

## Season I "Interview with Sports Executives": Anrijs Brencans, Member of the European Handball Federation (EHF) Executive Board

*These are series of short three-question interviews with experts in the sports industry conducted by Gautier Vasseur, Partner at Pedersen & Partners, to gain insights into strategic governance and human capital issues of sporting organisations.*

Anrijs Brencans is a recognised expert in governance for sports both for government and private organizations; he has over 25 years of experience of chairing boards for industrial conglomerates, internet start-ups and sporting organisations across Europe.



**With your Board experience in so many different sectors, do you believe that the characteristics of governance in the sports industry differ essentially from those in other sectors?**

The goal of governance is to ensure the best possible decisions, and this is the same across all sectors. Sporting organisations need to make well-informed decisions in order to be able to organise better competitions. These organisations have no shareholders but multiple stakeholders with diverging interests, which means that their performance is measured by Return On Objectives, as opposed to Return On Investment.

**The EHF is often taken as an example for its sustainable development, and has been comparatively spared by reputational crises; how do you explain this achievement?**

The EHF has some stability in its leadership; its members know each other well, sharing the same working principles and vision. This fosters internal cohesion and strengthens long term relationships with all stakeholders. Over the years, it has created an organisational culture that enhances positive behaviours and protects the legacy of handball in Europe.

**At the EHF, you represent the interests of smaller handball federations; what are their specific challenges, and what advice could you give them?**

Smaller sporting organisations have less financial and human resources to sustain their development, however they are often more agile and creative. Therefore, the backbone of their strategy must be to master operational efficiencies; they should collaborate with similar organisations, leveraging shared best practices to continually raise their standards and improve their reputation.



[Gautier Vasseur](#) is a Partner of Pedersen & Partners, based in Geneva. He is a multicultural Executive Search professional who has completed over 500 Senior Leadership, Board and Supervisory Board level assignments in more than 40 countries. Mr. Vasseur has been with Pedersen & Partners since 2003, developing the firm's growing presence across CEE, Russia/CIS and APAC based, at different times, out of Prague, Moscow and Shanghai offices.

Mr. Vasseur was an international-level professional athlete before embarking on business career. While pursuing his athletic goals, he received an MBA from the INSEEC Graduate School of Business and later completed a Specialised Master's in Inter-Cultural Management from EMLYON Business School. In addition to his native French, he speaks fluent English and can communicate in German, Russian and basic Mandarin.

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