
MINUTES TO THE 27TH MEETING OF THE WOMEN'S HANDBALL BOARD

Date | Time: Tuesday, 9 April 2024 | 08:30 – 13:00

Venue: Renaissance Hotel Vienna

Participants:

WHB:

Leonor Mallozzi	Chairwoman Member NCW POR
Marta Bon	Deputy Chairwoman SLO
Trine Nielsen	Member WFCH DEN
Jelena Eric	Member SRB
Monika Listkiewicz	Member POL
Bente Aksnes	Member EXEC NOR

EHF Office:

Michael Wiederer	EHF President (<i>In Part</i>)
Martin Hausleitner	EHF Secretary General (<i>In Part</i>)
Attila Heim	Manager NT Competitions
Alenka Cuderman	Women's Handball Coordinator

Excused:

Nodjalem Myaro	Member NCW FRA
Elena Borrás Alcaraz	Member ESP
Deja Ivanovic	Member WFCH SLO
F. V. Blazquez Garcia	Member EXEC ESP

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

Mallozzi welcomed the WHB members to the meeting announcing the absence of the members Myaro, Ivanovic, Borrás Alcaraz and Blazquez Garcia due to their business commitments, bearing in mind that the WHB meeting initially scheduled for March has been postponed. Furthermore, she warmly welcomed the new member of the WFCH Trine Nielsen, who introduced herself to the board.

2. Minutes of WHB Meeting No. 26 (10/2023)

Without additional comment, the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted.

3. Stakeholder Reports

3.1. EHF NCW / Nations Board

Mallozzi reported the outcomes of the NCW discussions:

- Overviewing the results of the **EURO Qualifiers 2024** it has been noted that there were matches with a too high goal difference (> 20-30 goals). The difference of the playing level of some teams is too big and their results may negatively affect future funding, TV, etc. Smaller nations are playing catch-up, therefore the expectations of the newcomers must be realistic, and the media support is required, helping smaller nations to come closer step by step. **A continuous investment, a high-level motivation and patience** are of high importance. It is important to give the federations time to develop, and to help them, even with reducing standards on a very responsible way, if required. Also, the very positive examples of the qualified teams were mentioned: TUR, FAR, POR, SVK.
- **In order to overcome the gap, it is important to develop young national teams**, giving them continuous opportunity to participate at the YAC events (European Open, EURO/Championships, World Championships, IHF Trophy) **with the priority to develop players and to collect international experiences without pressure of winning**. The development of women's teams takes longer, the patience is required.
- The NCW supported the newly proposed daily rates for the **YAC EURO/Championship** of 170€/130€ with the view to possibly reach more YAC organisers under the new conditions.
- The NCW is of the view that whilst planning to develop and raise the profile of the **YAC EURO** (TV broadcasting, media and marketing, player name on playing kit, etc) the priority during the competition should be given to **further development of players** and officials (referees, delegates, coaches), especially in women's handball.
- The NCW proposed the following agenda topics for the Women's Handball Conference 2024: sustainable player development, player drop out, gender equality and player safeguarding.

3.2. WFCH | Due to the absence of Ivanovic, the input from the clubs has been provided in writing in advance and noted by the WHB.

3.3. General Assembly of the Women's European Leagues/ Women's Handball League Board

- President Wiederer provided a short overview of the development of the WHB and women's handball since 2012 and highlighted the development role of the WHB at the start. With raised achievements of women's handball the representation of different interest groups and the importance of mirroring the political structure with the men's handball is necessary. The WHB is changing the role and becoming a platform for exchanging interests. It is a political process and requires representation of women's handball by respective stakeholder groups, leagues and players. Currently 4 WHB members were nominated by the EXEC for the period 2021-2025 based on their handball expertise as there was no stakeholder group representing leagues and players. The new political structure of the WHB (after the EHF Congress 2025) will consist of 2 elected representatives of EXEC, 2 representatives of federations (via NCW), 2 representatives of clubs, 2 representatives of leagues and 2 representatives of players. The EHF has started the initiative to motivate

federations to bring in the league representatives, and similar to the men's side the league board will be installed from minimum of three different league levels.

