
MINUTES TO THE 25TH MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S HANDBALL BOARD

Date | Time: Tuesday, 14 March 2023 | 08:30 – 12:50

Venue: Renaissance Hotel Vienna

Participants:

WHB:

Marta Bon	Chairwoman SLO
Leonor Mallozzi	Deputy Chairwoman 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
Bente Aksnes	Member EXEC NOR
F. V. Blazquez Garcia	Member EXEC ESP

EHF Office: Alenka Cuderman Women's Handball Coordinator (Minutes)
In Part Martin Hausleitner Secretary General

Excused: Nodjialem Myaro Member NCW | FRA

The meeting took place as a second part to the common meeting of PHB/WHB where the general presentations were provided.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Bon warmly welcomed the participants to the meeting noting the absence of Nodjialem Myaro due to the health reasons, wishing her a speedy recovery.

2. Minutes of WHB Meeting No. 24 (10/2022)

Without additional comment, the minutes of the previous meeting that took place in October 2022 were adopted.

3. Stakeholder Reports

3.1. EHF NCW / Nations Board

Mallozzi reported the outcomes of the NCW discussions:

- NCW praised the programme, the composition of the invited stakeholders and the outcomes of the Women's Handball Conference 2023, which has been organised during the final weekend of the EHF EURO 2022 Women and proposed that the next Women's Handball Conference to be scheduled as a side event at the EHF EURO 2024 Women. *WHB agreed to the proposal. The format like general introduction and parallel sessions for the interest groups were mentioned.*

- NCW proposed that regular meetings of the women's league representatives would be organised with the EHLB men in order to exchange the knowledge and experiences and ensure the progress on women's league side, preparing the representatives for their roles.
- NCW highlighted the RUS/BLR situation and possible participation of their national teams in the international competitions and expressed concerns for respective political decisions of the national governments and consequences for the sport.
- NCW/Malozzi presented the anti-harassment national campaign "There is no room for harassment in sport. Report it!" in Portugal, highlighting the high importance of prevention and awareness of the sexual harassment at all levels of sport. It is mandatory that the organisations have an anti-harassment concept / strategy and respective education and policies are implemented and provide a safe environment to all participants in sport.
It has been recommended that the EHF would raise awareness to the National Federations at one of the EHF major events in respect of the importance of implementation of the anti-harassment strategy and policies and preserving the reputation of the sport.
- NCW emphasised the pro-active approach of the EHF Media by initiating the activation of the **"female women's handball commentator"** position at international events and the **"empowering women campaign"** presenting successful women in various roles i.e.: player on- and off-the court, referees, delegates, coaches, sport managers, and representatives.

3.2. WFCH

Ivanovic informed about the club situation:

- The attendance of 15.400 spectators at the EHF FINAL4 2022 Women is the highest attendance at women's handball events ever and handball can be proud about.
- In the season 2022/2023 112 women's clubs are participating in three clubs competitions; the quality of the CL has a huge challenge as two RUS clubs have been missing and the replacing clubs are not on as high level, therefore the results are with a very high goal difference. The consequences of the DAZN / Infront marketing rights agreement were mentioned, returning the marketing rights to the clubs with no time for adaptation and consequently the income has been reduced.
- The clubs discussed the challenge of the decreasing numbers of spectators at women's competitions and are looking for an EHF support in creating / collecting ideas how to increase the spectators in the halls. One of the clubs' suggestions is that the club should have one person responsible only for spectators and how to fill the hall.
- The WFCH had an election to replace one of the board members who is not working any more in the club, Stefan Albrechtson from IK Sävehof has taken over this position.
- The club income distribution in the current season between men and women is a split 75/25%, which will be changed in the next season to 70/30%.
- The club partnership agreement with the IHF has been prolonged and the clubs will receive 20% higher compensation for releasing the players to WCh/OG from 2023 and 20% more from 2025 on.
- The playing system and the playing days will not be changed. For further information regarding the next season please see the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.3.

3.3. Situation other interest groups

No input has been provided.

