

GOING HOME

How an Expat Relocates his Car to Europe

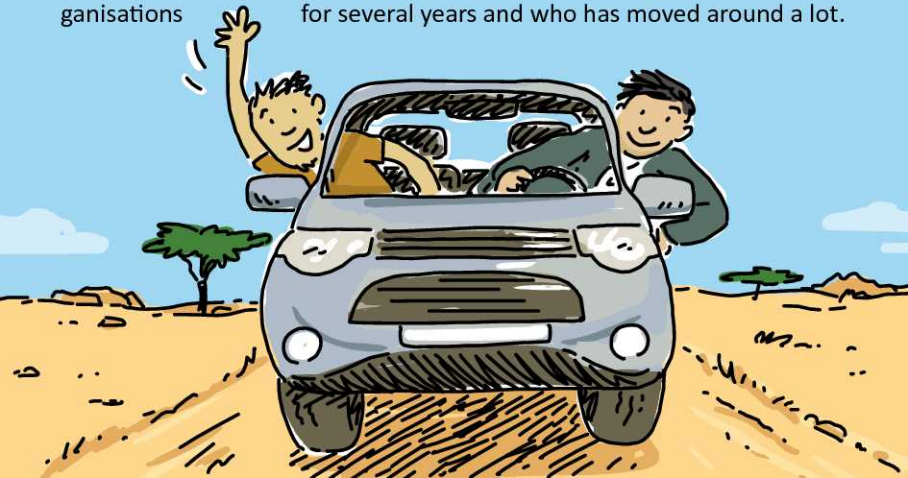
Volker Risse

International Car Trader



Returning Home

These are Michael and Joe. Michael is a German diplomat in Sudan – but not for much longer. Soon he will leave his first position abroad and return back home. When he leaves, he wants to take his SUV with him. The car was his companion on many adventures throughout the country over the past two years and he feels attached to it. But what does he need to do to take his car back to Germany? Michael asks his friend Joe, who has been working for a number of non-governmental organisations for several years and who has moved around a lot.



Customs and VAT

“You’re in luck!” Joe grins. “Your car has to have been registered under your name for at least six months in a foreign country, and you yourself have to have been abroad for at least a year. Since you and your Mitsubishi fulfil these requirements, the car falls into the category of ‘personal effects’ also called ‘relocation goods’. So you don’t have to pay either customs or taxes.

That means you’re saving about 32% of customs and taxes, because people who don’t fulfil these requirements have to pay 19% VAT on the 10% customs as well. So you can keep your car and avoid buying a new car in Germany which usually means paying a much higher purchasing price than abroad.”



Customs requirements if I want to take
my car back home tax and customs free:

1. Copy of passport
2. Copy of Visa/residence permit
3. Copy of the car invoice (I can issue a new one myself if the original is missing)
4. Proof of ownership, e.g. original title or export-certificate
5. Copy of vehicle registration certificate showing that the car has been registered under my name for at least six months in a foreign country
6. Written confirmation that I have lived abroad for at least 12 months by my employer or embassy
7. Certificate of residency back in my home country



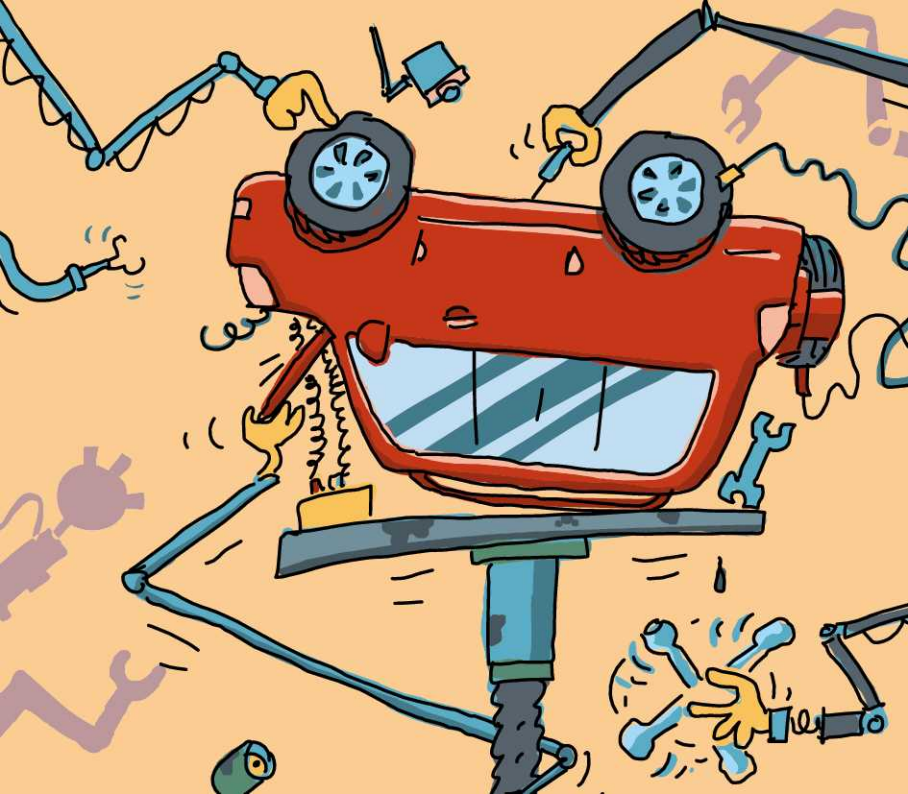
Homologation – Technical Stuff

Michael wonders whether taking the car with him will really pay off. Joe explains:

