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## MINUTES TO THE 175<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN OSLO, NORWAY

**Date | Time:** 21 June 2024 | 09:00 – 12:00 | 13:30 – 14:30

**Venue:** Scandic Holmenkollen Park Hotel | Room Ragnhild Sigursdottir

<b>Executive:</b>	Michael Wiederer	President
	Predrag Bošković	First Vice President
	Henrik La Cour	Vice President Finances
	Božidar Djurković	Chairman Competitions Commission
	Pedro Sequeira	Chairman Methods Commission
	Gabriella Horvath	Chairwoman Beach Handball Commission
	Stefan Lövgren	Member
	Francisco V. Blázquez Garcia	Member
	Bente Aksnes	Member
	Mark Schober	Chairman Nations Board
Leonor Mallozzi	Chairwoman Women's Handball Board	
<b>Office:</b>	Martin Hausleitner	Secretary General
	Bernhard Binder	Chief Finance Officer
	Markus Glaser	Chief Sports Officer
	Vesna Lazic	PA to the President
	Marsha Brown	Corporate Liaison   Minutes
<b>Excused:</b>	Franjo Bobinac	Member
	Xavier O'Callaghan	Chairman Professional Handball Board

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### 1. Welcome, Programme, Agenda

The Executive Committee was welcomed to the 175<sup>th</sup> meeting; President Wiederer noted the upcoming meeting with the Board of the Norwegian Handball Federation as well as the absence of two members due to other professional commitments.

### 2. EXEC 04/2024 – Minutes / Follow-up

Following the distribution of the minutes from the 174<sup>th</sup> EXEC Meeting, the EHF was notified of a written discrepancy in AP 6.3. Professional Handball Board. To eliminate a mistake in the notetaking, the text was amended [*reproduced below*] and submitted to the Executive Committee.

[...]

~~[OLD] The FCH, in alignment with the current agreement, reiterated that after the Final4 in Cologne, no additional matches are to be played at a club level to ensure that all players enter the vacation period as agreed. Thus, the request from a league in France was denied by the EHF as per the regulations.~~

**[New]** The EHF Competitions department, in alignment with the current agreement, reiterated that after the Final4 in Cologne, no additional matches are to be played at a club level to ensure that all players enter the vacation period as agreed. Thus, the request from the league in France was denied by the EHF as per the regulations.

[...]

The Executive Committee approved the amendment; furthermore, they also took note of the two circular decisions taken on 29.04. and 10.05. pertaining to an update of the Women's EHF EURO 2024 Regulations.

### **3. Business Reports**

#### **3.1. Secretary General**

Elaborating on the extensive report at hand, Secretary General Hausleitner highlighted the following:

- ongoing recruitment activities as well as other personnel matters of interest.
- the rethink of the digital strategy together with Infront and the objective of turning data into direct contacts as well as CRM initiatives
- the potential partnership with 'Learn Handball'
- the prolongation of partnerships (Kinexon, Swiss Timing, Accredito) where negotiations are ongoing
- media/marketing sales and the search for an 'all-round' partnership to cover sleeve advertising and possibly referee packages
- Infront collaboration – excellent feedback from EHF EURO 2024 GER and a positive outlook in view of EHF EURO 2024 AHS

Wiederer added that the EHF wishes to continue moving forward with the digital strategy and referred to the report compiled by EHF Media & Communications. Concluding the report, and specifically referring to the Masterplan and the in-depth information supplied to the EXEC, the upcoming retirement of Alenka Cuderman on 31 August 2024 was also mentioned. The Executive Committee is also informed that Cuderman will continue to oversee the RYT project for an additional 12 months on a short-term limited contract (16 hours per week). The EHF Office is currently deliberating on how to move the Masterplan forward.

