

## MINUTES TO THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE EHF NATIONS COMMITTEE MEN

**Date:** Monday, 16 October 2023

**Time:** 11:00 – 16:30

**Venue:** Renaissance Wien Hotel

**Participants NCM:**

Ingo Meckes	Chairman   SUI
Jari Henttonen	Vice Chairman   FIN
Mark Schober	Member   GER
Fintan Lyons	Member   IRL

**Excused:**

M. S. Christensen	Member   DEN
Bertrand Gille	Member   FRA

**EHF Office:**

Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison   Minutes
Max Riede	YAC Coordinator

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### 1. Welcome & Introduction

#### 1.1. NCM Meeting 03/2023 – Minutes and Follow-up

Opening the meeting, NCM Chairman Ingo Meckes made note of the agenda and looked forward to an interesting and productive meeting.

#### 1.2. Follow-up to Common Meeting

It was mentioned that input from common topics would be dealt with at the respective points in the agenda.

### 2. Men's National Team Competitions

#### 2.1. 2024 Younger Age Category Events – Preview

Using the information provided during the common meeting as the basis, the discussion was opened. The following points were emphasised: the expansion to 24 teams commences in 2024 for the men, and 2025 for the women. The awarding timeline of the YAC EURO events will not change; thus, remains approx. 18 months prior to the event. The awarding timeline of the M20 & M18 Championships are, for some potential organisers, dependent on the outcome of the M18 Qualification Tournaments (05.-07.01.2024) in order to decide on which Championship event category (M20 or M18) they are willing to bid for; the bidding process will open following the conclusion of the Qualification Tournaments. YAC Championships are a 'smaller' event geared at teams from Federations ranked 25-33 and have less organisational requirements compared the YAC EURO. Out of the discussion, concerns also arose to the lateness of the bid/awarding process, especially in relation to the M20 Championships, where it was thought that it could suffer from unavailability of venue, reduce marketing opportunities, etc.

The YAC 2024 playing system (3 venues, 96 matches, 8 matches per team) presented at the common meeting is an internal working document; the graphical presentation of the document will be improved once it is confirmed. The benefit of how the playing system is created will ensure all teams know when they arrive and when they depart; this will help when organising travel, and it will engage the teams in competition.

The NCM Members discussed the playing system in-depth, and from the outset stated that the matter needed to be discussed within the Nations Board as it affected all National Federations. The NCM raised the following questions and concerns to the playing system:

- It will not be easy to rank first in the group (strong competition at the beginning), and there is the risk of the host team and 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked team not advancing to the next stage; only teams ranked 1<sup>st</sup> have a decent shot at the title.
- The definition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked team; it has to be the same across the board.
- The system is more important for the M20 event than the M18 event, and only interesting for those teams ranked 9 to 16.

The NCM also agreed that an EHF strategy is necessary for the overall approach to the YAC. In particular the following topics need a clear position:

- What is the overall EHF strategy pertaining to the YAC competitions?
- Who are the YAC events aiming to attract?
- Furthermore what is the strategy regarding media, finances and the technical development.

Again, it was reiterated that some nations do not consider hosting a YAC event as it is an automatic economic loss for the Federation, the same nations host the YAC events time and again, and the standards of the YAC events have to be revisited. It was underlined that the EHF needed to first “decide upon a strategy, and then create a playing system, and not the other way round”.

Acknowledging the input from the NCM and noting it for further consideration, CSO Glaser responded that surrounding the ongoing discussion around the YAC events, at the time, a key factor was the event duration as the stronger nations were against the enlargement of the competition. He mentioned that the solutions presented by the EHF are mainly resulting from a compromise.

Other topics that could impact the future of the EHF YAC events were briefly discussed; these points will be mentioned in the meeting of the Nations Board; concerning the IHF development idea of introducing U17 WC, it was stated that there is no clarity on the matter, and it is difficult to find information as no documentation is available.

## 2.2. Beach Handball

Chairman Meckes questioned the possibility of making handball a year-round sport (i.e. a fusion of indoor/beach) with the idea of placing beach handball within the scheduled National Team Weeks. This could potentially give the coaches the option (after delegations have been determined) to send some players to beach handball training.

In response, CSO Glaser assured that the input would be taken into consideration together with findings of the evaluation of the 2023 events. The difficulties concerning the international beach handball calendar were mentioned during the common meeting (see AP 3.4./3.5.1). Time and resources are needed for exploring a strategy in line with the ideas of the NCM. Moreover, such a strategy/vision would also have to indicate where beach handball is positioned in relation to indoor handball and what is the role of beach handball in relation to the '7 Pillars' of the EHF Master Plan. It was agreed that the topic would be raised at the meeting of the Nations Board.

