# WEEKLY UPDATE

# A pick-up in eurozone growth

At its March meeting, the European Central Bank (ECB) published a sharp downgrade to its GDP growth forecasts, slashing the 2019 projection from 1.7% to 1.1%. Coming on the heels of its decision to halt asset purchases at the end of last year, the announcement raised fears that the economy might not withstand this reduction in monetary support.

Market economists have also steadily downgraded their growth expectations in recent months. In the event, the figures published this week by Eurostat came as a welcome surprise – growth reached 0.4% quarter on quarter (QoQ), a marked improvement from Q3's 0.1% and Q4's 0.2% and above the consensus estimate of 0.3%.

Encouragingly, the country-level data suggests that growth has begun to broaden. Italy emerged from recession, with GDP above expectations at 0.2% QoQ. Spain continues to outstrip its neighbours, up 0.7% QoQ, its fastest pace since Q4 2017. And France registered the third consecutive quarter of steady 0.3% growth. German GDP data won't be published until May 15 but the aggregate eurozone figures suggest its growth is likely to come in around 0.4% QoQ.

The breakdown figures we have so far suggest that growth remains quite well balanced. Private consumption was robust in France (+0.4% QoQ) as was business investment (+0.5%), although the contribution from net trade was negative. The same trends prevailed in Spain, where the 1.5% QoQ bounce in investment was a stand-out. Italy was the outlier, with a negative contribution from domestic demand while net trade was positive.

In manufacturing, the recent weakness in Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) surveys reflects a combination of factors: the slowdown in global trade, compounded by the ongoing US-China trade war, the unresolved Brexit saga and the aftermath of new tighter emission standards for automobiles. The European Commission's April economic sentiment survey tells broadly the same story – declines in production expectations, order books and stocks have pushed industry sentiment to the lowest level since 2013.

However, the generally strong performance from household spending confirms the message from recent PMI Services surveys, where confidence has remained high. One contributing factor has surely been the continued decline in the unemployment rate – at 7.7% in March, it stands at a decade low – which has bolstered household confidence.

In this context, credit growth in the euro area remains solid. Lending to households did slip from 3.3% to 3.2% YoY in March, but February did mark the best pace of credit growth in 10 years. Growth in the broadest monetary aggregate ticked higher in March, from 4.3% YoY to 4.5%, while the narrowest measure (notes and cash) also accelerated. As shown on the right-hand chart below, narrow money tends to act as a leading indicator of turns in the business cycle – the recent improvement augurs well for coming quarters.

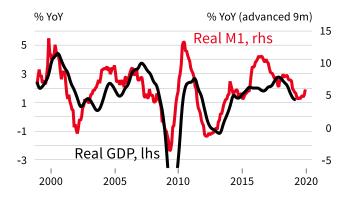
Bottom line. Inflation remains low, which should encourage the ECB to stick with accommodative monetary policy settings. And fiscal policy has been eased across the region, most recently in France. All in all, recent data provide support for our expectation that euro zone growth will improve in the second half of this year.

#### Still close to decade highs

Eurozone loans to households & Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households, % YoY



**Eurozone real M1 growth has picked up this year** *Eurozone real GDP and real M1 money supply* 



Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, Gavekal Research, ECB, Eurostat, March 2019

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Sources: SGPB, Macrobond, ECB, March 2019

### **OUR MACRO-COMMENTS**

### This week and next

- According to preliminary data, Q1 economic growth outpaced expectations (0.4% QoQ against 0.3% forecast) back to Q1 2018 levels after a slump in the second half of 2018.
- The March unemployment rate fell to 7.7%, its lowest in more than a decade and better than consensus expectations for no change from February's 7.8%.
- The April Manufacturing PMI was confirmed at 47.9, a modest rebound from March. The Commissions' industrial confidence survey deteriorated significantly hitting -4.1 in March, well below the -2.0 expected and February's revised -1.6.

	Next we	ek's key events	Per.	Prev.	Cons.
₿	06 May	Sentix Index	Мау	-0.3	
	06 May	Composite PMI	Apr (F)	51.3	51.3
	06 May	Retail Sales YoY	Mar	2.8%	

- April ISM Manufacturing surprised on the downside at 52.8, well below March's 55.3 and expectations of 55.0 and the weakest level since October 2016. However, core capital goods orders rose 1.4% MoM in March, fuelling hopes of better capex.
- The Federal Reserve held interest rates unchanged at 2.25% to 2.5%, given ongoing economic growth, a strong labour market and only "transitory" weakness in inflation.
- Q1 unit labour costs declined -0.9% QoQ, thanks to a strong rebound in non-farm productivity (+3.6% QoQ vs +2.2% expected).

