

Common Meeting  
**24<sup>th</sup> Professional Handball Board (PHB) / 19<sup>th</sup> Women's Handball Board (WHB)**

**Date / Time:** Tuesday, 10 March 2020 / 08:30 – 10:30

**Venue:** Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Vienna/AUT - Meeting Room: Schönbrunn

**Participants PHB:**

Gerd Butzeck	Chairman / MFCH / GER
Nikolas Larsson	Vice Chairman / EHLB / SWE
Morten Stig Christensen	Member NB / DEN
Gregor Planteu	Member MFCH / SLO
Marcus Rominger	Member EHPU / GER
Stefan Lövgren	Member EXEC / SWE

**Participants WHB:**

Nodjialem Myaro	Chairwoman/ Nations Representative / FRA
Pirje Orasson	Vice Chair/ Nations Representative / EST
Leonor Mallozzi	Member/ Nations Representative / POR
Narcisa Lecusanu	Member/ Leagues/ ROU
Liudmila Bodnieva	Member/ Players/ RUS
Deja Ivanovic	Member/ WFCH / SLO
Gabriella Horvath	Member EXEC / HUN

**EHF Office:**

Michael Wiederer	EHF President
Martin Hausleitner	EHF Secretary General
Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
Alenka Cuderman	WHP Coordinator
Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison / Minutes

**Excused:**

Predrag Bošković	Member EXEC / MNE
Henrik La Cour	Member EXEC / DEN
Philippe Bana	Member NB / FRA
Frank Bohmann	Member EHLB / GER
Michael Sahl Hansen	Member EHPU / DEN

**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

Wiederer welcomed the stakeholders to the meeting and took reference to the schedule noting that as much information would be provided in the common meeting, it was expected that the individual meetings would be handled quicker as was the case with the meetings the day before. The value of the discussion process was underlined. Highlighting the current situation and differing responses across Europe, it was obviously clear that decisions were not been made on a sporting level but on the level of national and local authorities, and that the EHF had to adapt accordingly; thus compromises were to be expected in terms of upcoming competitions (i.e. OG Quals) organised by the IHF. He took note of the persons who were unable to attend.

## **2. Information on Competitions**

### **2.1. National Team Competitions**

Secretary General Hausleitner provided a comprehensive review of the Men's EHF EURO 2020 in Sweden, Austria, and Norway (SAN). He spoke of the challenges faced on a technological level (i.e. Kinexon, Swisstiming), the workload (an improved match schedule, but still teams that faced four matches in five days), as well as the multiple successes in many areas such as Officiating, TV, social media, fan acceptance, spectator and viewing figures, the feedback from teams and officials, marketing sales and partner activation, etc. It was mentioned that the experiences and feedback from the SAN event will allow for better practices to be put in place for the Women's EHF EURO 2020 NOR/DEN in December. It was underlined that the event in December is the last event under the current Infront agreement.

In respect to the EURO events, the measures being undertaken to improve the events was briefly mentioned, such as the planned digital campaign, cooperation to spread content using the platforms of the national federations, the new EHF homepage, and the cooperation with Oracle to spread targeted content to fans based on their interests in their respective countries. The PHB were also informed on the intent by the EHF to remove the awarding of future EHF EURO events from the framework of election congresses; thus, it is planned to award EHF EURO 2026 and 2028 on the fringes of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the EHF at the Extraordinary Congress in November 2021. This move allows enough time to potential hosts to prepare bids and have a proper process. To the upcoming EURO events, there was no special report.

Wiederer added information on the initiative of the IHF to be part of the Paralympic movement in the future. To realise this objective, and comply with the IPC, it would be necessary for two IHF World Championships by the end of 2021. Based on the limited infrastructure around wheelchair handball within the IHF, they approached the EHF regarding a possible joint event. With the 1<sup>st</sup> EHF Wheelchair Handball EURO in November 2020 awarded to Sweden, a dialogue has begun with the OC to work further on the topic. The EHF underlined its willingness for such a cooperation as handball for persons with special needs is part of the corporate social responsibility of the EHF and it needs to be positioned as a complete branch of the sport.

