

MINUTES TO THE 6TH MEETING OF THE EHF NATIONS COMMITTEE MEN

Date: Monday, 13 March 2023

Time: 11:00 – 16:30

Venue: Renaissance Wien Hotel

Participants NCM:

Ingo Meckes	Chairman SUI
Jari Henttonen	Vice Chairman FIN
M. S. Christensen	Member DEN
Mark Schober	Member GER
Fintan Lyons	Member IRL

Excused: Bertrand Gille Member | FRA (Excused)

EHF Office:

Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General (in part)
Mario Kovacic	Director National Teams
Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison Minutes

1. Welcome & Introduction

1.1. NCM Meeting 10/2022 – Minutes and Follow-up

With no additional comments or questions, the minutes to the autumn session were approved.

1.2. Follow-up to Common Meeting

The resin-free ball and the Infront contract would be discussed under AP3. Miscellaneous.

2. Men's National Team Competitions

2.1. 2024 Younger Age Category Events – Preview

The NCM are informed that bids have been received for the M20 and M18 EURO events in 2024, but as the bids are currently under evaluation in view of the awarding at the meeting of the Executive Committee (03/2023), no additional information could be given to the NCM at this point.

In the ensuing discussion, the NCM also questioned the overall objective of the changes to the YAC event system. With a view to the teams and the respective National Federations, the goal was to develop YAC National Teams and raise the level of some lower-ranked/emerging nations, provide young players with international experience, etc.; thus, the focus was mainly on the players. However, changes to the organisational aspects and the competition structure have also been improved over the years. Nonetheless, there was no strategic plan laid out for certain organisational aspects.

The NCM requested more transparency on the long-term strategy for the National Federations in view of the events beyond 2024 and looking to the future of the YAC events, the NCM members were agreed that further discussion was warranted to discuss various matters and possible solutions:

- Awarding of YAC event - linking the awarding of the (Men's)EHF EURO to a YAC event
- Finances: increasing the daily allowance, TV and marketing rights, and financial support
- Organisational challenges in view of venues, accommodation, and standards
- Promotion, marketing, and the monetising of the events as still the best result is for a host to break even, as many YAC events operate at a loss for the organisers
- The bidding documents for the YAC Championships are still dependant on the registrations to the YAC EURO events.

2.2. IHF Events 2023

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting.

2.3. Beach Handball

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting. The NCM had a brief exchange on the professionalisation (registration of players, coaches education and licensing, etc.) and popularisation (event concepts, promotional tour, monetisation, TV/marketing) of the sport. Further ideas included bringing the sport to larger cities (Beach Handball Tour), collaboration with other sport disciplines, and additional financial investment among other things incl. local authority funding. The expense of having a beach handball team was also mentioned in view of the international tournaments i.e., travel costs to global locations outside of Europe to the World Games.

The situation of the players was also mentioned, as most players also play the indoor sport, and beach handball is the summer activity for these players; in order to develop beach handball, it would need dedicated players and more competitions; the idea of indoor venues for year-round play was also voiced. Aside from the input, the positive work of the Beach Handball Commission was underlined and the discussion of the NCM would be raised with the BC Chairwoman G. Horvath.

2.4. Other Events

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting.

2.5. EHF EURO Events 2024 – 2028

2.5.1. EHF EURO Qualifiers | Status Update

- EHF EURO 2024 (GER) Qualifiers: the completion of Round 4 was briefly mentioned.
- EHF EURO 2024 (AHS) Qualifiers: 32 registrations have been received and the matches will commence in October 2023; therefore, no Qualification Phase 1 will be played for this event. Based on this information, the first challenges have arisen from the sphere of the emerging nations with a request for assistance (infrastructure) to enable participation – a meeting with the Federation in question is to be arranged to find a solution prior to the draw on 20 April. The situation including challenges, risks, and potential consequences was discussed.

2.5.2. EHF EURO 2024 GER – Organisation

2.5.3. EHF EUROs 2026/2028

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting.

