
MINUTES TO THE 20TH MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S HANDBALL BOARD

Date / Time:	Tuesday, 13 October 2020 / 08:30 – 13:30	
Venue:	Microsoft Teams Video Conference	
Participants:	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/ Clubs / SLO
	Gabriella Horvath	Member EXEC / HUN
	Alenka Cuderman	Women's Handball Coordinator
In Part:	Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General
	Peter Sichelschmidt	Senior Director National Team Competitions
Excused:	Henrik La Cour	Member EXEC / DEN

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chairwoman Myaro warmly welcomed the participants to the meeting, wishing them good work together throughout the agenda topics and expressed her thanks for the offered virtual meeting taking place during the ongoing Covid-19 situation. Further, she intimated that EHF Secretary General Hausleitner would join the meeting for the AP3-AP7, which were postponed to the end as he was attending the meeting of the PHB that was taking place at the same time.

The WHB Members provided information about the current Covid-19 situation in their respective countries. The briefings included the restart of the local and international competitions, the EHF Hygiene Concept and guidelines, safety conditions and testing of the players within clubs/national teams, consequences of positive cases and postponement or cancellation of the matches, challenges of the organisation of the cross-border matches due to travel restrictions and possible quarantine, preparing the national team competitions and intensified communications with the clubs about releasing the players.

Whilst everybody is going through very challenging and ever-changing environments it was concluded that it is imperative to ensure the wellbeing of the players and to continue playing handball matches to safeguard the competitions, with the view to coming out the pandemic even stronger.

2. Minutes of WHB Meeting No. 19 (03 & 04/2020)

Without additional comment, the minutes of the previous meetings that took place in March and April 2020 were adopted.

3. EHF Information

Reference to be taken to the minutes of the common PHB/WHB meeting; no additional discussion took place.

4. Follow-up to the Common Meeting

Education Compensation: Hausleitner underlined that discussions are about to commence regarding the transfer system. The IHF is suggesting that the starting point for calculation of the transfers should be based on the national team ranking. However, this would not provide a possibility to differentiate between the varying levels of the women's and men's teams in the member federations, which in turn could have a detrimental effect on the level of education compensation to women's clubs. The EHF are looking to elaborate a system which fairly reflects the interest of women's handball and clubs.

He therefore requested that the WHB should find, and clearly express, their position on this matter to ensure that adequate compensation is obtained for the education of female players. The WHB agreed that a working group should be convened to deal with the matter.

5. Media and Marketing Agreement 2020+

5.1. Status Update

Hausleitner reported that despite the current situation, the partnership with Infront and DAZN was implemented as scheduled on 1 July 2020, and the collaboration continues to work well. The media sales have reached a good level in both areas of club and national team competitions and most markets are covered.

In the area of marketing sales, the outlook for EURO events is positive, conversely sales directed at club competitions have mainly been solicited from the EHF network; the discussion on how to deal with these rights is ongoing and is more difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the EHF is very optimistic to solve the challenges and in the long term everybody will take profit of this cooperation.

Much success has been attained in the area surrounding the digital content; the establishment of the 'Home of Handball' and 'EHFTV', as well as the involvement of the clipping service has enabled the EHF to provide national federations and clubs with more content; the reach is increasing.

6. Master Plan

The original outlook of the EHF Master Plan was summarised (7 Players, etc.); however, it was noted that due to the change in global circumstances, the plan has had to be amended accordingly. At the 12th EHF Conference for Secretaries General (CfSG), the Federations provided the priority rating of various projects and measures. The EHF Master Plan will now primarily focus on grassroots activities, the development of the game, as well as strengthening the handball network. There is still a lot to do, the input is still possible, as the adjusted plan will be finalised prior to the next presentation at the 15th Ordinary EHF Congress in April 2021.

7. Consequences of Covid-19 on Women's Handball and required measures

Hausleitner informed that following the discussions at the PHB, a balance of the interest between club and national team competitions was found. This was a very intensive topic

because everybody is facing travel restrictions, and the EHF clearly stated that national team competitions are also important in order to be a reliable partner towards Infront & DAZN and the TV stations; therefore the top events have been safeguarded, because they are the second part of the fundament of European handball.

All federations are prepared to save the standard for the national team competitions and are ready to have close cooperation with the clubs to ensure travel from and to the clubs. This is one of the most important messages - the clubs and federations shall work closely together and support each other when it comes to the national team competitions.

