

Be aware

I am about to meet Bill (not his real name) whose wife was pulled over the other day whilst driving in Benidorm. The registration number of her car had been put into the DVLA system by an officer from the Guardia Civil which showed that it has no road tax. She was told to regularise the situation immediately but let go without punitive action. No doubt the crying of her new born baby melted the officer's heart

Bill could pay the tax on line, but realised that this would only be a temporary measure before his wife got pulled again so sought advice on how to get his wife's car made Spanish and after being given a very high price by his lawyer as well as misleading information he was referred to me so I am on the case.

A maiden over

Straightaway we hit a fairly common problem that I have dealt with in the past in that some of the lady's documents are in her married name and some in her maiden name.

Well the bureaucrats have difficulty understanding this as Spanish children take the primary surname of their fathers and mothers and retain them for life, so before the car can be re-registered we need to regularise this situation. I mention this because on top of the stress of being pulled by the police and suddenly having to find money for the registration costs, additional angst will be caused by sorting out papers so if you know of any newlyweds it might be worth mentioning this to them so that the documents can be sorted at a more leisurely pace

Not so lucky

The irony is that when Bill called I had only just left Benidorm where I had gathered papers from another client whose car was in the municipal compound. Not only is his UK road tax out of date, but so is his MOT so the tax cannot be renewed on line. The €500 fine will be reduced to €250 if he pays it quickly, but the cost of being in the compound is mounting daily. Catch 22 now comes in. His car cannot be re-registered until it has passed the ITV and the car cannot be driven to the station until it is legal. Two choices, the first is to hire a grua (breakdown truck) to take it from the compound to the ITV and back, but his headlights need changing, so does the grua go via a workshop? The second option is to apply for provisional green plates so that the car can be driven freely and this is what we are doing.

Green plates which have a shelf life of two months used to be very common but the system was being widely abused, so now there are only two circumstances in which they can be issued, one of which is where a car has been impounded, the other is under exceptional circumstances where a vehicle does not have EU Type Approval

No van, no home

The day before I spoke to Bill I received a call from a chap in Almeria. His van had been impounded because it had no insurance. To make matters worse the owner is an itinerant and the van is his home. He asked about re-registration but because the vehicle is a right-hand-drive commercial it cannot be re-registered in Spain. My broker was able to arrange insurance, but the owner will need to go back to the UK soon before his tax and or MOT expire because he won't even be able to get green plates on this vehicle

The inspiration to write generally comes from very recent experiences but to have three similar cases within 24 hours is incredible

As a reminder, for a vehicle to be legal in Spain it must be legal in the country in which it is presently registered. For example SORN in the UK means it cannot be used anywhere throughout the EU

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