
MINUTES TO THE 28TH MEETING OF THE (MEN'S) PROFESSIONAL HANDBALL BOARD

(Parallel to the meeting of the WHB)

Vienna, 12 October 2021 | 09:00 – 12:45

Participants

PHB

Xavier O'Callaghan	Member MFCH / ESP
Gregor Planteu	Member MFCH / SLO
Nikolas Larsson	Member EHLB / SWE
Predrag Bošković	Member EXEC / MNE
Michael Wiederer	President
Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General

WHB Participants in the Common Meeting

Nodjialem Myaro	Member NCW / FRA
Leonor Mallozzi	Member NCW / POR
Deja Ivanovic	Member WFCH / SLO
Radmila Petrovic	Member WFCH / MNE
Jelena Eric	Member / SRB
Elena Borrás Alcaraz	Member / ESP
Monika Listkiewicz	Member / POL
Marta Bon	Member / SLO
Bente Aksnes	Member EXEC / NOR
F. V. Blazquez Garcia	Member EXEC / ESP

Excused

M. S. Christensen	Member NCM / DEN
Mark Schober	Member NCM / GER
Frank Bohmann	Member EHLB / GER
Michael Sahl Hansen	Member EHPU / DEN
Marcus Rominger	Member EHPU / GER
Stefan Lövgren	Member EXEC / SWE

EHF Office

Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer (<i>in part</i>)
Mario Kovacic	Director National Teams
Alenka Cuderman	Women's HB Coordinator
Marsha Brown	Minutes

PART 1: COMMON MEETING WHB/PHB

1. Welcome and Introduction

President Wiederer welcomed the members of the Women's Handball Board (WHB) and the Professional Handball Board (PHB), especially those who are new, to the common meeting held due to a cross-over of topics and the necessity to deliver information. Prior to the elections of the Chairpersons to take place in the individual sessions, the purpose and the structure of the PHB and WHB were reiterated for the benefit of the new members; the corresponding information from the Statutes was also provided.

2. EHF Information

2.1. EHF Executive Committee 06 & 09/2021

A brief recap of the meetings was given including information to the circular decisions taken between sessions. Upon input, the distribution lists will be checked to ensure that all stakeholders are receiving the minutes.

2.2. EHF Marketing GmbH

Wiederer elaborated on the ongoing crucial discussion concerning club marketing rights and the challenge levelled by I&D as to what concerns (long-term) financial guarantees; in order to uphold the integrity of the agreement, the EHF/M endeavours to ensure that all matches are played. To the business year 2020/21, the examination of the accounts is in the

finalisation phase; all payments due to the clubs according to the regulations were fulfilled despite the challenges of the pandemic. The accounting year will be officially concluded at the EHF General Assembly in November.

Concerning media and marketing information to the current season, the situation is good and broadcaster/transmission figures have increased, there is an indication of high interest in markets with limited access, and across the 21 digital channels figures also continue to rise, with the exception of Facebook where the numbers remain stable. The CRM implementation and delivery of newsletters tailored to the subscriber, as well as other promotional materials are well received, based on the high engagement rates.

2.3. 15th Ordinary EHF Congress/Follow-up 04/2021

The implementation process of the decisions taken at the Congress continues; some actions are complete what concerns personnel and implementation of text to the EHF Statutes, the structures. The follow-up to the NOR motion is concluded, and the details are available; the procedure applied by the European Handball Federation and the decisions taken by the IHF reflect what was decided at the EHF Congress.

2.4. Preview Congress International Handball Federation

It is expected that the IHF Congress will be an online event; the Continental Meeting Europe (via Zoom), planned to take place on the fringes of the Congress, will be arranged. The PHB/WHB took note of the information.

2.5. Preview 14th Extraordinary EHF Congress

Invitations to the 30th Anniversary Gala event were distributed. Congress documentation will be distributed on 20 October. The focus of the event is the awarding of the men's and women's EHF EUROs 2026 & 2028.

2.6. Business Report/Activities

Hausleitner provided brief information on the EHF House project, as well as the relocation of the EHF offices. To office personnel, the restructure of the Management Board with the integration of the Heads of Media and IT was mentioned. The Hygiene Concept continues to be adapted to the changing environment; a version of the document is being prepared for the upcoming EURO and standards are being defined. The EAU has resumed European activities in agreement with the IHF; all clubs and national teams will use the WADA ADAMS system to document 'whereabouts' information. In the area of IT/Digital updates were given to the handball app, the CRM system, data delivery, etc.

2.7. Other Topics

Hausleitner informed on the positive cooperation and ongoing activities with the various partners e.g. Hummel, Select, Swiss Timing, and Kinexon as well as the prolongation of partnership agreements (eventim 2028, Gerflor 2026). The EHF meeting calendar is finalised yearly at the September meeting of the Executive Committee for the following year; the organisation of the meeting dates is based around the identified sporting activities and responsibilities. Upon distribution of the meeting calendar, the stakeholders are requested to reserve the dates and also to inform the EHF as soon as possible if there is a calendar conflict. The objective of the meeting calendar is to have a smooth rundown of activities, keep

the various stakeholders connected by topics, and ultimately ensure a proper decision-making process across the spectrum prior to the meetings of the Executive Committee. The 2022 meeting calendar was distributed, and the stakeholders were asked to reserve the dates and submit feedback if necessary.

