



EUROPEAN HANDBALL
FEDERATION

National Handball Federations of Europe

Attn.: President / Secretary General

Vienna, 24 April 2020

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Open Letter on Competitions and Other Activities – Further Procedure

Dear President,
Dear Secretary General,
Dear Handball Friends!

On 25 March, immediately following the meeting of the EHF Executive Committee, the National Handball Federations of Europe were addressed regarding competitions matters and received full documentation on the decisions that would cover the months of April and May; this information also included potential scenarios for the carrying out of competitions after that period, in particular for the June activities.

In order to follow that transparent information process, and to keep you informed prior to any media release, we now provide you with an update on the procedures and the resultant decisions of the Executive Committee from today, 24 April.

First, we can assure you that the EHF Structure as such is fully functional and the combined office/home office situation is currently in a release phase. The meetings foreseen according to the official schedule and, due to the situation, many more necessary internal and external coordination meetings were carried out via video conferences. The minutes to the meetings of the respective EHF Bodies will be distributed accordingly together with those of the Executive Committee. During the process, legal expertise on the principles of the decisions according to the EHF Statutes and the regulations were collected in order to grant a proper decision-making process.

For clarity and brevity, we will now impart the remainder of the information in a short form.

In April, the following video conferences contributing to the decision-making process took place:

- Finance Delegation,
- EHF Marketing Men's Club Board, Women's Club Board, Advisory Board,
- Technical Commissions: Technical Delegation, Competitions Commission, Methods Commission, Beach Handball Commission,
- Legal Commissions (no direct reference): Court of Handball, Court of Appeal, ECA Council,
- EURO Delegation,
- Calendar Conference with IHF Leadership,
- Nations Board, Professional Handball Board/Women's Handball Board,
- Conferences or telephone calls to all EHF and EHFMs Partners,
- HUB meetings EHF/EHFMs Management.

Additionally, regular contact was established with public authorities combined with the extended monitoring of European-wide decisions. The EHF answered input received from Federations, Leagues, and Clubs as well as integrated it into the working processes. At the same time, all media requests for interviews and statements (via video or other mediums) were accepted.

European Handball Federation Hoffingergasse 18, 1120 Vienna, Austria
T: +43 1 80151 0 F: +43 1 80151 149 E: office@eurohandball.com W: eurohandball.com

Bank Account: Bank Austria, bank code: 12000, account no: 00640 000 204
IBAN: AT46 1200 0006 4000 0204, BIC: BKAUATWW | DVR 0856371 | ZVR 263489108 | UID/VAT ATU 38516405



The four main topics for the European Handball Federation resulting from this global crisis are not so much different to those that all our handball stakeholders are facing, namely

- Competition issues
- Technical and organisational activities
- Contractual obligations
- Financial consequences

These four points are directly linked to each other and can therefore not be isolated in any deliberations.

The following points include the crisis management parameters

- Develop and publish guidelines to the involved parties: 'Feasibility Study'
- Constant monitoring of the situation in respect to the consequences for the abovementioned parameters
- Set the health and human elements in a rational relation to the sport
- Endeavour to keep competitions and activities 'alive' wherever possible
- Otherwise stick to sporting criteria based on results already achieved
- Finish the current season in the best possible way
- Prepare the next period (summer) minimising the risk and with special consideration of Organisers and YAC Players
- Start the new season in a structured way with least impact possible from the current season
- Consider existing sporting and contractual obligations of the federations and other stakeholders
- Bear in mind the new contracts for national team and club competitions in the given circumstances of the markets: 'we have to deliver'

Based on the facts resulting from the monitoring of the situation and the official information available, the following measures according to the decision of the 03/2020 Executive Committee will enter into force:

