



J. Safra Sarasin Cross-Asset Weekly

02 June 2023

Getting ready for a summer hike

The deal on the debt ceiling, assuming it is written into law this week, removes a significant downside risk to the US economy. Recent data releases also suggest that the economy remains resilient to tight money so far. Additionally, inflation appears to be stuck in the 4%-5% range, which clearly is a problem. Therefore, there is a good chance that the Fed might have to hike interest rates again, either in June or July.

With Fed hikes back in play, the dollar has started to reverse its recent downtrend, in particular versus the euro. We expect this pattern to hold for the time being and see downside risks for the euro building. Medium term market pricing for the ECB seems relatively hawkish as compared to what the market is pricing for the Fed as tailwinds for the European cycle have started to fade.

Another currency which should benefit from a generally softer global macro backdrop is the Japanese yen. It has troughed at a 20+-year low in October last year, helping Japanese equities to reach a 20-year high relative to global equities (ex US). The yen remains the single most important driver of Japanese equity performance, which is not only the case from a cyclical point-of-view but also over the long term. As we expect the BoJ to ease yield curve control in the coming quarters while the long end of the US yield curve should decline, the yen will likely strengthen over the coming 6 to 12 months. As a result, we remain cautious on Japanese equities and would refrain from trying to build exposure on the recent rebound.

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US macro

No free lunch

The deal on the debt ceiling, assuming it's written into law this week, removes a significant downside risk to the US economy. And recent data releases suggest that the economy so far remains resilient to tight money. However, inflation appears to be stuck in the 4%-5% range. Therefore, there is a good chance that the Fed might have to hike interest rates again, either in June or July.

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The debt ceiling deal is likely to be signed into law this week, removing a significant downside risk to the US economy

Recent news from the US has been overwhelmingly positive. With the X-date approaching fast, Republican leadership and the US Administration have reached a common ground and suspended the debt ceiling until January 1 2025. While defaulting was never a realistic option, a temporary government shutdown, which would have weighed on the economy, was. The resulting fiscal drag on growth from the agreed spending restraint is likely to be small, at around 0.1%-0.2% of GDP. The proposal still needs to go through Congress, but it is now highly likely that it will be signed into law by the end of this week.

Recent activity data suggests that the economy is more resilient than previously thought

Activity data continues to come at the strong end of expectations, indicating solid annualised growth of around 2.5% in Q2 for final domestic demand, following Q1's expansion of 3.3% (Exhibit 1). The improvement has been broad-based, with consumer spending increasing by 0.5% mom in April, and core capital goods orders, a good proxy for capex spending, rising by 1.4%. Residential investment appears to have stabilised, and new house sales have picked up. The labour market may be looser than a year ago, but it is still historically tight (Exhibit 2).

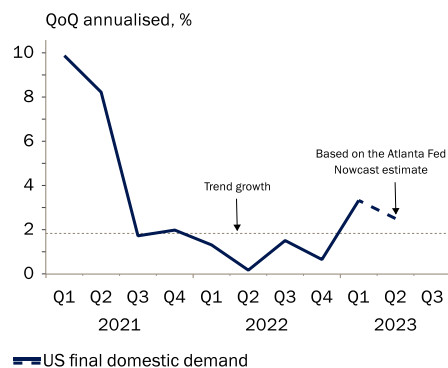
High inflation rates risk becoming entrenched

The combination of strong demand and a tight labour market is contributing to the persistence of inflation. Last week's core PCE inflation reading has probably raised further concerns among Fed officials that underlying inflation might remain stuck in the 4%-5% range. Though the final reading of the Uni. of Michigan 5-10 year inflation expectations ticked down to 3.1% (from 3.2%), the 1-year ahead figure remains well above its 5-10 year counterparts, increasing the risk of long-term inflation expectations becoming unanchored.

