



Procedures for International Ad Hoc Path Request Management

Appendix to the RNE Process Handbook for International Path Allocation for
Infrastructure Managers

Version 2.0

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Version history

VERSION	RESPONSIBLE	DATE	CHANGES
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0.2	Andrius Bartuškevičius TT & TCR Manager	2018-09-18	Inclusion of remarks from the TTSG
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2.0	Sebastián Čarek TT & Project Manager	2019-12-04	Approval by the RNE GA

1. Introduction and scope of this document

This handbook describes the process by which applicants may request and obtain international paths from infrastructure managers, C-OSS and allocation bodies (hereafter IMs) for:

- the next annual timetable, if the requests have been placed after the last day to place late path requests but before the timetable change¹
- the running timetable, if the request has been placed after the timetable change

This phase is the so-called “**ad hoc path requests period**”.

The requesting process for traffic not crossing an international border is out of the scope of the document and described in Network Statement of each IM. Same applies to the requests for transport of dangerous goods, nuclear transport, military transport and exceptional transport.

This handbook focuses solely on newly submitted path requests in ad hoc path request period, the requests for modifications of already allocated paths are out of the scope of the document and covered by RNE Process Handbook for Modification of International Path Request Management.

2. Reference documents

This handbook follows and is based on the principles set down in:

- Directive 2012/34/EU
- RNE Process Handbook for International Path Allocation
- TAP/TAF TSI Sector Handbook for the Communication between RUs/IMs v1.4
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 454/2011 on the technical specification for interoperability relating to the subsystem ‘telematics applications for passenger services’ of the trans-European rail system (TAP TSI)
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 1305/2014 on the technical specification for interoperability relating to the telematics applications for freight subsystem of the rail system in the European Union and repealing the Regulation (EC) No 62/2006 (TAF TSI)

3. Path Request System

All request methods shall be published and described in the Network Statement of each IM. Alongside the national request methods, internet-based path request system should be provided by RNE, to optimise international requests and path coordination. Currently, this process is reflected in Path Coordination System (PCS).

As soon as bidirectional interfaces between PCS and the national IT systems are in place, PCS shall be used as one of the official request tools, without the demand to place the request also via another tool.

For path request via PCS, the process is described in the “PCS Documentation” (<https://cms.rne.eu/pcs/pcs-documentation>).

¹ Until the full implementation of Commission delegated decision (EU) 2017/2075 some IMs do not offer a product called “Late Path Request”. For the time being, in the period of Late Path Requests (X-8 to X-2), applicants can place a request also called “ad hoc”, however, these requests follow the process described in Handbook for International Late Path Request Management, as they have to be incorporated into the yearly timetable until X-1 and need to be answered before the first requests placed in ad hoc period as described in this document).

