

**PROCEDURES FOR INTERNATIONAL  
LATE PATH REQUEST MANAGEMENT**

Appendix to the RNE Procedures (handbooks) for International Path Requests

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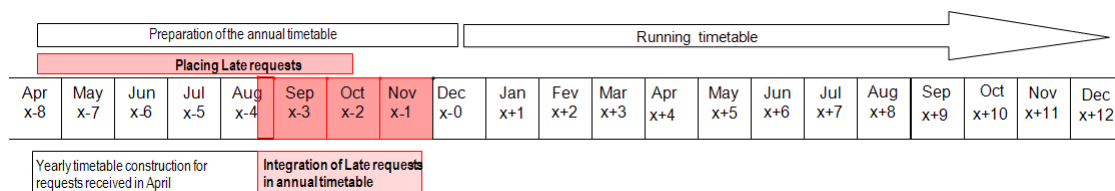
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## 1. Introduction / Scope

This handbook describes the process by which applicants may request and obtain international paths for the next annual timetable; in particular for the phase starting after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April and ending eight weeks or more (according to the calendar agreed each year) before the new timetable starts. This phase is the so-called period for “**Late path requests**” and it is part of capacity management for the preparation of the annual timetable.

Initial requests for international paths in the annual timetable are to be made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April at the latest. By doing so, these path requests will be treated by Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Bodies (IM/AB) according to Articles 18 – 22 of European Directive 2001/14. Allocation for “Late path requests” will be made in the order in which requests were made, but these requests have a lower priority than initial requests for paths made on time.

## 2. Reference documents

This handbook follows the principles set down in the

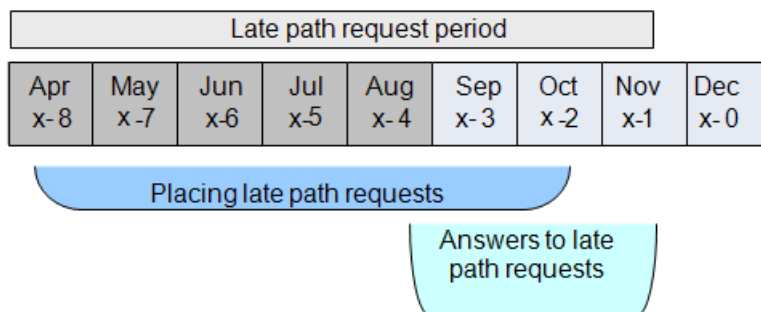
- European Directives 2001/12-14
- RNE Process Handbook for International Path Allocation in relation to
  - Abbreviations and definitions
  - Who can submit a path study request or path order?
  - Documents for the path request process

## 3. Path orders

### 3.1 Period for placement of path orders

European Directive 2001/14 does not describe specifically the period after the path ordering deadline (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April). For this reason, it has been agreed to describe it as a part of capacity management for the preparation of the annual timetable.

All requests coming after this 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April until at least 8 weeks (according to the calendar agreed each year) before the new timetable starts are dealt within the so-called **Late path request period**.



### **3.2 Path order form**

For best results, it is strongly recommended that applicants use either Pathfinder (Internet-based communication system for the optimization of international train path coordination) or the RNE path order form, and include all requested information.

Both Pathfinder and the RNE form help to ensure that the path order is valid for the whole journey. Also, if you are an applicant group, it allows each of your members to confirm the path order and/or sign it, and share responsibility for the path order.

### **3.3 Preparation of requests**

Applicants prepare the path request, which they must harmonise together. This is the precondition for IM/AB acceptance. A request consists of one path for the next annual timetable with the same origin and destination point at all times, and with the same train parameters.

The path request must provide all mandatory data which are specified either in Pathfinder or the RNE path order form. In case it is not possible to fill in all mandatory fields, it is recommended to ask any IM/AB for information before placing the path request.

Applicants may also use a catalogue path for their path request. The catalogue of train paths is intended as an aid for preparing applications for paths. However, there is no guarantee that a request for a path from the catalogue can be given a positive response in the allocation process, as the catalogue path requested may already have been allocated for an initial path request submitted on time.

### **3.4 Submitting the path order**

The way to submit the path order in Pathfinder is described in the “Pathfinder Process Guidelines”. If applicants use the path order form, they should submit the form to any IM/AB involved along the relevant path. If the path was the subject of a previous path study request, the form has to be sent to the same recipient as for the path study request, citing the reference of the study request.

The IM/AB receiving the request (coordinating IM/AB) will be in charge of the communication with the applicant that has applied for the path.

### **3.5 Constructing and coordinating “Late path requests”**

The IM/AB (coordinating IM/AB) will check the consistency of the request and designate the other IM/AB involved in the path request. In case the request is not consistent, it might be rejected by the coordinating IM/AB – who should always explain why it has been rejected. If the request does not provide enough information for path construction, the coordinating IM/AB will ask the applicant to provide the missing data. The coordinating IM/AB may also specify within which time frame – respecting the deadlines – an answer must be given to the applicant and who should start working on the path.

