

Market Comment | Extended gains in oil prices encourage positive market mood

Global Financial Markets Unit 22 Apr 2016

- Euro zone PMI remains almost unchanged in April, while US manufacturing declines. Euro zone composite PMI remained stable in April (decreasing by 0.1 points to 53.0; BBVAe: 53.2, consensus: 53.3) with both services and manufacturing indices remaining broadly stable. By country, Germany composite PMI declined unexpectedly (by 0.2 to 53.8 BBVAe: 54.0, consensus: 54.2) hampered by the unexpected deterioration in services and despite the improvement in manufacturing. In France, composite PMI rose by more than expected (by 0.5 points to 50.5; BBVAe: 50.1, consensus: 50.2) helped by services, which stopped contracting, while manufacturing activity continued to deteriorate (_see). On the other hand, US manufacturing PMI dropped in April against estimates of an increase (by 0.7 points to 50.8; consensus: 52.0), with new orders declining.
- Oil prices and the ECB meeting were the cornerstones in the financial markets in this past week. The oil producers' meeting in Doha ended without an agreement to freeze oil production at January's levels. Saudi Arabia's opposition to signing an agreement without the participation of Iran was the main obstacle to striking a deal. Initially, the lack of agreement had a strong impact on oil prices, which fell sharply (Brent -6.4% to 41 \$/b and West Texas -7% to 37.55%) but the falls reversed even in the same session -, keeping the upward trend intact. The main drivers behind this week's positive oil prices were encouraging signs from the supply side: 1) smaller-than-expected US oil inventories, and 2) The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicting the biggest output fall in 25 years in non-OPEC countries' production in 2016. Prices ended the week reaching a new high for the year (Brent: 45.9 USD/b WTx: 43.5 USD/b per barrel).
- The other main event during this week was the ECB meeting. As expected, it did not bring any substantial change in monetary policy. The willingness of the monetary authority to use all the instruments available to reach its target (which could include further deposit rate cuts if needed) was unnoticed by markets. On bond markets, yields moved up sharply across the board (GER 10Y: +11ps ITA 10Y: +15 bps SPA 10Y: +10 bps POR 10Y: +12 bps US 10Y: +13 bps). The Greek risk premium narrowed sharply due to increasing expectations of an agreement with European creditors at next week's extraordinary Eurogroup meeting. The European corporate bond index also performed positively after the ECB meeting, as the monetary authorities unveiled details of the corporate bond purchase programme, which suggests that the ECB wishes to provide assurance of a sizable programme, despite the narrow corporate market the high limit of the purchases by ISIN (70%) and the inclusion of insurance companies in the programme as well as all companies established in the euro zone, regardless of where the parent company is located- (iTraxs Europe -5bps in the week and 23bps since March's announcement).
- In equity markets, the high volatility in Chinese financial markets (Shanghai: -3.9%) was not
 enough to derail the recent positive market mood. The negative performance of Chinese stocks may
 be due to both technical factors (profit taking) and fading expectations of further easing measures, after



PBoC Chief Economist Jun Ma said that the improvement shown in the latest macroeconomic data could lead to a slower pace in the implementation of new easing measures. Nonetheless, the rest of the main equity indices rose during last week (Eurostoxx: +2.7% IBEX: +4.4% DAX: +3.0% CAC: +1.5% MIB: +2.5%), with the banking sector extending gains. The Nikkei continued its recovery (+4.3%) helped by the probability of more monetary policy easing and the depreciation of the JPY against the USD.

• **Despite the rebound in commodity prices** (Brent: +5.1% Wtx: -8.7%), EM currencies showed a mixed performance against the US dollar (RUB: +0.1% BRL: -1.6% COP: +1.8% CLP: -0.4% MXN: +0.5%). The USD appreciated in the week against the main developed market currencies with the exception of the GBP (EUR: -0.38% GBP: +1.25% JPY: -2.5%).

FOMC preview:

April's FOMC meeting is the central focus for the week even though we are not expecting another 25 basis point rate increase at this time. Since the March meeting, employment and inflation reports have pointed to continued improvement, and global financial volatility has declined. However, other economic indicators have surprised to the downside, and lingering uncertainties are playing right into the hands of the doves. Last month's meeting revealed that there are some hawkish members making a push to move things along, but there likely won't be enough support for a rate increase until at least June, if not later. Also, markets are not pricing in an April rate hike, so a surprise announcement could cause unwanted financial market disruption. As long as economic data continue to evolve in line with the Fed's expectations and we don't experience another global economic shock, the FOMC could be confident in raising rates by June. Still, a few days can make a world of difference, with the Fed more willing to hold off on further action if data surprises to the downside. The "asymmetry" argument - where the FOMC has less wiggle room to adjust if economic data prove to be weaker-than-expected but can move quicker on the upside - supports a more cautious strategy at this time. Therefore, we continue to expect the next 25 basis point rise in June and another towards the end of the year, closing out 2016 at 1.0%.

Update 17.3 CET 22 April, 2016 Table 1



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*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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