For the shipment and customs clearance you need to assign a forwarding company. You can handle the homologation yourself and save a bit that way. However, you shouldn't underestimate the expenses for homologation. This is the technical adaptation and documentation of your car to meet legal EU-standards.

Michael, who has never heard of homologation, is amazed when he learns what it includes:

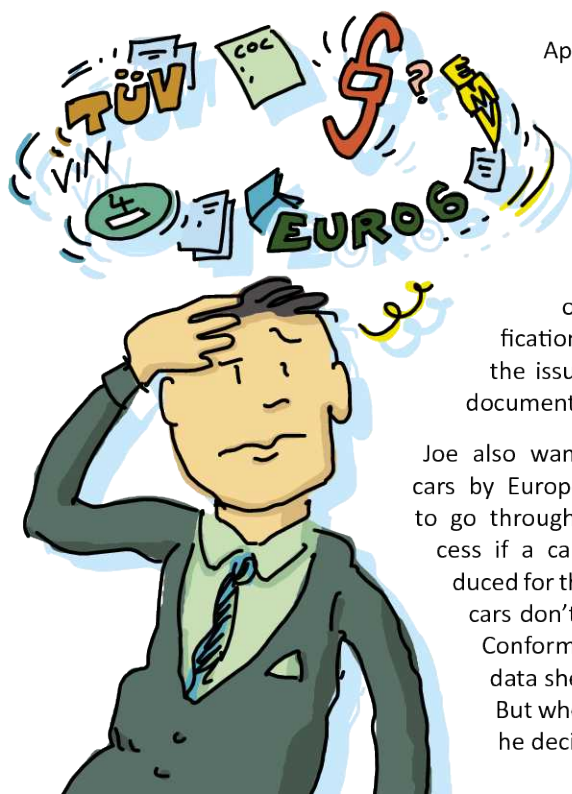
- The rear fog light needs to be retrofitted – and it has to be integrated, not just mounted beneath the bumper.
- Sometimes, especially with US-imported cars, the red indicators on the rear have to be exchanged for orange ones.
- Many US-imported cars also need retrofitting of a reversing light.
- A vehicle with xenon headlights needs an automated washing system as well as an automated headlight levelling device.
- The vehicle identification number (VIN) might have to be stencilled into additional parts of the car.
- Particularly dark tinted privacy films are not permissible in Germany and may have to be removed.



Homologation – Paperwork



“In your case it’s easy!” Joe continues. “My Toyota Landcruiser 200 or my colleague’s Isuzu cannot be registered without special authorization. That has several disadvantages, such as a higher motor vehicle tax, and we might not be granted the green environmental badge. But oh well – in any case it’s better to get a regular license, because the real work only starts with the necessary expert certificates and documentation. For example, you need an expert certificate on emissions. This is not the quick and easy standard emissions report you can get at any technical control board (TÜV), oh no. You have to go to a special laboratory where the TÜV will rate the car on a scale of EURO 2-6 after running it for 48 hours. However, some homologation providers might already have this emissions certificate for your model – that would save you the trouble.



Apart from that, an EMC expert certificate is needed which certifies electromagnetic compatibility. You even have to get reports on light and noise emissions. And of course the TÜV certification according to § 21 and the issuance of all the usual car documents.”

Joe also wants to explain that even cars by European manufacturers have to go through the homologation process if a car is not specifically produced for the European market. Such cars don't have a EU Certificate of Conformity (COC), and technical data sheets will not be accepted. But when he sees Michael's face, he decides to stay quiet.

Emission Standards and Environmental Badge

Michael wants to know exactly how this emission standards thing works:

"Which emission class my car needs to fulfill?" he asks Joe.

"That depends on the date of first registration. The older the car, the easier it is to obtain a regular license for it in Europe. Look!" Joe shows him another note.

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1. A car first registered before 1 January 2006 needs EURO 3
 2. From 1 January 2006 to 30 May 2012 EURO 4
 3. From 1 June 2012 to 31 December 2012 EURO 5a
 4. From 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013 EURO 5f
 5. From 1 January 2014 to 31 August 2015 EURO 5j
(up to 31 August 2016 if registered as a truck)
 6. From 1 September 2015 EURO 6

“Regardless of the emission class, there is also the environmental badge,” Joe continues. “All petrol vehicles with a regulated catalytic converter are issued a green environmental badge, even with EURO 1. Diesel vehicles need to have particle filtering and be graded EURO 4 or higher. Without the green badge, driving in inner cities is not most allowed.”



