

Minutes to the 21st Meeting of the Professional Handball Board

Date / Time:	Tuesday, 9 October 2018 / 8:30 – 13:00	
Venue:	Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Vienna/AUT - Gloriette 4	
Participants:	Predrag Bošković	Member EXEC
	Stefan Lövgren	Member EXEC
	Morten Stig Christensen	Member NB
	Philippe Bana	Member NB
	Gregor Planteu	Member FCH
	Gerd Butzeck	Member FCH
	Nikolas Larsson	Member EHLB
	Frank Bohmann	Member EHLB
	Michael Sahl Hansen	Member EHPU
	Marcus Rominger	Member EHPU
	Michael Wiederer	EHF President
	Martin Hausleitner	EHF Secretary General
	Markus Glaser	EHF Chief Sports Officer
	Marsha Brown	EHF Corporate Liaison

1. Welcome and Introduction

President Wiederer welcomed the participants to the 21st meeting of the Professional Handball Board (PHB); since the introduction of this major part of the European structure on the side of men's handball, there is a real platform where all the stakeholders are present and can contribute to and collect information on EHF activities. This is an exchange between the EHF and all the stakeholders, but mainly between the stakeholders themselves and this is of relevance to the business, and it has proven to have brought the sport forward.

In the middle of the 4-year mandate, the PHB entered a special situation due to the resignation of Chairman Xavier O'Callaghan (representing the clubs), which was met with regret as the stakeholders are aware that his contribution to club matters was great; he was also a good partner to the EHF as he always strove to find the right balance in his various functions. At the last MFCH meeting, Gregor Planteu (MFCH Vice President and from Slovenia) was nominated to succeed O'Callaghan in the PHB. Also affecting the PHB was the introduction of a newly configured league stakeholder, the European Handball League Board (EHLB). The efforts of the EHF to strengthen the group stakeholder leagues began with an initial meeting in February; the first General Assembly of the European Handball Leagues was held at the end of June and was followed by a brief initial meeting of the EHLB. The second meeting took place in September. Nikolas Larsson (SWE – EHLB Chairman) and Frank Bohmann (GER) who was in the PHB in his function as EPHLA Chairman [*though not brand new, it was a new configuration*] now represent the EHLB. Therefore, the process to elect a new chairman and vice chairman of the PHB would come later on the agenda; the EHF would chair the meeting.

Planteu and Larsson were welcomed to their first meeting of the PHB and were given time to make a personal introduction to the members.

2. PHB Meeting 03/2018 – Minutes and Follow-up

Items discussed in the previous meeting return to the agenda of the current meeting. Other activities that took place prior to the current meeting will be reviewed. Member Butzeck reminded the members that there was to be an evaluation of the handball report from the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil; at the last meeting handball as an Olympic sport was discussed, and the information received thus far was not encompassing, and it is a natural topic of interest. The EHF will meet with the IHF in the coming week and this subject will be broached. With no additional comment, the minutes were approved.

3. EHF Information

3.1. Executive Committee / EHF Marketing GmbH

The minutes of the latest meeting were distributed initially in September, and were provided in copy to all the PHB members. Vice President Bošković gave a brief report on the 142nd meeting of the Executive Committee that was held at the FC Barcelona compound at the invitation of the former MFCH Chairman, Xavier O’Callaghan, who unfortunately could not attend the meeting. At the meeting, the known issues and challenges discussed included, but were not limited to:

- ◆ finances (overall in good shape)
- ◆ national federation accounts (no major problems)
- ◆ business partnerships (Salming, Gerflor – negotiations ongoing)
- ◆ event organisation/club competitions (sponsorship issues with two clubs – situation being handled; current season started well)
- ◆ EHF EURO (2018 FRA – organisation and ticketing situation, 2020 SAN – ongoing)
- ◆ match technologies (discussions ongoing)
- ◆ motions (mainly technical motions with no effect on the competitions)
- ◆ technical commissions.

With no additional comments to the meetings in March, June, and September, the members took note of the minutes and the report resp. the information that several points would be on the PHB agenda as well.