- The General Assembly of the European Women's Handball Leagues and the election of the 6 members into Women's Handball League Board (WHLB) are scheduled for 2 June 2024 on the occasion of the EHF FINAL4 2024 Women in Budapest. Two elected representatives of the WHLB will become members of the WHB (2024-2029) whilst the existing 4 members in their expert function will continue until the EHF Congress 2025.

3.4. Situation Players Representation

- Following the EHF Congress 2025 the EHPU plans to nominate 2 members representing players interest in the WHB. However, on EHF side a clarification on the status must follow prior to the process.

4. Women's National Team Competitions | Follow up to Common Meeting

4.1. EURO Qualifiers & WHB initiatives status

- **The status of the EURO Qualifiers:** The delivery of the matches and the marketing implementation of the Qualifiers requirements by the Federations have been fulfilled with a few exceptions. The EHF support for the new EURO Qualifiers participants has been provided (additional workshop, marketing supervisor, venue video check, promotional activities, graphics). Various activities were undertaken to promote the highlight matches and to raise awareness for the upcoming EURO with the objective to get more spectators on-side. Further discussion took place under AP 3.1.
- The importance of levelling up the competition, further development of the EURO product and the women's teams to close the gap to the top nations and to have wide base of strong teams has been highlighted.

4.2. Preview EURO 2024 (AUT/HUN/SUI) | (28/11-15/12 2024)

- With the respect to all known **EURO 2024** participants the draw event will take place in Vienna on 18 April 2024. On the same occasion the event mascot and the promo video will be launched. With 100 days prior to the EURO the content marketing will focus on promotion of the venues and respective venue packages for the spectators. The playing schedule and the nomination of the referee couples (18) were discussed. For all further details please see the minutes of the common meeting, AP 3.1.2.
- The WHB praised a wide list of side events at the EURO 2024, especially on the Final Weekend, which all will contribute to strengthen the highlight event and women's handball. The Women's Handball Conference 2024 is scheduled for the Main Round.

4.3. EHF EURO 2026 | POL/ROU/CZE/SVK/TUR (3-20/12 2026)

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.1.3.

- Heim presented the proposed **qualification system for the EURO 2026** which will be presented to the EXEC for approval: EURO Cup with 5 organisers and 3 best teams from

the EURO 2024 playing in two groups with 4 teams; two phases of Qualifiers, Phase 1 with lower organisational standards played in tournament format for up to two places in the Phase 2, and the Phase 2 with 6 groups of 4 teams, playing for the 16 positions. The registration will follow according to the sporting results with the commitment to follow the competition in all required phases. The registration will start after the EURO 2024 in January 2025 at the latest. NCW supports the proposal.

4.4. Preview YAC Events 2025

- For preview see the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.2.2.
- YAC Events have been discussed under AP 3.1. 'YAC Organisers', the development of the EURO product and the development of the players as a 'main objective' of the YAC events.

4.5. IHF Competitions

- **IHF Women's World Championship 2023 | DEN/NOR/SWE (29/11-17/12/2023)**
The tournament has been organised with 32 teams, thereof 18 from Europe, with the final ranking of 9 European teams out of the 10 best. In the preliminary round, there were matches with larger goal difference involving the teams of different athletic level, however the final stage was very strong and competitive.
- **Olympic Games 2024 | FRA (25/7-11/8 2024)**
Twelve teams will compete at the Olympics: FRA as organiser, NOR as 2nd at the WCh (after FRA), DEN as 2nd at the EURO (after NOR), KOR, BRA and ANG as continent champions, as well as 6 teams via 3 qualification tournaments (11-14 April 2024).
- **World Championship 2025 | GER/NED (27/11-14/12 2025)**
- **IHF WU18 World Championship 2024 | CHN (14-25/8 2024)** – with 17 European teams participating, including KOS directly qualified via the IHF Trophy tournaments
- **IHF WU20 World Championship 2024 | MKD (19-30/6 2024)** – with 15 European teams

5. Club Competitions

5.1. Season 2023/2024 – Status

- The played rounds of all three women's club competitions were reviewed, the competitions are in the quarter-finals stage. All matches were played and decided regularly. The strong CL quarterfinal matches involving four former F4 teams have been noted.
- It has been noted that there is a missing English commentary at the following Women's EHF CL matches: all Matches of the Week and all Quarterfinals in comparison to the respective men's competition. In national team competitions the respective status is equal. The clarification is required.
- The WHB discussed the full venue initiative in the CL, average attendance and average fulfilling rate figures. Whilst the WHB praised the EHF initiative and the efforts of the clubs it has been noted that there are still two clubs with less than 1000 spectators per match.
- After great delivery and attendance record of the EHF FINAL4 Women 2023 in Budapest the expectations for 2024 edition are high.

