

EHF BUSINESS REPORT 2018

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European Handball Federation

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EUROPEAN HANDBALL
FEDERATION

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Welcome from the EHF President



2018 was a year (un)like any other...

It was an EHF EURO year...and an extraordinary business year; what better way to start (and end) the year than with star-studded celebrations of handball at the Men's EHF EURO 2018 in Croatia and the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France. The 'even' years are always full of excitement, and our handball community revelled in the many activities offered by the European Handball Federation over the past twelve months.

It was the year of the YACs...every year it is our pleasure to watch our champions of the future flourish on the international stage as the younger age category events play out in venues and on beaches across Europe. In 2018, we sent our players to the beaches of Ulcinj (MNE), and to venues in Gothenburg (SWE), Podgorica (MNE), Skopje (MKD), Celje (SLO), Tulln (AUT), Tbilisi (GEO) and Varaždin (CRO).

It was the year of education...with around 10 courses and seminars per year tailored for both indoor and beach handball, we can see the diligence applied in the classroom smoothly transferred to the court. The 2018 Master Coach and Licensing Course took place over three-modules in the cities of Poreč (CRO), Győr (HUN) and Paris (FRA); the importance of ensuring that our coaches, referees and delegates have the best tools at their disposal remains the topmost priority for our education unit, the EHF Competence Academy & Network.

It was a year of gatherings...whether a large or small meeting, a high profile gala or simply a low-key business lunch, hundreds of meetings took place during 2018. However, the cities hosting the three final weekends of the club season, Budapest, Magdeburg and Cologne, were the main meeting points for a 'who's who' of European and international handball. The VELUX EHF FINAL4, the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 and the Men's EHF Cup Finals are magnetic events and the atmosphere surrounding the match weekends are enough to entice many visitors year on year. Another important gathering was the 2018 EHF Congress; over 150 people descended on the City of Glasgow, where business and pleasure mixed with a unique flair. The next major meeting will be held in Copenhagen in April 2019.

It was the year of the exceptional...a special press conference in Cologne in May 2018 signalled the start of a significant development that will steer the story of European handball in a new direction as of 2020. This year the EHF brought its tender process to an end with the signing of an agreement with Infront and DAZN Group for the period 2020 to 2030. Never in the history of the EHF has it embarked on such a special and complex journey that will have a lasting impact on the sport. We are extremely pleased to be moving forward with this partnership; work on the development project will continue throughout 2019.

It was a working year...for the 85 members of the 13 commissions, committees and boards, as well as the 61 professionals in the EHF and its daughter company EHF Marketing GmbH, it has been a very busy year. But with the usual dedication, skill and aplomb we have delivered an unforgettable year!

It was 2018 and it was a year of handball! On behalf of the EHF Executive Committee, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to our year of success. It is the unyielding contribution and cooperation of the federation's stakeholders – from the clubs, to the leagues, the partners, the players, the media, the national federations, the officials, the referees and the dedicated team at the office in Vienna – that is intricately woven into our fabric of our achievements. As we propel ourselves into 2019, we expect another year of handball (un)like any other, and we are thoroughly looking forward to it!

Michael Wiederer
President, European Handball Federation

SPORTS REVIEW



Men's EHF EURO 2018 Croatia

“I have been hypnotised by what happened in Croatia over two action-packed weeks.”



Fantastic atmosphere, packed arenas, a top level of handball and passionate support from fans. The Men's EHF EURO 2018 in Croatia in January was a great success, with everything falling into place for a complete handball experience.

Four venues were used in the Balkan nation: Split, Poreč, Varaždin and Zagreb in a tournament which the organising committee dubbed the 'Hypnotic Game'.

"Sometimes it is interesting what you assume from a championship and what really happens at a championship. We saw the enthusiasm of the organisers supporting the cause with everything they could," said EHF President Michael Wiederer during the closing press conference in Arena Zagreb on the final Sunday.

"From the sporting part, we can state that the top level in Europe is growing. It is not by chance that we see new teams now in the top nations, and this is very good for our sport," added Wiederer.

"We thought that the EHF EURO 2018 was going to be a hypnotic game," said EHF Secretary General Martin Hausleitner. "Well, I have been hypnotised by what happened in Croatia over two action-packed weeks."

The attention to advanced preparation and organisation was obvious, as the tournament proceeded without a glitch.

"In the most important games there were over 500 volunteers in the arenas. As far as the audience, over 65% of the fans were from outside of Croatia. I am very proud to say that nearly 200,000 spectators attended the games," said Local Organising Committee President Silvijo Njiric.

The Men's EHF EURO 2018 saw an impressive improvement in media figures with strong TV interest, featuring coverage in 175 territories provided by 130 media outlets. RTL, the Croatian broadcaster, reported a market share of 60% during the host nation's matches.

ehfTV – the EHF's own OTT platform – recorded a 30% increase in unique users and 25% increase in number of visits to the page. During the Men's EHF EURO 2018, there were 1.2 million visits to ehfTV.com.

On court, Spain finally claimed their first gold medal at a Men's EHF EURO with a commanding 29:23 win over Sweden, after losing four previously. France beat Denmark 32:29 in the bronze medal match with Nikola Karabatic named best player of the game - a rematch of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games final.

Over 10,000 fans cast their vote for the tournament All-star Team making up 40% of the final vote with the remaining 60% decided by an expert panel provided by the teams that played in the tournament.

The team saw the best goalkeeper award go to Vincent Gerard (FRA), left wing: Manuel Strlek (CRO), left back: Mikkel Hansen (DEN), centre back: Sander Sagosen (NOR), line player: Jesper Nielsen (SWE), right back: Alex Dujshebaev (ESP), right wing: Ferran Sole (ESP) and defender: Jakov Gojun (Croatia).

Jim Gottfridsson (SWE) was the MVP of the tournament while Ondřej Zdráhala (CZE) finished top scorer with 56 goals.



Women's EHF EURO 2018 France

“It was an important development for the EHF to play a flagship event in one of the strongest handball nations in Europe.”



In a fitting finale, the 47th and final match of the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France saw the host nation add the European title to the world title won one year previously, as a record-crowd of 14,060 ecstatic fans saw a dramatic final inside the sold-out AccorHotels Arena in Paris.

The attendance was the highest for any match in the 24-year history of the Women's EHF EUROs, with France coach Olivier Krumbholz, after the defeat of 2016 Olympic champions Russia in the final, exclaiming; "It's a great moment in our history - it was a fantastic game and an incredible audience who pushed us all along the match. In my memory, this is the most emotional match I have ever been involved in."

With Netherlands claiming bronze, the Women's EHF EURO was packed full of drama with the French winning their fourth consecutive medal at a major international championship at the first ever EURO to be held in the country.

"It was an important development for the EHF to play a flagship event in one of the strongest handball nations in Europe," said EHF President Michael Wiederer about the 13th edition of the championship, which saw 65 TV stations broadcast the event to more than 130 countries.

"These are good figures," he continued. "The viewing rates in the major countries are extremely high and extremely good, a step forward for women's handball. It's very easy to sell women's handball when you see the quality of women's handball at elite level - it offers top-quality entertainment and attracts a wide audience to the game."

French television station, TF1, reported exceptional TV figures for the final match. A peak TV audience of 8.1 million tuned in for the conclusion of the match, with an average of 5.4 million watching the French team win the title. In comparison, a total of 4.3 million watched the final of the Men's IHF World Championship in 2017.

"The event meant much more than just 17 days of competition," said Sylvie Pascal-Lagarrigue, President of the EHF EURO 2018 Organising Committee, about the competition, which saw 200,000 handball fans visit host venues in Brest, Montbéliard, Nancy, Nantes and Paris - the first time a EURO operated a 'one ticket, one game' policy, rather than the previous session/day tickets.

New standards were also set, particularly in technology, with goal-line and goal-light technology, the digital timeout buzzer, instant video replay, the Digital ScoreSheet, and - for the final weekend - the iBall, developed by SELECT and KINEXON.

"The Women's EHF EURO 2018 set a milestone in the history of women's handball," said EHF Secretary General Martin Hausleitner, who praised the range of companies which contributed to the success of the event.

"Our media and marketing partner Infront and their staff did an outstanding job in creating an environment for our sponsors," said Hausleitner, who also thanked the companies involved: engelbert strauss, Gjensidige, Intersport, REMA1000, Unibet, Grundfos and EHF partners Gerflor, Sport Transfer, SELECT and Salming.

The Women's EHF EURO 2018 bilingual app was downloaded more than 30,000 times with 1,200 video clips produced courtesy of a new artificial intelligence based clipping tool, while views on ehfTV.com and other EHF owned channels reached the 25-million mark. Added to this, the 'handballissime' campaign successfully spread the word of women's handball across the country. All these activities combined made this EHF EURO the most successful to date in terms of digital content, reach and engagement across all channels.

VELUX EHF FINAL4 Cologne

“Every top player dreams of playing in Cologne, the event is a must-visit for every handball fan...”

The 25th season of Europe's premier handball club competition – the VELUX EHF Champions League – came to an end in May with a 32:27 win for Montpellier HB over their French rivals HBC Nantes in the final match of the VELUX EHF FINAL4 2018. The third French side in the competition, Paris Saint-Germain Handball, took bronze with a 29:28 victory over the previous season's winners, HC Vardar, as the mega event again showed its ongoing strength.

Over 41 TV stations broadcast the event to more than 80 territories around the world, with every second of the action also live on ehfTV.com. The TV production featured a 26-camera set-up, including in-goal and bench cameras and a noteworthy new development: the first European indoor sports event to be produced in 4K UHD. Offering a much better resolution to TV viewers, Ultra HD gave fans the opportunity to enjoy not only the handball but also the shows and surrounding spectacle in a previously unmatched picture definition.

back on the last 25 years and even when only looking upon the time since the FINAL4 was implemented in 2010, everything underwent so many great changes and a huge development. The Champions League is reaching a much broader audience now, not only those, who are in the arena, but all over the world, watching the matches. This is not comparable to the past. The Champions League and the FINAL4 definitely took huge steps forward.”

Such is the success of the VELUX EHF FINAL at the LANXESS arena that the EHF and EHF Marketing GmbH, organiser of the VELUX EHF FINAL4, once again confirmed Cologne's status as the home of top-class international club handball by signing a new deal in December. The agreement with the City of Cologne, LANXESS arena and federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia will see the event return to the city for a further four events, starting in the 2020/21 season.

Its unique blend of top-class sports action and spectacular entertainment makes the two-day mega event a meeting place for everybody connected to the sport and the end of this current season will also see



Further technology innovations including the first implementation of the iBall, with the new tracking technology introduced after an intensive testing phase. The first-ever handball Hackathon also took place in Cologne, as part of the Handball Business Talks, focusing on brand creation and digitalisation.

