

Who can you trust?

For a few years now I have been dealing with those wonderful people in the Spanish bureaucracy. Although I am conversant with the language and procedures I prefer to work with a specialist gestoria who act as the main interface with the authorities. Quite frankly if I didn't I would not have the time to deal with the myriad other issues that arise when dealing with registrations and other motoring matters.

Perhaps there is also the fact that I may otherwise have slashed my wrists or committed murder rather than just having a flat forehead after hitting it against so many brick walls. Civil Servants have exceptional powers and boy do some of them know it. To say that they are arbitrary, inconsistent, incompetent, rude and unhelpful would be unfair to those that are none of these things; however the helpful ones are not always available

So what you ask? Well if you want anything done that involves the authorities hopefully you will go to an expert or recognised source of good information and not just ask around whilst having a pint. But the rub is that the rules change so often, can be interpreted differently but perhaps more importantly no two situations are identical. There is always some quirk or other that can make a big difference to what your pal experienced

“Is this cos' I's foreign?”

Nah! A Russian client needed a document; a Spaniard from a firm specialising in getting such documents asked me to come along to reinforce our case. A slanging match started between the natives refereed by a National Police officer in the same office who smoothed things over but not until the Spanish specialist was made to grovel. In another incident, a Spaniard who looked like a rugby player only just restrained himself from ripping apart another jobsworth. A Spanish lady drove to Alicante to see me in her UK plated motorhome as she had had no joy in the capital with the myopics there

Shooting the messenger

Here is a good example. Your NIE number remains with you for life and your identity is stored away on the State's computers, you would assume for easy retrieval. The certificate however has undergone many metamorphoses and some types of them are no longer acceptable at Trafico even though other departments may not be so fussy. For the past couple of years NIE certificates have carried a notice at the bottom that the document is only valid for 3 months; I won't bore you with why

Here is the point. If you were to be advised that you needed to renew your out of date NIE certificate even though you only acquired it 4 months ago, you may question the sanity or competence of the messenger, especially as your mates on the urb' will say that the messenger should be shot for gross stupidity. If your chosen expert says that

the tow bar has to come off your car, or that it is impossible to register your campervan you can either trust him or ask another specialist to confirm or contradict the decision. But then who do you believe?

Trust is vital

So, trust between the service provider and client is vital. Dealing with the daily problems and finding solutions can make one blasé when giving explanations, but if you trust the person who is dealing with you then let him or her take the strain; after all this is why you are paying them and here you certainly get what you pay for

Working with the authorities is a constant tightrope walk. Just when you think you have cracked it along comes another change of rules and the tried and trusted methods may no longer work. A way has to be sought as to how to deal with the changes or how to legally work around them in order satisfy the client which is always the goal. Now where is the nearest wall?

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