Secretary General Hausleitner reported on the most recent business of EHF Marketing GmbH. At the meeting of the EHF Advisory Board in September, the following major topics were dealt with: the replacement of Xavier O’Callaghan and the welcoming of new members to the board. Also, the restructuring of the Advisory Board including the Rules of Procedure impacted by the EHF-MFCH Memorandum of Understanding that was completed at the most recent EHF General Assembly was on the agenda; the new structure foresees an adapted situation with the EHF Comptrollers Council, as well as the introduction of the new Men’s Club Board (MCB) with a first meeting scheduled for 11/2018. Referring to the EHF Budget update, in light of the difficulties surrounding the partnership with MP&Silva, EHF was able to compensate for the issue still with a positive result; the marketing matters will be handled by EHF until the activation of the new partnership contract in 2020.

Concerning the new partnership with Nordstream, the deal will positively impact the business, but EHF/M remained aware of the conflicts, and solutions – together with the parties involved - are being suggested. Overall, a positive effect for the next two seasons is expected. Another major topic was

the future cooperation with Infront/Perform which will force some changes on the professional level. Further information was given later in the agenda. It was noted that as EHF was the parent company, the EHF Executive Committee received all information coming from EHF.

3.2. 14th Ordinary Congress of the European Handball Federation

Giving a short report on the last EHF Congress, President Wiederer deemed the event a success from the point of view of the EHF. The important event was the first full congress with the new Executive Committee. Prior to the Congress much emphasis was placed on the preparation of the documents that were delivered in a reasonable way independent of the political nature; the comprehensive information enabled a reasonable rundown. Generally speaking, the Congress was conducted under a positive atmosphere and was well organised. It was highlighted that yet another 'small' nation had organised a good Congress. The outcome delivered overall positive results with transparent decisions and without any misunderstandings. With the minutes at hand, there were no comments. Closing the agenda point, Wiederer provided the Nations Board with an overview of upcoming administrative EHF events:

- ◆ 14th Conference of Presidents – 1 June 2019 – Cologne, GER (*VELUX EHF Final4*)
- ◆ 15th Conference of Presidents – January 2020 – Stockholm, SWE
- ◆ 13th Extraordinary EHF Congress – January 2020 – Stockholm, SWE (*EURO Finals*)
(*Confirmation of Congress 2021 LUX [legalities]; budget update 2020; budget 2021-2022; together with the Conference of Presidents*)
- ◆ 15th Ordinary EHF Congress – April 2021 – Luxembourg
(*All EHF bodies will be elected according to the 2018 statutory changes*).

3.3. Anti-Doping: Status report

Wiederer declared once again the European Handball Federation continued to work on anti-doping measures. This is an important topic as there was a critical phase in the past when not enough focus was placed on the activities and this led to serious criticism from the public. The process to establish the EHF Anti-Doping Unit (EAU) was complex as the international federations are the contract partners of WADA, permission and support from the International Handball Federation (IHF) was requisite in order to open the upon and to get a WADA sub-license. There is much financial investment in the EAU and it proves to the handball community at large that the EHF is taking care of this area of the business; this is a safeguarding measure. The IHF can use the EHF data which can then be provided to the IOC.

The activities of the EAU are not standard procedure; it was done at the urging of the Federations and is now being undertaken in a consequential manner. There is testing in all youth and junior competitions, and educational measures were also implemented. The EHFU was approached by the EHF to use the topic of anti-doping to strengthen the ties as stakeholders for the future to provide information to the players, so that the players are confident due to the fact that they are well informed on the subject matter and they can protect themselves.

In response to a question of anti-doping education, it was said that prior to all YAC events, specific information is distributed to all the players telling them to register for the anti-doping online education course and complete the training and subsequent questionnaire; thus the players are actively taking part. The eLearning platform was introduced last season and meant that everyone

could take part; each national team also had to nominate a person to be responsible for anti-doping matters. The EAU/EHF continues to work on the subject of education as there have been some language problems, and is also aware that some countries have their own systems. However, what was faced was the fact that young players often had no idea about doping matters e.g. in 2018 there were three doping cases all arising from YAC competitions concerning players aged 16-17 years, and they were of the opinion that they had not done anything wrong. Therefore, the EAU identified and targeted those specific nations that required more input.

Member Christensen added that this was not only a task for the EHF, but for every European national federation; when a player is called for the very first time to the national team, the federation should be obliged to inform the player on anti-doping regulations. It was suggested that there be guidelines for this. He also mentioned match-fixing as another threat towards the sport and its players, as it is important to reach the young players on both matters. In Denmark, match-fixing and anti-doping are under the same umbrella and there is also a Code of Conduct for the players; a key element thereof is to not to place bets on your own sport/matches; this is the easiest way to avoid any issues down the line. Wiederer added that it was positive a country was moving ahead in this area, and agreed that anti-doping was not only an issues for the EHF and also not only a matter in question related to EHF competitions; anti-doping topics should be taken into a pyramid and transferred across all stakeholder levels. It was mentioned that all stakeholders should support such initiatives.