Hausleitner provided further input that the Women's EHF EURO 2020 in NOR/DEN is safeguarded, as this is the utmost important cornerstone of the 2020 season in women's handball and in the EHF business, as well as to give players a platform, even more important as it is possible that spectators will not be permitted, and that we have women's handball spread throughout Europe via the TV transmission and all other platforms.

8. Women's National Team Competitions

8.1. EHF EURO 2020 NOR/DEN

Sichelschmidt informed that there are continuous intensive discussions between EHF, Organising Committees and their local authorities with the objective of safeguarding of the event. To reduce the financial and operational risks the EURO venues were reduced in Norway. Therefore, the Preliminary Rounds will be played in Trondheim (2), Frederikshavn and Herning, the Main Round in Trondheim and Herning and the Final Weekend in Trondheim.

Last week there was the Heads of Delegation video conference where the teams were informed about the EURO "Red Bubble" concept with very strict protected zones for the team delegations, EHF Officials and staff as well as testing every 72 hours. Due to the Covid-19 situation the Official Squad is increased to 35 players and there is an unlimited players replacement out of the Official Squad in the event of a player(s) positive test result.

Teams will arrive two days prior to the first match. According to the current situation there will be a very limited number of spectators allowed, and the organisers are therefore fully committed to presenting the competition as a quality TV event. Infront, presented the adapted marketing promotion, several partners are committed.

The WHB noted the referee nomination for the EURO, which consists of ten female couples. A discussion about a balanced representation, further development and experience of female referees at EHF competitions took place; the importance of competence was underlined. Finally, the group expressed best wishes to the nominated group of referees for the EURO.

8.2. EHF YAC Events 2021

Thirty-four (34) teams are registered for the W19 EHF EURO (SLO)/Championships (ITA/MKD), which will take place in July 2021; whilst 39 teams are registered for the W17 EHF EURO (MNE)/Championships (GEO/LTU), which will take place in August 2021.

The W17 EYOF, which will take place in Slovakia, has been postponed to 2022 so as not to collide with the Olympic Games.

8.3. OG 2020/2021 JPN - Status Qualifications and Final Tournament

The OG Qualification tournaments were postponed to 19-21 March 2021; the organizers are Spain, Hungary and Montenegro; the first two ranked teams in each group will qualify to the Olympic games, which will take place in Japan from 27 July to 8 August 2021. Already qualified are Japan, Netherlands, Brazil, Korea, France and Angola.

8.4. Women's IHF World Handball Championships 2021 ESP

This will be the first Women's World Championship with 32 participating teams with Netherlands as defending World Champion, Spain as organiser and additional 14 teams from Europe. The EXEC approved that the first four teams at the EURO 2020 apart from Netherlands and Spain will qualify directly to the WCh. The Qualification Phase 1 will be played across five tournaments in December 2020 and the first two ranked teams will qualify to the Qualification Phase 2, which will be played in play-off matches in April 2021 for the remaining 10 available places.

8.5. Women's IHF U18/U20 World Championships 2020 – Status Update

Sichelschmidt informed that both U18 and U20 WCh scheduled for Q4/2020 were postponed by the IHF to 2021 without a dedicated schedule, as the IHF is constantly in the contact with the organisers having in mind the complex Covid-19 situation on the various continents.

9. Club Competitions

9.1. Season 2020/2021 – Status Update

Opening the agenda point, Cuderman informed that in the season 2020/21 ninety-one (91) women's clubs are registered (-9%/last season) and divided across three competitions: DELO EHF Champions League (16 clubs/10 countries), European League (34 clubs/15 countries) and EHF Cup (41clubs/21 countries). All competitions have already started.

Pertaining to the qualification matches, there was a special intervention of splitting the teams into three regional zones to make it easier for that the matches to be played. Due to the Covid-19 situation some of the matches had to be postponed or cancelled because of positive cases or travel restrictions or required quarantine measures. Sometimes the clubs are playing in a neutral country as that is the only way that the match can take place.

The DELO EHF Champions League as a product has been upgraded in respect of branding and graphics, TV production, match highlights videos, top goals and top saves etc., all of which are shared with the clubs, who can further share it with their fan community. The competition received exclusive weekend time schedule and the media interest has increased, there are more TV partners than ever before, media reporting is equal for men's and women's Champions League.