Fed officials might have to tighten policy more than previously expected

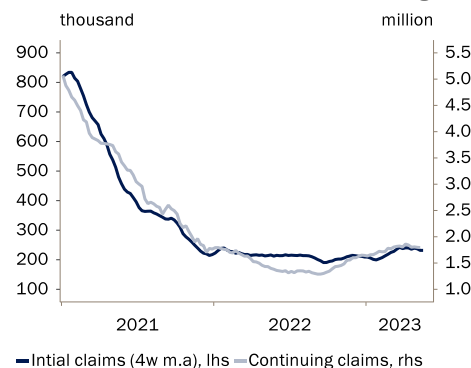
Inflation should fall more rapidly in 2H23 as corporate pricing power decreases, tight lending standards weigh on economic growth, and the labour market moves into better balance (Exhibit 3). The Fed likely shares this view, but if data keeps surprising on the upside in the near term, most officials may think the job isn't done yet.

Exhibit 1: Demand has accelerated in 1H23



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 30.05.2023

Exhibit 2: The labour market remains tight



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 30.05.2023

Exhibit 3: Inflation has to come down further



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 30.05.2023



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FX markets

A bumpy road ahead for the euro

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With tailwinds from both the reversal of the terms of trade shock and the dwindling dollar yield advantage fading, the euro has probably arrived at a turning point. In our view, the currency's near-term challenges should primarily come from the rates side, while weaker cyclical momentum should act as a further drag.

Euro has probably arrived at a turning point

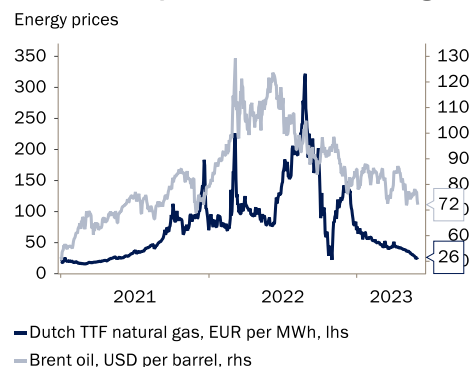
During the past one and a half years, the euro experienced something like a 'mini cycle'. The start of the war in Ukraine accelerated a downward trend of the euro which had already started in 2021, sending the EUR-USD pair temporarily below parity (Exhibit 1). Following an unexpected reversal in Q4, the pair was quick to recover and posted steady gains over the past months. Yet several indicators are hinting at an end of this upward trend.

Exhibit 1: Euro likely again at a turning point



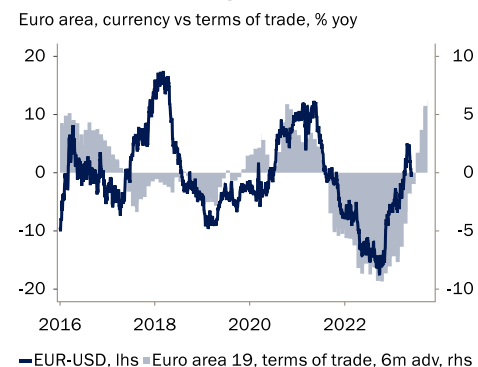
Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Exhibit 2: Gas prices have normalised again



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Exhibit 3: ToT are important for euro



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Combination of factors drove the euro's decline in the first half of 2022

It is instructive to revisit the confluence of factors working at the core of this euro mini cycle. Recall that during the first half of 2022, the euro faced a 'perfect storm':

- In response to widespread fears of an imminent energy shortage, oil and gas prices soared to levels not seen for more than a decade (Exhibit 2). This abruptly worsened the euro area's terms of trade (ratio of export to import prices) and sent the euro to a 20y low (Exhibit 3).
- In the first half of 2022, the Fed's relatively tighter monetary policy stance further increased the dollar policy rate advantage over the euro (Exhibit 4), which had started to weigh on the euro since 2021.
- The yield spreads on government bonds of the euro area periphery quickly widened on the back of a worsening global economic outlook on the back of the war in Ukraine. Serving as an indicator for the longer-term stability of the euro, the currency responds sensitively towards movements in the peripheral yield spread (Exhibit 5).