#### **3.2. Legal Management**

The legal motions submitted to the Executive Committee are dealt with at the end of the meeting as they relate to AP 9.1. Supporting AP 3.2. is the comprehensive report that provides an overview to all the current cases. Wiederer outlined the ECA cases of Milena Raicevic (vs Club) and Ivica Obrvan (vs NF) as both cases touch principal employment issues; the outcome of the matter with the club will also send a clear message to players and clubs alike to ensure they are fully aware of what agreements are being concluded and handled properly. In the case concerning the National Federation, the ECA has requested of the EHF for the complete implementation of the decision. The implementation was confirmed by the Executive Committee, possible consequences for non-compliance will have to be discussed at the meeting in September.

With the minutes of the Legal Commission meetings at hand, it is informed that all the meetings took place accordingly, and President Wiederer and Secretary General Hausleitner were present for the opening of the Legal Delegation meeting. Furthermore, in the last period, the Initiators of Proceedings (IoP) have acted upon a filing of the EHF; this is the first time that the system has been used in the interest of the EHF. The filing is in response to a decision of a legal instance pertaining to financial elements. The IoP launched an appeal on behalf of the EHF to protect its rights; this case will now go to the second instance.

The Executive Committee took note of the reports at hand as well as the additional information provided.

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### **3.3. European Anti-doping Unit**

Report on the activities and the control management available. It is mentioned that the EHF (President/Secretary General) will meet with the unit lead to reiterate the position of the organisation. Information resulting from this discourse will follow at the next meeting.

Without any comment the report was approved.

### **3.4. Sustainability Board**

The Board met in mid-May and the planned activities were highlighted as the group will focus on the integration of various actions through the upcoming events; additionally, there is to be relevant education offered to the EHF staff members as the organisation seeks to gain sustainability competence in the field of events. The meeting schedule for the Board will incorporate two in-person meetings within the event framework as well as two conference calls. Having moved ahead in the discussions, the EHF Sustainability Board mission and vision statements are to be finalised in coordination with Chairman Bobinac.

### **3.5. EHF Services & Infrastructure GmbH**

The keys to the new building are expected to be received at the end of October; currently the activity centres around the interior fixtures, and though there are minor decisions still to be taken, the construction continues to proceed according to schedule. The financing of the project remains within the agreed budget. Three offers for interior furnishing have been received and decisions are to be made. Moreover, the EHF will receive the Austrian sustainability certificate (Klimaaktiv) and the minor investments in relation to gaining the endorsement are acknowledged. The minutes to the SI Advisory Board and the SI General Assembly were submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the meeting, to which they took note. The leadership looked forward to the finalisation of the project as well as the unveiling of the finished product in December.

The EXEC took note.

### **3.6. EHF Marketing GmbH**

The EHF Advisory Board minutes were supplemented with the information concerning the prolongation of the employment contract with the Managing Director, David Szlezak until 2028 and on the basis of responsibilities defined. Additionally, the MD delivered a comprehensive analysis of EHF complete with risk assessment in case of any changes. Closing the agenda point, President Wiederer emphasised that D. Szlezak will be responsible for integrating EHF back into the main EHF office following 3.5 years of separation; this includes the employee harmonisation (contracts), financial decisions, etc. especially as EHF works to a different business year.

The Executive Committee took note of the minutes and the information.

## **4. Finances**

### **4.1. Finance Delegation 06/2024 – Minutes and Decisions**

On the basis of the minutes of the Finance Delegation, Vice President Finances, Henrik La Cour expanded on the topics discussed which included the delivery of the finalised report from the EHF Comptrollers where the recommendations are to be implemented. Moreover, the professional handling of the finances, including investments, was praised by La Cour. The FD also had confirmed the adaptation of transfer fees. Turning to the Federation Accounts, the EXEC members were informed on the negative balances due to the changed situation in YAC

and beach handball events, as well as the individual situations in UKR, ISR, and ISL leading to payments being postponed.