Ivanovic informed that the clubs were discussing the scenario that the competition would be played in tournament format in "Red Bubble", however many clubs depend on spectator revenues and the decision was to start the competition normally. Some matches are played with and some without spectators, depending on the respective country measures. She further expressed her satisfaction with the EHF Hygiene Concept and the respective guidelines, which were provided to the clubs. The concept is good and works very well, however if the measures of the country are stricter, then these have to be followed i.e. the

positive tested player must go into quarantine, and the rest of the team can continue with the competition, albeit in some countries for the same incident the whole team must go into quarantine.

The consequences are the postponement of the matches and the challenges for the clubs are increasing. Ivanovic emphasized the challenging situation with the regular testing of the players as well as the financial impact of testing for the clubs. She praised the EHF for the provision of the rapid Antigen test, which can be used for domestic matches as well.

10. Stakeholder Reports: Nations, Clubs, Leagues and Players

10.1. Sexual harassment /abuse /bullying

Mallozzi initiated the group discussion on these topics as athletes are often exposed to abuses; the objective is to raise awareness and to encourage prevention at the National Federation level and entities involved, as sport has to be safe environment and a comfort zone for children and people of all ages. She emphasized that these issues not being communicated may often be the reason for the players dropping out. Therefore, the respective awareness/prevention policies, procedures and education of professionals and athletes, and encouraged communication are imperative. The group will continue to work on these topics.

11. Women's Handball Projects 2020

Various activities scheduled for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation.

Educational projects/EHF CAN (2):

- ◆ **2020 EHF RC Master Coaches Course:** four (4) participants
- ◆ **2020/21 European Handball Manager** (English): one (1) participant
All participants, who received financial support are obligated to submit a report to the EHF/WHB. The objective is to raise the competences of the female non-playing staff and to empower their leadership.

Development projects (5):

- ◆ **Women's Handball Network Workshop** (10/11 March 2020)
The event focused on grassroots and development of the youth players, talent management and special topics for emerging handball nations. The feedbacks received were very positive and the WHB are very thankful to the federations, which shared their best practices, so that together women's handball has been moved forward.
- ◆ **Handball@Home** (H@H) activity (May 2020)
RYT ambassadors and RYT players were activated to present their H@H activities and encourage the handball community for action during the pandemic lockdown. With a changed daily routine and priorities, with new developed skills they motivated others for keep going and overcome the corona virus challenges.
- ◆ **Mentoring of Coaches in Women's Youth Handball**
The cooperation agreement is in place with BEL und MNE, however due to the pandemic situation both are currently on hold.

◆ **Respect Your Talent (RYT) Programme (3/2019 - 2027)**

The RYT programme is linked to the EHF YAC EURO/Championships with two activities: Summer Tour and Camp, which will be executed for both women and men, and supported with the online RYT Toolkit platform.

The RYT Programme stands for the talent development in European Handball with the player as the most important stakeholder. The key objective of the RYT programme is to contribute to sustainable pathways of talented handball players across Europe based on stimulation of skills, empowering personal development on and off the court, enforcing ambition for competitive pathway and strengthening the European handball community.

○ **RYT Summer Tour**

Identification of talented players at the YAC events via “Player of the Match” award and the players meeting and interacting with the RYT ambassador, who inspires and encourages them for elite handball. Tracking of the All-Star team players via EHF competitions and the sharing of their stories on the EHF social media channels.

○ **RYT camp for the talented players**

The camp is organised for the All-Star team players of the W17/M18 EHF EURO/Championships with the objective to inspire and encourage the players for personal development on and off the court as well as for professional handball. The messages are transferred to them by the RYT ambassadors with the support of the experts. The training sessions consist of the following topics: dual career, on-camera interview skills and social media, anti-doping, sports law and match fixing.

○ **RYT Toolkit**

The RYT Toolkit is expected for release in Summer 2021 and will be available on the EHF website in the form of digitalized training sessions including the tools to support the players with their personal development in the following topics: dual career, media, wellbeing and sport integrity.

