

Padrons, Residencias and cars

“For in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, he remains an Englishman, he remains an Englishman” so went the line from Gilbert and Sullivan.

So therein lies the rub; we live in Spain maybe all of the time or just occasionally, but we retain our umbilical cord to the homeland, why wouldn't we, it's perfectly natural. When it comes to paperwork and what we should and shouldn't obtain in Spain, we are bombarded by conflicting advice as to what we need and don't need. Apart from needing genuine advice, many expats are fearful of having the umbilical cord to their home country severed

There has been much in the CBN and other papers recently about the Padron. Much of this has to do with the forthcoming elections and that without a Padron; you have no vote, the articles point out the obstacles that you may have to overcome with some Town Halls in order to get this document, so how does this affect the re-registration of our motor vehicle?

The Padron and re-registration

You have brought your car over to Spain when you decided to set up home here, or have one stored at your holiday home. There are many reasons why people do this, normally associated with cost and value for money. Generally the car has been owned, serviced and cherished so why wouldn't you bring it over? Perhaps more importantly it is paid for

The increasing costs of car hire has made many people consider channelling the money spent on hiring into leaving a car here permanently, so they will eventually need to re-register it to Spanish number plates; well if they want to stay legal that is.

So, back to the Padron. This document has many uses not least that you can enjoy any benefits offered by your town, you can vote if you wish and we all benefit by our Town Halls receiving an amount of government cash for each person registered. Why wouldn't you register? I guess that it goes back to the umbilical cord to the homeland and whether being on the Padron will affect this. The answer is in no way can being on the Padron affect your UK, Irish etc status.

One of the other purposes that the Padron serves is that it is a mandatory document for when a Right-Hand-Drive car is re-registered, and for many people is vital if they are to avoid the import or registration tax. If you have a motorbike or LHD car or motor home, in most (but not all) cases you do not need to register on the Padron, but in these circumstances you will pay import tax for certain, so again; why not register?

On a number of occasions previously, this has been mentioned but is always worth repeating as it is widely misunderstood. To avoid import tax, you must re-register your vehicle within 2 months of applying for the first Padron (not merely a renewal). Other qualifiers exist, so always check with a professional before going too far

“Residencia”

What about the Residencia, or Green Form or Certificate of Residency which are the various names given to this particular document? Although this document was introduced when the previous identity cards were phased out, it is not a direct replacement. The wording is a clue “This document is not valid as identification of, or nationality of the carrier”. The ID cards were such proof, which is why so many people lament its passing and the CBN is behind a campaign to introduce its voluntary re-introduction

This document has its uses, such as when you need to join the healthcare system or obtain a Spanish driving licence. In my view it is merely a “Super NIE”. In fact there have been a number of occasions when I have helped customers to replace a lost or out of date NIE certificate, and the individual has been advised to take the green form instead and why not? (Incidentally if you are now panicking that your NIE is out of date, I refer only to the certificate, not the number which stays with you for life)

Again, this document does not affect your homeland status. So you can obtain an NIE, which incidentally everyone does without the bat of an eye, a Padron and the green form and not feel concerned that you will get called up for jury service, the army or lose you UK pension rights. But if in doubt or need further clarification, speak to a reputable fiscal representative

So what documents do I need?

So back to motoring which after all what I am supposed to write about. To re-register a vehicle, the only three documents that you must always have are the registration document from whichever country it is presently registered, a modern style NIE certificate and passport copy. The Residencia/green form is not a compulsory document for re-registration. However and this is where confusion can arise; certain Ayuntamientos (Town Halls) will not issue a Padron without the applicant obtaining the green form first; just another little hurdle on the Spanish path of life

When re-registering, certain other documents will be needed depending upon the owner’s circumstances and the vehicle type and age. These may be the Padron, escritura (property deeds), property rental agreement, Baja Consular, receipt for vehicle purchase, various certificates of conformity or approval. The permutations are endless and vary with every customer. Only someone who is a regular practitioner of this service can advise which ones you need

Now if you want to be like me and many other expats, then have an NIE, Padron, green form, Spanish car, Spanish driving licence and pay taxes to the Hacienda. My old age and Royal Navy pension are still safe, but not everyone wants to go the whole hog which is our choice. I still retain my Madrid issued British passport; after all “In spite of all temptation etc...”

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