

## Minutes to the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EHF Nations Board (Men)

<b>Date/Time:</b>	Monday, 6 March 2017/14:15 – 18:00	
<b>Venue:</b>	EHF Office – Conference Room	
<b>Participants:</b>	Morten Stig Christensen	DEN Chairman
	Philippe Bana	FRA Vice Chairman
	Mark Schober	GER
	Marek Góralczyk	POL
	Ingo Meckes	SUI
	Stephen Neilson	GBR
<b>In Part:</b>	Michael Wiederer	EHF President
	Predrag Bošković	EHF Vice President
	Monika Flixeder	Office / BG EURO Events
<b>EHF Office:</b>	Peter Sichelschmidt	Office / BG National Teams
	Marsha Brown	Office / Minutes

### 1. Welcome

Chairman Christensen welcomed the members to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EHF Nations Board for men's handball, noting that it was the first full meeting following the elections in November 2016 and gave a special welcome to the newest members of the Nations Board, Mark Schober (GER) representing the National Federations ranked 3 to 6, and Ingo Meckes (SUI) representing the nations ranked 13 to 24. Upon invitation, EHF President Wiederer reiterated the welcome to the Nations Board and gave a brief history of the presence of the EHF President and EHF Secretary General at the meetings; he underlined President and Secretary General are not NB members, but have regularly participated at the invitation of the Chairman. Christensen commented on the relevance of the participation of the EHF President and Secretary General.

### 2. NB Meeting 11/2016 – Minutes and Follow-up

With no additional comment or question, the minutes were accepted.

#### 2.1. NB Network

A brief reiteration of the purpose of the Nations Board network was given; it was underlined, that in order to prepare and discuss matters of interest, the NB members should contact the EHF to have specific items of interest added to the agenda. Following a comment to the effect, a brief discussion took place on how to engage members Federations and build a stronger relationship between the NB representatives and the National Federations; to the upcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General (CfSG) in Paris, it was mentioned that the configuration of the groups should be more relatable in terms of commonalities. Furthermore, the Nations Board agreed to give a brief presentation at the CfSG in order to give the attendees the opportunity to make contact with their representatives.

The Nations Board requested a reminder of the topics one month prior to the meetings, as well as to the National Federations to contact their representatives with matters of concern.

### 3. EHF /IHF Information

#### 3.1. Information Update on personnel/office

Continuing, President Wiederer excused the absence of the EHF Secretary General as the position currently remains open. The Nations Board was informed that a presentation and hearing of the top three candidates would take place that afternoon at an external location. The successful candidate will be decided by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 24 March 2017 in Vienna. Later, to the question of a proposed new EHF office building, the NB was informed that the topic remains open, but at this time, there is no further information.

#### 3.2. PHB / EXEC / Commissions

**PHB:** to the minutes of the last meeting of the PHB, there was no additional comment or question to the minutes.

**EXEC:** Peter Sichelschmidt, Senior Manager National Teams, mentioned that following the November 2016 elections, the new EXEC members comprised 60% of the Committee, and on the whole new EXEC tasks reached 80%. To the area of EHF EURO Qualifications for 2020, it was mentioned that promotional tournaments (EHF EURO Cup) would form part of the overall concept, which has not been finalised to date. Monika Flixeder, Senior Manager EHF EURO Events gave additional information relating to the marketing in general. In the brief discussion that ensued, the NB asked that the following points be taken into consideration:

- ◆ Some Federations already long term agreements already in place and advertising rights for the periods under discussion have already been negotiated.
- ◆ The media and marketing rights situation has to be made clear to the National Federations.

**Commissions:** the minutes from the meeting of the Methods Commission (MC) are available; however, the minutes to the meetings of the Beach Handball Commission (BC) and the Competitions Commission (CC) have not been finalised to date. In relation to the CC meeting, Sichelschmidt noted that several motions regarding club competitions have been formulated and will be presented at the meeting of the Executive Committee, it is expected that the motions will take effect from the upcoming season (2017/18). One motion is relevant for season 2018/19.

It was reported that the CC also dealt with the matter of the 2017 YACs, due to a calendar conflict on the part of the organiser; the event was rescheduled and will take place two weeks earlier than originally planned. Sichelschmidt related an instance of inappropriate conduct by a participating Federation, but underlined that many Federations affected by this change were cooperative and accommodating.

The matter of European Open (EO) and the recent amendment to the age classification was discussed; the next editions will be held with M17 (2017) and W16 (2018) as decreed by the Executive Committee. Following the events, the situation will be re-evaluated and a final decision on the EO system will be taken. A brief discussion took place and the impact on the emerging nations was mentioned as it was underlined that this change enlarges the four-year cycle.