◆ **EHF Online Handball Summit (10/2020) – contribution of three topics**

- How to improve Grassroots Handball – Role of the Camps (CRO)
- Women’s Handball Academy – When a Vision Comes True! (SUI)
- Respect Your Talent

Promotional projects (2):

◆ **Leadership Award (12/2020):** All-Star team players at the Women’s EHF EURO 2020

◆ **Women’s EHF EURO 2020 promotion (12/2020):**

- Cross promotion of EURO via DELO EHF Champions League through the LED EURO animation in November 2020 (24 matches)

- Podcast: promotional activities involving EURO players and RYT ambassadors
- Activity with the EURO participating Federations – the teams will be motivated to provide the slogans for their fans, as they will not be able to be at the venues and the slogans will be shared on the EHF social media channels prior to the EURO

12. Review of the WHB Strategy and Action Plan 2016 – 2020 & Proposals for 2021+

Following the second election period, a review of the women's handball projects 2016-2020 and the EHF activities has been undertaken. The Action Plan is based on the women's handball strategic objectives: enhancing brand & image of women's handball, improving women's handball top products, give focus to youth handball, enhancing the status of women in handball, and work closely with emerging nations and is divided into areas of education, development and promotion.

REVIEW

In the period 2013-2016, the projects focused on the surveys (Federation, Player, Club), which were a base for the formulation of the Women's Handball Strategy and Action Plan and was communicated to the Federations via yearly Women's Handball Network Workshops. Subsequently, the actions were taken to improve the gender equality position, and the Brighton Declaration was signed. The Women's EHF Champions League FINAL4 was introduced. Various photo and mobile reporter projects, aimed at improving the image of women's handball, were undertaken. Promotion of female leadership awards were initiated in respect of female national team head coaches and All-Star team players at Women's EHF EURO and YAC events.

In the period 2017-2020 the focus was redirected to raise the image and popularity of women's handball, and to strengthen youth handball. To empower female leadership, the EURO promotional campaign with role models "handball inspires" was introduced. To ensure a better future of women's handball, a talent development programme "Respect Your Talent" (RYT) was incorporated along the EHF YAC EURO/Championships, consisting of Summer Tour, Camp, and RYT digital toolkit. The RYT programme is part of the EHF Master Plan and will be executed for both genders.

In this period the women's competitions were strengthened i.e. new structure of women's club competitions including a new playing format of DELO EHF Champions League and attainment of the title sponsor, European League and FINAL4, and the extension of the Women's EURO from 16 to 24 teams in 2024. A big step forward is also the new media and marketing approach in the season 2020/21, which is providing equal treatment of men's and women's handball, and which hopefully will lead to improved profile and raised popularity of women's handball.

STATUS & FURTHER STEPS

The WHB can be satisfied with the achievements in the area of education, with the female competency and participation in various roles i.e. coaches, referees, delegates and sport managers; however, the education programme should continue and the focus shall be put on

recruitment, retention and post-athletic career to further strengthen female leadership and the status of women in handball.

The new competition structures are great achievements, but also an obligation, which requires further investments and sponsor contribution to women's handball, to ensure the required expansion and quality of the players/clubs/national teams.

The WHB are proud of the achievements in youth handball and the steps taken with the RYT programme, which will be further developed, also for the use of federations. Additional actions are required to prevent the high drop-out rate of players between the ages of 14-18 years. In general, the focus should stay on grassroots and youth handball to ensure the required numbers and quality of female players to play in the competitions.

The position of women's handball can be strengthened with the realisation of the newly agreed board structure 2021+ (National Team Committee Women, new joint male/female Nations Board, in addition the amended Women's Handball Board). As one additional strengthening measure for women's handball one female representative per nation at the Congress will be financially supported by the EHF. The group emphasized the importance of the strong representation of women's handball in the new board structure after the election 2021, with the opportunity for the Clubs, Leagues and Players representatives.

The emerging nations are receiving mentoring support upon request and their development opportunities have greatly increased through the introduction of the YAC Championships. Solutions for further European YAC competitions, which would allow them to seek governmental financial support and provide the players with the opportunities for continuous competitions, are proposed.

The Board would take this opportunity to express their thanks to the EXEC for their continuous support for women's handball, and the positive strategic steps taken, which are very promising for the future of women's handball.

13. Miscellaneous

Lecusanu informed that the IHF panel has taken the action to clarify the situation of the Egyptian women's handball team campaigning for the same rights and sporting privileges as men's side and she will provide an update once outcomes are known.

Hausleitner and Horvath offered to the WHB members a virtual communication from the EURO 2020, which was much appreciated by all members.

Cuderman thanked to the WHB members for their participation and contribution and brought the meeting to a close.

For the minutes: Alenka Cuderman

Vienna, 16 October 2020

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