Is it worth it?

Michael has almost decided not to take his car home after all, but Joe reassures him. "The good thing is: you don't have to go through the homologation process all by yourself if you don't want to. You can hire experts to do it for you. This will cost you approx. €2,400.

But don't forget: the net price of a car in Germany is much higher than in almost any other country.

So you save money on the net price and in addition the 32% customs and taxes, which you would have to pay as gross price for a new car in Germany. You will probably never get again so cheap a car for Europe, than by importing your old one as relocation good. It is even allowed to import more than one car at the same time as relocation goods! Experts can do the homologation for almost any country in Europe, and the requirements for your used Pajero are not as strict as for new cars. But you are not allowed to resell your car for one year."



ICH HABE IHNEN DOCH
GESAGT, ES IST EIN
AUSLAUFMODELL.



PETROL CAN: THE FUEL
TANK MUST BE CLOSE TO
EMPTY FOR SHIPPING.

BOX OF
PAPER TISSUES!
CHECK THE
OIL LEVEL!

BOTTLED WATER:
REFILL COOLING
WATER AND
WINDSCREEN
WIPER SYSTEM!

DRINKS
FOR THE
RETURN
JOURNEY.



Collecting a New Car

Michael has long since returned to Germany. His successor Robert took over from him two months ago and is collecting his car from Port Sudan today to drive it to Khartoum himself.

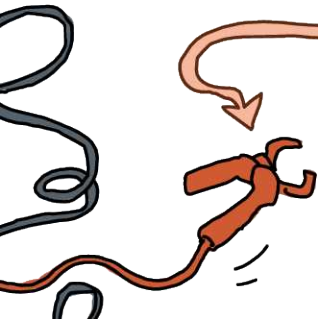
Robert is a very accurate guy, so he has brought everything he might need.



TYRE PUMP:
THE TIRES
MIGHT HAVE
TO BE
REFILLED.



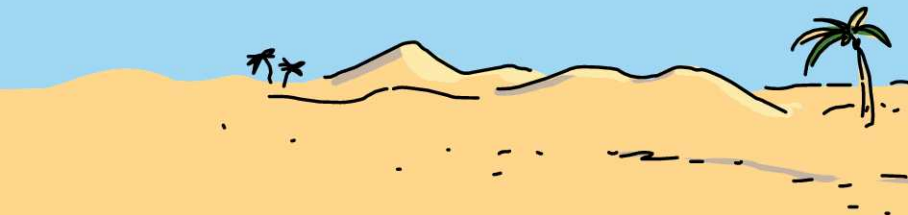
JUMP CABLE :
THE BATTERY COULD
BE EMPTY AFTER THE
LONG STORAGE AND
SHIPPING PERIOD .



Robert has also made an appointment with a professional car detailer to have all adhesive residue from the protective films properly removed.

A special vehicle for hot countries

It's time for the new car to make its first trip. Robert has invited his colleague Jenny and proudly shows off his SUV. It has everything it needs for a hot country like Sudan: a stronger radiator than normal, better air conditioning and a special air filter, as well as a motor designed for extreme conditions and even low-grade fuel.



For the car's long-term care, the car dealer also gave Robert a spare parts package of parts susceptible to wear and tear, such as wiper blades, spark plugs, lamps, oil filters, air filters, fuel filters, brake linings and V-belts.

Have a good trip!



Volker Risse



Born in 1972, the businessman and entrepreneur moved abroad for the first time directly after finishing high school in Bonn, Germany. He carried out alternative community service with mentally handicapped people in the francophone part of Belgium and subsequently studied politics. During that time he also founded his first business in the automobile and logistics industry.

Later on he specialised in the cross-border trading of automobiles. Further pillars of his trade are online services, such as an online car dealership (www.cartrader24.com) and investments in holiday real estate abroad (www.la-perla.ch). In 2015 he wrote his first book “Ich mach mir mein Geld, wie es mir gefällt. Von Knickwürsten, Polenschlüsseln, Applasshandel und anderen frag- oder denkwürdigen Geschäftsideen”, published by atemwort verlag.

His company, ICB International Car Bridge FZE, has its headquarters in the United Arab Emirates. Here, he specialises in global sales of new cars for diplomats, the UN and NGOs.

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When diplomats, NGO-officials or employees sent abroad start planning their return home, they often wonder whether they should take their foreign car with them or not. To decide, they need to know the costs and what it takes to organize potential technical modifications and to obtain the relevant documents. Volker Risse, international car-dealer in Dubai since 2003, knows all the answers and explains in a fun and easy-to-understand way what to keep in mind and what to prepare for if you want to take your car back home.

Powered by ICB International Car Bridge FZE

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