



Common Meeting

19th EHF Nations Board (NB) / 3rd European Handball League Board (EHLB)

Date / Time:	Monday, 11 March 2019 / 14:00 – 15:30		
Venue:	Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Vienna/AUT – Gloriette 1		
Participants NB:	Morten Stig Christensen	DEN	Chairman
	Philippe Bana	FRA	Vice Chairman
	Mark Schober	GER	
	Marek Góralczyk	POL	
	Ingo Meckes	SUI	
	Stephen Neilson	GBR	
Participants EHLB:	Nikolas Larsson	SWE	Chairman
	Frank Bohmann	GER	Vice Chairman
	Stefano Podini	ITA	
	Patrice Hitz	SUI	
	Alf Mangor Johannessen	NOR	
	Thierry Wagner	LUX	
EHF:	Michael Wiederer		President
	Martin Hausleitner		Secretary General
	Markus Glaser		Chief Sports Officer (CSO)
	Peter Sichelschmidt		Senior Manager National Teams
	Mario Kovacic		Office
	Marsha Brown		Office/Minutes

1. Welcome and Introduction

EHF President Michael Wiederer welcomed the members of the European Handball League Board (EHLB) and the Nations Board (NB) for men's handball to the joint meeting that took place prior to the individual board meeting scheduled later the same day. The nature of the meeting was to impart relevant information on various topics from the side of the European Handball Federation (EHF) in an efficient manner.

2. Information on Competitions

Due to the recent expansion of the IHF World Championship from 24 to 32 teams that coincides with the expansion of the EHF EURO (men) from 16 to 24 teams, to understand the qualification process, an overview of the situation was given. Peter Sichelschmidt, Senior Manager National Teams, led the presentation.

◆ World Championships and Qualifications

The place distribution (decided by the IHF Council) for a 32-team event to be implemented accordingly as of 2021 was compared to the previous 24-team distribution plan. For the 2021 event in Egypt, the 32 places have been determined as follows:



- 1 place – organiser
- 1 place – reigning world champion (direct qualification)
- 12 performance places (based on teams ranked 1 – 12 at the preceding event)
- 17 compulsory places (4 AHF / 4 CAHB / 4 EHF / 1 NACHC / 3 SCAHC / 1 OZE)
- 1 wild card

It was duly noted that if OZE failed to attain 5th place at the Asian Championship, the place would revert to an additional wild card for the IHF to allocate. Moreover, should there be more than one organiser in the future the number of compulsory places for the respective continent would be reduced accordingly. Thus, at the 2021 event, thirteen (13) places will be available to Europe:

Four (4) compulsory places + one (1) reigning world champion + eight (8) performance places (2019 DEN/GER)

An overview of registration figures to the EHF EURO and world championships covering the period 2008 to 2020 (men and women) followed by the qualification pathway 2019 to 2021 was given. The qualification structure for the same time period was also compared. The first matches to the 2021 IHF World Championship (Qualification 1) will begin in October 2019 and conclude in January 2020 prior to the Men's EHF EURO 2020. Prior to the recent changes on the international and European level, it was possible to qualify all participants in a direct way. However, and due to the Olympic cycle, an intermediate round (Qualification 1B Play-Off) has to be implemented; the matches will be played between the teams of WCh 2021 Q1 and the remaining teams of EHF EURO 2020 parallel to the Olympic Games (JPN) qualification tournament and will exclude those teams scheduled to play in the OG QT in April 2020. The WCh 2021 will continue in June with Qualification 2 Play-Off Europe in the usual way.

It was mentioned that had the previous situation remained the same, over time, there would have been fewer places for Europe at World Championship events – hence the action taken at the EHF Congress in Glasgow calling for the enlargement of the Men's IHF World Championship from 24 to 32 teams.