	Next we	ek's key events	Per.	Prev.		
▦	07 May	Consumer credit	Mar	15.19bn		
	09 May	PPI Demand YoY	Apr	2.2%		
	10 May	CPI YoY	Apr	1.9%		

- While policymakers voted unanimously to keep rates steady at 0.75%, the Bank of England warned that investors are underestimating the risk the central bank might raise interest rates.
- UNITED KINGDOM According to Nationwide, house prices rose 0.9% YoY in April, up from +0.7% in March and the fastest pace since November.
  - As expected, Manufacturing PMI declined to 53.1 in April from March's 13-month high of 55.1.
  - Driven by a pick-up in housebuilding, April Construction PMI returned to expansionary territory, reaching a three-month high at 50.5, above forecasts and March's 49.7.

	Next wee	ek's key events	Per.	Prev.	Cons.	
₽	07 May	Halifax house prices MoM	Apr	-1.6%		
	10 May	GDP YoY	Mar (P)	1.4%	1.8	
	10 May	Industrial output YoY	Mar	0.1%	0.5	

- China's April Caixin PMI manufacturing declined unexpectedly to 50.2 after March's positive 50.8 surprise.
- Mainly thanks to higher output and new business growth, Russia's manufacturing PMI remains in expansionary territory, albeit lower than March (51.8 vs. 52.8).
- ASIA & EMERGING COUNTRIES • Despite an unexpected pick up, Indonesian inflation at 2.8% YoY remains within the central bank's target range of 2.5-4.5%.
  - India's Manufacturing PMI for April fell more than expected to 8month low of 51.8 - new orders and output have dipped since national elections got under way.

Next wee	e <b>k's key events</b> Japan: Manufacturing PMI	Per.	Prev.	Cons.
07 May	Japan: Manufacturing PMI	Apr	49.5	
08 May	China: Trade balance USD	Apr	32bn	33bn
09 May	China: CPI YoY	Apr	2.3%	2.5%

Sources: DataStream, Bloomberg, 02 May 2019. Note: YoY = year-on-year; QoQ = quarter-on-quarter; MoM = month-on-month, P = preliminary figure, A = advanced figure, F = final figure, seasonally adjusted, PMI = Purchasing Manager's Index.

Cons. 17.00bn 2.3% 2.1%

### Our 3-month targets for currencies and commodities

	Thursday close	3mth target		
EUR/USD	1.12	1.11		
GBP/USD	1.30	1.31		
EUR/CHF	1.14	1.11		ges made to our targets this week.
USD/JPY	111.5	110		C C
Brent	\$70.2	\$78		
Gold (oz.)	\$1268	\$1250	Forecast figures are no	ot a reliable indicator



### **THIS WEEK'S Q&A**

### Is there still upside for oil prices?

Heightened and complex geopolitical risks in Iran, Libya, and Venezuela have pushed Brent prices above \$70 per barrel. In this week's Q&A, we look at the current situation in these three countries and the impact on oil production.

#### Is time up for Iranian oil imports?

President Trump unexpectedly announced an end to the waivers he'd granted to some importers of Iranian crude such as China, Turkey, India or South Korea, further escalating tensions with Iran. Although several countries may decide to ignore the US sanctions, some may prefer to comply. For example, China might decide that compliance could help finalise the ongoing trade negotiations with the US.

We expect the end of the waivers to seriously slash Iranian exports by some -0.7mbd.

The risk to our scenario would be retaliatory measures from Iran, most notably a blockage of the Ormuz straits by Iran through which transit much of the Persian Gulf oil exports.

#### How would Libya's oil fare in the event of a guerilla war?

Haftar's surprise assault on Tripoli has apparently failed to spread beyond the capital so far. However, full-fledged conflict in the region could lead to civil war, which could take output back to 2016 levels, a drop of -0.7mbd.

Nevertheless, Haftar's recent talks with Donald Trump have given him international recognition and he may therefore choose to avoid cuts in exchange for greater US support.

# What is the impact of the current unrest in Venezuela on the oil market?

The opposition party and US sanctions have so far failed to attract sufficient backing from high-ranking officers to oust President Maduro. He has strong backing from Russia which has repeatedly warned the US against any military intervention and has pushed Maduro to take on the opposition more decisively.

**Recent signs of tightening, but still room for oil to run** *Crude oil, Brent spot price, FOB North Sea (in USD)* 



With foreign military intervention highly unlikely, we think the window of opportunity for rapid regime change might be closing. We expect oil output to deteriorate further – production infrastructure is creaking and many foreign operators have pulled out.

We conservatively assume a decline of -0.1mbd, although there remains a risk production could fall towards 2002 levels (-0.3mbd).

#### How will other producers react?

Any worsening of the situation in Iran, Libya or Venezuela could send Brent prices above \$80/b. Given the risks this might pose for global demand, we believe that OPEC+ will attempt to keep prices firm around \$70-80/b.

Strong OPEC+ discipline since December 2018 has resulted in a build-up of spare capacity (~2.5mbd). Last year, OPEC+ may have overreacted in hiking output, pushing prices lower in Q4. We believe they will try to avoid making the same mistake this year. We expect OPEC to announce +0.6mbd and Russia +0.2mbd at the upcoming June 26 meeting.

