
MINUTES | 7TH MEETING OF THE EHF NATIONS BOARD

Date: Monday, 8 April 2024
Time: 11:00 – 19:00
Venue: Renaissance Wien Hotel | Strassburg I & II

Participants NB: Mark Schober Chairman | GER
Pirje Orasson Vice Chairwoman | EST
Morten Stig Christensen Member | DEN
Leonor Mallozzi Member | POR
Ingo Meckes Member | SUI

Participants EHF: Michael Wiederer President
Martin Hausleitner Secretary General
Markus Glaser Chief Sports Officer
Attila Heim Manager National Team Competitions
Alenka Cuderman Women's Handball Coordinator
Marsha Brown Corporate Liaison | Minutes

Excused: Nodjialem Myaro Member | FRA

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Schober welcomed the participants to the meeting and moved directly into the agenda.

2. NB Meeting 10/2023 – Minutes & Follow-Up

With no additional comments or questions, the NB members adopted the minutes.

3. Input Nations Committee Women

EHF EURO 2024 Qualifiers: following the conclusion of the phase, the NCW discussed the results; the conclusion centred on the development of the teams resp. players via the YAC events and the European Open. The NCW emphasised the importance of developmental continuity at the base level, as well as the resilience and patience that will be necessary. However, the NCW was not in favour of a WU16 World Championship. And overall, it was noted that the NB is not in favour of a MU17/WU16 World Championship.

EHF EURO 2026 Qualifiers: the NCW voiced appreciation for the amended requirements in the first phase; but it must be considered that the overall standard of the competition could possibly be lowered. The head of National Teams, Attila Heim elaborated on the extension of the EHF EURO Cup, and a possible benefit for lower-ranked nations as this could produce more balanced matches in the qualification.

The competitions department will explore the calendar possibilities and return to the Nations Board with the results to determine possible options for a crisscross of the two EURO Cup groups.

YAC Events | the NCW agreed that the daily rates should be increased in line with the recommendation. It is noted that it is a fixed rate for all YAC EURO (EUR 170)/Championship (EUR 130) events.

Having spoken at length about the YACs in both meetings, the EHF agreed that an analysis would take place after one YAC cycle – men and women; at this time, further discussion on the strategy (objectives/targets), structure (system/organisation) will take place. The European Open schedule was also mentioned. The need for a clear differentiation of the objectives of the top-middle-lower-ranked nations was emphasised. From the side of the EHF, it was reiterated that any changes resulting from such evaluations could only be implemented in 2028.

Women's Handball Conference | during the EHF EURO in December, the next edition of the conference should focus on 'dropout syndrome,' equality, and safeguarding against harassment.

4. Input Nations Committee Men

Emerging Nations Round Table | the NCM agreed that the next edition should take place in 2025; the development of emerging nations events in combination with the Master Plan is to be a pivotal point to the discussions due to the current difficulties faced getting such projects started in emerging nations.

Younger Age Category Events | having discussed the system, structure, and daily rates, the NCM recommended that an analysis of the 2024 men's events is undertaken, where the results could be discussed in a specially scheduled meeting.

Beach Handball | with the sport excluded from the next three Olympic cycles, the NCM questions where the EHF will take the sport from this point? From the ensuing discussion, several ideas were raised such as using it as a promotional tool. The NCM are in support of the EHF dealing with the general strategic approach for the sport. SG Hausleitner mentioned that with the support of the NB, the EHF could approach the IHF following the definition of a framework on how to take the discipline forward in close cooperation with the national federations.

3rd Playing Kit | a request to remove the obligatory 3rd playing kit will be dealt with by the Executive Committee and the situation is to be regulated.

Image & Personality Rights | the issue was discussed in depth and the NCM agreed that they are willing to work with the EHF to secure (collective) images for event communication & promotion for use by the EHF/OC. It was mentioned that this topic will be discussed within the PHB and WHB to begin an initiative in this respect.

5. Input EHF

In addition to the information provided during the common meeting, to the EHF Grassroots Charter it was also mentioned that the EHF is currently investigating the optimum way to implement the accord on three levels, which should be amalgamated into the Master Plan. Following the development of the charter, the result will be presented at the Conference of Presidents in December.

6. Summary and Follow-up Discussion

The NB are satisfied with the EHF efforts in the shaping of the Women's EHF EURO Qualifiers system; having 24 teams in the event has been well received, and the opportunity to improve women's handball stands. Concerning the YAC, the NB are appreciative of the initiatives to reduce the requirements for the participants, as well as in support of an increase in the daily rate. It is agreed that the YAC strategy is to be re-evaluated in two years. The initiative to hold the next Women's Handball Convention is supported by the Nations Board. The request to amend the stipulation on having three playing kits will be submitted as a motion to the Executive Committee. The Emerging Nations Round Table is to reconvene in 2025. The Nations Board, would like their opinion on a reenvisioned beach handball strategy, heard by the respective bodies EHF internally and, in particular, on the IHF level.

7. Preparation PHB and WHB

The NB will give focus to the EHF EURO 2024 GER, as well as the initiatives that also have the support of the other stakeholders; emphasis will be placed on the philosophy of the 'top product' as the EURO is a "window to the world".

Member Christensen, looking to the future, mentioned there needs to be a balance between development of the National Federations and the professionalism of the sport. As the market changes, there is a need to ensure that there is still room for federations to improve. It was suggested that an evaluation be undertaken while handball is on top of its game and invite experts to discuss the future trends of sports, how to stay at the top, or even how to raise the level of the sport again. The NB agreed that a 'Think Tank' would be beneficial.

During the WHB meeting, the NB will mainly focus on the development of the players. Furthermore, the matter of image and personality are to be discussed at the level of both the PHB and WHB.

8. Miscellaneous

It was suggested that during the stakeholder sessions, NCM Members Henttonen and Lyons, are granted an extra night at the venue to ensure that discussions about emerging nations are not cut short due to their early departure.

Coming to the end of the agenda, Chairman Schober closed the meeting with thanks to the NB Members for their contribution.