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SERVICES PMI AND MANUFACTURING PMI: THE GAP WIDENS AGAIN IN APRIL

In April, the S&P Global composite PMI index for worldwide business activity rose again slightly (+0.1 points) reaching its highest level since July 2023 (52.4). This rise results from the increase in services, with the associated PMI hitting its highest level since July 2023 (52.7, compared to 52.4 in March). Conversely, the manufacturing index fell slightly in April (50.3, -0.3pp), following three months of growth. However, it is still in expansionary territory.

Regarding services, six countries, out of the 13 countries for which April data are available, indicated a monthly increase in the index. There were particularly notable increases in France and Germany, as well as, to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom and the Eurozone. In France, the index hit a highest since May 2023, thereby returning to expansionary territory (51.3, after 48.3 in March). At a global level, the improvement in the services sector came hand in hand with an increase in the "new export orders" component and a decrease in the "output price" and "input price" components, which is good news. However, the situation was not completely rosy, as the "employment" component deteriorated, dipping below 50.

Focussing on the manufacturing PMI, 20 countries (out of the 31 for which April data are available) indicated a decline in business climate (while 10 reported an improvement), as a result of the deterioration in the "new orders" and "production" components, most notably in the USA, France, Italy, Ireland, Greece, the United Kingdom and Indonesia. In the Eurozone, the index dipped again, sinking further into contraction territory. The "input price" component rose again in April, particularly in Austria, Germany and Brazil. The global employment index fell slightly to 50, dragged down by South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Ireland and Italy. Conversely, the index rose sharply in France and New Zealand, as well as, to a lesser extent, in Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and Japan. One of the key developments in April was the improvement in the Dutch manufacturing index, which hit its highest level since August 2022, driving it back into expansionary territory again (51.3, v. 49.7 in March).

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