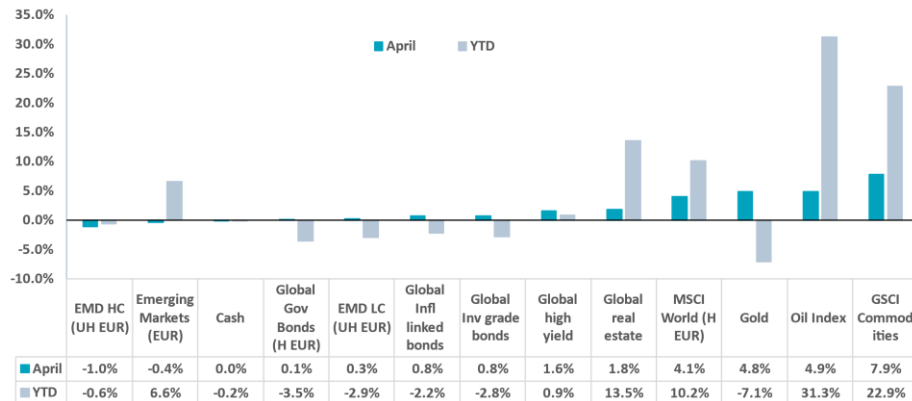


## Multi-asset market outlook

### **Metals... anything but rusty**

May 2021

## April: a very good month for commodities



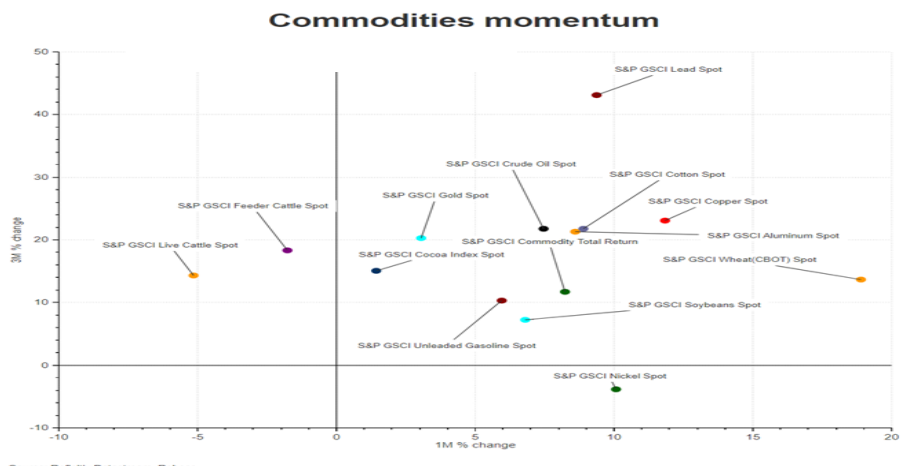
Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

## Positions: reflation remains the theme

|                                | Portfolio | Benchmark | Active |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Equities Developed Markets     | 25.00%    | 25.00%    | 0.0%   |
| Equities Emerging Markets      | 5.00%     | 5.00%     | 0.0%   |
| Real Estate Equities           | 5.00%     | 5.00%     | 0.0%   |
| SPX (US Equities)              | -4.00%    | 0.00%     | -4.0%  |
| STXE 600 (EUR) Pr (Europese aæ | 2.00%     | 0.00%     | 2.0%   |
| Nikkei 225 (Japanese equity)   | 2.00%     | 0.00%     | 2.0%   |
| Commodities                    | 7.50%     | 5.00%     | 2.5%   |
| Global treasuries              | 27.50%    | 27.50%    | 0.0%   |
| US Treasuries                  | -3.50%    | 0.00%     | -3.5%  |
| Investment Grade Corp Bonds    | 18.00%    | 20.00%    | -2.0%  |
| High Yield Corp Bonds          | 5.00%     | 5.00%     | 0.0%   |
| Emerging Market Bonds LC       | 5.00%     | 5.00%     | 0.0%   |
| Cash                           | 5.50%     | 2.50%     | 3.0%   |

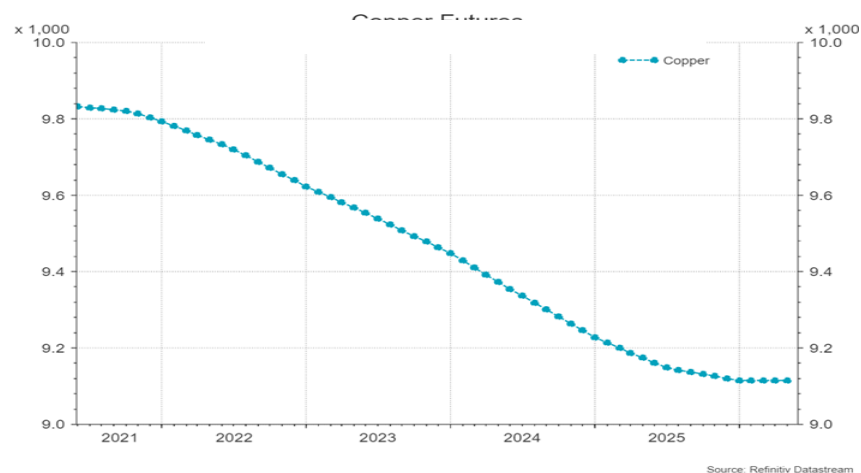
- > April was very favorable for risky assets. Commodities were the best-performing asset class, closely followed by equities. The strength within commodities was broad based, and the weakening US dollar was very beneficial for the asset class as a whole. Emerging equities and emerging debt were adversely affected as hard currencies experienced a difficult month. Signs that China is tightening weighed on emerging market assets, while Covid-19 infections are rapidly rising in places like Brazil and India. After a couple of difficult months, developed market fixed income seems to have found a footing. Within fixed income, high yield and global investment grade bonds were the best-performers.
- > One of the most striking developments in April was the reversal of US rates. The upward pressure on US rates suddenly came to a halt and started to meander lower. While it is difficult to explain why this happened, it should not be surprising that after a quite substantial move higher, rates moved into a phase of consolidation. We continue to think that rates need to move higher to reflect more favorable growth and inflation conditions. In other words, the reflation trade is not over.
- > We therefore continue to run a portfolio that is pro-cyclical and made no changes to it. In equities, we continue to prefer Europe and Japan at the expense of the US. The former markets are more skewed towards value stocks, which we expect to continue to do well. No changes were made to our exposure to commodities, investment grade corporate bonds and US Treasuries.

## Commodities: 1-month vs. 3-month momentum



Source: Refinitiv Datastream , Robeco

## Copper's term structure is in backwardation

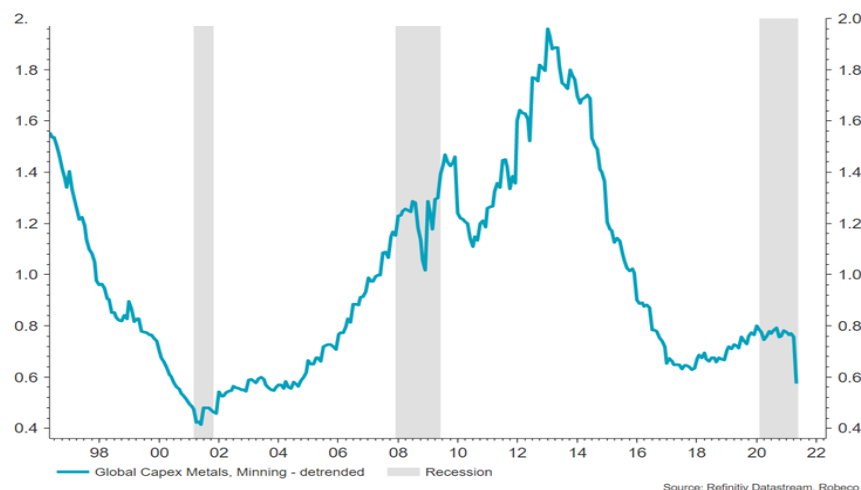


Source: Refinitiv Datastream & Robeco

## Metals... anything but rusty (I)

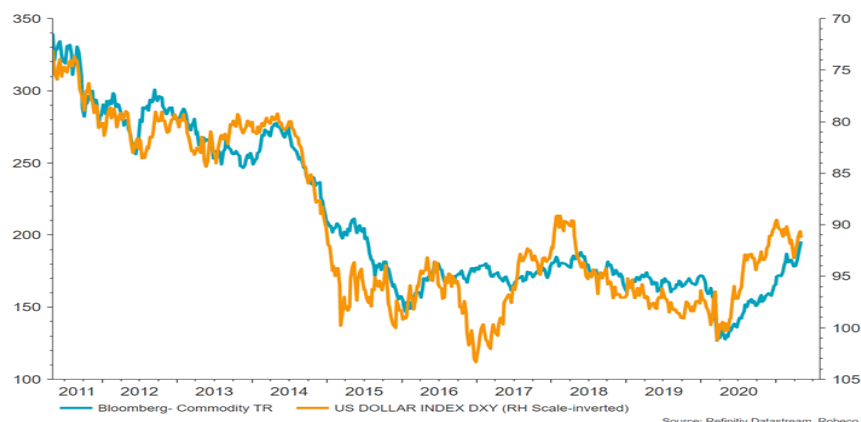
- > Commodity markets have been on a tear, with the Bloomberg Commodity Index in euros rising 35% over the past 12 months. As we upgraded commodities to overweight in our multi-asset portfolio last May, it is time to revisit the case for the asset class. Deploying our asset allocation framework factors of macroeconomic developments, momentum, valuation and sentiment, we conclude that commodities in general (and metals in particular) have become anything but rusty. Instead, commodities still shine, and continue to warrant a portfolio overweight in the near to medium term.
- > The momentum effect, where price returns follow previous price performance, can be seen everywhere in the multi-asset space. Commodity markets are clearly enjoying strong and positive momentum at this juncture, seeing the strongest price gains on short 1-month momentum across the multi-asset universe. Strong short-term momentum gains like those observed in metals such as copper and aluminum likely signal further price gains in the near future.
- > The valuation of commodities has become more favorable, as can be seen in a metric commonly used to value them – the roll yield. This is one of the three components of commodity returns, next to spot price movements and the cost of carry. Roll yields are positive if a commodity's futures curve is in backwardation, meaning that a longer-dated futures contract converges to the higher spot price upon expiry. For a buy-and-hold investor who keeps rolling over their exposure, it simply boils down to buying low and selling high, so long as the futures curve stays in backwardation. Looking at the current curves, backwardation is the name of the game, implying positive roll returns so long as the shape of the curve remains the same. This especially holds for metals like copper.