La Cour also provided an update that Sabbianco Anorthosis Famagusta failed to fulfil its payment obligations and consequently will not be accepted to any EHF competition until complete payment is received regarding all open debts. In the FD meeting other financial questions were resolved in relation to senior and younger category competition; information was also provided on the final accounting of the Women's EHF EURO 2024 Qualifiers and the Men's EHF EURO 2024, and a clarification on travel expenses was also given; the FD subsequently recommended to unify the respective guidelines to avoid unclear handling.

#### **4.2. Update 2024 Budget**

Despite the recent update, which includes the final accounting of the Men's EHF EURO 2024, transfer income, governmental support related to Covid for 2022, as well as adaptation of fees (expenses), the result for the two-year period remains almost unchanged to the last forecast. Thus, the two-year period for 2023 – 2024 shows a minor loss of EUR 25k.

President Wiederer expressed that it was important to take positive note of the report as 2023 is complete and the organisation is where it needs to be in 2024 and still moving in a reasonable direction.

*First Vice President, Predrag Bošković, held the Chairmanship of the meeting for AP 5 to AP 7.*

### **5. Commissions – Reports and Decisions**

#### **5.1. Competitions Commission**

CC Chairman, Božidar Djurković delivered a brief report and highlighted the following points:

**Club Competitions** | the 2023/2024 season was concluded without incident and played according to schedule; the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg of the MEC Final between Olympiacos and Valur Reykjavik was played in the basketball arena in Athens with 7.500 spectators. Hamburg, as a new venue for the MEL Finals, delivered a particularly good event under an elevated atmosphere.

**National Team Competitions** | all matches of the season are concluded, and national team matches will resume in October. It was noted the SUI received the IHF Wild Card to the Men's 2025 World Championship.

**YAC Competitions** | all summer events are in the final preparation phase, and a few minor issues are unresolved. However, the full TV coverage of the M20 EURO in Slovenia underlines the positive development of the event, which has consequently led to an increased workload across some departments in Vienna. The 2025 YAC bid documents were distributed, and awarding will follow under AP 7.2.

**Officiating** | following the Referee Candidates course held in Drammen, Norway in April, some of the pairs were nominated to YAC events and undertake their first official assignment. The next course will be held in July on the fringes of the M20 Championship in Pristina, Kosovo.

The registration of referees for the new season is ongoing (deadline 30 June); some referees already announced the end of their careers and others have indicated that the Olympic Games

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in Paris will be their final assignment. Subsequent to the (ongoing) officiating investigations, the referee pairs from KOS and MNE are rotated back into the system and will be nominated again in the future; the pair from SRB remain unavailable until further notice. The issue of the new age limit initiated by the IHF will be treated under AP 9.1.

The kick-off meeting for referees and delegates nominated to the Women's EHF EURO 2024 will take place in Vienna at the end of September. Moreover, a season analysis concerning IVR topics is planned and will serve as a basis for the priorities and initiatives for 2024/25 season incl. the EURO in December.

## **5.2. Methods Commission**

From the report at hand, MC Chairman Pedro Sequeira supplemented the information and highlighted the following:

**Methods & Coaching** | the 'Players' Index' is in development; this is a collaboration with handball.ai and the EHF IT department, and it will serve as the official EHF metric for the classification of players. Currently, the focus of the project concerns the alignment of the scouting providers with the handball.ai algorithm.

**Education & Training** | the relaunch of the EHF 'RINCK' Convention - competence based education - continues with a scheduled presentation on 14 December at the Conference of Presidents. The language and legal review of the documents was completed. Additionally, the 2<sup>nd</sup> module of the 2024 Master Coach PRO License course is planned for 8 to 13 July 2024 in Celje, Slovenia on the fringes of the M20 EHF EURO.

The MC continue to run the Webinars and four, covering the topics of marketing, grassroots, strength & conditioning, and coaching will take place in June. Moreover, the documentation from the 2023 EHF Scientific Conference has been distributed together with the 'Save the Date' for 2025 edition of the event; the EHF Goalkeeper Summit, also planned for 2025, is in preparation.