Member Rominger underlined that it was a good way to work together; noting that the best way was through the teams, visiting the teams and having direct conversations (as was done with the subject of match-fixing). It is also a good way to cooperate with the other stakeholders (leagues, clubs) and a perfect starting point to approach the players together from all stakeholder sides. The EHPU supports such measures. Christensen also added that it is easier to receive the message when it is being delivered from a former player to an active player. Player representative M. Sahl Hansen described the system "Red Button" - a Danish initiative that serviced through a mobile application. Once downloaded onto a mobile device, the 'RED BUTTON' is accessed via a personal code (each code can be used only once) and allows players to easily report fraudulent activity through an anonymous and encrypted system where the report will be transmitted directly to the Danish anti-doping body. It is the objective of the Danish Handball Federation to reach and educate 450 players through this simple system.

3.4. IHF Information

At the meeting of the Nations Board a more detailed report was given on IHF matters. Giving a summary for the PHB it was stated the relationship between the EHF and IHF remained good and even continued to improve. What concerns European interests the communication channels are open which is good for the work undertaken on that level e.g. the EHF was able to contribute positively to the IHF by providing information on the MP&Silva situation, and the message delivered by the EHF President to the IHF President at the Congress in Glasgow concerning a future World Championship with 32 teams was received in a good way. On this matter, a decision will be taken at the next IHF Council meeting on whether to enlarge the World Championships. This is a major topic for Europe; in the past, places for Europe were reduced. It is expected that an expansion will be approved.

There are also overlapping issues i.e. development of handball in the United States of America and in China. Here the IHF is granted support in the coordination in the understanding that there are markets outside of Europe which are of interest and the EHF continues to work with the IHF on this matter.

In the brief conversation that followed, it was mentioned that though should be given to the question of how to professionalise global handball, specifically, the question surrounding a place for beach handball at the Olympic Games in the future, and the ongoing development of handball on other continents e.g. keeping handball on the Olympic programme.

In closing, Wiederer reported on the relationship of Europe with the other continental federations. It was also mentioned that the next IHF Ordinary Congress would take place in Sweden in July 2021.

4. Stakeholders Reports: NB/MFCH/EHLB/EHPU

Information from the stakeholder meetings was at hand; the point covered additional remarks to minutes.

Nations Board: Chairman Christensen informed the PHB on the discussion that covered the topic of good governance. It was reiterated that it was not a problem within the EHF, but it was underlined that the organisation should lead the way with the national federations as many of the federations need guidelines. In Europe, governments are putting more pressure on the sports institutions in relation to this topic. Christensen stressed that it should be a point that is elaborated upon in the future.

Men's Forum Club Handball: Managing Director Butzeck opened that a major point at the last meeting was the resignation of Xavier O'Callaghan; it was decided that his tasks would be divided as O'Callaghan had previously represented the MFCH in all bodies. Thus, Peter Leutwyler (SUI) was nominated to the EHF Advisory Board, Janos Szabo (HUN) was nominated to the Men's Club Board, and Gregor Planteu (SLO) was nominated to the Professional Handball Board. In January 2019 (Hamburg/GER) it is foreseen that Planteu will be elected to the position of MFCH President. Other points of interest are listed.

- ◆ The cooperation with WFCH was prolonged until 2022.
- ◆ The MFCH will propose a second Managing Director to the EHF; there are two candidates currently under consideration – it is unsure whether they will fit into the structure, and additionally the future structure of EHF (following the new partnership) is also unknown at this time. Due to the unknown elements (incl. role definition), the process of selection is on hold.
- ◆ The MFCH is of the opinion that the European Handball Manager education is successful and should be prolonged and maybe enlarged.
- ◆ A major point for the future is the development in USA/CHN; there has to be a two-fold initiative. The sport needs the TV viewers and will target this, also the MFCH is willing to partly support sustainable projects (incl. financially i.e. development of grassroots sports in CHN/USA). Furthermore, competitive national teams are also needed, and this must be enabled, as without teams there would be no support from the governments or the National Olympic Committees in CHN/USA. Butzeck mentioned that the support of the clubs was also necessary and mentioned that FRA and NOR were taking the initiative; but a global plan was needed. FCH would take over that part of a plan that concerned the education of players in a

way where clubs would be paid to host and educate (top, pre-selected) players. This is viewed as a long-term project.

