

Common Meeting
21st EHF Nations Board (NB) / 5th European Handball League Board (EHLB)

Date / Time:	Monday, 9 March 2020 / 14:00 – 16:00	
Venue:	Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Vienna/AUT - Schönbrunn	
Participants NB:	Morten Stig Christensen	DEN Chairman
	Mark Schober	GER
	Marek Góralczyk	POL
	Ingo Meckes	SUI
Participants EHLB:	Nikolas Larsson	SWE Chairman
	Frank Bohmann	GER Vice Chairman
	Stefano Podini	ITA
	Patrice Hitz	SUI
	Thierry Wagner	LUX
EHF:	Michael Wiederer	President
	Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General
	Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer (CSO)
	Peter Sichelschmidt	Senior Manager National Teams
	JJ Rowland	Business Development/Marketing
	Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison/Minutes
Excused:	Philippe Bana	FRA Vice Chairman NB
	Stephen Neilson	GBR NB Member
	Alf Mangor Johannessen	NOR EHLB Member

Remark: Please note that the following record (finalised, but not adopted as of 19.03.2020) of the meeting is based on the date and the time the meetings took place on 09/10 March 2020. The COVID-19 situation was developing at a rapid pace; subsequent to, and immediately following, the (common) meetings of the Nations Board, European Handball League Board, Professional Handball Board, and the Women’s Handball Board, decisions concerning competitions were taken by the EHF that no longer reflect the outcome of the discussions held at the time.

1. Welcome and Introduction

President Wiederer welcomed the participants to the meeting noting the absence of some members and the varying restrictions in the different countries due to the ongoing situation (COVID-19). Coordination meetings are essential to the decision-making process, and the members remained keen to do their jobs in the best possible way; Wiederer thanked the members for being present during this difficult time.

2. Information on Competitions

2.1. National Team Competitions

Men’s EHF EURO 2020 SAN: Secretary General Hausleitner presented a summary of the Men’s EHF EURO 2020 in Sweden, Austria, and Norway. The event was a massive success exceeding nearly all previous records and achieved a very positive acceptance in the sports realm. Having three

organisers resulted in many additional tasks in terms of logistics (i.e. EHF-OC coordination, fans, travel management, etc.); all the topics were evaluated and from these experiences the EHF is confident that there is an excellent basis to organise the next EUROs on a higher level. The on-site spectator figures grew from 260k to 500k, the almost 50% increase was attributed to more teams (8), matches (20), and venues; furthermore, the concept of the matches of the SAN home teams was well appreciated.

The history of the tournament also contributed to the overall success as there were attractive teams in the main round and, during the final weekend, despite some teams not reaching their own expectations, the event still benefitted from almost full halls for the semi-final and final matches. TV transmission hours increased from 2500 in 2018 to 3400 in 2020. Additional TV data received is currently being evaluated and it will indicate in which countries the biggest benefits were elicited, it is expected to be seen in those markets where teams took part for the first time, as well as team GER that lessened the impact of weaker performances, which is expected to have had an impact on the figures.

Additionally, social media figures also saw great increases; this incorporated 67m views across the platforms, over 100k shares, 130k downloads of the App (increase of 200%), 100m views from single users in 130 countries on ehfTV.com, 40k new Facebook users that paralleled the Instagram increase, as well as over 1200 video clips used (compared to 500 in 2018); the most popular clip was viewed 2.4m times (CRO:NOR SF Goal). Using the WSC technology over 12000 video clips were produced. More figures will be presented at the Conference for Secretaries General.

In terms of the match schedule, EURO 2020 SAN saw matches played every day, additional rest days implemented, and exciting matches scheduled at the end of the PR and MR (i.e. 1 vs. 1). The EHF has taken note of the challenges of the schedule that saw teams faced with playing four matches in five days; it was undelined that would not happen again at any future edition of an EHF EURO. Moreover, elements such as the placement match (5/6), TV transmission times, and the interval between matches are all newly under reconsideration.

