Investment Research - General Market Conditions

2 June 2023

Executive Briefing

Strong service sectors and weak manufacturing

According to PMIs, economies have continued to strengthen in May and the picture of a two-speed economy has become clearer. Globally, manufacturing continues to struggle, in particularly in the euro area where the manufacturing contraction intensified in May, not least driven by Germany. The much bigger service sector, on the other hand, accelerated further, which leaves the impression of a resilient European economy supported by some relief in purchasing power following higher wage growth and lower energy prices. The picture is largely the same in the US, although the manufacturing sector has not weakened as much. However, in Western countries, we estimate that only a small part of the effect of the monetary policy tightening that has taken place is so far visible in the growth picture. In Japan, service PMI reached a historical high in May. The Chinese recovery has overall weakened after a strong rebound in Q1.

The strong service sectors are reflected in labour markets, which continue on a tight note. The unemployment rate in the euro area hit a historical low of 6.5% in March and April. Labour shortage remains a key obstacle for growth across sectors but particularly in the service sector, and wage pressures continue to build. The US economy is further ahead in the business cycle and we see some small signs of weakening in the tight US labour market, although the picture is very murky, with for instance job openings picking up again in April and payroll employment in May, but the unemployment rate also increased. It does look like wage pressures have peaked, though.

Inflation has declined significantly, largely driven by lower energy prices, while food prices have also started to decline. Lower commodity prices and freight rates is pulling business costs lower. However, core inflation remains elevated as tight labour markets continue to push service prices higher. Euro area HICP inflation declined to 6.1% in May from 7.0%, but underlying price pressures remain elevated. We expect service price growth to be underpinned by higher wage growth in Europe. In the US, core inflation remains too high as well, although we have seen some easing signs, as service sector inflation has declined, indicating a somewhat lower price pressure in the part of the economy, which is running particularly hot.

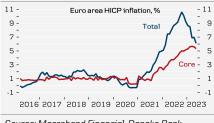
Central banks are walking a tightrope as economies continue to run hot and inflation remains far above target. However, the full effect of the rate hikes has not nearly fed through to the real economy and a quick tightening pace risks triggering financial unrest as we have already seen in the banking sector. Thus, the ECB lowered the hiking pace to 25bps at the May meeting in line with the Fed. We expect the ECB will hike by a further 75bps before they are done fighting inflation, whereas the Fed is most likely done and will keep rates unchanged for the rest of the year.

In the US, the debt ceiling crisis has been avoided for this time around, as expected.

Key points

- Rebounding service sectors create strong job growth and hence inflationary pressure, but central banks have to balance that against expected effects of past tightening.
- Growth has surprised to the upside in both Denmark and Sweden, though for different reasons.
- Nordic housing markets show signs of levelling out, but that might change again.
- In financial markets, Nordic currencies are under pressure, while IT/AI equity is booming and credit markets are very active.

Inflation declines rapidly but underlying price pressures remain elevated

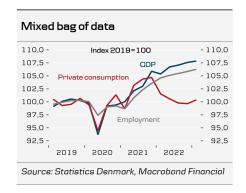


Source: Macrobond Financial, Danske Bank

Danske Bank

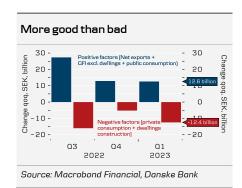
Denmark

GDP growth was 0.2% in Q1, following the strong 0.5% in Q4. For both quarters, the number would most likely have been negative had it not been for the surge in pharmaceutical production that seemed to occur in December. Q1 showed a strong rebound of 0.7% in household consumption especially driven by car sales, suggesting that the long decline in consumption has ended, as households now again experience increasing real incomes. On the other hand, business and housing investment are now clearly declining. Employment continues to grow despite the stagnant non-pharma economy, but job vacancies are coming down and we still expect job growth to eventually end and even reverse slightly. The housing market continues to show signs of stabilisation and even slightly higher prices.