- ◆ A Chinese delegation will visit Basel on 12 November; FCH will be present at the meeting and represented by G. Planteu and T. Storm. The level of investment will be discussed. Jean Brihault continues to do good work on the USA project. After the meeting there will be a clearer picture of the situation.
- ◆ At the General Assembly it was declared that MFCH had spent 47k on 15 minor projects in 15 countries. The step was regarded as a success, and will continue in the future also on the women's side.

Closing his report, Butzeck gave a brief overview of the upcoming MFCH meetings: IHF/CHN – 12 November, EHF/MCB – 25/26 November.

European Handball League Board: EHLB Chairman Larsson reported on the inaugural General Assembly that took place in June and where 27 leagues were represented; the EHLB was formed and the first board meeting in September. The objective was to create a new platform and to see how to connect the leagues on all different levels. In the September meeting the leagues of Europe were divided between the board members to ensure that each league had a specific contact person within the EHLB to create the first flow on how to interact and work. On a general level, the leagues were split into top leagues, middle leagues, and the emerging markets. Larsson continued that there was a situation where the eastern/south-eastern European Leagues were not represented on the board; therefore the EHLB will work very closely with these leagues (e.g. SEHA, etc.). The members would report back to Chairman Larsson or Vice Chairman Bohmann on the activities.

Moreover, Larsson indicated that on the level of the top and mid-ranked leagues, there was a lot of opportunity in the way of media, events, licensing, and new business models. It was underlined that the issues between the leagues are very different e.g. in some countries the league would first have to find a structure to be able to organise competitions before thinking about other issues. The perspective is to work with all the leagues on the various aspects, which will include exchanging best practice models. The EHLB would also facilitate an exchange of information using the knowledge of the most advanced leagues. Lastly, Larsson mentioned that the board would meet twice yearly (analogous to NB/PHB), but would also organise additional meetings when necessary.

European Handball Players' Union: EHPU President Sahl Hansen stated that since the last meeting in Cologne the EHPU had been working hard to get new nations involved in the EHPU, which included getting Hungary and Romania to the level of full members. ROU now has a structure in place and will be a full member. EHPU is also working with Austria and has already had contact with some players; there will be a follow-up. It was reported that EHPU was also working on the matter of insurance, dealing with an expert on accident insurance. The project will start in Germany, but it is hoped that it can be extended to all EHPU members. Sahl Hansen mentioned a case surrounding a contract dispute involving a Danish player; it was made clear that it was not a case that EHPU was dealing with, but it was a topic that was discussed within EHPU, and one that they wish to discuss on the level of the EHF and IHF on a general level and not case specific.

Rominger voiced his disappointment that it was not possible to host the 'Top 7' award during the last edition of the Final4 in Cologne, as the awarding had found favour among the players as it was a player-to-player award. The breakdown of cooperation with EHF Media & Communication was mentioned and it was decided to try a different approach for next year in order to work together.

Wiederer briefly responded to the contract dispute comment and stated that transfer regulations lay within the remit of the IHF, and if any changes to the regulations are requested, a national or continental federation must submit a motion to the IHF Council, i.e. identify the issue with the system and submit the motion to adapt the international regulations. The PHB were informed that the Nations Board discussed an ongoing situation concerning player release to national team activities; it was made clear that independent of the level of league for which they play, if a player is a professional player, they must be released to national team activities if called. And the club must follow the international transfer regulations.

Member Bana mentioned that the problem of 'sudden passports' remained and issue where there seemed to be little oversight. It was noted that the situation must be observed as it seems to be a growing problem; this matter relates to the Player Eligibility Code.

Wiederer reiterated that with the advent of the new structure in 2021, the EHPU will be required to nominate its players representatives. By that time, a stable structure on the women's level within the EHPU or any other institution would be necessary. Sahl Hansen responded that the EHPU was aware of the situation, and it had been discussed in Cologne. It was noted that in some associations both genders are represented by one person i.e. DEN, SWE; EHPU will continue to work on the matter.

