



Summary

United States

Risk management

The latest economic indicators are mostly well oriented and financial markets are calmer, a mix that looks like opening the window for the Fed to hike. Still, data-dependency is also about the outlook, and, in the end, the decision lies in FOMC members' appraisal of risks.

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Eurozone

The ECB changes gear

ECB unveiled new easing measures and placed emphasis on unconventional tools.

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Also in :



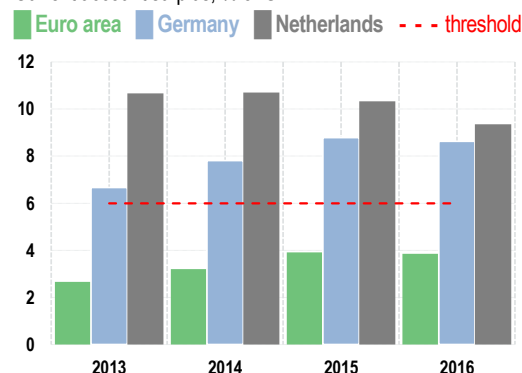
The ECB hits hard

- While the European Commission dithers, Draghi gets out the big guns.
- The sense of urgency is not the same in Brussels and Frankfurt.

The European Central Bank came out swinging this week, to the point that it even risks feeding the sentiment that this time it might have thrown its last weapons into the battle. Key rates cuts, a stronger Quantitative Easing programme and new long-term refinancing operations: there is no time to wait and see, but instead everything possible must be done to accelerate the recovery of lending, activity and, in turn, prices (see on page 4). Unfortunately, the sense of urgency is not the same in Brussels and Frankfurt. The European Commission presented this week a summary of the in-depth reviews of twelve Eurozone countries that risk experiencing macroeconomic imbalances. Although presented differently, the Commission's basic observation is identical to that of the ECB when it notes that "the Eurozone currently shows one of the world's highest current account surpluses." Even so, the procedure will advance at the slow pace we've grown accustomed to expecting from European institutions, and will be based on "a strengthened dialogue with the national authorities". In addition, while France, Italy and Portugal are just one notch away from triggering disciplinary procedures, Germany and the Netherlands are seen in a less severe light, even though their current surpluses have exceeded the 6% threshold since 2012 and 2009, respectively. Their imbalances were not found to be excessive by the Commission services, although their situation "might indicate excessive domestic savings with regard to investment..."

EXCESSIVE SAVINGS

Current account surplus, % of GDP



Source: European Commission (Ameco)

THE WEEK ON THE MARKETS

Week 7-3 16 > 10-3-16

➤ CAC 40	4 457	➤ 4 350	-2.4 %
➤ S&P 500	2 000	➤ 1 990	-0.5 %
➤ Volatility (VIX)	16.9	➤ 18.1	+1.2 %
➤ Euribor 3M (%)	-0.22	➤ -0.23	-1.4 bp
➤ Libor \$ 3M (%)	0.63	➤ 0.63	+0.1 bp
➤ OAT 10y (%)	0.57	➤ 0.64	+6.2 bp
➤ Bund 10y (%)	0.24	➤ 0.30	+5.8 bp
➤ US Tr. 10y (%)	1.88	➤ 1.94	+5.3 bp
➤ Euro vs dollar	1.10	➤ 1.11	+1.3 %
➤ Gold (ounce, \$)	1 271	➤ 1 266	-0.4 %
➤ Oil (Brent, \$)	38.3	➤ 39.8	+4.1 %

Source: Thomson Reuters



United States

Risk management

- The latest economic indicators are mostly well oriented: strong labour market, firming prices, encouraging manufacturing surveys. Some relative calm is back on financial markets, with a stabilised dollar and increased inflation expectations.
- That mix looks like opening the window for another rate hike. In the end, the decision lies in FOMC members' appraisal of risks. For some, the asymmetry of risks at the ZLB is reason for patience.

The latest survey, activity and price data have been mostly encouraging. The manufacturing ISM bounced back in February (+1.3 points to 49.5) and even if it fell short of breaking the 50-threshold, its most forward-looking components (production and new orders) have been above that mark for two consecutive months. Additionally this was accompanied lately by an increase of 2.6 points of the employment index (to 48.5). Admittedly, the decline in the non-manufacturing ISM is bad news, but not a huge concern as the PMI remains well above the 50-threshold (53.4) with strong readings in "production" and "new orders" indices (respectively 57.8 and 55.5 in February). Over the last two months, the largest contributor to the seemingly deteriorating sentiment in the non-manufacturing sector has been employment. That index fell by 6.6 points from December to February coming down below 50 (49.7) for the first time in two years. The decline in the job component explains roughly half of the fall in the composite index since last November and two thirds over the last two months. Without that set-back the non-manufacturing ISM would still be around 55. This development does not just come at odd with the trend in production and new orders components. It is also quite difficult to reconcile it with actual employment data.

