

## Liquid Insight

## Home bias and real yields – a different kind of risk-off

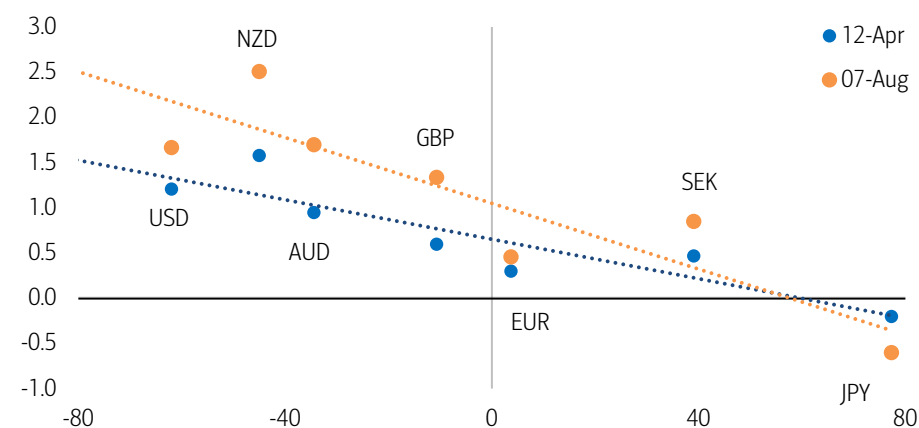
## Key takeaways

- In April, we discussed how the relationship between a country's real yields and its IIP position had returned.
- Since then, the gradient of that relationship has become more acute. Having savings shortfalls is now more costly.
- This might help explain 10y US-Euro real rate developments, but the long end is a different story altogether.

## By Mark Capleton

**Chart of the day: Real yields versus net International Investment Position/GDP, %**

Increased home bias? Gradient change means debtor countries paying more to attract/retain capital.



Source: BofA Globl Research, IMF, Bloomberg

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## Running a savings shortfall becomes more costly

In an April Liquid Insight, we discussed how an old relationship between countries' IIP positions and their real yields seemed to have reestablished itself. The "home bias" premium had returned. Countries with large net external liabilities were having to pay higher real yields to attract and retain foreign savings. Our Chart of the Day shows this relationship has become more severe.

It perhaps helps explain why 10y TIPS have underperformed 10y Euro linkers. However, it doesn't explain what is happening at the long end. 10y20y US real swap rates are at a record wide margin over the Euro equivalent, while the opposite is the case for the 10y20y inflation swap rate difference. The structural supply/demand issues that have got us here are unlikely to change quickly. But the seasonal support for Euro linkers that is probably aggravating the situation should.

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## The old normal returns

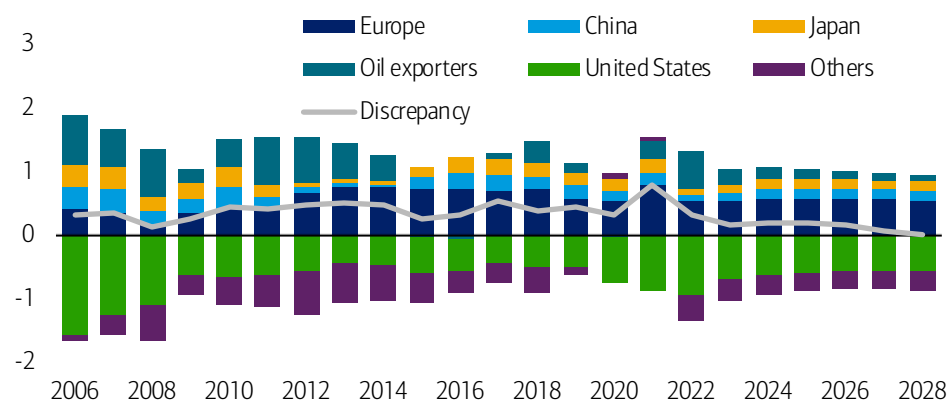
Back in April (see [‘What the IMF didn’t say about real yields’](#), Liquid Insight, 13 April 2023), we said:

“The idea that countries with large current account deficits and accumulated net foreign liabilities need to offer higher prospective returns is back in play. The inverse relationship between real yields and IIP/GDP ratios is important again.”

