

¿Qué? Podcast, Season 2, Episode 3: New clocking-in System and Pedro Sánchez's "hero moment"

Many thanks to listener Ryan V. for the transcript!

Hello everyone! My name is Simon Hunter, I'm the editor of the English edition of *EL PAÍS* and this is "Que!?" a podcast from EL PAÍS that tries to explain what the devil is going on in Spain right now, in the language of Shakespeare. Whether you're frying on the beaches of the *costas*, taking refuge in the cool Iberian mountains, or outside of Spain and simply obsessed with all things Hispanic. We are here for you. "Estáis en las mejores manos." So sit back, relax, and let us break down all the Spanish stories that make you say "How do I ask for a straw from a Spanish barman without it sounding rude?"

It's a *pajita* joke...

As usual I'm here right now with my colleague from the English edition Melissa Kitson. Hello Melissa!

Melissa: Hello!

Simon: This is episode 3 of season 2. A kind of summery feel in the air now isn't there? What's the opposite of an Indian summer? An Indian Summer is after what? What is this an early – I don't know. Anyway, it's summer it feels like it here in Madrid. I'm sure it's um, fairly warm across the rest of Spain at the moment. As we published in our story the other day.

I have an annoying request first of all for our listeners. I hate it when they do this in podcasts, but could you go and rate our podcast on wherever you're listening to it and leave a comment? Plus share it on social media and get the word out. We've got five ratings on iTunes at the moment. They're all five stars which is fantastic, but I was thinking about it the other day that's probably me, you, Veronica, Chris Thompson and Señora Wright. Those are probably the people so, if you could we'd really appreciate it because it would get the podcast out to more people. And of course I invite you, as I do every week, to email us at Englishedition@elpais.es or tweet me @simoninmadrid using the hashtag #quepodcast. Let us know where you're listening, especially if you're in the States. We're really keen to hear from you if you're in the U.S. And let us know of any topics that you'd like us to talk about.

I got a- I've been encouraging my friends to listen to our podcast. My best- one of my best friends here in Madrid, Tasha, she texted me this morning as I was driving into work. She said "Morning! I've been listening to your "Que!?" podcast this morning. I love the interludes of music and sound bites. It makes it sound so cheesy and 90's." Thanks Tash! That's a very British thing I think. Never expect a proper compliment from a mate if they're British. So, just, um if they say "Oh your podcast's crap!" that probably means actually they like it and they just don't want to tell you.

Señora Wright has also been back in touch, talking about Ryan V. “Ryan V is a total legend to produce the transcript. We’ve missed this in previous podcasts.” Ryan V is one of our listeners from the United States, and he has provided transcripts for season 1 episode 12 and season 2 episode 1. So for all the people that were asking for them for linguistic reasons or teaching reasons or whatever, you can go and download them now from the webpages on our website where you can find those two podcast episodes. Señora Wright continues “What a kind and selfless gesture, all in the name of learning languages and sharing cultures. Still loving the podcast. Have really enjoyed the first two episodes of season 2, and I missed it in my life over Easter.” Well thank you very much Señora Wright and hello to your A-level students if they’re listening.

We also have heard from another friend of the show, Chris Thompson, who I just mentioned. He says “Hello Simon and Melissa and Veronica. Good to have you back. Wandering around the house on Friday morning doing my chores and listening to “Que!?” is one of my little pleasures.” What a nice thing to say. Thank you Chris. “I really like the way you use the sound clips in the stories.” The debate rages on! It’s all people seem to message us about – whether or not they like the sound clips. He says “Despite watching, listening to, and reading the Spanish news, you manage to bring a clarity to what I’ve seen and heard that’s really focused and interesting. If you fancy doing a piece that’s not election-related, you could have a go at the new working hours law. I found the Spanish coverage incredibly complicated to understand as I have never been offered an honest, everything declared, tax paid, holidays paid, extras paid, true reflection of working hours contract, and there may be a bit of ‘Spain runs like this, and here’s a law trying to do something about it’ type story.” And he concludes “Lastly, if you want another Catalan quote to stop you being the bad guys” – this is a reference to us avoiding us saying anything on the issue of Catalonia last week. He says “I was at infant school in the last 1950’s, and that’s the last time I saw behavior similar to that of Quim Torra and chums.”

Melissa: Oooh!

Simon: Controversial. And he finishes as usual with “Un Abrazo varoníl” which we decided last time was “a manly hug.” So thanks very much Chris.

Do get in touch. If you’re listening to the podcast, let us know your thoughts.

So, great topic. Melissa. Tell us about this new law. It’s really interesting.