## 2.3. EHF EURO Events 2024 – 2028

### 2.3.1. EHF EURO Qualifiers | Status Update

There was a common understanding that the large difference in some of the results produced negative comments and are not good for the competition. CSO Glaser acknowledged this, but underlined that an immediate change of the competition system is not an option to be discussed already after Week 1 of the Groups. Still, learnings from the way how the games are presented on TV need be evaluated. In any case, there was the position of the NCM that, if there are to be any changes, it is important for 'Regulations' to be a topic for the Nations Board whether in a scheduled meeting or an interim coordination session.

### 2.3.2. EHF EURO 2024 GER | Organisation

### 2.3.3. EHF EUROs 2026/2028

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting.

## 2.4. Other Events & IHF Activities

Information was provided on the 2023 European Olympic Youth Festival (EYOF), the Masters Games (IMGA), and other events. The internal evaluation mentioned various issues that need to be clarified as the information around and preparation of these events have room for improvement.

## 3. Miscellaneous

### 3.1. EHF EURO Qualifiers Phase 1 | Further Discussion | Development in the Future

No additional comment.

### 3.2. Emerging Nations Round Table | Review & Follow-Up

In addition to the report given during the common meeting; Lyons added that within the level of the Emerging Nations, the difference in the scale of the problems is large. During the meeting, many

topics of interest were presented, and the Master Plan was also discussed in depth. Member Lyons complimented the EHF on the serious approach and delivering the resources to realise the meeting. He also underlined that for the Emerging Nations, it is valuable being part of the EHF, if the sport and its protagonists continue to act with integrity, if interest is shown, it is important to keep the Emerging Nations involved and engaged. Additionally, there is a need to look at the competitions and the way certain countries have a “stepping-stone” to participation (e.g. Challenge Trophy); some countries have united to create cross-border collaborations (Baltic League, Nations Tournament). There are actions that will have an impact for ‘smaller’ nations (i.e. competitions for micro nations), which could see a GBR (ENG, IRL, SCO, WAL); it was suggested that a Master Plan could be used to drive such a programme, noting how the Master Plan has been used differently. Lyons reported that IRL handball is currently rebranding and part of this is encouraging more people to come to the sport, and also added that the IOHA is also actively working with GBR.

### 3.3. Other:

Bearing the information presented at the common meeting in mind surrounding the upcoming EHF EURO event in Germany and as a result of some discussions, the NCM agreed that the site visits of the participating Federations need to be part of the regulations. Using the unwritten option of host nations that have preferential options available (e.g., first choice of locker/changing rooms at venues), the NCM stated that for the sake of transparency, such options should be in writing.

Member Schober brought the topic of ticket contingents to the NCM for further discussion. As per the current regulations the host nation must agree to block contingents of tickets (i.e. for each participating Federation but also for Partners). The problem is that having been taken out of circulation for general sale, only a small percentage of these tickets are sold. Thus, the contingents are too big and needs to be revised. Furthermore, the centralised ticketing for EHF events (Eventim) is leading to problems for those nations with local (contracted) ticketing agencies.

The NCM raised concern that the awarding of the 2030 and 2032 EHF EUROs was too early and that local authorities would not promise funds for an event so many years in advance.

Turning to the regulations and looking to the development of the product and the sport in general, the idea of having events that reflect the level of a Federation was floated; for instance, this would mean that venue requirements would vary based on the ranking of the national federation. However, this was questioned as to if this was only going to lead to exceptions when the main objective is to raise the level of competitions/events in the future.

Regarding the Congress motion touching the Administrative Sanctions Schober suggested that the NCM/NB could work with the EHF to find a solution for a next attempt. With the majority of the National Federations during the Congress not in favour, it was deemed that a lack of understanding on the nature of the motion and its effect caused the motion to fail again. Furthermore, there is a

common understanding that information needs to be provided to where the income from administrative sanction is going.

Following a brief discussion the postponement of the Coaches Challenge was basically welcomed as technical details seemed not to be understood by all stakeholders and therefore led to a very restrictive use of the Coaching Challenge. Coaches Challenge: following a brief discussion, the NCM agreed that the risk of losing a challenge, and subsequently losing a team time-out, was too tough.

FCH Assembly (Mallorca, ESP): arising from the brief discussion, the NCM was concerned that the media strategy could have an effect on the nations at some levels. It was encouraged with the signs that the club product can be improved, and further meetings with Infront will be scheduled to deal with this sensitive issues.

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

Vienna, 24 October 2023

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