Reversal of the euro's terms of trade shock and the currency's dwindling yield disadvantage versus the dollar allowed the euro to stage a remarkable recovery

Only the easing of the above headwinds allowed the euro to stage a remarkable recovery from Q4 2022 onwards. In the meantime, natural gas prices have fallen back close to their 2021 lows, while oil is currently trading at below \$80/bbl – a marked retreat from its peak at \$130/bbl in March 2022. Providing significant relief to the euro area's commodity terms of trade, the improvements on the energy front account for a large part of the euro's recovery. This gained further traction as the ECB kicked off its policy rate hiking cycle in late July, while the announcement of the ECB's 'Transmission Protection Instrument' (TPI) kept the bond yield spreads of the euro area periphery at bay.



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Exhibit 4: Hawkish ECB diminished the US dollar's yield advantage

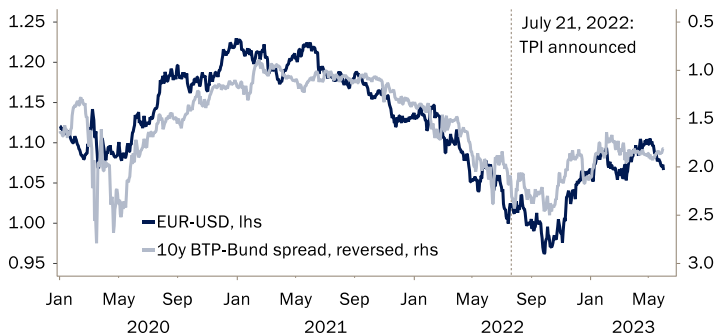
OIS, implied policy rates in 1y, %



Source: Bloomberg, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Exhibit 5: TPI compressed peripheral yield spreads in the euro area

EUR-USD vs 10y Italy-Germany gov't bond yield spread



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Yet with both developments priced, the odds are once again tilted towards a weaker euro

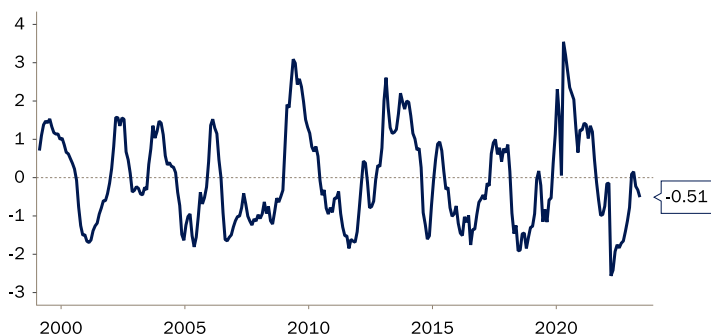
So where are we now? Given that the tailwind from the reversal of the terms of trade shock and the dwindling dollar yield advantage are fading, the euro has probably arrived again at a turning point. While the euro area is quite unlikely to experience another terms of trade shock of a magnitude similar to 2022, we think that the euro's near-term challenges should come from the rates side and from the economic cycle. Euro area policy rate expectations are on the hawkish side for 2024/25, in particular as compared to expectations for the Fed, warranting some retracement (see last week's article [«Implied policy rates diverge»](#)), giving the US dollar a relative edge.

Euro support is fading from both a cyclical and a rate perspective

A moderation of the implied ECB policy rate path looks increasingly likely in the light of weakening sentiment in the euro area (Exhibit 6) and the euro area's May inflation prints, which surprised to the downside. Both likely reflect a deterioration in euro area activity, led by weak German manufacturing on the back of a recent drop in Chinese car imports. In contrast, the US economy is holding up better, which is once again indicated by strong US jobs data. Given a relatively tight historical correlation, we contend that these relative cyclical patterns should favour the US dollar over the euro in the near term (Exhibit 7), implying that the euro has likely seen a temporary peak around early May. A global recession would strengthen this view, given that a global downturn typically weighs more on the euro area's export-driven economy.

