

Car ownership transfer

It is alleged, and even admitted to by themselves, that folks from say Yorkshire or Scotland are reluctant to part with their money. Stories that they still have 10-bob notes and coinage with Victoria's head on them are legion. But I see a thin ice warning has just flashed up on my dash so should offset this by saying that they are equally kind and warm hearted!

In Spain, taxes and other costs are involved in the transfer of vehicles as well as a fair amount of bureaucracy as you might anticipate. It goes against the grain for some expats to have to pay money to transfer ownership of their car as it is free and simple to do so in the UK. Yeah well, we don't live in the UK, so cherry-picking what we like and don't like about our adopted country is futile. So some are tempted into not bothering changing ownership and if the seller has gone "back home" he won't know will he? Fair enough but what happens when the buyer wants to sell it?

In the UK, transfer of ownership is widely open to abuse and fraud to the extent that a UK registration document -V5c- makes the statement that it is not proof of ownership. This is because only the signatures of the buyer and seller are required for transfer with such signatures not being verified, for sure an open invitation to the criminally minded.

Proof of identity

Here passport copies are required for both parties wishing to buy and sell as well as NIE certificates and proof of address. (Though only the DNI is required if either party is Spanish). So those who have bought a car which is still in the previous seller's name and wish to sell it on will have a problem unless they can contact the seller who is now living as a recluse in the Brecon Beacons.

Just to make matters harder a case that I had last week concerns a client that has bought a car registered in Eastern Europe. This car was legitimately sold to a guy in England who in turn legitimately sold it to my client, but it is still registered to the original owner behind the former Iron Curtain. I have successfully dealt with similar matters before, but now Trafico say that transfer can only take place between the present owner and ultimate buyer in all cases, even if the car is Spanish registered. This is going to cause headaches for those that didn't deal with a transfer on purchase

Using specialists and taxation

Most transfers are undertaken through a Gestoria, whose role is to give legal advice and act as intermediaries with the authorities. These are the folks who have undergone stringent physical examinations to ensure that they are fit for all of the running around, been locked in a padded cell whilst listening to the word "no" over and over again, interspersed with screams of "this document is incorrect" until they are hardened to the realities of their chosen profession. I am sure that many wish they had

chosen being patients for dental students or sparring partners for boxing champions, but a predilection towards the masochistic is clearly compulsory

IVA (VAT) is levied on cars purchased from dealers, but so that the taxman does not miss out, a transfer of ownership tax applies to private sales. This tax is based upon the Hacienda (tax office) tables which believe it or not are normally less than market value so it is prudent to obtain the Hacienda value via your specialist, because if you declare a higher purchase value you will pay a higher tax.

Trying to transfer ownership yourself, if you have the stomach for it, may seem like the cheap option, but with sound professional advice it should be undertaken speedily with no fuss and could save you money as well as your sanity

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