### 3.3. IHF Council

With the minutes available to the NB members, a brief review of the 2017 IHF Men's World Handball Championship in France was given. The venue for the next IHF Congress (Antalya, TUR) and the changes to the IHF regulations were highlighted. With OCE unable to participate in the upcoming YAC WCs in Algeria (U21) and Georgia (U19), the replacement teams (SWE and NOR) were mentioned.

## 4. EHF EUROS

### 4.1. Review 2017 Men's World Championship

The highlights of the event were reiterated and key figures (ticket sales, TV broadcasters, etc.) were mentioned. The NB discussed the structure of the match scheme and the position of the EHF representatives on the matter (in favour of a main round system) was given. The discussion resulted in open questions, but it was underlined that it is an IHF matter and the NB will wait for the conclusion.

### 4.2. EHF EURO 2018 CRO – Preview

The NB was informed that the preparations, as well as promotional activities are ongoing. The issue with Split venue and the current status was mentioned. The Final Tournament Draw event is scheduled to take place in Zagreb in June and the Heads of Delegation Conference is scheduled to take place in Zagreb in the second week of October. The matter of overall sponsorship will be tabled at the Executive Committee meeting in June 2017; prior to the meeting, the issues of concern to the NB will be clarified and taken under consideration. It was underlined that no final decision in this matter had been taken to date. At the request of the NB it was agreed that an overview concerning marketing rights for the upcoming qualifications in May and June 2017 would be provided to the Nations Board; it was also requested, and agreed, that the model for the 2020 event would be provided to the NB when it is available.

### 4.3. 2018 Younger Age Category Events

Sichelschmidt informed on the current status of the six upcoming events, which included a short overview on the current registrations. From the discussion that followed, it was noted that the YAC events centre of the evolution of handball, though the fact remains the potential to lose money when hosting a YAC event is greater compared to senior events, which makes it unattractive to the broader spectrum of potential hosts. The possible combination of tying a YAC EURO/ECh event as part of hosting an EHF EURO was reiterated; the idea had already been discussed on various occasions.

### 4.4. EHF EURO 2020 SWE/AUT/NOR – Preview

#### 4.4.1. Qualification

With the overview at hand, Sichelschmidt reported on the current status of the qualification: Phase One is complete and the three winners will enter Phase Two; the other six teams will enter the IHF Emerging Nations Championship. Concern was voiced that for the emerging nations, the current system is that the IHF absorbs the costs for the 15 European teams participating in the event and the possible consequences should this change; these nations would be once again be left with no opportunity to participate. The

matter of player eligibility (age limit) was raised with reference to IHF events and the challenges this posed for some of the national teams ranked 24 to 50.

#### 4.4.2. Final Tournament

Concerning the Final Tournament, the NB was informed that the EHF is in the process of harmonising the three organisers with the objective of presenting a unified image. Concerning venues, the arena in Trondheim is currently under construction with an estimated completion date of 2018/19; thus, the arena will be utilised in the later stages of the competition. The four promotional tournaments (EHF EURO Cup) are currently in the scoping stage and no final decision has been taken and the input of the Nations Board will be taken under consideration.

#### 4.5. EHF EUROS 2022 & 2024

Flixeder sketched the timeline of the awarding process; the 'Right to Organise' documentation was published in February and the deadline to receive statements of intent was set for 1 May, the distribution of bidding documents for 1 July and the receipt of final bids for 1 November 2017. An evaluation of the bids will then be undertaken. It was noted that awarding criteria are still being determined. Information was exchanged within the NB as to from which National Federations bids could be expected.

### 5. Open Discussion: TV/Marketing Rights perspectives

EHF President Michael Wiederer introduced the agenda point by summarising the current state of affairs. The negotiation phase for media and marketing rights for the period following the EHF EUROS 2020 and the 2022 and 2024 editions of the EHF EUROS has commenced. A brief history of the relationship between EHF and Infront was given. It was reiterated that the last agreement with the current media partner was signed in 2011 by Tor Lian for the period 2016-2020. Previous agreements afforded the media partner first negotiation and matching offer rights. Prior to the contract being signed in 2011, detailed negotiations took place and the agreement that was signed was structured differently, where the first negotiation right was granted, but the matching offer element was withdrawn, as it was apparent that the clause was deterring any other potential top offer.

Secondly, it was a complex system that allowed the EHF to participate in the result: at a time when the EHF EURO was not 'big business', the EHF had guaranteed amounts; as the product developed, at some point a break-even point was reached and the media profited from this. The current agreement enabled the EHF to benefit from the guaranteed sum paid in advance, which provided security for the product as well as a share in the result that exceeded the guaranteed sum. With new insight into the current value of the product, new negotiations are possible.