Fans also flocked to Cologne once again in their tens of thousands, with the Managing Director of EHF Marketing GmbH, David Szelezak, highlighting the continued success of the event at the closing press conference: “We are proud to receive the sold out award for the ninth time at the ninth edition of the VELUX EHF FINAL4,” he said.

Stefan Lövgren, a former Champions League winner with THW Kiel, who was the official ambassador of the event in its early years and is now a member of the EHF Executive Committee, also commented: “Looking

a major milestone celebrated with the 10th edition to be played on 1/2 June 2019.

“Cologne is a special place for everybody in European club handball,” said EHF President Michael Wiederer. “Every top player dreams of playing in Cologne, the event is a must-visit for every handball fan and Cologne has become a meeting place for a ‘who’s who of international handball’ year after year.

“This sports city offers the perfect conditions for the organisation of the FINAL4: a central location in the North Rhine-Westphalia region, where handball is hugely popular, and a venue – the LANXESS arena – which ranks as one of, if not the, best handball arenas in Europe.

WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 Budapest

Györi Audi ETO KC took the WOMEN'S EHF Champions League 2017/18 title after a tense 70-minute battle versus HC Vardar, taking a 27:26 victory thanks to a fast-break save from Györ goalkeeper Eva Kiss in the dying seconds of extra time.

By winning their fourth EHF Champions League title, Györ are the first side to defend a FINAL4 title while CSM Bucuresti defeated Rostov-Don 31:30, to claim their second consecutive Champions League bronze.

CSM left back Cristina Neagu finished top scorer for the season with 110 goals. Vardar goalkeeper Amandine Leynaud won the FINAL4 MVP award.

The packed arena saw spectacular shows: a headline pre-final performance from John Newman and, of course, four spectacular matches – the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 2018 was a stellar success that showed the event is going from strength to strength.

In the lead-up to the event, a bespoke and unique official event merchandise range, developed by Salming, was launched at the draw for the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4. New companies also became part of the mega event, with a diverse line-up of businesses using the event as a platform to communicate with fans and promote their brand.

EHF President Michael Wiederer was more than satisfied with how the competition has developed.



A capacity crowd of 12,000 spectators filled Budapest's Papp László Sportaréna for the whole weekend with action from the Hungarian capital witnessed by a bigger TV audience than ever before.

For the first time since the introduction of the event in the 2013/14 season, 22 television stations broadcast the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 to more than 55 territories. Handball fans in countries without TV coverage were able to stream all four games live and free of charge both on ehfTV.com and on the Olympic Channel, after EHF Marketing closed a deal with official Olympic platform to expand the event among sport fans around the world.

"The FINAL4 tournaments are showcases, both on the men's and women's side," said Wiederer.

"I see many people coming from all kinds of directions and I think it is motivating people, it's motivating young players. I remember when we started the men's FINAL4 in Cologne there was a certain discussion among people, who said 'Oh, but we like home matches.'

"Nowadays, if you ask a player in the Champions League, he or she always says: 'I want to go to Cologne. I want to go to Budapest.' So, this is a target, and therefore, it is an important highlight overall – not only for club handball."



“The FINAL4 tournaments are showcases, both on the men’s and women’s side.”



Ottostadt Magdeburg EHF Cup Finals

Although hosts SC Magdeburg did not make it to the final after their semi-final defeat against Saint-Raphael on the first match day, the Ottostadt Magdeburg EHF Cup Finals created a brilliant atmosphere as Füchse Berlin celebrated the title. The competition was broadcast live in 13 countries and all matches and highlights of the action streamed live on ehfTV.com.

More than 6,000 fans came in person to support the four teams – and the event was not only a success in terms of public appeal, as both SC Magdeburg and EHF Marketing underline in their conclusions.

“We wanted to be a perfect host, and judging from the feedback of the teams, fans and the EHF, we reached this goal,” said Marc-Henrik Schmedt, Managing Director of SC Magdeburg.

“Thanks to the support of the city of Magdeburg, the EHF, our partners and many volunteers, we could organise this event. I am proud of the way we worked and that, from the financial perspective, we did not have a minus in the final balance.”

David Szlezak, Managing Director of EHF Marketing GmbH, was very satisfied with the organisation and cooperation with SC Magdeburg.

“The club worked very professionally, but still with a lot of heart, blood, sweat and tears,” he said. “Like in Göppingen in 2017, we were in a city that lives and breathes handball. It was a really great event in the GETEC Arena.”

Right after the 2017 edition in Göppingen, SC Magdeburg started their plan to host the 2018 event, then bid for it and were subsequently awarded as hosts of the Ottostadt Magdeburg EHF Cup Finals.

“Through the whole process, it was a great cooperation with all people at Magdeburg involved,” said Szlezak.

“Even when the hosts missed the finals, the fans came to the arena. The club can be proud of their fans and what, in general, it has achieved through this organisation. When I was a player in the Bundesliga, it was always something special to play at this arena, and it is still the same.”

In general, Szlezak is sure the future of the EHF Cup Finals is positive.



“When you see the last three events in Nantes, Göppingen and Magdeburg, you could recognise that both the EHF and organisers invested a lot to improve the tournament, which is growing step by step. Now our aim is to find a major international sponsorship partner for the EHF Cup, as we are sure that this competition has great potential for the future.”

“The EHF Cup Finals in Magdeburg have proved that it is the best solution to award one of the participating teams with the organisation, as this creates huge fan interest right from the start. In all aspects, Magdeburg did a great job.”



2018 was a busy year on the European beach scene: Poland hosted the ebt Finals, new U18 European champions were crowned in Montenegro and the Champions Cup was played in a new location for the first time - Catania in Sicily. New technologies and a social media campaign were also introduced.

ebt Finals

The 2018 edition of the ebt Finals - the traditional opening tournament of the beach handball season featuring the best teams from the previous season - took place in Stare Jablonki, Poland, with new men's and women's champions crowned.

Hungarian side Multichem Szentendrei N.K.E. won the women's title with a 2:0 victory against Westside Amsterdam, while C.BM Playa Algeciras beat Team Poland 2:0 in the bronze medal game.

The men's competition saw Pinturas Andalucía BM Playa Sevilla from Spain claim their first title by defeating record winners Detono Zagreb 2:1, while Russia side Ekaterinodar won bronze, against Salgótarjáni Strandépítők BHC.

The event also saw the organisation of education courses for beach handball referees, delegates and coaches.

Under 18 Beach EURO

Germany and Hungary were crowned as the men's and women's Under 18 Beach EURO champions in Ulcinj, Montenegro at the conclusion of a fantastic three days of handball from 29 June to 1 July.

Hungary beat Netherlands in the women's final, with Germany defeating Portugal in the bronze medal match, while Germany's men overcame Poland in a shootout to take gold after Spain beat Croatia in the same way to take bronze.

Champions Cup

The newly-extended EHF Beach Handball Champions Cup with 16 men's and 16 women's teams from 17 different nations took place in Catania, Sicily, Italy, with Detono Zagreb and Multichem-Szentendrei

N.K.E. winning the men's and women's competitions respectively in a competition which saw 32 teams compete over four days with 48 games played in each gender competition.

In the men's competition, Zagreb defeated title-holders Ekaterinodar Krasnodar 2:0, while bronze went to OFKSE-LINMAR from Hungary.

In the women's competition, Hungarian side Multichem-Szentendrei N.K.E. came from behind to beat GRC LEC-apostaganha.com from Portugal 6:2 in a shoot-out, while Norwegian team Aker Topphandball defeated 2017 champions C.BM Playa Algeciras to claim bronze.

The event also generated considerable TV interest. Six nations showed the matches from the event live including Denmark, Norway, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Germany.

All matches from courts one and two were also available via live-stream on ehfTV with the number of viewers tripling compared to the previous event.

Educational courses for beach handball coaches also took place in Italy covering a variety of topics, including the newest insights into goalkeeping, conditioning, coaching, scouting and more.

ebt final ranking

63 tournaments were played and verified in the 2018 European Beach Handball Tour, with two Spanish teams topping the rankings through points gained at six tournaments each.

In the women's ranking, C.BM Playa Algeciras finished first with 2,030 points, while Palletways Verallia Azuqueca sat top of the pile in the men's ranking with 2,078 points.

Goal-line technology

The ebt Finals saw goal-line technology used during a major European beach handball tournament for the first time.

In a system provided by French company 'Vision

Sport', which are also responsible for goal-line technology at the EHF's FINAL4 and EURO events, two high-speed cameras were installed under the horizontal bar of each goal, to assess if the ball had fully crossed the line or not.

Digital ScoreSheet

The Digital ScoreSheet (DSS) was also introduced into beach handball in 2018 with all teams at the Champions Cup given access to the platform.

The app and the platform were also presented at the coaches' course in Catania.

In the future the DSS (including the app) will remain a fixed part in the referees' and delegates' education programme.

The objective is to offer this service to all teams at future competitions.

#dontworrybeachhappy campaign

At the start of the 2018 European Beach Handball season, the EHF launched its first beach handball-centred campaign: #dontworrybeachhappy.

The campaign ran from May until August and focused on the ebt Finals and tournaments which were part of the European Beach Handball Tour (ebt).

#dontworrybeachhappy offered activation, engagement and participation possibilities for players and fans on a weekly basis with prizes awarded to weekly and monthly winners and a final, grand prize of a free trip to the EHF Champions Cup.

The successful campaign ran exclusively on the EHF's beach handball accounts on Facebook and Instagram leading to an increase in the number of followers across all channels - the most successful being Instagram with a 30% increase.

Summer of YAC events

2018 was the first year that the new competition system for the EHF's younger age category (YAC) competitions was fully rolled out with six events played in July and August - and the success was overwhelming on and off the court.

Slovenia beat France to claim gold at home in the Men's 20 EHF EURO in front of 5,000 spectators in Celje and a further 43,000 watching the final live on TV (Sport Klub) and ehfTV.

Men's 20 EHF Championships were played for the first time, with FYR Macedonia winning the title in Skopje, beating Belarus in front of 1,200 fans, and Czech Republic defeated Austria in Montenegro.

Over 140,000 people followed the live matches of the Men's 18 EHF EURO in Croatia on ehfTV, which ended with Sweden beating Iceland 32:27 in the final.

In the Men's 18 EHF Championships host nation Austria used their home advantage to beat Czech Republic in the final in Tulln, while Italy beat Belarus in Georgia, with both teams advancing to the Men's 18 and Men's 20 EHF EURO level in 2020.

Poland and Romania will play the M20 and M18 EHF Championships in 2020, after finishing 15th and 16th respectively at the Men's 18 EHF EURO.

Wheelchair Handball Nations Tournament

From 30 November to 2 December, Leiria, Portugal, was the setting for the 2018 European Wheelchair Handball Nations' Tournament, organised by the EHF in cooperation with the Portuguese Handball Federation.