PART 2: MEETING PHB

3. PHB Meetings 03/2021– Minutes and Follow-up

Without additional comment, the minutes of the meeting are adopted.

4. Elections/Nominations

Opening the point, it was noted for the record, that all members had been consulted on the matter. Due to the NB Chairman having a seat on the Executive Committee, NCM did not submit candidacy for the open positions. In accordance with the EHF Statutes, it was reiterated that no one stakeholder group has an automatic right to the PHB chairmanship and subsequently the seat on the EHF Executive Committee.

4.1. Election Chairman/Deputy Chairman

With the agreement of the PHB, having consulted the excused members prior to the meeting, Xavier O’Callaghan was confirmed as Chairman and will represent the PHB in the Executive Committee. Nikolas Larsson was confirmed as Deputy Chairman. O’Callaghan thanked the PHB for the trust placed in him following his three years away from the handball scene and expressed his appreciation for the treatment he has received since his return. For the record it was stated that Gerd Butzeck, former PHB Chairman/EXEC member, performed his duties well, not acting as a club representative, delivering input from the broader perspective of the stakeholders and global handball.

4.2. Nomination ECA Vice President

The ECA Vice President nominated by the stakeholders will not decide on cases; the function is a supervisory position; given the profile of the candidate, the nomination of Marta Utor (ESP) was supported by the PHB.

5. Stakeholder Reports

5.1. EHF Nations Committee Men/Nations Board (NCM/NB)

Due to personal and professional commitments, the Nations Committee Men representatives were unable to attend the meeting, and no report was submitted.

5.2. Men’s Forum Club Handball (MFCH)

MFCH President Xavier O’Callaghan mentioned the participation of a non-European club at the latest meeting of the MFCH General Assembly in Mallorca on 4 October. Discussion points included information provided by EHF/M concerning the I&D situation. Additionally, Gregor Planteu was elected to serve as MFCH Vice President. The cooperation agreement MFCH and WFCH was prolonged and Gerd Butzeck will continue to serve as the Managing Director to the M/WFCH organisations until 2026. Clubs have requested a re-evaluation of the playing schedule (weekends vs. weekdays).

Upon input to the topic of Players' Agents, MFCH restated its position that clubs would no longer pay Players' Agents if engaged by the player. If a club request a scouting service of an agent, the club is obliged to pay for the service. Hausleitner spoke of the undertakings at the level of the IHF, the most recent meeting that covered the topic, and the intent of the EHF to have the matter integrated into the transfer regulations. Noting the unavoidable complexities (national law, etc.), it was suggested that the stakeholders cooperate at a deeper level to resolve the matter in an informal, but progressive, way.

5.3. European Handball League Board (EHLB)

Prior to the report, Wiederer praised the clear and full agenda of the EHLB noting the good start to the functions period. EHLB Chairman Nikolas Larsson informed that contact will be established with the EHF concerning the SMART programme that was laid inactive due to the pandemic. In the period since the last meeting, the EHLB held digital sessions with external guests; the EHLB will engage and activate the digital meetings, due to the nominal cost, to coordinate with emerging and top leagues separately. An in-person workshop will be organised in line with the budget available. At this time, the EHLB is working with 20 leagues and, to expand the stakeholder group, an information letter will be distributed to interested parties. It was also mentioned that the Master Plan also needs to be viewed from the league perspective and in respect of developing further leagues.

Wiederer mentioned the presentation given by NCM Member F. Lyons that delivered a comparison of the involvement of the lower ranked nations in handball to those in football and the question of how to close the obvious gap. A discussion ensued and it was made known that, a club level, efforts are being made to involve lower ranked clubs with the intent of strengthening the leagues in Europe. It was underlined that it is impossible to compete at the national team level if clubs are not producing players. Also, an example of a US club participating in the IHF Superglobe was given, and it was reiterated that the stakeholders have to work harder to spread handball at a broader level. In response, the EHLB has assigned Member Wagner to the task of focusing on league activity within emerging nations.

Noting the possibility to broaden the EHLB to include women's leagues, it was mentioned that the WHB had concluded a mapping of women's leagues. The aim of the EHLB should be a close cooperation, and not a merging, of the men's and women's league organisations; a formal invitation for an exchange of information will be submitted.

Closing the report, it was mentioned that the EHLB also considered the timing of the evaluation of the competition format as the pandemic has changed the TV landscape, and leagues have questioned how it will continue in the future. In response, it was underlined that such a process takes time, and it is fixed that the competition system would remain static for the first three years of the I&D cooperation. Thus, looking to 2024, a process of evaluation would commence, but any changes, if at all, would have to serve the benefit of the majority.