### **2.2. Club Competitions**

CSO Glaser reported that the current season was moving ahead, and is adapting accordingly to the COVID-19 situation. It was remarked that although the three Final4 events were currently under question, the EHF was following developments and exploring options, however, it was deemed too early to make a decision at this time, but rather in the coming weeks.

For information purposes, the decisions concerning club competitions taken at the previous Executive Committee meeting (01/2020) were reiterated; these included decisions on, but not limited to, training times in the CL, TV obligations and Marketing Supervisors in the European League. Decisions from January were already incorporated into the regulations and distributed to the clubs. Further decisions to be taken by the Executive Committee at the next meeting in April were described briefly under the 'open topics' such as the development of media management, mandatory digital and social media, participation in draw events, etc.

Glaser expanded on the topics of financial guarantees (and a 'safety net' for 'major cases' for the Champions Leagues), the venue and spectator concepts (search for a new approach for the next cycle), ticketing strategy and the proposal of an 'CL Away' package of 50 tickets purchased at a

symbolic price to encourage fans to visit the away matches; this could be also implemented for EHL as it is not a strategic issue.

Closing his report, Glaser also mentioned the 'European Handball Club Ranking' element that directly relates to media activities i.e. 'storytelling'. This concept is targeted towards the interest of the clubs and its fans, but it will not replace the official ranking and seeding currently in place.

### **3. EHF Activities**

#### **3.1. General Information: 15th Conference of Presidents, 13th Extraordinary EHF Congress, 12th Conference for Secretaries General**

With the minutes made available to the participants, there were no additional comments to the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Presidents or 13<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary EHF Congress. Hausleitner reviewed the comprehensive programme of the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference for Secretaries General that was extended by one day compared to other past events; it was mentioned that this event there would be presentations from EHF technology partners, and the opportunity to enter into the topic of the EHF Master Plan and its implementation. The third session of the conference would focus on topics such as eTransfers, the players' database, and the 'Respect Your Talent' project, a keynote presentation on eSports is also planned. This is addition to the EURO draw event and the Qualifiers workshop.

#### **3.2. EHF Master Plan**

Presented by JJ Rowland, the PHB are informed that the project has entered its second phase as a result of the initial research and consultation (survey, workshops, etc.) undertaken following its unveiling and introduction. Based on the feedback some elements were amended including the goal to be the most attractive team sport in terms of sports disciplines on the smaller field e. g. ahead of basketball, volleyball, etc. The insight has also allowed for the EHF to define the course in terms of governance i.e. more investment in specific areas i.e. women's handball, emerging nations, etc.

Rowland also emphasised the significance of planned targets, and announced that in the second phase, it was returning to the stakeholders to focus on the individual and shared needs that will bring the stakeholders together; feedback and additional input was requested by 20 March. Following the presentation, in response to questions, it was underlined that projects have to be clearly defined in view of the objectives of the overall plan, and that the EHF is working to a distinct strategic timeline to achieve the targets.

#### **3.3. The Brand of Handball**

Hausleitner presented the planned changes to the EHF corporate identity; this included a recap of the evolution of the EHF logo, the modification official fonts and colours, as well as new premise behind event logos. Further information on the implementation will be distributed prior to the roll-out on 1 July 2020.

### **4. Other Issues**

Touching on various topics, the PHB were informed on the following:

- **Officiating / Instant Replay:** Glaser recapped the roll-out of the new system that became valid as of 1 July 2019. As to the EHF EURO, the pre-event procedure, which included the discontinuation of the seminar, the introduction of a learning platform, staggered nominations, mental coaching prior to and during the event, and professional fitness testing was described. Overall the performance of the EHF EURO officials was very good, and there were no major issues.