5. Nomination / Election of Chairman/Vice-Chairman

Opening the topic, Wiederer reiterated the special situation that had not been seen before; the EHF Statutes state that the eight stakeholder representatives (EHPU, EHLB, NB, MFCH) are to nominate and elect. Presenting the point of view of the EHF, Wiederer underlined that the quality and competence are wanted in the Executive Committee, and that its representation is not only focusing on one stakeholder group. It is a broad representation of the Professional Handball Board, and by that, taking part in the Executive Committee in the different discussions - including representation of the EHF - needs the understanding of the sentiment and the position. It is also in the interest of professional handball to have a good representation.

For accuracy: at the request of the Vice President Bošković the remainder of AP5 was dealt with at the end of the meeting.

To the process of nominations, NB Chairman Christensen gave a statement that reflected on the cooperative way of working within the Professional Handball Board and noted that common solutions were found in the past without having to resort to an election process. He underlined that whoever would take the position in the Executive Committee had the obligation to represent the PHB in its entirety and not just the individualistic stakeholder opinion. Since the foundation of the PHB, the members have gotten to know each other very well, and there is a well-established network within the PHB. Christensen acknowledged the good work of the previous Chairmen – Joan Marin and Xavier O'Callaghan, who were both club stakeholder representatives. The position of the Nations Board was to find a solution without the election process and to limit the impact within the Executive Committee.

The stakeholder representatives from the clubs (MFCH) and the leagues (EHLB) held a private conversation external to the meeting. Upon their return, and speaking on behalf of both stakeholders, Member Larsson informed that PHB that Gerd Butzeck would assume the role of PHB chairman.

EHPU Vice President Rominger reiterated the outlook of the Nations Board and extended his thanks to Larsson and Planteu. He underlined that not only the handball approach was considered, but also the business approach; and at this time, experience is needed in the environment. Rominger also took the opportunity to raise concern about the overwhelming influence of the clubs, and said that he did not like the fact that the club stakeholder representatives were part of every board.

With the agreement of all eight stakeholder representatives, Gerd Butzeck was elected and will assume the position of PHB Chairman from the next meeting 03/2019, and subsequently the seat in the Executive Committee. EHF President Wiederer thanked the stakeholders, especially G. Planteu and N. Larsson, for their cooperation and recognised that it was not an easy situation. It was stated that it was a good time to take the next two years to optimise the leagues, as with 2021, the PHB would start its next cycle.

Nikolas Larsson was nominated to the position of PHB Vice Chairman, to which there was no dissent. Concluding the agenda point, EHF President Wiederer congratulated the newly elected and thanked the PHB for their process. He hoped that the PHB would continue to work in the open spirit of cooperation and in the best interest of the sport.

6. Men's National Team Competitions

6.1. EHF EURO 2020 SWE/AUT/NOR – Preview

Organisation: The 2018 Conference for Secretaries General in Trondheim, Norway saw the presentation of various topics that included sponsorship/partnership matters, development fund information, as well as the new qualification system. Based on the feedback it is expected that the national federations involved in the qualifications are offering reasonable standards; moreover, all matches will be broadcast live and present a unified picture of the event.

Qualification: the teams of SWE, AUT, NOR, and ESP will play the EHF EURO Cup, and from the other 32 teams on the start of the Men's EHF EURO 2020 Qualification, the 1st and 2nd ranked teams from each group plus the four best 3rd ranked teams will emerge from the qualification to the final tournament. The Qualifiers will have a presenting sponsor following a successful initiative. It was decided that marketing supervisors will assist with general presentation i.e. venue dressing, etc.

Final Tournament: the issue around travel and rest days was resolved. The adjusted playing schedule with additional days, which sees matches on each final weekend day, was at hand; the changes were undertaken in cooperation with the event organisers to ensure better general conditions for the players and balanced conditions for the matches. It was underlined that travel days are not rest days.

6.2. EHF EURO 2022/2024 – Awarding & Further Procedure

The EHF acknowledged the many good candidates at the EHF Congress and reiterated the results of the awarding - Men: 2022 HUN/SVK, 2024 GER; Women: 2022 SLO/MKD/MNE, 2024 to be awarded. Cooperation with Hungary/Slovakia will begin in November. The work with Germany will begin after

the World Championship in spring 2019. Through the I&P agreement there will be new obligations as well as new chances in various areas such as, but not limited to, digital and brand. For the upcoming event a new hall will be built in HUN with a capacity of 20 thousand seats. Germany has proven that it has a good environment for top events and the EHF looked forward to strong events. A new awarding process will be initiated for the Women's EHF EURO 2024.