**Youth, School & Non-competitive Sports** | giving focus to the current status of wheelchair handball, Sequeira emphasised that a solid concept for development as well as the future championship enabling tailored assistance to the needs and targets; this will be discussed at the next MC meeting in September. Concerning the future financing of wheelchair handball, the MC was requested to prepare a concept prior to financial aspects being defined as there are currently only five National Federations actively participating in Europe. Sequeira confirmed that the project is currently being conceptualised at the office level and gave a timeline of the process.

In closing, Sequeira also mentioned that the EHF Grassroots Charter introduced at the Conference for Secretaries General in Copenhagen will also be on the agenda in Vienna on 14 December at the EHF Conference of Presidents; the MC will also hold a presentation at the next edition of the Women's Handball Conference.

**Additional Activities** | The MC is also involved in the EHF Data Strategy project linked to the EHF Database/Index aiming to gather, promote collaboration, and share handball knowledge across the research and handball practice realm. It was deemed an interesting project should the information/data be delivered as promised.

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### 5.3. Beach Handball Commission

Opening the report, BC Chairwoman Gabriella Horvath spoke of the most recent event, the ebt Finals, in Lacanau, France. Currently, the BC/Office is preparing the Beach Handball YAC and European Championship 2024 in Varna, Bulgaria; the YAC event is scheduled prior to the senior events. The beach handball season will officially close with the Champions Cup in Porto Santo, Portugal. To other events, the next edition of EUSA, also hosting the beach handball discipline, will take place in Debrecen in mid-July.

In the area of officiating, Horvath stated that there were currently 74 delegates and 110 active referees serving beach handball following the successful conclusion of the latest educational courses.

Looking to the near future, Horvath mentioned the recommendation of the BC to extend the deadline for applications for the 2025 events – ebt Finals, EHF Beach Handball EUROS, and Champions Cup, although interest to host the events is acknowledged, fundamental information from the applications is missing. Nonetheless, the organisers in Porto Santo, would like to prolong the cooperation, but more time is needed due to upcoming elections in the region. The BC Chairwoman was advised that a strong initiative is to be shown to push for conclusions; however, it was accepted that the final bids would be presented in September. The application for the latter by the Turkish Handball Federation (THF) was in principle approved, however it was remarked by the EXEC that a full approval remains conditional on the provision of additional information to be sent by the THF in due course.

Turning to the European Games 2027, a brief reiteration of the situation was given; it remains imperative that there is a qualification system for the event. President Wiederer added that there has been direct contact with the EOC as well as the EHF using informal contact methods; it is acknowledged that the hosting national federation should engage in contact with the NOC to assist with an intervention, hence the letter was already sent to the Turkish Handball Federation.

### 6. Stakeholder Groups - Report

The next session of the stakeholder meetings will take place in October; however, the stakeholder groups were active in Budapest and Cologne towards the end of the club season. Various members of the Executive Committee were present at the meetings, and the protocols from these meetings are awaited from the individual stakeholder groups. Thus, an interim report was given by President Wiederer.

As a follow-up to the initiated dialogues in 2023, the Women's European Handball League was inaugurated in 2024 on the fringes of the Women's EHF Final4 in Hungary. The process of foundation did mirror that of the structure of the Men's European Handball League, where nominations were requested from the EHF Member Federations. The election process was concluded and the representatives to serve in the EHF bodies were selected; however, this remains informal (participation in the 10/2024 Stakeholder Meetings) until ratification in 2025, when the nominees will officially represent in the Women's European Handball League Board and subsequently, the Women's Handball Board.

The Executive Committee took note of the nominations resp. elections coming from the interest groups; and as there have been changes within the interest groups, the EHF reserves

right to confirm the changes. In the same vein, a statement is awaited by the EHF to the situation concerning Ingo Meckes (SUI/GER), Member of the Nations Committee Men/Nations Board.