Melissa: Yeah, so the Spanish government has introduced a new law that makes it mandatory for all businesses, regardless of their size, to track the number of hours their employees work. The decree was approved in March and businesses were given till May 12th to implement a system to record working schedules. This means all companies now have to have a system that lets workers sign in and out of work. This could be with a traditional punch-card system, a computer program or even a cellphone app. The aim of the initiative is to crack down on companies that are not paying their workers overtime. According to the latest workforce survey, people in Spain work 5.7 million hours of overtime a week. And of that amount, 2.6 million is unpaid. The Labor Ministry argues that without this measure it is really hard for workplace inspectors to assess whether or not working schedules are being properly observed. Imagine, for instance, that, you know, a worker complains that they have unpaid overtime but there is no official record of when they started and ended their working day. So, under this new decree,

companies must keep the working records for four years and if they do not comply they face fines of between €626 and €6,250.

Sound bite: Ha habido dos meses para planificar y por lo que veo, pues nadie se lo tomaba en serio. Pero no se preocupe que cumplan, que lo cumplan es lo que hay que hacer.

Melissa: But the Labor Ministry has sort of tried to alleviate fears and said these, you know, these will be implemented using “common sense”, it’s not, for instance, like the local barber who has two employees it’s unlikely he will be slapped with a €5,000 fine. But not everyone is happy about the new measure. Employers’ associations say that the move takes Spain back to the past, and law firms have also pointed out that the changing nature of work makes it much more difficult to track working schedules.

Many people now, for instance, work remotely, a sales representative might spend their entire day traveling from client to client. Other people might do a little bit of work in the morning, pop out and do some work in the afternoon. You know, we’re yet to see how effective it will work.

Simon: Yeah, is this a really realistic requirement given people whose changing work habits? Is it, is it a workable system? I mean, you know if you work in a factory and you clock in and clock out and you don’t take your work out of the office with you - your factory with you I should say, then that’s one thing. But, I think, you know, think about the job that we do. I’m just glued to my phone all the time and constantly on-call and I get in touch with you guys when I’m still at home in the morning making the breakfast for the kids and send you, you know, the topics for the morning and things like that. How would that work? I think they pointed out in their first article – we’ve run two articles about that – and it’s like, well, ok, so what about somebody who works in sales and is traveling all the time? Do they, does their working days start when they get in their car and, you know, drive an hour to see a client? Or is it when they sort of get into the room with the client? It’s a bit of a weird thing, and you know, we’re sort of, we’re on the second day of this and everyone seems to be a bit confused to say the least. One employee that EL PAÍS spoke to at a dental clinic said “Oh this is great for me because I’ll finally get my overtime pay” but then other people said oh this is, you know, this is just ridiculous. It’s completely unworkable and how are we going to do it? This was an interesting quote that someone in the store – this is a store called “Tiger” that sells a lot of real, sort of hodge-podge-

Melissa: I love it!

Simon: Yeah! It sells a real mix of things there. They said that they used to keep digital fingerprint records so they were obviously clocking in using a digital fingerprint system which is strange. But now with this new system they’ve gone to using paper timesheets. It seems really weird! It seems like it should be the other way around. It’s a bit of a boom time for any companies that are offering this kind of software for controlling your employees. They’re getting lots of inquiries and lots of interest because as you said, companies technically are going to have to be able to prove if they get a work inspection that they are doing this, that they are keeping these records. Just a bit of in-house news, nothing from EL PAÍS from human resources about how they’re going to do it because people clock in in the morning, people have to sign in in the morning when they arrive and they sign out when they leave but there’s no- you know, there’s lots of work that goes on outside the newsroom of course. Sounds like one of those things where it’s a very noble plan, a very noble idea from the Socialist party government, but definitely doesn’t seem to have been very well thought through and certainly not very well

communicated or implemented within companies. So let's see what happens, let's see how it pans out. I've got a scrappy old notebook with some spare pages in it Melissa so let's start writing down our hours and we'll write them in just in case.

Alright so, let's move on to our second story of the week. A sad story but with one that's got a very "QUE!?" twist at the end of it. So, tell us what happened last week in the world of politics Melissa.

Melissa: On Friday, we received the sad news that Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba had died after suffering a stroke. He was 67 years old.