4. Women's National Team Competitions - Follow up the Common meeting

4.1. Review of the EURO 2022 (SLO/MKD/MNE)

- There has been a proper organisational rundown with essential satisfaction of the teams and officials with accommodation, meals, and transportation provided. The organisers have taken sustainable approach in promotion, logistics, etc. and made also further steps in branding of the women's EURO event.
- The lack of spectators onsite / weak spectator occupancy per playing stage (PR: 61%, MR 35%, FW 49%) and in total (47%) and therefore necessary measures to increase the number of spectators have been noted. The spectators from MNE were a positive example.
- The digital figures have compensated the lower TV figures, which were affected by the start of the FIFA World Cup on the final day.
- The referees appreciated additional mentoring and mental support during the EURO. Out of 12 referee couples 7 were female. The teams in general have been satisfied with the officiating performance at the EURO. 71% of the EHF officials were female.
- A negative example lacking the Fair Play in the last match of the PR in Podgorica (GER vs ESP) which caused negative headlines for the competition was discussed.

For more information see the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.1.1.

4.2. Preview EURO 2024 (AUT/HUN/SUI)

- It will be the first Women's EHF EURO with 24 teams. The match schedule (PR: 6 groups x 4 teams, MR: 2 groups x 6 teams, FW: top 6 teams) will be the same as at the men's EURO. The attention will be given to the rest days and traveling teams.
- The organisational structure has been changed in respect of the venues in the Main Round and the Final Weekend (AUT instead of HUN). For information see the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.1.3.
- 36 teams registered for the event, the Champion (NOR) and the organisers (AUT/HUN/SUI) are qualified and play EURO Cup, 32 teams will play qualification for 20 places at the EURO.
- The final tournament draw will take place in May 2024, the final tournament will be played from 28 November-15 December 2024.

4.3. EURO 2024 Qualifiers & WHB initiatives status

- 32 teams (8 groups x 4 teams) will play the Qualifiers Phase 2, the best two teams of each group and the best four third teams will qualify for the final event.
- The draw event will be on 20 April 2023. The matches will be played in October 2023, February/March and April 2024.

- The importance of levelling up the competition and further development of the EURO product was highlighted. In the first step, the aim is to strengthen the competition and to involve more teams in the qualifications. *For the start the encouragement of the emerging nations for participation at YAC events is essential.*

4.4. YAC Events

- 33 teams have registered for the W19 EURO/Championships and 36 teams for the W17 EHF EURO/Championships, which means no changes to the previous years. The W19 EURO will be played in ROU with 16 teams, the W19 Championships in LTU with 8 teams and in KOS with 9 teams. The W17 EURO will be played in MNE with 16 teams and W17 Championships in AZE and in TUR with each 10 teams. The new event organisers are appreciated.
- The EYOF (W17/ 8 teams) will be played in SLO from 23-29 July 2023.

4.5. IHF World Championship 2023

The tournament will be organised by DEN/NOR/SWE (29/11-17/12/2023) with 32 teams, there are 16 places for Europe are granted, further teams are possible as substitute nations, 6 teams are already qualified: organisers and FRA, MNE, NED.

5. Club Competitions

5.1. Season 2022/2023 – Status

The played rounds and the upcoming final stage rounds of all three women's club competitions were reviewed. After great delivery of the last year EHF FINAL4 Women 2023 in Budapest the expectations for this year edition are high. A neutral venue for the EHF Finals Women 2023 in Graz has been presented and the spectator situation discussed.

5.2. Season 2023/24 - Preview

The rundown of all three women's club competitions for the season 2023/24 with all required meetings, publication of club competitions regulations, deadline for club registrations, draw events and competitions start dates was noted.

Further information has been provided and discussed under the AP 3.2. and is available in the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.3.

6. WHB Initiatives

6.1. /6.2. Women's Handball Conference 2022 – Follow up the Common meeting

The WHB appreciated the structure and the programme of the delivered Women's Handball Conference focussing on developing national teams and national team events, developing players and players pathways, providing more professional environment to the players, presentation of women's sport in relation to raise sponsor interest and the role of clubs and leagues in strengthening of women's handball. The exchange of the best practices and the external expertise have motivated the stakeholders for further development.