## Capex has been cut dramatically for metals and mining



Source: Refinitiv Datastream & Robeco

## Correlation: a weaker USD is supportive for commodities



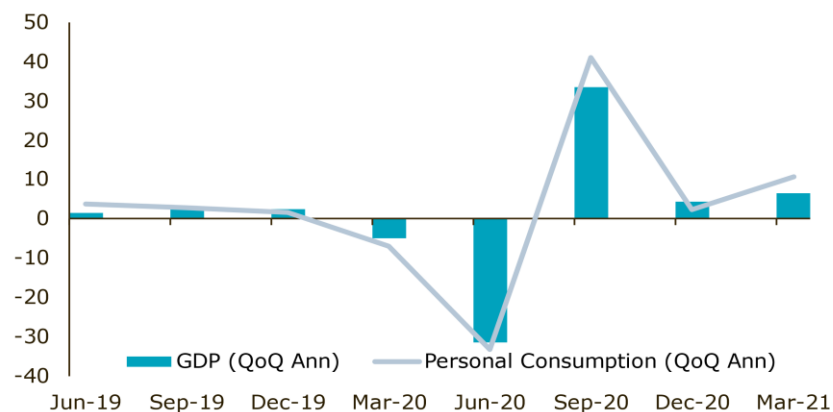
Source: Refinitiv Datastream , Robeco

## Metals... anything but rusty (II)

- > The current backwardation reflects supply-side pressures in a global economy that is facing higher commodity demand in the post-pandemic expansion phase. It is not only the typical cyclical forces that are at play here, such as increased mobility, pent-up travel demand and elevated goods consumption. The USD 2.25 trillion American Jobs Plan, for example, will give a more structural impetus to commodity-intensive investments in roads, bridges and railways.
- > The green investments needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of net zero emissions by 2050 can't materialize without seeing a huge demand surge for metals such as copper, aluminum and lithium. The knife of decarbonization cuts both ways here, as the supply side is also affected. Clearly, new capital expenditures in metals, mining and oil are needed to onboard new production. Another macroeconomic element that keeps us bullish is our moderately bearish view on the US dollar. Commodities are largely priced in dollars, so a weaker dollar typically leads to higher commodity prices. Also, the reopening of the European economy, which is a net energy importer, supports commodity demand. Turning to sentiment, the rising inflation expected as the global economy expands again could be another tailwind. Inflation risk ranks highest on the worry list for fund managers. Commodities have seen inflows as they are generally fairly accurate inflation hedges.
- > Although we see the risks for the asset class as skewed to the upside, there are downside risks. The most prevalent is that the monetary policy tightening stance in China to force deleveraging in certain overheating sectors could inhibit commodity demand. China still matters for commodities, and a deceleration in Chinese money supply growth has typically been followed with a lag of two quarters by slower commodity price appreciation.

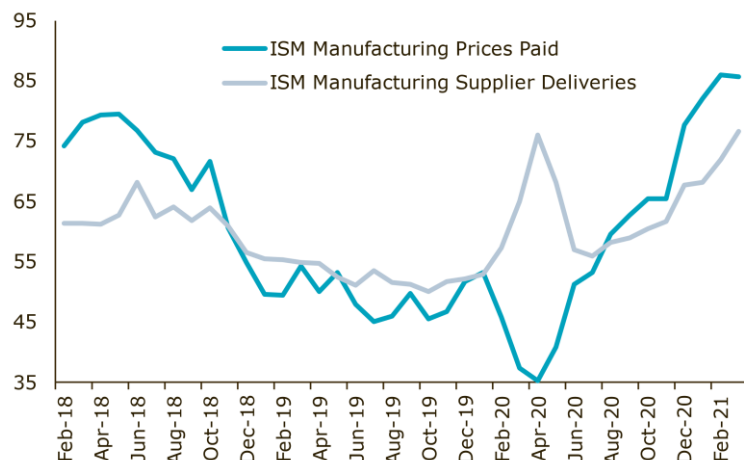


## US GDP: Consumption is one of the main driver of growth



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

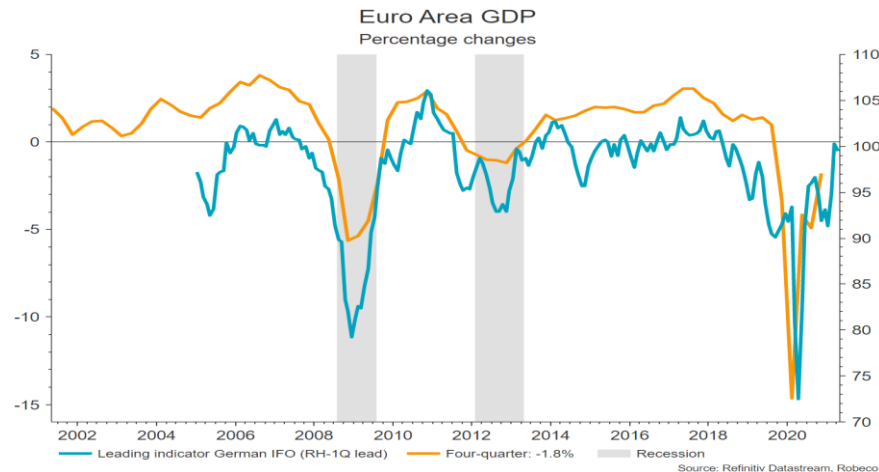
## The US economy is starting to run hot



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

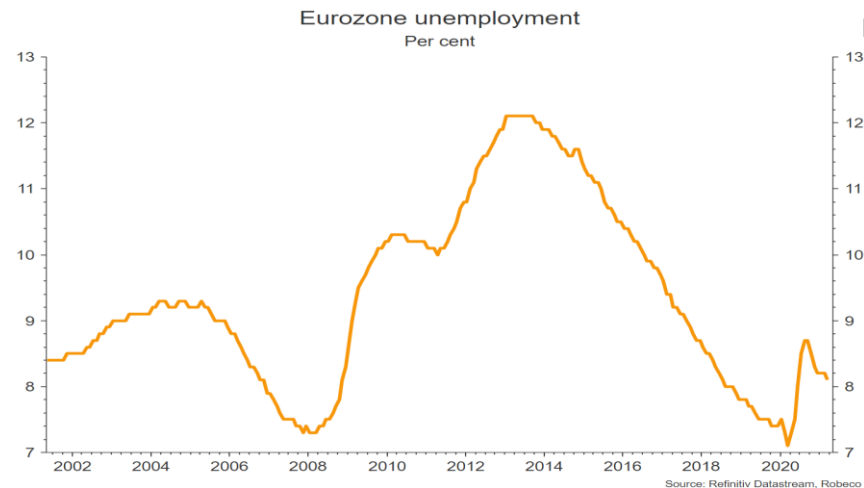
- > As expected, the Fed made no changes to its policy at its last meeting. The recent strength of the US economy was acknowledged but was deemed insufficient to lead to a policy change. The Fed continues to show a willingness to look through the current and near-term inflationary pressures. Near-term determinants of changes in policy will therefore be progress in containing the pandemic and developments in the labor markets. Given the rapid vaccination rollout, progress in the job market is now the main focus of the Fed. Here, the central bank will want to see more than just one strong top-line job number.
- > While the overall message was a familiar one, a shift in nuance was seen. Compared to the last meeting, the Fed is less worried about the outlook. This gives the meeting a slightly dovish tilt, as the central bank continues to fully push the policy throttle, even though it confirms that risks to the outlook have receded. It once again shows that the Fed intends to run the economy hot, and that the risk of possible overheating is seen as being one worth taking.
- > Just like the Fed, the US government continues to support the economy. After announcing the American Jobs Plan last month, this month the American Family Plan was introduced.
- > The US economy grew by 6.4% on an annualized basis. While this is a more than decent number, it was somewhat below expectations. The domestic demand component almost grew by double digits on an annualized basis. Exports and inventory were a drag on overall growth.

## Economic sentiment has strongly improved



Source: Refinitiv Datastream, Robeco

## Unemployment has seen little progress



Source: Refinitiv Datastream, Robeco

The Eurozone is still battling the third wave of the pandemic, though the peak should be behind us now, with most European countries easing restrictions or becoming very close to lowering the intensity of lockdowns. The pace of vaccinations is also increasing, though it is lagging the US, with Germany having 29% of its population vaccinated and France 23%.

