

PRESS-RELEASE



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- **Leading European Hockey Clubs establish a continental employers' alliance**
- **SC Bern CEO Marc Lüthi becomes first E.H.C. Alliance president**
- **IIHF President René Fasel addressed clubs at founding meeting in Berlin**

Europe's leading hockey clubs from 13 countries formally founded the Alliance of European Hockey Clubs E.H.C. at a meeting in Berlin, Germany on Monday, 13 June.

Between the initial meeting in Düsseldorf on 2 March 2016 and the official founding gathering at the Mercedes-Benz Arena in Berlin, 72 European had signed up as provisional members leading up to Monday's historic founding. These 72 clubs became founding members of the E.H.C. Alliance. See below for list of the founding clubs.

Ice Hockey thus became the third major European team sport after football's European Club Association (ECA) and Forum Club Handball (FCH) to found a club alliance with the mandate to look after the interests of the professional hockey clubs and represent them internationally.

Marc Lüthi, the CEO of Swiss champion SC Bern was elected president, while Swedish Triple Gold Club member Håkan Loob and German Jürgen Arnold were elected vice-presidents of a nine-man board. The complete E.H.C. Board is listed below.

"This is an important day for the European hockey clubs," said Marc Lüthi. "That 72 clubs signed up as provisional members leading up to Berlin, is a clear signal that such an organization is needed."

"The biggest challenge the clubs are facing is economy," said Lüthi. "If all clubs were making money or at least breaking even, we wouldn't be having this meeting. By challenging others, but also ourselves, we want the E.H.C. to contribute to making club hockey in Europe a sustainable business."

“The leading clubs of Europe pay around €375 million Euro in salaries annually, they have a huge economic impact and contribute with players to major events but have until now not had a unified voice,” said Lüthi. “The E.H.C. should play the role of an employers’ organization and to be a challenging interest and pressure group.”

The clubs approved the following five long-term goals for the E.H.C.

1. Strive for direct representation and active participation in deciding bodies of the IIHF
2. Use unity and synergy effects for member clubs via centralized marketing efforts
3. Assist growing the pro game in aspiring leagues and new markets
4. Be an active partner on player transfer issues with North American leagues
5. Membership to grow to include 75% of clubs in the top-15 Euro leagues

The clubs furthermore are looking to gain influence into key issues such as the international calendar and playing dates, playing rules and player safety.

IIHF President René Fasel was an invited guest at the founding meeting and he addressed the some 60 clubs which were represented on hand or via proxies in Berlin. In his speech, Fasel explained how the IIHF is structured and acknowledged the E.H.C.’s objective of club representation in various IIHF bodies.

“Bring your concerns and challenges, let’s work together on solving them, and let’s make our game better,” said the IIHF President.

The E.H.C. Board for the first fiscal year 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017.

President: Marc Lüthi, CEO SC Bern, Switzerland
Vice-President: Håkan Loob, GM Färjestad Karlstad, Sweden
Vice-President: Jürgen Arnold, Chairman ERC Ingolstadt, Germany
Neil Black, Owner Nottingham Panthers, Great Britain
Kjetil Bøe, CEO Stavanger Oilers, Norway
Franz Kalla, CEO Vienna Capitals, Austria
Richard Lintner, President Slovak League
Jiri Slegr, President HC Litvinov, Czech Republic
Tommi Virkkunen, Chairman Kärpät Oulu, Finland

During Marc Lüthi’s tenure as CEO of SC Bern, the Swiss club has led all European leagues in attendance for the last 14 years, constantly over the 16.000 mark.

Alongside Håkan Loob, who won Olympic gold 1994, IIHF World Championship gold 1987, 1991 and the Stanley Cup 1989 (Calgary), Czech Jiri Slegr, currently President and assistant coach of HC Litvinov, is also member of the Triple Gold Club, having won Olympic gold in 1998, Worlds 2005 and Stanley Cup with Detroit in 2002. Richard Lintner is a 2002 World Champion and has played in the NHL, KHL, Slovak, Swedish, Finnish and Swiss leagues.

The Founders of the Alliance of European Hockey Clubs:

Dornbirner Bulldogs | KAC Klagenfurt | Vienna Capitals | Red Bull Salzburg | Pirati Chomutov | Bili Tygri Liberec
BK Mlada Boleslav | HC Litvinov | Skoda Plzen | Sparta Prague | IFK Helsinki | HPK Hämeenlinna | Lukko Rauma
Pelicans Lahti | Vaasa Sport | JYP Jyväskylä | Kärpät Oulu | Tappara Tampere | SaiPa Lappeenranta | TPS Turku
Ilves Tampere | KooKoo Kouvola | Ässät Pori | Kalpa Kuopio | Jukurit Mikkeli | Braehead Clan | Nottingham
Panthers | Coventry Blaze | Cardiff Devils | Sheffield Steelers | Düsseldorfer EG | Eisbären Berlin | ERC Ingolstadt
Krefeld Pinguine | Adler Mannheim | Hamburg Freezers* | Red Bull München | Fischtown Bremerhaven | Grizzlies
Wolfsburg | Kölner Haie | Thomas Sabo Ice Tigers | Iserlohn Roosters | Jegesmedvek Miskolc | Stavanger Oilers
Storhamar Hamar | Cracovia Kraków | SC Bern | EHC Biel | HC Davos | Fribourg-Gottéron | Genève-Servette
EHC Kloten | Lausanne HC | HC Lugano | EV Zug | Zürich Lions | Rapperswil-Jona Lakers | HC Kosice | MHC
Martin | HK Poprad | HC Banská Bystrica | Brynäs IF | Djurgården Hockey | Frölunda Indians | Färjestad Karlstad
HV71 Jönköping | Linköping HC | Luleå Hockey | Rögle BK | Skellefteå AIK | Örebro Hockey | Malmö Redhawks

**Hamburg ceased operations on 24 May, but remain on list of founding members.*

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