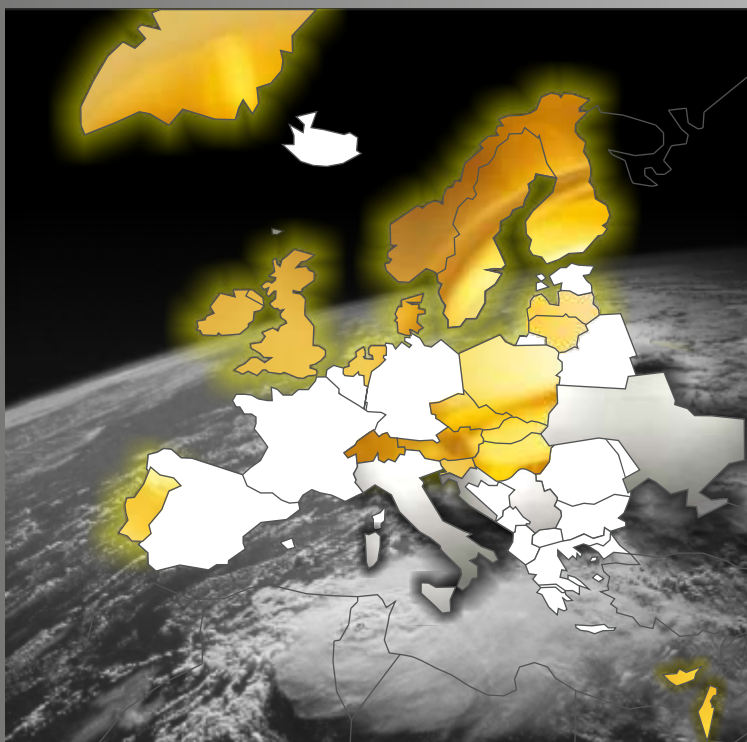


CONVENTION ON THE CONTROL AND MARKING OF ARTICLES OF PRECIOUS METALS



The Convention on the Control and Marking of Articles of Precious Metals is an international treaty between States on the cross border trade in precious metal articles. It was signed in Vienna in November 1972 and entered into force in 1975.



The Members of the Convention (in gold on the map) are Austria (1975), Cyprus (2007), Czech Republic (1994), Denmark* (1988), Finland (1975), Hungary (2006), Ireland (1983), Israel (2005), Latvia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Netherlands (1999), Norway (1983), Poland (2005), Portugal (1982), Slovak Republic (2007), Slovenia (2009), Sweden (1975), Switzerland (1975) and the United Kingdom (1976).

* including Greenland (since 2004)

The Convention is open to any State being part of the United Nations and having the arrangements for the independent assay and marking of articles of precious metals. The following States are in the process of acceding to the Convention: Croatia, Italy, Serbia, Sri Lanka and the Ukraine (in silver on the map).

Other countries around the world follow the work of the Convention such as Bahrain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, India, Mauritius, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, and Singapore.

The Convention aims at facilitating trade in precious metal articles while at the same time maintaining fair trade and consumer protection justified by the particular nature of these articles. The scope of the Convention is strictly limited to the control of the precious metal content - not to health, security or other aspects of precious metals articles. The Convention provides a common set of technical requirements for the independent third party verification ("hallmarking") and a Common Control Mark indicating fineness. Each member country agrees to allow goods marked with this mark to be imported without further testing and marking if such articles would normally qualify for its domestic market.



The Convention's Common Control Mark (CCM) is the first and only international hallmark and has the same legal status as a national Assay Office mark. The CCM is applied by national Assay Offices, designated under the terms of the Convention, to articles of platinum, gold, palladium and silver after the fineness of the alloys has been checked in accordance with agreed testing methods. The CCM can also be applied on Multimetal Articles (i.e. articles made of precious and non-precious metals), subject to specific requirements.

Articles bearing the CCM – together with the national Assay Office Mark, the responsibility mark (i.e. the manufacturer or sponsor) and the fineness mark indicating its purity – do not have to be re-controlled or re-marked in the Contracting States. The national Assay Office mark guarantees that the purity of the metal is at least that indicated by the fineness mark.



COMMON CONTROL MARK



ASSAY OFFICE MARK
(FINLAND)



RESPONSIBILITY MARK

750

FINENESS MARK

The responsibility marks have to be registered in the country which applies the CCM. They do not need to be registered in the importing country.



ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

WHY PRECIOUS METAL CONTROL...?

Precious metals control has been practised in most European countries for hundreds of years.

In a world, which is increasingly deregulated, the voluntary or compulsory control of articles of precious metals may be regarded as an anachronism. It is, however, not the case. The purpose of independent third party verification is primarily to protect consumers from being cheated and to ensure fair competition between manufacturers and retailers, thus ensuring market stability and growth.

Countries having no precious metal control tend to suffer from undercarating. Goods on their markets are not worth the value they are sold for.

The control and marking of precious metals articles is the best way to boost consumer confidence and the sales of precious metals goods.

The beauty of the Convention is that the marking of articles of precious metals with the CCM is always voluntary: manufacturers can request that their articles are marked with the CCM but are not obliged to do so. The CCM marking is applied independently from the control system in place in each country. Some Convention countries have a compulsory hallmarking system (all articles must be controlled by an Assay Office and marked with the Assay Office Mark); some countries have a voluntary system (articles are hallmarked by an Assay Office on request of the manufacturer) while other countries have a mixed system in place (e.g. in Switzerland, only watchcases made of precious metals are subject to hallmarking).



To be marked with the CCM, a precious metal article must bear a fineness mark, a responsibility mark and an Assay Office mark, as shown on this photo. The CCM ascertains that the article has been controlled and marked in line with the Convention's requirements. It also represents an additional protection and quality mark.

Despite of being applied on a voluntary basis, the number of articles marked with the Convention marks has increased substantially since the entry into force of the Convention.

As the Convention is an agreement between countries, any changes to the regulations must be agreed unanimously. Such changes apply simultaneously in all Contracting States once they have been duly notified by the Depositary (the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs).

A Standing Committee of representatives of the Contracting States supervises the operation of the Convention, determines the technical requirements, and assesses that hallmarking procedures of Acceding States are in conformity with those of the Convention.

In an attempt to modernise the Convention, the latter has undergone a profound revision taking over as far as possible international normalisation (e.g. the ISO fineness standards), introducing palladium as a new precious metal and devolving more competence to the Standing Committee e.g. to determine technical requirements. The revised Convention entered into force on 27 February 2010 after having been successfully ratified by all Contracting States.

At the moment the Convention is the **ONLY WORLDWIDE INSTRUMENT**, which harmonises the control and marking of precious metals, thus eliminating trade barriers in the cross-border trade of precious metal articles. It does not affect manufacturers who do not wish to use the CCM but certainly favours those interested to export worldwide. As a matter of fact, the Convention's Common Control Mark is regarded in a number of third countries as a reliable quality mark and de facto recognised.

RESPONSIBILITY MARK	COMMON CONTROL MARK				FINENESS (PURITY) MARK			
	Platinum	Gold	Palladium	Silver	Platinum	Gold	Palladium	Silver
					850	375	500	800
					900	585	950	830
					950	750	999	925
					999	916		999
						999		
ASSAY OFFICE MARK								
Austria	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Finland	Hungary	Ireland	Israel	Israel
Latvia	Lithuania	Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal	Portugal
Slovenia	Slovenia	Slovenia	Slovak Republic	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom

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