

9th EHF Extraordinary Congress

The European Handball Federation welcomed close to one hundred delegates from 47 EHF Member Federations to the 9th EHF Extraordinary Congress in Lillehammer on Saturday 26th January 2008. Dr. Hassan Moustafa, President of the International Handball Federation, and further IHF representatives were also present at the Congress. Tor Lian, EHF President, and Jean Birhault, EHF Vice-president, chaired the event, which was originally called as an add-on to the Extraordinary Congress, which took place in Rome in October 2007.

European Championship Qualifications

The principle reason behind the calling of this Extraordinary Congress was to deal with the matter of European Championship Qualifications. The European Championship Qualification Working Group, which was formed after a decision-made at the Rome Congress, has now presented its findings which primarily focus on the TV and marketing situation. The motion, seeking to further develop the qualification phase of the EHF premier national team event, was passed by the Congress. While respecting all existing contracts, the European Handball Federation will invest resources to establish a universal standard for these matches and make use of unutilised rights and offer marketing packages. As of 2008 the qualifications for this will be played in the form of home and away matches.

Club Handball and National Team Handball

EHF Structure

Motions tabled by the German Handball Association propose the establishment of bodies to act as Advisory Committees to the EHF Competitions Commission and to EHF Marketing GmbH. The individual bodies will focus on men's club handball, women's club handball and national teams to allow for a permanent dialogue on the highest level.

This motion was passed with the necessary majority, which means that three Advisory Committees: Men's European Club Handball, Women's European Club Handball and National Teams Competitions with 5 members will report to the EHF Competitions Commission, with the chairman of each Advisory Committee positioned also within the Competitions Commission.

EHF Marketing GmbH

On a further motion, also relating to the same subjects, the Congress voted positively to introduce Advisory Committees, mirroring the same structure of those described above. These Advisory Boards will be a permanent counsel and monitoring panel to consult to EHF Marketing GmbH.

This alignment in the structure of the EHF and its marketing arm, EHF Marketing GmbH, secures a platform for all stakeholders enabling permanent dialogue in decisive matters, which are interlinked with the further and positive development of the sport of handball in Europe.

Tor Lian stated after the end of the Congress; *"The very large support obtained by these motions is a clear sign of Europe's national federations desire to preserve the unity of handball in Europe, to recognise the fundamental role of clubs in the success of European handball and to keep handball in the hands of those whose sole motivation is the success and development of sport."*

European Handball Championships

The third motion tabled by the German Handball Federation focused on the European Championship Regulations was passed in principle. The matter specifically deals with the distribution of revenues from the European Championship Final Rounds. The exact details relating to this motion will be worked on by a Working Group which will present its finding at the next EHF Congress in September 2008.

Conclusion

The EHF Extraordinary Congress was held in an extremely cooperative and positive environment. The delegates will remain in Norway to follow the final matches of the 2008 Men's European Handball Federation.