Wiederer added that the instant replay technology was used 32 times throughout the event on 12 goal, 18 disqualification, and 2 substitution queries. It was stated that the use of such equipment relieves the pressure on the officials. Instant replay was introduced in handball at the highest level prior to football; it is a tool that is used to protect the sport and those involved, because for example, there is major difference between a goal scored in minute 5 of a match, and minute 59. In a next step, the EHF will examine how to implement instant replay on a wider level.

In response to a comment that concerned mental preparation and, as well, limiting the contact between referees and the host team, Glaser responded that there is an awareness of the matter. A new cycle presents the opportunity to do things in a new way; it has to be known what is possible in this respect. Moreover, it is not only the leagues, but also the clubs, and the officials that are of the same opinion.

- **International Calendar:** the suggestion of preparing future international calendars earlier was raised i.e. 2- 2.5 years for 2022/23; the idea was well received, and the benefits and limitations were also mentioned.
- **'Respect Your Talent' (RYT) Project:** the origins (WHB) of the project were reiterated, and its success was highlighted. WHB Coordinator A. Cuderman provided a review of the RYT campaign that was focused on the empowerment, aspirations, and development of young players both on and off the court. The utilisation of expert speakers, ambassadors and professional players had a positive effect on the participants (peer-to-peer) and resulted in open discussions on topics such as anti-doping, sports law, etc. Documentation including video material has been created and redistributed; next steps include the distribution of a RYT Toolkit to the national federations. Wiederer added that the project will be introduced for YAC male players in 2020 as well.

In the brief discussion that ensued, the meeting participants expressed their appreciation of the project mentioning the feedback they have received in their own federations, and how the material from the EHF would be used to spread the messages, as well as how positive it was to have top players enthusiastic about the RYT project. It was noted that some federations already have similar projects in place i.e. DEN, POR. Wiederer also mentioned the benefits of such a project when dealing with the topic of anti-doping and informing the players; the statement was supported by Rominger (EHPU) who underlined that information and awareness was a key element of EHF tasks. Furthermore, the area of dual career and 'life after handball' was also mentioned; the idea of a platform with relevant information that also allows for the exchange of information i.e. that it is possible to be involved in an education programme whilst playing; available information on anti-doping and betting was also highlighted as key points.

- **Player Agents:** returning to the topic that was raised at a previous meeting of the PHB, the EHF consulted external legal advice. To implement such a system would mean to follow one set of guidelines; this would be difficult as three pillars are involved:
  - **Agents:** with no direct contact to the player agents, it would be problematic for the EHF to implement a system within its statutes and regulations. And if the agents are not under the EHF roof, it would not be possible to administer any sanctions.
  - **Employment Law:** Governmental regulations for employees vary europewide from country to country; the EHF has no influence.
  - **EU Regulations:** these guidelines cover the profession

The EHF was advised to follow the employment law of the respective country (together with the Chamber of Commerce) when dealing with such matters, as it would not make sense to implement an EHF system.

▪ **IHF Council:**

**Continental Reports:** the environment of the Council meetings was described. The EHF delivered a continental report; SATHF delivered a 'business plan'; no other continent reported on their activities. On a continental level, there is no conflict between confederations and the European representatives try to maintain a balance on talking time/information exchange. They also concentrate on major topics to ensure that the interests of Europe are well (re)presented. Overall, the cooperation IHF and EHF is on a very good level regarding the information processes.

**International Transfers for Education Compensation:** a European initiative concerning the unclear interpretation of the topic resulted in a formal motion to the IHF Council; the motion in respect to the transfers of players from/to nations of a different level follow the quality of the receiving nations was subsequently approved by the Council and will be in force as of 1 July 2020. 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 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'. Furthermore, there is a tendency that in the future only former top referees shall be entitled to work at the table of international championships.

**IHF Athletes' Commission:** Igor Vori/CRO was confirmed as a new AC Chairman following the withdrawal of Gro Hammerseng/NOR; the next election of the AC should take place within the framework of the Olympic Games.