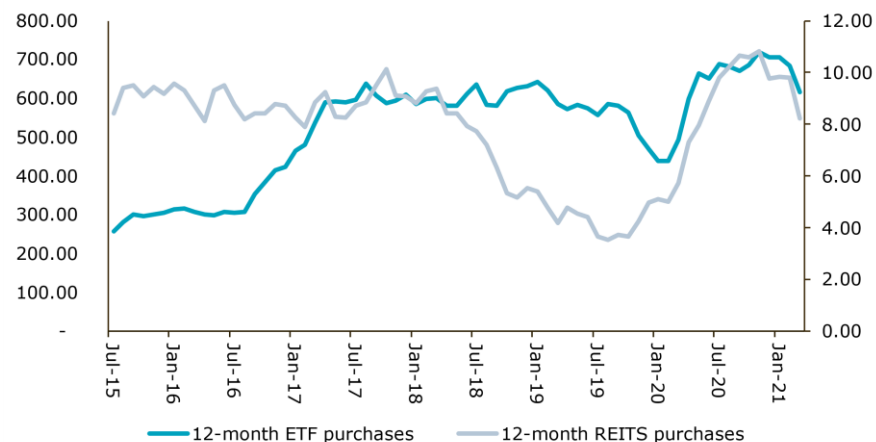
The composite Eurozone PMI climbed to 53.8 in April, helped by the manufacturing sector, which stayed largely open during the third Covid-19 wave. With the re-opening in sight and having adapted to the changed circumstances, the services sector producer confidence reading also lifted. The Eurozone services PMI moved into expansion territory, coming in at 50.5 for April after recording 49.6 in March.

The recovery within the Eurozone is still fragmented and fragile across both regions and sectors, with the ECB increasing the pace of PEPP asset purchases last month. As seen elsewhere, supply chain disruptions are top of mind for goods sectors. The composite input price index jumped to 64.0 from 61.9, its highest level of the past decade.

For the crucial services sector there is upside ahead, especially as Greece and Spain start to allow tourists in again to enjoy their holidays. The business expectations index for the services sector skyrocketed to 68.4, also the highest level of the past decade.

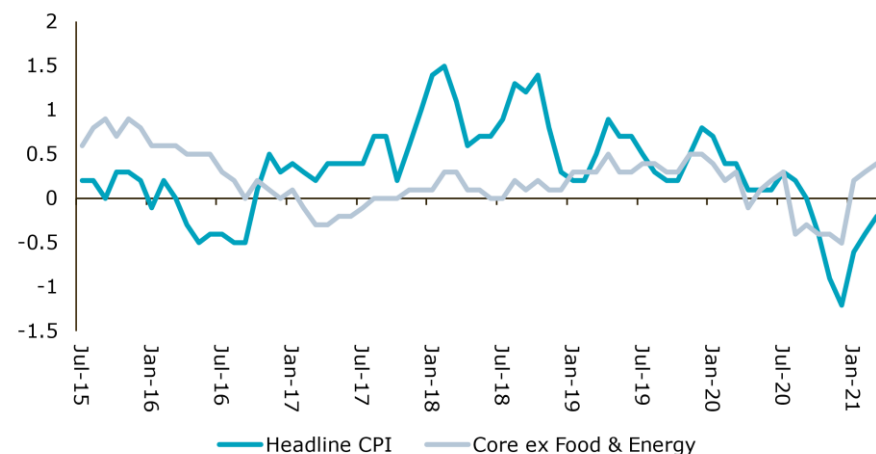
Given the ongoing re-opening and acceleration of the Eurozone recovery, enlargement of the ECB's PEPP envelope is not in the cards, which implies the ECB will slow down the pace of PEPP purchases after Q2.

## BOJ lowers purchases of ETFs and REITS



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

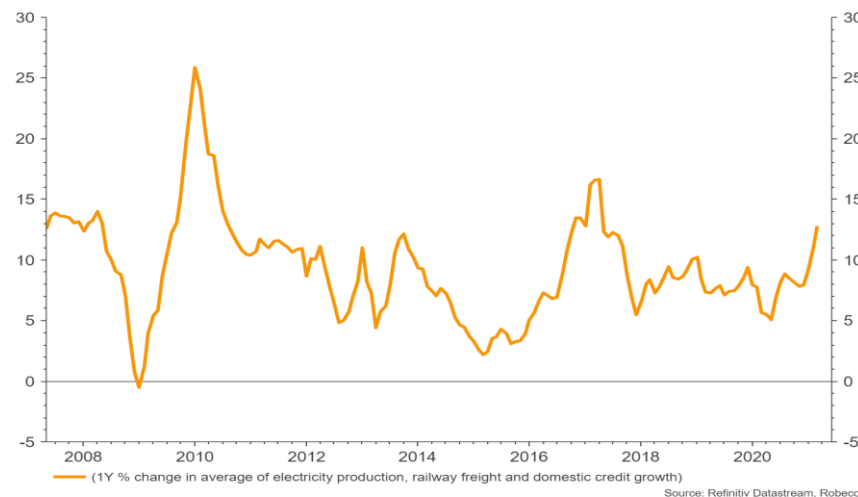
## Inflation continues to improve



&gt;Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

- > As widely anticipated, the Bank of Japan made no changes to its policy framework at its latest meeting. The impact of the last month's policy review is already visible in the lower amount of ETFs and REITS purchased by the central bank. This reflects the flexibility the BOJ now has to size purchases according to market circumstances. One noticeable thing is that while the changes to the policy in reaction to the policy review were small, marginally they all seem to point towards less rather than more policy support. The wider band around the 10-year yield and the greater flexibility in REITS and ETF purchases all seems to leave the door open for less market intervention. While the BOJ continues to leave its inflation target at 2%, it doesn't expect to reach this at the end of its three-year projections outlook, but expects inflation to only be around half of it. Growth forecasts on the other hand were lifted but the output gap is expected to remain deeply negative.
- > Covid-19 cases are once again on the rise. While the number of new infections is lower than that of Europe and the US, the vaccination rate in Japan is also much slower. In response, the government has renewed the state of emergency in four regions including Tokyo and Osaka.
- > The economy continues to firm. The composite purchasing manager index is back above 50. The improvements were mainly driven by the manufacturing sector as the service sector remains under pressure.
- > The inflation index excluding both energy and fresh food – the gauge preferred by the BOJ – came in at +0.4% year-on-year.

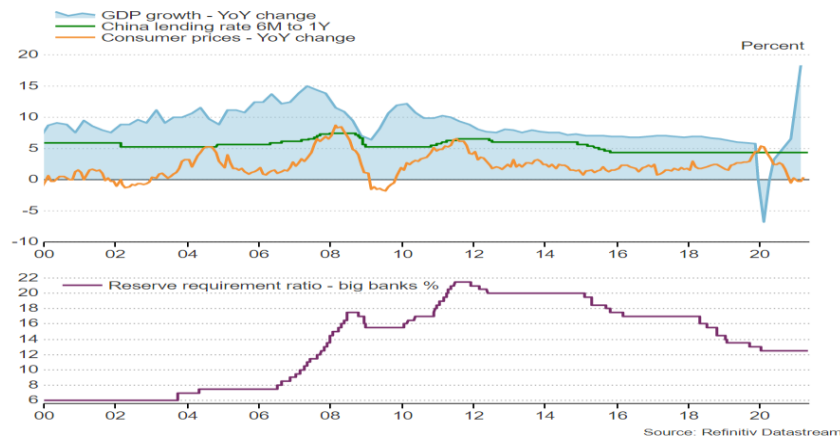
## Real activity: momentum is still positive



Source: Refinitiv, Robeco

## PBOC: no imminent rate hike threat

## China monetary policy



Source: Refinitiv, Robeco

China's economic recovery remains on track, but the pace of recovery is decelerating. Although the recent Caixin PMI showed increased producer confidence in the manufacturing sector, with the April PMI surprising to the upside at 51.9, the official PMI data suggests that the pace of factory activity has slowed instead. Firms are reporting supply chain issues that are limiting factory output, notably shortages in microchips and containers and rising freight rates. The problems in international logistics that Chinese corporates face were also echoed by Maersk's Q1 earnings figures. The global shipping company said that high freight fees could persist into Q4.

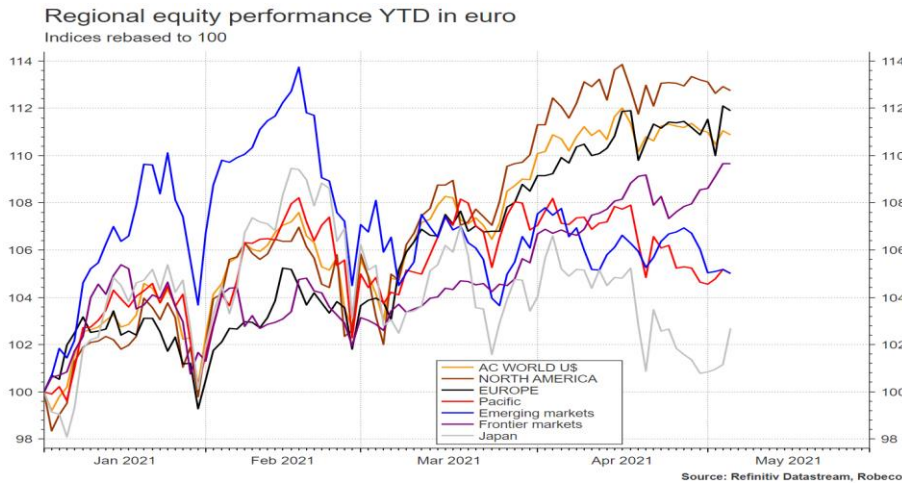
Nonetheless, looking at the so-called Li Keqiang indicator, a real activity metric that consists of railway freight, electricity production and credit growth named after the Chinese Premier, China's real activity still shows upward momentum.

