

Market Comment | Volatile end of quarter in financial markets

Global Financial Markets Unit
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- **Mixed labour market data in the US.** US jobless claims rose unexpectedly in the week ended 26 March (276K; consensus: 265K) and continuing claims declined in the week ended 19 March against estimates of increase (to 2173K from 2180K; consensus: 2200K). On another front, the Chicago purchasing managers' index rose by more than expected (by 2.9 points to 53.6; consensus: 50.7).
- **Services and core inflation increased, pushed by Germany.** Inflation increased by 0.1 pp to -0.1% YoY in March, due to the significant rise of services prices, which resulted in an increase of core inflation to 0.9% YoY. Beyond the volatility of services prices during the last two months, we still expect subdued and stable core inflation, while oil prices will keep annual inflation rates negative until summer. By country, French CPI preliminary data showed the deterioration remaining unchanged at -0.2% YoY (consensus: -0.1%), in Spain the decrease also remained stable without surprises (at -0.8% YoY) and Italian CPI harmonized declined more than expected (by -0.3%YoY; consensus: -0.2%). On another front, German retail sales fell unexpectedly in February (by -0.4% MoM; consensus: +0.4%). ([see](#))
- **Evans reinforces the probability of two rate hikes this year.** Chicago Fed president Charles Evans reiterated that within this year there could be two interest rate hikes, "Given the economy we're looking at, it would be two rate hikes this year," he said. According to Evans, the first one could be in the June FOMC meeting, underpinned by the improvement in the labour market and the US economy's growth.
- **Turkey's GDP growth accelerated to 5.7% YoY in 4Q15, higher than market expectations of a 5% increase.** Thus, 2015 GDP growth came in at 4%, up from 3% in 2014. Strong private consumption on top of a loose fiscal policy facilitated a close-to-potential growth rate in an environment with heightened global market volatility and a challenging geopolitical and thus uncertain political situation.
- **Volatile end of quarter in financial markets.** High volatility remains in financial markets with the expectations of the US interest rates path and oil price dynamics as main sources of uncertainty. Regarding interest rates, after the dovish tone exhibited by Yellen in Tuesday's speech, the market is awaiting the release of tomorrow's US employment data. Oil prices again suffered significant volatility. Early today, Brent crude stood at USD39.5b, after topping USD41b yesterday and currently is recovering to USD xb (+0.5%). China was also another source of market instability. On the one hand, the PBoC appreciated the currency against USD (+0.2%), diminishing the market's concerns about an abrupt depreciation. On the other hand, S&P cut China's sovereign debt rating outlook to negative from stable. Sovereign debt still has a high rating (AA-) but according to the agency economic and financial risk could affect China's creditworthiness. That said, the impact on risk assets was not very significant. Against this backdrop, European equity markets offset yesterday's gains (Eurostoxx: -1.2% IBEX: -1.7% DAX: -0.8% CAC: -1.3%), dragged down mainly by the energy sector due to the high volatility in oil prices. Meanwhile, US indices remained almost unchanged at the time of writing and Asian markets showed a mixed performance (Nikkei: -0.7% Shanghai: +0.1%). On bond markets, US treasury inched down slightly

(10Y: -2bps), while European yields stayed almost unaltered. The Spanish risk premium also remained unchanged despite the release of a bigger-than-expected public deficit (5.2% of GDP vs target of 4.2%).

In FX, the USD continued its depreciation trend against other major currencies, triggered by Yellen's dovishness (EUR: +0.42% GBP: +0.12%). EM currencies appreciated again against the US dollar (RUB: +1.6% BRL: +1.4% COP: +0.5% MXN: +0.1% CLP: +1.0%) supported by increasing commodity prices (Brent: +1.2% Wtx: +1.4%). In addition, Turkey's strong GDP growth had a mild impact on Turkish financial variables (10Y bond: -5bps, FX: +0.5% and equity markets: +0.4%).

Update 17.30 CET 31 March, 2015

Table1

*CDS, EMBI & MSCI indices with one day delay

**Credit spread (BAA) with two days delay

***S&P GSCI with one day delay

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