In the first two months of 2016, the non-manufacturing sector added a monthly average 204k positions, just slightly less than in 2015 (227k per month) when the employment component of the non-manufacturing ISM was 56.1. Such a drop in the job index already happened in the past without materialising in payrolls, proving inconsequential. In February 2014, it fell 8.6 points to 47.7. Over the previous three months, payrolls had indeed been soft but they strongly rebounded as soon as March 2014 without recording any weakening thereafter. Smoothing monthly developments for both payrolls and the ISM component helps get a better idea of the relationship between the two (Chart 1). Here, the current development rather than signalling an incoming slowdown looks like illustrating the correction of sentiment that was overly optimistic in 2015 and announcing stronger job creations that were actually implemented.

As for prices, the acceleration is obvious (Chart 2). In January, the annual rate of consumer price inflation was 1.4%, the highest rate in fifteen months. Part of the acceleration (from 0.1% in 2015) is due to

Survey realigning with hard data....

— Payrolls (m/m, mm12) ; — Fitted by the employment component of the non-manufacturing ISM

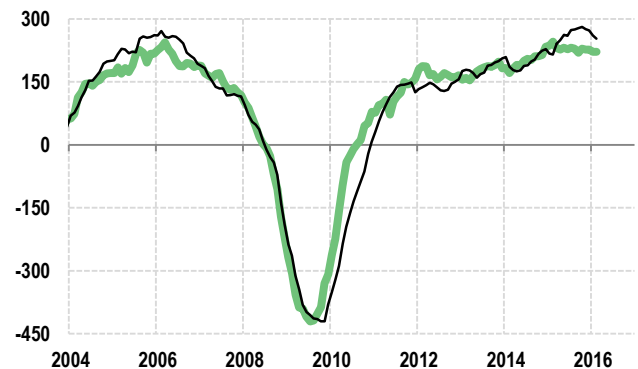


Chart 1

Sources: BLS, ISM, BNPP Economic Research

Inflation rebounds

Year-on-year rate of increase, %

— Core CPI ; — Market-based core PCE
--- Augmented" core CPI ; --- Dallas Fed Trimmed Mean PCE

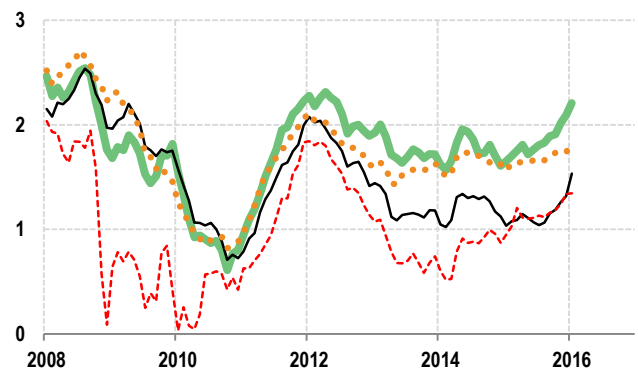


Chart 2

Sources: BEA, BLS, Dallas Fed, BNPP Economic Research

base effects affecting energy prices: the energy CPI was down by "just" 6.5% y/y in January versus -16.7% in 2015. But excluding food and energy, consumer prices are also firming, their year-on-year rate of growth coming up from an average of 1.7% in early 2015 to 2% in end-2015 and 2.2% in February 2016. The preferred measure of the Fed, i.e. the price index for personal consumption expenditures (PCE) also exhibits signs of firming: the headline index, at 1.3% y/y in January, runs at the fastest pace since October 2014 and the core annual rate of inflation (1.7%) reached its highest in eighteen months. Details are actually even better-looking, as the marked-based core PCE – that measures the price of spending actually borne by consumers – was up 1.5% y/y in January, the fastest since



November 2012¹. Other measures for inflation also point to accelerating prices, as the Trimmed Mean measure from the Dallas Fed² (the 6-month rate was 1.9% in January, the fastest since spring 2012) and our own augmented-core index³ that currently is up by the highest rate since fall 2012. As the dollar stabilises (as well as oil prices), downward pressures on prices should keep on abating, which is illustrated by the recent strong rebound in market-based measures of inflation expectations (Chart 3).

