
MINUTES TO THE 9TH MEETING OF THE EHF NATIONS COMMITTEE WOMEN

Date | Time: Monday, 14 October 2024 | 14:00 – 15:30

Venue: Renaissance Hotel Vienna | Strassburg 2

NCW Participants:

Nodjialem Myaro	Chairwoman FRA
Leonor Mallozzi	Vice Chairwoman POR
Sarka Drozdova	Member CZE
Pirje Orasson	Member EST
Cristina Varzaru	Member ROU

EHF Participants:

Attila Heim	Manager NT Competitions
Anna Lamprecht	Senior Administrative Assistant Women's Handball

Excused: Paola Fiorillo Member | ITA

1. Welcome & Formalities

Chair Myaro welcomed the NCW Members and thanked Mallozzi for managing the last meeting; she also informed on the absence of Member Fiorillo. Additionally, the future management of the board was shortly discussed. Heim added information on the rundown of the upcoming meeting.

1.1. NCW Meeting 04/2024 – Minutes and Follow-up

The minutes of the last meeting were approved unanimously, without further additions.

1.2. Follow-up to Common Meeting

The status of the Women's Competition Conference was discussed resulting in a follow-up to the Nations Board and the further elaboration of potential input from the NCW.

Challenges posed by the national team weeks were debated, outlining the existing intensive load on players in autumn compared to spring. Orasson pointed out the issue with the national team week in May instead of March as in the men's competition these are potentially colliding with playoffs. Consequently, the national team weeks in May rather pose an issue to National Federations compared to the national team weeks in March. On the other hand, concerns were raised that the date of the national team weeks in September are quite early in the season for clubs which are starting their season in late August or September and may hesitate to release players due to the need for partners to show games and a seemingly increased injury risk at that time. It was suggested to move national weeks for both men and women to later in the season rather than in September.

Again, it was mentioned, that in 2026 the EURO Cup Final is planned during the national team week in September. A heterogeneous picture of the use of the national team week in September by various federations was provided. Finally, Heim informed that the women's national team weeks are not subject to any changes as it is the men's national team weeks that might be affected.

A clear request for more long-term calendar planning, was brought forward, suggesting the next three seasons should be finalized.

The impact of the grassroots charter particularly on the women's side was discussed, with the remark to refer to the respective staff member Noemi Szecsenyi. Orasson questioned if the grassroots charter could be considered a quality measure for national team development. Mallozzi emphasized the importance of long-term development and grassroots investments to support the success of national and younger age category teams.

2. Women's National Team Competitions

2.1. EHF EURO 2024 AHS (28/11-15/12 2024) | Final Tournament | Preview

Heim provided additional information about the preparations for the final tournament of the EHF EURO 2024 AHS. The officials conference took place (27–29/09), reports to the participating federations have been sent out and, for sustainability reasons, public transport (trains) will be used for travelling between the venues where it is possible.

For the EHF EURO 2024 AHS initial nominations included 9 female and 9 male referee couples, but one female couple (AUT) withdrew, resulting in 10 male and 8 female couples.

Excursus: Female referees and delegates

The NCW discussed the representation of female referees and delegates. Mallozzi underlined the importance of competence instead of quotas as well as the importance of investing in tailored education and long-term preparation for women to become leaders and competent referees as well as the provision of opportunities. Myaro added that, in addition to skills, it is also needed to provide an environment in which women referees can flourish and make women's refereeing more attractive. From example the French league, where the approach involves finding matches close to referees' homes, on their return from maternity leave, to support female referees. Varzaru emphasized the importance of the growth of the talent pool of female referees. Drozdova added a comment on the need to educate federations to support the development of female referees. Additionally, the importance of showing role models and examples, with Denmark and Norway highlighted as successful cases, was discussed.

The discussion was concluded by references to the impact of the societal environment and the wish that EHF motivates and further engages federations to address social issues, including gender participation.

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

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.1.2.

Heim provided an update on the hosts and qualification. There will be 24 places in the final tournament. Five (5) hosts will provide a new situation with eight (8) teams already qualified. The finals will be held in Poland, with the main round in Romania and Poland. The first information regarding the Qualification will follow in November.

Heim reiterated the wish to play Phase 1 to include smaller nations. The new situation with eight (8) already qualified teams (5 hosts and 3 best ranked teams from the Women's EHF EURO 2024) will put some teams typically in Phase 1 already to Phase 2. The registration documents will be sent out in a timely manner to ascertain the level of interest from smaller nations. The NCW further discussed having 30 teams in the final tournament and directly in Phase 2 (8 final tournament positions + 22 Phase 2 positions with 2 positions open for teams coming from Phase 1). Lowering standards for participation and ensuring as many federations as possible to take part were also discussed.

Mallozzi and Orasson concluded by emphasising the necessity for advancement and a shift in the perception of women's handball.

2.3. EHF EURO 2028 | NOR/DEN/SWE (30/11-17/12 2028)

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.1.2.

As in previous years, the registration process for the EURO Qualifiers will be conducted in advance. Additionally, the particularly strong Scandinavian market and the opportunity for women's handball were highlighted.

2.4. Preview YAC Events 2025

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.2.2.

Heim summarized the inputs previously presented in the common meeting for the NCW. Montenegro will host both events as no other federations submitted applications. The daily rate for next year has been set at EUR 170. Championships for the upcoming season will be awarded in December. There will be only one W17 Championship and one W19 Championship besides the respective EURO in both age categories. Based on the registrations a total of 32 teams will participate in the W17 and 34 teams in the W19 age category.

The European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) will be held in July 2025 in North Macedonia, featuring Women's and Men's U17 teams. Team selection will be based on the result of the W16 EHF European Open 2024 (women) and the Younger Age Category ranking (men). Federations and the European Olympic Committee (EOC) will be informed regarding the qualified teams by the EHF by the end of October.

2.5. Other Events & IHF Competitions

Please refer to the minutes of the common meeting AP 3.2.3.

Heim informed about a new proposal for W16 and M17 World Championships. This decision was made at the IHF Council level, official information by the IHF is expected. The IHF scheduled two men's World Championships (MU19 and MU21) with the MU17 World Championship in 2025 still in question.

3. Miscellaneous

▪ Handball at the Olympics

The status of handball among other Olympic team sports and potential effects for sponsorships and media rights, impacting National Federations' and NOCs' funding was discussed. Myaro underlined the great atmosphere of handball at the Olympic Games in France 2024, particularly in Lille.

▪ Women's Handball Conference

Mallozzi provided a preview of the program and topics at the Women's Handball Conference 10/11 December in Vienna, including harassment, grassroots development, refereeing, and dropout rates. Federations are encouraged to promote participation. Further information regarding the NCW will be distributed shortly.

Myaro concluded the meeting and thanked all those in attendance for their participation. She suggested that the following topics be discussed at the Nations Board: the topics calendar, NCW input to the Competitions Conference, female referees, the situation at the Olympics, and the future approach to qualifiers.

For the Minutes: Anna Lamprecht
Vienna, 21 October 2024