- The spectator situation for the EHF EL Finals Women 2024 in Graz in respect of the finalists (CS Gloria/ROU, Dunarela Braila/ROU, Storhamar H. Elite/NR, Neptunes Nantes/FRA) has been discussed.

5.2. Season 2024/25

- This year EHF FINAL4 women event will be crucial for the prolongation of the organisational contract with HUN HF.
- A question has been raised in respect of the status of the title sponsor of the Women's EHF CL / FINAL4.
- Further information is available in the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.3.

6. **Other Competition Related Topics** - Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.5.

7. **Calendar | Meetings | Activities** - Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 4.1.

8. **Follow-up to the Common Meeting - Other Topics** - No agenda points were farther discussed.

9. WHB Initiatives

9.1. Respect Your Talent (RYT) Programme

- RYT Programme consists of two live events and two digital activities, all focused on personal development of the players in the areas: dual career, media, anti-doping, sports law, mental fitness and nutrition. **The digital platform** for the player self-development “**RYT App**” with a gamification concept is finally completed and is going to be promoted to the Federations, focussing on federations staff working with the young national teams (16-20y.), staff in handball academies and talent development camps. Therefore, in April and May 2024 the “**Train the Trainer**” workshops are scheduled. The EHF wants to encourage the federations to deliver their own RYT activities with local Ambassadors in their country and to promote/encourage the use of the RYT app. The respective conception, presentations and graphics will be available for the federations in the future. In addition, **the digital Ambassador sessions**, where the players can meet their role model (Ambassador) online, learn from their experiences and ask questions, are part of the RYT App and are already implemented.
- Whilst it is very difficult to involve active players in the role of Ambassadors this is seen as crucial to attract and inspire the young players.

9.2. Educational initiative with the EHF support for female participants: European Handball Manager Course 2024/25 (English) – 2 candidates are confirmed, 1 place is still available.

9.3. Preparatory support for the female referee couples going to the EURO 2024

- 18 referee couples are previewed for the upcoming EURO and their preparation will possibly include the EHF M20/M18 Summer events; there are also WU18/WU20 WCh. and Olympic Games to be covered. The WHB confirmed their view that for the EURO the best available referee couples are required independent of the gender.

9.4. Women's Handball Conference 2024

- The timeline, the format and the content of the Women's Handball Conference 2024 has been briefly discussed: event to take place during the Main Round of the Women's EHF EURO 2024, in Vienna, main stage and breakouts presentations; possible agenda points: follow-up example of the Women's Handball Conference 2022, grassroots (sustainability), player drop out, RYT, professional player environment / employment contract / gender equality / safeguarding, mental coaching for women in sport, preparation of players for post-career & successful example of a top player. The agenda will be further coordinated.

10. Miscellaneous

- Sustainability & women's handball was discussed, gender equality & quotes, safeguarding, leadership and decision taking positions, etc. Bon presented a carbon print sustainable project involving handball players presenting fashion collection of dresses made from the reused cloths and balls.
- Sustainable development of women's handball – Hausleitner provided his view: A holistic approach is necessary, the main goal was **to increase the number of women's teams at the EURO** and to give 8 additional federations the platform to raise the visibility of women's handball in their country, **development of the young players is a key** (RYT- as a player and as a person) and takes in average 10 years. Provide them with a big stage of the EURO/Championship, motivate them to play in professional club competitions; **leagues** to mirror the same political landscape and to underline the importance of leagues for women's handball to create an environment for women's handball in their country; it is the league responsibility to create visibility, TV contracts, marketing, personality rights, safeguarding, help clubs to earn more money and offer more professional contracts to the players; **grassroots activity is fundamental, and approach to keep them in sport (Circle of Handball Life)**; women's sport is important and women's sport in Europe shall be leveraged.

Mallozzi concluded the meeting and thanked the members for participation and on the occasion of the upcoming retirement to Alenka Cuderman for her long-term support and dedication to women's handball.

Vienna, 11 April 2024

For the Minutes: Alenka Cuderman