On top of that, the February softness in wages does not seem a reversal of a trend (Chart 4): first, over the last few months, hourly earnings proved quite volatile⁴ from one month to the other, and it is best to smooth developments. Second, while the usually watched measure of earnings indeed slowed from 2.5% y/y to 2.2% between January and February, the measure that we do prefer (average hourly earnings for non-supervisory production workers in the private sector) did not slow that much: +2.4% in February versus +2.5% in January. Additionally, the softness is concentrated in a few sectors: within the eighteen industries, nine were recording wage growth below 2% in 2014, a number that decreased to seven in 2015 and to only four in February 2016. Finally, the Atlanta Fed measure of median wage growth (wage growth tracker) is picking up, running above 3% for the latest three months (Chart 4). The accuracy of that measure is obviously open to debate, as it focuses on the continuously full-time employed and thus helps to control for the effects of the demographic evolution of the labour force⁵.

That mix looks like opening the window for another Fed rate hike. In the end, the decision lies in FOMC members' appraisal of risks. For some, the asymmetry of risks at the zero-lower bound (ZLB) is reason for patience⁶. Some still are confident that inflation is on the path towards the 2% objective in the medium term: it will just take a little longer than they previously thought. Most of them seem to agree that financial turbulences did not affect their assessment of the economic outlook.

Under the hypotheses that 1/ the Fed really is keen on getting away, both as far as possible and as fast as possible, from the ZLB and

¹Admittedly, there were some base effects at play: the month-on-month increase a year earlier had been weak (+0.005%), while it was particularly strong in January 2016 (+0.22%), and some deceleration in the coming months can be expected and should thus be overlooked.

²The idea is to trim PCE inflation from the most volatile components in a given month. Instead of an index that always excludes the same component(s), the trimmed-mean measure excludes each month the 24% components that decreased the most and the 31% that increased the most. See "Trimmed Mean PCE Inflation" Jim Dolmas, Research Department Working Paper 0506, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, July 25th, 2005.

³It applies to US data the Bank of Canada's preferred measure of inflation, which excludes, from the headline CPI, fruit, vegetables, gasoline, fuel oil, natural gas, homeowner equivalent rent of primary residence, inter-city transportation and tobacco products.

⁴Both January and October were strong months, coming after and before soft ones. If that pattern were to continue, the y/y rate of growth of earnings would rebound above 2.5% in March.

⁵See "What's up with wage growth?" Mary C. Daly, Bart Hobijn and Benjamin Pyle, FRBSF Economic Letter, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, March 7th, 2016.

⁶A further deceleration in prices might push the economy into deflation, with limited tools for the Fed to reverse the outcome. On the flip side, an unexpected acceleration in prices would leave inflation not that high while the Fed has a long experience of curbing such a development.

It's all about oil....

— Inflation expectations (from 5y TIPS, %)
— West Texas Intermediate (USD/Bbl, r.h.s.)

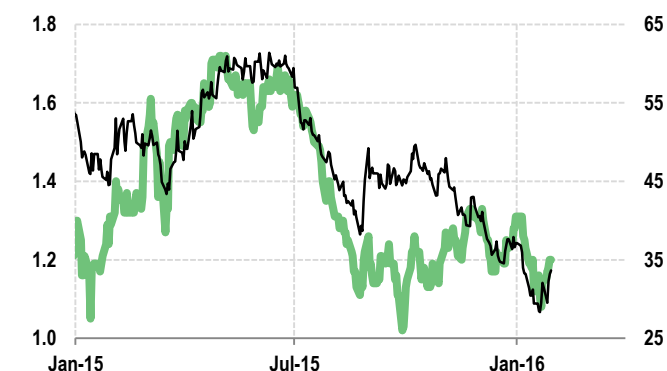


Chart 3

Source: MacroBond

Firming wages

Year-on-year rate of increase, 3-month moving average, %

— Atlanta Fed Measure of Median Wage Growth (Usually Full-Time)
— Average hourly earnings, non-supervisory production workers, private sector

