20 Championship (July 2024) was awarded to the Handball Federation of Kosovo based on the submitted bids and subsequent evaluation thereof. The awarding of the M18 Championship I (August 2024) was delayed as more information is sought to complete the open bid; however the mandate was given to award the event to SVK accordingly.

6.3. Club Competitions

- Motion I | Mandatory VIP Box Acquisition by Clubs at Final Events: in keeping with the development plans such as the full venue initiative and in the continual effort to raise standard at club competition final events, it is requested to amend the regulations to include **the acquisition of a VIP box at Final events by the participating clubs**. The motion was adopted by majority, 1 vote against and 3 abstentions are recorded.

6.4. Other Competitions

The Executive Committee approved the calendar for the 2025/2026 season that was distributed in draft form in December 2023 and further dealt with on the basis of the input received. The YAC period W17 will finish on 10.08.2025 instead of 17.08. The date of the Women's National Team Week in September 2025 remains unchanged, and the Men's 18 Qualification Tournaments have been scheduled additionally to coincide with the Men's National Team Week commencing 31 October 2025.

7. International Institutions

7.1. IHF Information

No additional information was provided concerning the IHF activities; the Executive Committee members were referred to the documents at hand, in particular the minutes of the 2023 IHF Congress.

7.2. Other Partners

Another official letter was sent to the leadership of the EOC requesting a meeting to discuss open questions as well as to raise concerns about processes and responsibilities. With no response to date, Member Bobinac imparted brief information on the current situation within the EOC to bring further light to the lack of action towards the EHF.

8. 2024 Activities – Status

The Executive Committee took note of the listing of the upcoming events (draws, combined events, etc.) as well as the 2024 meeting calendar. To the representative nominations to summer events, a draft is to be sent to the members of the Executive Committee within two weeks. The EXEC members were requested to submit a notice of unavailability to Vesna Lasic as soon as possible.

9. Various

In response to a question from MC Chairman Sequeira to wheelchair handball it was answered in the affirmative that the EHF has yet to nominate a person to the IHF working group on the topic.

The situation surrounding the legal decisions in respect to a possible football ‘Super League’ was briefly discussed, it was noted that the EHF was paying attention to the current happenings. It was mentioned that due to the close cooperation with, and the involvement of, the stakeholders, handball is seemingly protected from such actions until 2030.

With the agenda completed, President Wiederer thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Vienna, 5 February 2024