

Minutes to the 21st Meeting of the (Men's) EHF Nations Board

Date / Time:	Monday, 9 March 2020 / 14:00 – 18:30	
Venue:	Hilton Garden Inn Vienna South – Meeting Room: Gloriette 6	
Participants:	Morten Stig Christensen	Chairman / DEN
	Mark Schober	Member / GER
	Marek Góralczyk	Member / POL
	Ingo Meckes	Member / SUI
EHF Office:	Michael Wiederer	EHF President
	Martin Hausleitner	EHF Secretary General
	Peter Sichelschmidt	EHF National Team Competitions
	Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison
Excused:	Philippe Bana	Vice Chairman / FRA
	Stephen Neilson	Member / GBR

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

Chairman Christensen welcomed the members to the meeting and noted that many agenda points were presented and treated in the common NB-EHLB meeting.

2. Previous meetings – Minutes/Reports

2.1. NB Meeting 10/2019

With no additional remarks, the minutes were adopted.

2.2. PHB Meeting 10/2019

2.3. EXEC Meetings 11/2019, 01/2020

2.4. 15th Conference of Presidents

2.5. 13th Extraordinary EHF Congress

With no additional remarks, the NB took note of the minutes.

2.6. Further Reports

President Wiederer made reference to the IHF Council meeting (03/2020 – EGY - minutes to be provided by the IHF) and remarked on the following points:

Report Europe: at the previous meeting (07/2019 – SWE) the European representatives requested that each continent deliver a report on their activities at the Council meetings as a formal agenda point. Thus, in March the EHF delivered a continental report; SATHF delivered a 'business plan'; no other continent reported on their activities.

Education Compensation: an initiative regarding Education Compensation was put before the Council in order to correct the procedure that failed to grant the compensation in respect to the quality of the player by reaching a contract in the respective receiving league to take into account the differences between the continental federations; this resulted in a formal motion which was approved by the Council. Therefore, the continents now have the possibility to define compensation amounts at their own level. The EHF will now work on this matter on an internal basis, and if any decisions are to be taken, they will be put before the EHF Congress.

Continental Referee Chief/PRC Lecturer Requirements: the IHF PRC Chairman produced two documents containing the criteria to be fulfilled in order to become a Continental Referee Chief respectively to be a PRC Lecturer and Referees Observer. It was noted that the EHF structure does not have the position of 'Chief Referee'.

Athletes' Commission: Igor Vori/CRO confirmed as a new Chairman, replacing Gro Hammerseng/NOR. As the former and current AC representatives are not affiliated to a players' union (i.e. EHPU) rather nominated via the national federations, it has to be seen how the IHF AC corresponds to the players' unions.

IHF Rules Working Group: at this time, there is no confirmed information in respect to a motion resulting from the meeting that took place in early February; thus no clear picture. On an IHF level tests are foreseen and the respective nations/leagues will be contacted respectively.

Further Information: the initiated 'IHF Beach Handball Global Tour' is new to the EHF; no involvement is currently foreseen.

3. EHF / World Competitions

As all topics under AP3 were discussed during the common meeting, only a brief discussion ensued (as written). A general request was made for the earlier preparation of the international calendar in the future (e.g. 2- 2.5 years for 2022/23). The suggestion was positively received, however, the NB was reminded that some calendar considerations remain at the international level.

3.1. *EHF EURO 2020 SWE/AUT/NOR – Review*

3.2. *EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK – Status Update (Qualifications / Final Tournaments)*

3.3. *2020 Summer YAC Events – Status Update*

3.4. *World Championships and Qualifications*

3.5. *Beach Handball*

The cost of YAC beach handball events was mentioned i.e. the costs being on par with senior events. The 2020 European event uses the same infrastructure (e.g. hotels, venues, etc.) as the world championship and the high season in the host countries has to be taken into account. If costs are to be lowered the question of how to support the organisers then arises, and support for beach handball is also lower in some countries. If beach handball becomes an Olympic discipline, it changes the picture yet again. In the future, there would be a more transparent differentiation between YAC and Senior events.

3.6. *Other Competitions*

3.7. *Wheelchair Handball*

Christensen spoke of an idea to showcase wheelchair handball during the Women's EHF EURO 2020, possibly in the fan zone, as it presents an excellent opportunity to promote this branch of the sport. This will be discussed at the coming EHF-OC meeting on 16 March. MSC also noted the growth of players with special needs (800+) in DEN. Hausleitner mentioned the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Special Olympics Europe and East Asia, where handball is already included, and the exchange of information is ongoing. It is expected that wheelchair handball will be part of the Paralympics in 2024; however, the decision for 2028 is to be taken in 2022. For transparency, the situation with special needs sports in Germany was clarified.