As already mentioned in Figure 1, late path requests take a lower priority than initial requests for paths which have been made on time – this means before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April. Therefore these requests will be treated by the IM/AB as soon as they have fulfilled

all the requirements for the initial requests. In case of conflicts between late path requests, the principle “first come, first served” will be applied.

The IMs/ABs work on the request for their respective parts using available sections of catalogue paths whenever possible, as well as spare capacity. The coordinating IM/AB must inform the applicant as soon as it becomes aware that a train path is not available. If possible, the IM/AB will provide an alternative proposal.

The IMs/ABs also need to take into account infrastructure availability and check it with their partners. Infrastructure availability may be reduced due to planned maintenance work, closed stations, etc. This work needs to be fully integrated into the process of harmonisation. Appropriate communication between IM/AB and applicant must take place (e.g. alternative proposals).

### 3.6 Path requests referring to a previous request

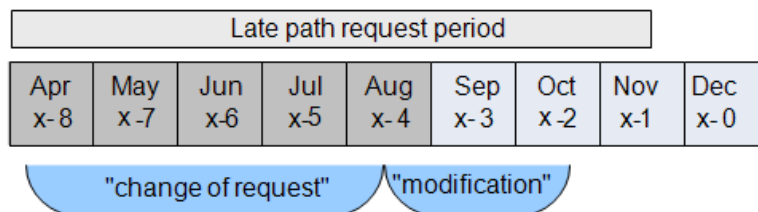
All late path requests referring to a previous one and asking for a “change of request” or “modification of an accepted path offer” must be properly identified (order or path number, reference, contract, etc.).

A “change of request” refers either to a path request placed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April or in the period starting after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April and ending with the receiving of the final offer. A “change of request” placed after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April for an initial path request placed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April cannot be taken into account in the Path Construction phase (April – July). However it will be handled by the IM/AB as soon as they have finished the path planning for initial requests. The original request will be cancelled.

A “modification” refers to the phase after the acceptance of the final offer by the applicant. A “modification” contains the two following steps: “cancelling of the final path offer” and “new request for creation of a new path”. Of course, the cancellation of the previous path will be made only when the applicant accepts the offer for the new path. However if the offer does not fulfil the needs of the applicant, then the cancellation will not be made. The former path will be kept until further information from the applicant is received.

This process will give the best chance to the applicant to receive a path offer fulfilling its wishes. A “change of request” or a “modification” enables the customer to have a new path attached to the original request.

“Changes of request” or “modifications” of details which have no consequences for the characteristics of a train path (characteristics include train speed and train type, or other items) do not require the path to be cancelled and re-applied for.



### 3.7 Path offer

IMs/ABs harmonize the international path offer together by taking any necessary coordination initiatives.

Once the answer has been harmonised, the coordinating IM/AB is in charge of sending the harmonised and consistent offer – with remarks if necessary. Remarks may consist of an indication regarding temporarily uncertain times depending on infrastructure availability (works/maintenance). The path offer will be transmitted either through Pathfinder or in paper form (depending on the form in which the path was requested).

Offers for late path requests are not given before final answers for initial path requests submitted before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in April have been provided, which means after the deadline “final answer to applicants” in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of August. The last possible date for submitting path offers to applicants for late path requests is one month before timetable change (x-1). Any possible restrictions regarding dates or deadlines will be published in the national Network Statement (e.g. in cases where the offer could not be given as soon as possible).

### **3.8 Path acceptance**

If all applicants agree with the offer, the leading applicant sends a formal acceptance notification, either by using the relevant function in Pathfinder or in writing (if the RNE form was used). The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the path offer given the short amount of time left until the date of the timetable change. If the applicants do not agree with each other on the path offer, any corresponding remark will be treated as far as possible in the final answer. The IM/AB will propose an alternative proposal; however if “No alternatives” are possible, the applicant(s) will have to prepare a new request. That means that the whole process starts again at the beginning with the placing of a completely new (Late) path request. If applicants do not send an answer within 5 working days, the path offer will be treated in the way described in the Network Statement of the IM/AB.

### **3.9 Path allocation**

Formal path allocation is a legal act. For the time being, this will remain a national process and contracts will be delivered IM/AB by IM/AB.

**Each Infrastructure Manager/Allocation Body has set up specific contact points (One-Stop-Shop, or OSS) to ensure an efficient handling of the international path requests submitted with the RNE path order form. Applicants are therefore asked to submit the path order form to one of the involved OSSs. Contact details: [http://www.railneteuropa.com/cont/aboutus\\_oss.aspx](http://www.railneteuropa.com/cont/aboutus_oss.aspx)**