Brent prices above \$70/b would also be satisfactory for US producers. In addition, their ability to increase production remains constrained by bottlenecks in pipeline and refinery infrastructure. We expect the US and Canada to raise their output by +1.1mbd towards the end of 2019.

#### **Bottom line**

In the near term, Brent prices could rise further, perhaps towards \$78/b. However, we expect oil to revert to the \$65/70 trading range by spring 2020.



# MARKET PERFORMANCE

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Interest rates	Last	1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth	Government bonds	ŧ	1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth
EONIA (EUR) -36 bp		0 bp	-	0 bp	-1 bp	0 bp	United States (3-7yr	)	-0.1%	-	1.3%	1.5%	4.8%
3mth Euribor (EUR) -31 bp		0 bp	-	0 bp	0 bp	2 bp	United Kingdom (3-7y	/r)	-0.2%	+	0.3%	0.5%	2.3 %
3mth Libor (USD)	257 bp	-2 bp	ŧ	-17 bp	-24 bp	20 bp	Germany (3-7yr)		-0.1%	ŧ	0.3%	0.5%	1.8%
3mth Libor (GBP)	81 bp	-1 bp	+	-10 bp	-10 bp	11 bp	Japan (3-7yr)		0.0%	-	-0.1%	0.0%	0.2 %
10-year US Treasury bond	255 bp	2 bp	•	-14 bp	-14 bp	-41 bp							
10-year German bond	2 bp	3 bp	•	-14 bp	-22 bp	-56 bp	Equities*	Last	1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth
10-year French bond	37 bp	0 bp		-20 bp	-34 bp	-43 bp	MSCI AC World	521	-0.1%		6.8%	15.4%	5.5%
10-year UK bond	119 bp	3 bp	1	-6 bp	-8 bp	-27 bp	Eurostoxx 50	3,489	0.4%	1	11.2 %	17.8%	1.9%
							DAX	12,345	0.5%	•	10.4 %	16.9%	-3.6%
Credit		1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth	CAC 40	5,539	0.2%	1	11.5 %	18.3%	3.8%
BAML EURO Corp. IG		0.1%	•	2.8%	3.9%	3.1%	S&P 500	2,918	-0.3%	ŧ	8.3%	17.1%	12.9%
BAML EURO Corp HY		0.0%	-	4.3%	6.6%	2.6%	FTSE 100	7,351	-1.1%	ŧ	6.4%	11.1%	1.8%
BAML GBP Corp IG		0.0%	-	2.9%	5.0%	4.3%	SMI	9,746	0.5%	•	11.0 %	18.5 %	12.9 %
BAML US IG		-0.1%	-	3.3%	5.3%	6.5%	Торіх	1,618	-0.2%	+	4.6%	9.5 %	-6.5 %
BAML US HY		0.0%	-	3.9%	8.8%	6.6%	IBOV Brazil	95,528	-1.1%	+	-2.4%	8.7%	13.0 %
BAML Global EM Sov. Extern	nal Plus	0.6%	1	1.4%	5.7%	3.9%	MICEX Russia *	2,575	0.6%	1	2.1%	9.2%	11.7 %
							MSCI EM	1,079	0.2%	•	3.2%	12.3%	-3.6%
Exchange rates	Last	1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth	SENSEX 30 India	38,981	0.7%	1	7.1%	8.3%	12.2 %
EUR/USD	1.12	0.4%	•	-2.4%	-2.5%	-6.5%	Hang Seng (H-K)	29,944	1.3%	•	7.6%	16.3 %	0.9%
EUR/CHF	1.14	0.3%	1	-0.1%	1.2 %	-4.6%	Shanghaï Composite	3,078	-1.5%	+	17.6 %	23.4%	-0.1%
GBP/USD	1.30	1.1%	•	-0.4 %	2.2%	-4.0%							
USD/JPY	111.5	-0.1%	٠	1.8%	1.8%	1.5%	Commodities	Last	1wk		3mth	YTD	12mth
USD/BRL	3.97	0.3%	•	8.4%	2.2%	11.7%	Brent	\$70.2	-6.6%	+	13.0 %	32.2 %	-3.5 %
USD/CNY	6.73	-0.1%	+	-0.2 %	-2.1%	5.8%	Gold	\$1,268	-0.9%	+	-3.8%	-1.0%	-2.9%
USD/RUB	65.4	1.1%	•	-0.1 %	-6.2%	2.1%	Copper	\$6,166	-3.0%	+	0.8%	3.7%	-9.1%
Source: DataStroom on 02 May 2010													

Source: DataStream, on 02 May 2019.

1wk = 1-week change, 3mth = 3-month change, 12mth = 12-month change, YTD = year-to-date change, YoY = year-on-year change, BAML = Bank of America Merrill Lynch, JPM = JP Morgan, IG = Investment Grade, EM = emerging markets. \* Price return for MICEX equity index. Equities; total return in local currency. Government bonds = 3-7-year returns. Figures are rounded.



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