

The CNMC makes it easier for railway companies to replace their train drivers due to the ‘pull effect’ of Renfe's calls for train drivers

- In 2023, almost a third of the train drivers employed in other freight and passenger operators moved to work for Renfe.
- To ensure the continuity and plurality of services offered, Renfe will inform these companies of the recruitments at least a month and a half before finalising any call for employment.
- Once the process is completed, Renfe will have to wait three months before incorporating the train drivers into its workforce.
- In addition, Renfe will continue to communicate its recruitment plans annually, as required since 2017.
- Ninety percent of train drivers in Spain are employed by Renfe, which hires an average of 550 new drivers every year.

Madrid, 29 May 2024.— The CNMC has imposed new obligations on Renfe to ensure that its competitors—Ouigo, Iryo and freight operators—can replace their train drivers with sufficient notice given the “pull effect” of Renfe Operadora's calls for employment ([STP/DTSP/059/23](#)).

Train drivers are an essential resource for rail services. Renfe employs approximately 90% of train drivers in Spain and recruits an average of 550 new drivers every year. Competing companies employ around 650 train drivers in total. In 2023, Renfe recruited almost one-third of its competitors' drivers.

Measures by the CNMC

Renfe will have to inform its competitors, at least one and a half months before concluding a selection process, of the number of train drivers it intends to recruit. Moreover, it will not be allowed to incorporate them into its workforce until three months after the final decision has been made. This measure, which already applied to some freight companies, is now being extended to all of them, including passenger companies.

This will ensure that railway companies know how many train drivers will leave at least four and a half months in advance, the minimum time necessary to replace them and avoid disruptions to their services.

The CNMC maintains Renfe's obligation—set in 2017—to report before 31 January each year on its plans to hire train drivers for the next two years. This measure means that the current ‘pool of train drivers’ (unemployed drivers with a licence) is sufficient for the competing companies to cover the vacancies caused by Renfe's hiring of train drivers.

Train Driver Training

Despite there being enough train drivers available, the activity of competing companies can be seriously affected when they are hired by Renfe in one of its calls for employment, since their replacement is not immediate.

Train drivers need specific training on the lines and trains they are going to operate, which requires a minimum of three months, in addition to the time needed to select and recruit staff beforehand.

Previous Measures

In 2017, [the CNMC had already imposed obligations](#) on Renfe to communicate its recruitment needs for train drivers sufficiently in advance so that training centres could adapt their course offerings.

In 2021, [the CNMC found in another report](#) that Renfe's calls for employment had a significant 'pull effect': in 2023, Renfe hired almost a third of its competitors' train drivers.

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- [STP/DTSP/059/23](#)
- Press release [\(16/11/2021\)](#) The CNMC suggests several measures to meet the growing demand for train drivers in the railway sector
- Press release [\(10/01/2018\)](#): The CNMC sets conditions for Renfe so that its competitors can have enough train drivers to carry out their activities
- [STP/DTSP/053/17](#): Decision of 21 December 2017
- [STP/DTSP/008/21](#): Report of 28 October 2021