2018 marked the third edition of the tournament which started in 2015 in St. Pölten/AUT and continued in Sölvesborg/SWE a year later

The host nation swept away their three opponents in emphatic style to win their first title after losing the two previous finals against Netherlands and it was their big rivals who they beat in the first game, before they defeated Croatia 18:15. Winning the group was then assured by another emphatic win, over Hungary.

But there was not to be a repeat of the Netherlands vs Portugal final for the third successive edition after the Dutch faltered against Croatia in their last group match, with the Croats earning a narrow 15:14 win against Netherlands - who eventually won bronze - to progress to the final.

A motivated Portuguese side kept the Croatians and their top scorer of the tournament, Ademir Demirovic, quiet in the final with things already looking good for the hosts at half-time, when they boasted a healthy 10:2 lead, eventually winning 20:7.

Portugal's Ricardo Queiros was named MVP of the tournament and the Netherlands' Joyce van Haaster was best goalkeeper.

The EHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group is currently working with European experts in the field of Paralympic classification on European Classification Regulations for future European competitions.





EHF Marketing GmbH

In 2018, EHF Marketing GmbH reached an important milestone: sponsorship opportunities in the VELUX EHF Champions League officially sold out. Not only were new sponsors welcomed to the family, but also contracts with existing partners were extended.

Highlights in 2018



VELUX

Title sponsor of the VELUX EHF Champions League, the VELUX Group, continued with its 'Let's Play' initiative to support youth handball across Europe through the donation of official VELUX EHF Champions League handballs.

All youth teams in the 8-14 age groups were able to apply and VELUX received 3,181 applications in the 2017/18 season via their website veluxhandball.com. All in all, a proud number of 8,412 handballs were distributed to 701 teams in 45 countries.



Nord Stream 2

Ahead of the start of the VELUX EHF Champions League season 2018/19, EHF Marketing GmbH signed up Nord Stream 2 as a new premium sponsor.

The contract between the two parties was signed for the duration of two seasons including the VELUX EHF FINAL4 as the competition's benchmark event. It is not only giving Nord Stream 2 extensive exposure but also the opportunity to support the youth: tickets not taken by the company from their VIP contingent are given to each club's youth department.



Betano

A new regional betting partner was found in Betano, a daughter brand of the leading betting operator Stoiximan.

Throughout the season, the cooperation is targeted towards the German market where handball enjoys huge popularity. In addition to that, Betano became the official betting partner of the VELUX EHF FINAL4 in Cologne.



Cashback World

Regional partner Cashback World extended the successful cooperation with the VELUX EHF Champions League at the beginning of the season 2018/19.

Part of this cooperation is the VELUX EHF FINAL4 Cashback Programme which was initially presented in 2017 and which offers handball fans attractive shopping benefits. Additionally, Champions League club HC Vardar initiated their very own Cashback Programme customised for their fans.

Brand Design Guidelines 2018/19

EHF Marketing GmbH developed and implemented an online Brand Design Guide for Europe's main club handball competitions: the VELUX EHF Champions League, the WOMEN'S EHF Champions League, the MEN'S EHF Cup and the WOMEN'S EHF Cup.

In order to strengthen the position of each competition on the sport market and to further develop them into strong and recognisable brands, consistency is most important. Therefore, the Brand Design Guidelines' main focus is to secure the value of brand recognition.



VELUX EHF FINAL4 2018, Cologne



Key facts



19,750 spectators at every match



Matches LIVE on 41 TV channels to more than 80 territories



1,110 broadcast hours



26 cameras & 100 crew produce the TV world feed



Performance of American band Welshly Arms

European Handball Talks

As part of the VELUX EHF FINAL4, EHF Marketing GmbH organised the sport business event European Handball Talks.

The topics brand management and community building in the digital age as well as digitalisation and technology in sport were part of the presentations. The line-up of speakers included Michael Wiederer, the EHF President, David Szelezak, Managing Director of EHF Marketing GmbH, as well as leading experts in brand, sponsorship and technology.



Locker Room Show

A brand new development for 2018 was the VELUX EHF FINAL4 Locker Room Show.

Four handball stars from the participating teams met with ehfTV.com commentator Tom O'Brannagain in the unique locker room setting of the LANXESS arena. Handball fans were given the chance to ask their own questions via Facebook and Instagram which led to high engagement.



WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 2018, Budapest



Key facts



12,000 spectators at every match



Matches LIVE on 22 TV channels to more than 55 territories



654 broadcast hours



ehfTV.com and Olympic Channel streamed in parallel globally



Performance of British singer and songwriter John Newman

Ottostadt Magdeburg EHF Cup Finals 2018, Magdeburg



Key facts



More than 6,000 spectators



Event was broadcast in 13 territories



Total audience of 7.4 million



INCREASING OUR REACH



Faces of the VELUX EHF Champions League



To reveal the untold stories of Europe's premier club competition, EHF Marketing introduced the 'Faces of the VELUX EHF Champions League' project in 2018 to make it possible for fans to follow all the different aspects of the competition.

The 'faces' are British presenter Hannah Jackson and her Austrian counterpart, Markus Floth. The pair started off their 2017/18 season 'Road to the VELUX EHF FINAL4' series with the Last 16 second leg match between Telekom Veszprém and Skjern Håndbold - a journey which eventually took them to Poland, Germany, Hungary (again) and France (twice) before arriving at the LANXESS arena and the VELUX EHF FINAL4.

Since the beginning of the 2018/19 season, they have featured on the competition's social media platforms and on-site at the 'Match of the Week', bringing the audience courtside for exclusive chats with players, commentators and fans, while providing unique coverage of each round's highlight match.

The role aims to increase awareness of women's handball as a sport by focusing on Europe's top-flight competition, the WOMEN'S EHF Champions League which Althaus won for the third time, with Györi Audi ETO KC in the 2017/18 season.

The former German international has been travelling across Europe to give fans a special peek behind the scenes where the magic happens and, accompanied by a mobile reporter, has provided experiences which money cannot buy, bringing fans into the locker rooms and onto the court.

Her road to Budapest for the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 on 11/12 May 2019 has already started with Women's EHF Champions League matches Györi Audi ETO KC vs. Thüringer HC and Metz Handball vs. Odense HC in November featured and more dates for 2019 to be announced.

Fans have had the opportunity to interact with the handball legend by using hashtags #ehfcl and #anjaisback.

Fans are offered a glimpse behind the scenes at the EHF's major events as well as the chance to meet some of the stars of the sport through its digital channels.

At both the Men's and the Women's EHF EURO events as well as at the VELUX EHF FINAL4 this took the form of live TV shows streamed live across social channels and ehfTV.com.

The EHF presented the 'EHF EURO Live Show' every day direct from the Men's EHF EURO 2018 in Croatia, together with LIDL - the first time in championship history that the EHF brought live news from the event to handball fans around the world.

At the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France, the EHF's media team kept fans up to date through two online shows - EHF EURO Daily and EHF EURO Live - both streamed on social media.

In the VELUX EHF FINAL4 Locker Room Show, ehfTV.com commentator Tom O'Brannagain provided fans with last-minute insight into the VELUX EHF Champions League season and the matches at the VELUX EHF FINAL4, through the eyes of four stars representing each of the semi-finalists.



TECHNOLOGY IN HANDBALL

WCL Ambassador

Former world-class line player and three-time WOMEN'S EHF Champions League winner Anja Althaus joined up with the Women's EHF Champions League in 2018 in a new role as Official Ambassador.

Live shows

iBall - Cologne/France

The final weekend of the VELUX EHF Champions League 2017/18 season became the first major event in sport to be played with game-changing tracking technology, enabling the distribution of data in real time. The ball had its second big outing at the Women's EHF EURO 2018, making its debut in a national team competition.

The VELUX EHF FINAL4 saw all four matches played with a new, intelligent ball - the iBall - developed by the EHF's official ball supplier, SELECT, and German tracking company, KINEXON, in a collaboration dating back to January 2016.

The new technology delivered unprecedented levels of insight into the sport, providing athletes, fans, media and sponsors the opportunity to see the game from completely new and fascinating angles via an integrated tracking chip which is able to capture real-time information such as ball speed, position of the shot and placement of the ball in the goal.

Fans watching the action live inside Cologne's LANXESS arena, online or on TV had access to a variety of data in real-time through fan TV in the arena, television broadcasts or the event app, such as the speed of shots, the distance and position the shot was taken from, where the ball entered the goal and much more.



4K TV at VELUX EHF FINAL4



The VELUX EHF FINAL4 has always been at the forefront of technological advances and the 2018 edition was no different as fans were treated to watching Europe's premier handball club competition in Ultra HD, also known as 4K.

Over 41 TV stations broadcast the weekend event to nearly 80 territories around the world with coverage complimented by ehfTV.com, and with 26 cameras as part of the set-up, EHF Marketing GmbH took yet another giant step forward by offering an Ultra HD/4K signal in 3840x2160 pixels to TV partners, with stations in Denmark, Norway, Poland and Sweden becoming the first in the world to show the spectacle in the new production.

"The 4K production of the VELUX EHF FINAL4 was a pioneer project in the European indoor sports market," said Miguel Mateo, Head of TV & Media at EHF Marketing. "We are totally committed to offer the event in the best quality possible to our fans around the world - 4K is here to stay."

Apps - VELUX EHF FINAL4/Women's EHF EURO 2018

In a collaboration with innovative Swiss company, Fanpictor, both the VELUX EHF FINAL4 2018 and Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France launched apps this year, available to download for iOS and Android devices, enabling fans to receive live data and live streams, video highlights, social media feeds and the latest news.

Fans following both competitions had opportunities to win exclusive prizes on a daily basis throughout the events via prize giveaways and innovative 'Pulse' features on the app, while those at the VELUX EHF FINAL4 had the chance play their own part in the

entertainment programme, combining the app with their mobile phone in the 'light-show' feature which used a unique data-via-audio solution to enable spectators to become part of the opening shows ahead of each match.

At the FINAL4, the app offered fans in the arena and at home the chance to vote for the best players of the match, while in France, the 'match predictor' feature saw fans win points for guessing match winners, goal difference between teams and the exact match score with the overall winner on points at the end of the championship winning two tickets to the final of the Men's EHF EURO 2020.



Artificial intelligence at the Women's EHF EURO 2018

The Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France saw, for the first time, the EHF instantly generate and distribute professionally-edited videos on a large scale using artificial intelligence with the introduction of technology from start-up tech company WSC Sports.

WSC Sports' platform generates personalised sports videos for every platform and every sports fan - automatically and in real-time - utilising advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies to analyse live sports broadcasts, identifying each and every event that occurs in the game to create customised short-form video content with the ability to publish to any digital destination.

This enables partners such as the EHF to instantly generate and distribute these professionally-edited personalised clips and videos on a large scale, to engage audiences and maximise video monetisation opportunities.

At the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France, examples included in-game highlights directly posted to Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram; game clips to EHF EURO Instagram stories; videos in both square and 16:9 format; GIF generation; and auto-generation of highlights including game recaps, top plays of the day/group/stage, top saves, top goals, individual player highlights and team highlights to YouTube, the official app and website.