- As follow up of the conference EHF support will be provided to the emerging nations who will participate in the Qualifiers Phase 2 of the EHF EURO 2024 Women; first time participants are: AZE, BUL, GBR, LUX, BIH and LAT. A “**preparation workshop for the newcomers**” will be organised to discuss the standards, the expectations, as well as the possibilities (arenas of required standards, event presentation and promotion to attract spectators, media, and sponsors) and a “**game supervisor**” provided to help the teams to meet the required EURO standards in presentation and delivery of the game (TV production, set-up, etc.). Possible “**financial support**” may be provided to the new registered federations.
- To balance their stakeholder structure the EHF decided to activate the role of women’s leagues for the period after the EHF Congress 2025 and integrate them into the EHLB structure. As a first preparation step the “**Women’s League Convention**” will be organised in Budapest during the EHF FINAL4 2023 Women gathering the representatives who are responsible for management of the women’s national handball leagues in Europe and discussing the role of a league in relation to player environment (i.e.: player contract, player protection, integration of young players), TV and marketing contracts etc. The information on organisational structures of the national leagues has been collected to provide better understanding of the respective development stage.

For further information see the AP 3.1. and the minutes of the common meeting AP 2.3. and 5.

6.3. Respect Your Talent (RYT) Programme

- Cuderman reported about the **RYT Camp 2023**, which has been organised in January for 30 All-Star team players of **M18** EHF EURO/Championships 2022 and being inspired by Ambassadors like Olafur Stefansson, Luka Stepancic, Vid Kavticnik and Carlos Prieto.
- **Player of the Match activities** will be organised this Summer during the **W17/W19** EHF EURO/Championships 2023, where the Ambassadors will inspire the selected “Players of the Match” and motivate them for professional handball.
- Following the Summer events, in December, a **RYT Camp 2023** will be organised for 30 All-Star team players of **W17** EHF EURO/Championships 2023.
- Furthermore, **the digital Ambassador sessions** are offered to the young talents (Players of the Match), where they can meet their role models (Ambassadors) online, learn from their experiences and ask questions.
- A **digital learning platform RYT App** is in a construction process.

7. Women’s Handball Strategy – Update 2022-2025

Further discussion in respect of the update of the Women’s Handball Strategy took place and it was agreed to include a sustainability approach in respect of the Master Plan and complete the discussion via an online meeting.

8. Follow-up to the Common Meeting

Hausleitner briefly provided information about the restructuring of the Rinck Convention programme (age related, kids and goalkeeper programme, etc), which is adapted to specific knowledge and expertise, EHF sustainability project and European Handball House. For further information refer to the minutes of the common meeting.

9. Miscellaneous

9.1. Players' Agents

Hausleitner informed that player agents have created the European Handball Agent Association (EHAA) with a seat in Vienna. The EHF had a meeting with them, and there is a serious approach and objective to get unserious agents out of the market. The agents' activities are not regulated in the EHF system and there is a very complex environment in each country (legal, financial), therefore every situation must to be dealt with individually.

9.2. Officiating

Hausleitner explained the field of tasks (game evaluation, professionalisation of referees, delegates, technical support, women's referee and YRP projects, integrity project with Sport Radar, etc.) in respect of the officiating. The EHF is going to professionalize the approach how to cover these tasks, also in connection to a HUN motion and possibly change the sport political structure at the next EHF Congress: refereeing should be neutral and not a political topic. With professionalisation of officiating more persons will cover the tasks.

Currently 119 male and 21 female delegates are in the EHF officiating system. The EHF issued an invitation for the **EHF delegate course 2023** with a strong support to women, to encourage more potential female delegates to take over a role in European handball. The application process is completed and after first selection there are 19 male and 10 female delegates who potentially will be invited to the delegate course in Vienna (April 2023).

9.3. IHF Rules of the Game

The WHB have been informed that the EHF has established a good cooperation with the IHF in respect of the implementation of the new rules and education. Currently new rules like i.e.: 4 passes, middle circle, hit the head of the goalkeeper are in the evaluation.

Bon thanked all participants for their constructive work and contributions.

Vienna, 17 March 2023

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