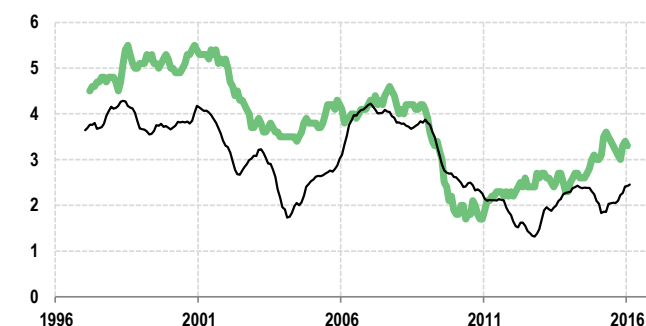


Chart 4

Source: BLS, Atlanta Fed

2/ financial markets are to keep on being quite shaky in the coming months (under a mix of uncertainty about the global economy and decreased liquidity) and the March window could be close by June, one would indeed expect a 25 basis points increase in the Fed Fund Target range (to 0.50%-0.75%) on March 16th.

Under the hypothesis that the December hike was a close-call and that the ones who (perhaps reluctantly) voted for the move might not be as cooperative in March, you might expect a status quo. The two Governors who probably were then the most sceptical (Lael Brainard and Daniel K. Tarullo) about the opportunity to start normalising policy could choose to dissent a hike. Such a threat could be reason for the FOMC to choose prudence. The fact that St. Louis Fed President James Bullard, usually seen as a moderate Hawk, has argued in late February that "declines in inflation expectations and a reduced risk of asset price bubbles likely give the FOMC more leeway in its normalization program" is another element to expect a status quo.



Eurozone

The ECB changes gear

- The ECB unveiled a new easing package in March. It includes a 10bp cut in the deposit facility rate, an increase of EUR 20 bn in the volume of asset purchases under QE and the launch of four new long-term refinancing operations at very favourable terms.
- Although called TLTRO II, those new operations significantly differ from the previous ones. In particular, loan dynamics will determine the cost of funding, not the potential take-up as it was the case with TLTRO I. The interest rate will fluctuate between the refi rate and the deposit facility rate, which means that borrowing costs could turn negative for banks whose net lending exceeds a benchmark.
- During the press conference, Mario Draghi stated that the lower bound of the policy rates has been hit. This triggered a sharp increase in the euro exchange rate and of the short-end of the yield curve.
- This marks a shift in the ECB policy which will now focus on unconventional tools, namely credit easing and quantitative easing.

In January, Mario Draghi announced that ECB monetary policy stance could be reconsidered in March. Indeed it was, and significantly: the main refinancing rate and marginal lending rate were both reduced by 5 basis points, to 0% and 0.25%, respectively. The deposit facility rate (DFR) was reduced by 10 basis points to -0.4%.

As to unconventional tools, the ECB also increased the size of its quantitative easing programme. The pace of monthly asset purchases was raised to EUR 80 bn, from EUR 60 bn previously. To address the potential shortage of securities, non-bank investment-grade corporate bonds were added to the list of eligible assets. The Central bank also raised the issuer share limits for purchases of bonds issued by eligible international organisations and multilateral development banks from 33% to 50%.

Lastly, the ECB announced four new long-term refinancing operations, one per quarter between June 2016 and March 2017. Although called TLTRO II, those new operations significantly differ from the previous ones. First, each of them will have a maturity of 4 years. Second, banks will be able to borrow up to 30% of the stock of eligible loans as at 31 January 2016 and not based on the evolution of net lending relative to a benchmark as it was the case for TLTRO I (excluding the first two). Loan dynamics will determine the cost of funding of TLTRO II. It will fluctuate between the refi rate and the deposit facility rate, which means that borrowing costs could be negative for banks whose lending exceeds a benchmark. This would reduce the penalty created by the negative deposit facility rate for banks with major liquidity surpluses and/or that have issued loans at floating rates,