Moving to the area of match technologies, Hausleitner spoke of the implementation of goal-light and goal-line systems noting that the regular use of the elements has reached a respectable level. The implementation of the Kinexon technology had mixed results; on the one hand it was possible to offer teams match data (also to be used for further scientific study) quickly during the event, and on the other hand, there were many issues from the start and throughout the preliminary and main rounds. During the event, the coordination between EHF, Swisstiming, and Kinexon was intensified as challenges were identified; following the event, all three partners are currently working in close cooperation to eliminate the issues prior to the EURO in December.

The inaugural implementation of the new officiating processes (nomination of referees and delegates in phases) worked as expected and was well appreciated; for the first time, a female referee couple was nominated to a men's event. The feedback from the officials is currently under evaluation; overall, the outlook is positive as the EHF looks to future events. In the area of marketing sales, the event sold out with 8 partners, three of which excelled in partner activation (Grundfos, Lidl, Gorenje). Throughout the event multiple activities took place across the venues; the merchandising solution also worked well, as did the fan concepts, and the integration of partners. Concluding the report, Hausleitner noted that following the event in view to improving future events, further procedure on the side of the EHF includes the finalisation of the evaluation process that also encompasses feedback from the national federations (survey); the EHF remains ready to accept any and all input.

In the discussion that followed, Wiederer mentioned that despite the challenge of having a complex organisational structure that incorporated many new aspects (including some elements being in a test phase i.e. officiating), the picture presented to the outside world was overall positive.

CSO Glaser provided a preliminary report on the officiating system that included a recap of the changes implemented on 1 July 2019, as well as the different approach to EUROs where the 2020 event was viewed as an important test phase. To strengthen the preparation phase (09/2019 – 12/2019) the usual seminar was discontinued and in the months prior to the event an online platform was installed that dealt with two topics per month to which all delegates were also granted access. This was in addition to professional fitness testing by local accredited institutes and mental coaching. Immediately prior to the start of the EURO, a seminar for the nominated referees and delegates took place in Vienna where all relevant information was transmitted i.e. period of activity for each couple during the preliminary and main rounds. The arrangements for the final weekend were prepared later during the event. In the weeks that followed the event all officials provided feedback to the EHF that was treated in the February 2020 meetings of the Technical Referee Committee and the Competitions Commission; the input allows for the further evaluation of what elements can be adapted for the events as of 2022. Glaser underlined that though the logistics proved difficult, there were no major issues.

The stakeholders agreed that the resolution to expand the tournament to 24 teams was the right decision and the event showed the good development of the teams; the expansion also serves as a motivation for all mid-ranked teams. Furthermore, it was clarified that the Women's EHF EURO 2020 (12/2020 – NOR/DEN) will be the final event under the current EHF-Infront agreement, and the events from 2022 onward will be under the EHF/I&D agreement entering into force on 1 July 2020. The input from Infront concerning the SAN event was very positive and this was reflected as EHF and Infront shared a stage together at the Spobis conference in Germany where figures and information from the event were presented. It was stressed that through such platforms the organisation, in cooperation with its stakeholders, has to ensure that the message sent is that handball is a good and strong sport. Moving briefly to the financials, the accounting process is underway; the prognosis of the overall situation seems positive.

Men's EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK: the regulations for the event have been adapted, and the rundown was provided. The EURO Qualifiers draw event is scheduled to take place in April (Bratislava/SVK) in coordination with a workshop for the participants; at this time FIN, EST, and BEL have advanced from phase one to phase two. The Qualifiers will present with 7 groups of four teams and are scheduled to play during the national team weeks in November 2020, March, April, and May 2021.

The new EHF-I/D agreement will be in effect for this event and focus areas identified include more content, a digital campaign, and utilising opportunities to promote the event; the EHF will assume the responsibility for ticketing with its new partner Eventim. Veszprém has been removed from the venue concept in Hungary, and Bratislava and Košice are the confirmed venues in Slovakia with arena construction scheduled for completion in 2021. The next information exchange with the OC will take place on 11 March in Vienna.

