
**Minutes to the Common Meeting of the
23rd EHF Nations Board (NB) & 6th European Handball League Board (EHLB)**

Date / Time: Monday, 12 October 2020 / 14:00 – 15:30

Venue: MS Teams Video Conference

Participants NB:

Morten Stig Christensen	Chairman / DEN
Philippe Bana	Vice Chairman / FRA
Mark Schober	Member / GER
Marek Góralczyk	Member / POL
Ingo Meckes	Member / SUI
Stephen Neilson	Member / GBR

Participants EHLB:

Nikolas Larsson	Chairman / SWE
Frank Bohmann	Vice Chairman / GER
Stefano Podini	Member / ITA
Patrice Hitz	Member / SUI
Alf Mangor Johannessen	Member / NOR
Thierry Wagner	Member / LUX

EHF:

Michael Wiederer	President
Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General

EHF Office:

Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
Peter Sichelschmidt	Senior Director National Team Competitions
Doru Simion (<i>in part</i>)	Senior Director Sport & Game Services
JJ Rowland	Director Business Development & Marketing
Marsha Brown	Office/Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1. Current Situation

President Wiederer welcomed the participants to the common meeting of the Nations Board and European Handball League Board convened to provide an exchange of information on the current status of activities.

1.2. 'Back-to-Handball' Information

Secretary General Hausleitner gave a brief recap of the period since March 2020; having made the decision of postponing and cancelling numerous events, the mission was to find a common basis to revive the sport. Several steps were taken, and the objective of the organisation was not only to inspire, but also to provide tools to get the handball community back to handball. A support programme was developed that provided both material and financial support. Additionally, the EHF Hygiene Concept was developed for club competitions and was subsequently adapted for national team competitions; this is a living document and was/will be updated as needed.

Furthermore, the ‘Back-to-Handball’ platform was created as an information exchange holding relevant documents. The National Federations and other handball stakeholders were encouraged to submit medical/health protocols and other useful information; the platform is updated on a regular basis. The latest step to be taken was the hosting of the 12th Conference for Secretaries General and the European Handball Convention; this was the first in-person event since the Europe-wide lockdown. The hybrid event was simultaneously streamed live with active participation from Federation representatives. The events received a positive reception.

On the level of the club competitions, much effort was undertaken to secure a successful start of the 2020/21 season, this included the organisation of charter flights for club teams, consistent negotiations with numerous national authorities in an endeavour to align the broader approach to travel and restrictions. Through these efforts it is estimated that almost 90% of all matches are played. The matches of the EHF EURO 2022 Qualifiers scheduled for late October/early November has led to an intensified coordination with the National Federations. To the upcoming Women’s EHF EURO 2020 in December, the organisation is working to ensure that it will be a reliable partner. Having returned to playing, handball has garnered a remarkable status on the sports market recognising that many sports are not in the same position.

2. Information on Competitions – Overall

2.1. National Team Competitions

Peter Sichelschmidt, Senior Director National Team Competitions, stated that between 15 March and 28 August 2020, the EHF had to cancel 180 matches. This action incorporated the W16 European Open, the Women’s EHF EURO Qualifiers rounds 3 to 6, as well as the Men’s IHF World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 2. Seven EHF YAC events (211 matches) were postponed, and at the IHF level over 300 matches were postponed or cancelled (W-ENCh, OG-QT, OG, WU18, WU20).

EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK – Status Update (Qualifiers / Final Tournament): an overview of the playing dates for the six rounds were provided; it was reiterated that those six teams participating in the Olympic Games Qualification Tournaments would play their round 3/4 matches in 01/2021 instead of 03/2021. Sichelschmidt briefly mentioned challenges faced by some teams in Group 3 that were not able to play on home ground; alternative playing locations were sourced. Preparations for the final tournament are ongoing despite the current situation, construction on the venues is underway, and collaboration on open issues such as accreditation, etc. continues. The final tournament draw is scheduled for 6 May 2021.

A discussion ensued concerning available options should it not be possible to play the qualifiers in November. For brevity, the key points and statements are summarised. It is not in the interest of the sport to continue to postpone matches due to the calendar situation in 2021. At this time, there is no ‘Plan B’, the intention is to play, and if play is not possible at all the matter will be dealt with on a specific basis. As previously stated, the EHF is in close contact with all National Federations involved, support measures are in place (i.e. hygiene concept, antigen tests), and moreover, the EHF is staying informed on the different regulations and restrictions in the various countries and continuously working on how to best present the qualifiers with the least negative impact. It is accepted that under current

conditions it is not to be expected that teams (club and national) will have the optimum squad; therefore, the EHF aims to optimise conditions to the best of their ability. It was underlined that if the minimum conditions are met, the match in question will be played; an administrative decision to decide the outcome of a match remains undesired.

EHF EURO 2024 GER –Qualifiers: all teams participating in Phase 1 of the Qualifiers will receive financial support of EUR 2.000; the Organisers will receive EUR 10.000; costs for referees and delegates (excl. accommodation) will be borne by the EHF. The registration deadline is 14 October 2020. The event to be played in a tournament format is scheduled for January 2021.

2.2. Club Competitions

The current status of club competitions was presented by CSO Markus Glaser; he noted that since the start of the season on 29 August, problems had been experienced across the club competitions. Despite that, and over the past six weeks of play, the EHF has experienced a success rate of nearly 90% of all matches played and with all challenges being dealt with on a case-by-case basis with individual solutions being sought. It was conceded that the major challenge of the moment is finding dates to reschedule the small number of matches that could not be played; cooperation with the relevant parties is ongoing. As the European League starts on 20 October, it is expected that some matches will be ‘lost’, but the objective remains to keep the playing quotient high. In response to the query of a deadline to play rescheduled matches, it was stated that objective is to have them played by the end of December 2020 though the EHF is aware that it will have to be flexible if necessary. Closing the agenda point, it was underlined that the cooperation with the leagues and clubs is on a very good level that fosters an open dialogue.

