
MINUTES TO THE 21ST MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S HANDBALL BOARD

Date / Time: Tuesday, 09 March 2021 / 14:00 – 17:00

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
Henrik La Cour	Member EXEC / DEN
Alenka Cuderman	Women's Handball Coordinator

In Part:

Michael Wiederer	President
Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General
Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
Peter Sichelschmidt	Senior Director National Team Competitions

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chairwoman Myaro warmly welcomed the participants to the meeting with the hope that all and their families are well, expressing happiness to see them again, albeit only virtually. She wished them good work together and highlighted the importance of discussion under AP 6.

The WHB Members provided information about the current Covid-19 situation in their respective countries. The briefings included the local young age category, amateur and professional competitions and respective measures taken by their national federations to keep active connection to the players.

2. Minutes of WHB Meeting No. 20 (10/2020)

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

3. EHF Information

Reference to be taken to the minutes of the common NB/EHLB/PHB/WHB meeting. As follow-up Wiederer presented the received EHF Congress motions of National Federations. The WHB afterwards and within the group discussed the motion of NOR regarding the Beach Handball Regulations – Athletes uniform and their position will be delivered to the EXEC.

4. International Handball Federation

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

5. Stakeholder Reports

Ivanovic highlighted the provision of the WFCH minutes to the WHB members last week and offered her readiness to answer any respective question now or in the future. She further provided the current status of the EHF club competitions and noted that currently the varying travel restrictions are a bigger challenge for the teams than the Covid-19 infections. The clubs are fighting through the competitions and hopefully this year the season will be concluded with two FINAL4s.

Bodnieva stressed that for the players on the highest level the main challenge is the number of matches to be played in a very short time, especially at the end of the season and underlined the number of injuries that have happened in women's and men's competitions; particularly in situation when the players have to play directly out of 14 days quarantine. To reduce the risk of injuries, France was mentioned as a positive example, where the competition regulations oblige the players to have a 14 days preparation period after the quarantine and only afterwards, are they permitted to play the matches. In Hungary, the players infected by Covid-19 are registered and are losing the playing licence and only after 6-7 weeks of recuperation period they can reobtain it. The discussion concluded that the situation is very complex for all stakeholders (federations, clubs, players), therefore an individual and joint responsibility of all is essential.

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

Based on the carefully summarised consequences of Covid-19 on women's handball on various levels, the group discussion focussed on grassroots as the most vulnerable group. The lack of training, gathering and playing, as well as the observing of senior team matches in the arena is concerning. How to avoid the drop out? There is restricted contact to the players, however various proposals were raised:

- Federations or Clubs can create a platform, where the players can meet and chat, to feel that they belong to the same group.
- Federations intensify streaming or even televising the matches of the national / international competitions, therefore promoting and encouraging the young players and their parents for watching or otherwise participating in social media activities.
- Federations or Clubs may consider organising campaigns or tournaments for street handball, Goalcha, and beach handball as attractive alternative outdoor activities, all in close cooperation with the parents and during this difficult time the future relationship might be strengthened.
- Localised summer camp activities involving role models.
- It is recommended that the EHF consider the provision of a social media campaign together with the federations and clubs to retain, attract and inspire the young players in/to handball.
- It is recommended that the EHF consider the provision of grassroots guidelines "Back to Handball" for federations and clubs to tailor the guidelines to meet their own aims and objectives.

7. Women's National Team Competitions

7.1. EHF EURO

7.1.1. EHF EURO 2020 NOR/DEN (Report)

During this time, it was of the utmost importance to play handball and deliver show competitions, therefore first priority was to safeguard the event and to provide a safe environment for all participants. Whilst NOR, due to the local pandemic measures could no longer deliver the EURO organisation, DEN as a sole organiser with a lot of experience, professionalism and flexibility, together with the EHF, delivered the EURO. The hygiene concept worked perfectly, which was possible only in very close cooperation with all participants for the EURO to become a showcase for all team sport events. It proved that in this insecure situation a very close cooperation with the participating teams in the preparatory phase was crucial, so that the teams were prepared to enter the bubble safely and the created platform at the EURO provided a stable environment for the matches.

The complete set of modern technology was used for the event, including Kinexon and Select iBall, all of which allowed the fans and the teams to receive various statistics live during the matches.

There were no spectators in the arenas and the event was delivered as a TV event. The engagement of the fans was great via TV, especially in Scandinavia (NOR, DEN), EHFTV streaming, and via record hours of programming at Women's EHF EUROs. The EURO in DEN was the most engaging online in the tournament history, celebrating 56% increase in social media engagements and 166% growth in followers. The digital strategy and the investment into social media paid off. The loyalty of the EHF TV and marketing partners was very important, and the partners gained more exposure than ever among sport fans. The media podcast activity provided a lot of deeper information of women's handball players and was appreciated by the fans.