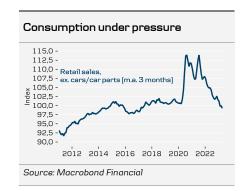
Sweden

Swedish core inflation peaked in February and there are hopeful signs in the form of sharply falling price expectations for consumer goods according to the monthly NIER survey. GDP for Q1 was much better than expected at 0.6 % q/q. We have been focusing too much on negative factors such as falling private consumption and dwellings construction. The fact is, that since Q3 22, the negative impact from these two sources has been outweighed by positive growth in the remaining demand sources. That said, we are worried about the implications of the recent plunge in manufacturing PMI. This is a warning sign for the Q2 23 outlook. We look for PMI services to give signals about whether this setback is contained to manufacturing or whether it has a negative spill over into that sector. The housing market has also surprised to the upside although prices have fallen 12%. There is likely some downside risk in the coming months but it is more likely to be a decline of around 15 percent from peak to bottom than the 25 percent we previously forecast.



Norway

Even though the activity level remains elevated, growth is now clearly slowing and ended at 0.2 % q/q in Q1. At the same time, unemployment has started to rise moderately and new job openings are falling. There are also some warning signs from private consumption, as retail sales dropped again in April and overall consumption looks weak based on BankAccept-data. However, inflation remains high and the exchange rate continue to depreciate, which increases the pressure on Norges Bank to deliver rate hikes both in June and August. This challenges our expectations of a soft landing for the economy.



Finland

The Finnish economy is pushing slowly through a weak period. GDP rose a meagre 0.2% q/q mainly thanks to public consumption in Q1 and we expect GDP to be roughly flat in 2023. Employment is forecast to stay fairly stable. Open job vacancies continue to be plentiful in many industries, which gives a buffer against the economic adversities. Wages rise roughly 4% in 2023 and in 2024. Consumer confidence is still weak, although early 2023 has brought some rebound. Higher interest rates continue to transmit into existing housing loans. Housing market has remained quiet but stable in H1. Demand for housing loans has stayed flat at roughly 1/3 below normal. Housing prices could fall slightly more, but there is no pressure for a large price movement and pent-up demand is growing. Housing construction is going to fall. There will be additional investment into domestic energy. We expect a new conservative government to be formed in June. Fiscal policy will get tighter.



Currency markets

May was characterised by Scandi weakness as both SEK and NOK were the clear underperformers. This was down to not least other central banks getting more aggressively priced (more rate hikes) than the Riksbank and Norges Bank, concerns about the Swedish economy (despite strong GDP numbers) and for NOK a continued mismatch in the fiscal FX transactions. In the other end of the spectrum, CAD, AUD, USD and GBP all had a strong month with the noticeable common denominator of their short-end rate curves moving considerably higher. Also for the USD, focus increasingly has turned to the outlook of tighter USD liquidity conditions and a more challenging medium- to long-term global growth outlook. Following the rebound in global yields the JPY had a weak month which was also the case for the EUR were optimism with respect to the growth outlook seems to be fading alongside the outperformance of European equities. EUR/USD has consequently moved below the 1.08 mark. Finally, EUR/DKK has moved back below 7.45.

Bond markets

A 20-25bp increase in 10Y swap yields was followed by a similar size drop the end of May on back of more disinflationary data. The short end of the yield curve has also seen volatility during May driven by changes in expectations of central bank future rate moves on back if changing economic key figures. It is mainly the expectation of how much and how fast the ECB will cut rates at a later stage that has affected the short end yields in up and down directions. Currently, the market is pricing slightly higher peak level from ECB and afterwards the same pattern of rate cuts starting nearly one year's time. Overall, markets have been more stable in terms of yields and credit spreads changes, and intra-Europe spreads were rather stable during May. Zooming in on Danish mortgage bonds, the main event was the refinancing of record high floater amounts in mid to end of May. Result was a roughly 14bp extra spread premium to flex bonds and decent demand at the auctions.