4. Path requests

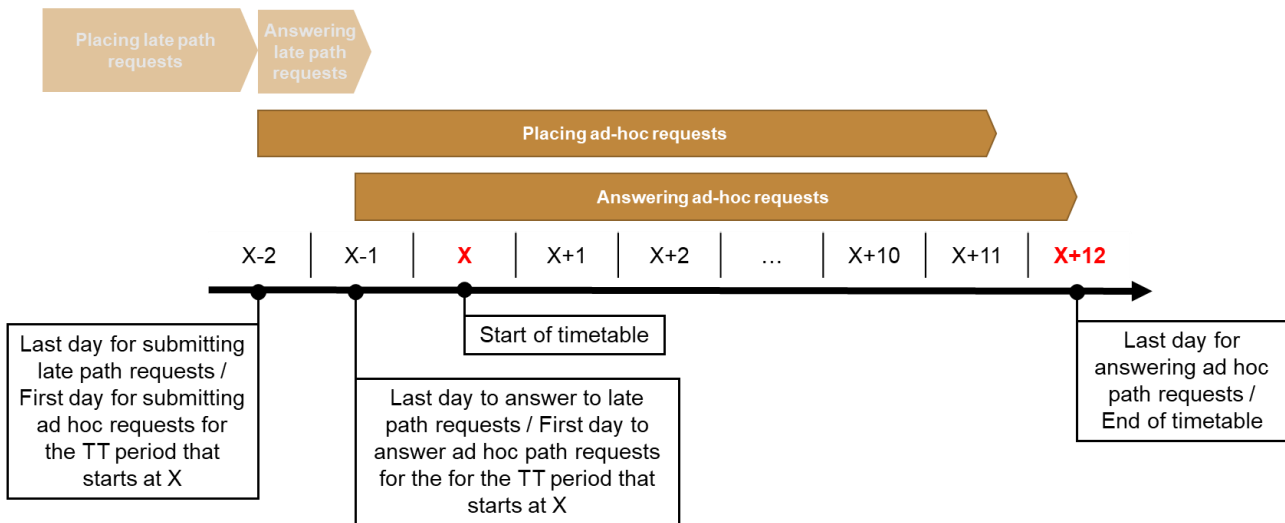
4.1 List of involved stakeholders

Stakeholder	Definition/explanation
Leading IM	<p>The IM in charge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interaction and active communication with all participating/involved IMs and communication with the leading applicant concerning general matters for each request acting as an information turntable for involved IMs monitoring of compliance with the agreed timetabling process, detection of pressure points in the timetabling process and estimation of results initiating all possible steps to ensure compliance with the deadlines and to provide a harmonised offer in case that pressure points are detected (investigation of the situation, active communication with the participating companies, e.g. sending a reminder) execution of relevant tasks in PCS to promote dossiers to the correct phase on time
Involved IMs	The IMs in charge of capacity allocation on the networks where the involved applicants apply for particular capacity.
Leading applicant	<p>The applicant in charge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interaction and active communication with all participating applicants and communication with the leading IM concerning general matters for each request, including changes in the requests, request withdrawal acting as an information turntable for involved applicants monitoring of compliance with the agreed timetabling process, detection of pressure points in the timetabling process and estimate of results. initiating all possible steps to ensure compliance with the deadlines in case that pressure points are detected (investigation of the situation, active communication with the participating companies, e.g. sending a reminder) execution of relevant tasks in PCS to promote dossiers to the correct phase on time
Involved applicants	Applicants that under the coordination of the leading applicant apply for particular capacity in the networks of involved IMs/IMs other than the leading IM.

4.2 Ad hoc path request period

It is possible for applicants to place requests at any time after the last day for late path requests (X-2) and during the running timetable. This period from X-2 to X+12 is referred to as “Ad hoc path request period”. As the period is longer than the timetable itself, between X-2 and X (overlapping period) it is possible to place requests for the running timetable, but also for the next timetable starting at X.

Ad hoc path request period (X-2 to X+12)



In the period between X-2 and X-1 (collecting period), IMs offer applicants the possibility to formally submit ad hoc requests for the upcoming TT starting at X. However, the processing of these requests (and the timeline defined in subchapter 4.9) is commenced only from X-1, when IMs answer all late path requests.² Between X-2 and X applicants can also place ad hoc requests for the running timetable which will be processed according to the timeline described in this handbook.

4.3 Preparation of requests

Applicants prepare and have to harmonise their path request. This is the precondition for IM acceptance. The path request shall provide all mandatory data³. In case it is not possible to provide all mandatory data, it is recommended to ask the respective IM for information before placing the path request.

Applicants shall apply for train path from origin station to destination station or in case of national requests, include the complete route information to all IMs involved in the request. If an applicant has a given contingent of international train numbers in advance, it states the chosen train number in the path request. In other cases, the IMs will allocate the train path with an agreed international train number assigned by the IMs. International requests without sufficient identification shall be rejected.

Applicants may also use a catalogue path for their path request, if are provided by the respective IM. The catalogue of train paths is intended as an aid for preparing applications for paths. However, there is no guarantee that to 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 to an applicant that has requested earlier.