However, policymakers face a delicate balance between supporting growth and deleveraging overheated sectors. Chinese money growth has been decelerating, indicating some further deceleration in the pace of activity is to be expected. With inflation remaining subdued, no rate hike is to be expected soon from the PBOC, despite the tightening bias. Also, the Q1 People's Bank of China meeting signaled lower funding costs for corporates, while Premier Li also said he wants to extend credit support to small companies up to the end of 2021.

Geopolitically, Chinese merchandise is facing headwinds both from an assertive Biden administration in the US, as well as from European counterparts. After working on the case for seven years, the European Commission decided to dial down efforts to promote its planned investment agreement with China, as Beijing maintains sanctions against several EU members.

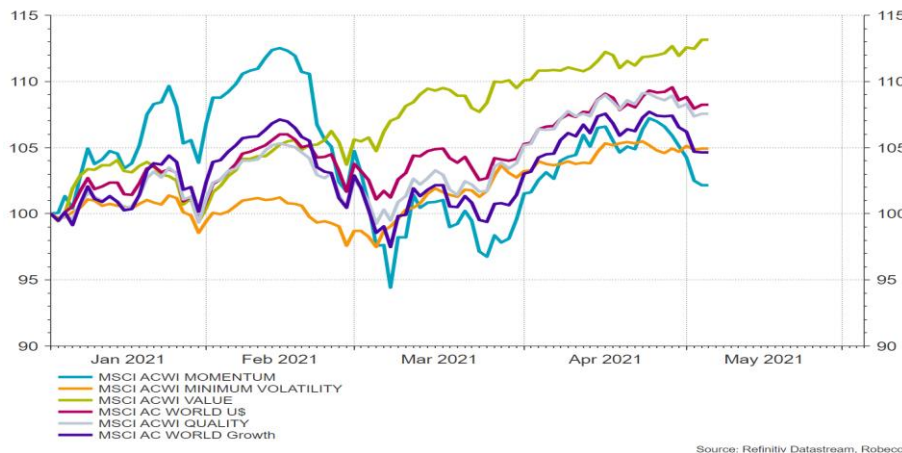


## Regional dispersion: Europe gains while Japan slips



Source: Refinitiv Datastream & Robeco

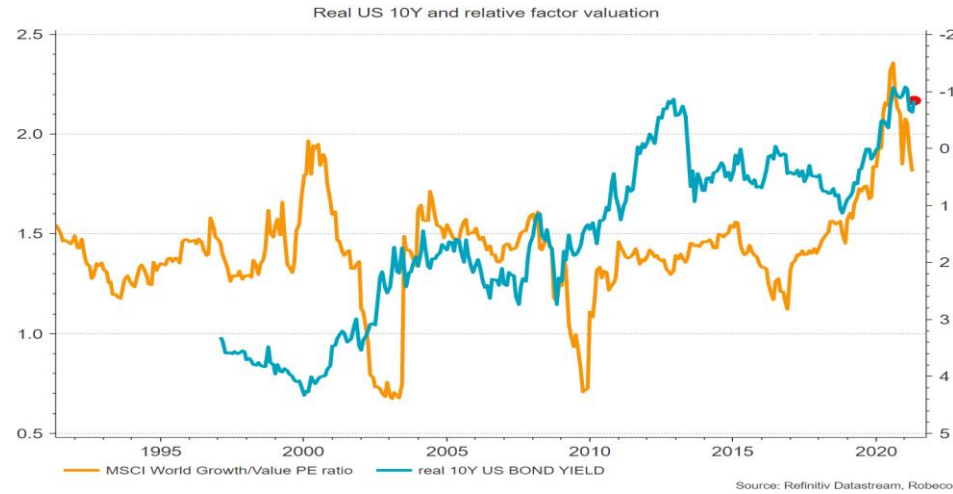
## Value continues its strong recovery



Source: Refinitiv Datastream, Robeco

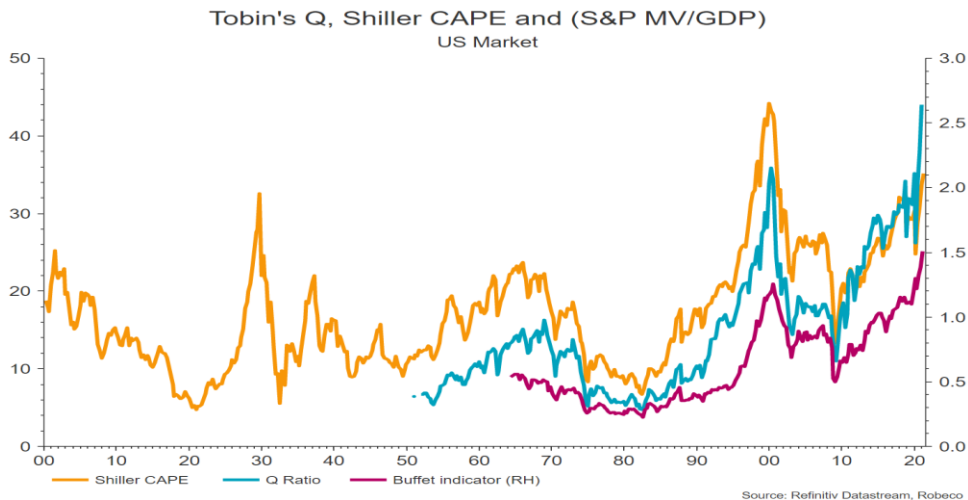
- > April was a very strong month for global equities. The MSCI World Index in local currency terms gained 4.0% in a rally that was broadly supported across sectors and regions. However, the cross-regional performance reveals that the market remains sensitive to pandemic developments. Countries that needed to increase lockdowns such as India, Japan and Italy faced modest losses.
- > The equity market has been enjoying positive momentum for a full year now after central banks flushed the financial system with liquidity. In addition to huge monetary and fiscal support, equity markets have been discounting historic GDP growth rates not seen in recent decades. Normally, earnings estimates are downgraded in due course, but this year earnings per share estimates for 2021 have been upgraded by a whopping 11% year-to-date. This is a sign that analysts have had difficulty in keeping up with the string of positive macroeconomic surprises that we have observed in the past few months, especially for the US economy.
- > Yet, looking at the timid reaction to earnings that beat expectations during the Q1 reporting season, the equity rally seems to be losing some steam. With more than 78% of S&P 500 companies having reported, the subsequent two-day price reaction to companies that met estimates is a meagre -0.3%. The fact that the market is almost 'selling the fact' of a 52% year-on-year increase in Q1 earnings indicates that it is already worrying about the next hurdles. Top of mind for the equity market is inflation risk, which could show up in the next earnings season. The impact of surging global supply bottlenecks could dent production and sales. However, the impact on profitability during the reopening of the economy could be less than the market fears, given the lower price sensitivity of consumers who are eager to go shopping again coming out of lockdowns.

## Value stocks are rerating as real yields increase



Source: Shiller, Robeco

## US equity valuation metrics surpass 2000 levels



Source: Refinitiv Datastream, Robeco

- > The fact that inflation is high on the worry list of investors also shows up in the outperformance of value stocks in the year to date, as value has the highest correlation with inflation expectations among equity factors. Value stock multiples are still trading 1.8 times cheaper compared to growth stocks and should continue to rerate as real rates start to bottom out as the economic recovery continues.
- > The expectation that the Fed will be forced to cool an overheating US economy in the second half of 2021, triggering a taper tantrum, is also making equity investors pause to add risk at this juncture. In our view, one should not overestimate the probability and impact of a taper tantrum. Though equities initially reacted badly during the 2013 taper tantrum, with hindsight it was a buying opportunity. Also, looking at real yield levels back in the late 1990s/early 2000s, real US 10-year yields of 4% did not prevent a melt-up in equities in an environment where the structural growth outlook seemed weaker than today's.
- > Nonetheless, stretched valuation levels, pockets of euphoria, negative seasonality and the above macroeconomic worries could materialize in an equity market dip in the near term. Though our medium-term outlook remains bullish as we expect a second leg in the reflation trade, we see near-term risk as more balanced, and stay neutral on equities in our multi-asset portfolio, looking to add in case of a dip.
- > We are selective risk takers within equities, with an overweight to the value factor and with regional overweights in Europe and Japan, while underweighting US equities. US stocks have been pricing in a lot of good earnings news judging from historically stretched valuation levels and could therefore also be relatively vulnerable this time around for a rise in real rates.

## IMF: Global growth and divergence

### Stronger recovery projected

Policy support and vaccines are expected to lift economic activity.  
(world real GDP growth forecast; year-on-year percent change)



Source: IMF staff estimates.

