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TimeShare - If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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They were desperate to sell their timeshare. The management fee had increased over the years, they had not visited the resort for years, they were older and less anxious to jet off abroad so when the call came, they jumped.

The polite, enthusiastic lady said her company could take the timeshare off their hands and maybe even make them a profit or at the very least recover their initial capital expenditure. They had a buyer ready and waiting to pay £15,000. In fact the purchase monies had already been paid into an independent party's bank account.

The elderly couple were over the moon! A windfall and the timeshare off their hands for good, or so it seemed.

The still polite lady would send them the contract documentation for them to review and consider. However the buyer was not willing to wait forever so could they move quickly? Yes was the reply. Even better, the timeshare

would be off their hands before Xmas with some extra spending money. Things were definitely looking up.

"Did they have a fax?" "No" but they knew someone who did. After they asked for permission to use the fax the contract arrived. Still, £15,000 for their timeshare; this was for real!

On closer inspection of the contract came the catch. They had to send 2,540 euros (approximately £1,600) by bank transfer in settlement of Spanish Capital Gains Tax, Notary, Legal and Administrative Fees.

A call back to the polite lady. "Could the fees be deducted from the £20,000?" "No". "Why?" "Because these fees, which were required to be paid to the Spanish Government and Tax Authorities, had to be paid up front".

No fees no £15,000! "The Buyer is going back to his home country and we need the fees as soon as possible so that we can complete the deal for

you and send you the money". "Don't you want to sell your timeshare?" "Where would you like the cheque sent? Or perhaps you would prefer a bank transfer?"

After much deliberation, out came the Xmas money. After all £1,600 for £15,000 was quite a good deal. Wasn't it? A trip to the bank later the £1,600 was sent by bank transfer.

A call to the lady to see if the monies have arrived. "No, not yet?" "When did you send them?" "We'll check our bank account and call you when we receive them."

A few days later still no news. After more deliberation and with the alarm bells ringing, they made a call to the polite lady. "Yes the monies had arrived but there was a problem." "The Company has to pay Transfer tax and need a further £600."

The elderly couple refused to pay the additional amount and sought advice. The advice was to call the Company, ask for the £15,000 and not to pay anymore money.

However the calls to the Company went unanswered and the horror and embarrassment set in.

Unfortunately there are still quite a few fraudulent and bogus timeshare traders out there. So when receiving unsolicited calls to buy your timeshare, if the price sounds too good to be true it usually is! Be careful and do not be rushed. If in doubt seek professional advice.

IBEX again over 14.000

The Spanish stock exchanges have managed to rise above 14,000 points again, after lingering between this level and 13,000 since the mortgage crisis in USA started in July. Constructors and banks have been the principal victims. The building company Sacyr Vallehermosa lost 43.8% of its share value during the crisis, ACS 22.5%.

Tax increase on empty dwellings in Sevilla

Sevilla will increase the local property tax (IBI) by 50% on empty dwellings to increase the offer of dwellings for rent. The Andaluz capital has an estimated 40,000 unoccupied dwellings.

Minister of finances, Pedro Solbes, has protested against the decision, saying such a tax increase is illegal.

Clampdown on Under-Declarations

2000 tax inspectors are busy at work to wipe out the Spanish habit of under-declaring the sales price in title deeds on the sale/purchase of properties, as well as income on letting. They intend to increase the 46,402 inspections carried out in 2006, which was in itself an increase of 90% on the number of inspections in 2005.

The Government is losing 1.8 billion Euro tax income per year due to letting income not being reported. The authorities in the Valencia region are ready to impose fines of up to 90,000 Euro on owners not reporting.

The citizens have defrauded the Hacienda by 200,000 million Euro's this year.



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