Exhibit 6: Euro area sentiment is deteriorating again

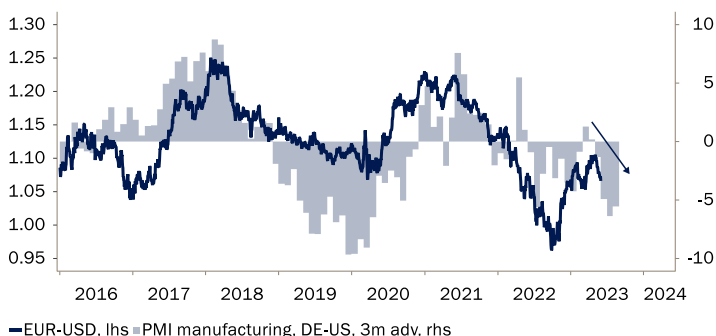
Euro area, ZEW Financial Market Report, 2y z-score



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Exhibit 7: Relative cyclical dynamics to favour a stronger US dollar

EUR-USD vs relative PMIs



Source: Macrobond, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023



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Japanese equities

It's all about the yen

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One should not venture too far out in order to explain the recent strength in Japanese equities. We argue that the Japanese yen matters more than any other factor to explain Japanese equity performance, not only from a cyclical perspective but also over the long term. Indeed, the recent peaks in the Japanese equity market have coincided with troughs in the trade-weighted yen. The yen itself has been driven by moves in the long-end of the US Treasury curve, as the Japanese yield curve is tied by the BoJ's yield curve control. As we expect the BoJ to ease yield curve control in the coming quarters while US yields should decline, the yen will likely strengthen over the coming 6 to 12 months. As a result, we remain cautious on Japanese equities and would refrain from trying to build exposure on the recent recovery.

Japanese equities have had a strong start this year

The Japanese equity index has been the best performer globally over the past 6 months, gaining almost 8% while the MSCI AC World has only moved up by 2.5%. As a result, it is almost back to the peaks relative to global equities it touched last year (Exhibit 1). Some argue that this rebound is the result of factors such as improved corporate governance in Japan and a re-assessment of Japan Inc.'s future growth potential.

The most important driver of the Japanese equity market is the yen

We believe these arguments run the risk of missing the key point. By far, the most dominant driver of the Japanese equity market (on a hedged basis) is the Japanese yen. This does not only hold from a cyclical point of view (which explains the recent market rebound), but also from the long-term perspective (Exhibit 2).

The Japanese market's 20-year peak, relative to global equities (ex US) in October coincided with a 25-year low of the yen

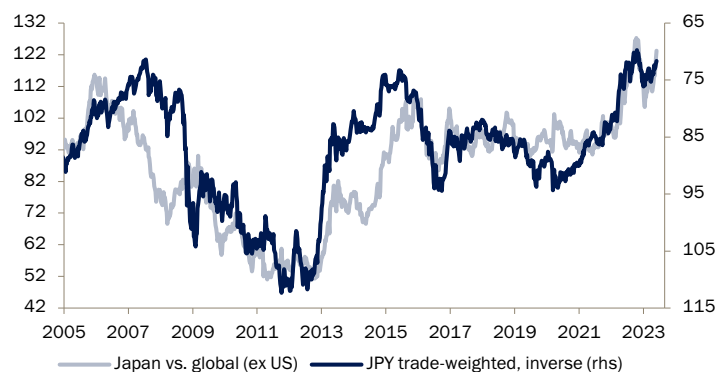
Indeed, the 20-year peak in the Japanese equity market, relative to global equities (ex US), which was reached last October, matched the timing of a 25-year low of the trade-weighted yen. Since then the yen has fluctuated somewhat but resumed its weakening path over the past five months, pushing Japanese equities back to almost the October peak.

