

Liquid Insight

Bubills after X

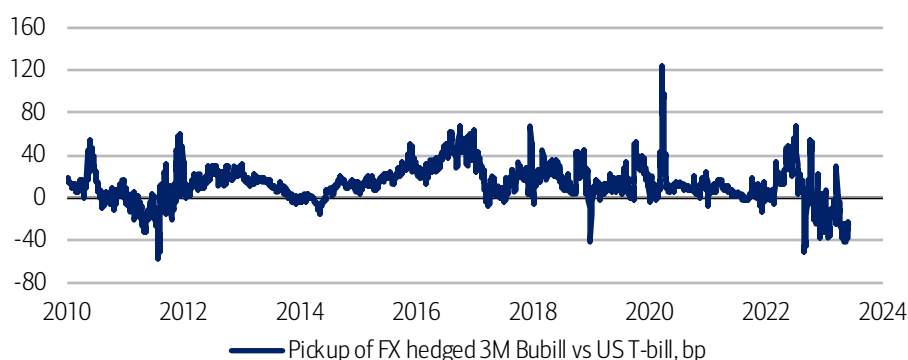
Key takeaways

- Bubills are rich on a cross market basis, vs swaps, and vs other short euro assets
- This may reflect risk-off, remuneration rate changes by the ECB, and recent supply
- We expect Bubill cheapening, wider EUR FX-Sofr basis, and more front-end EUR term premium post US debt limit resolution

By Ronald Man

Chart of the day: 3M Bubills are rich on a FX hedged basis vs US T-bills

We believe Bubills may cheapen after the US debt limit resolution



Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg

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Front-end EUR rates to cheapen post debt limit resolution

Bubills are rich by many measures: vs US T-bills on a FX hedged basis, vs swaps, and vs other euro bills. We believe the recent richness reflects risk-off sentiment from US debt limit uncertainties, richening pressures on short-dated euro assets due to changes in the remuneration of government deposits at the Eurosystem, and bond supply last month.

We do not expect such richness to sustain. Cheapening of US Treasury bills (T-bills) expected by our US team post debt limit resolution is likely to make Bubills even more unattractive vs T-bills on a FX hedged basis. Euro factors that supported recent Bubill richness may fade in June. Flows out of Bubills and into T-bills on a FX hedged basis are likely to lead to a combination of Bubill cheapening vs swaps and EUR FX-secured overnight financing rate (SoFr) basis widening. This may bring a pickup of as much as 45bp from T-bills over FX-hedged Bubills, after the T-bill supply surge, closer to zero.

We believe Bubill cheapening vs euro short-term rate (€str) could put upward pressure on front-end EUR rates and front-end term premium. Term funding competition in the euro area has increased as excess liquidity declines. We maintain our Mar24 3M euro interbank offered rate (Euribor) futures vs €str widener recommendation.

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Rich by many measures

3M Bubills are rich by many measures:

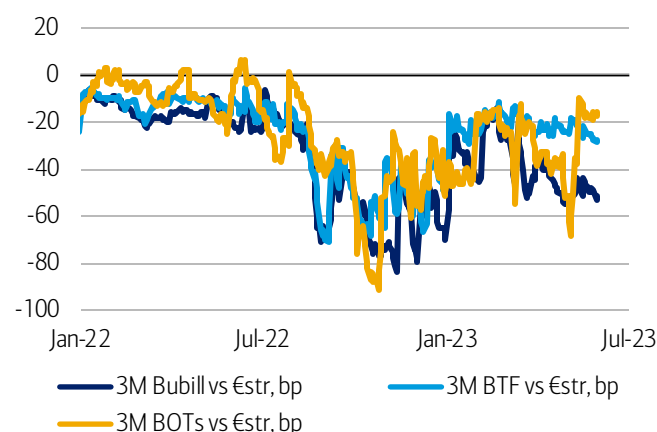
- FX hedged Bubills require a give-up of c. 35 bp vs US T-bills at the time of writing. This is 2.2 standard deviations below its three year average.
- When compared with €str swaps, Bubills are over 50bp rich.
- The recent richening, since end February 2023, in Bubills vs swaps was also stronger than other euro bills (Exhibit 1).

We believe the recent richness of Bubills may reflect:

- Risk-off sentiment due to uncertainties surrounding the US debt limit. The risk-off sentiment was also reflected in the widening of the EUR FX-SoFr basis, i.e. USD funding becoming more expensive vs EUR (Exhibit 2). Despite the increased USD funding cost, the pickup from FX hedged Bubills over US T-bills continued to decline. In other words, the pickup US T-bills was offering over FX-hedged Bubills remained insufficiently attractive to investors. One interpretation is some investors with access to the Bubill, T-bill, and FX swap markets may have been unwilling to take on risks from the debt ceiling so close to, and over, the X-date by switching from German bills to US bills in meaningful size.
- Changes to the ceiling of remuneration of government deposits at the Eurosystem from the lower of the deposit facility rate or €str to €str minus 20bp since 1 May 2023. Government deposits at the Eurosystem fell €106bn on the week ending 5 May 2023. Some of this cash may have been reallocated into the repo market, contributing to the richening of general collateral (GC) rates vs €str in May (Exhibit 3). We believe such search for yield flows could have led to richening pressures on other short-dated euro assets, including bills.
- Low European Government Bond (EGB) supply in May, with net supply of c. € -3bn. Low net EGB supply in May contributed to a more collateral scarce environment, which may also have added richening pressures on euro repo rates and, in turn, richening pressures on broader short-dated euro assets including bills.