## **7. Organisation of Events / Competition Topics**

### **7.1. Update Report Events**

The comprehensive report at hand, like always, covers all competition events and their respective status. Referring to the Men's EHF EURO 2024 in Germany, with the final accounting completed, the financial success and fruitful cooperation was underlined.

**Women's EHF EURO 2024** | in the final stages of organisation, the framework events were reiterated. Ticket sales are ongoing and an upsurge in the autumn is expected. The area of media and TV is satisfactory, and with two new teams in the competition, positive results can be expected.

**Men's EHF EURO 2026** | preparation is ongoing, and the next meeting is scheduled in the autumn. The OC is currently working on event branding and set-up.

**Women's EHF EURO 2026** | the EHF is connecting with the five organisers as well as working on the multi-party agreement; to the unification of the event standards, this is being resolved in collaboration with Infront. Cluj (ROU) and Katowice (POL) will each host a Main Round, and the Final weekend will be in Poland.

**Men's EHF EURO 2028** | an initial meeting was held in Vienna where the event concept was discussed; the matter of which groups will play in which countries is to be clarified.

**EHF EUROs 2030 & 2032** | the list of bidders was delivered to the Executive Committee and published; before the decision is taken, several steps are to be precisely followed. It was noted that the bidding process of the EUROs ran parallel to that of the IHF WCs, thus, the event timetable was crucial to the National Federations. The bids to be finalised (and to be confirmed by the Executive Committee in September) will be presented at the next Extraordinary EHF Congress.

**Nomination - Continental Referee Couple** | The IHF request to incorporate two female continental referees from Africa (in addition to the IHF Representative) into the event was discussed in depth. Many complex elements were taken under consideration. Eventually, it was agreed that in order for non-European Referee Couple(s) to be integrated into EHF competitions, a structure governing the practice as well as the fulfilment of criteria would have to be set. If the conditions are met, a referee couple could be accepted as the 19<sup>th</sup> couple at the Women's EHF EURO 2024.

### **7.2. National Team Activities**

**2025 YAC Events - Awarding** | as the only applicant for both the Women's 17 and Women's 19 EURO, the event was awarded to the Handball Federation of Montenegro. A general discussion on YAC organisers and the ambitions of various nations to host a tournament in 2026 took place. This resulted in a clear opinion that due to the changed conditions (24 teams, higher daily rate) the situation has developed, and the awarding will take place in a combined process for 2026 (M18, M20) and 2027 (W17, W19).

The awarding of the 2025 YAC EHF Championships will take place once the W17 EHF EURO 2025 Qualification Tournaments have been played (22-24.11.24). President Wiederer expressed gratitude and appreciation for the National Federations who regularly reengage with the hosting of YAC events, and also acknowledged the feedback in relation to the earlier organisation of the bids and awarding of the events.

Looking to the Women's EHF EURO Qualifiers, a renewal of the EHF EURO Cup in respect to the eight teams and in the final phase is envisaged. This will be a new competition played with four teams at one venue in a 'Final4' format and in the usual September National Teams Week; the branding of the event is to be determined, though an event title could possibly be 'EHF Nations Final4'.

The Executive Committee approved the proposal for the event of 2026; however, for 2028 events, the discussion will continue on the basis of the pre-conditions.

### **7.3. Club Competitions**

CSO Markus Glaser gave focus to the upcoming season, and it was recommended that based on the ongoing situation, teams from UKR will only be allocated to the EHF European Cup until further notice.

In accordance with the documentation to the awarding of places for season 2024/2025 Machineseker EHF Champions League and the Women's EHF Champions League, CSO Glaser presented the proposal of the Evaluation Group including basis and reasoning; an in-depth discussion followed whereby questions raised by the EXEC were answered and additional information in this complex process with the many factors was given.

The Executive Committee approved the proposal as written.

### **7.4. Other Competitions**

With no additional information imparted, the Chairmanship of the meeting reverted back to President Wiederer.