2.6. Other Competitions/IHF Competitions

- World Championship Qualification Europe Phase 1: Member Henttonen informed on the concerns of some National Federations to register to the competition due to the potential financial impact if the system moves away from the tournament format (1 week in one location) to the Home/Away format (6 matches). It was noted that some National Federations would not register for the competition if it will be played in the H/A format; thus, it was requested that a confirmation on the system is given to the National Federations as soon as possible.

3. Miscellaneous

- Sportradar/Match Fixing: referring to the information provided during the common meeting, the NCM were of the opinion that to maintain transparency, the processes (Sportradar Alert System, Whistle-blower Platform, and activation of the Initiator of Proceedings) need to be communicated to the National Federations and placed on the EHF website. This also will show both internal and external parties that the organisation treats such matters with the required seriousness.
- Resin-Free Ball: Hausleitner reiterated information arising from the IHF working group on the resin-free ball (C. Machado, ESP/EHF Representative) that it is foreseen that the next testing phase for the resin-free ball would be the MU19 World Championship in Croatia. It was noted that this did not correspond to information filtered to some National Federations, and the NCM asked that the EHF seek for confirmation.
- EHF – Infront Contract: upon question, Hausleitner confirmed that the changes to the long-term media and marketing agreement would not financially impact the agreement specific to the National Teams (EHF EURO). The adaptations are on a services level, with Infront taking over the majority of services (i.e., clipping, etc.); the standards would remain the same. The guaranteed amounts remain secure. It was noted that in the first cycle, it was not possible to gain additional shares due to the impact caused by the pandemic and the RUS/BLR/UKR. Hausleitner briefly mentioned how the changes affect the agreement on the club side, and mentioned despite the difficulty of the current market, EHF positively stated that it has a chance to earn back the money lost from the exit of DAZN, as the marketing rights have now been reacquired by the clubs. The NCM stated that the topic (and the information provided) would be mentioned at the meeting of the Nations Board to follow.
- RUS/BLR: in view to participation of team RUS and BLR in qualifications to upcoming competitions, a decision from the EHF Executive Committee is imminent. At this time, no additional information can be given.

- Workshop for the Smaller Nations | Status Update

Member Lyons revisited the topic and emphasised the need to bring members of the smaller nations together in a forum for an exchange of information targeted at specific subject matter. He also referred to the minutes of previous NCM and NB meetings (NCM°3, NCM°4, NB°3, NB°4) where the matter of a workshop was discussed, to date, there was still no definitive feedback from the EHF. He continued by presenting a picture of the current situation for some smaller nations and asked the question if England [*Associated Federation*] would consider itself as an emerging nation based on real results, despite being ‘bigger’ in terms of numbers and finances than the other countries within the British Isles. Making his point, Lyons also mentioned a recent competition between Scotland and Ireland and the benefit thereof and stated that it has been wished by IRL to have a cross-border cooperation with GBR and in this context, Lyons would like the opportunity to discuss such matters (of leadership, opportunities, and best practice) with GBR.

Lyons also mentioned that some of the agenda points raised at the Women’s Handball Conference in Slovenia would also be of relevance for the smaller nations; and looking to the ‘Master Plan’ he stated that looking to the application document, if a nation could answer all the questions, it was ‘well on its way’ to being developed based on the resources already at the disposal of these nations. Therefore, he felt that there was a gap in the Master Plan where some smaller nations could use the Master Plan as guidelines (a step) to grow and some assistance or support would be necessary in order for them to achieve the next level of development. Lyons stated that the Master Plan project was still, for some nations, too advanced despite the plans being individualised. It was noted that some Federations do not have the resources to deliver the plan organisationally (i.e., personnel), and most are overly dependent on state aid.

Following the statement of Member Lyons, Chairman Meckes agreed that a development workshop for specific nations was necessary, and the recommendation needed to be supported at the level of the EHF. The NCM was also in agreement that the issues/challenges among the smaller/emerging nations needed to be explored once again to determine any common aspects where support is needed (i.e., the development of the player pathway, infrastructure, best practice examples, etc.). The NCM Chairman will follow up on the matter.

With no further topics raised, Chairman Meckes closed the meeting with thanks to the NCM Members for their contribution.

Vienna, 17 March 2023

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