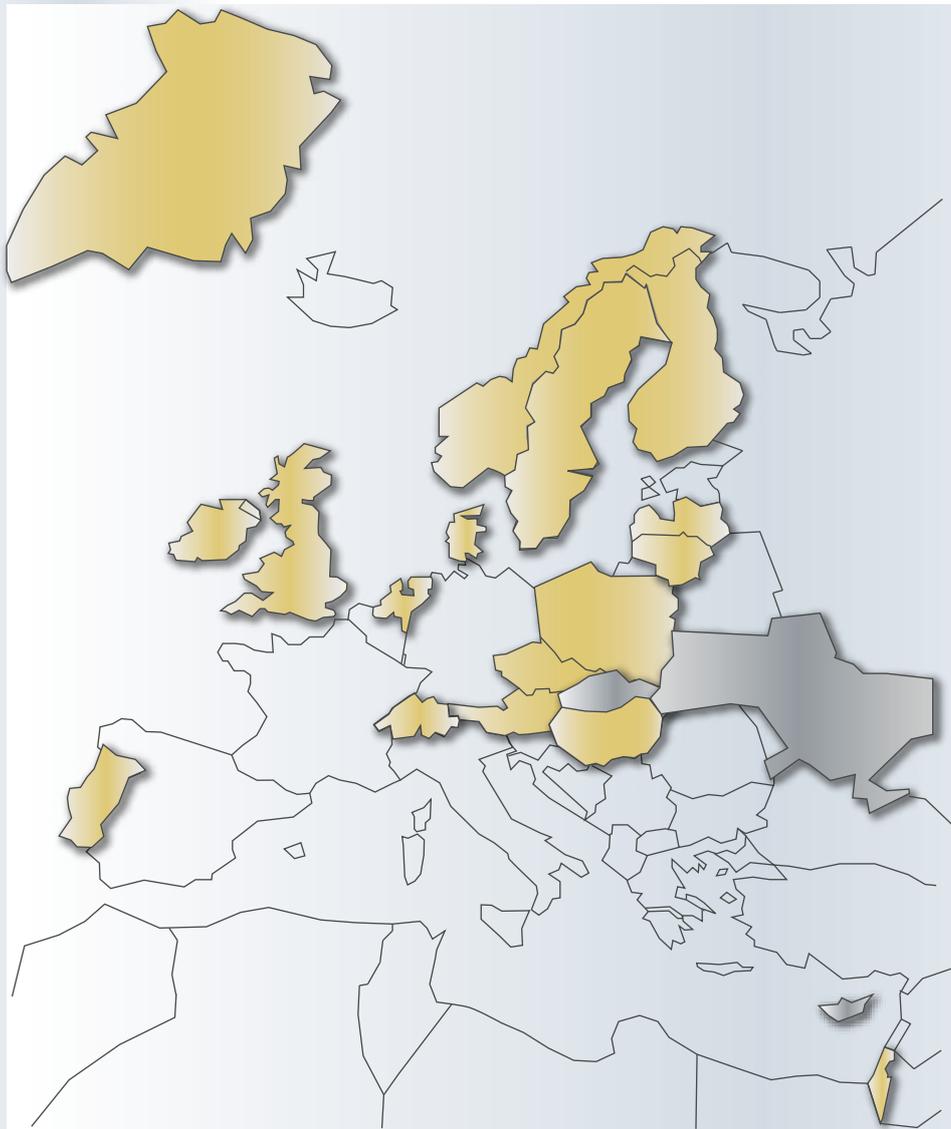




CONVENTION ON THE CONTROL AND MARKING OF ARTICLES OF PRECIOUS METALS



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), 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), 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 (in silver on the map): Cyprus, Slovak Republic and the Ukraine.

Other hallmarking countries around the world regularly follow the work of the Convention such as Bahrain, China, Croatia, France, India, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

The Convention aims to 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 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 hallmark. The CCM is applied by national Assay Offices, designated under the terms of the Convention, to articles of gold, silver and platinum after the fineness of the alloys has been checked in accordance with agreed testing methods.

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-hallmarked in the Contracting States. The national hallmark guarantees that the purity of the metal is at least that indicated by the fineness mark.



COMMON CONTROL MARK



ASSAY OFFICE MARK
(DENMARK)



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 HALLMARKING...?

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

In a world, which is increasingly deregulated, the control of articles of precious metals may be regarded as an anachronism. Well, it is not. The purpose of hallmarking is primarily to protect consumers from being cheated and to ensure fair competition between manufacturers and retailers, thus ensuring market stability and growth.

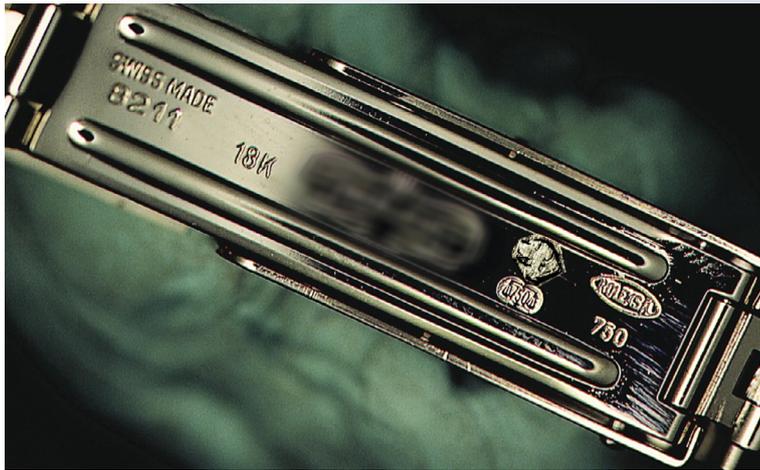
Countries having no precious metal control tend to suffer from undercarating. Goods on their markets are not worth the value they are sold for.

Hallmarking is thus both a reliable symbol of quality and the best way to boost consumer confidence and the sales of precious metals goods.





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 hallmarking 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 hallmarking 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 thus represents an additional protection and quality mark.

The number of articles marked with the Convention marks has increased steadily since the entry into force of the Convention, thus proving the strong demand for hallmarked goods. It has been multiplied by 14 between 1992 and 2002 and currently stands at around 25,000,000 a year.

Articles Marked with the CCM (1982 - 2002) Selected Countries

	1982 TOTAL	1992 TOTAL	2002 TOTAL
DENMARK	..	57	9'286
IRELAND	..	161'568	1'169'287
SWITZERLAND	365'595	456'853	1'329'180
UNITED KINGDOM	24'000	967'257	22'552'331

Source: National Assay Offices

As the Convention is an agreement between countries, any changes to the regulations must be agreed unanimously. Such changes apply simultaneously in all 16 Contracting States once it has been notified to them by the Depository (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 the hallmarking procedures of acceding states for conformity with the Convention.

In an attempt to modernise the Convention, the latter has undergone a profound revision introducing 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 is still in the process of ratification.

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			ASSAY OFFICE MARK		
	Gold	Silver	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Platinum			
				375	800	850			
				585	830	900			
				750	925	950			
				916	999	999			
				999					
									
									
									
									

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