² The update of the draft working timetable as defined in point 6 of Annex VII to Directive 2012/34/EU

³ Mandatory data/parameters are listed in Network Statements of each IM and in case of placing a request using PCS, directly in PCS.

At this stage, the applicants are provided with the possibility of pre-acceptance.⁴ If this option is chosen by the applicant, there will be no explicit acceptance phase after the path elaboration.

At this stage, the applicants requesting via PCS are also provided with the possibility of the partially harmonised process. If this option is chosen by the applicant, all involved applicant/IM pair can work on the request in a different phase. For instance, while the first IM is already constructing the path, the applicant in the second network has not submitted the request yet. At the end of the process, the dossier is harmonised in the acceptance phase.

4.4 Submitting the path request

Once the request is harmonised, applicants submit the path request to IMs. Requests submitted in the ad hoc path request period are being treated based on the “first come – first served” principle, this means that the date and time of submission are essential for assignment of the request priority.

Applicants submitting the request using national request methods are encouraged to place the request in all networks of the train run simultaneously. A hold up put a request at risk that it loses the priority in one of the networks to other conflicting request submitted in the meantime by a different applicant. If PCS is available for the request, the request is delivered to all IMs of the train run at the same time.

4.5 Communication and Request Priority

The leading IM is in charge of the communication with the applicant that has applied for the path. For paths requested in PCS, the leading applicant⁵ selects the leading IM. In case an international path is requested part-by-part by using national request methods, each of the involved IMs is in charge of the communication with the applicant that has applied for the path in their network.

Requests submitted in ad hoc request period, regardless of whether submitted via PCS or by national request methods, are always being treated on the “first come – first served” principle, based on the date and time of the submission.

4.6 Construction and coordination

Requests submitted in the ad hoc path request period should be by default elaborated by IMs in order of the train run. The first IM of the train run is the first to provide a path. When this step has been done, the second IM on the train run provides a path and so forth. A different order might be asked by the applicants and IMs should take the expressed wish into consideration, but it is up the IMs to decide which approach will be used at the end.⁶ In case the lead time (time between request and the running first day) does not permit the work in sequence, each IM may decide individually to deviate from the work in sequence approach.⁷

⁴ This option is provided in PCS for all networks (before a dossier creation) and in national request methods of some IMs for their networks.

⁵ The applicant that creates the dossier or an applicant selected by the dossier creator from harmonisation phase.

⁶ In some cases, the most suitable offer can be provided by IMs if the first IM proving the path is the one with limited capacity.

⁷ The first IM providing the path might also agree with the IM responsible for the subsequent path section on the timetable times at the infrastructure border. The detailed path is provided by the IMs later; this enables earlier involvement of the subsequent IMs into the path construction.

The IMs might agree in advance when every particular IM will finish the construction process. In the process of determination of the time frame, it has to be ensured that all involved IMs have sufficient time to construct their train path section and that the responses to the requests will be provided in due time. The advance agreement does not need to be concluded for each request, it may have a form of general bi/tri-lateral contract/agreement between IMs or for freight traffic a general agreement at rail freight corridor level.

The IMs in the process of construction also need to take into account infrastructure availability and check it with their partners, as it might be reduced due to temporary capacity restrictions (TCRs). This work needs to be fully integrated into the process of harmonisation. Appropriate communication between IMs and applicants via the leading applicant and the leading IM has to take place (e.g. alternative proposals).

If applicable, the IMs may apply the following working methods in the path elaboration:

- Use of catalogue paths
- Use of reserve capacity⁸
- Use of offered and not requested rolling planning products until one month before a train run

Each IM must inform immediately the leading IM as soon as it becomes aware that the request cannot be satisfied and there is no economically usable alternative. The leading IM communicates this information to all other IMs of the train run and the leading applicant.

4.7 Path offer

The path offers for an upcoming TT shall be sent not earlier than after the late path requests are answered.