"The Women's EHF EURO 2018 marked further significant progress in the digital capabilities of the



EHF," said Martin Hausleitner, Secretary General of the EHF.

"The introduction of artificial intelligence technology is a first in handball and enables us to reach and engage many more fans through personalised video content."

The Tel Aviv-based WSC Sports has grown from 13 employees to 70 over the past two years in order to help satisfy an expanding and impressive client list

which also includes the NBA league office, all 30 NBA teams, Turner Sports, MLS, the PGA Tour, the Stadium digital network, FIBA, Cricket Australia, the World Surf League and the US Open tennis tournament.

In December 2018 they won the prestigious SportTechie 'Outstanding Sports Technology for 2018' award. The awards highlight the teams, executives, sports technologies, venues, investors and leaders that most deserve recognition for their work in pushing the industry forward.

Technology assisting referees, delegates and coaches

2018 saw technology becoming more integrated in handball with the Women's EHF EURO in France featuring instant replay, goal-light technology and the premiere of electronic team timeout requests to help assist EHF delegates and referees with decision-making.

After being tested and used at major club events including the VELUX EHF FINAL4 in Cologne, the EHF Cup Finals and the Women's EHF EURO 2016 in Sweden, instant replay made its Men's EHF EURO debut at the 2018 edition in Croatia, with the technology further refined for the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France.

To make instant replay technology transparent for teams and spectators at France 2018 both in the arena and watching on TV, the EHF implemented four icons that were shown on screen to indicate why the situation in question was being reviewed: for goal line situations - to check whether a goal was scored or not; for disqualification; for substitution; and for use of the electronic team timeout request technology, known as a buzzer - a large red button at the end of each team bench, directly connected to the official scoreboard.

Once a coach requests a timeout by pressing it, the game clock stops, the goal-light lights up and an audio signal sounds to make all parties aware that a timeout has been requested.

The buzzer replaced the previously-used timeout cards and premiered in May at the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 in Budapest, then followed at the Ottostadt Magdeburg EHF Cup Finals and VELUX EHF FINAL4 in Cologne in the same month before France 2018 became the first EURO to feature it.

Goal-light technology itself was also upgraded in 2018 and the system now comprises of an LED tube - also connected to the game clock and timeout buzzer - positioned along the back perimeter of the goal in a rectangular shape, making the light more visible.

Referees, delegates and coaches are also assisted by

the Digital ScoreSheet developed by Maxosystem. Available online and as an app, the tool provides videos clips and match action for further analysis.

Linked to match data, the automatic system analyses a total of 71 situations, including 35 specifically for coaches and 17 for referees and delegates. Coaches are also able to tag specific situations and use this content during the match to show players and explain specific issues.

The tool is currently in use in the EHF Champions League and EHF EURO final tournaments.



SPONSORS



Gorenje

The sponsorship between the EHF and Gorenje Group, one of Europe's leading home appliance manufacturers, went from strength to strength in 2018.

After signing a three-season deal at the VELUX EHF FINAL4 2017 to become an official regional premium sponsor of the VELUX EHF Champions League, a further agreement, brokered by EHF Marketing GmbH, was reached with Infront for the Men's EHF EURO final tournament which saw Gorenje become the official sponsor of the Men's EHF EURO in 2018 and 2020.

In a sign of the strength of the partnership, Gorenje's '#simplyfans' campaign won the prestigious SPORTO Sponsorship Award, which ensures entry into the 'Best of Europe' European Sponsorship Association (ESA) Excellence Awards, to be held in London in February 2019.

The Gorenje Group created the campaign with the objective of supporting their sponsorship of European handball and uniting sports fans from the whole Adriatic region and across Europe as well as improving awareness and perception of the Gorenje brand across the continent, particularly in Germany, Scandinavia and the Balkans where handball is one of the most popular sports.

The first phase of the #simplyfans campaign focused on the Adriatic region, where the company has six subsidiary units. Over 700 handball fans from Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were taken in specially branded #simplyfans buses to see the matches of the Men's EHF EURO 2018 in Croatia, with a related TV campaign reaching a TV audience of 7.5 million.



The campaign was further supported with famous handball stars Vid Kavtičnik, Ivano Balić and Nikola Karabatic as ambassadors, including their presence in TV commercials and also a strong social media campaign.

The digital strategy made use of owned, earned and paid media with a goal to encourage fans to participate in prize draws in selected markets and share the spirit of #simplyfans through their own channels - including taking 'fridges' instead of selfies in front of Gorenje fridges at venues.

The second phase of #simplyfans then rolled out across the VELUX EHF Champions League through logo presence on LED advertising, floor stickers, press backdrops, product placements and social media campaigns.

As part of a spring campaign, the four biggest #simplyfans were taken to the VELUX EHF FINAL4 to congratulate their teams personally at the award ceremony, have a guided tour behind the scenes including the team dressing rooms with the club-branded Gorenje fridges. With another Europe-wide campaign in December, a creative fan won a fridge in his favourite club's colours with a further nine fans also rewarded.

The initial success of #simplyfans extended well beyond handball and into other sponsorship activities of the Gorenje Group and its subsidiary units with nearly EUR 18 million-worth of total media value and 278 hours of visibility during the Men's EHF EURO 2018 and a presence at 138 VELUX EHF Champions League matches in eight countries with 3,200 hours of visibility and EUR 22.3 million-worth of media value in the 2017/18 season.



Plan International

As part of the cooperation which commenced in 2017 between EHF Marketing GmbH/VELUX EHF Champions League and charity partner Plan International, the 'International Day of the Girl Child' was presented at matches in Europe's elite club competition throughout October 2018.

The charity, which helps children and young people in developing countries, and the VELUX EHF Champions League, joined in with the celebrations around the special day on 11 October, with all participating clubs in round 5 of the season supporting the campaign.

Girls symbolically opened all games by bringing the official match ball onto court, while centre circles turned pink a strong colour, conveying power, joie de vivre and the courage to stand up for oneself, with the day drawing worldwide attention to the fact that girls often do not have the same chances as boys and are often prevented from exercising their rights.

The day of celebration was very successful with many of the clubs – on top of their match activity – producing their own social media content and creative ideas including organised photo shooting with players and their children, videos and special shirts.



In addition to the existing partnership with the VELUX EHF Champions League, the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 in Budapest, Hungary, brought further attention to Plan International's work - particularly to gender equality for girls and women, with the charity receiving extensive TV exposure through on-court advertising (centre circle) at the women's club highlight.



EHF ACTIVITIES

We turned Europe pink together!

Plan International activation in Round 5, Season 2018/19

"Plan International would like to express their gratitude to the VELUX EHF Champions League and to all participating clubs and fans for setting this important sign for equality at the International Day of the Girl Child 2018. Thanks to the participation of all clubs the European handball showed their united support for girls' rights worldwide. This is a very valuable contribution to the work of Plan International and the global movement."

Christine Kowalski, Plan International Germany
Team leader of sport cooperations



1,649,603
IMPRESSIONS

239,882
REACHED

21,750
ENGAGED



Developing the women's game



The Women's Handball Board (WHB) is committed to the betterment of women contributing to handball in all its different facets including development, dual careers and education. In 2018, the WHB focused its attention on youth players and youth handball.

Mentoring of coaches in women's handball youth

In April, the EHF launched the 'Mentoring of Coaches in Women's Youth Handball Project' as part of its continued efforts to develop women's handball in Europe. The long-term objectives of the project are to propel the EHF EURO and Women's EHF Champions League competitions forward, to develop more female elite players in more countries and close the gap to the top nations, while improving the level and motivation of coaches actively involved in women's youth handball.

The project targets and supports the development of the younger age category (YAC) coaches of national teams ranked 13-24 in Europe, focusing on players aged 12 to 18 years old. A maximum of six federations

Women's Handball Convention

The Women's EHF EURO 2018 was the setting for the EHF Women's Handball Convention, which saw representatives of federations and clubs across Europe presented with new ideas for development and promotion. The event also sought to strengthen the women's handball network.

Held at the Maison du Handball in Créteil, the headquarters of the French Handball Federation, the convention was opened by EHF Secretary General Martin Hausleitner, who spoke of the success of the Women's EHF EURO 2018, highlighting the outstanding performances on court at the EHF EURO.

The convention featured keynote speeches focused on the continued development of women's sport. This included a presentation of the 'This Girl Can' campaign from Sport England's Kate Dale and an overview of both FIBA digital marketing programmes and the EHF/M's future digital marketing plans from Joe Edwards, Marketing Director DAZN Partnerships.

SELECT's Jan Gubi Wichmann and KINEXON's Maximilian Schmidt also presented the iBall and the ball manufacturer's Maxi Grip (resin-free ball).

The EHF Women's Handball Coordinator, Alenka Cuderman, also updated the participants on the latest women's handball programmes and initiatives including the 'Mentoring of Coaches in Women's Youth Handball Project' and the WHB's new 'Life Skills Toolkit for Players'.

The WHB had numerous successes over the past year. These included supporting the educational goals of 25 female participants through various courses and the development of a project for the mentoring of coaches in women's youth handball to improve the development of the women's youth handball on a national level.

Promotional activities were also initiated, in conjunction with the EHF Media and Communications Department, including a role model campaign and a handball ambassador project to strengthen the image of women's handball.

All the activities will continue into 2019 - adding to the 10 projects in the pipeline for the coming year.

will participate in the first two years, with federations submitting a proposed programme and project concept for approval by the EHF Executive Committee.

With each federation having their own specific needs in the area of coach development, the EHF works closely with the federations involved to formulate the agreed programme.

EHF Lecturers are provided by the EHF during the project lifespan for continuous mentoring of coaches through coaches' clinics, organised by the member federation during their respective national/regional tournaments for the targeted age range, three times a year over two years, up to a total of six sessions.

This will take the form of guidelines to assist top players to cope with the challenges they are exposed to, both on and off the court. The toolkit will cover important topics, including: projecting a positive image, communication with the media, the necessity of a dual career, balancing sport and education, planning post-career and anti-doping information.

In 2019, the WHB will produce an online survey/questionnaire, which will provide players with information, and in turn raise the interest to challenge themselves via quizzes and motivate them to further self-analysis.



Handball Inspires Generations

In June, to coincide with the draw for the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France, a new campaign was launched with the aim of promoting women's handball under the slogan of 'Handball Inspires Generations'. In a first step a promotional video was published and distributed across digital channels and to all member federations.



The film shows a player's career path from the very top to an eventual career in coaching. It features Women's EHF EURO 2018 bronze medallist, Dutch international goalkeeper Tess Wester; Danish international Line Jorgensen; Swedish international and EHF EURO 2014 MVP Bella Gullden; Edina Szabo Borsos, coach of Hungarian club side Erd, and EHF EURO 2018 winners Amandine Leynaud and Camille Ayglon Saurina from France.

