

SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE VEHICLE TAX CODE

The Government has approved a Bill to be presented to Parliament with a view to amending the Vehicle Tax Code enacted by Law 22-A/2007 of 29 June. The Bill seeks to introduce greater flexibility to two specific areas: firstly, by eliminating certain obstacles to the process for allowing the temporary access of vehicles belonging to cross-border workers and registered in another Member State (e.g. Spain) and, secondly, by increasing the number of people who are authorised to drive vehicles belonging to physically handicapped persons.

With regard to Spanish cross-border workers, the Bill seeks to eliminate the current legal restriction which only allows these workers to travel up to sixty kilometres between the border and their place of work, consequently allowing Spanish workers to be able to commute to work daily between Spain and Portugal, whatever the distance within national territory. As a result, the distance between the border and the workplace in Portugal will no longer be a limiting factor for these cross-border workers.

This amendment will of course facilitate the free movement of Spanish workers in Portugal in harmony with the principles set out in the EC Treaty in respect of freedom of movement within the Community. According to the Bill, the temporary admission of vehicles regime will remain valid for renewable 12-month periods.

The second amendment will facilitate the mobility of physically handicapped persons by widening the range of people who may be authorised to drive vehicles belonging to such persons. Consequently, apart from the spouse, direct ascendants and direct descendants who share bed and board with the disabled person, two other persons – relatives or otherwise – may now be authorised to drive such a vehicle, as opposed to the current law which only allows one other person to be designated.

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