We argued that this once-useful relationship had been suppressed for a long time by the willingness of creditor countries to recycle savings into borrower countries – more specifically, into the government bond markets of indebted countries (because surplus savings were being redistributed abroad by state actors, rather than private investors). And it had been distorted by the lower bound constraint for policy rates.

### Exhibit 1: Current account balances as a share of global GDP, %

Imbalances increased through the pandemic, requiring recycling from creditor to debtor countries.



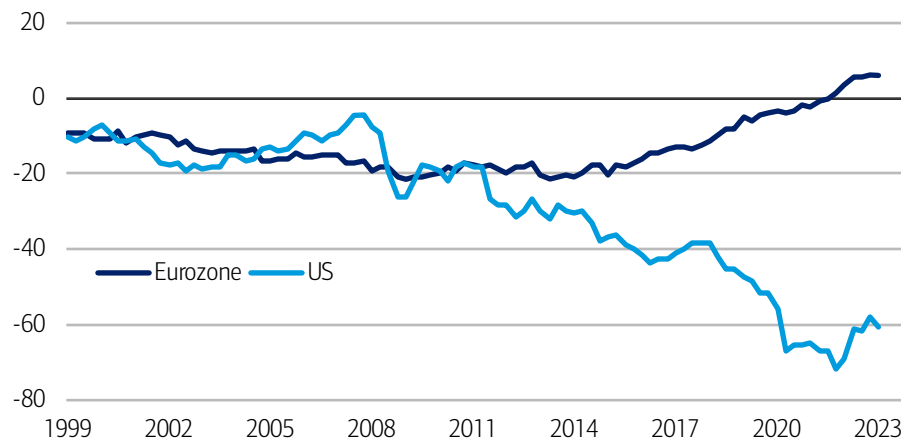
Source: IMF World Economic Outlook April 2023

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The resurgence of imbalances and the move away from policy rate floors seemed to have helped reestablish the relationship. Our Chart of the Day shows the relationship between real yields and net external assets as a share of GDP then (12 April close) and now. We should note that we have added 70bp to UK real yields at both dates as an assumption for the RPI formula bias that will persist until the 2030 reform date.

### Exhibit 2: US and Eurozone net International Investment Position/GDP, %

Relative improvement in Eurozone position may go some way to explaining longer term relative real (and nominal) 10y rate performance.



Source: BofA Global Research, IMF

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### Why return to this now?

We have updated the relationship in our Chart of the Day because we think it's interesting how the gradient of the regression line has changed. The yield premium that net indebted countries must pay relative to creditor countries has increased substantially.

So, for instance, 10y TIPS and 10y German linkers are similarly rich to the trend line, so it is not obvious that the former are cheap relative to the latter on this metric alone. Over the past ten years or more the Euro Area's IIP/GDP ratio has improved relative to the US (Exhibit 2), favouring Euro linkers over TIPS, and in the very recent past this has been augmented by an increase in the value the market places on the difference, reflected in the greater inversion in the Chart of the Day trend line.

Yes, we would say that 10y Euro breakevens and inflation swap rates look expensive versus their US equivalents, but that doesn't mean the 10y real yield spread is too wide. In isolation, it would rather suggest that 10y nominal rates in Euro might be attractive to the US.