Once the last IM in the chain of constructing of the offer has provided his path section, it shall inform the leading IM that the harmonised and consistent offer is prepared for sending – with remarks if necessary. The remarks may consist of an indication regarding temporarily uncertain times depending on infrastructure availability (TCRs).

Each IM have to via the leading IM inform the applicants and potentially affected IMs as soon as it becomes aware that a train path, offered (not allocated) to the applicant, is not available any more due to contingencies. If possible, the IM will provide an alternative proposal.

4.8 Path acceptance

If all applicants agree with the offer, the leading applicant sends a formal acceptance. In case the applicants do not agree with the path offer, they can ask for adaptation⁹; any corresponding remark will be treated as far as possible. The IMs will propose an alternative; however, if “No alternatives” are available, the applicants will have to prepare a new request. That means that the whole process starts again at the beginning with the placing of an entirely new path request. If applicants do not send an answer within the timeline defined in Chapter 4.9, the offer is to be considered as rejected.

If the path has been pre-accepted in the path request, the path will be allocated immediately after placing the path offer.

⁸ As defined in Article 14(5) of Regulation (EU) 913/2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight.

⁹ In this case the process starts again from the coordination and construction, including the new timeline for processing. If the adaption has only a little impact, IMs might accelerate the process.

4.9 Different type of requests placed in ad hoc path request period

This handbook distinguishes between two different types of request placed in the ad hoc period; however, this does not mean that IMs offer them as separate products. For both types of requests placed in ad hoc path request period applies the process described in chapters above. The differences are summarised in the following subchapters.

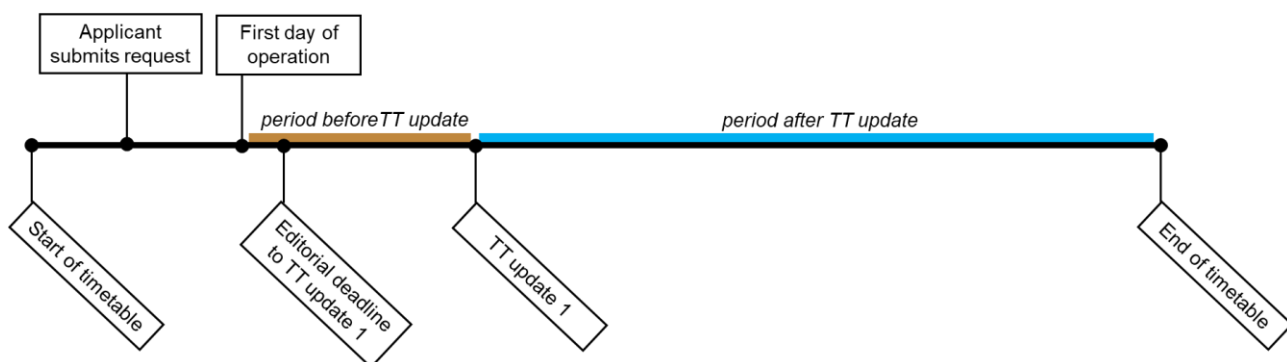
1. **Ad hoc request for individual train path** (single running day, spot train), which is the subject of the Directive 2012/34/EU, Article 48(1): “The infrastructure manager shall respond to ad hoc requests for individual train paths as quickly as possible, and in any event within five working days.”¹⁰
2. **Ad hoc request for recurrent train path**, which is a request for more than one train running day with the same origin, destination and timetable.

In addition, some of the infrastructure managers use internationally agreed timetable updates and editorial deadlines, these IMs process differently running days requested by the applicant before the next relevant yearly TT update and after this yearly TT update, but this does not mean that they require from applicants to place two separate requests.¹¹

Yearly TT update: also called updated TT publication day. The day when the yearly timetable is updated and the recurrent train paths requested before the associated editorial deadline are incorporated into the yearly timetable.¹²

Associated editorial deadline to the yearly TT update: also called ordering deadline. All ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths submitted until the deadline will be incorporated into the yearly timetable with the next associated TT update. If the request is placed after the editorial deadline, it will be incorporated only in the next but one TT update (see the graphics below).

