

ALL THAT GLITTERS CAN ALSO BE SILVER

Volatility in precious metals highlight fears

Precious metals stole the news at the end of the month, as the price of gold and silver spiked and then crashed, as market participants searched for safe havens from perceived risks in equity, bond and currency markets. The gold rally, which began in the post COVID years as a fairly classic inflation hedge, accelerated during 2025 as market concerns grew over the political independence of the US Federal Reserve, the willingness of the US government to tolerate a weak dollar, and the consequences for treasury markets from the geopolitical machinations of the US government. In the latter half of 2025 silver rose even more dramatically than gold, fueled by retail investor purchases through ETFs.

The precious metal rally took a severe hit late in January, when US President Donald Trump nominated the relatively conventional Kevin Warsh to be the new Chair of the Federal Reserve. Other potential candidates had been viewed as less hawkish on inflation, and more subject to the influence of the US President.

Despite the spike in precious metals reflecting broader concerns, equity markets rose with the MSCI World index rising by 0.93%. Mirroring the start of 2025, Europe and Japan outperformed the US. The MSCI Europe index rose by 3.11% vs. the -0.03% decline of MSCI USA, which was impacted by fears over AI spending excesses. The United Kingdom was the standout European market, due to strength in materials and energy stocks, which constitute a large part of the UK market. However Japanese equities outperformed even Europe, due to a rising belief in the proposed fiscal stimulus from the new Japanese Prime Minister, despite the calling of an early election in Japan raising political risks.

The dollar weakened during the month due to concerns over monetary policy. The nomination of Kevin Warsh led to a rally in the dollar, however it still ended the month with declines against the Euro and Yen. US government bonds were also weak in the month, driven by the same inflation fears.

Value starts the year positively

The portfolio returned 2.44% in the month, below the 3.11% return of the MSCI Europe index. A meaningful positive contributor to the relative returns was the style of the fund, with the value style performing well in the month. Negative contribution from stock selection and sector allocation offset the benefits from the style and led to the modest underperformance. The MSCI Europe Value index rose by 3.17% in the month. Relative to MSCI World Value, the fund benefited from its style, with the fund having a value style exposure greater than the index. Meanwhile, negative contribution from other style exposures, sector exposures and stock selection led to the modest underperformance against the value index.

Energy, Utilities and IT were the strongest sectors in the market. Industrials were also strong helped by solid gains in defense stocks countries continue to ramp up defense spending,

The negative stock selection was to a large degree due to strong share price rises in stocks not held by the fund, such as Dutch ASML, which alone cost about 1 percent in relative performance. Despite the negative contribution from stock selection relative to the broad market, the fund had a number of holdings that experienced strong returns. For example, Steel company Arcelor Mittal performed well, as sell-side analysts raised the earnings outlook for the company after the European Union announced improved protection for the sector from imports.

Strategy

European Value invests in European equities, cf. the fund's prospectus. Stocks are selected using the value strategy, meaning that through careful fundamental analysis, the team strives to identify companies that trade at healthy discounts relative to intrinsic value. A risk-aware approach to the portfolio construction ensures a well-diversified portfolio and broad exposure across sectors and countries.

This is marketing communication prepared by Sparinvest S.A. ("Sparinvest"). Please, refer to the Sparinvest SICAV prospectus and to the KIID/KID before making any final investment decisions. This is not a solicitation, an offer, or a recommendation to buy or sell any investment or to engage in any other transaction, or to provide investment advice. Past performance does not predict future returns. Capital at risk: the value of investments and the income from them can fall as well as rise and are not guaranteed. Investors may not get back the amount invested. Investments may be subject to foreign exchange risks. Investment in the Sparinvest product concerns the acquisition of units of shares in a fund, and not in a given underlying asset. The indicated performance is calculated without consideration of subscription or redemption fees. All relevant materials (in English) are available free of charge at sparinvest.eu or by request. Information from external sources is used without verification and Sparinvest accepts no responsibility for their accuracy. Sparinvest may decide to terminate the arrangements made for the marketing of investment products.