



To
FIVB, President Mr. Acosta
Château Les Tourelles
Edouard-Sandoz 2-4
1006 Lausanne
SWITZERLAND



Dear Mr. President!

The Austrian Volleyball Association herewith states the current situation of volleyball in Europe and around the world.

We divide the task of discussing the problems of volleyball into the following areas:

- **The sporting sector**
- **The impact of the media**
- **The economical importance**
- **The political importance**

The sporting sector of volleyball:

At present only the national teams are funded by the FIVB.
Communication does not exceed the national associations.
The national associations represent the interests of the national teams.

The clubs neither have a vote nor are they represented in the national associations of the CEV and the FIVB.

The clubs form the basis of volleyball in Europe.
The clubs train the national players.
The clubs provide the national teams with players for free.
The clubs undertake the funding of the assignments of the players in the national teams for the associations.

In the season of 2007 – 2008, the clubs only had 4.5 months of the entire season for national and international competitions.

The national teams were available for competitions for 7.5 months.



Example of men's volleyball:

In Europe, championships take place in at least 44 countries. Assuming that at least 10 teams take part in a first league, at least 440 club teams with over 5.280 top players play professional volleyball in Europe.

In comparison to this, there are 44 national teams with 528 players.

Of the 44 national teams, eight teams take part in the World League and eight national teams take part in the European League.

This means that 16 national teams with 192 players actively take part in these sportive events.

440 teams with approximately 5.000 players do not take part in any official events for 7.5 months and do not have anything to do.

This means that, due to the current organization of the events by the FIVB, 440 European top teams do not have the possibility to compete in any matches for the duration of 7.5 months.

Over 5.000 top athletes can only take part in competitions for 4.5 months.

In contrast to this there are 192 top athletes, who have the possibility of participating in official competitions during the entire 7.5 months.

Due to this organization of events, the current situation of the top European volleyball clubs is critical.

The basis of European volleyball – the clubs – are not represented in the media for more than half the year.

As no competitions are held in 44 countries during 7.5 months per year, the media cannot report on volleyball for 7.5 months.

In the majority of the countries, there are no reports on volleyball for 7.5 months per year as only few national teams are involved in attractive competitions.

In these 7.5 months, continental as well as worldwide competitions take place for national teams.

In the course of the qualification for the European championships, seven national teams dropped out after 2 days of competition.

37 European national teams are involved in qualifications until the first of June 2008.

As of the first of June 2008 only 16 European national teams take part in official events. Eight European teams take part in the World League.

Another eight European national teams are involved in the European League.

The World League is represented by the media in only eight countries.

The European League is known as the second league in volleyball sports and can hardly be sold via the media.

This means that during the 7.5 months, which are reserved for the national teams, volleyball is only represented in eight countries in Europe.

Furthermore one can say that in all the other countries (over 36), volleyball is neither represented as sport nor covered by the media.

As a consequence, volleyball is far behind other sports such as soccer, basketball and handball with respect to the length of the sportive presence in all the European countries.

For this reason, volleyball has a considerable disadvantage when it comes to its presence in the printable media and TV stations compared to the sports soccer, basketball and handball.

Consequently sponsors are far less interested in volleyball than in soccer, basketball and handball.

As a result, the clubs lose their economical basis.

Many clubs in most of the European countries cannot afford professional volleyball.

That's why professional work with young talents is not possible.

In a majority of the European countries the national teams only have amateur players at their disposition.

Concerning the last world championships in the sports soccer, handball, basketball and volleyball, we have gathered the following statistical data:

Of the participating nations in the last world championships of

soccer, 44% of the teams were from Europe

handball, 54% of the teams were from Europe

basketball, 38% of the teams were from Europe

volleyball, 38% of the teams were from Europe

Of the top ten in the last world championships of

soccer, 75% of the teams were from Europe

handball, 100% of the teams were from Europe

basketball, 75% of the teams were from Europe

volleyball, 70% of the teams were from Europe

Competitions of the European teams against non-European teams in the last world championships of

soccer were won by European teams in 67% of the cases (22-5) 6 draws

handball were won by European teams in 93% of the cases (28-1) 1 draws

basketball were won by European teams in 78% of the cases (31-9) 6 draws

volleyball were won by European teams in 79% of the cases (42-11) 7x BRA

With the current top ten teams of the world in

basketball, 69% of the team players join European clubs

soccer, 96% of the team players join European clubs

handball, 100% of the team players join European clubs
volleyball, 84% of the team players join European clubs

