

## Dear Friends of Sport! Dear Partners in handball!

Please bear with me if I don't address you primarily as our guests. This is because at this event you are not only participants but also an important part of a development process in European handball – the actors, as it were, on the “event management” platform. Your role is to help our sport play its part in the “concert” of the other team sports – football, basket ball, volleyball, and ice hockey – and to play “good music”.

The role of the EHF delegate, referee, official, representative, office member, who play in the handball “concert” is going to be discussed in detail. It is however important and necessary that you are aware of how important you are for the EHF and its events.

Let me now do something which may appear rather unusual, use the opening of a technical event as an opportunity to take a moment to think about our colleagues, who have passed away in the past year and whose loss is felt by all of us: please, a *Moment of Silence* for the EHF Delegates **Mihai Stark** and **Hans Hansson**.

Thank you.

*And now back to this event...*

Let me, at this point, extend my thanks to the team sports federations and their senior representatives here in Vienna, who support our frank dialogue at the political level through the practical exchange of know-how at the technical level.

Where are we actually positioned as the sport of handball, and where are we as its European Federation?

After some 12 years of activities and with a current membership of 47 Federations, we have improved our market presence significantly. It goes without saying that work done at the grassroots level, by the clubs and federations, is the indispensable prerequisite for top-level matches. But it is these top-level matches that people talk about: What is in fact being discussed beside the desire of watching one's own team win, is the quality of the game, the quality of the event, simply ... quality.

The aim of this Convention is to make an important step towards achieving this quality.

Together, we handle some 1000 matches per year, that is 1000 opportunities for presenting our sport. And we want to make good use of these opportunities:

- in the interest of performance on and off the court
- for better organisation before, during, and after the match
- for a worthy representation of European handball

I call on you, who take an interest in this development, to contribute actively to this Convention – for the benefit of the product “handball”.



**Dear friends of handball, dear guests,**

I hereby declare the 2005 Referees' and Delegates' Convention opened and extend my best wishes for successful work in the plenary and in the working groups and, in particular, for a fruitful exchange of expertise at the personal level in pleasant surroundings.

Thank you.

**Tor Lian** - *EHF President*