Source: IMF

## Emerging market equities' relative valuation

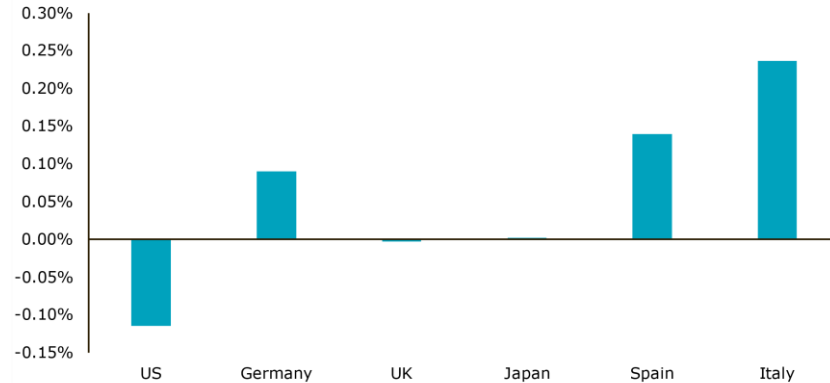


Source: Refinitiv, Robeco

Source: Refinitiv Datastream, Robeco

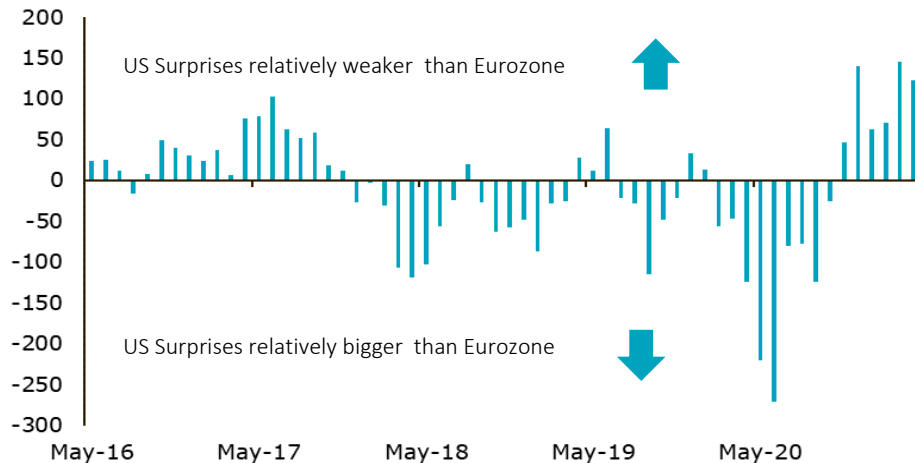
- > In a strong month for risky assets, emerging market equities lagged with a return of just 0.1% in euros. This compares to a positive return of 2.2% for global equities. Emerging markets are also trailing on a year-to-date basis.
- > Stimulus remains a driving factor for equities in the near term and emerging markets have less of that. Fiscal (and monetary) stimulus is less profound in general, but also is being reversed slowly in China. The Chinese credit impulse will go flat – if not negative – in the coming month, to a large extent caused by the fact that China went through the Covid-19-induced cycle earlier.
- > This means while global growth will be very strong, as shown in the IMF chart on the top left, the growth differential between emerging and developed markets will be below average this year and next. Ex-China, which is expected to grow by 8.4% this year, growth in emerging and developed markets is pretty much the same. Historically, larger and growing GDP growth differentials have benefited EM.
- > We see no reason to turn outrightly negative on emerging market equities, however. In recent weeks, the rise of the US dollar has halted, and it seems likely that the greenback will move in a trading range for the foreseeable future. As a result, commodities, which benefit directly from the strong recovery in demand, combined with clear bottlenecks in some areas, has resumed their uptrend. Higher commodity prices usually mean higher EM equity prices. In addition, we expect EM equities to profit from their relatively high operational leverage as global growth picks up.
- > We remain neutral on emerging markets.

## 10-year yields were less synchronized in April



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

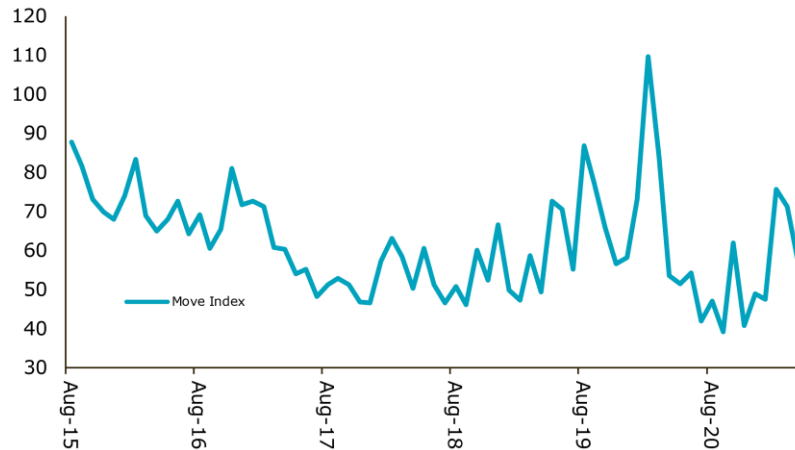
## Economic surprises: Eurozone much stronger than expected vs. US



>Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

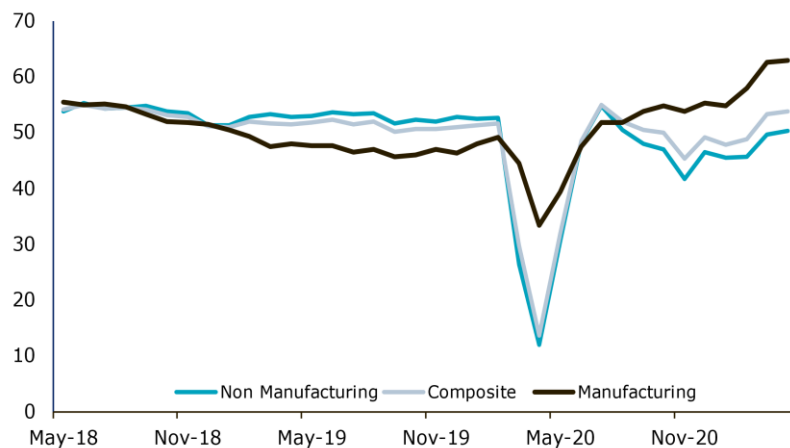
- > April was an interesting month for developed market government bonds. Over the past month, we have become used to the government rates of different countries moving in a synchronized fashion, but this was not the case in April. A divide has opened up between European continental rates and US rates, as the former moved upwards while the latter was pressured downwards.
- > It's still unclear why US rates came under pressure. While it is not uncommon for a period of consolidation to set in after a substantial increase in rates, the timing of this consolidation is interesting, as it occurred at a time when US data points were exceptionally strong. Everything is in place for the recovery to continue, and the answer might lie here. The bar for US data to continue to perform is currently extremely high. It looks like the Biden administration has laid all its cards on the table when it comes to fiscal support. The success of the US vaccination rollout is well known, so do we need a new catalyst to drive rates higher?
- > We don't think so. US rates are still lower than pre-pandemic levels. First, we think the current economic circumstances are more conducive for higher growth and inflation. Further, the Fed has made it very clear that it will not act on expectations but only on actual data. It will look through current higher inflation numbers as they are influenced by base effects and other transitory factors. This means the Fed is willing to run the economy hot. This by itself should be sufficient to demand a higher risk premium to hold bonds, and we don't think this is currently reflected in the price.

## Move Index: bond market volatility moves lower



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

## Eurozone PMIs continue to improve

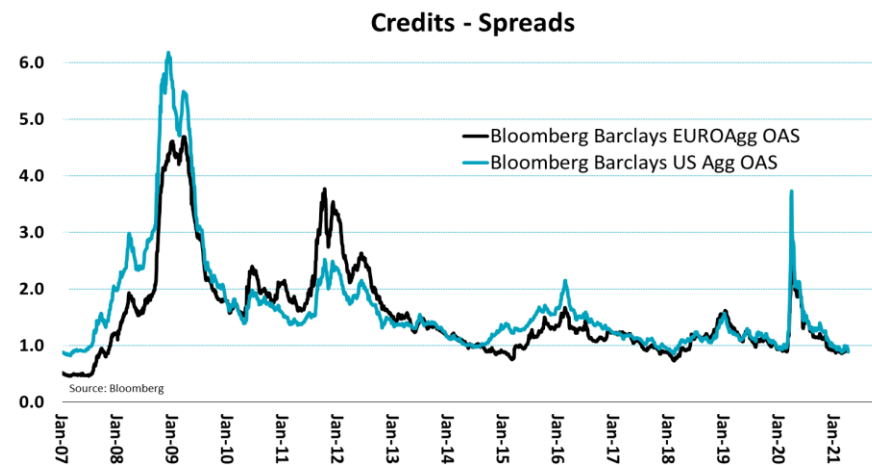


Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

- > What could also have supported US rates is that US yields are attractive compared to those offered by most European and Japanese bonds. This attractiveness has grown with the steepness of the US curve, a consequence of the Fed continuing to hold down short-term rates. Japanese and European bond investors can bag a higher yield even when they hedge out the currency risk. The fact that the volatility of US Treasuries continued to move lower over the past period is also supportive for this.
- > Although parts of Europe continue to remain in lockdown, there has been a steady string of better economic data. The pick-up in the vaccination rollout is also very positive, while the German High Court is no longer an obstacle for the execution of the EU recovery plan. The bar for European data was relatively low and things are lining up to push the economy higher. This will create upwards pressure on European rates. Although the ECB has made it clear that it is against an unwarranted tightening, we don't think it will prevent upward pressure on yields, as these rate rises reflect improving conditions for the European economy.
- > We continue to remain underweight in government bonds. Our preference is still to be underweight US Treasuries. We are starting to warm to underweighting German bonds; we see a window in which German yields can start to play catch-up now that the vaccination rollout is speeding up and the recovery plan is can be implemented.