- No national team matches will take place in June; therefore,
 - the qualification for women's national teams will be based on the results of the EHF EURO 2018 in France. Corresponding to the ranking thereof, the teams will qualify directly to the EHF EURO 2020 in Norway and Denmark according to the number of places available.
 - the qualification for men's national teams will be based on the results of the EHF EURO 2020 in Sweden, Austria, and Norway. Corresponding to the ranking thereof, the teams will qualify directly to the 2021 IHF World Championship in Egypt according to the number of places / reserve places available for European teams.
- No club matches will take place in June; therefore,
 - the remaining rounds/Finals of the Men's and Women's EHF Challenge Cup will be cancelled
 - the remaining group/KO matches, and Final4 in Berlin (in agreement with the Organiser), of the Men's EHF Cup will be cancelled
 - the Women's EHF Cup rounds/Finals will be cancelled
 - the Last16/Quarterfinal matches of the VELUX EHF Champions League cannot be played as a consequence; the best two teams of groups A and B, after the finalisation of the group phase, will have direct access to the Final4. Possible options of having two knock-out rounds with four



matches in autumn were proofed but are not feasible due to the dense calendar on the men's side and the new contract with potentially different media and marketing partners.

The analysis of the adverse consequences for both the top clubs and the EHF (and by that the EHF) in respect to finances, existing and future contracts, as well the promotional effects are negative. Thus, in agreement with the club representatives, the organisation of the Final4 tournament will be upheld as even prior to the event ban from the German government a new date was set and coordinated with the LANXESS Arena (foretelling the pressure of event organisers looking to available venue capacities in autumn). The set date of 28/29 December is available and not within the national team period. The date had to be published prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee because of media reasons. The title '2020 VELUX EHF Final4 in Cologne' will remain.

- The DELO EHF Champions League Quarterfinals for women will not be carried out in June and the clubs ranked 1 and 2 EHF and EHF are currently checking the possibilities of playing the quarterfinals together with the Final4 (Thursday and Saturday/Sunday on 3, 5/6 September) in the main round are qualified directly to the 2020 DELO EHF Final4 tournament in Budapest. In case of an event ban for the September date, the following alternative in October will be evaluated with the organiser HHF. In this case, the quarterfinals cannot take place as the new season is in full swing at that time and the contractual obligations do not allow for that occurrence.
- No Younger Age Category events on a European level will take place in July or August; therefore,
 - in close coordination with the International Handball Federation, and their approach to the WU17 and WU19 World Championships, the EHF will postpone the Younger Age Category events currently planned in August.

For the Men's 20 EURO in AUT/ITA and the Championships in BIH and LAT the situation for an organisation in January prior/during the Men's World Championship will be analysed with the Organisers respectively and coordinated with the participants. A final decision is planned for the June meeting of the Executive Committee.

For the Men's 18 EURO in Slovenia and the Championships in BUL, MKD, MNE the situation for an organisation in January prior/during the Men's World Championship will be analysed with the Organisers respectively and coordinated with the participants. A final decision is planned for the June meeting of the Executive Committee.

- In close cooperation with the OC Partille Cup, the Women's 16 European Open scheduled for the end of June/beginning of July in Gothenburg, Sweden is cancelled.
- Other indoor competitions postponed/cancelled are the
 - European Masters Championships (men and women) in Granollers, ESP originally planned for mid-June
 - EUSA Games (universities) in Belgrade/SRB in July



- Regarding beach handball competitions, a separate mailing will follow as the coordination with the organisers as well on the level of the IHF regarding the World Championships is ongoing.
 - The YAC European Championship – Men’s/Women’s 16 in July in ITA is postponed; further clarification with the organiser resp. the participants regarding a possible venue for the date of 24 – 27 September will follow.
 - The Beach Handball European Championships in GEO and GRE are cancelled; other options for qualifying for the EURO 2021 will be elaborated.
 - The men’s and women’s EUSA Games (Universities) with beach handball are postponed until 2021

Understanding that the upcoming season 2021 will be a challenge for all involved, be it the Federations, the Leagues, the Clubs, the Players on the one hand and on the other that the contracts concluded by EHF and EHFEM will see a substantial improvement for the financial and as well promotional situation, the EHF still has to consider the recent developments in the markets - in particular the impact of financial cuts in the marketing segment simply due to the commercial developments. As well changes are to be expected in the media landscape and will put pressure on the agencies and the whole sport structure. It is a fact that delivering content is key for the marketing success of our partners and in this respect, we are obliged to fulfil the contractual obligations.