Credit markets

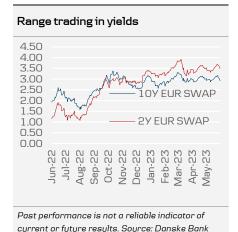
The primary market has taken most of the focus in credit markets during May, with aggregate issuance from corporates and financials amounting to EUR83bn, thus significantly exceeding the usual issuance pace in May. Amidst this backdrop, secondary bonds have naturally been in lower demand as investors have had ample opportunity to increase risk in primary at decent new issue premiums. Hence, it is not very surprising that IG cash bonds (where we have seen the vast majority of supply) have lagged the performance of synthetic indices, with IG bonds widening 7bp during May whereas iTraxx Main tightened 1bp. On the other hand, HY bonds outperformed Xover by tightening 8bp vs 1bp for Xover. In terms banking turmoil it seems markets have calmed down (for now), with the spread between iTraxx senior financials and Main close to pre-SVB levels.

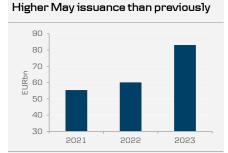
Equities

Equities continued to do well in May despite increased uncertainty related to the US debt ceiling, but the most interesting part was the growth/tech rotation that took place. Especially the stocks related to AI did a quite notable outperformance. Most investors we meet with are still underweighted equities and hence suffering when equities are drifting higher. This could well continue as investors are still doubting the economic backdrop. In our opinion, what we see now is a classical disbelieve in the late cycle macro acceleration and that leads to investors underestimating the upside risk while focusing on the recession risk. We still think it is too early to allocate for recession and Q2 will mark a low of earnings growth before it starts to reaccelerate again in Q3 and Q4.

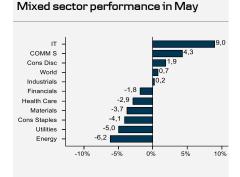
FX. Sorted spot returns vs EUR 4 - Spot change vs EUR (**DKK) - 4 3 - since 30 April 2023, % - 3 2 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 1 - 0 - 1 - 2 - - 2 - 3 - - - 2 - 3 - - - 2 - 3 - - - 2 - 3 - - - 3

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results. Source: Macrobond Financial





Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results. Source: Bloomberg



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results. Source: Refinity



Names and contact information of analysts

Editor:		. 45 45 14 14 04	1 8 1 1 1
Las Olsen, <i>Chief Economis</i> t	Denmark	+45 45 14 14 94	laso@danskebank.com
Bjørn Tangaa Sillemann, Chief Analyst	Global	+45 45 14 15 07	bjsi@danskebank.com
Michael Grahn, Chief Economist	Sweden	+46 8 568 807 00	mika@danskebank.com
Frank Jullum, Chief Economist	Norway	+47 85 40 65 40	fju@danskebank.com
Pasi Petteri Kuoppamäki, Chief Economist	Finland	+358 10 546 7715	paku@danskebank.com
Kristoffer Lomholt, Chief Analyst	FX Research	+45 45 12 85 29	klom@danskebank.com
Jan Weber Østergaard, Chief Analyst	Fixed Income	+45 45 13 07 89	jast@danskebank.com
	Research		
Mark Thybo Naur, Senior Analyst	Credit Research	+45 45 12 84 30	mnau@danskebank.com
Bjarne Breinholt Thomsen, Senior Equity	Equities	+45 61 22 56 13	bt@danskebank.com
Strategist	Research		

