



Competitions Conference

18–20th April 2008 • Vienna, Austria

Opening by Tor Lian / EHF President

Dear Handball Friends,

Welcome to Vienna and welcome to the 1st EHF Competition Conference for Men's Handball. It is my pleasure as President of the European Handball Federation to open this milestone meeting in the history of European handball.

Thank you for making your way to Vienna. We are all busy people and I know that many of you have had to rearrange your diaries to be able to be part of this conference. We will make full use of this unique occasion to define and shape the future competitions plan.

The European handball environment is very much like a big family. You meet the same people time and time again, colleagues and partners become friends and joint experiences become memorable moments but as am I sure you will all agree, it is very rare that we all come together for one occasion. That was our objective back in September 2007, when this event was initially being planned – to bring all stakeholders together. We decided to combine this occasion with the draw and we are looking forward to a constructive, fruitful and productive few days where we all focus on the good of our sport and its future.

The handball landscape has changed considerably over the past years. These dramatic changes have brought with them more and more interest in the sport and its mechanisms. The sport has not only become faster and more powerful but also in terms of the public recognition, medial attention economic factors which play an ever crucial role in the development equation of handball. All areas of the sport, whether it is the technical development or the actual positioning of handball on the sporting market, are directly connected to each other.



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This trend can only be seen as being positive for handball and we have all played and contributed our part. However this said; as is true in any development curve, we have to do our utmost to keep this trend constant and continuous. It is our job to make sure that we make the correct decisions for the future of our sport.

The European Handball Federations sees it as its highest priority and duty to find and establish a balance for all interest groups. Systems based on sporting achievement must be balanced with the short and long term advantages and consequences.

Let's not underestimate the job and challenge we have. We are talking about complex subjects. Each and every one of us have our own opinion, our own interests and our own priorities. The only way to safeguard that curve I was talking about is to work together – ultimately we share the same goal and visions. We have to listen to each other, understand and maybe make adjustments but this can not be successful if we take a one-sided approach. We must reach a common understanding and the best solution for our sport.

This is an open event; everybody will have the chance to have their say. As I said just before – let's listen, let's combine our knowledge and experience and move forward together. Yes we will see changes, no they will not suit each and every one of us but we need that winning formula – this is our priority!

I will close now and hand over the floor to IHF President, Dr Hassan Moustafa, for the IHF address. Good Luck - we have two working days ahead of us.



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