■ EUR/USD

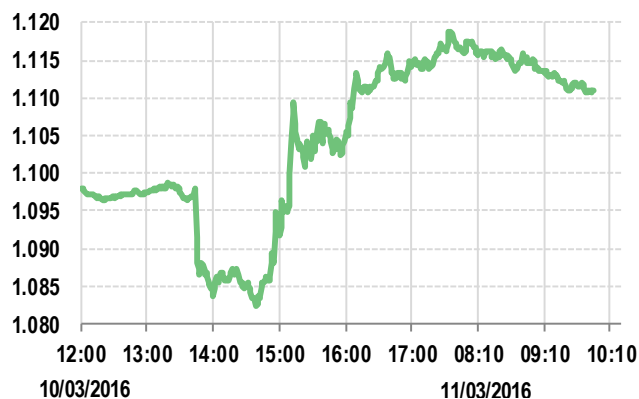


Chart 1

Sources : Bloomberg, BNP Paribas

By reducing the deposit facility rate again, the ECB is putting downward pressure on money market rates. The impact on the exchange rate is much more mixed to say the least. The euro depreciated against the dollar when the measures were first announced, but then appreciated strongly when Mr. Draghi stated during the press conference that the lower bound of the policy rates has been hit (see chart). The exchange rate is particularly sensitive to future short-term rate expectations. Once policy rates have reached a floor, they can only remain stable or rise. This also explains the upturn in the short end of the yield curve. This will make QE easier to implement though. Indeed, the ECB cannot buy bonds with a yield below the DFR. The announcement of Thursday has considerably reduced their number.

The main information of the press conference was that, in the future, ECB monetary policy will focus on unconventional tools, namely *credit easing* and *quantitative easing*. The ECB is no longer seeking to lower the euro, as was the case since mid-2014. This should reassure some other central banks, who could fear that the ECB would venture too far into negative territory, forcing them to follow the same path.

Even so, financial and monetary conditions should remain very accommodative. Long-term rates – which are the most pertinent for the real economy – will remain low over the long term thanks to the increase in the QE size, which should also reinforce portfolio rebalancing towards credit.

Overall the March easing package is positive. It should bolster the ongoing recovery. It remains to be seen whether this will suffice to trigger a lasting increase in inflation expectations, which is vital for the objective of price stability.



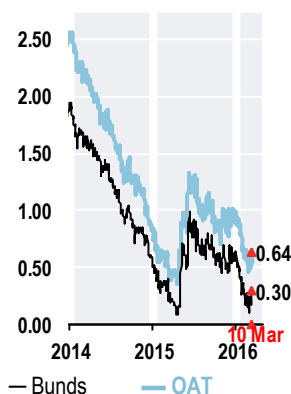
Markets overview

The essentials

Week 7-3 16 > 10-3-16

➤ CAC 40	4 457	➤ 4 350	-2.4 %
➤ S&P 500	2 000	➤ 1 990	-0.5 %
➤ Volatility (VIX)	16.9	➤ 18.1	+1.2 %
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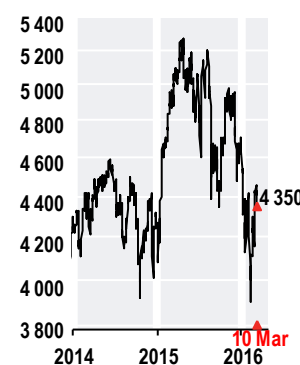
10 y bond yield, OAT vs Bund



Euro-dollar



CAC 40



Money & Bond Markets

Interest Rates		highest' 16		lowest' 16	
€ ECB	0.05	0.05	at 01/01	0.05	at 01/01
Eonia	-0.24	-0.13	at 01/01	-0.25	at 06/01
Euribor 3M	-0.23	-0.13	at 01/01	-0.23	at 10/03
Euribor 12M	-0.03	0.06	at 01/01	-0.03	at 04/03
\$ FED	0.50	0.50	at 01/01	0.50	at 01/01
Libor 3M	0.63	0.64	at 07/03	0.61	at 04/01
Libor 12M	1.21	1.21	at 07/03	1.12	at 12/02
£ BoE	0.50	0.50	at 01/01	0.50	at 01/01
Libor 3M	0.59	0.59	at 15/02	0.58	at 08/03
Libor 12M	1.00	1.07	at 01/01	0.98	at 12/02

At 10-3-16

Yield (%)		highest' 16		lowest' 16	
€ AVG 5-7y	0.23	0.49	at 12/01	0.16	at 01/03
Bund 2y	-0.44	-0.34	at 01/01	-0.56	at 03/03
Bund 10y	0.30	0.63	at 01/01	0.11	at 29/02
OAT 10y	0.64	0.98	at 01/01	0.47	at 29/02
Corp. BBB	2.17	2.50	at 20/01	2.11	at 08/03
\$ Treas. 2y	0.95	1.06	at 01/01	0.64	at 11/02
Treas. 10y	1.94	2.27	at 01/01	1.64	at 11/02
Corp. BBB	4.22	4.50	at 12/02	4.20	at 08/03
£ Treas. 2y	0.46	0.65	at 01/01	0.28	at 08/02
Treas. 10y	1.53	1.96	at 01/01	1.28	at 11/02