6.3. YAC Competitions 2018

An overview of the 2018 summer events was given; on the whole that events were carried out successfully and with impressive spectator figures; the EURO event in Slovenia had live transmission of all the matches, the distribution of the event was very good. A list of the 2019 (EHF/IHF/EOC) YAC events was at hand; next year the focus returns to the women's events. A correction to the list was made and it was underlined that 2019 European Open will be for the M17 category and not the M19 as listed on the document. The challenges still be faced in the area of YAC events (finding organisers, standards, modus, competition platforms, etc.) were briefly mentioned; the points raised are to be discussed and evaluated in a working group with the objective of submitting final recommendations at the 2019 Conference of Presidents. In due course the bid documents for the next instalment of the Men's 2020 YAC events will be distributed to the National Federations.

7. Club Competitions

7.1. Season 2017/2018 – Review

Overall, though no new systems were introduced and the majority of the matches were carried out well, it was not the best season because of a number of challenges e.g. overlapping playing dates; team disqualification; recurring issues with a German club team; as well as a penalty replay due to an error of an EHF delegate. In an effort to avoid similar problems in the future, the EHF initiated an information campaign among the delegates. Moreover, intense cooperation with the parties involved in the various issues led to resolution in most cases.

7.2. Season 2018/2019 – Status

The season started in a good way with no withdrawals and no change to the playing systems; the rundown is proceeding accordingly. At this time, there was nothing special to report. Out of the discussion, the following points were raised:

- ◆ **EHF Final4:** the event will celebrate its 10th edition in 2019. The introduction of the event led to a strong presence on the international sports market. To the negotiations for the future after 2020, the PHB members were informed that a comprehensive analysis will take place that will encompass economic aspects, logistics, and event accessibility. Discussions with the City of Cologne will also be held. It was acknowledged that it was advantageous not to have changed the location of the event every year in order to guarantee standards and quality.
- ◆ **EHF Cup:** the host of the 2019 final event has not been fixed; the process will start with the distribution of documents inviting clubs to submit a bid. The evaluation of the bids will take place in November 2018, and a recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Committee for decision in December 2018.

- ◆ **Refereeing Matters:** Member Butzeck issued a reminder to the members of the PHB about the clubs wanting to see another structure in place regarding refereeing. This matter was mentioned previously in the meetings of the PHB, and was referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding, and also was a motion at a previous congress. He continued that in all other sports, the head of refereeing is a full-time employee, and handball is the only sport where the head of referees is an elected person. Therefore, this position is part of the general bargaining before the Congress and the clubs are looking forward to the time when that would change. In response, Wiederer acknowledged that the issue had been raised several times, and is aware of the system, but at the same time the matter must be on the list for the introduction of new competitions, because this is not about targeting and criticising the position of individuals, but bearing in mind that the in the number of top level matches that are conducted the number of problems faced is very small – thus, it is not the current issue but the principle. However, when speaking of the principle, it has to be integrated into the list of topics that are to be evaluated.

7.3. Season 2019/2020 – Preview

The season 2019/20 will be played without any change to the system as it made no sense to introduce changes one year before there is a new situation with the contractual partners on the level of media and marketing. Any of the changes currently discussed could only come into force in the season 2020/21 when the new partner situation is active. This would be the starting point for not only issues around the competitions but also for the technical part of the competition itself. If any regulation changes have to take place (it is not planned to have any major changes), they would have to be concluded by the Executive Committee in March 2019 in order for the registration process to begin with a sound basis.

Regulations: CSO Glaser briefly mentioned the most recent changes to the club competition regulations that would see all clubs organising their travel and accommodation at away games in all competitions – this is already practised within the Champions League, and is now expanded to all competitions (both men/women, EHF Cup and Challenge Cup). There will be no more interaction with the home club on this matter unless both clubs agree on reciprocity. The situation seems to be working well so far, however, it will be observed throughout the season. Upon question, it was confirmed that double matches are still allowed within the EHF Cup and Challenge Cup in rounds one and two, but not from round three onwards.

8. Agreements 2020 - 2030

8.1. Overall Information

For the benefit of the new members, Wiederer gave a brief reiteration of the final stages of the contract negotiation and the signing of the agreement; the utilisation of the EHF Secretary General and EHF Managing Director to finalise the last points with several lawyers during the intense consultations. Wiederer said that it was the right decision to enter into a tender process; over the past decade EHF has strengthened the handball product with the contribution of all the stakeholders (i.e. national federations, clubs, leagues, and players). The professionalization of the players greatly contributed to this work and it had paid off. It was also beneficial to secure the cooperation of the clubs for a reasonable time period, working together in one direction. These two aspects brought the process forward, and now it is time to make something out of it. It was essential to ensure that the control of handball and its products was not lost to the EHF, and this was also ensured.