Exhibit 1: 3M Bubills, BTFs, and BOTs vs €str

Richening in Bubills was particularly strong

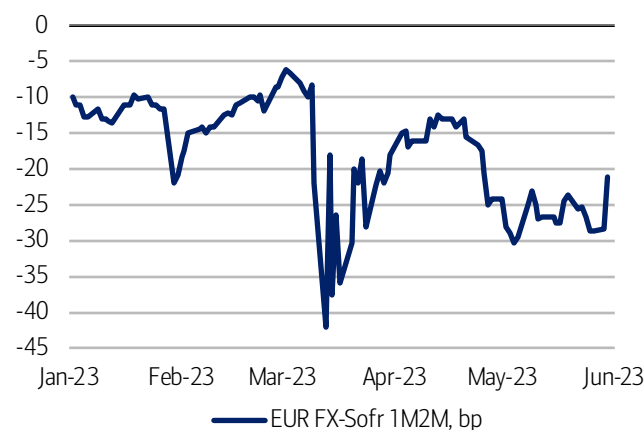


Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg

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Exhibit 2: 1M2M EUR FX-SoFr basis

Widening pressures built on risk-off sentiment



Source: BofA Global Research

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Cheapening pressure post US debt limit resolution

Our US team expects a debt limit resolution in the US to lead to a USD 1tn bill supply surge in three months, and 3M T-bills to trade 10bp to 20bp cheap vs overnight indexed swap (OIS) after the supply surge (see [US Rates Viewpoint, 26 May 2023](#)). All other things being equal, this would cause 3M US T-bills to offer a pickup of as much as 45bp over Bubills on a FX hedged basis based on market pricing at the time of writing. We believe such pickup may attract investors away from Bubills and into T-bills on a FX hedged basis, especially when taking into account other dynamics in June:

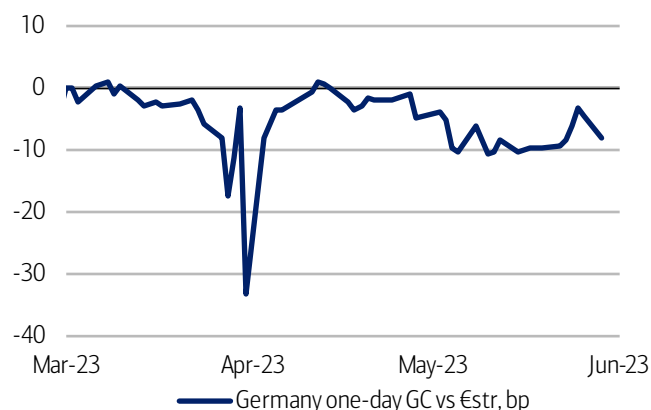
- By construction, we've assumed a debt limit resolution to have been reached. And if, as our US team expects, the debt limit extension is longer-term 2Y-ish, then this could reduce associated near-term tail risks and reduce any reluctance of investors to take US risk over Germany risk.
- There are signs of stabilisation of government deposits at the Eurosystem since the decline following the remuneration change (Exhibit 4). Nevertheless, we cannot rule out further deposit reduction by governments, as well as by non-euro residents who are also affected by the remuneration change and whose deposit holdings at the central bank are still above pre-COVID levels.
- June is expected to be a high net EGB supply month at €66bn (see [European Rates Watch, 30 May 2023](#)). This would make it the fourth highest net supply month of 2023 and reduce collateral scarcity pressures in the euro repo market. Cheapening pressures in repo may put cheapening pressure in other short-dated euro assets.

A shift from Bubills into T-bills on a FX hedged basis by investors may reduce the pickup of US T-bills over FX hedged Bubills from as much as 45bp, after the T-bill supply surge, towards zero. In our view, such flows are likely to lead to a combination of Bubill cheapening vs €str and widening in the EUR FX-Sofr basis.

We prefer to quantify the potential cheapening of Bubills from the perspective of FX pickup, rather than outright, because 1) the deviation of the FX pickup from its three year average is greater than the respective deviation of Bubill vs OIS, and 2) our ambivalence about the relative contribution to pickup changes from Bubill cheapening vs OIS and EUR FX-Sofr widening.