The WHB expressed gratitude and congratulations to the organisers DEN/EHF for the excellent organisation and delivery of the event.

7.1.2. EHF EURO 2022 SLO/MKD/MNE

The record number of registrations (36) for the EURO without any specific measures proved a positive development of the women's national teams and with regard to the EURO 2024, which will be played with 24 teams, it is required to develop measures to have more than 40 teams taking part. The WHB and respectively NB Women in the future should provide recommendations how to develop women's national teams and motivate smaller nations to participate at the European Open, Championships and in the next steps at the EURO.

It will be the last event played with 16 teams. Already qualified are SLO, MKD, MNE and NOR as current champion, who will play the EHF EURO Cup. Qualification Phase 1 will be played in tournament format in the NTW 31 May-6 June 2021 and the draw for the Qualifiers will be on 25 March 2021. The event preparatory process is ongoing.

7.1.3. EHF EURO 2024 HUN/SUI/AUT

The tournament will be played with 24 teams for the first time.

7.2. EHF YAC Events 2021

Thirty-four (34) teams are registered for the W19 EHF EURO (SLO)/Championships (ITA/MKD), which will take place 8-18 July 2021; whilst 39 teams are registered for the W17 EHF EURO (MNE)/Championships (GEO/LTU), which will take place 5-15 August 2021.

Sichelschmidt also informed that both Women's U18 and U20 WCh scheduled for Q4/2020 whilst twice postponed were finally cancelled by the IHF, as well as Men's U19 and U21 WCh. In reaction, the EHF decided to offer to this generation of top teams/players a competition and will organise the M19(M18) EHF EURO 2021 (2020) in Croatia along with previously announced M19 (M18) EHF Championships 2021 (2020), which will take place in BUL, MKD and LAT.

The workshops for the EHF YAC event Organisers and the draw for all respective competitions took place in February 2021. There will be an update of the EHF YAC events regulations regarding the Official Squad with an increased number of players from 28 to 35, similar as in senior competitions. At all ten EHF YAC events the 'Respect Your Talent' programme is planned to be executed.

The W17 EYOF, which will take place in Slovakia, has been postponed by the EOC to 2022 so as not to collide with the Olympic Games. The EHF CC proposed to the EOC to use the age groups 2005 and 2006, which is corresponding to the normally used aged groups.

7.3. 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.

7.4. 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 an additional 14 teams from Europe. Therefore, already qualified for the event are ESP, NED and the first four teams from the EURO 2020: NOR, FRA, CRO, DEN. Qualification Phase 1 will be played across five tournaments in March 2021 and the Qualification Phase 2 in play-off matches in April 2021 for the remaining 10 available places (10 from EURO and first two from Qualification Phase 1). The draw for Qualification Phase 2 will be on 22 March 2021. It was noted that at the Men's WCh 2021 there in addition to wild cards two more places were provided to European teams by the IHF due to pandemic issues and something similar might happen at the Women's WCh 2021 as well.

8. Club Competitions

8.1. Season 2020/21 – Status Update

Glaser praised the clubs for their efforts, cooperation and flexibility for saving the competitions until the end. Whilst at the beginning of the season 2020/21 some teams were suffering with Covid-19 infections and some matches had to be postponed due to the positive cases, after the restart in January the teams have better adapted to Covid-19; however, the travel restrictions were challenging. The rescheduling of the matches did not always work out

and at the end some matches were not played and were decided by administrative decision: 9 matches in DELO EHF Champions League, 9 matches in European League and 11 matches in European Cup. As a fair compromise in the DELO EHF Champions League, the EXEC approved an updated playing schedule qualifying all 16 participating teams to the Play-offs for Quarterfinals, therefore all decisions will be taken on the court. The DELO EHF FINAL4 is planned to be played under the hygiene concept as scheduled.

In the European League it was different, there were no group matches in 2020; whilst a very small number of Covid-19 cases occurred, the biggest challenge were the travel restrictions and in some cases, it was not possible to come to a conclusion. The competition is in the Quarterfinals stage. The respective bid document for the organisation of the FINAL4 was sent to the teams qualified for the Quarterfinals.

In the European Cup with K.O. rounds only two teams are concerned, and as no solution was found for the match, one team dropped out of the competition. The competition is in the Semi-finals stage.

9. Women's Handball Projects 2021

Educational projects/EHF CAN (4):

- ◆ **2020/21 EHF RC Master Coaches Course:** four (4) participants obtained the MC licence
- ◆ **2020/21 European Handball Manager** (English): one (1) participant
- ◆ **2021/22 European Handball Manager** (German): two (2) places available
- ◆ **2021 EHF Club Management Seminar:** five (5) places available

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 (2):

- ◆ **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 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 the competitive pathway, and strengthening the European handball community.