Macroeconomic forecast

	Year	GDP ¹	Private cons.1	Public cons. ¹	Fixed inv.1	Ex- ports ¹	lm- ports ¹	Infla- tion ¹	Wage growth ¹	Unem- ploym ³	Public budget ⁴	Public debt ⁴	Current
Denmark	2022 2023 2024	3.8 0.5 1.3	-2.4 0.0 1.8	-3.5 -0.4 1.6	8.6 -5.0 -1.7	8.6 1.3 1.3	4.2 -2.0 0.6	7.7 5.1 3.6	3.6 4.7 5.0	2.6 3.1 3.6	3.3 2.0 1.1	29.8 27.1 25.1	13.1 11.5 11.3
Sweden	2022 2023 2024	2.9 -1.0 1.7	1.9 -2.3 1.8	0.1 1.1 1.2	6.1 -2.8 2.3	7.0 2.0 2.8	9.4 -0.1 2.6	8.4 9.6 2.3	2.5 4.1 3.3	7.5 8.0 7.9	0.7 -0.9 -0.9	33.0 29.0 29.0	4.6 5.7 5.8
Norway	2022 2023 2024	3.8 1.0 1.5	6.9 -1.0 0.9	0.1 1.2 1.7	4.3 0.5 4.0	5.9 4.0 2.0	9.2 3.0 2.0	5.8 4.8 2.5	4.3 5.0 4.0	1.8 2.1 2.4	- - -	- - -	- - -
Macro f	oreca	st. Eur	oland										
	Year	GDP ¹	Private cons.1	Public cons. ¹	Fixed inv.1	Ex- ports ¹	lm- ports ¹	Infla- tion ¹	Wage growth ¹	Unem- ploym ³	Public budget ⁴	Public debt ⁴	Current acc.4
Euro area	2022 2023 2024	3.5 0.4 0.6	4.3 -0.1 1.2	1.4 1.2 1.0	3.8 -0.8 0.2	7.1 3.4 3.6	8.0 3.4 4.6	8.4 6.3 3.5	4.5 4.9 3.6	6.7 6.9 7.0	-3.6 -3.2 -3.0	93.2 90.9 90.1	0.6 2.2 2.4
Finland	2022 2023 2024	2.1 -0.2 0.9	2.1 -0.2 1.0	2.9 1.2 0.5	5.0 -2.0 2.0	1.7 -0.5 1.5	7.5 -1.0 2.0	7.1 5.5 2.1	2.4 4.1 3.7	6.8 7.0 6.8	-0.9 -2.5 -1.7	73.0 72.1 72.4	-3.9 -1.4 -1.0
Macro f	oreca	st. Glo	bal										
	Year	GDP ¹	Private cons.1	Public cons. ¹	Fixed inv.1	Ex- ports ¹	lm- ports ¹	Infla- tion ¹	Wage growth ¹	Unem- ploym ³	Public budget ⁴	Public debt ⁴	Current acc.4
USA	2022 2023 2024	2.1 0.8 0.3	2.7 0.7 0.4	-0.6 1.7 1.3	-0.2 -5.5 -1.5	7.1 -0.3 -1.9	8.1 -5.5 -1.9	8.0 4.1 2.1	5.3 4.1 3.2	3.6 3.7 4.2	-5.5 -5.4 -5.8	123.3 123.6 125.4	-3.9 -3.1 -2.8
China	2022 2023 2024	3.0 6.2 5.0	2.8 7.0 5.2	- - -	4.0 6.0 4.8		- - -	2.0 2.2 2.5	- - -	- - -	-7.5 -6.9 -6.4	77.1 82.4 87.2	2.3 1.4 1.1
UK	2022	4.2 -0.7	- -	- -	-	-	-	8.9 6.2	-	3.8 4.4	-	-	- -

 $Source: OECD \ and \ Danske \ Bank. \ 1] \ \% \ y/y. \ 2] \ \% \ contribution \ to \ GDP \ growth. \ 3] \ \% \ of \ labour \ force. \ 4] \ \% \ of \ GDP.$