Ad hoc path request for a recurrent train path (example 1)

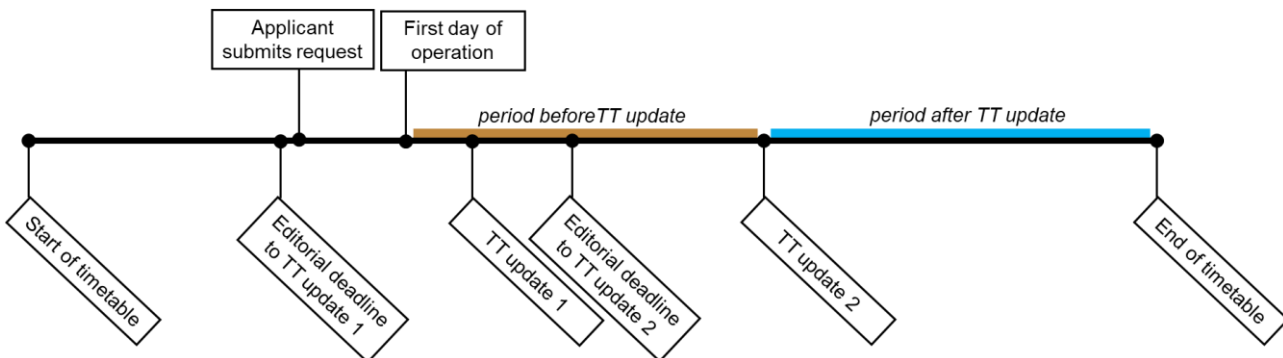


¹⁰ In the period between X-2 and X-1, IMs offer applicants formally submit ad hoc requests for the upcoming TT starting at X. However, the processing of these requests (and the timeline defined in this subchapter) is commenced only from X-1, when IMs answered all late path requests (update of the draft working timetable as defined in point 6 of Annex VII to Directive 2012/34/EU

¹¹ The map of IMs using internationally agreed deadlines is provided as the annex A.

¹² Some IMs apply also national TT updates to incorporate into the yearly timetable national ad hoc requests for recurrent train paths. However, the national requests are out of scope of the document.

Ad hoc path request for a recurrent train path (example 2)



The differences in the processing of ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period before the TT update and from the timetable update are explained in Subchapters 4.9.2 and 4.9.3.

The IMs not applying internationally agreed editorial deadlines treat both periods in the same manner and as described in Subchapter 4.8.2 (provide the offers for all running days at the same time).

Yearly TT updates and editorial deadlines for each TT are coordinated under the umbrella of RailNetEurope and consulted with applicants in the respective working groups. They can be found published on RNE website: <http://www.rne.eu/sales-timetabling/timetabling-calender/>

4.9.1 Processing ad hoc requests for individual train path

Request submission by applicants

Ad hoc requests for individual train paths should be submitted at least 5 working days before the running day.¹³

Response from IMs

IMs shall respond as soon as possible but not later than in 5 working days. The response could be a path offer or an alternative path offer or rejection.

Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 24 hours of receipt of the path offer, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.¹⁴

4.9.2 Processing ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period before the next TT update

¹³ IMs might also apply a later deadline and or offer another product that enables to request a path at very short notice. Nevertheless, proper processing in all RNE members' networks is guaranteed only if this deadline is kept.

¹⁴ Example: if the acceptance phase starts on Friday at 04.00 pm, it expires on Monday 03.59 pm.

Request submission by applicants

It is recommended to submit ad hoc requests for a recurrent train path as soon as applicants have sufficient information to place the request. IMs guarantee proper and timely processing in all networks:

- Within 44 days if 2 or 3 IMs are involved in the train run
- Within 54 days if 4 IMs are involved in the train run
- Within 63 days if 5 or more IMs are involved in the train run

Response from IMs

IMs shall inform the applicants about the expected time required for the offer for its network within 5 working days, but only in the case that this information is not provided in the Network Statement.

