

Vehicle re-registration

In my business life, I transfer ownership of Spanish cars and obtain Spanish driving licences as well as dealing with the many and varied questions that I receive from readers of CBN, customers and website browsers. Whilst this keeps me on my toes, my primary function is the re-registration of vehicles that presently do not have Spanish number plates

Over the years, I have re-registered between 700-800 vehicles from all parts of the world, though predominantly the UK. The process is essentially the same for all types of vehicle be it a newish top of the range Beemer, a well-travelled motor home or caravan or a cherished motorbike. The variety of situations is incalculable, and curved balls are a matter of daily routine. (For those that are wondering about this expression, it is a baseball term and nothing to do with deformed male genitalia)

The Spanish way

Patience, an understanding of the Spanish system and the ability to see the job through to the end are a must for anyone who undertakes this process. Problem is of course that understanding the Spanish system is a bit like being married; just when you thought you knew all of your spouse's moods and odd little foibles she/he likes to act differently so that you become confused. If I were paranoid, I'd believe changes are happening because I'm a foreigner, but no, the Spanish become equally confused and in any event I work hand in hand with specialist Spanish motoring lawyers who become as bemused as the rest of us

Despite good preparation I just accept what comes my way; it's gentler on the health. I just think of being married to a lady Spanish bureaucrat who knows that as a man I will always have the last word, which is of course "Yes dear"

Re-registration

There are two reasons why I am discussing re-registration this week. One is that I am experiencing an unprecedented surge in business at the moment and the second is the constantly re-occurring question of why re-register or in some cases why bother? The two situations are linked

Of course if I was full of ego, self importance and covered in self-inflicted love bites (any footballers spring to mind?) I would say that it is because I am brilliant at my job and have a fantastic reputation. Whilst recommendations form a good source of new clients, the main reasons are a mixture of old and new.

Most people moving to Spain want to do things right and making their vehicle legal is one of them; whilst last year there was a slackening off in new ex-pats, this year more are on their way. Secondly, the cost of cars in Spain is very high compared to other countries, so sourcing a car in the UK or elsewhere is almost always cheaper, even where "import tax" has to be paid. Thirdly, I have lost count of the amount of customers who have said that they are bringing a car over when they next visit their

holiday home due to the cost of hiring a car. Normally the cost of re-registering a trusted car from “home” is recovered within the first or second visit.

Hello Hello Hello

Finally, the dear old “Boys in Green” or sometimes Blue a.k.a the Guardia Civil or Policia Local are trying to top up the national, regional and local money banks now that construction is at a virtual standstill. We’re used to this in the UK where motorists have always been a soft target, but the Spanish are fast catching up.

So there you are going about your lawful business in your car, driving on the roads that your road taxes have paid for, going shopping, taking the kids to the beach, your mate to the airport or doing a tour of the well decorated roundabouts and are waved to a stop by a guy in uniform and sporting a gun, which is scary to us Brits used to unarmed coppers. They want to see your papers and may have a look around the car. Believe me from both personal experience and talking to policemen of different nationalities, if they want to find a fault they will, be it a defective bulb, the wearing of flip-flops (that subject died a death didn’t it?) or more commonly a problem with the paperwork. This is where a degree of paranoia comes in handy; make it as hard as possible for them to find an issue.

Why re-register?

So you have a foreign plated car; the tax disc has expired, it is not registered in your name, and you have “I Love Torry” or “Costa Negro FM” stickers in the rear window. Prime target? Not always, but why run the risk of making the officer’s day? Live in an area where there are many foreign plated cars? Safety in numbers perhaps, but a simple question to ask the bloke down the bar who said not to bother as he’s had his car here for years and hasn’t been stopped yet. “Will you pay my fine if I’m stopped?”

Why re-register; after all we are all in Europe? I couldn’t disagree, but as the law stands, throughout Europe you must re-register if the car is to be kept here for more than 6 months in any 12- month period. Personally, I used to get bent out of shape (must be a week for clichés) with all of the foreign cars in Spain and not just because I make my living from making them Spanish, but now I have become indifferent. There are more than enough people who want to be legal, pay Spanish road tax and have less need to worry about the Police. Having rescued cars from council compounds and seen the fines that are paid and people then struggling to find the money to re-register, I know it’s just a matter of time

Scaremongering? Hell no. As always, just talking from experience; both mine and yours

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