Exhibit 1: Japanese equities vs global ex US hit a 20Y high in October



Source: Refinitiv, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 31.05.2023

Exhibit 2: The weak yen has been a key driver of Japanese equities



Source: Refinitiv, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 31.05.2023

It's all about the yen

We believe that it is absolutely crucial to get the yen right in order to get the Japanese equity market right. When it comes to the yen, we have held the view for some time that it should be close to its trough and appreciate over the medium-term. That call is largely based on the view that the BoJ will adjust and eventually abandon its yield curve control policy, which targets the JGB curve up to 10 years



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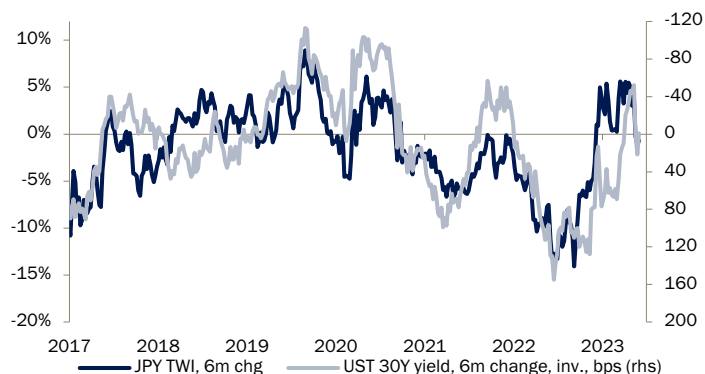
More than any other currency, the yen has suffered from rising US yields

What's more, with the long end of the Japanese yield curve fixed, the trade-weighted yen has predominantly been driven by changes in US yields. Whenever the long end of the US curve moves higher, the yen depreciates and vice versa (Exhibit 3). This relationship also explains the yen's multi-decade weakness in 2022, when US yields moved back to the highest levels since the global financial crisis, and why it has not recovered since.

Given the yen's dependence on US yields, Japanese equities benefit when US yields rise and suffer when they fall

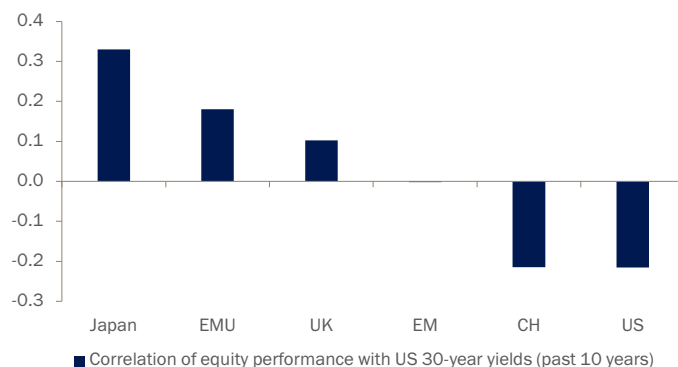
Taking it one step further, we can also show that the Japanese equity market is the regional market which is the most correlated to US 30-year yields. This leaves us with the conclusion that a call on the Japanese equity market has a lot to do with the call on the long end of the US yield curve.

Exhibit 3: The yen tends to move inversely to US yields



Source: Refinitiv, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Exhibit 4: Japanese equities are highly correlated to US yields



Source: Refinitiv, Bank J. Safra Sarasin, 01.06.2023

Given our view on US yields and the Japanese yen, we remain cautious on Japanese equities

When it comes to US yields, we believe that we are past the peak and expect yields to come down until the end of the year (please see our [May forecast update](#)). This also leaves us cautious with regard to Japanese equities.