### Why has the gradient changed?

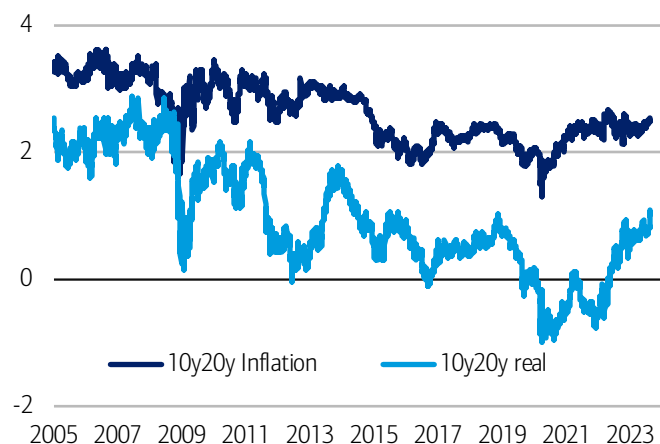
We suspect this apparent increase in the indebtedness penalty reflects two things. Firstly, surplus countries are diversifying purchases away from the countries with the largest savings shortfalls (perhaps away from government bond markets as a whole). And secondly, by coincidence, the countries with the savings shortfalls also happen to those where quantitative tightening is augmenting a still-large deficit financing need with net bond supply from the central bank at a rapid pace (e.g. US, UK). By contrast, Japan the largest creditor country in the chart, might have adjusted its YCC but the BoJ is a long way from net sales.

### We can rationalize 10y US-Euro real yield spread. Long end a different matter

Although the wide real yield spread at 10-years might make sense, the same cannot be said about the long end. Consider 10y20y real and inflation swap rates in the US and Eurozone:

#### Exhibit 3: US 10y20y real and inflation swap rates, %

The forward inflation rate of 2.58% is modestly above a rate consistent with 2% PCE target, while forward real rate is above what we judge to be "neutral".

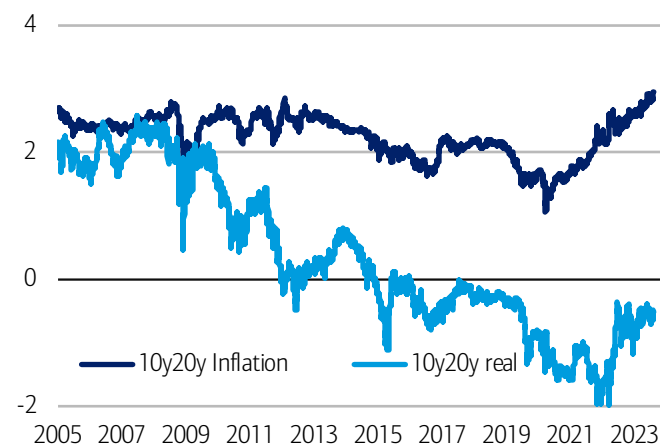


Source: BofA Global Research

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#### Exhibit 4: Euro 10y20y real and inflation swap rates, %

A forward rate of almost 3% seems inconsistent with the ECB inflation target and inconsistent with a negative implied forward real rate.