MFCH Planteu expressed appreciation for the work being undertaken by the leagues; he underlined that the growth of the leagues was in the best of the clubs. In support of Planteu's suggestion of best practice exchanges and education, Larsson confirmed that discussions had been held in view of expanding/adapting the current club manager education to

encompass instruction for league managers. Further alignment with the education programme resp. the University of Cologne will follow.

5.4. European Handball Players' Union (EHPU)

Due to personal and professional commitments, the EHPU representatives were unable to attend the meeting, and no report was submitted.

Wiederer mentioned that the IHF, during the Olympic Games, did not complete the election of a representative to serve on the Athletes' Commission; a harmonisation with EHPU did not take place as the EHPU is regarded as a European representation only.

6. National Team Competitions

6.1. Preview EUROs 2022/2024 and 2026/2028

Men's EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK: confirmation for 100% spectator capacity received; concepts are being defined. A testing regime will be implemented; an objective of the testing is to remove the risk of team elimination. The two new arenas in Szeged and Budapest are complete and ticket sales are progressing as expected.

Women's EHF EURO 2024 SMM: organisation is ongoing; the event period begins in November 2022 and concludes prior to the start of the football world cup.

Men's EHF EURO 2024 GER: in a challenging sporting year for Germany (EHF EURO, football EURO, WC, etc.), the preparation is ongoing; the event brand and slogan have been released, and all venues have a 12k+ spectator capacity.

Men's/Women's EHF EURO 2026/2028 Awarding: EHF EURO events demand strong applicants, and this is supported by the bids received. The awarding will take place on 20 November.

EURO Qualifiers: the presentation of the matches is improving, and this is reflected in the media figures (increased transmissions in non-participating countries); the product continues to grow in the women's sector and the EHF is aware of the challenges faced to fill the roster of 24 female teams for the first time for the EHF EURO in 2024.

6.2. YAC Events

Eleven events were successfully carried out incl. M19 that served the generation unable to play the cancelled youth World Championship. The execution of the YAC EUROs and Championships benefited not only the players, but also referees and officials. However, it was noted that the competition format is not optimal, in particular for the lower tiers regarding the numbers and the further qualification, and the system is currently under re-evaluation. It was indicated that in the future, the IHF MU21 will be placed in the calendar to coincide with the end of the season so that all players are on the same holiday schedule.

7. Club Competitions

7.1. Season 2020/2021 – Review

Underlining the challenging season passed, the flexible methodology of the clubs and the accord with the leagues was emphasised. An openminded approach was applied to

situations, this led to a minor adaptation in the competition format. Ultimately all Final4 events were played, and the financial result of the season is viewed as favourable.

7.2. Season 2021/2022 – Status Update

7.2.1. Hygiene Concept – Query Validity of Vaccinations

The current season has continued with only one match postponed to date; the objective remains to have every match played.

The topic was discussed in-depth where various information and possible scenario for upcoming events were relayed. Points included, but were not limited to exemptions, degree of obligation, participation conditions, and costs; no conclusion was reached, and the dialogue remains open.

8. I/D Partnership - Status Report

An overview of the situation that primarily revolves around the media and marketing agreement for club competitions in the final phase of the agreement as well as discord surrounding guaranteed payments was given. With the dialogue between the parties ongoing, the direction of the EHF/M was how the partners can mutually proceed in the future and the reshaping of the governance structures; the next meeting will be held on 18 October followed directly by the meeting of the EHFM Advisory Board and Finance Delegation on the day after.

9. Calendar/Meetings

9.1. International Calendar

9.2. Meeting Calendar 2022

9.3. Competitions Calendar 2022/23 & 2023/24

The international calendar was harmonised with the IHF; the next steps will follow accordingly. In addition to what was mentioned in the common meeting as a potential wish of the other Continental Federations, and in response to input from Kovacic, it was reiterated that 60 (statutory regulated) days are available to all continental federations for the release of (trans-continental) players. It was suggested that the calendar be used objectively. However, it was noted that in 2022 (due to the W-EURO beginning in November), female competitions would continue after the EURO and before Christmas break, would pose complications and that conditions e.g., scheduling, were very different across the continents.

10. Follow-up to the Common Meeting – Other Topics

No additional topics raised.

11. Miscellaneous

11.1. TRC Nominations

An overview of the Technical Referee Committee, its function and function period was given; the members - Denis Reibel (FRA) for grassroots, Jutta Ehrmann-Wolf (GER) for female referees, Oyvind Tøgstad (NOR) for elite referees, Zigmars Sondors (LAT) for development will serve until the end of the 2022/23 season (incl. 2023 summer events). The area of 'Special Tasks' is assigned to the EHF Office. The PHB are reminded that referee nomination is conducted at the EHF office level with expert consultation. Concerning referee development, the PHB concurred that it should be comprehensive across the Member Federations.

11.2. EHF Scientific Conference

In cooperation with the Union of University Handball Teachers (UUHT), the 6th edition of the EHF Scientific Conference will be held as a digital event. The theme of the conference is “Digitalization and Technology in Handball - Natural Sciences/The Game/Humanities”. Further information will be distributed in due course.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

For the minutes: M. Brown

Vienna, 18 October 2021

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