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Economic Calendar

Week of 05/06 – 09/06/2023

Country	Time	Item	Date	Unit	Consensus Forecast	Prev.
Monday, 05.06.2023						
JP	2:30	Composite PMI	May F	Index		52.9
DE	9:55	Services PMI	May F	Index		56.0
	9:55	Composite PMI	May F	Index		54.2
EMU	10:00	Services PMI	May F	Index		56.2
	10:00	Composite PMI	May F	Index		54.1
UK	10:30	Services PMI	May F	Index		55.9
	10:30	Composite PMI	May F	Index		54.9
US	15:45	Services PMI	May F	Index		53.6
	15:45	Composite PMI	May F	Index		53.4
	16:00	Services ISM	May	Index	52.9	51.9
Tuesday, 06.06.2023						
DE	8:00	Factory Orders	Apr	mom	--	-10.7%
EMU	11:00	Retail Sales	Apr	mom	--	-1.2%
Wednesday, 07.06.2023						
DE	8:00	Industrial Production	Apr	mom	--	-3.40%
US	13:00	Mortgage Applications	Jun	wow	--	-3.70%
Thursday, 08.06.2023						
JP	1:50	GDP SA	1Q F	qoq	0.5%	0.4%
	1:50	GDP SA	1Q F	qoq	1.9%	1.6%
				ann.		
EMU	11:00	GDP SA	1Q F	qoq		0.1%
	11:00	GDP SA	1Q F	yoy		1.3%
US	14:30	Initial Jobless Claims	Jun	weekly		
Friday, 09.06.2023						
CN	3:30	CPI	May	yoy	0.2%	0.1%
	3:30	PPI	May	yoy	-4.3%	-3.6%
		Aggregate Financing CNY	May	CNY bn	1'757	1'220

Source: Bloomberg, J. Safra Sarasin as of 01.06.2023



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Market Performance

Global Markets in Local Currencies

Government Bonds	Current value	Δ 1W	Δ YTD	TR YTD in %
Swiss Eidgenosse 10 year (%)	0.88	-20	-73	6.4
German Bund 10 year (%)	2.25	-29	-32	3.1
UK Gilt 10 year (%)	4.12	-10	44	-1.3
US Treasury 10 year (%)	3.62	-18	-26	3.2
French OAT - Bund, spread (bp)	56	-1	2	
Italian BTP - Bund, spread (bp)	184	-2	-31	

Stock Markets	Level	P/E ratio	1W TR in %	TR YTD in %
SMI - Switzerland	11,296	18.0	-0.7	8.4
DAX - Germany	15,854	11.2	0.4	13.9
MSCI Italy	840	8.1	0.2	11.3
IBEX - Spain	9,168	10.3	0.6	13.5
DJ Euro Stoxx 50 - Eurozone	4,258	12.2	-0.1	15.3
MSCI UK	2,143	10.3	-1.1	1.9
S&P 500 - USA	4,221	19.3	2.6	10.7
Nasdaq 100 - USA	14,442	27.6	6.2	32.5
MSCI Emerging Markets	962	12.7	-0.2	1.5

Forex - Crossrates	Level	3M implied volatility	1W in %	YTD in %
USD-CHF	0.90	7.0	-0.2	-2.2
EUR-CHF	0.97	5.2	0.3	-1.6
GBP-CHF	1.13	6.8	1.4	1.3
EUR-USD	1.08	6.8	0.5	0.7
GBP-USD	1.25	8.1	1.6	3.8
USD-JPY	138.8	10.1	-1.3	5.9
EUR-GBP	0.86	5.6	-1.1	-2.9
EUR-SEK	11.61	7.3	0.1	4.0
EUR-NOK	11.88	10.3	0.0	13.2

Commodities	Level	3M realised volatility	1W in %	YTD in %
Bloomberg Commodity Index	100	14.0	-1.0	-11.8
Brent crude oil - USD / barrel	75	39.5	-1.6	-12.1
Gold bullion - USD / Troy ounce	1,980	12.4	2.0	8.5

Source: J. Safra Sarasin, Bloomberg as of 01.06.2023



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