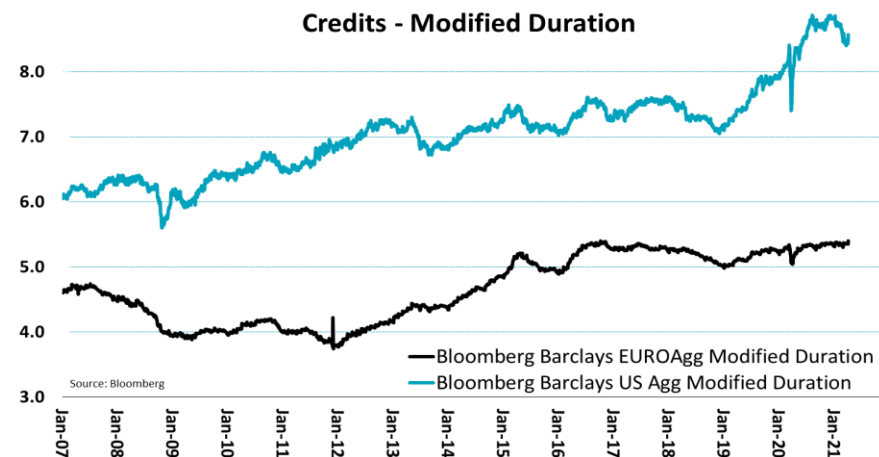


## Investment grade credits: spreads



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

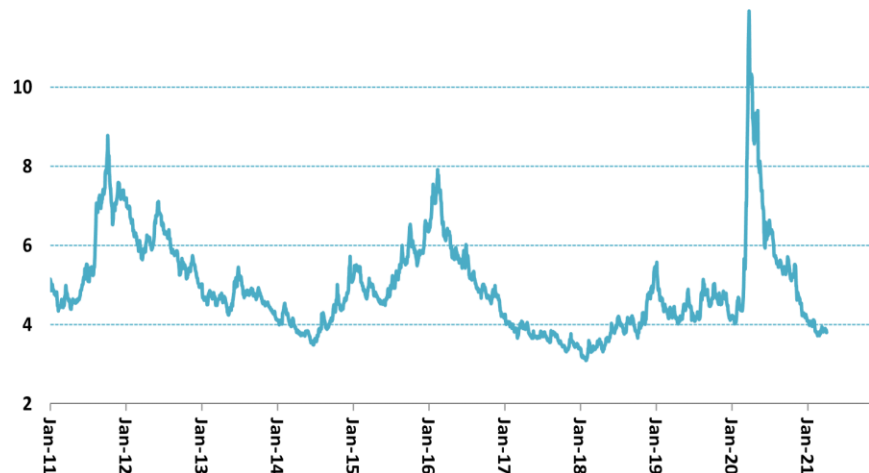
## Investment grade credits: duration



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

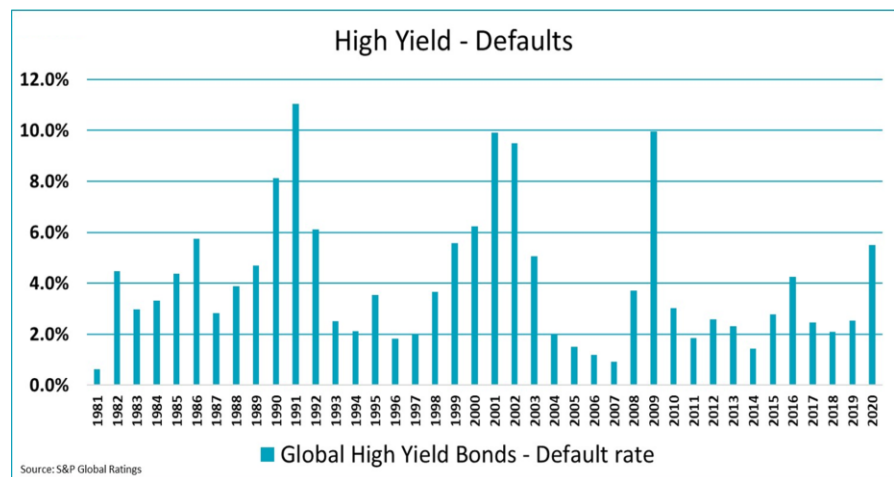
- > After two difficult months, global investment grade bonds realized a positive return in April of 0.7%. Yet, as virtually all (risky) assets realized a positive return, the asset class still ranked at the low end of the universe. Spreads dropped even further and are now well below the 100 basis point threshold.
- > The outlook for global investment grade credits remains negative compared to other asset classes. The duration of corporate bonds, which in the US is even higher than for government bonds, remains the main reason for that. And while duration is much lower in the Eurozone, we believe that rising bond yields will cap the upside for corporate bonds as well. April was a good example of that, with bond yields rising both from an absolute as well as a relative perspective. As a result, the return on European investment grade bonds was zero.
- > With Eurozone investment grade spreads at just 84 basis points, there is practically no buffer for rising bond yields. And with the yield to maturity at 0.34%, little is needed to push returns into negative territory. In the US, yields are higher, but so is duration.
- > Hence, while we believe that strong earnings growth, stellar GDP growth and massive amounts of liquidity bode well for some risky assets such as commodities and value stocks, investment grade bonds do not offer an attractive risk/return profile in the near term.
- > We remain underweight global investment grade credits as we expect bond yields to continue their increase, with current spread levels offering little buffer.

## Global high yield: relative spread levels vs. global credits



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

## Global high yield issuance

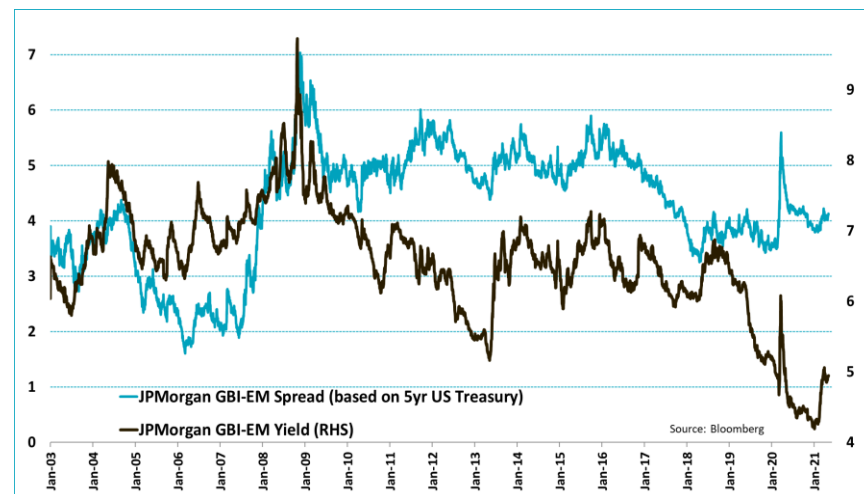


Source: S&P Global Ratings

Source: S&P Global ratings

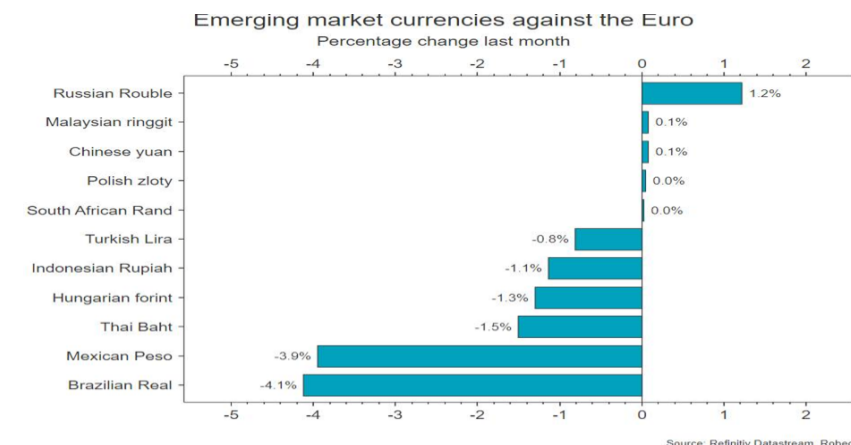
- > Global high yield bonds realized a positive return of 1.4% in April, again beating the performance of government bonds and global investment grade credits. The average spread level declined to 358 basis points, its lowest level in almost three years.
- > As mentioned last month, we now expect some further tightening in high yield spreads on the back of a very strong earnings recovery and well-above-average GDP growth. This should translate into below-average default rates, as we have seen many times in the years following recessions.
- > We do expect a headwind from a further increase in bond yields, but the asset class has a duration that is significantly lower than that of government and investment grade bonds. In addition, even at 358 basis points, the spread level still provides some buffer against rising yields.
- > Given the current economic backdrop, we do not expect leverage – which is high in an historical context – to become a performance drag in the very near term. However, with high yield bond issuance at record levels (even though most of this is related to refinancings), we do take this into account for the medium term, especially as we believe that yields will continue to rise from here.
- > We remain neutral on global high yield bonds for now. Duration is likely to be a drag on performance but is much lower compared to other bond asset classes, whereas spreads still offer some buffer and have room to tighten just a little bit more.