Exhibit 3: Germany one-day GC vs €str

GC richened in May 2023

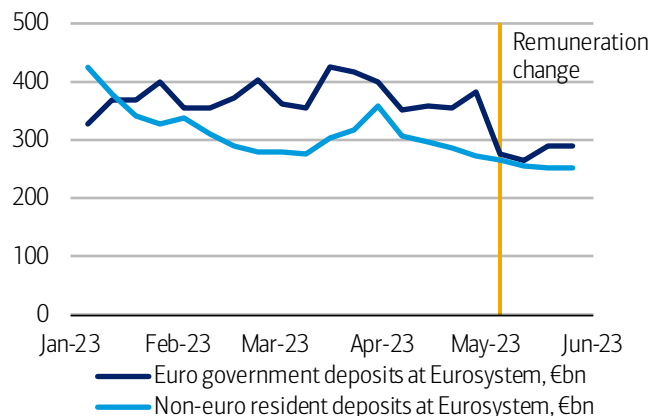


Source: BofA Global Research, Bloomberg, CME Group

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Exhibit 4: Government and non-resident deposits at the Eurosystem

Change in remuneration on 1 May led to deposit reduction by governments



Source: BofA Global Research

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Upward pressure on front-end EUR rates

We believe Bund cheapening vs €str could feed into broad upward pressure on front-end EUR rates and front-end term premium.

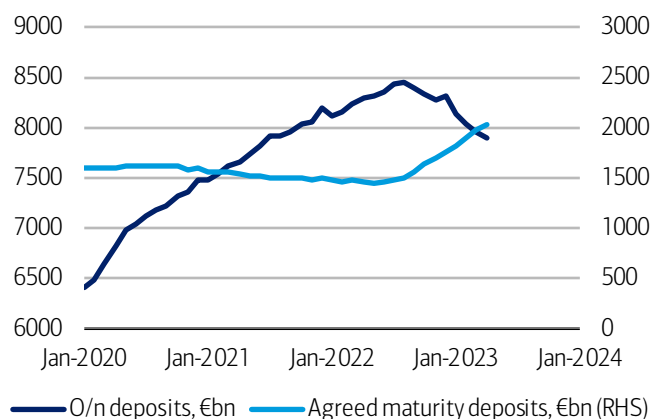
Competition for term funding in the euro area has increased as excess liquidity declines on the back of targeted longer-term refinancing operation (TLTRO) repayments and quantitative tightening. Euro area banks are increasing term deposit rates and attracting household and corporates to shift from overnight (o/n) to term deposits, as well as net issuing more longer term debt (Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6, see [European Rates Watch, 22 May 2023](#)). In our view, any cheapening pressures on short-dated core euro assets following the US debt limit resolution are likely to prompt other funders to pay up for term euro funding.

We continue to expect front-end euro rates term premium to increase and maintain our [Mar24 3M Euribor futures vs €str widener recommendation](#) (current: 15bp, target: 25bp, stop: 8bp). Risks are excess liquidity in the euro area staying at persistently high levels.

For a complete list of our open trade recommendations, as well as our trade recommendations closed over the past 12 months, see the latest [Global Rates Weekly, 26 May 2023](#).

Exhibit 5: Household and corporate bank deposits

Shift from o/n to term deposits as banks raise term deposit rates

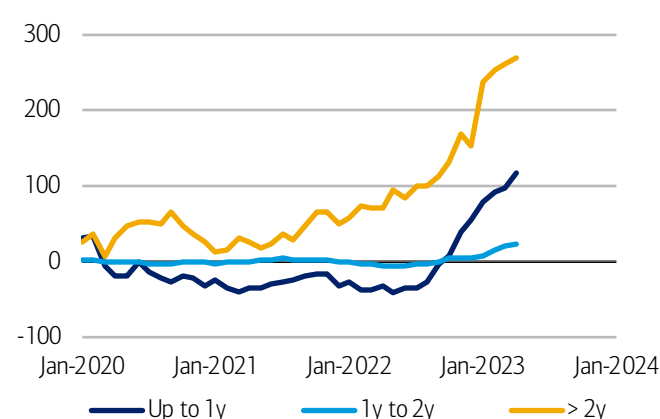


Source: ECB. Latest data point: April 2023

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Exhibit 6: Cumulative net debt issuance by banks since Jan20, €bn

Net debt issuance by euro area banks picked up since 2022



Source: ECB. Latest data point: April 2023

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Notable Rates and FX Research

- **Global Rates, FX & EM Year Ahead 2023 – [Year Ahead 2023: Pivot ≠ Peak](#)**, 20 Nov 2022
- [Before the X-Date](#), **Global FX Weekly**, 26 May 2023
- [X-marks the spot](#) **Global Rates Weekly**, 26 May 2023
- [China pessimism & US debt limit hopes and fears](#), **Liquid Cross Border Flows**, 22 May 2023

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