

Market Comment | Oil price volatility is driving equity markets

Global Financial Markets Unit
21 Mar 2016

- **Negative macroeconomic data in the US.** US existing home sales decreased by more than estimated in February (to USD5.08M from USD5.47M; consensus: USD5.31M). Meanwhile, the Chicago Fed national activity index dropped sharply in February and fell into negative territory (to -0.29 points from 0.41; consensus: 0.25).
- **EZ Consumer confidence fell 0.9 point to -9.7 in March.** The flash estimate was below market expectations (consensus: -8.3) and it is the lowest reading within more than a year (Since December 2014).
- **Fed's Lacker sees inflation at 2%.** Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond President Jeffrey Lacker said that when energy prices bottom out and the US dollar halts its appreciation, inflation will reach the 2 percent target. "I am reasonably confident that, barring subsequent shocks, inflation will move back to the FOMC's 2 percent objective over the medium term," Lacker said.
- **Cœuré recalls the requirement for fiscal reforms.** ECB's Benoît Cœuré said that "ambitious reforms are still needed in most of the euro area economies, given the low growth potential and high structural unemployment". He signalled that the ECB monetary policy by itself without fiscal reforms was unlikely to be sufficient to bring about recovery in the European economy.
- **Oil price volatility is driving equity markets.** The week after the FOMC's meeting - in which Fed revised downwards its interest rate pace forecast- has started with high volatility in financial markets, as usual during recent weeks, conditioned by commodity prices. Last week's dollar depreciation reinforced the positive trend in commodity prices that remains today, but it is following an erratic path due to fears of increasing oil supply (there was the first increase in US oil rigs since December 15). On another front, the Chinese authorities announced a relaxation of conditions for financing brokerage activities that could reinforce "margin purchases": On the one hand it could contribute to preventing further falls in equity prices - in fact it was well received by Chinese equity indices (Shanghai: +2.15% Shenzhen: +2.68%), but it also could re-fuel fears about the increasing leveraging and bubbles in Chinese equity markets. Developed equity markets were generally hampered early this morning by the energy sector, and main European indices were down by around 1%. The midday oil price recovery, coupled with a relatively positive opening in the US contributed to smothering the falls in the main European equity indices (Eurostoxx: -0.4% IBEX: -0.4% CAC:-0.9% DAX: 0%). In addition, Japan markets remained closed today due to the Spring Equinox Day. On bond markets, US treasury yields inched up (2Y: +2 bps 10Y: +3 bps) - halting last week's falls due to the FOMC meeting - as did European yields, which rose across core and peripherals countries (by around 1-2 bps). Consequently, peripheral risk premiums remained almost unchanged. On FX markets, the USD recovered slightly from its recent falls against other major currencies (EUR: -0.21% GBP: -0.67% JPY: -0.12%). EM currencies showed a mixed performance

against the US dollar (RUB: +0.5% BRL: +0.5% COP: 0.0% CLP: -0.1% MXN: +0.1%) despite the slight increase in commodity prices (Brent: +0.4% Wtx: +1.8% Copper: +0.7%).

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Table1

Current level and changes at daily, weekly, monthly and annual frequencies

Debt markets (changes in bp)

US Treasury

US 2yr	3.06 (2.0) (17) (136)
US 5yr	1.96 (2.0) (17) (140)
US 10yr	1.9 (2.0) (17) (130)

Japan

JP 2yr	0.08 (0.0) (0) (11) (20)
JP 5yr	0.18 (0.3) (2) (15)
JP 10yr	0.2 (0.4) (3) (14)

Germany

DE 2yr	0.48 (0.4) (2) (6) (15)
DE 5yr	0.3 (0.3) (2) (5) (12)
DE 10yr	0.2 (0.4) (1) (4)

France

FR 2yr	0.42 (0.1) (4) (9) (13)
FR 5yr	0.37 (0.1) (4) (10) (12)
FR 10yr	0.3 (0.1) (4) (10) (12)

Italy

IT 2yr	0.38 (0.1) (1) (1)
IT 5yr	0.27 (0.1) (4) (2) (13)
IT 10yr	0.2 (0.1) (4) (2) (13)

Spain

ES 2yr	0.3 (0.1) (4) (2) (13)
ES 5yr	0.2 (0.1) (4) (2) (13)
ES 10yr	0.2 (0.1) (4) (2) (13)

UK

UK 2yr	0.42 (0.1) (4) (9) (13)
UK 5yr	0.37 (0.1) (4) (10) (12)
UK 10yr	0.3 (0.1) (4) (10) (12)

China

CN 2yr	2.8 (2.4) (1.4) (13) (11)
CN 5yr	3.1 (3.1) (2.1) (13) (11)
CN 10yr	3.8 (3.1) (2.1) (13) (11)

India

IN 2yr	5.1 (5.1) (3.1) (13) (11)
IN 5yr	5.1 (5.1) (3.1) (13) (11)
IN 10yr	5.1 (5.1) (3.1) (13) (11)

South Korea

KR 2yr	1.4 (1.4) (1.2) (13) (11)
KR 5yr	1.4 (1.4) (1.2) (13) (11)
KR 10yr	1.4 (1.4) (1.2) (13) (11)

Indonesia

ID 2yr	7.1 (7.1) (5.1) (13) (11)
ID 5yr	7.1 (7.1) (5.1) (13) (11)
ID 10yr	7.1 (7.1) (5.1) (13) (11)

Country risk (changes in bp)

US investment grade (against Germany)

Japan	29.1 (0.1) (0.2)
France	34.1 (0.1) (0.2)
China	104 (0.1) (0.2)
India	102 (0.1) (0.2)
UK	32.1 (0.1) (0.2)
Italy	31.1 (0.1) (0.2)
Spain	27.1 (0.1) (0.2)
S. Korea	12.1 (0.1) (0.2)

US investment grade (against Germany)

Japan	8 (0.1) (0.1)
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Commodity (changes in percentage)

US investment grade (against Germany)

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Stock markets (changes in percentage)

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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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