## Emerging market debt in local currency: spread and yield



Source: Bloomberg & Robeco

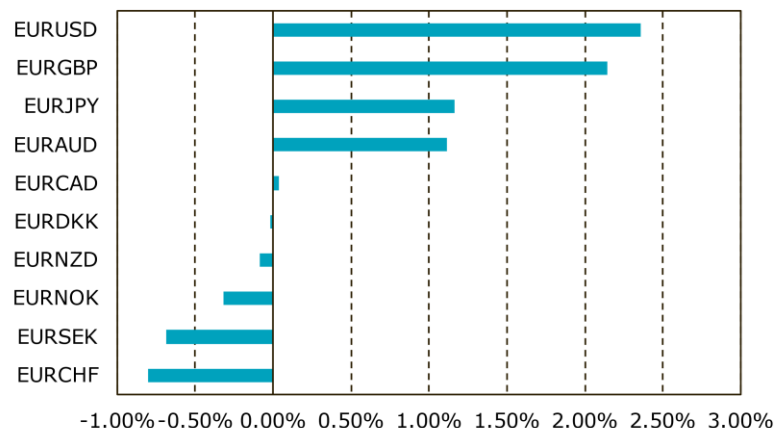
## Emerging market currencies have come under pressure



Source: Refinitiv, Robeco

- > After a couple of difficult months, local currency emerging debt realized a positive return of 2.1%. In the year to date however, the asset class is still down as a result of rising bond yields around the globe, as well as from emerging currencies declining against the euro. The average spread (relative to the 5-year US Treasury yield) and the average yield were little changed over the month.
- > April was no exception, with most emerging currencies depreciating against the euro. The Brazilian real was among the worst performers, declining by more than 4%, as the Covid-19 outbreak is still far from contained in the country. Fundamentals such as Brazil's current account are improving though, partly because of the strong rise in commodity prices.
- > Things look less promising for other countries. Turkey, for example, is suffering from high inflation as a result of another big leg-down in the Turkish lira. Further weakening should not be ruled out from here. Emerging currencies look a bit of a mixed bag, offering some upside to the euro as growth and sentiment stay upbeat, but high idiosyncratic risks remain.
- > We continue to believe that global bond yields can go higher from here. While duration, at just over five years, is much lower than for government bonds and US corporate bonds, rising bond yields will also be a headwind for emerging market bonds. With monetary stimulus less explicit than in most developed markets, there is also less 'weight' keeping bond yields low.
- > We are neutral on local currency emerging market bonds.

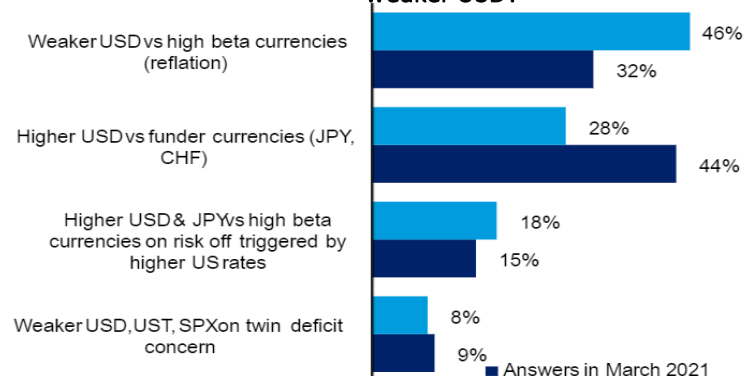
## G-10 currencies: European currencies were the strongest



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

## BofA Survey: tilting towards a weaker USD

What does bigger US fiscal package mean for FX in 2q2021? tilting towards a weaker USD?

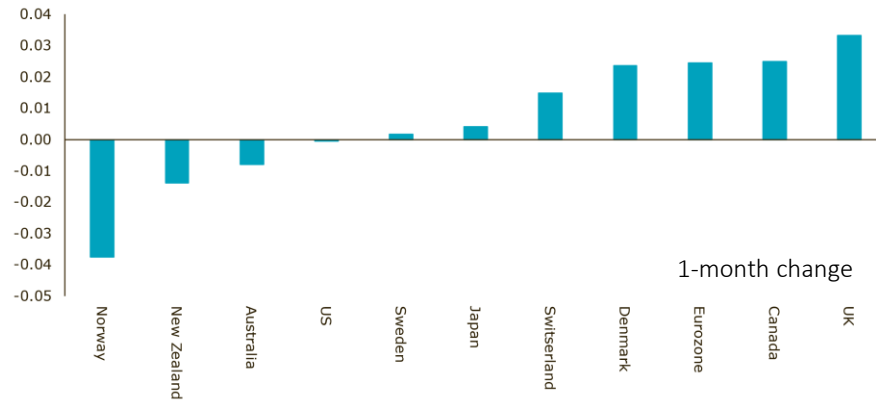


Source: BofA Global Research FX and Rates Sentiment Survey

- > April was a tough month for the US dollar. That cracks were starting to appear in the dollar strength story has already been visible for the last couple of weeks. The thing that immediately stands out when looking at the month-to-date performances of the G-10 currency pairs is that the winners were almost all European currencies. It has been a difficult period for Europe as parts of the continent remained in lockdown while the rollout of vaccinations remains slow. While the dark shadow of the pandemic continues to cloud the outlook, the European economy continues to steadily improve. The faster rollout of vaccinations in both the UK and US had enabled sterling and the dollar to benefit from first mover advantage. This seems to have played out now, and there is currently a window for European currencies to outperform as Europe vaccinations catch up with the US and UK.
- > To be clear, the US outlook remains extremely positive. The difficulty is that this is well known and looks to be fully priced in. The bar for data to surprise positively is therefore higher, at least far higher than for European data. The euro benefitted from the repricing of risk, and we think there is a bit of room left for it to strengthen. What happens after that is less straightforward but will probably be determined by the view that markets take on policy divergence by central banks.
- > The easy money in sterling has been made now that risk premiums have compressed and have almost fully discounted Brexit and the rapid vaccine rollout. Going forward, positioning and momentum will be less of a driver for sterling. We do think though that the longer-run implications of Brexit still need to work their way through the economy.

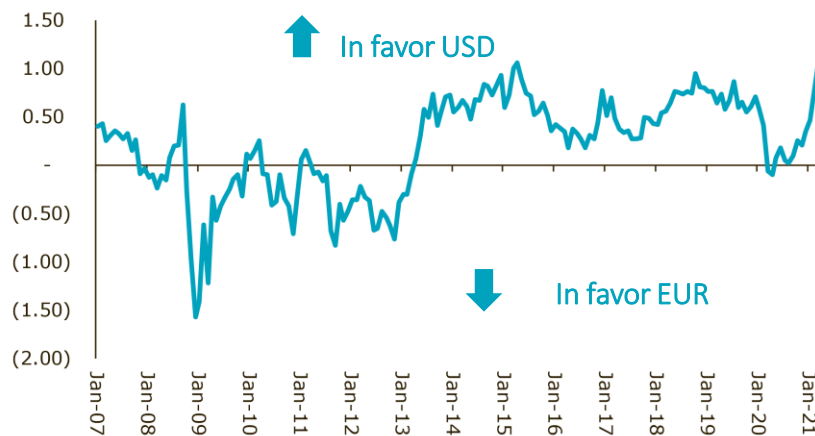
## 2-year rates were less of a driver of currencies in April

Basis point



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

## 5Y/5Y real rates continue to move in favor of the USD



Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

- > Ultimately the strength of sterling will be determined by to what extent the UK is able to attract long-term structural capital inflows. A near-term risk to sterling is the strength of support for nationalists in the 6 May elections and whether this might increase the calls for another referendum for independence. This also needs to be put in the light of the recent disturbances in Northern Ireland and the instability which forced the leader of the ruling Democratic Unionist Party to step down. All and all, this could increase political tensions in the union and weigh on sterling.
- > With most of the meetings of the major central banks behind us, we must conclude that in general, their messages have remained the same. In short, central banks will continue to provide monetary support, and upcoming economic data will determine the path of future policy. In that light, the only thing noticeable was last month's policy review which gave the Bank of Japan greater flexibility and more room to do less quantitative easing.
- > The generally unchanged message of central banks didn't prevent the market from adjusting short-term rates for individual currencies. Eurozone two-year rates increased relative to Japanese and US two-year rates. On a whole, however, the moves in 2-year rates were less consistent with the performance of their respective currencies.
- > With regard to the EUR/USD cross, we noticed that the real rate support for the greenback is weakening. The 5-year/5-year real rate differential moved lower for the first time in five months.
- > We currently hold no currency positions.