The average number of spectators during the finals of the last world championships

in soccer amounted to 63.750

in handball amounted to 17.250

in basketball amounted to 12.326

in volleyball amounted to 8.831

The entire average of spectators during the last world championships amounted to

52.538 in soccer

10.579 in handball

6.699 in basketball

2.881 in volleyball

The utilisation of sports facilities without host during the last world championships amounted to

99.75% in soccer

73% in handball

72% in basketball

22% in volleyball

The utilisation of sports facilities with host during the last world championships amounted to

100% in soccer

100% in handball

89% in basketball

77% in volleyball

From these numbers one can see clearly that volleyball ranks far behind other sports such as soccer, handball and basketball in terms of the number of spectators during world championships.

The European teams dominate all of the four important types of team sports.

The best players of the world mainly play in all of the important team sports of Europe.

Even though only 38% of the participants in the world championships of volleyball are from Europe, the European championships, with 79% of all events against teams, which do not come from Europe, are becoming more and more important.

84% of the players in the top ten teams of the last world championships play in Europe.

The current situation is a menace to the sport of volleyball in Europe.

As the best club teams of the world, the best players of the world as well as the professional leagues of the world are situated in Europe, one can also state that the situation of volleyball in the entire world is threatened.

Worldwide players in the sports

- soccer (Beckham, Zidane),
- basketball (Nowitzky, Shaq O'Neil, Air Jordan),
- golf (Tiger Woods),
- cycling (Neil Armstrong),
- athletics (Carl Lewis),
- swimming (Mark Spitz),
- motor sports (Schuhmacher, Hamilton, Alonso) and
- boxing (Muhammad Ali, Tyson)

etc. are currently as well as historically famous.

There is no worldwide known volleyball player – neither historically nor currently famous.

Numerous sports have events, which are present in the media around the world:

- **Soccer:**
World championships, European championships, UEFA Champions League, the clubs
Champions Leagues in England, Spain, Italy and Germany.
- **Basketball:**
NBA
- **Tennis:**
Grand Slam Tournaments of Wimbledon, Paris, Melbourne, US Open
- **Cycling:**
Tour de France, Giro Italia
- **Golf:**
American Open
- **Sailing:**
American Cup
- **Ice Hockey:**
NHL
- **American Football:**
Super Bowl

All media in Europe and around the world regularly and continuingly reports on these sports.

Reports on the best volleyball events such as

- World championships, European championships
- World Grand Prix, World League, Champions League

are only held in countries which directly take part in these events.

Consequently for example the Volleyball World Championships of 2007 in Japan was not existent in the European media.

The worldwide best volleyball leagues, the Legapallavolo in Italy as well as the Russian League, are only reported on in Italy and Russia.

With a limitation of the number of foreign players, this situation will be even more dramatic.

Volleyball does not have any multinational sponsors which invest in the sport of volleyball European- and worldwide.

Multinational sponsors in the sports of

- **soccer:** Adidas, Coca Cola, Fly Emirates, Kia, Sony, Visa
- **basketball:** b-win, Nokia, Sinalco, Zepter, Voda Voda, Champion
- **athletics:** Toyota, Seiko, TDK, Epson
- **handball:** Adidas, Mondo, Select
- **tennis:** BNP, Rolex, Hugo Boss, Kia
- **beach volley:** Swatch
- **volleyball:** Descante, Gerflor, Mikasa

Resume of the current situation of European volleyball:

With regard to sports:

4.5 months of contests for the 440 best men's teams and their over 5.000 players in Europe is by far a too short period of competitions.

In the long break between competitions of 7.5 months, the players lose a great deal of athletic, technical and tactical ability.

Young players which could be considered for national teams lose a great deal of ability in every area.