Also as part of the campaign, German record international player Grit Jurack; referee pair Charlotte and Julie Bonaventura; EHF delegate Carmen Manchado and Hungarian Handball Federation Vice President Katalin Palinger are featured, completing the whole breadth of role models.

Each of the role models represents a specific stage in a player's development: a rising star, an established player, a top player, motherhood, the final years of her career and post-career. Each stage is presented in an individual video and published through an individual story on the EHF website and social media channels.

All the role models appeared in a variety of promotional activities online as well as at national team and WOMEN'S EHF Champions League matches and further to the initial group of inspirational figures, all 16 nations at the Women's EHF EURO in France added their very own 'generation link' story, featuring their own role models and key players.

The 'Handball Inspires Generations' campaign will continue until August 2019.

European Handball Manager

Organised by the EHF and the German Sports University Cologne, the third edition of the European Handball Manager degree course completed this year.

Alternating annually between German and English language, participants cover five modules: basics in economics and law, media and communications, marketing and sponsorship, finances and licensing and strategic handball management, before ending with oral and written exams.

Two EHF Champions League winners were among the 2017/18 group which featured five women, with four continents represented in the current intake: Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania. The 2018/19 course participants are pictured right.



Grassroots Market

The inaugural EHF Grassroots Market, took place at the impressive Maison du Handball in Créteil on the fringes of the Women's EHF EURO 2018 in France.

Focusing on initiatives to encourage more people to start playing handball, the event shed light on the grassroots of the sport and asked the question: How do we encourage more people, of any age, to pick up handball and try playing the game, in any form?

Coaches and representatives from clubs and federations attended various presentations, trying out numerous games which use different, specially-designed handballs, aimed at making the game easier to learn and more attractive to children and young people.

One example of the presentations on offer was Goalcha, a street version of handball which uses a squeezable ball, making it earlier to grip and handle.

Another creative innovation was Playfinity, which combines technology and sport. The ball includes a chip which connects to a corresponding app on a mobile phone or tablet, with the system registering almost everything that can be measured inside a ball: speed, air time, bounces and even if it is being caught or not.



ERASMUS + EU Projects

Two EU-funded Erasmus+ sport programmes involving the EHF continued to grow this year.



The ONSIDE team

Coaching

Young Coaches Workshop

In the Polish city of Szczyrk in June, 16 male and female coaches aged 33 or younger attended the fifth edition of the EHF Young Coaches Workshop, organised by the EHF Methods Commission.

The six-day workshop focused on development, (further) education, and training with theoretical sessions delivered by EHF Lecturers who gave presentations about technical, tactical and mental aspects of handball.

Coaches undertook practical sessions too; one which had been pre-prepared and one prepared during the workshop.

Coaches received individual and collective feedback and evaluation from the lecturers based on content, realisation, soft skills and communications.

Club Manager Seminars

The EHF Club Manager Blended Learning Programme took place over two modules from April-July this year, initiated by EHF CAN, in cooperation with the EHF Professional Handball Board.

The first module was conducted through e-learning and focused on how the EHF European Cup/European Championship Qualification regulations can be implemented in the best way and how they can help national events, event management, media management, social media, best practice examples and the latest trends in marketing.

The second module was at the 2018, and seventh, edition of the EHF Club Manager Seminar held in Cologne, Germany, on the fringes of the VELUX EHF FINAL4.

The players' role in marketing was the key topic with Stefan Walzel from the German Sports University

Master Coach Course

The EHF Master Coach Course was one of the educational highlights of 2018. Participants from 16 countries attended the course, after completing the first module in Croatia in January, the second in Hungary in June and the last one in Paris during Women's EHF EURO 2018 in December.

From 2020 on, all teams that take part in EHF competitions – on both a national squad and club level – must be coached by Pro Licence holders. The whole Master Coach system includes national courses. In 2018 there were 12 were held across the Europe. National courses help the EHF RINCK Convention signatories to achieve the commonly set goal of 1000 Master Coaches (850 PRO Licences) in 2020.

making the key note speech about this, while the rest of the seminar focused on best practice and discussions from prominent speakers in the fields of sport and media management, sport universities, leagues, clubs and federations.

These included Stephan Hakkers (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences) who presented the 'Handball 4 Dual Career' programme, Thorsten Dum (Cooperative State University Baden-Württemberg) and Axel Sierau (SportTreff Cooperative) who talked about investors in handball and financial fair play, Mario Leo (Result Sports), who talked about players as ambassadors, while Oliver Gilhaus (SpVgg Greuther Fürth) held a presentation on the 'Internationalisation and Digitalisation of Handball'.

All EHF Club Manager Blended Learning Programme attendees obtained their EHF Club Manager Licence.

Handball 4 Dual Careers

2018 marked the halfway point of 'Handball 4 Dual Careers' (H4DC), a 30-month project collaboration between the EHF, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry, to promote and support the topic of dual careers in handball.

H4DC aims to develop a comprehensive support service for the development of players through a collaborative approach between sporting bodies, educational organisations and private sector representatives. Professional clubs Club Fenix Toulouse (FRA) and IK Sävehof (SWE), alongside project leaders Fraikin BM. Granollers (ESP) are involved with 12 to 18-year-olds targeted.

EHF CONGRESS



Glasgow 2018

The 14th Ordinary EHF Congress took place in Glasgow, Scotland from 18-20 June. Meetings of the EHF Executive Committee and the various EHF Commissions were held and a range of motions were dealt with. The Men's EHF EURO 2022/2024 and the Women's EHF EURO 2022 were awarded.

The motions put before Congress dealt with changes and amendments to the statutes, regulations and the structure of the EHF with all proposed by the EHF and national federations.

Approved motions included the timing of the EHF Congress in the future to be held in odd years rather than even years; the EHF treasurer to become 'vice-president finance'; an additional person to join the Competitions Commission responsible for women's club competitions; a new structure for the Nations Committees, Nations Board and Women's Handball Board to ensure equal and fair representation and a change to the mandate of members of the Executive

Committee ceasing at the end of the calendar year in which he or she becomes 70, with an extension of up to four years also possible.

Changes to the EHF statutes were also agreed; one relating to the development of wheelchair handball, now allowing for the awarding of competitions for people with disabilities.

Additional proposals included the creation of a 'protected disclosure advocate' by the Irish Olympic Handball Association, which Congress agreed would be incorporated into the existing EHF legal system, as well as the formation of a new impartial body to decide compensation for future EHF presidents. The next EHF Congress, in April 2021, was awarded to Luxembourg.

Pictured right: Dr. Hassan Moustafa, IHF President; Stephen Neilson, Chief Operating Officer, Scottish Handball Association; Michael Wiederer, EHF President and Martin Hausleitner, EHF Secretary General



INSIDE THE EHF

Boards & Commissions

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXEC)

Whilst primarily overseeing the good governance of handball in Europe, the EHF Executive Committee remains dedicated to the forging and realisation of strategic growth in its various configurations, and 2018 was no different.

Following a tender process in 2017, the first half of 2018 was characterised by an intense period of negotiations that resulted in the finalisation of a long-term media and marketing agreement with Infront and DAZN, announced in May.

The year quickly became one of forward-thinking as the EHF Executive Committee prepared for the development curve scheduled to begin in 2020 when the new partnership starts.

But that was not all the EHF Executive Committee dealt with over the course of a year which started with the Men's EHF EURO in Croatia and finished with the Women's EHF EURO in France.

These were just two of many memorable events in 2018 in which the EHF experienced its most successful year in terms of development across the board in competition, marketing and promotion.

The governing body intensified its engagement with national federations, intervening in several situations and authorising proposals that led to improvement in the governance of the sport at the national level.

Also, the face of the Executive Committee changed with the departure of Professional Handball Board (PHB) Chairman, Xavier O'Callaghan, who served the committee for two years, replaced by Gerd Butzeck.



MICHAEL WIEDERER (AUT)
President



PREDRAG BOŠKOVIĆ (MNE)
First Vice President



HENRIK LA COUR (DEN)
Vice President Finance



BOŽIDAR ĐURKOVIĆ (SRB)
CC Chairman



JERZY ELIASZ (POL)
MC Chairman



OLE R. JØRSTAD (NOR)
BC Chairman



STEFAN LÖVGREN (SWE)
Member



GABRIELLA HORVATH (HUN)
Member



ANRIUS BRENCANS (LAT)
Member



XAVIER O'CALLAGHAN (ESP)
PHB Chairman (until 09/2018)



GERD BUTZECK (GER)
PHB Chairman (from 10/2018)



GEORGETA NARCISA LECUSANU (ROU)
WHB Chairwoman (until 03/2018)



NODJIALEM MYARO (FRA)
WHB Chairwoman (from 03/2018)

FINANCE DELEGATION

The Finance Delegation oversees the financial activities of the organisation, ensuring transparency and upholding its financial integrity. In a secondary function, it also acts as the Advisory Board to EHF Marketing GmbH.

The EHF Executive Committee has sanctioned the creation of additional bodies within the structure of the federation including the Finance, Technical and Legal Delegations as well as the Technical Refereeing Committee. These bodies perform a coordination function and also deal with specific tasks assigned to them by the EHF Executive Committee.

Represented on the Finance Delegation are the president, vice president finance, secretary general and chief finance officer; it meets four times a year. In 2018, among other tasks, the group ratified the results of the accounting procedures performed by the internal and external oversight parties, before submitting the documents to the EHF Executive Committee and, subsequently, at the 2018 EHF Congress in Glasgow

TECHNICAL DELEGATION

Consisting of the chairs of the federation's technical commissions including the Competitions, Methods and Beach Handball Commissions as well as the responsible staff members from the EHF Office, the Technical Delegation also acts as the CAN Advisory Board. It serves as a coordination body and in 2018 dealt with topics including the rules of the game and the further development of the use of technology in game administration.

COMPETITIONS COMMISSION (CC)

2018 saw over 900 matches played in EHF men's, women's and youth national and club handball competitions, with the majority played without any issues, once again highlighting the smooth operations behind the scenes which allow 100s of players to shine in the global spotlight.

The breadth of responsibility within the EHF Competitions Commission means the work of the members is continuous, including the open-ended reform in the area of Younger Age Category events, anti-doping initiatives, and close cooperation with the Methods Commission and Technical Referee Commission for the education of EHF officials.

Over the past 12 months, the commission has submitted over 40 recommendations and motions to the EHF Executive Committee aimed at improving the standards of competitions at all levels. This has been reflected in the stability of playing systems, and in other areas that benefit players - for example, regulating the distance between playing venues and hotels.

Another key focus for the commission was finding the optimal international calendar solution for all handball stakeholders, an endeavour which, like many others, will continue in 2019.