Arising from the discussion that followed, it was mentioned that the nominations of the both the current and previous chairperson came via the national federations, and not via the EHPU. The meeting of the EHPU with the IHF in 09/2019 was recapped. Moving forward, it has to be seen how the AC works within the system, at this time, the players do not feel represented or heard within the AC, as it does not reflect the player movements (i.e. player unions). The EHPU intends to approach the IHF on how to proceed. It was suggested that candidates to the AC are active players or at least were recently active, however, they must have a desire to be involved, etc.

**IHF Working Group re. Rules:** no status update was provided; tests seem to be ongoing. In other areas, it is purported that the next edition of the IHF Superglobe will test the idea of three referees in a match. A new working group for event inspections was founded as part of an IHF initiative for the professionalisation of the World Championship framework.

**Upcoming IHF Events:** all events until 2027 were awarded; in addition to 2021 EGY and 2023 POL/SWE, new is 2025 CRO/DEN/NOR and 2027 GER. Information on the planned IHF BH Global Tour with four stations across Europe (GER, POL, ITA) and Asia (THA) where teams will be invited to take part, was also provided at the meeting.

Following the report, the topic of the glueless ball was raised. Based on the information available, it was noted that a glueless ball is smaller than normal; it is expected to be tested at one IHF YAC events in the summer. It was underlined that this topic was not part of the Council meeting agenda. The IHF Congress decided that a glueless ball was possible; solutions are being sought. Ball producers are aware of the matter as see its problematic to have different sizes for

one category. At this time, there are no clear preconditions for events when using a glueless ball. Considering such elements of when-where-how such a ball is to be implemented, as well as the regulations question, it was suggested that all questions be sent by the federation to the IHF COC.

- **Relation: EHF – ITA – WADA – NADA – IHF:** Hausleitner informed the members that the International Testing Agency (ITA) is obligated to establish anti-doping test levels for the IHF. In Europe, this now results in three institutions where anti-doping guidelines have to be followed – the EHF EAU, the respective NADAs, and the ITA. The EHF is in a constant exchange of information with the bodies; however, ITA has solicited the EHF for information, specifically club ‘whereabouts’; the EHF believes this to lie within the responsibility of NADA. As the EHF undertakes doping controls at all its events, there is no need for a ‘whereabouts’ declaration. The EHF stated its position that it is responsible for European Championships and its own club competitions, and not for events organised by the IHF (incl. OG/WC Qualifications); this information was given to ITA. The WADA intervened (and supported the position of the EHF), and now the various organisations are trying to establish a central platform for ‘whereabouts’ declarations. It was noted that the project is delayed since 09/2019 and is planned now for 09/2020. The main issue is the ITA, whose system has worked on other continents, coming into Europe where there is a functioning and established system. The stakeholders will be kept informed on the developments in this matter.
- **COVID 19:** the participants informed the group on the current measures within their respective countries i.e. public building closures, cancellation of (sports) events, limited to zero spectators, insurance (force majeure), travel restrictions, financial recompense from governments, etc. the discussion process also looked to the response of other sports and their governing bodies. Questions and input surrounding the situation included: what happens if a player is infected, or quarantine is mandated, and how long can matches be postponed, and if a internal task force would be necessary to evaluate the situation on an (handball) internal level, as well as the relocation of matches across a border, and if the EHF was in communication with other sport federations.

It was suggested that a small task forces within the federations (with a federation, league, and club representative) are formed to maintain an overview of the ongoing situation on the sporting level. It was emphasised that the sporting community needed to join forces to facilitate the exchange of information. Moreover, it was mentioned that many organisations have to work with the recommendations from the governing bodies.

The EHF stated that, in this situation, it could decide on its own competitions, and could not tell clubs or federations what to do on a national level. It was underlined that government advice is to be and will be followed. As the situation is changing daily, decisions have to be made on a case-by-case basis.

The meeting was concluded with thanks extended to the participants for their cooperation and input.

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

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