

Market Comment | Fed's hawkish tone continued as main driver in financial market

Global Financial Markets Unit
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- **FOMC Minutes leave the door open for a June rate increase.** Weak 1Q16 activity supported the dovish dominance at April's meeting. Hawkish FOMC members argued that further delays could be confusing to the public in regards to their data-dependent strategy and may ultimately hurt their credibility. Fed communication will continue to signal the possibility of a June move, helping to better align market expectations along the way. [\(see\)](#) Today NY Fed William Dudley stressed that Fed policy stance is data-dependent. **Regarding US economic indicators:** In the US jobless claims dropped as expected in the week ended 14 May (278K; consensus: 275K, previous: 294K) while continuing claims in the week ended 7 May decreased in line with estimates to 2.152K from 2.165K (consensus: 2.163K). Meanwhile, Philadelphia Fed Manufacturing index dropped in May against a forecast increase (by -1.8, consensus: +3.5).
- **ECB Minutes.** Today, the ECB released the monetary policy accounts of its 21 April meeting. The minutes confirmed that the Governing Council (GC) was unanimous in its commitment to deliver on its mandate and on the appropriateness of the accommodative monetary policy stance. The accounts also revealed that participants broadly agreed that there was no need to change the current monetary policy stance, emphasising that the key is to focus on the implementation of the latest measures. Moreover, the ECB strongly reiterated the need for other policy areas to contribute to euro area economic recovery.
- **Fed's hawkish tone continued as main driver in financial market.** After some Fed officials' remarks on Tuesday, signalling that two or three rate hikes could be undertaken in 2016, the release of the latest FOMC minutes (last night) supported this week's trend in the financial markets. The increase in the probability of a sooner-than-expected rate hike (probabilities of a June hike increased to 32%, of a September hike to 62% and of a December hike to 75%) caused a rebound in US sovereign yield curves. It took place across all tenors, but with greater intensity at 2Y reference (US 2Y: +5 bps since Tuesday, maximum since 15 March). European curves were pulled up by the rebound. The USD also continued with its upward trend and even topped the 1.12 USD/EUR threshold. EM currencies were also hit by the general appreciation of the USD (RUB: -1.5%, BRL: -1.5%, CLP: -1.2%, MXN: -0.8%, COP: -1.4%) coupled with the abrupt drop in oil prices (Brent: -2.5%, WTx: -2.4%). Commodity prices were affected by (i) the negative impact on emerging markets of a faster-than-expected normalisation of US rates, coupled with (ii) the strong USD - historical inverse correlation between USD and commodity prices as they are priced in US dollars - and (iii) larger-than-expected US oil inventories in the case of oil prices. On another front, equity markets dropped across the board on the back of higher yields, which dragged down valuations (S&P:-0.9%, DJ:-1%, EuroStoxx: -1.1%, IBEX: -1%, DAX: -1.3%, CAC: -0.7%) but sectors' performances were disparate: the banking sector benefited from expectations of an increase in US interest rates (increasing lending margins), while high dividend sectors were punished (they lose some of their attractiveness in a context of increasing interest rates).

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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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