## **8. International Institutions**

### **8.1. IHF Information**

Taking reference to the latest meeting of the IHF Council, the protocol was received and taken note of. President Wiederer highlighted the following points out of the report and as well later meetings of the IHF.

**IHF Athletes Commission** | the notification for candidature was received and the elections and meetings are to be held in Paris; the National Federations are to be reminded to engage in the process in order to secure the presence of players' representatives in the system.

**IHF Regulations Update** | several amendments were approved at the latest and previous Council meetings; the information package was distributed to the EHF and the National Federations accordingly.

**Age Limit Referees – Motion** | following the approach of the IHF to raise the age limit of international referees to 55 years, the EHF acknowledges the information and will implement the age limit accordingly. At the same time the individual cases will be evaluated instead of



following on automatism. However, it is noted that in Europe, there is obviously a tendency for the referees to initiate the conclusion of their careers at an earlier age.

## **8.2. Other Partners**

**EOC** | the Executive Committee took note of the report at hand; the current direction of Europe (following the EU Parliament elections) as well as the potential impact on sport (i.e. ‘Workplan for Sport’) was highlighted.

**Intercontinental Cooperation** | in the interest of continuous development of handball on a global stage, the EHF will activate and conserve the contact to the five Continental Federations.

## **9. Conferences / Congresses**

### **9.1. 2024 Activities**

An overview of the upcoming administrative events within the framework of the Women’s EHF EURO 2024 is at hand. The following information was given; a main focus of the September meeting of the Executive Committee will be the upcoming events. The final meeting of the Executive Committee will be in December; this will be prior to the Conference of Presidents to which the organisation is ongoing, and the content of the meeting is being finalised. The main topics of the Extraordinary EHF Congress will be the awarding of the EHF EUROs 2030 and 2032 as well as motions. The complexity of undertaking the legal revisions were mentioned and, based on what is needed to complete the task, a modification of the EXEC decision approved. These motions relating to the:

#### **EHF Statutes (Congress Decisions)**

- ECA Formalities
- MC Responsibilities

#### **EHF Legal Regulations (Congress Decisions)**

- Damage Compensation
- Disciplinary Commission
- Jury
- Hearings via Virtual Means
- Recognition of Decisions

Furthermore, the document included motions to be approved by the Executive Committee. These motions concern the:

#### **EHF List of Penalties**

- General Violations
- Failure to Enforce ECA Decisions

Regarding the Harmonisation of the EHF Statutes the order of articles will not be changed.

Naturally, the motions were briefly discussed, and it was emphasised that a unity in the wording of the statutes and regulations is a priority; the Executive Committee agreed to submit the motions before the Extraordinary EHF Congress in December 2024 for final approval.

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In relation to the revision of the EHF Statutes, the topic of ‘Suspension of a Federation’ was raised and discussed. Elements of the conversation included that a suspension could go beyond on-court activities. It was questioned as to who should take the final decision to suspend a Federation from all (on- and off-court) activities. Naturally, no consensus of opinion was reached; but it was noted that the discussion is open and would continue to be finalised in September in order to prepare for the Extraordinary EHF Congress.

### **9.2. 2025 EHF Congress**

With reference to the information submitted to the Executive Committee, President Wiederer elaborated on the considerations including the financial element that led to Scheiblhofen - Wine and Conference Resort in Andau, Austria (Burgenland) being selected as the venue for the 2025 Ordinary EHF Congress. The material presented showed the proximity to the airport and the options for organising the event thereof. The Executive Committee approved the proposal and, moreover, the EXEC will be introduced to the location in September at the next scheduled meeting.

### **10. Various**

Due to a calendar conflict around professional commitments, Member Blasquez will be replaced by MC Chairman Sequeira as the Executive Committee representative at the M20 Championship 1 in Pristina/KOS from 13 – 21 July 2024.

With no additional topics on the agenda, President Wiederer thanked the Executive Committee for their contribution and closed the meeting.

For the Minutes: M. Brown  
26 June 2024