Many national teams decrease in their level of proficiency as only a small elite majority operates on a high international level of volleyball and the majority of the players is without occupation.

With respect to media:

In the 7.5 months of break between the competitions of the clubs, the sport of volleyball loses its importance with respect to its main competitors basketball and handball.

As only eight nations of the 56 associations play in the World League, volleyball is not existent in the media of 48 countries of Europe.

Furthermore there are no reports from the World Grand Prix from Asia in Europe. During the main period of competitions in November and December, there are no reports in the European countries, which do not take part in these events.

Thereby volleyball disappears from all the media for over four weeks.

A competition period of at least six months is ultimately necessary for the clubs.

The economic importance:

For the sponsors, a period of 4.5 months of competition is not enough.

In the 7.5 months break between competitions, the clubs cannot maintain the contacts to the sponsors, media and spectators.

As national teams do not have the chance of succeeding in sports in 48 European countries, volleyball is not interesting for sponsors, the media or spectators.

Volleyball does not have the chance to exist alongside sports like soccer, basketball and handball.

The political importance:

As sports such as soccer, handball and basketball are represented in the media far longer than volleyball, and as a majority of the European national teams does not have any chance of sportive success, the politicians rank volleyball well behind other sports in their list of priorities. The infrastructure of volleyball suffers from this fact. As politicians have a large influence on the distribution of the budget among sponsors, volleyball is also neglected in this respect.

The sponsors are drawn to other sports by the politicians.

Now the FIVB must state the number of domestic and foreign players.

Only two foreign players should be able to play actively. Supporting young players as well as improving the level of proficiency of the national teams, are named as reasons for this matter. The consequences of this fact will have a major impact on European volleyball.

Example Italy:

Currently 81 legionnaires are under contract in the first Italian League, the A Uno. 42 players thereof are non-EU residents. 57 would no longer be able to play in the A1. The best and most attractive volleyball league in the world would dramatically decrease in its level of proficiency. The interest of the media and therefore also of the sponsors would decrease even more.

The 57 players will have to play in other leagues of lower levels.

The national teams of these countries would decrease in their professional level.

Example of Slovakia and the Czech Republic:

Over 120 players in both of these countries are currently active in the European League. Therefore both of these countries with their national teams play on a high international level. Neither Slovakia, nor the Czech Republic have teams that could afford this number of professional players.

A majority of these players would have to end their volleyball career or would have to return to amateurism.

The national teams of both countries would considerably decrease in their professional level, and would no longer be competitive on an international basis.

Example USA:

In the USA there are no club championships. The players which come from the colleges, who are well educated and currently play in Europe, would have to end their volleyball career.

In the USA there would no longer be any incentive to play volleyball in the colleges.

The youth will play other sports rather than volleyball.

The American national team will lose its importance.

Example Austria:

In Austria, 36 of the 58 of the legionnaires, who currently play in the first league, would no longer be able to play. In Austria there are not enough players for the level of the first league. Five of ten teams in the first league would have to quit.

The club teams, which are currently successful in the European events (number eight in the European ranking) would no longer be represented in the media.

Volleyball would no longer exist in Austria.

This scenario would equally be valid for Germany and many other European countries.

Example hotVolleys – Austrian champions men:

- Currently 86 hours of TV per season in Austria
- 20 hours of TV in other countries of Europe
- 1.500 articles in the printable media
- 400 pictures in the printable media
- high interest by the sponsors due to strong presence in the media
- therefore strong interest by the politicians in Austrian volleyball
- by reducing the number of legionnaires, no further sportive success in European competitions
- loss of media presence
- loss of sponsors
- loss of interest of the politicians in volleyball
- return to amateur sports
- no further possibility win the interest of younger players in volleyball
- no possibility to form a good national team in Austria
- this scenario is equally valid for the best teams of Germany, Belgium etc.

Furthermore domestic players would demand a multiple of the income, without having to practice more or to perform better.

The domestic players would know that it's not possible to play in the first league without them.

The sportive competition and motivation would decrease considerably.

The younger players would not be supported, but would only earn more money.

The national teams of many countries would become weaker.