Furthermore, developments in the realm of media and marketing proved education, as what was valid in 2011 is no longer valid today. Presentations at 2015 (ROU) and 2016 (AUT) EHF Congresses provided a comprehensive overview to the EHF Member Federations and underlined that a strategy had to be defined relevant for all National Federations with the understanding that the media/marketing situation in Europe is different and that broad coverage is needed when discussing i.e. coverage vs. finance, open markets vs. new media channels, etc.

It was underlined that the NB (and WHB) was a good starting point to have the Federations represented and stating what is important in order to ensure that the EHF is not entering negotiations with the input from a limited cluster, but with input that is based on a larger idea. The previous constellation of the NB discussed this matter where multiple points of interest arose i.e. the difference between public access and pay TV. Concluding, Wiederer hoped that the discussion could be continued and taken further.

Opening the group discussion element, Chairman Christensen reiterated that this matter had been raised on several occasions and that the NB had an opportunity to examine what could be changed. It was stated that the discussion was not meant to be challenging and it was not meant to formulate a specific direction to be taken, but to be an open discussion where all input was welcomed. Due to the length of the discussion, the pertinent points were summarised as follows:

- ◆ Question: can media/marketing rights be handled by the EHF on an internal level? Response: Although the marketing of media and advertising rights for the Men's and Women's EHF Champions League are handled internally (EHFM working on club activities only), the event is facing challenges concerning global sponsorships. The work undertaken on this level is conducted with a limited group of partners and agencies. For a product with the scope of the EHF EURO external expertise on how to handle the markets is essential.
- ◆ The EHF has the option to split the media and marketing rights as well as not to enter into a new agreement with the current media partner. These negotiations will commence towards the end of June 2017. Clear objectives must be set prior to negotiations (e.g. revenues, development, and exposure).
- ◆ With background information given on the situation (i.e. conflict between stakeholders), it was stated that a new vision must be sought that creates a win-win system for all the Federations.
- ◆ Furthermore (though not directly linked to the marketing question), it was suggested that more cohesion between the EHF and IHF was needed (e.g. fees – pPerson vs. pGame).
- ◆ Emerging Nations will need to be convinced of TV marketing, the reason to provide TV coverage must be compelling, and more discussion and consideration on this level is needed. Agreements should be tailored to the needs of the different competitions; the focus should be exposure and not the financial element.
- ◆ The situation within the Federations and each market needs to be clearly identified. It is noted here individual solutions do not help the overall situation as 'packaging' has its advantages and disadvantages; split markets do not lend to coherence. Handball needs to access a new dimension of people who currently have no affiliation to the sport; increasing exposure and presence will automatically increase any revenues.
- ◆ There is no innovation to try to enter smaller markets, thus it would be beneficial for the EHF to hold the media rights. The 'easiest' way to development is via TV rights, this would gain access to secondary and tertiary rights; a bigger change would be needed in the area of marketing rights.

- ◆ It is important to see the situation from the point of view of the National Federations as the main source of income is via partners and sponsors and these relationships should not be threatened by future EHF agreements, as this could result in lasting long-term damage if these partners/sponsors are lost. The NB members agreed that information and education of the EHF Member Federations to help them fully understand the issue and the potential consequences was essential.

Concluding the discussion it was mentioned that the issue of player (image) rights remain a contentious and recurring issue. Input to this statement included a solution analogous to IOC Charter (collective rights). It was deemed that the topic must be discussed with the stakeholders in close cooperation with the players' union. Moreover, more investigation was needed (e.g. feedback from all Federations as to the laws governing this matter. The NB suggested that the EHF approach the National Federations initially.

## **6. Preparation PHB meeting**

The topics covered in the meeting of the Nations Board are reflected on the PHB agenda for the meeting that follows on 7 March. The agenda points concerning club matters and a follow-up to the EHF Congress are the only variations. The final draft of the CAL 18/19, submitted to the Executive Committee for approval, was presented and briefly discussed.

## **7. Other Issues**

The NB took the opportunity to exchange information on recent actions within specific European Federations, this included but was not limited to:

- ◆ Prolongation of media contract for club and national team matches and change of national team coach (DEN)
- ◆ Event organisation; construction of education facility; concerted effort in the area of reaching new local markets; stakeholder meeting on the fringes of the WC with EHF participation (FRA)
- ◆ Upcoming elections; internal structural change centred on the integration of non-managerial employees; implementation of (sport, finance, development, marketing) departmental directors (GER)
- ◆ Concerted efforts to garner media interest in women's national team events; internal changes; contract prolongations (POL)
- ◆ Generational change within the men's national team; new sponsor; confronting budget cuts; centralised administration after the dissolution of regional structures (SUI)
- ◆ Progressing the development of GBR; confronting budget cuts; called for the harmonisation of the qualification process for emerging nations (GBR).

Chairman Christensen closed the meeting and expressed his thanks to the Nations Board for the active contribution and the relevant input to the various topics.