At 10-3-16

10y bond yield & spreads

9.12%	Greece	882 pb
2.98%	Portugal	268 pb
1.67%	Spain	137 pb
1.46%	Italy	116 pb
0.74%	Belgium	44 pb
0.69%	Ireland	39 pb
0.64%	France	33 pb
0.57%	Austria	27 pb
0.45%	Finland	14 pb
0.43%	Netherlands	13 pb
0.30%	Germany	

Commodities

Spot price in dollars		lowest' 16		2016(€)	
Oil, Brent	40	28	at 20/01	+8.8%	
Gold (ounce)	1 266	1 062	at 01/01	+16.2%	
Metals, LMEX	2 300	2 049	at 12/01	+1.7%	
Copper (ton)	4 902	4 328	at 15/01	+1.5%	
CRB Foods	341	329	at 11/01	-0.8%	
wheat (ton)	178	146	at 04/01	+12.3%	
Corn (ton)	139	135	at 11/01	-1.4%	

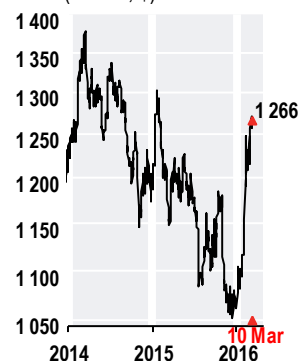
At 10-3-16

Variations

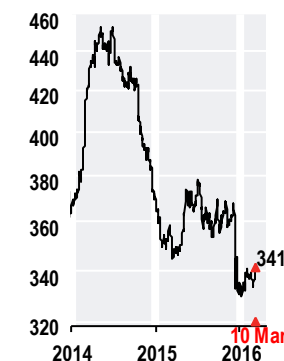
Oil (Brent, \$)



Gold (Ounce, \$)



CRB Foods



Exchange Rates

1€ =		highest' 16		lowest' 16		2016	
USD	1.11	1.13	at 11/02	1.07	at 05/01	+2.6%	
GBP	0.78	0.79	at 24/02	0.73	at 05/01	+5.7%	
CHF	1.10	1.11	at 04/02	1.08	at 29/02	+1.2%	
JPY	126.40	131.84	at 01/02	122.54	at 24/02	-3.3%	
AUD	1.50	1.60	at 11/02	1.47	at 09/03	+0.3%	
CNY	7.26	7.45	at 11/02	6.99	at 05/01	+3.0%	
BRL	4.10	4.53	at 16/02	4.07	at 09/03	-4.7%	
RUB	79.39	91.22	at 11/02	78.24	at 09/03	+0.1%	
INR	74.73	77.50	at 11/02	71.42	at 05/01	+4.0%	

At 10-3-16

Variations

Equity indices

Index		highest' 16		lowest' 16		2016	2016(€)
CAC 40	4 350	4 637	at 01/01	3 897	at 11/02	-6.2%	-6.2%
S&P500	1 990	2 044	at 01/01	1 829	at 11/02	-2.7%	-5.1%
DAX	9 498	10 743	at 01/01	8 753	at 11/02	-11.6%	-11.6%
Nikkei	16 852	19 034	at 01/01	14 953	at 12/02	-11.5%	-8.5%
China*	53	59	at 01/01	48	at 12/02	-10.4%	-12.8%
India*	430	460	at 01/01	393	at 11/02	-5.3%	-8.9%
Brazil*	1 263	1 263	at 10/03	860	at 21/01	+13.2%	+18.8%
Russia*	442	447	at 07/03	331	at 20/01	+7.2%	+6.5%