The task of the FIVB given to the associations and clubs of the European Union to deliberately breach existing contracts and valid laws is a problem.

The national associations as well as the FIVB would be confronted with numerous law suits.

In soccer, the clubs as well as the national teams are important components of this successful and most popular sport of the world.

Our suggestions to increase the popularity of volleyball in the world:

The basic decision:

The basic decision one has to make is whether an elite sport should be produced or volleyball should be made popular around the world.

Currently an elite sport is produced.

Example World League: 16 nations are playing in the World League.

204 are not involved nationally!

In order to increase the popularity of volleyball, the national teams and clubs, the associations and league representatives must work together.

The sportive way (example men's volleyball)

The clubs need at least six months of contests per season in order to be competitive against their main competitors soccer, basketball and handball etc. with respect to sports, media, economics and politics.

All the 220 national teams of the FIVB should be integrated into internationally attractive competitions.

Currently of the 220 national teams of the FIVB

- 16 national teams are eligible to play in the World League – 204 are not,
- 12 of the national teams are eligible to play in the FIVB Men's World Cup – 208 are not and
- all of the 220 national teams should be integrated in attractive world cup qualifications, large groups (of at least ten teams).

The World League and the FIVB Men's World Cup should participate in the world cup qualifications.

The elite clubs should participate in attractive national and international competitions.

Attractive teams with internationally highly qualified players should be made available to the clubs.

The players of the first leagues of all countries as well as the national players should have the opportunity to take part in competitions of high international and national level during the entire year.

The way in the media

Volleyball must offer attractive competitors and events during the whole year for national teams as well as clubs.

The most attractive and popular volleyball clubs such as Sisley Treviso, Dynamo Moscow, AS Cannes, VfB Friedrichshafen and Noliko Maaseik which would be Real Madrid,

Barcelona, AC Milan, Manchester United, Chelsea, Bayern Munich in soccer, must offer competitions to the media over a long period of time.

All nations should have the possibility to take part in these competitions for as long as possible - in the clubs as well as in the national teams.

Soccer, being the most popular sport in the world, would never be as popular if it weren't for the worldwide known clubs, which are so popular among the fans of soccer.

Volleyball needs top championships for clubs as well as national teams. Clubs and national teams should work on a media strategy together and should work on a media concept which is agreed on by both.

By doing so the media should be motivated to report on volleyball around the world and during the whole year. Currently only the media of the 16 participating nations is reporting on the World League. In 204 countries there are hardly any or even no reports at all on volleyball events.

Volleyball should offer the world at least two world class players in order to form them to worldwide known testimonials for the sport of volleyball.

This is only possible if the clubs and national teams work together.

These testimonials would have to be present in the media all year long.

Volleyball must create events which are known and reported on around the world. A worldwide event for clubs (A1 Legapallavolo) as well as a worldwide known event for national teams must be created.

The medial strategies therefore must be elaborated together.

The economical way

Volleyball must get the sponsorship of multinational companies, who are willing to invest in volleyball regionally and around the world. This can only be achieved by offering attractive events, which contain club volleyball as well as competitors of the national teams.

Volleyball must be present in the media during the whole year.

The sport of volleyball must define a market position, its target group and must engage in market research. Volleyball must work out an image strategically and on the basis of this information, volleyball must provide classical advertisements.

On the basis of this information and activities volleyball must attract multinational companies to whom the contents, philosophies and image of volleyball apply.

The political way

Based on its sportive, medial and economical force, volleyball must be interesting for politicians.

Volleyball must have a top image worldwide, must be well known and must transfer a positive image.

Due to these attributes politicians on the one hand will be motivated to support volleyball and on the other hand they will gain from the popularity and the positive image of this sport.

The volleyball associations should give the clubs as well as the representatives of the leagues the possibility to take part in the decision making for volleyball.

Finally we would like to conclude that China lost its dominant position in economical and cultural areas after the construction of the Chinese Wall. Through the isolation and thereby the loss of influence by other countries and cultures, China suffered from a setback in all areas of life.

The Austrian Volleyball Association would be happy to provide ideas as well as workforce in order to promote volleyball.

With best regards

Peter Kleinmann

