

## Impossible cases

As a positive minded person I prefer to see impossible situations as challenges or hurdles to overcome, but sometimes I have to yield and advise potential clients that their vehicle cannot be imported into Spain

Where people have already brought the vehicle to Spain their reaction is one of bewilderment and annoyance. Where a vehicle is a potential purchase, whilst disappointment may feature, clients are usually very glad that they have got an honest professional opinion.

Messenger shooting does not normally happen, but I advised a chap last week that what he was asking for was just not possible. His suggestion to me would have been an interesting proposition were I a gay contortionist, but nevertheless was anatomically impossible. Phew it reminded me that not matter how tough life can seem there are some seriously bitter people out there

### Significance of the Padron

So what impossible situations can there be? The main difference for import and re-registration is whether a vehicle was owned prior to or purchased after the registered keeper came to Spain. Moving to Spain for our purposes is determined by the date of application of the first Padron or Residencia. Having an NIE certificate or property does not infer residency of any description. The Padron alone does not mean that a person is a resident for tax purposes, so folks have no reason to be worried on this score

If a vehicle were owned by a person in any country before coming to our chosen adopted land they can bring their vehicle with them, generally speaking without hindrance. This regime is known as Change of Residence; in Spanish “Cambio de Residencia”

### European Type Approval

If you are a Spaniard or a foreigner with Residencia or a Padron then you are restricted in what vehicle you can import and re-register. The EU is hell bent on standardisation throughout the Union whether it is the shape of bananas or adding “May Contain Nuts” onto packets of cashews; standards are agreed for vehicle manufacture also. Beginning in the mid 1990’s European Type Approval was introduced, also know by the more linguistically challenging “Homologation”. Where a vehicle has such approval it can be registered in any EU country provided that it still meets the original standards under which it was produced

The standards originally started with cars, then motorbikes and finally caravans and motorhomes. My Mercedes E class was built in 1997 so has such a number; a motorhome built 6 years later may not. Motorhomes and campervans are becoming increasingly popular but because of their high initial cost many people buy older models and it is these vehicles that may catch out the unwary when wishing to import, so if you have a Padron (or Residencia) check with a specialist like me before you buy

## Why bother?

“Blimey” you may be thinking, “why don’t I buy a Spanish registered vehicle and save myself any problems?” Good question and this is an option worth considering, but the fundamental reason why many people don’t is because of the very high purchase price compared to vehicles sold elsewhere and the generally lower spec’ level. Of course if you owned the vehicle before coming to Spain then you have no such concerns

To check if the vehicle that you are considering buying has Homologation firstly take a look at the registration document where it should be shown but not always is; better still check the vehicle itself. The number should follow this format e13\*97/27\*0040\*02. It is normally on a plate on the door column or in the engine compartment. For motorhomes it must be shown on the coachworks; for bikes it is normally on the yoke or under the saddle.

Straightforward? Yes if you know the ropes. Challenging? Sometimes. Impossible? Not often.

Spanish Number Plates  
Graham Shelton  
Orihuela, Alicante  
[www.spanish-number-plates.com](http://www.spanish-number-plates.com)  
[info@spanish-number-plates.com](mailto:info@spanish-number-plates.com)  
966 753 375  
605 319 889