In several interviews, I have stated that after such a crisis, like in every business, there will be winners and losers, and this holds true for the sports sector as well; and we have the chance to be among the winners as long as we are able to coordinate our efforts, and by that are providing interesting products to the markets. Conversely, shortcomings may result in reduced investments in the handball structure and, in substantial cases, the termination of the various existing agreements. At the same time, with the EHF and the whole handball structure delivering good products, this may strengthen the partners and support the refunds of the guaranteed payments, which as well is in our interest.

- Olympic Games Qualification Tournaments (organised by the IHF)
 - In our efforts for the best possible coordination, we are facing the strong request of the International Handball Federation, within their responsibility towards the IOC, to grant reasonable dates for the men’s and women’s Olympic Games Qualification Tournaments. It is within the remit of the IHF to issue the official dates after coordination with the IOC; however, in the given situation with the clubs and leagues, it was agreed to use the existing national team weeks in the season 2020/21 for the postponed Olympic qualifications in order to avoid additional national team weeks. This will have an impact on the men’s side of the EHF EURO 2020 Qualifiers

For the men’s Olympic Games Qualification Tournaments, the EHF developed several options how to implement the envisaged IHF date into the calendar in the best possible way bearing in mind that additional national team weeks would have a tremendously negative impact on the national and international club competitions system. Out of the elaborated proposals, and after consideration on the level of the Nations Board, Professional Handball Board/Women’s Handball Board on 23 April, the following procedures for the EHF EURO 2022 Qualifiers will be applied. The three planned national team weeks in October/November 2020, March 2021, and April/May 2021 will remain as the basis for the



EUROPEAN HANDBALL
FEDERATION

six qualification matches and those six European teams being part of the Olympic qualification and the EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK Qualifiers will play two EURO qualification matches (home resp. away) in January in the national team period prior to the IHF World Championship (planned 6 – 9 January) against one opponent.

Due to the limited time window, the principle decisions for men's national teams had to be taken in order to have a complete picture, details being part of the regulations are being worked out and prepared prior to the envisaged draw for the EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK Qualifiers on 16 June.

For the women's Olympic Games Qualification Tournament, no adaptations will be necessary due to the women's national team week being available in Spring 2021.

Detailed information on dates and procedures regarding the Olympic qualification will be issued by the International Handball Federation.

We are fully aware of the fact that this amount of information is not easy to digest, however, we deem it necessary that you are not only confronted with facts, but for the sake of full transparency, are informed on the background and the coordination efforts as well.

This initial news will be captured in a brief way for the media services of the EHF after you have received this letter. Due to the fact this letter that this letter, as with the communication on 25.03.20) is constructed in a transparent form, we will attach it to the media release.

Another topic regarded by the Executive Committee to be of major importance for European handball and the Federations concerns the activities on the many other fields such as projects, courses, development support, etc. The EXEC agreed to adapt the Masterplan in respect to its investments in our sport in accordance with the current situation. It was confirmed not to withhold any financial means not usable due to the currently blocked activities, and in addition to that to provide funds out of the Masterplan and other budgetary possibilities for necessary measures of and within the Federations. For this, we already started to (or will) establish contact with all Member Federations in order to finalise a full project until June to be ready for the coming season.

Dear colleagues in handball, despite the current government requested 'social distancing', we ask you to 'keep in touch' with us for further coordination in the interest of our sport handball. As usual, the representatives of the EHF structure, both on a sport-political and professional level, will be at your disposal and you are kindly asked to contact us, respectively.

On behalf of the EHF Executive Committee, all those who contributed on a Commission or Board level, and the staff members involved in the process, I remain.

With best regards,

European Handball Federation

Michael Wiederer
President