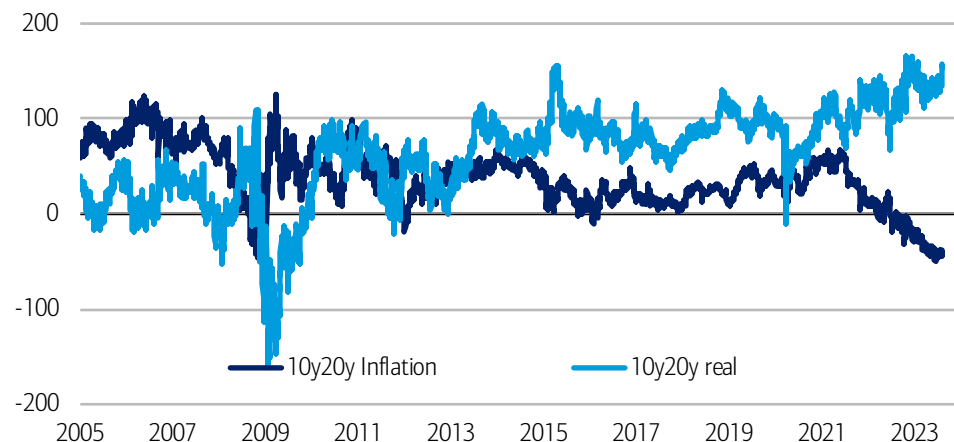
Source: BofA Global Research

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Put them together and you have a near-record wide US-Euro 10y20y real swap rate difference and a near-record negative US-Euro 10y20y inflation difference. These two things sit very uneasily together:

**Exhibit 5: 10y20y US less Euro real and inflation swap rate differences, bp**

Both of these seem stretched, individually. Together they seem completely wrong.



Source: BofA Global Research

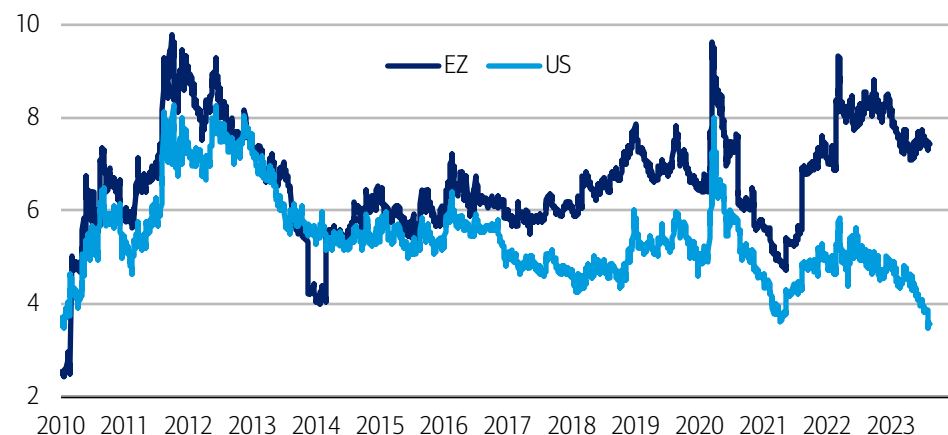
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Creating a trade idea to capture all the elements in Exhibit 5 would be unnecessarily complex for a Liquid Insight. The main message we want to convey is the overall expensiveness of long-dated Euro linkers versus US TIPS.

Another dimension of this relative expensiveness is versus equities. Exhibit 6 shows equity earnings yield gaps for both, taking the equity market earnings yield (the inverse of the PE ratio) less the 30y real swap rate:

**Exhibit 6: Equity earnings yield gaps (earnings yields less 30y real swap rates), %**

The gulf between the two is now 4%.



Source: BofA Global Research, Refinitiv, Bloomberg

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We have written about the supply scarcity issues and the persistent bid for positive real yields driving the Euro side of this before and it's hard to know what might correct this situation materially. However, we have just been through the July index event for French linkers, delivering €1.8bn coupons and a 0.31 extension. Once we clear September's coupons and extension from Italy's linkers, some of the "frothiness" in longer Euro inflation should subside.

## Notable Rates and FX Research

- **Global Rates, FX & EM Year Ahead 2023** – [Year Ahead 2023: Pivot ≠ Peak](#), 20 Nov 2022
- [Every week a new narrative](#) **Global FX Weekly**, 04 Aug 2023
- [Steep demand curve](#) **Global Rates Weekly**, 04 Aug 2023
- [Q3 so far](#), **Liquid Cross Border Flows**, 31 July 2023

## Rates, FX & EM trades for 2023

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For a complete list of our open trade recommendations, as well as our trade recommendations closed over the past 12 months, see the reports below:

[Global FX weekly: Every week a new narrative 04 August 2023](#)

[Global Rates Weekly: Steep demand curve 04 August 2023](#)

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