3. EHF Activities

3.1. General Information

3.1.1. 12th EHF Conference for Secretaries General

3.1.2. European Handball Convention

The minutes from both the 12th EHF Conference for Secretaries General and the European Handball Convention were distributed on 1 October 2020; all content e.g. summaries, presentations were uploaded to the ‘Back-to-Handball’ platform. Reflecting on the success of the first in-person administrative event since the Europe-wide lockdown, President Wiederer once again thanked the participants for being part of the event, especially those who managed to travel to Vienna in mid-September.

3.1.3. Ordinary EHF Congress / Extraordinary EHF Congress in 2021

A full rundown of the 15th Ordinary EHF Congress including the election procedure was given during the European Handball Convention; Wiederer reiterated the first documents, in keeping with the statutory timeline, will be sent to the National Federations on 23 October 2020.

3.1.4. Other Activities

Following the presentation of the bidding process for the Men’s and Women’s EHF EUROs in 2026 and 2028, much interest has been shown by the National Federations. To date, 14 letters of intent were received at the EHF Office. On 1 November, the application forms will

be distributed, the deadline for all applications is 1 May 2021. The awarding of the four future EURO events will take place on 19 November 2021 on the fringes of the EHF 30th anniversary celebrations.

4. Various

4.1. Meeting CAL 2021

The 2021 meeting overview was mailed to the National Federations and the stakeholders as part of the minutes from the 09/2020 meeting of the Executive Committee. It was noted that following the elections in April 2021, the next electoral period starts immediately after the congress, thus, the committees and boards will meet to select the chairpersons and decide on the delegations. The meetings on the list that follow the Congress are reproduced for orientation.

4.2. Players' Agents

Opening the topic, it was mentioned that the topic of player agents is not new and has been on the agenda of many different meetings. The matter is not held in high regard when looking to unsuccessful project outcomes in other team sports. An initiative looking at how to regulate players' agents started by the club stakeholder (MFCH) was described, as was the subsequent approach of agents' representative towards the EHF to start the dialogue. The response of the EHF was neutral as it was clear that the matter had to be put to the platforms of the Professional Handball Board (PHB) and Women's Handball Board (WHB). In preparation of the upcoming PHB meeting, the NB and EHLB were requested to discuss the topic in their individual meetings to follow. To emphasise the difficulties in regulating the players' agents, the following facts were presented by Doru Simion, Senior Director of Sport and Game Services:

- **Two separate studies (11/2009 & 10/2019) stated similar conclusions and recommendations:**
 - ✦ Three totally different "pillars" are acting currently
 - *IHF – as "reigning owner" of transfers and players agents' regulations*
 - *Legal framework of every single nation*
 - *Legal framework existing and governing within European Union*
 - ✦ First and foremost, as a basic common point it needs:
 - *To unify and to harmonise the respective activity in terms of legal framework*
 - ✦ No EHF existing legal tools for administrating – not current valid possibility to link and to include the activity of players' agents into the EHF legal system

Moreover, acting as an agent is a free choice; it is not a profession, but a vocational calling. There is no need for harmonisation, but rather a deliberate need of practical coordination of the parties involved; first and foremost of course, players and clubs; and at the level of the EHF, there are weekly issues born by the procedural mixture of clubs–players–agents, which are mostly not a subject of the transfers, but topics for the Civil Court in terms of the linked relation: employer–employee–negotiator. Simion continued mentioning the number of transfers in the 2018/2019 season (3774 [1083 Professionals]), and the facility available to National Federations since the 2019/2020 season to directly register their professional players on the EHF family platform; here they can see the status of the players. This system

provides a requisite transparency. In the brief discussion that followed, it was stated that the stakeholders should try to move the topic forward in a different way i.e. certification, registration, and it was conceded that regulations would be difficult to formulate. It was hoped that a middle ground could be settled. It was agreed that the discussion would continue during the individual meetings.

4.3. Education Compensation

A brief status update was given to the topic of Education Compensation; this follows a specific process on the level of the IHF in a global context. The IHF gave the Continental Federations the permission to define regulations within their own continents. It is the intent of the organisation to find a solution that is bearable and useful for the producers of the talented players, and it is also to be understood whether a proposal should be prepared in view of a Congress (major question) or should the matter end with the Executive Committee (minor question). Therefore, the matter was placed on the agenda of the upcoming PHB meeting. Simion added the following points for consideration:

At its origins, compensation for education was created and implemented to ease the way for the free movement of players within Europe in accordance with European Law/EU Standards (01.07.2004). Various adaptations and changes have been implemented since the IHF took over the administration of the transfers activity worldwide (01.07.2011). Primarily, Education Compensation targets only professional players aged 16 to 23 years old who are finishing their official agreement (educational included) with the releasing club and gaining the professional status in the receiving club – currently, following an adopted EHF motion, also the amateur players – same age period – becoming professional in the receiving clubs. As the amounts linked to the education compensation are reflecting the ranking of the nations (releasing – receiving) according with the IHF classification(s), which are accounting for global competitions, a fair and correct approach presumes reference to the continental, respectively to the European, activities.

It was underlined that an equitable ranking must be found for the competitions at the European level in this regard. Whilst the complexity of the matter was granted, it was agreed that the situation need reform. It was also made clear that concerning transfer regulations, any revision would be a big step as these regulations are governed by the IHF. As the topic touched all stakeholder areas, it was agreed that the matter would be discussed further in the individual meetings.

With no other topics raised, the meeting was closed by President Wiederer who thanked the participants for their contributions to the joint session.

Vienna, 16 October 2020

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