Sound Bite

For those who have not heard of him, Rubalcaba was a very important member of the Spanish Socialist Party. Over the course of his career, he had been the party's spokesperson in Congress, interior minister, deputy prime minister and was even elected to lead the Socialist Party in 2011. Rubalcaba retired from the front-line of politics in 2014 but continued to remain a prominent figure in Spanish politics. Needless to say, his death sparked a great outpouring of public grief. Over 8,000 people visited the Congress of Deputies in Madrid over the weekend to see Rubalcaba's coffin and pay their respects. Politicians from both sides of the political divide visited the mortuary chapel, including former prime minister Mariano Rajoy of the Popular Party. King Felipe and Queen Letizia also attended. But the respectful reverence was interrupted on Saturday when a man staged an impromptu protest. As mourners filed past, the protester stopped in front of Rubalcaba's coffin and threw a handful of papers in the air. In footage from Congress, the man is heard to say: "I am not moving from here until I see the defense minister or the prime minister." He then demanded to speak with the head of Spain's CNI secret service. Faced with this tense situation, Pedro Sánchez quickly got up from his seat next to the casket and told the protester "I am the prime minister, come with me." And with that very dramatic statement, he led the man into a different room and really basically confuse- *diffused* any potential conflict. According to the government sources, the protester wanted to speak with the prime minister about a legal situation he was involved in. But Sánchez has since been largely applauded for this quick and cool response. Footage of the incident has made the rounds on social media, with many comparing Sanchez to Batman, Superman, to Spain's own private hero.

Simon: Absolutely. Now, the first thing that we should remind our listeners of is that Melissa has a massive crush on Pedro Sanchez, so I wish you could have seen her face as she was describing the latest exploits of "Batman" Sanchez! I mean, obviously very sad news about Alfredo Rubalcaba and, as you said, it was really interesting to see the tributes coming from people outside of his party such as Mariano Rajoy who was uh, you know, his political opponent for a time. He wrote a very touching tribute in EL PAÍS, as did Pedro Sanchez.

Incredibly cool reaction from Sanchez, to such an extent that people are actually claiming, you know, conspiracy theories. They're actually claiming it was staged, because it is a bit odd that security did not kind of immediately swamp this man considering, you know, they were in the Congress building, there were plenty- you know, lots of politicians, lots of high profile people around as people were filing past the coffin. When someone dies in Spain it's- for people that don't know - it's quite a different approach to- you know, in other countries. Normally people are buried incredibly quickly in Spain. Within a day or two days at the most. Normally what happens

is the body is taken to a kind of funeral home where it sits in a “sala” – it sits in a room basically, and the family are there all day and people come to pay their respects then throughout the day. So what they’ve done is called a *capilla ardiente* which we’ve kind of translated- the best translation we could come up with was a mortuary chapel. They actually installed this mortuary chapel in the congress and people were filing through congress to pay their respects to Rubalcaba’s casket which was there all of Friday and I think all day Saturday. So yeah it is a bit strange that security didn’t step in but um, Sanchez is, you know, he’s a cool customer isn’t he? The uh “I’m the prime minister. Come with me.” It kind of reminds me of that line from the Princess Bride when Iñigo Montoya says “My name is Iñigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.”

Sound Bite: My name is Iñigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.

Simon: It was just this sort of phrase that kind of rolled off his tongue. He reacted in a very calm way and he escorted the man away. He does like to remind people that he’s the prime minister, doesn’t he?

In one of the first interviews he did with I think on *La Sexta*, someone chopped it up afterwards and just put it together and Pedro Sanchez is just saying “Porque yo soy el presidente...”

Sound Bite

Simon: And he says it about I think 15 times in the interview which is quite funny. He’s obviously wish- because he’s in this position where he’s not quite the prime minister yet because he has to be voted back in the investiture vote. Maybe it’s that sort of positive-thinking thing-

Melissa: I am the president! I am the prime minister!

Simon: I will make it happen. I will make it happen. You certainly can’t imagine Mariano Rajoy acting like that. I saw Rajoy once getting out of a car here at the newsroom, and he has more of this sort of an air of an undertaker about him. He was a very tall man. He was wearing a very long, black overcoat. I think he’d sort of give sort of a response, more sort of *rocambalesco*, he’s be sort of like “Yo no soy esa persona a que usted se refiere”.

Alright well we shall wrap it up there. This was episode – what was it? – episode 2

Melissa: Three!

Simon: Three! Episode 3 of season 2. Sorry I get confused. My name is Simon Hunter.

Melissa: I’m Melissa Kitson.

Simon: This was Que? A podcast that tries to explain what happens in Spain to those of us who sometimes get a little bit lost in translation. This is an *EL PAÍS* production it was recorded right here the *EL PAÍS* newsroom, where we are surround by chulapos and chulapas, and you can listen to it on your favorite podcast app. We’ll be back next week with a brand new host of issues. Adios!

Melissa: Ciao!