IMs shall respond not later than in¹⁵

- 30 days if 2 or 3 IMs are involved in the train run
- 40 days if 4 IMs are involved in the train run
- 49 days if 5 or more IMs are involved in the train run

The prescribed timeline above is to be considered as the maximum response time. IMs aim to shorten the time needed for the coordination and construction process.

Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the path offer.

4.9.3 Processing ad hoc requests for recurrent train path for the period after the next TT update

This process is used by only those infrastructure managers, which apply internationally agreed timetable updates and editorial deadlines.

Request submission by applicants

Only those requests for recurrent train paths are processed, which were submitted until the editorial (order) deadline of the respective internationally agreed yearly TT update. If the request is placed after the editorial deadline, it will be incorporated in the next TT update.

Response from IMs

The IMs send the path offer for remaining running days after the next timetable update. The offer shall be provided not later than 2 weeks before the respective internationally agreed yearly TT update.

The IMs always take into consideration the path that was provided for the period until the TT update (and vice-versa) and try to make them as identical as possible.

¹⁵ For IMs using internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines, this applies only for running days before the TT update after the next editorial deadline

Acceptance of an offer from applicants

The applicants' acceptance should be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the path offer.



*) some internationally agreed TT updates might have the associated editorial deadline also 9 weeks prior to the TT update

4.9.4 Conflicting ad hoc request for individual train path and recurrent train path

An unclear situation might occur when an ad hoc request for individual train path (hereafter R2) is placed, which is in conflict with another ad hoc request for recurrent train path (hereafter R1) placed earlier. In these circumstances, IMs are obliged by Directive 2012/34/EU to respond to the R2 within 5 working days, but at this time the offer for the R1 will not be available yet. In order to allow for a harmonised reaction to such requests, all IMs shall apply the “first come – first served” principle without exceptions. The applicants R2 shall within 5 working days receive either:

- An alternative path offer with explanation why the request cannot be accepted as submitted
- Or notification that the offer as requested cannot be provided due to an earlier ad hoc request for the same capacity and that the applicants can decide whether would like to wait or be provided by an alternative path
- Or rejection

4.10 Path allocation, modification, alteration and cancellation

If a path alteration is triggered, the process will be applied as described in the Appendix “Procedures for Alteration of International Path Request Management” to the “RNE Process Handbook for International Path Allocation for Infrastructure Managers”. If a request for path modification is submitted, it will be treated in the way described in Appendix “Procedures for Modification of International Path Request Management” to the “RNE Process Handbook for International Path Allocation for Infrastructure Managers”. If a path cancellation request is submitted, it will be treated in the way described in the Network Statement of every IM.