Financial forecast

Rond	and mone	y markets	,							
DUITU		Keyinterest		2-yr swap	10-yr swap	Currency	Currency	Currency	Currency	Currency
		rate	rate	vield	vield	vs EUR	vs USD	vs DKK	vs NOK	vs SEK
USD	02-Jun	5.25	5.42	4.69	3.81	107.5	_	693.0	1099.7	1072.4
	+3m	5.25	5.40	4.00	3.45	107.0	-	695.8	1093.5	1046.7
	+6m	5.25	5.35	3.70	3.45	106.0	-	702.4	1066.0	1066.0
	+12m	5.00	4.82	3.30	3.35	103.0	-	723.3	1048.5	1116.5
EUR	02-Jun	3.25	3.46	3.66	3.15	-	107.5	744.8	1181.9	1152.5
	+3m	3.75	3.98	3.50	3.05	-	107.0	744.5	1170.0	1120.0
	+6m	4.00	4.02	3.15	2.95	-	106.0	744.5	1130.0	1130.0
	+12m	4.00	3.70	2.85	2.85	-	103.0	745.0	1080.0	1150.0
JPY	02-Jun	-0.10	-0.03	-	-	120.5	139.8	6.18	9.81	9.56
	+3m	-0.10	-	-	-	141.2	132.0	5.27	8.28	7.93
	+6m	0.10	-	-	-	136.7	129.0	5.44	8.26	8.26
	+12m	0.10	-	-	-	130.8	127.0	5.70	8.26	8.79
GBP*	02-Jun	4.50	-	5.20	4.26	86.8	123.8	858.1	1361.6	1327.6
	+3m	4.75		4.40	4.00	88.0	121.6	846.0	1329.5	1272.7
	+6m	4.75		4.30	4.00	88.0	120.5	846.0	1284.1	1284.1
	+12m	4.50		4.20	4.00	88.0	117.0	846.6	1227.3	1306.8
CHF*	02-Jun	1.50	-	1.85	1.97	97.0	90.3	767.6	1218.1	1187.7
	+3m	2.00	-	-	-	97.0	90.7	767.5	1206.2	1154.6
	+6m	2.00	-	-	-	96.0	90.6	775.5	1177.1	1177.1
	+12m	2.00	-	-	-	96.0	93.2	776.0	1125.0	1197.9
DKK	02-Jun	2.85	3.47	3.77	3.27	744.84	693.03	-	158.68	154.73
	+3m	3.35	3.82	3.65	3.20	744.50	695.79	-	157.15	150.44
	+6m	3.60	3.85	3.30	3.10	744.50	702.36	-	151.78	151.78
	+12m	3.60	3.53	3.00	3.00	745.00	723.30	-	144.97	154.36
SEK	02-Jun	3.50	3.68	3.73	3.08	1152.5	1072.4	64.6	102.6	100.0
	+3m	4.00	4.10	3.65	2.90	1120.0	1046.7	66.5	104.5	-
	+6m	4.00	4.15	3.30	2.80	1130.0	1066.0	65.9	100.0	-
	+12m	3.75	3.70	3.00	2.75	1150.0	1116.5	64.8	93.9	-
NOK	02-Jun	3.25	3.88	4.19	3.59	1181.9	1099.7	63.0	100.0	97.5
	+3m	3.50	4.03	4.05	3.35	1170.0	1093.5	63.6	-	95.7
	+6m	3.50	3.84	3.70	3.25	1130.0	1066.0	65.9	-	100.0
	+12m	3.25	3.60	3.35	2.95	1080.0	1048.5	69.0	-	106.5

^{*}Notes: GBP swaps are SONIA and CHF swaps are SHARON.

We have updated our Norges Bank forecasts after yesterday's Norges Bank meeting but not yet our Norwegian yield outlook

Commodities												
			20	23			20	24		A	vera	ige
	02-Jun	Q1	02	Ω3	Ω4	Q1	02	Ω3	Ω4	2023		2024
ICE Brent	77	87	90	85	80	80	80	80	80	86		80

Source Danske Bank



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