4. Follow-up to Common Meeting

4.1. EHF Master Plan

The Nations Board praised the presentation of the EHF Master Plan, specifically the idea of the '7 Players', and noted that further work could be done prior to the 12th Conference for Secretaries General where the plan could be discussed further. It was underlined that priorities needed to be set as all the work cannot be undertaken at once and it would be important to know what was realistic. The differences in the needs between federations was mentioned and working within the plan was not only about funding, but also about internal (i.e. federation) and external (i.e. political, governmental) structures. Thus, a key part of the plan would be to help nations identify what they need and, if and where possible, assist on clearly defined projects; the topics of professionalisation, regulations/criteria, strategic planning, concepts, etc. were also mentioned. Input by the NB members may be given via masterplan@eurohandball.com before 20 March 2020.

4.2. The Brand of Handball

In addition to the information given at the common meeting, Hausleitner added that during the implementation of the changes, there would be an additional workload for the federations.

5. Media and Marketing Agreement 2020+

5.1. Overall Report / Activities

There are still topics under discussion and others that are ready to be finalised. Regarding media sales, the NB are informed on the changes within the Infront structure and the subsequent impact on the work to be undertaken. Though work continues i.e. arrangement of TV partners for the EURO Qualifiers, satisfaction in the area is still not complete; however, it is expected that this will change around June. The positive work within the Task Forces, especially in the area of production e.g. highlights, team presentation, content spreading, was underlined. TF Events continues to work in a detailed way with the examples given of event rundown, and cube usage, and the dissemination of information via EURO App, as well as fan engagement and data procedures.

The EHF continues to be satisfied with the developments in the area of marketing sales i.e. the continued and increased interest in the final weekend sponsors' workshop where future events were presented. A brief comparison to the area of club competitions was made, noting that an intensive discussion is still ongoing as there is no central sponsor via the I/D cooperation for the competitions, all current sponsors were activated through the EHF handball network.

Hausleitner informed on the positive developments coming from the TF Digital such as the influencer projects and other campaigns, as well as the cooperation with DAZN, which has so far increased figures outside of the handball world. To this, the EHF is ready to invest more resources with the aim of delivering more content. The CRM project continues, as well as the implementation of various

strategies such as a unified accreditation system for journalists, national federations, etc. The objective is to create a large database. The Task Force is also working on an information strategy, supported by the database to provide information on various topics to targeted groups i.e. methodic. Closing the report, Hausleitner underlined the necessity of the HUB meetings with EHF as a coordination platform; it continues to function well.

5.2. Finances

Opening the point, the NB presented a case example – for information purposes only - about compensation for players being part of the delegation at national team events, but not utilised (on court / on the list), and the subsequent demand from clubs for compensation. At some events the delegation is larger to account for player replacements, injuries, etc. There are no additional monies to fund such requests; a feasible option would be to divide the same amount among the total number of players.

The NB was of the opinion that the finalisation of the EHF Master Plan should follow prior to proposals about EURO revenue sharing within the new agreement; the NB had submitted their inputs to the EHF and will await a proposal. The EHF budgets for the years 2021 and 2022 are completed, and it was suggested that the EHF reach a common understanding with the NB as to what is happening in this respect i.e. following EHF EURO 2022, there will be areas that can be discussed. To avoid the idea of the EHF not wanting to spend money, the differences between the EHF EUROs and the IHF World Championships was briefly mentioned in terms of distributions/prize monies.

Wiederer outlined the distribution plan for the Men's EHF EURO 2022; it was underlined that the distribution for the Men's EHF EUROs will progressively increase with each event from 2022 onwards for the duration of the agreement. For the next men's event, from the figures already presented at the Extraordinary Congress, it is obvious that the figures regarding payments to the participants can be increased, according to the presentation 2.58x in 2022. Payments to the officials will also increase accordingly, as will the payments to the four final teams. In the interest of the sport, it is intended that the final contribution and the bonus to the Champion will be higher than that of the other semi-finalists. In 2022, a total of EUR 4.5 will be spent on the 24 participating teams.

To avoid any misunderstanding, it was mentioned that the funding of the EHF Master Plan is already integrated in the EHF budgets of 2021 and 2022 under development, etc. It was noted that any changes in the future could be constructed differently, but not at the expense of the participants. The EURO distribution percentages (2008 Congress), the qualifications (no release fees to clubs, instead injury fees are paid by the EHF), and rights (qualifiers with the federations) situation were clarified once again to aid the discussion that followed. During the dialogue, it was mentioned that the current spending on YAC participation stands at EUR 350k; in the future this will eventually double. The outcome of the discussion resulted in the Nations Board being satisfied that following the EHF EURO 2022, the matter would be reevaluated. The positive sentiment around the EHF Master Plan was reiterated; and the discussion surrounding the finances, distribution, and the allocation of finances through the budget was deemed constructive. Therefore, the current situation was confirmed to be followed by a careful analysis for the period 2023/24.

