

Phantom official



- 1 Spanish civil servant Joaquin Garcia, 69, whose job was to supervise the building of a waste water treatment plant, failed to turn up for work for “at least” six years. He was paid €37,000 a year before tax by a water company run by local authorities in the south-western city of Cadiz. He has been caught after becoming eligible for a long service award.
- 2 Spanish newspapers have dubbed him “el funcionario fantasma” – the phantom official. The court heard that the boss of the water company had not seen Mr Garcia for years despite occupying an office opposite his. The local authorities thought he was supervised by the water company and vice versa. The deputy mayor noticed his absence when Mr Garcia became eligible to receive a plaque for 20 years’ service.
- 3 A court found in the authority’s favour and ordered him to pay a fine of €27,000, which is equivalent to one year’s salary after tax and was the most that the company could legally reclaim. Mr Garcia has written to the mayor asking not to have to pay the fine. He claims he was bullied and will ask for a review of the judgement.

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