At 10-3-16

Variations

* Indices MCSI



Economic forecasts

En %	GDP Growth			Inflation			Curr. account / GDP			Fiscal balances / GDP		
	2015	2016 e	2017 e	2015	2016 e	2017 e	2015	2016 e	2017 e	2015	2016 e	2017 e
Advanced	1.8	1.5	1.5	0.3	0.6	1.7						
United States	2.4	1.9	1.5	0.1	1.1	2.2	-2.6	-2.8	-2.9	-2.5	-3.2	-3.3
Japan	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.1	1.8	3.3	3.6	3.3	-4.6	-3.7	-3.2
United Kingdom	2.2	1.7	2.0	0.1	0.4	1.9	-4.5	-4.8	-3.8	-4.1	-3.0	-2.2
Euro Area	1.5	1.3	1.4	0.0	-0.2	1.0	3.0	2.6	2.5	-2.2	-2.0	-1.7
Germany	1.4	1.3	1.5	0.1	-0.0	1.5	8.1	7.7	7.6	0.7	0.3	0.3
France	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.1	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	-0.7	-3.7	-3.5	-3.2
Italy	0.6	1.0	0.9	-0.1	0.8	0.8	2.1	1.8	1.9	-2.7	-2.8	-2.3
Spain	3.2	2.6	2.1	-0.6	-1.0	1.0	0.9	0.6	0.5	-4.8	-3.8	-2.7
Netherlands	1.9	1.8	1.6	0.2	0.3	1.1	9.6	8.7	8.5	-2.1	-2.0	-1.8
Belgium	1.4	1.3	1.6	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.8	1.4	1.7	-2.7	-2.7	-2.5
Portugal	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.5	0.3	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.4	-4.1	-3.0	-2.5
Emerging	4.1	4.1	4.6	6.0	6.4	5.4						
China	6.9	6.4	6.1	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.8	3.1	2.2	-2.4	-3.1	-3.3
India	7.3	7.9	8.1	4.9	5.8	5.2	-1.3	-0.6	-0.6	-4.1	-3.9	-3.5
Brazil	-3.8	-4.0	0.0	9.0	9.1	7.4	-3.4	-1.0	-1.1	-10.3	-10.6	-10.3
Russia	-3.7	-1.8	0.6	15.6	9.1	7.2	5.4	2.8	7.4	-3.9	-4.8	-4.7
World	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.9	3.8						

Source : BNP Paribas Group Economic Research / GlobalMarkets (e: Estimates & forecasts)

Financial forecasts

Interest rates		2015				2016						
End period		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1e	Q2e	Q3e	Q4e	2015	2016e	2017e
US	Fed Funds	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.5	0.25-0.50	0.25-0.50	0.25-0.50	0.25-0.50	0.01	0.25-0.50	0.25-0.50
	3-month Libor \$	0.27	0.28	0.33	0.61	0.62	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.61	0.70	1.05
	10-year T-notes	1.93	2.35	2.03	2.27	1.62	1.75	1.65	1.50	2.27	1.50	1.75
EMU	Refinancing rate	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
	3-month Euribor	0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.13	-0.40	-0.50	-0.60	-0.60	-0.13	-0.60	-0.60
	10-year Bund	0.18	0.77	0.59	0.63	0.25	0.30	0.00	-0.20	0.63	-0.20	-0.20
	10-year OAT	0.42	1.20	0.90	0.98	0.65	0.60	0.30	0.10	0.98	0.10	0.10
	10-year BTP	1.29	2.31	1.73	1.60	1.50	1.45	1.25	0.95	1.60	0.95	0.80
UK	Base rate	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	1.00
	3-month Libor £	0.57	0.58	0.58	0.59	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.59	0.75	1.25
	10-year Gilt	1.58	2.03	1.77	1.96	1.40	1.40	1.47	1.50	1.96	1.50	1.80
Japan	Overnight call rate	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.04	-0.10	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	0.04	-0.30	-0.50
	3-month JPY Libor	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.10	0.00	-0.05	-0.10	0.17	-0.10	-0.25
	10-year JGB	0.40	0.44	0.35	0.25	0.00	-0.10	-0.10	-0.10	0.25	-0.10	-0.25

Exchange rates		2015				2016						
End period		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1e	Q2e	Q3e	Q4e	2015	2016e	2017e
USD	EUR / USD	1.07	1.11	1.12	1.09	1.14	1.16	1.15	1.14	1.09	1.14	1.05
	USD / JPY	120	122	120	120	110	108	110	115	120	115	124
EUR	EUR / GBP	0.72	0.71	0.74	0.74	0.77	0.77	0.74	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.68
	EUR / CHF	1.04	1.04	1.09	1.09	1.12	1.14	1.14	1.16	1.09	1.16	0.01
	EUR/JPY	129	136	134	131	125	125	127	131	131	131	130

Source : BNP Paribas Group Economic Research / GlobalMarkets (e: Estimates & forecasts)



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