5.3. Competition Related Matters

Hausleitner provided a breakdown of the shares for EHF EURO Qualifiers e.g. what was allocated to the men's and women's competitions, as well as the QP1 stage (for organisers and participants) and

QP2 (injury compensation, venue dressing, productions, etc.). Referee (incl. EURO Cup) costs are deducted; this results in EUR 750k to be distributed among the 28 participating federations – 60% through fixed amounts and 40% through the updated bonus catalogue. As determined via the Executive Committee, the fixed amount will not be less than in 2020; what is left over from the men's competition will go to the women's competition to ensure that nothing returns to the EHF budget. Due to the fact that discussions are ongoing concerning the women's qualifiers competition (three organisers, 24 teams in QP2, 4 places left in the qualification), no final decision has been made. An overview of the current bonus catalogue (that could provide an additional EUR 12k to each participating federation) was presented and the areas where the EHF was placing emphasis on were underlined.

The area of officiating - compensation for referees and delegates - was presented in the common meeting; this amounts are covered in the financial distribution (EUR 300k). It was underlined that officiating costs are still a working proposal to be approved by the EXEC.

The success of the 'Respect Your Talent' campaign within women's YAC events was reiterated; the campaign featured a camp in Vienna during the women's World Championship as well as representation from top players; there was much enthusiasm from all involved. The recipients of the campaign returned to their countries and gave positive feedback. It was apparent that it could be a project for burgeoning professionals to become involved in, giving the younger players the opportunity to learn from their peers. The project will be rolled out for male players in the upcoming YAC events, and it is hoped to incorporate more players from the Champions League and the EHF EURO. A 'RYT' Toolbox (guided by the EHF) will be rolled out to the federations to spread the message. Moreover, the EHF intends to introduce the project at the EU level.

Personality rights: the topic was discussed at the last meeting of the European Handball Players' Union (EHPU) and it is also on the next meeting agenda of the Professional Handball Board. The NB made it clear that players are essential to the promotion of the top events, but understood that the personal rights of the players have to be protected. It is necessary to clearly define what are rights and what are needs in this respect; balance must be found through conversation and harmonisation of interests.

Player Agents: to the previous request that the matter be examined, the EHF sought legal advice. The conclusion is that the situation is very complex and is made more difficult by the application of national law in the different countries, and European law, thus the EHF would be unable to regulate a system on this level. The EHF would be the 'weakest part' of such a structure, and it was underlined that agents would have to enter any system voluntarily. Experiences with agents were described; the NB conclusion was that an agents' system was feasible.

Kinexon: Hausleitner expanded on the 'teething problems' experienced with the implementation at the beginning of the EHF EURO; a workable solution was found by the middle of the main round. It was made clear that the position of Data Analyst (at the table) was missing; moreover, the level of 'product' was sorely underestimated by Swisstiming. This identified that more partner coordination was necessary from the start. Overall, the EHF did not receive all the benefits from the implementation at the EHF EURO and as a result the EHF, Kinexon, and Swisstiming are currently working in close cooperation to resolve the issues experienced and to find workable solutions prior

to the next event. The scope of the project was underlined, and it was noted that more teams will work together on this area in the future.

6. Various

Preparation PHB Meeting: No additional remarks.

COVID-19: The members discussed the current situation and shared related issues having arisen in their own countries/leagues, which included recommendations that had been imposed by national and regional authorities. It was noted that due to the rapidly changing situation, it was not able to define as to what would happen with the matches, or players should they become infected (resp. quarantined) or if the Final4 event in Cologne would have to be moved; the potential financial impact of re-scheduling such an event was briefly mentioned. It was hoped that clarification soon followed. It was stated that the EHF did hope to realise matches according to the planned schedule, but conceded that it was possible that the situation could change within the next days.

IHF Congress – Motion 6: it was questioned if a national federation that changed its statutes the approval from the IHF was necessary based on the justification presented with motion six (national federations applying for IHF membership), thus giving the IHF the opportunity to ensure that any statutory changes on a national level were in compliance with the IHF statutes. According to the IHF Statutes such changes have to be communicated to the IHF by the National Federations.

The Chairman thanked the participants for their contribution and closed the meeting.

For the Minutes: M. Brown
Vienna, 19 March 2020

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