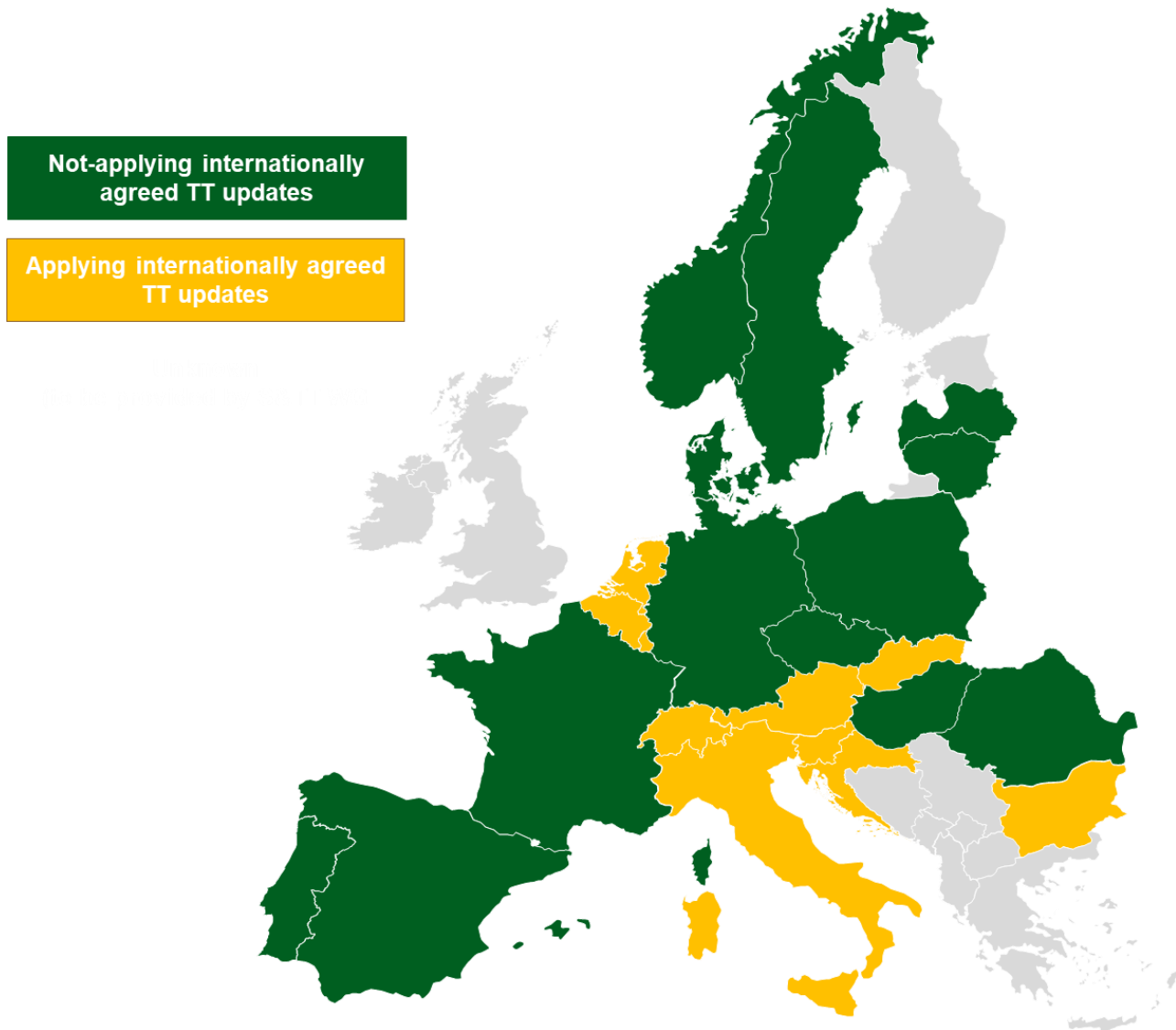
5. Transitional period

Procedures for International Ad Hoc Path Request Management become effective immediately by the approval of the RNE General Assembly. IMs and ABs should adapt their internal processes and the Network Statement for timetable 2022.

Each Infrastructure Manager/Allocation Body has set up specific contact points (One-Stop-Shop, or OSS) to ensure efficient handling of the international path requests.
Contact details: <http://www.rne.eu/organisation/oss-c-oss/>

Annex A – List of IMs applying internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines

The following picture shows which infrastructure managers apply the internationally agreed TT updates and editorial deadlines in timetable 2020. Information concerning particular TT periods could be found in the particular Network Statement of each IM.



Note 1: SŽDC applies only a single editorial deadline to TT update in June for path modification process
 Note 2: SNCF Réseau applies editorial deadlines for path modification process, not for ad hoc requests
 Note 3: ACF, SŽ Infra and ÖBB Infra provide more time to applicants (later editorial deadline) to place path modification requests and ad hoc request for recurrent train paths, but TT updates are the one internationally agreed.