BOŽIDAR ĐURKOVIĆ (SRB)
CC Chairman



JAN KAMPMAN (DEN)
Member Men's Competitions



CARMEN MANCHADO (ESP)
Member Women's Competitions



DRAGAN NACHEVSKI (MKD)
Member Refereeing



EMERIC PAILLASSON (FRA)
Member Men's Club Competitions



THOMAS HYLLE (DEN)
Member Women's Club Competitions

TECHNICAL REFEREEING COMMITTEE (TRC)

The Technical Refereeing Committee (TRC) is a think tank for the EHF Competitions Committee in refereeing matters with special focus on referee education and activities. The TRC members are nominated by the EHF Executive Committee. It consists of six members and is chaired by Dragan Nachevski (MKD), member of the EHF Competitions Commission responsible for refereeing. The committee includes the following members: Jiri Konecny (CZE) – responsible for the young referee programme; Jutta Ehrmann-Wolf (GER) – responsible for female refereeing; Oyvind Tøgstad (NOR); Mirosław Baum (POL) and Antonio Marreiros (POR).

METHODS COMMISSION (MC)

The EHF Methods Commission continued to develop handball at an educational and technological level in 2018.

One particular highlight was the EHF Master Coach Course with topics such as proprioceptive work and plyometric exercise in handball, positioning, transitioning, and perception covered across three modules in the cities of Poreč (CRO), Győr (HUN) and Créteil (FRA). In addition, 17 national Master Coach courses will help the EHF RINCK Convention signatories to achieve the commonly set goal of 1000 Master Coaches (850 PRO Licences) in 2020.

Many other courses and seminars for both indoor and beach handball were also held across Europe for referees, delegates and club managers.

Another highlight was activity in the area of wheelchair handball, culminating in the 3rd EHF European Wheelchair Handball Tournament in Leiria, Portugal in November. The Methods Commission hosted a two-day working group where topics such as rules of the game, classification for players and a nations tournament were discussed.



JERZY ELIASZ (POL)
MC Chairman



SJØRØTTGER (NED)
Member Methods and Coaching



PETER KOVACS (HUN)
Member Education and Training



KLAUS FELDMANN (GER)
Member Youth, School & Non-Competitive Sport



PEDRO SEQUEIRA (POR)
Member Development



MARTA BON (SLO)
Member

BEACH HANDBALL COMMISSION (BC)

In 2018 the keyword for the Beach Handball Commission was 'growth' and that was reflected as each beach handball competition saw an increase in the number of participants.

Compared to when the Beach Handball Commission was founded 10 years ago, in 2008, the number of active senior beach handball players has doubled.

Beach handball has developed in many new areas, with goal-line technology successfully implemented during the 2018 EHF Men's and Women's European Beach Handball Championships and the sport formally allocated a national team week on the EHF calendar - previously reserved for indoor handball.

Beach handball will also debut as a European University Sports Association (EUSA) sport, with the first EUSA-EHF European Beach Handball Championship to be held in Zagreb in 2019.

The Beach Handball Commission also made waves with its #dontworrybeachhappy campaign that spread across all the major social media platforms in summer 2018.



OLE R. JØRSTAD (NOR)
BC Chairman



MARCO TRESPIDI (ITA)
Member Events and Competitions



IVAN SABOVIK (SVK)
Member Officiating



JUAN CARLOS ZAPARDIEL (ESP)
Member Game Design & Coaching



GEORGIOS BEBETSOS (GRE)
Member Development & Promotion



JELENA RAKONJAC (SRB)
Member

EHF COMPTROLLERS (COMPT)

As mandated, the EHF Comptrollers, in cooperation with authorised external auditors, undertook and concluded their annual examination of the EHF accounts of 2017. In their second function as a Comptrollers Council of EHF Marketing GmbH, the finances for the year 2017/18 were examined in the presence of, and in cooperation with, men's and women's club representatives. They also changed the compensation process for EHF officials nominated to events and confirmed Robert Pretenthaler as the second EHF Comptroller and then Thomas Ludewig (GER) as the substitute.



ALAIN KOUBI (FRA)
Comptroller



ROBERT PRETENTHALER (AUT)
Comptroller



THOMAS LUDEWIG (GER)
Substitute

EHF COURT OF HANDBALL (COH)

Although a change in the IHF Regulations led to a decrease in the number of cases submitted before the Court of Handball in the 2016/17 season, the spike in the number of cases in the 2017/18 season was attributed to the process of 'on-site' handling of legal cases at EHF EURO events.

This new system was implemented in January 2018 at the Men's EHF EURO in Croatia, meaning that the COH handled 57 cases in the 2017/18 season with red cards and unsportsmanlike conduct accounting for 45% of all cases and regulation breaches 10%.

Other case matters included, but were not limited to, marketing, security and player eligibility.



PANOS ANTONIOU (CYP)
President



HENK LENAERTS (NED)
Vice President



KRISTIAN JOHANSEN (FAR)
Vice President



ELENA BORRAS ALCARAZ (ESP)
Member



IOANNIS KARANASOS (GRE)
Member



LIBENA SRAMKOVA (CZE)
Member



YVONNE LEUTHOLD (SUI)
Member



URMO SITSI (EST)
Member



VIKTOR KONOPLYASTYI (UKR)
Member

EHF COURT OF APPEAL (COA)

There was a three-fold increase in cases over the 2017/18 season compared to 2016/17, but the number of first instance cases appealed to the second instance remained stable, upholding the Court of Handball's efficiency.



MARKUS PLAZER (AUT)
President



JENS BERTEL RASMUSSEN (DEN)
Vice President



NICOLAE VIZITIU (MDA)
Member



ROBERT CZAPLICKI (POL)
Member



MAXIM GULEVICH (RUS)
Member



ROLAND SCHNEIDER (SUI)
Member



MILAN PETRONIJEVIC (SRB)
Member



JANKA STASOVA (SVK)
Member



KETEVA KOBERIDZE (GEO)
Member

EHF COURT OF ARBITRATION (ECA) COUNCIL

The EHF Court of Arbitration (ECA) Council's main responsibility is to safeguard the independence of ECA. Hence, it handles the general organisation and administration of ECA, its representation towards the EHF Congress, reviews, assesses and subsequently appoints the list of arbitrators, appoints substitute arbitrators within the course of proceedings and may take various procedural decisions such as interim measures.

A third ECA vice president was welcomed with Wouter Lambrecht's nomination submitted on behalf of the stakeholders via the Professional Handball Board to ensure a fair representation of the stakeholder groups. The 2017/18 season saw ECA called upon to review and adjudicate three cases, compared to none in 2016/17.



FRANCESCO PURROMUTO (ITA)
President



JACQUES BETTENFELD (FRA)
Vice President



BOGDAN SOJKIN (POL)
Vice President

LEGAL DELEGATION

The Legal Delegation meets annually to ensure a coordination and consistency between the three legal bodies: EHF Court of Handball, Court of Appeal and Court of Arbitration. The body is made up of the presidents of the three legal bodies in addition to the EHF's legal management staff members.



WOUTER LAMBRECHT (BEL)
Vice President

EHF NATIONS BOARD (MEN)

The primary EHF stakeholder group representing the national member federations, the Nations Board, held two official meetings in 2018, presenting all the EHF activities which have a specific relation to the 50 member, and two associated, federations that form the EHF.

The Nations Board was privy to the latest EHF developments and had the opportunity to give feedback and make recommendations to the EHF Executive Committee or bring information and suggestions to the Professional Handball Board, where the national federations are also represented.

With changes ahead for the EHF and its members from 2020, when the long-term media and marketing agreement with Infront and DAZN commences, members of the Nations Board were invited to be part of working groups such as 'EHF Structure 2020+' which presented recommendations to EHF Congress, which were then subsequently ratified.

The Nations Board also significantly contributed its input on the matter of the international calendar.



MORTEN STIG CHRISTENSEN (DEN)
Chairman



PHILIPPE BANA (FRA)
Deputy Chairman



MARK SCHOBER (GER)
Member



MAREK GORALCZYK (POL)
Member



INGO MECKES (SUI)
Member



STEPHEN NEILSON (GBR)
Member

PROFESSIONAL HANDBALL BOARD (PHB)

The PHB is a collective of prominent handball stakeholders including national federations, clubs, leagues and players, who come together to discuss important and intricate issues.

Firmly embedded into the EHF structure, the PHB meets twice a year to openly debate competitions, welfare of athletes, media, marketing, the international calendar and other matters of influence with the majority of topics on the agenda complex in nature and returning to the agenda time and again.

In 2018, the PHB welcomed Gregor Planteu (SLO - MFCH President), Nikolas Larsson (SWE - EHLB Chairman), and Frank Bohmann (GER - EHLB Vice Chairman).

The group also held an election process for the positions of chairman, vacated by Xavier O'Callaghan with Gerd Butzeck elected, and vice chairman, with Nikolas Larsson elected - with both roles effective from March 2019.



XAVIER O'CALLAGHAN (ESP)
Chairman (until 09/2018)



GERD BUTZECK (GER)
Chairman (from 10/2018)



NIKOLAS LARSSON (SWE)
Vice Chairman (from 10/2018)



GREGOR PLANTEU (SLO)
Member EHPU



FRANK BOHMANN (GER)
Member



MICHAEL SAHL HANSEN (DEN)
Member EHPU



MARCUS ROMINGER (GER)
Member EHPU



MORTEN STIG CHRISTENSEN (DEN)
Member NB



PHILIPPE BANA (FRA)
Member NB

WOMEN'S HANDBALL BOARD (WHB)

The Women's Handball Board (WHB) is committed to the betterment of women contributing to handball in all its different facets, including development, dual careers, education and much more - and 2018 was no different.

Working closely with the EHF Competence Academy & Network (EHF CAN), the WHB had numerous successes over the past year, including supporting the educational goals of 25 female participants through various courses, a handball ambassador project which made progress before and during the Women's EHF EURO in France with multiple promotional activities, and a mobile reporter project, in conjunction with EHF Media and Communications.

All the activities will continue into 2019 - adding to the 10 projects in the pipeline for the coming year.



NODJIALEM MYARO (FRA)
Chairperson (from 03/2018)



PIRJE ORASSON (EST)
Deputy Chairperson



GEORGETA NARCISA LECUSANU (ROU)
Chairwoman (until 03/2018)
Member (from 04/2018)



LEONOR MALLOZZI (POR)
Member - Nations



LIUDMILA BODNIEVA (RUS)
Member - Players



DEJA IVANOVIC (SLO)
Member - Clubs

EUROPEAN HANDBALL LEAGUE BOARD (EHLB)

In 2018, the EHF introduced a newly-configured league stakeholder, the European Handball League Board (EHLB) in response to efforts to strengthen the stakeholder group 'leagues'.

The main focus of the EHLB is to work on a close level with European leagues on various aspects and facilitate an exchange of information on a wide range of topics such as media, events, licensing, best practice and new business models. The EHLB is a group within the EHF structure comparable to the Nations Board.