# Heat Map Asset Returns (in euros)

Special Topic

Economy

Equities

Fixed Income

FX

Heatmap

| MULTI ASSET                            | 1mo   | 3mo   | YTD   | 1YR    | 3YR    | 5YR   | Fixed Income                   | 1mo           | 3mo   | YTD   | 1YR   | 3YR    | 5YR      |          |          |          |
|--|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Oil Index (USD)                        | 7.4%  | 22.1% | 31.3% | 164.8% | -21.5% | -9.6% | Inflation-linked US (UH, USD)  | 1.4%          | -0.4% | -0.1% | 6.1%  | 6.2%   | 4.1%     |          |          |          |
| GSCI Commodities (USD)                 | 5.7%  | 18.2% | 24.9% | 63.8%  | -3.9%  | -0.2% | Investment Grade US (UH, USD)  | 1.1%          | -2.3% | -3.6% | 4.5%  | 6.9%   | 4.9%     |          |          |          |
| MSCI World local currency              | 4.0%  | 11.3% | 10.4% | 41.9%  | 14.0%  | 14.1% | High Yield US (UH, USD)        | 1.1%          | 1.6%  | 1.9%  | 19.7% | 7.0%   | 7.5%     |          |          |          |
| MSCI World (H, EUR)                    | 3.9%  | 11.1% | 10.2% | 40.1%  | 12.0%  | 12.2% | US Gov Bonds (H, EUR)          | 0.8%          | -3.0% | -4.2% | -5.6% | 2.6%   | 0.4%     |          |          |          |
| Global real estate (UH, EUR)           | 3.1%  | 13.7% | 13.5% | 14.3%  | 6.1%   | 3.5%  | High Yield Europe (EUR)        | 0.7%          | 1.8%  | 2.3%  | 15.7% | 3.9%   | 4.8%     |          |          |          |
| Gold (USD)                             | 3.0%  | -4.6% | -7.1% | 1.3%   | 8.7%   | 5.2%  | Japan Gov Bonds (H, JPY)       | 0.2%          | -0.1% | -0.4% | -1.5% | 0.4%   | -0.1%    |          |          |          |
| MSCI World (UH, EUR)                   | 2.2%  | 11.9% | 11.6% | 32.2%  | 14.2%  | 12.9% | Global Gov Bonds (H, EUR)      | 0.1%          | -2.5% | -3.5% | -3.3% | 2.1%   | 1.0%     |          |          |          |
| EMD local currency (UH, EUR)           | 2.1%  | -1.6% | -2.8% | 14.4%  | 2.9%   | 2.8%  | Europe Senior Financials (EUR) | 0.1%          | -0.2% | -0.3% | 5.2%  | 2.3%   | 2.4%     |          |          |          |
| Emerging Markets (LC)                  | 1.6%  | 1.8%  | 5.6%  | 42.9%  | 9.4%   | 13.3% | Investment Grade Europe (EUR)  | 0.0%          | -0.5% | -0.7% | 4.9%  | 2.4%   | 2.3%     |          |          |          |
| Global high yield (H, EUR)             | 1.4%  | 1.0%  | 0.9%  | 18.4%  | 3.4%   | 4.4%  | Europe Non-financials IG (EUR) | 0.0%          | -0.8% | -0.9% | 4.6%  | 2.5%   | 2.2%     |          |          |          |
| Global investment grade bonds (H, EUR) | 0.7%  | -2.0% | -2.8% | 3.9%   | 3.9%   | 2.6%  | EMD local currency (UH, EUR)   | -0.1%         | -2.3% | -2.9% | -0.2% | 2.2%   | 2.3%     |          |          |          |
| Global inflation-linked bonds (H, EUR) | 0.6%  | -1.3% | -2.2% | 2.8%   | 3.2%   | 3.0%  | Euro Covered Bonds (EUR)       | -0.3%         | -1.1% | -1.2% | 0.3%  | 1.3%   | 1.0%     |          |          |          |
| Global Gov Bonds (H, EUR)              | 0.1%  | -2.5% | -3.5% | -3.3%  | 2.1%   | 1.0%  | Inflation-linked Europe (EUR)  | -0.7%         | 0.2%  | 0.5%  | 8.5%  | 2.5%   | 2.6%     |          |          |          |
| Emerging Markets (UH, EUR)             | 0.1%  | 2.7%  | 6.6%  | 35.3%  | 7.6%   | 11.4% | German Gov Bonds (EUR)         | -0.7%         | -2.7% | -3.1% | -3.4% | 1.8%   | 1.0%     |          |          |          |
| Cash (EUR)                             | 0.0%  | -0.1% | -0.2% | -0.5%  | -0.4%  | -0.4% | EMD hard currency (UH, EUR)    | -0.9%         | -0.5% | -0.6% | 3.0%  | 5.3%   | 3.9%     |          |          |          |
| EMD hard currency (UH, EUR)            | -0.2% | -2.6% | -3.0% | 1.2%   | 1.1%   | 2.0%  | France Gov Bonds (EUR)         | -1.0%         | -3.4% | -4.0% | -1.8% | 2.2%   | 1.6%     |          |          |          |
|  |       |       |       |        |        |       | Spain Gov Bonds (EUR)          | -1.1%         | -2.8% | -3.4% | 2.1%  | 3.0%   | 3.0%     |          |          |          |
|  |       |       |       |        |        |       | Italy Gov Bonds (EUR)          | -1.5%         | -1.7% | -2.3% | 7.5%  | 3.9%   | 2.9%     |          |          |          |
| Equities: Country Indices              | 1mo   | 3mo   | YTD   | 1YR    | 3YR    | 5YR   | FX versus the EUR              | current level | 1M    | 3M    | YTD   | 12M    | 1m       | 3m       | 1yr      | 1yr      |
| USA (USD)                              | 5.3%  | 13.0% | 11.8% | 46.0%  | 18.7%  | 17.4% | EURO/BRAZIL REAL               | 6.54          | 1.1%  | 1.5%  | -3.0% | -8.8%  | 6.61     | 6.64     | 6.01     | 6.01     |
| UK (GBP)                               | 4.1%  | 10.1% | 9.3%  | 22.2%  | 1.4%   | 6.3%  | EURO/SWISS FRANC               | 1.10          | 0.8%  | 1.6%  | -1.5% | -3.8%  | 1.11     | 1.08     | 1.06     | 1.06     |
| Global equities (LC)                   | 4.0%  | 11.3% | 10.4% | 41.9%  | 14.0%  | 14.1% | EURO/SWEDISH KRONA             | 10.17         | 0.7%  | -0.2% | -1.2% | 4.8%   | 10.24    | 10.15    | 10.69    | 10.69    |
| France (EUR)                           | 3.6%  | 16.5% | 13.5% | 40.4%  | 7.4%   | 10.6% | EURO/NORWEGIAN KRONE           | 10.00         | 0.3%  | 3.7%  | 4.8%  | 10.9%  | 10.03    | 10.39    | 11.22    | 11.22    |
| Australia (AUD)                        | 3.5%  | 7.5%  | 7.8%  | 30.5%  | 9.2%   | 10.0% | EURO/CANADIAN DOLLAR           | 1.48          | -0.2% | 4.7%  | 5.0%  | 3.3%   | 1.47     | 1.55     | 1.53     | 1.53     |
| Spain (EUR)                            | 3.0%  | 14.0% | 9.8%  | 30.5%  | -1.2%  | 2.6%  | EURO/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR         | 1.56          | -0.9% | 1.9%  | 1.9%  | 7.4%   | 1.54     | 1.59     | 1.68     | 1.68     |
| Global equities (EUR)                  | 2.2%  | 11.9% | 11.6% | 32.2%  | 14.2%  | 12.9% | EURO/JAPANESE YEN              | 131.40        | -1.2% | -3.4% | -4.1% | -11.9% | 129.86   | 127.13   | 117.42   | 117.42   |
| Brazil (BRL)                           | 1.9%  | 3.3%  | -0.1% | 47.7%  | 11.4%  | 17.1% | EURO/CHINA RENMINBI            | 7.79          | -1.3% | 0.3%  | 2.7%  | -0.8%  | 7.69     | 7.81     | 7.73     | 7.73     |
| Asia ex Japan (LC)                     | 1.8%  | 1.4%  | 5.9%  | 43.5%  | 9.6%   | 14.2% | EURO/SINGAPORE DOLLAR          | 1.60          | -1.4% | 0.8%  | 0.9%  | -3.5%  | 1.58     | 1.61     | 1.55     | 1.55     |
| Eurozone (EUR)                         | 1.8%  | 14.8% | 12.7% | 38.7%  | 6.5%   | 8.3%  | EURO/SOUTH KOREAN WON          | 1347.73       | -1.7% | 0.6%  | 1.1%  | -3.0%  | 1325.71  | 1355.73  | 1308.08  | 1308.08  |
| Korea (KRW)                            | 1.8%  | 4.4%  | 8.5%  | 63.6%  | 9.3%   | 11.5% | EURO/RUSSIAN RUBLE             | 90.46         | -2.0% | 1.7%  | 0.2%  | -11.1% | 88.72    | 91.98    | 81.44    | 81.44    |
| Emerging Markets (LC)                  | 1.6%  | 1.8%  | 5.6%  | 42.9%  | 9.4%   | 13.3% | EURO/BRITISH POUND             | 0.87          | -2.2% | 1.7%  | 2.8%  | 0.0%   | 0.85     | 0.89     | 0.87     | 0.87     |
| China (HKD)                            | 1.4%  | -6.0% | 1.0%  | 37.0%  | 8.8%   | 16.5% | EURO/HONG KONG DOLLAR          | 9.34          | -2.4% | 0.8%  | 1.8%  | -9.9%  | 9.12     | 9.41     | 8.49     | 8.49     |
| Hong Kong (HKD)                        | 1.3%  | 2.0%  | 5.9%  | 20.6%  | 1.1%   | 10.2% | EURO/INDONESIAN RUPIAH         | 17473.84      | -2.4% | -2.8% | -1.1% | -7.9%  | 17062.98 | 16999.98 | 16194.90 | 16194.90 |
| Netherlands (EUR)                      | 1.1%  | 11.1% | 13.3% | 37.9%  | 8.4%   | 10.0% | EURO/US DOLLAR                 | 1.20          | -2.5% | 1.0%  | 1.8%  | -9.7%  | 1.17     | 1.21     | 1.10     | 1.10     |
| Switzerland (CHF)                      | 0.9%  | 6.7%  | 5.6%  | 18.1%  | 11.0%  | 10.3% | EURO/INDIAN RUPEE              | 89.60         | -4.5% | -3.4% | 0.2%  | -9.7%  | 85.78    | 88.40    | 81.65    | 81.65    |
| Germany (EUR)                          | 0.8%  | 12.7% | 10.3% | 39.4%  | 6.3%   | 8.6%  |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |
| Russia (RUB)                           | 0.1%  | 8.1%  | 7.8%  | 33.7%  | 15.4%  | 12.7% |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |
| Emerging Markets (EUR)                 | 0.1%  | 2.7%  | 6.6%  | 35.3%  | 7.6%   | 11.4% |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |
| Japan (JPY)                            | -1.3% | 4.8%  | 5.7%  | 44.9%  | 10.8%  | 13.7% |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |
| India (INR)                            | -1.5% | 5.6%  | 2.3%  | 46.3%  | 12.9%  | 15.2% |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |
| Italy (EUR)                            | -1.9% | 12.1% | 9.2%  | 39.6%  | 3.5%   | 9.0%  |                                |               |       |       |       |        |          |          |          |          |

Source: Bloomberg, Robeco

All market data to 30 April unless mentioned otherwise

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