

Market Comment | Oil prices drag financial markets down ahead of FOMC and BoJ meetings

Global Financial Markets Unit
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- **US macro data disappoints.** New home sales dropped unexpectedly in March (to 511K from 519K; consensus: 520K), while Dallas Fed manufacturing activity deteriorated unexpectedly in April (by 0.3 points to -13.9; consensus: -10.0).
- **Germany's IFO data for April comes worse than expected.** IFO business climate indicator remained almost unchanged in April against the expected increase (-0.1 points to 106.6; BBVAe: 107.2, consensus: 107.1) mainly due to an unexpected fall in current assessment sub-index (-0.6 points to 113.2; BBVAe: 114.0, consensus: 113.8). IFO expectations indicator rose by less than expected (by 0.4 points to 100.4; BBVAe: 100.5, consensus: 100.9).
- **Oil prices drag financial markets down ahead of FOMC and BoJ meetings.** Volatility persists in oil prices: after rising for three weeks, prices were down at the start of the European session (by around 2%). With no relevant news from either supply or demand, the cause was probably profit-taking by investors. Worse-than-expected data in Germany and the US could also be behind the move at the start of a very relevant week (two monetary policy meetings and the release of US1Q GDP). Wednesday's FOMC meeting could be an opportunity to signal June's expected hike, as both the employment and inflation reports show improvement and as global financial volatility declines. The meeting in the Bank of Japan (Thursday) could also be used to signal further easing measures (on the back of the strong appreciation of the JPY). Equity indices in developed markets began the week in red (Eurostoxx: -0.7% IBEX: -0.9% DAX: -0.7% CAC: -0.5% S&P: -0.5% Dow: -0.6%); the banking sector led the falls in Europe while worse-than-expected quarterly earning results impacted stocks in the US. Asian markets also fell (linked to lower commodities prices and a stronger yen). The worsening of Asian stock indices (Nikkei: -0.8%, Shenzhen: -0.4%, CSI 330: -0.41%) signal investors' caution ahead of the monetary meetings this week. In bond markets, European yields inched up, led by Italian bonds (GER 10Y: +3 bps FRA 10Y: +4 bps ITA 10Y: +7 bps SPA 10Y: +5 bps POR 10Y: +2 bps GRE 10Y: +4 bps). Portuguese bonds outperformed their peers, as the rating agency DBRS seems to be relatively optimistic ahead of next Friday's review of Portuguese sovereign rating -"Fundamentally, the situation hasn't deteriorated since we last discussed the rating in November," said Adriana Alvarado-. Greek yields increased as an agreement with its European lenders is still pending on a comprehensive package of policy reforms, which is expected to conclude soon. On the other hand, US treasury yields remained unchanged awaiting the FOMC meeting. In FX markets, the USD depreciated against other major currencies (EUR: +0.43% GBP: +0.65% JPY: +0.63%), especially against the GBP (which reached its highest value in five weeks). The latter is linked to a lower probability of a Brexit according to polls. EM currencies, showed a mixed performance against the US dollar (RUB: +0.2% BRL: +0.4% CLP: -0.2% COP: -0.6% MXN: -0.7%) as volatility in commodity prices persists (Brent: -0.5% Wtx: -1.1% Copper: +0.2%).

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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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