Men's EHF EURO 2024 GER: the pitch for venues aims to be completed in the summer; with the football and handball EUROs to take place in the same year, there has been much consideration and work already undertaken on an organisational level.

Younger Age Category Events: with the M18 EURO/Championships draw event in Celje, all draws for all events have now been completed and match schedules are being coordinated. Event organisation

is under the responsibility of assigned staff members. The event in Bulgaria was returned to Varna due to costs. In the brief discussion that followed, concerns about the ongoing health crisis were raised, and possible remedies should events not being able to be carried out as scheduled in the awarded countries; it was noted that the EHF had opened the discussion not only surrounding YAC events, but also senior club, and national team events.

Awarding of EHF EURO Events: it is the aim of the EHF to remove the awarding of EHF EURO events from the framework of the election congress in order to allow for an unimpeded bid process; thus, it is foreseen to award EHF EUROs 2026 and 2028 in Autumn 2021 (*giving more preparation time to potential organisers*), together with the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the organisation. Further discussion will follow at the EXEC meeting.

IHF Events: President Wiederer mentioned his visit to Egypt and noted that there is much government support for the upcoming Men's World Championship, which delivers a positive outlook for the first expanded event with 32 teams. It was underlined that the expansion was necessary from the viewpoint of Europe as the continent has lost many places over the years due to different reasons; however, the enlargement sees an adapted match schedule providing one match less, rest days, and additional places for Europe. It was commented that future world championships – all of them in Europe (*2023 POL/SWE, 2025 CRO/DEN/NOR, 2027 GER*) - had good applicants and it was positive that federations continued to look far ahead.

Men's U19 IHF World Championship: the event was awarded to the Hellenic Handball Federation (GRE) and event period is 2 to 15 August 2021; due to the expansion of the competition to 32 teams, 14 places are available to European teams.

Other Competitions: the overview of beach handball activities in 2020 and 2021 was presented; a beach handball workshop took place in the previous week with Infront & Dazn; due to the different environment, the regulations applicable to beach handball were not ready, but are expected to be completed within the next days.

President Wiederer mentioned the initiative of the IHF to be part of the Paralympic movement in the future. To attain this target it was necessary for two IHF World Championships and two European Championships to have taken place prior to end of 2021, in order for a decision to be taken by the IPC in 2022 for the event in 2028. With the 1st EHF Wheelchair Handball EURO in November 2020 awarded to Sweden, the IHF approached the EHF regarding a possible joint event; at this time discussions are ongoing with the EHF-SWE-IHF to reach a workable solution. The EHF underlined its willingness to cooperate with the IHF for the benefit of promoting wheelchair handball. It was also mentioned that the prospect of the cooperation was exciting and that the infrastructure in Sweden to host such an event was in place. The national federations will be informed on the status of wheelchair handball activities in due course.

2.2. Club Competitions

An update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation as it pertained to the business was given; Glaser mentioned the matches in the various competitions that would be taking place without spectators. To the larger events such as the Final4s, the EHF continued to work towards the planned dates in the knowledge that the situation was subject to rapid change, however, it was at this point too early to make any definitive decisions. **Remark: please refer to the decisions taken after the meetings of the Boards.**

Briefing the participants on the current status of club competitions, the pertinent decisions taken at the Executive Committee meeting in January 2020 were reiterated; the decisions (i.e. player name on shirts in the EL, training times in the CL, EL TV obligations, entry fees, etc.) are reflected in the regulations that were distributed accordingly. In response to the question concerning deposits, and in particular the issue to secure competitions in specific cases of economic problems of a club, it was underlined that there is no money flow and the secured amounts are only to protect the competition – the deposit stems from the amount to be paid.