8.2. Status Report

In the endeavour to keep the stakeholders updated, the interim report was delivered by EHF President Wiederer. The preliminary work started in August 2018 and the major points have to be clarified by summer 2019. The season 2019/20 can be classified as a preparatory season prior to the start of the agreement; the Men's EHF EURO 2020 SAN is also a starting point. In respect to the I&P presentation in Glasgow, it was noted that further presentations to the national federations on this subject need to convey that there is a motivation going forward.

8.3. Definition of Working Fields

The EHF has begun work on the structure that will support the new agreement, the internal 'Commercial Partnership – Working Structure' document was shown to the Nations Board and an explanation thereof was given.

- ◆ **Eight (8) Task Forces:** comprised of EHF/M professional staff and cover the areas of Digital, Brand, Media Sales, Marketing Sales, Production, Finances, Events, Calendar/Competition. Collaborative bodies reporting to the Steering Board. The inaugural meetings of the task forces will be in October and November.
- ◆ **Steering Board (8 persons):** comprised of 2 members each EHF, EHF/M, Infront, and Perform. An oversight body reporting to the Strategy Committee.
- ◆ **Strategy Committee (4 persons):** comprised of 1 member from EHF, EHF/M, Infront, and Perform. Receives information from and confirms ideas and proposals of the steering board; a decision-making body. This body covers the shared responsibilities of the partners. As of 2021, the Chairperson of the Nations Board will sit on the Strategy Committee.

It was mentioned that some task force meetings (i.e. Brand – taking stock of values, aims, etc.) bear more weight than others sometimes due to the timetables that need to be adhered to. The first meeting of the Task Force: Calendar/Competitions will be the meeting where input will be needed from others, whereas Task Force: Financials has not yet taken place due to the contract timeline. On a professional level, different staff members will be assigned to the different meetings. These Task Forces are nominated by the Steering Board and called only when necessary

8.4. Further Procedure

EHF/M and Infront/Perform representatives met on 22 August to hold a coordination meeting; a point of discussion focused on the recruitment of 14 task designated staff members. The conscription falls within the remit of I&P; it was unclear at this point where the 14 persons would be based (ZUG/VIE/LDN) as location is role dependant. Furthermore, the detailed task profiles of the new staff remains undefined to date; thus, the swift implementation of an efficient staffing structure will be crucial. The PHB was presented with a working example using the 'Task Force: Brand' meeting; here, to begin, all relevant data relating to the sport in Europe is to be gathered and used to generate tailor-made content for specific groups. This will lead to the implementation of a brand for every competition with coordinated promotional (storytelling) campaigns. The next steps to be taken include a decision on brand policy and how it should work; the EHF will define the agenda and workload, as well as the interaction between the other groups. All task force meetings will be completed by 21 November in order to be ready for the coordination meeting with I&P.

Wiederer emphasised the need for the PHB to be fully aware that for the changes that have an impact (i.e. Task Force: Calendar/Competition), there will be no calendar discussion without the stakeholders. The negotiations, implementations, as well as other elements of daily business will run on the level of the EHF office. The stakeholders will not be 'forgotten'; an initial dialogue will be held with the clubs as it concerns club issues. In the agreement the EHF secured investment (including services) of 520 million Euros. As to what concerns the use of the investment is undecided as that process has not yet begun. Congress approval (of the EHF budget) will be required. The agreement will cover the competition inventory including beach handball, which is to be presented in a better way in the future along with YAC events.

In the comments that followed the structure was deemed appropriate, with a good system for cooperation. It was also noted that expertise in Vienna must be retained to ensure sustainability after the initial ten years.

Closing the point, Wiederer remarked that a comprehensive presentation would be given at the Conference of Presidents, and that the EHF remained at the disposal of the stakeholders for any questions they may have. In any case an update report will be given at the next PHB meeting.