◆ **International Calendar as of 2020**

The 2020/2021 international calendar was approved by the Executive Committee in Paris (12/2018) and distributed (approx. 20 months in advance) to the handball stakeholders accordingly. The main objectives for creating the new calendar were reiterated: longer break to aid the rejuvenation of players; a fixed highlight (CLF4) and a scheduled end to the season; more efficient (March/May) National Team Week (NTW) scheduling, etc. Therefore, with the exception of the four CLF4 teams, the season will conclude significantly earlier. It was underlined that the planned IHF Emerging Nations Tournament and the Continental NTWs have no effect on European activities. The attendees were reminded of the working process to complete the calendar that was reformed based on an initiative that came from various sides in the stakeholder realm. It was in Zagreb in January 2018 that the stakeholders were invited and partook in a coordination meeting. This initial step was followed by many discussions on the level of the boards and commissions, before a final formulation was ratified by the EHF Executive Committee.



◆ **Officiating System in Europe**

In 2018, the EHF faced a discussion emanating from the stakeholder groups concerning the nomination of referees and at what level it is to be undertaken; additionally the overall system of officiating was analysed and called into question in general. At the Executive Committee meeting in Hamburg (01/2019) it was noted that the structure in place was not coping with the tasks and coordination of the current demands of the sport. Thus, the issue had to be explored and the EHF Executive Committee gave the mandate to work on a proposal; on an office level, a new structure was formulated. It was underlined that the new system was not centrally about nominations, but also about how the technicians cooperate (referees/officials' table), the use of different available technologies (headsets, video replay), etc. Furthermore, it was stressed that the reformed structure is in its draft phase and is not approved yet, thus the information imparted was to be kept strictly internal.

Presented to the attendees by CSO Markus Glaser, the draft structure covering the professionalization of the EHF officiating system centred around six integral elements: Competitions Commission (CC)/Member Refereeing; Business Group Competitions/Business Unit Referee Operations; EHF Assessors (Observers/Mentors); Technical Refereeing Committee (TRC); EHF Competence Academy & Network (CAN); and EHF Lecturers (Instructors). Over the next few weeks, the draft structure is to be presented to the various stakeholder groups prior to cementing the final proposal that is to be put before the Executive Committee (04/2019) for ratification. If approved, the new structure will be implemented as of 1 July 2019.

◆ **IHF Rules and Interpretation**

Entering the topic it was conceded that in recent times on an individual level, the European handball played a passive role in the area of IHF Rules of the Game. As a consequence, the EHF was confronted with changes and struggled with both the interpretation and the subsequently implementation of the rules. Actively focusing on such matters, the International Handball Federation recently held an inter-commission meeting where corresponding topics were raised; this resulted in the formation of the 'IHF New Rules Working Group 2018 – 2022'. The next meeting of this group will be held in Basel on 28-30 March 2019 in Basel. The EHF will be represented by CC Member Refereeing, Dragan Nachevski and Helmut Hörtsch from the EHF office. The meeting will be led by IHF President, Dr Hassan Mustafa and IHF PRC Chairman, Ramon Gallego. The working group will focus on a general strategy for changes and a timeline for rule changes after 2021 and beyond; other topics (provided in a document and summarised for the meeting) will include (but are not limited to) rule simplification, passive play, video proof systems, etc. It was underlined that any of the changes mentioned will have an impact. Therefore, the EHF duly informed its member federations and clubs and encouraged them to submit input by 14 March 2019. Moreover, the sensitivity of the matter, as well as the need to contribute to the dialogue to avoid being confronted with implementation challenges in the future was emphasised.

3. Competitions 2020+

Introducing the topic, President Wiederer mentioned that it was of interest for the stakeholders to be kept informed on the working processes with Infront and DAZN; with more to come it was stated that the working structure will be completed on 1 April 2019. In a step by step progression, upon completion, the structure will be presented to the Executive Committee and the handball stakeholders.