The inaugural General Assembly of the European Handball Leagues was held at the end of June and was followed by a brief initial meeting of the EHLB which preceded a second meeting in September, prior to the meeting of the EHF Executive Committee.

Nikolas Larsson (SWE) and Frank Bohmann (GER) were respectively elected to the positions of chairman and vice chairman.



NIKOLAS LARSSON (SWE)
Chairman



FRANK BOHMANN (GER)
Vice Chairman



STEFANO PODINI (ITA)
Member



PATRICE HITZ (SUI)
Member



ALF MANGOR JOHANNESSEN (NOR)
Member



THIERRY WAGNER (LUX)
Member

EHF Office



MICHAEL WIEDERER
President & CEO



MARTIN HAUSLEITNER
Secretary General & COO

STRATEGIC BUSINESS



VESNA LAZIC
PA to the President



MARSHA BROWN
Corporate Liaison



ALENKA CUDERMAN
Women's Handball Programme
Coordinator



JJ ROWLAND
Head of Media & Communications



RICHARD TURNER
Corporate Design

EHF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



SARA BELLA
Social Media



VLADISLAV BRINDZAK
Club Competitions



THOMAS SCHÖNEICH
National Team Competitions



JELENA BAGARIC
PR & Corporate Communications

EHF EURO EVENTS



MONIKA FLIXEDER
EURO Events / Legal Management



JOHANNES MÜLLER
Organisation



YANNICK MARESCH
Support (until 08/2018)



MAIKE BOUWER
Support



LÓIC ALVES
In-house Lawyer

LEGAL MANAGEMENT

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



HELMUT HÖRITSCH
Education & Development/EHF CAN



PETER FRÖSCHL
Beach Handball



IVANA JELIC
Beach Handball/Methods



BEATA KOZŁOWSKA
Methods



NICOLE RABENSEIFNER
Development (maternity leave)

COMPETITIONS



MARKUS GLASER
Chief Sports Officer



PETER SICHELSCHMIDT
Senior Manager National Teams



INES CAPEK
Club Teams



THOMAS GANGEL
Venue Management



MARIO KOVACIC
Club Teams



ADRIENN ÖRI
Anti-doping



VLADIMIR RANCIĆ
Referees / Delegates



MARCOS BESTILLEIRO
Referees / Delegates



ANNA PSINTROU
National Teams



RIMA SYKUC
Qualifications

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES



DORU SIMION
Additional Activities



CLAUDIA BRANTL
Transfers



NADEZHDA LACINA
Operations/Reception



MICHAEL HELL
Operations/Caretaker

OPERATIONS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



CHRISTOPH GAMPER
Head of IT



ANDREAS KRYWULT
IT Junior Manager



CHARLY MUSIC
Implementation & Support



PETER GROßSCHMIDT
Implementation & Support



LARS ERICHSEN
Implementation & Support

FINANCE



ANDREA MOSER
Chief Finance Officer



EVA KALOCAIOVA
Bookkeeping



NATALYA BELLAN
Bookkeeping

EHF Marketing GmbH



DAVID SZLEZAK
Managing Director



ANNA HAIGATO
PA to the MD

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



SWEN HUDER



MATTHIAS MAYRHOFFER



LUKAS SALLOMON



NORA FORGO



KATHARINA HACKER
(maternity leave)

IMPLEMENTATION



GEORG RIECK



TOMAS EITUTIS



DAVID GUSTAV ANDERSSON



GABRIELE RIHTAR

CLUBS & COMMUNICATIONS



NINA KERNMAYER



EVA SIPPEL



CHRISTINE SCHAUER

TV AND MEDIA



MIGUEL MATEO



OLIVER LAABER



NINA LACZIKA

EVENTS



LISA WIEDERER



ANNA FARBOWSKI



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



New partnership with Infront and DAZN

In May, the EHF and its marketing arm EHF Marketing GmbH signed a major media and marketing partnership deal with Infront and DAZN Group – two of the leading companies on the international sports market – ahead of the final matches of the VELUX EHF Champions League 2017/18 season in Cologne.

The 10-year deal is worth between 500 and 600 million euro and is the biggest in the history of handball.

Set to start in 2020, it will transform the sport by bringing in not only a significant financial investment, but also industry-leading know-how, expertise and services from both the EHF's existing partner, Infront – one of the world's leading international sports marketing companies – and DAZN Group – a global leader in digital media.

At the core of the partnership is a new long-term strategy which will see all four partners, together with

Forum Club Handball – the organisation representing Europe's top men's clubs – secure significant growth for the sport across both existing and new markets. A key focus of the strategic plan will be to grow the appeal of the sport, particularly to younger audiences, through an enhanced digital offering.

The EHF's long-term media and marketing partner for the EHF EURO events, Infront, provides continuity within the new partnership.

Having worked with the EHF since the first European Championship in 1994 and at 26 EHF EURO events since, Infront has worked closely with the EHF to

develop the EHF EURO into one of the highest profile national team sports events on the international sports market.

In 2016, the Men's and Women's EHF EURO events in Poland and Sweden achieved an all-time high with a cumulative TV audience of 2.2 billion.

The contracts signed by the EHF include its national team competitions – the EHF EUROs 2022-2030, youth and beach events and those signed by EHF Marketing GmbH include its club competitions – EHF Champions League and other European Cup competitions from the start of the 2020/21 season through to 2029/30.



DAZN Group is a global sports media company, based in the United Kingdom, operating across a range of areas. It partners with the biggest rights holders to help them commercialise and grow their sports around the world. DAZN runs some of the biggest digital sports platforms and streams sports content directly through DAZN, the unique on-demand service, giving fans the power of choice.

"We are delighted with our long-term partnership with the EHF and have been working alongside our partners at Infront to set the foundations to maximise value for the EHF and expand its global fanbase," said Bruno Rocha, Executive Vice President of Global Rights Partnership, DAZN.

"We see this agreement as a unique opportunity to shape the future of handball on a club and national team level and grow the sport among new audiences across all markets.

"The key opportunity lies in the development of innovative, fan-first products that deliver premium content through an array of touch points and drive consumption across all platforms," he continued.

"For that reason, we have been working intensely in areas such as production, new media distribution and digital products, focusing on a forward-thinking initiatives that will provide more ways for fans to consume EHF content – we can wait to start delivering strong results."



Infront, a leading sports marketing company, has worked with the EHF since the first EURO in 1994 and has shaped the tournament into one of the biggest national team sports events in the world.

"Infront's history with the EHF goes back over two decades and, in that time, we have both helped create a legacy for the EHF EUROs, solidifying it as one of Europe's top sporting events," said Julien Ternisien, Infront Vice President Summer Sports.

"The potential for handball to expand its fan base to new and younger audiences is an exciting prospect and we have already started working on delivering content to that audience.

"We see value in the traditional broadcast model and we will continue to pursue those opportunities, however, it will be complemented by digital services and ensuring fans are consuming events through the mediums that suit them best. We have already introduced a number of innovations, including video editing using artificial intelligence and a more intelligent use of online influencer networks.

"Our focus is to deliver handball to new and potential fans wherever they want to view it and to help activate sponsors through the most lucrative channels."

New competition system from 2020

European club handball will have a new look from the 2020/21 season onwards

A regular television slot in Europe for top-class handball will also become reality after proposals for a revamp of the European club system were agreed in Paris at the EHF Executive Committee meeting, held on the fringes of the Women's EHF EURO 2018.

The changes follow extensive discussions with EHF stakeholders including clubs, leagues, players and commercial partners.

From the 2020/21 season, fans will have an 'appointment to view' each week, and with no overlap of men's and women's top competitions, TV partners will have better scheduling options in the future.

The reforms of the EHF club competition system follow the expansion to 24 teams of the EHF EURO, the federation's flagship men's national team competition, from 2020.

The first major change features both the men's and the women's EHF Champions League which will be played in a 16-team format, starting directly at the group phase played in a round-robin league format, with no qualification rounds or tournaments before.

The top two teams in each group will qualify directly for the quarter-finals with teams finishing in seventh and eighth place eliminated. The four remaining teams from each group (3rd-6th) will qualify for a play-off round, before progressing to the quarter-finals and then the EHF FINAL4.

Men's EHF Champions League games will be played on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with the weekends set-aside for Women's EHF Champions League games.

The second major change sees a new name and a new format for Europe's second tier of competition with both the Men's and Women's EHF Cup becoming the 'Men's or Women's, European Handball League' respectively. Both competitions will be played in the same format – with the women's competition having fewer teams, but a final weekend played in a final four format for the first time.

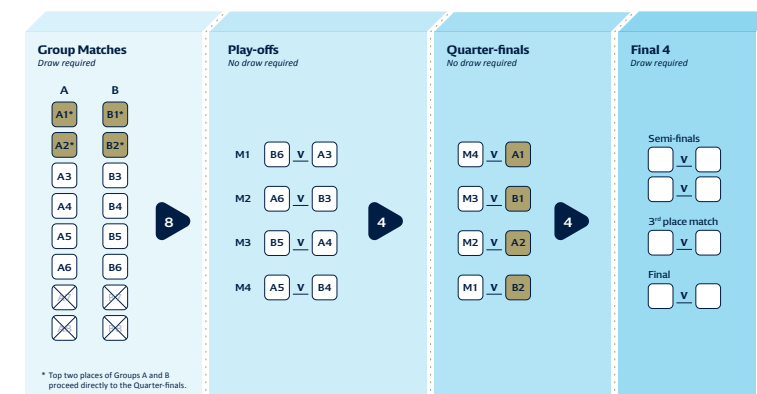
In the men's competition, qualification will be played on a home and away basis with 12 teams qualifying for the group phase and 12 additional teams seeded directly to the group phase, making a total of 24 teams competing in four groups of six teams. The top four teams from each group will qualify for the last 16, leading to the quarter-final knock-out stage and then a final four.

Games in the Men's European Handball League will be played on Tuesday evenings, with an option for selected matches on Wednesdays, while Women's European Handball League games will be played at set times on Saturdays and Sundays.

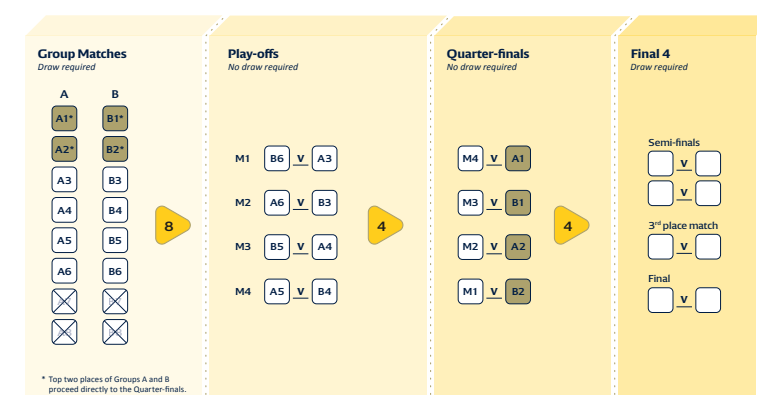
In the final major change, the third-tier EHF Challenge Cup becomes the new 'EHF Cup'. Ties will be played on a home and away knock-out basis, with 32 teams competing in both the men's and women's competitions from the third round onwards. The qualifying 16 teams will then play a Last 16 round, quarter-finals and semi-finals with the final itself continuing to be played on a home and away basis. All games will be played at weekends.