9. Various

- ◆ **Injury cases:** at this time, there are still open cases from EHF EURO 2018 CRO as the information necessary to close the cases has not been forthcoming. The EHF decided that a clarification on the topic was needed for future events (as of EHF EURO 2018 FRA), because the current procedures were not being adhered to. Therefore, national teams are now obligated to report any injury immediately after the injury occurs. The EHF insurance procedures will be activated when a player has been off for a total four weeks, and will only cover what is not covered by the insurance by the club. Moreover, when a player returns to activity, the team doctor as well as the player concerned must sign a statement of verification that the player is fit to return to active duty. The respective club is to be informed accordingly. If an injury is exacerbated, the EHF will not be liable for any insurance procedure. It was emphasised that there must a level of personal responsibility in such cases. It was hoped that the new procedures would result in cases being handled quickly and with more precision.
- ◆ **Guidelines for instant video replay:** as a follow-up to the experience at the EHF EURO 2018 CRO, new procedures were defined and describe the conditions under which instant video replay is to be used. In an attempt to avoid possible legal ramifications, the role of the referees and technical delegates, etc. have also been refined should such a situation occur again. The International Handball Federation (IHF) was duly informed, and due to the fact that many technical operatives adjudicate both EHF and IHF matches, it was noted that there needs to be a cohesive system and a synchronisation of the match technology that will serve a united presentation of the sport. Furthermore, at the EHF EURO 2018 FRA, the buzzer (time-out) system will be used for the first time. At the EHF EURO Heads of Delegation (HoD) conference in Paris, all team responsible persons will be informed of the new procedure concerning the reporting of injuries and the guidelines for using instant video replay.

- ◆ **Release for National teams:** an issue that affects players in clubs that are active in second and third tier events was brought to the attention of the organisation; such events do not follow the international calendar and has led to problems concerning the release of the player to the national team. Responding to the issue the following points were made:
 - It is the understanding of the EHF that if a national team player is called for duty during the national team week, the club has a duty to release that player.
 - If a player is under a professional transfer/contract, the club/league is obliged to release the player when requested.
 - If a player is contracted, it should be understood that the player will not be available for club activities during scheduled national team weeks.

From the brief discussion, the PHB was in agreement that attention must be given to the matter to ensure transparency by bringing precision to the regulations, as well as the consequences if they are not followed. Moreover, the National Federations should also be requested to support the regulations covering the release of players; but they should also have the opportunity to reschedule matches if there is a call for the national team players.

- ◆ **Meeting calendar for 2018/2019:** The meeting calendars for the remainder of 2018 and a preview of 2019 were at hand. It was mentioned that the planning within the calendars are to ensure a proper preparatory process for the decision-making across the EHF bodies. Without additional comment, the Professional Handball Board took note of the information.
- ◆ **Season 2020/21 Draft Calendar:** In order to have a basis for a stakeholder discussion, a draft calendar for the season 2020/21 was created. The calendar was not changed in its entirety, and it was underlined that it was drafted based on the input from the 'Think Tank: International Calendar' – a meeting with representatives from all stakeholder groups (EHF, Nations, Clubs, Leagues, Players) held in Zagreb in January. The calendar follows the current 2 x 8 Champions League system that will be retained in the 2020/21 season. It was mentioned that the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo will conclude on 11 August, which will allow for more time before the start of the season.

The key points of the draft concern a new structure for the end of the season; Final4 (event that ends the EHF club competitions season) moved to mid-June; National Team Week: March, April, June (IHF NTW); Leagues now have opportunity to finish at the end of May or the beginning of June. An analogous system can be applied to women's handball. It was underlined that the discussion for the 2020/21 season was ongoing and no final decisions had been taken; any changes could only be implemented with summer 2020.

The PHB were reminded of a key finding from the meeting in January to have a clear end to the season with no overlap. The excellent spirit of the meeting in January was highlighted, and that such collaboration on these interesting solutions are a 'win-win' for all the stakeholders; referring directly to the discussion and the request from the players to have a clear period for

vacation it was recommended that a vacation period be indicated in the calendar. In a next step the draft will be discussed with the IHF, and input from I&P (re. TV/Media) must also be sought. After the IHF – EHF International Calendar meeting, the calendar will be adapted if necessary and then distributed to the National Federations with the request for feedback.

- ◆ **European Handball Manager:** a request to expand and prolong the programme was made and the importance of having certified managers was underlined; the PHB pledged their continued support of the educational programme.

With no further topics on the agenda, EHF President Michael Wiederer thanked the members of the Professional Handball Board for their contribution and closed the meeting.

For the Minutes: M. Brown
Vienna, 16 October 2018