

Market Comment | Risk assets catch their breath after early week rally

Global Financial Markets Unit
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- **Improvement in US core CPI halted.** Slightly worse-than-expected March price data in the US. US core inflation fell slightly in March (by 0.1 bp to 2.2% YoY, previous and consensus: 2.3% YoY) in line with headline inflation, which stood at 0.9% YoY (from: 1.0% in February). US jobless claims dropped by more than expected in the week ended 9 April (253K; consensus: 270K) in line with continuing claims in the week ended 26 March: 2171K from 2191K while the consensus was expecting 2183K.
- **Fed's Lockhart moderated its hawkish tone.** The Atlanta Fed president - who in previous statements had said that the next rate hike could be undertaken in April's meeting - admitted that the latest developments - such as weak inflation and consumer spending - had led him to change his mind regarding the tightening process. He said that the Fed should perhaps hold off raising interest rates again until it is reasonably sure that the 2% inflation target will be reached.
- **Euro zone CPI final data in March were revised upwards,** increasing relative to the previous month (at 0.0%YoY; consensus: -0.1%; previous: -0.2%) and leaving negative territory. Meanwhile, core inflation also increased by 0.2 bps from 0.8% to 1% in March. This was the result of increased prices for services and food, while energy prices and industrial goods continued to drag inflation down. Meanwhile, Italian CPI harmonised remain unchanged in March after a positive revision (at -0.2%YoY; consensus: -0.3%).
- **Bank of England holds interest rate at 0.5%.** BoE members voted to hold the interest rate at the current record low levels (unanimously, for the third meeting in a row). Concerns about weak inflation and moderate growth motivated the decision. Doubts about the value of GBP also weighed "the likelihood that much of the fall in sterling reflects uncertainty surrounding the forthcoming referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union raises questions regarding whether the lower level of sterling will persist and its net economic impact."
- **Risk assets catch their breath after early week rally.** The market consolidated this week's profits, with no significant surprises in macroeconomic data released today, ahead of the publication of China's 1Q16 GDP (which will provide new clues about the slowdown) and this weekend's meeting of major oil producers. The recent rally in oil prices will fade if agreement is not achieved. Regarding this issue, the IEA (International Energy Agency) gave its point of view saying that the market has already priced in a freeze in oil production, so that the gains in oil prices would be extended only if oil producers agreed on an - unlikely - production cut. Despite intraday volatility, prices of the main risky assets changed only moderately against yesterday's: European equity markets remained almost unchanged across the board after yesterday's rally (Eurostoxx: 0.6% IBEX: 0.4% DAX: 0.6% CAC: 0.5%), as did the US indices (S&P: 0.1% Dow: 0.2%), with the worse-than-expected inflation data offsetting the positive effect of the release of better-than-expected quarterly earnings in the financial sector. The Nikkei continue its recovery (+3.2%) on the back of yesterday's hints of new easing measures by the authorities. On bond markets, US treasury yields inched up slightly (10Y:+3 bps). In the same vein, European yields rose, offsetting part

of yesterday falls (GER 10Y:+4 bps FRA 10Y:+5 bps ITA 10Y:+6 bps SPA 10Y:+4 bps POR 10Y:+3 bps) with a narrow increase in peripheral risk premiums. In FX markets, the USD showed a mild appreciation against some major currencies (GBP:-0.42% EUR: -0.15%) while EM currencies remained stable against the US dollar and commodity prices also remained almost unchanged (Brent: +0.3% Wtx: +0.5%).

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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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