How the new playing systems look

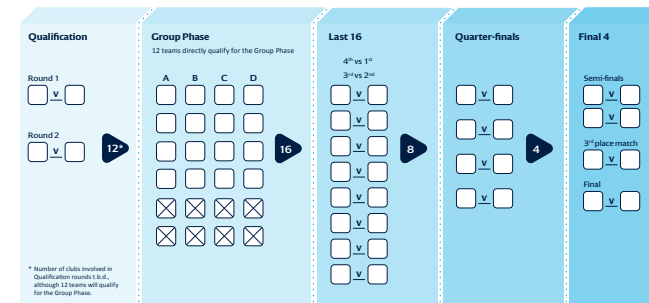
Men's EHF Champions League 2020/21 season playing system



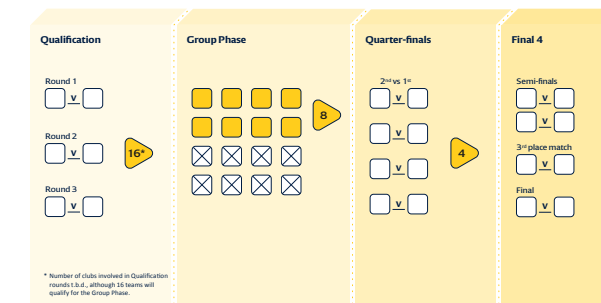
Women's EHF Champions League 2020/21 season playing system



Men's European Handball League 2020/21 season playing system



Women's European Handball League 2020/21 season playing system



New calendar

Meeting in Paris ahead of the final matches of the Women's EHF EURO 2018, the EHF Executive Committee approved major changes to the international calendar from the start of the 2020/21 season based on proposals developed by a special taskforce, comprising representatives of stakeholders including clubs, leagues and players.

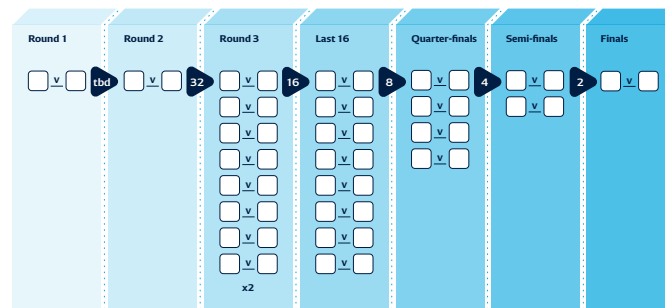
A key request from representatives of Europe's top players was for a longer break and more time to regenerate before the start of the new season, so the EHF rescheduled national team weeks normally in June to the end of April/beginning of May each

season, meaning players will not play any European qualification matches following the end of their club seasons.

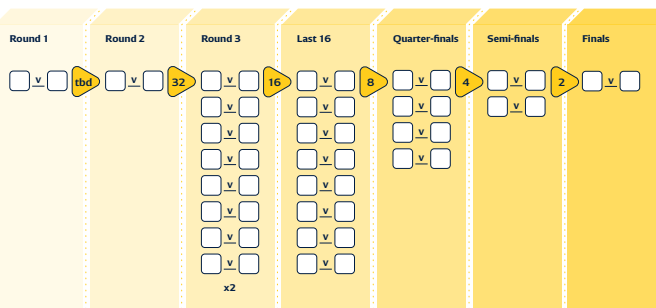
In addition, future men's and women's EHF FINAL4 events from the 2020/21 season onwards will change with the men's event played in the middle of June and the women's event at the end of May, with all national leagues in Europe required to finish one week before each. Therefore, the EHF FINAL4 will be the final handball event played by top players each season in Europe, allowing them to start their summer break following these events.

According to EHF procedures, the international calendar is released 20 months ahead of time to ensure enough time for national federations and leagues to prepare for upcoming seasons and due to the close working relationship between the EHF and International Handball Federation, which is responsible for scheduling the international calendar worldwide, the implementation of these changes was granted.

Men's EHF Cup 2020/21 season playing system



Women's EHF Cup 2020/21 season playing system



AWARDING OF EVENTS 2022/24

At the EHF Congress 2018 in Glasgow, three important votes took place to decide the hosts of future EUROS.



Men's EHF EURO 2022 HUN/SVK

After presenting as a "truly central European EURO", Hungary and Slovakia were successful in their joint bid to host the Men's EHF EURO 2022.

2022 is the first time either nation will host a senior Men's EHF EURO despite both having experience of hosting numerous handball events, including Hungary co-hosting a Women's EHF EURO with Croatia in 2014.

Both capital cities will be used in 2022: the 14,000-capacity Papp László Sportaréna in Budapest (HUN) – which has hosted the WOMEN'S EHF FINAL4 since 2013/14 – and 12,500-capacity Ondrej Nepela Aréna in Bratislava (SVK).

The 8,350-capacity Steel Aréna in Košice (SVK), the 6,500-capacity Főnix Hall in Debrecen, the upgraded 8,143-capacity Pick Aréna in Szeged and the upgraded 8,469-capacity Veszprém Arena will also be used.

Fans attending will feel the themes of 'youth' and 'festival' with tickets not just limited to the matches being played, but to public transportation, entry to concerts, famous spas and fan zones from the morning until night in regionally-flavoured events.

The joint bid also recognised the easy accessibility of the tournament for over 152 million people in less than 120 minutes via air, train, car or boat.



Women's EHF EURO 2022 SLO/MKD/MNE

The championship will aim to bring the biggest women's handball event in Europe closer to the biggest men's events through four destinations, with all three capital cities hosting games in modern cities in the heart of the Balkans, representing a Balkan flavour.



The 2016 European Green Capital, Ljubljana (SLO), will see matches at the 12,480-capacity Arena Stožice, while the 2,000-year old Macedonian capital Skopje will host games in its 6,173-capacity Boris Trajkovski Arena.

Slovenia's second venue is the home of VELUX EHF Champions League team RK Celje Pivovarna Lasko, the 5,800-capacity Arena Zlatorog in Celje, with the home of the all-conquering WOMEN'S EHF Champions League side Budućnost, the famous 5,000-capacity Moraca Hall in Podgorica (MNE), the final venue.

For the host countries, the Women's EHF EURO 2022 will contribute to the long-term mission of enhancing the brand and image of women's handball in general, with the 'We Can Handball' campaign.

Proposed initiatives include: 'We Teach Handball', which aims to use handball to promote inclusion of sport in young people's everyday lives, 'We Care Handball', a global community outreach initiative addressing important social issues and 'We Work Handball', featuring workshops around the championship led by lecturers and representatives of the EHF Women's Handball Board (WHB).

'We Support Handball', focuses on sponsors and partner companies and 'We Travel Handball', will be a social media push from the three host national teams to highlight interesting insights into the journeys the players make to their games.

Men's EHF EURO 2024 GERMANY

Germany won the final EURO awarding at the EHF Congress 2018 with a successful bid for the Men's EHF EURO 2024 – the first time Germany will host a Men's EHF EURO.

Venues include the opening match to be held at the 50,000+ spectator Düsseldorf's ESPRIT arena – a potential world record-breaking crowd for handball, the Mercedes Benz Arena in Berlin, the Barclaycard Arena in Hamburg, the TUI Arena in Hanover, the SAP Arena in Mannheim, the Olympic Hall in Munich and the LANXESS Arena in Cologne.

Since 2010, the LANXESS arena has hosted the VELUX EHF FINAL4, and four times (2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018) German cities have also organised EHF Cup Finals.

Hamburg has been the venue for the German Cup finals for the past 20 years while Germany has also successfully hosted the record-breaking 2007 IHF Men's World Championship, the 2017 IHF Women's World Championship, and is set to co-host the 2019 IHF Men's World Championship, alongside Denmark.

In total, up to 750,000 spectators will be able to attend matches in the handball-crazy country which

has more than 750,000 active players playing in more than 10,000 handball clubs.

Germany 2024 will be the first EHF EURO with 24 teams hosted by one country - continuing the history of 'firsts' for the German Handball Federation (DHB) and the EUROS, after the DHB hosted the first-ever Women's EHF EURO, back in 1994.

"With large arenas, top notch infrastructure and, last but not least, a loyal handball fanbase, Germany has what it takes to again be a welcoming host for an international tournament," said Dr. Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany.

"Our country has staged many such sporting events in the past. It has thereby gathered valuable experience and has proven that it is an ideal location for large sports competitions. We take that both as an incentive and as a challenge."



Former top handball player Filip Jicha presented Germany's EHF EURO 2024 bid at the EHF Congress in Glasgow

A look ahead to 2019



For many people and indeed organisations such as the EHF, the end of the year is a time to take stock, to consider the achievements of the year but also an opportunity to look to the year ahead and consider what the future holds.

In all of these respects, 2018 was clearly an exceptional year for the EHF: key decisions were reached and there were important developments that will shape the long-term future of the sport.

The signing of the new 10-year agreement with Infront and DAZN in May was a watershed moment. In financial terms, it is the biggest deal in the history of the sport but this is only part of the story. Our new partners bring industry-leading know-how, expertise and extensive services to our sport – Infront, as one of the world's leading international sports marketing companies, and DAZN Group, as a global leader in digital media - and we have set ourselves ambitious targets for growth that are set to transform the sport.

Ahead of the start of the new contract in 2020 there is a huge amount of preparation work to be done to ensure that the federation and its structures are ready for this new challenge. In December, we announced new competition formats for Europe's top club competitions as well as changes to the international calendar that will ensure more rest and time for regeneration between seasons for Europe's top players from 2020/21. A possible expansion of the Women's EHF EURO from 16 to 24 teams, in line with the men's event, is also under consideration.

Digital will play in an important role in the future of the EHF. We have already achieved a great deal with the creation of on-court technologies such as instant replay, goal-line technology and the new time-out buzzer. The Women's EHF EURO in France also saw the launch of a new app and the first use of artificial intelligence in the creation of video content. There is much more work to be done and the next 12 months will bring further developments include the implementation of a new digital match report across all competitions.

We finished 2018 on a high at the Women's EHF EURO in Paris and are now looking forward to the EHF's next major events including the 10th edition of the VELUX EHF FINAL4 in June 2019, a Beach EURO over the summer and the first Men's EHF EURO with 24 teams in January 2020.

Yours in sport,

Martin Hausleitner
EHF Secretary General



VELUX EHF FINAL4 2019

1/2 June 2019 LANXESS arena Cologne