◆ **Commercial Partnership Working Structure**

Secretary General Hausleitner moved into the topic by stating that when the contracts were signed in May 2018, the advantages to the organisations were acknowledged, but it was clear that the workload would significantly increase. In a first step, the organisation had to define how to approach the assignment i.e. how to bring the structure together with Infront and DAZN covering both club and national team competitions. As a result, a configuration was founded on ten basic work streams (Task Forces): digital, brand, media sales, marketing sales, calendar/competition, production, finances, events, communication/PR, and organisation structure. The task forces report to the Steering Board who in turn reports to the Strategy Committee. It is in the Strategy Committee where the common approach as well as investments, ideas, and long-term decision-making are defined.

◆ **Information on Task Forces**

- **Digital:** dominating future, data management, tailored content, OTT and beyond, etc.
- **Brand:** retain logo, reshape brand, brand families (EURO, etc.), targeted storytelling
- **Marketing sales:** new concept for clubs/national teams, attracting partners and building relationships, activation through hospitality concepts, key accounting on the side of the EHF
- **Media sales:** division of territories (I/D), national team events remain via public access
- **Calendar/competition:** internal dialogue with stakeholders, cooperation with partners
- **Production:** delivery, prize ceremonies, creative approaches and strategic systems (ticketing, accreditation), player tracking (Kinexon), relative content
- **Finance:** transparency, clear men/women club/national team division, use of investments, control
- **Events:** landscape has already changed; development ongoing
- **Communication/PR:** promotion concept (DAZN), target +80% across the channels, positive impact and economic benefit
- **Organisation/structure:** scheduled mandatory meetings

The increase in the EHF/M workload was reiterated and it was again emphasised that the business has to be optimised, which includes further development on the different levels; the set-up of functioning internal structures have to be complete before the start of 2020. In regards to the task forces, there are many EHF/M professionals called in for their respective expertise working in close cooperation with I/D in coordination functions. It was noted that currently there are a few financial questions (clubs internally and EHF internally) still open; discussions are ongoing and will be continued on 25/26 March (Men's Club Board) with the target to be concluded prior to the next scheduled meeting of the EHF Executive Committee. The result will be presented at Conference of Presidents on 1 June 2019.

In relation to the Competition/Calendar Task Force, the timeline for deciding club qualification dates was questioned. The timeline will be determined in the coming meetings and a June 2019 publication is foreseen (12 months prior to the start of the respective competition. Though it is not possible to define individual teams (nor issues), places and seeding are expected to be clear at the end of June. Thus, one year/season in advance, club teams (and leagues) will be aware of the registration conditions. Furthermore, in response to comment, it was noted that the regulations are to be examined in relation to national ranking based on the performances and, if necessary, revised.



4. Other Issues

◆ **Good Governance: whistle blower system**

Returning to the motion tabled by National Federation of IRL and in line with the subsequent congress decision in June 2018, the EHF worked on the creation of a whistle blower system. A proposal will be submitted to the Executive Committee and, if approved, information on the proposal can be published in April. The system will be a fully anonymous, ticket system accessed via the EHF homepage with a feature that would allow the Initiator of Proceedings to communicate with the whistle blower. A comprehensive explanation of the system will be provided to the stakeholders.

In response to the information provided the active system 'Red Button' currently in use in Denmark via a mobile application was mentioned again.

◆ **Manager education**

The manager education programme is to be extended; the renewed contract offers a next level of education in the scope of the 'dual career'. The expected start is 2020. The current programme is being held in English and continues to receive positive feedback; the course will revert back to the German language in the next semester.

◆ **Digital environment**

Renewed and improved, the data base for players aims to reduce workload on the business level and provides a better overview of the players. The new facets will be presented to the National Federations via a seminar to allow them to familiarise themselves with the new rules.

President Wiederer thanked the attendees for their contribution and closed the common meeting with the best wishes for the meetings of the NB and EHLB.

For the Minutes: M. Brown

Vienna, 14 March 2019

EHF Nations Board\2019\19NB_3EHLB_190314e