To the open topics, it was conceded that venue and spectator concepts was proving to be challenging as the organisation wants to move forward on the issue of venue capacity. With the new agreement in place for the next ten years as of 1 July, the EHF aims to be ahead by setting up plans and implementing visions to have reached the best possible presentation of the competitions and to be ready for the next tender process in 2027. With the dialogue ongoing, it is expected that the clubs can produce a proposal in early May 2020. Pertaining to ticketing as part of the spectator concept, specifically encouraging the away fans, the organisation had the idea to implement a package system where 50 tickets will be made available to the away club for a symbolic price in an effort to aid promotion; the clubs are on board with the idea. Glaser also spoke of the ‘European Handball Club Ranking’ to be implemented in the summer; this element directly relates to media activities aiding ‘storytelling’. The ranking will overlap different competitions and is expected to be of interest for the individual clubs and their fans; however, it will not replace the official ranking and seeding.

The EHF continues to work on the subject of officiating costs, and the current outline was described with referees getting an increased fee (according to the index) per match and an additional payment for matches played Tuesday to Thursday (in club competitions only men’s matches), as the women’s matches play on the weekend there are no changes foreseen for these competitions; the outline was still subject to approval by the Finance Delegation.

Glaser informed on the timeline of distributing information to the clubs with a reiteration of the playing dates. An information session has been scheduled for late April when it is expected that all decisions would have been approved by the Executive Committee. Prior to the distribution of the regulations and the registration of the teams, it is expected that another information package will be sent out all prior to the Men’s and Women’s EHF Champions League draw events on 1 July 2020.

3. EHF Activities

3.1. General Information: 15th Conference of Presidents, 13th Extraordinary EHF Congress, 12th Conference for Secretaries General

With the minutes of the 15th EHF Conference of Presidents and 13th Extraordinary EHF Congress distributed to the participants prior to the meeting, no special report was given; however, the EHF representatives remained at the disposal of the stakeholders for any questions they may have. Concerning the upcoming 12th Conference for Secretaries General, a brief overview of the topics and activities across the three day event was provided. Upon question, it was stated that most likely, a bus transfer from Vienna International Airport to the conference venue in Slovakia would be offered.

Remark: please refer to the decisions taken after the meetings of the Boards.

3.2. EHF Master Plan

Presenting a status update on the EHF Master Plan, JJ Rowland that the project has now entered its second phase following the initial research and consultation that incorporated surveys, workshops, and the input of the handball stakeholders. From this feedback, Rowland mentioned elements that were duly amended, which included the goal to be the most attractive team sport in terms of sports disciplines on the smaller field e.g. ahead of basketball, ice hockey, etc. He highlighted the

importance of the feedback and insights in terms being able to move in the right direction in terms of governance i.e. more investment in specific areas such as grassroots, women's handball, emerging nation and the significance of achieving targets (i.e. increasing reach and popularity) in the 7-year period until 2027.

The first phase of the plan was to identify targets that were eventually clustered into the '7 Players', and in the second round, the EHF returns to its stakeholders to focus on the individual and shared needs that will bring the stakeholders together (e.g. handball-at-school, etc.); a request for additional input by 20 March was stated. The ensuing short discussion covered areas of development such as the implementation of camera systems in SUI, the expansion of data chips in balls from suppliers other than Select, and the use of the Kinexon system in other federations.

Overall, most of the participants were already part of the different phases of the development of the Master Plan and the next steps will follow at the Conference for Secretaries General.

3.3. The Brand of Handball

Secretary General Hausleitner presented a brief overview of the changing face of the EHF; this included a recap of the evolution of the EHF logo, the modification of corporate identity fonts and colours, and how new elements are to be incorporated in event logos. The scheduled roll-out is 1 July 2020.

4. Other Issues

With no other items on the agenda, and with no additional topics raised, the participants were informed on the draw event for the 2021 Men's World Championship Play-Off Europe that would follow shortly after the meeting.

Concluding the common meeting, the participants were thanked for their collaboration.

For the Minutes: M. Brown

Vienna, 19 March 2020

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