

Challenging train path allocation for the 2012 Annual Timetable: despite restrictions in capacity on the North-South axis to allow for infrastructure maintenance, almost all the applications for train paths were satisfied

Right on time, on 19 August 2011, trasse.ch made the definitive allocation of train paths for the 2012 Annual Timetable. A total of 12 845 paths were allocated to railway undertakings. The number of applications received for freight paths increased by 12% compared with the previous year, a sign of economic recovery. A more modest growth in applications for passenger paths was also noted.

Train path allocation for the 2012 Annual Timetable proved to be very challenging. Between the beginning of 2012 and spring 2014, the Simplon Tunnel between Brig and Iselle will be renovated. The Simplon Tunnel consists of two single line bores with a cross over in the middle of the tunnel. This divides the tunnel into four sections one of which will be closed for renovation at any one time. Line capacity for freight traffic will be reduced by a third on this axis. In August and September 2012, the crossover in the middle of the tunnel will be renewed, a job which will take eight weeks. This will require a complete tunnel bore to be closed (closure of one track) and will reduce the capacity for freight traffic by two-thirds.

This reduction in capacity meant that the applications for train paths gave rise to a total of 240 conflicts, almost three times as many as in the previous year. During the eight weeks of closure of one track, additional conflicts will arise.

trasse.ch's objective is to resolve all the conflicts between applications for train paths so that all the applications for capacity can be satisfied. Together with the railway undertakings in question and SBB Infrastructure we succeeded in resolving almost all the 240 conflicts by means of a painstaking dialogue. The railway undertakings will now be able to move their traffics under acceptable conditions even if slightly amended by reference to their original aspirations. trasse.ch would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved for their commitment and for the flexibility they showed.

In the cases of four conflicts on the Simplon axis, it was not possible to find satisfactory alternatives. In those cases and for the first time, trasse.ch held a bidding process. The train path was allocated to the railway undertaking which put in the higher bid. trasse.ch passed on the amount offered to the infrastructure managers in question as a contribution to the costs of operating and maintaining the infrastructure.

Train path allocation and diversionary planning for the eight-week closure of one track in the Simplon tunnel is on-going. The end of the period in which train paths can be returned without being charged for (at the end of September) will be crucial in that respect. The objective is to allocate train paths for this phase before the end of October 2011.

Thomas Hösli, Head of Train Path Allocation, will be pleased to answer any questions on the allocation process you may have. He can be contacted on tel. +41 (0)31 384 20 46.

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GLOSSARY

A train path (comparable to a slot for airlines) is the right to run a train over a particular section of the rail network at a given time.

A conflict between applications means impossibility of satisfying two or more mutually exclusive applications for train paths.