Ref. Ares(2022)7488429 - 28/10/2022

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS
Macroeconomic policies
Euro protection and euro cash

Brussels, 11 May 2021
ECFIN.C.5/

Mint marks on euro circulation coins

ECSC meeting, 27 May 2021, item 10 of the agenda

Commission services have received information from the public about the use of different mint marks for 2-euro commemorative coins. It appears that a few euro area Member States are issuing variants, i.e. change the mint mark according to the mint quality of the coin, though by its very nature the approval of the national design by the Council would only cover one unique design.

In general, mint marks for any denomination are tiny design elements and not very visible to the naked eye. Commission services observe that the various mint marks used in the euro area have not been subject to concerns raised with regard to their public perception (no complaints from euro cash users).

Mint marks serve the purpose to indicate which mint has minted the coin, but they can also play a role as a means to make anti-counterfeiting more efficient. Nonetheless, mint marks are optional, contrary to the year mark. However, if the former are used, they are part of the national design of euro circulation coins, which since 23 July 2014 are subject to the approval by the Council further to Regulation No 729/2014.

Some euro area Member States use also mint master marks or designer marks (signatures) in addition.

Euro circulations coins of a given country can be minted by different mints, it being by different mints within one country (only one case in the euro area) or by mints from different countries, e.g. depending on which mint was awarded the minting contract. What is more, mints may change their mint mark, though this would be quite an exception.

In principle, a mint should not use different mint marks for a coin; otherwise, it would have to be considered a variant of a national design. There can be different qualities of a coin, but there can only be one unique design per euro circulation coin of a given year.

Therefore, the general understanding seems to be that a euro area Member State can use different mint marks for a given euro circulation coin only if all of the following conditions are met:

- the coins come from different mints or, if they come from one mint, the latter has changed its mint mark exceptionally

- the designs with the various mint marks have been approved by the Council, given that the mint mark is part of the national design.

Against this background, the ECSC is invited to discuss the above general understanding and its implementation in practical terms, including the following:

1. How do proceed if for coin of a given year of issuance different mint marks are used in line with the above principles?

2. How to deal with additional, optional features such as a mint master mark or a designer mark/"signature"?

3. How to proceed if a euro area Member State wants to put a mint mark into the coin design but the mint is not known yet at the moment of Council approval of the national design (e.g. because a tender procedure is pending)?

Amongst others, the following possible solutions could be considered: Recommendation not to put marks at all because marks are not mandatory (though, on the other hand, they can serve also as a useful anti-counterfeiting feature)? Council to decide on every "variant"? For scenario 3: Use of a graphic placeholder for the Council approval? Other?

The delegates from the Euro area Member States are also invited to report about the situation in their country.