The RYT programme is linked to the EHF YAC EURO/Championships with two activities: Summer Tour and Camp, which will be executed as part of the EHF Master Plan for both women and men and supported with the online RYT Toolkit platform and ambassador sessions. Visit <https://respectyourtalent.eurohandball.com/>

- **RYT Summer Tour (10 events in 2021):** 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 (W17/Dec. 2021, M19 (M18)/Jan. 2022):** the camp will be 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 expected release is planned for the end of 2021 and will be available 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.
- **RYT Ambassador Sessions:** the handball stars and topical experts are working with talented players in customised online formats.
- **RYT Train the Trainer:** a set of expert workshops empowering national federations and clubs to implement RYT activities within their own handball systems.

Promotional projects (2):

- ◆ **Pool of Ambassadors** (recruitment)
- ◆ **Leadership Award at W17/W19 EHF EURO/Championships 2021**
 - All-Star team players
 - Female National Team Head Coach
- ◆ **Update of the Women’s Handball Strategy**

The WHB summarised the project achievements of the board in the election period 2016-2021, which will be reported at the EHF Congress.

10. Media and Marketing Agreement 2020+

10.1. Status Update

Hausleitner informed about the cooperation with Infront and DAZN and the status of the two contracts, one for the national team and one for the club competitions.

The national team contract is running properly, the cooperation is established in eight fields: TV rights and marketing packages, TV production and postproduction to deliver all digital content for the social media platforms and platform of federations, finances, media and communications, competitions/EUROs. In the near future a new field will be created, where all technicians will come together with the aim to reach a higher level of data flow and statistics. For national team competitions nearly all markets in Europe are covered, men’s and women’s EURO are broadcast, the Qualifiers are better covered than ever before. The

financial part of the contract is fulfilled. It is a success model for the EHF and its partners, both are close to reaching the break-even point, the partners have their costs covered and the EHF have achieved the guaranteed amounts to be received.

It is different in the club competition contract as Infront and DAZN could not manage to sell marketing rights, DELO and ICONIQ are coming out of the handball network, also the TV contracts are not offering sufficient income, the contract is not covered on the outside fully right now, therefore it is important that debt is not accumulated by not delivering matches, which may reduce the guaranteed amounts. The cooperation is not in question, and the EHF is confident of improvement in this area next season having more experience. After the normal season, the created product will be evaluated regarding its attractiveness for the market. The EHF will release an app at the beginning of May for the upcoming FINAL4 tournaments with presenting all results, video content and option for personalisation.

11. Master Plan

The project Master Plan was announced 18 months ago, the idea behind is to increase the value of the European handball in the next tender process. The Master Plan describes the way how to reach this goal, it is not only about selling process of media and marketing rights but also the number of active players, number of stakeholders being involved, number of clubs, number of fans, it is also about the quality what we are delivering, coaches, managers etc. For the plan seven players were created, each of them covering points elaborating the game, highlights events, fan appeal, grassroots growth, strengthening network, good governance, and commercial success, all of which should have a positive impact on development of handball. The prioritised initiatives of the federations are integrated into the Master Plan, the initiatives to develop seven players are defined (one of them RYT) and will let the European handball community grow. The engine of this project could be the CRM system, where the data base for all stakeholders is created: it could be used to observe the growth of the club and /or fan data base, but also smaller groups: beach handball or referees; The CRM projects are connected to the Master Plan and the RYT project is one important part of the Master Plan. The updated Master Plan will be presented at the 2021 EHF Congress and also some financial resources are foreseen to start the first project for the next season.

12. Miscellaneous

Hausleitner presented the proposed EHF transfer ranking system (with different ranking for men and women, with combined ranking of national team and club competitions and with three levels of federations: top/developed/emerging) to leverage the education compensation for European transfers, which will be forwarded to the EXEC for decision at their meeting in March 2021.

Hausleitner further explained the complexity of the system of the Players' Agents (PA) including the legal environment, the FCH and WFCH statement, that the clubs will not pay the PA anymore, therefore the players would have sole responsibility for that payment, and the statement of all stakeholders, that the EHF should find an environment where the basic principle will work: "one who orders the service shall pay for it" and implement it into the EHF legal system. The EHF decided to look deeper into the legal challenges as the topic is very complicated. The basic approach of all stakeholders is that the system of PA right now shall not be supported any longer. It was also noted that players are not fully aware of their rights

and possibilities and implementing a system like this means all legal burden would be on their side. Also, the Players Union would have a lot of work to do to prepare various templates and informing the players. Additional tax questions have to be solved. The EHF will further discuss this topic if there are regulations following.

Myro thanked to all participants for constructive work and contribution at the meeting as well as for a very good cooperation during the last five years. She also expressed thanks to Alenka Cuderman in her function as coordinator and the EHF for their full support.

For the minutes: Alenka Cuderman
Vienna, 15 March 2021

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