

Market Comment | Oil prices and central banks' expected path drove markets this week

Global Financial Markets Unit
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- **July US economic data released today missed expectations**, as wholesale prices fell by more than expected (-0.3% MoM, consensus 0.2% MoM, prior 0.4% MoM) and core retail sales fell (-0.3% MoM, consensus 0.2%, prior 0.9%), pointing to weaknesses in the US economy and weighing on expectations of a Fed interest rate hike, which fell to 16% from 20%. At the time of publication, the USD had depreciated significantly (DXY -0.52%), while the US government bond yield had decreased signally (2Y US -6 bps)
- **The news flows about oil supply and demand brought a change in the current trend in oil prices**, which reached US\$40 per barrel. Rumours about an informal meeting of OPEC members to rebalance the oil market were reinforced by yesterday's speech by Saudi Arabia's oil minister, who showed its commitment to this goal: "We are, in Saudi Arabia, watching the market closely, and if there is a need to take any action to help the market rebalance, then we would, of course in cooperation with OPEC and major non-OPEC exporters". Against this backdrop oil prices climbed during the week (+4.5%), so the prospect of future oil supply restraint was able to offset the bigger-than-expected oil stockpiles this week, among others, by record supply from Saudi Arabia. **Uncertainty regarding the geopolitical situation between Russian and Ukraine during the last few days were have passed unnoticed in markets** so far, but taking into account the sharp effect of the previous episode (summer 2014) in financial markets, the developments regarding this dispute will be closely followed by investors.
- The change of trend in oil prices, positive economic indicators in the EZ (German GDP Q2 better than expected and euro zone GDP met expectations) and the expected dovish tone of central banks allowed risk assets to gain some traction across the board despite the somewhat disappointing economic indicators from China during this week, in a context in which the BoJ and the BoE have recently shown their willingness to do more if necessary. Likewise, despite the positive US employment data last week, expectations of an interest rate hike were lower, ahead of the **Jackson Hole monetary policy symposium on 26 August, where investors expect central banks' officials to keep the current monetary policy stance broadly unchanged.**
- Against this environment, **bond markets moved as follows this week: Government yields went down across the board during the week** (10Y US -10 bps, 10Y GER -4 bps), led by peripheral bonds (10Y SPA -8 bps, 10Y POR -15 bps) and UK (10Y -10 bps), extending the trend triggered by the asset purchase programme announced by the BoE last week, and although by the BoE encountered difficulties in meeting its demand due to bond scarcity, finally that situation seems to be fading.
- **This week's downward trend in the USD dollar extended on the back of today's economic indicators** (EURUSD +0.95%, USDJPY +0.71%). Apart from that, the ongoing rebound in commodity prices led by oil prices contributed to ease some pressure on emerging currencies, which registered a **huge appreciation during this week**, led by those closely correlated with oil prices: MXN +3.2%, COP

+5%, CLP +1.6%, TRY +1.7%, RUB 1.3%

- Meanwhile, **the three main US equity indices, S&P, Dow Jones and Nasdaq hovered around their historical highest levels.** European markets also tracked the mood (Euro Stoxx 2.3%, Ibex +1.9%, Cac +1.9%), the improvement being led by Dax (+3.2% during the week), which for the first time this year showed a positive year-to-date performance.

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Table 1

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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