

## Update on systematic rule based trading strategies

### Rules based strategies for trading duration and Euro area rates volatility

- This is an extract from the *Overview* and *European Derivatives* sections of the *Global Fixed Income Markets Weekly*, 3 February publication
- We present a monthly update of our suite of signals for trading duration and volatility
- Our overall duration signal increased short duration exposure this month
- The majority of Euro rates volatility macro-based signal are also pointing towards short gamma positions; the technical signals are flashing neutral
- We highlight that our portfolio in the flagship GFIMS publication is based on more qualitative and discretionary approaches and may not always express views in line with the systematic rule based signals

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#### Rates Strategy

**Khagendra Gupta** <sup>AC</sup>

(44-20) 7134-0486

khagendra.x.gupta@jpmorgan.com

**Mika Inkinen** <sup>AC</sup>

(44-20) 7742 6565

mika.j.inkinen@jpmorgan.com

**Sampath Vijay**

(44-20) 7134-1842

sampath.k.vijay@jpmorgan.com

J.P. Morgan Securities plc

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See page 6 for analyst certification and important disclosures.

Mika Inkinen  
(44-20) 7742 6565  
mika.j.inkinen@jpmorgan.com

## Update on systematic rule based trading strategies

### Duration

We update our regular suite of systematic signals for outright and cross-market fixed income duration trading to complement our qualitative and discretionary approaches<sup>1</sup>. The current signals and past performance are summarized in **Exhibit A1** below. A brief summary of the signals is provided to the right.

Our systematic duration model combines five signals, which seek to capture economic momentum (via manufacturing PMIs and revisions to earnings forecasts in equities), price momentum (via momentum in bond and equity prices), and value (via carry adjusted by volatility). We apply these signals to 10Y total return swaps across 10 developed economies (Euro area, US, Japan, UK, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, New Zealand and Norway).

**Our overall duration signal increased short duration exposure this month (Exhibit 1).** At the signal level, much of the change came from the bond price momentum signal turning short duration across most countries in our sample, after turning neutral last month due the rally in the second half of December (the signal is a composite of 1M and 12M momentum, and is neutral if they point in opposite directions). Changes in other momentum signals were relatively small given continued strength in manufacturing PMIs and equity prices, with a further improvement in earnings revision momentum seeing the signal shift modestly further short. By contrast, the combination of a modest steepening in yield curves and decline in vol meant our carry-to-risk signal turned somewhat longer duration. The largest change at the country level among G4 economies was for the US, where the signals shifted from largely neutral to short.

<sup>1</sup> [Systematic fixed income trading strategies](#), M. Inkinen et al, Apr 2015

<sup>2</sup> Signals discussed in more detail in [Simple rules to trade duration](#), S. Mac Gorain, October 2012.

<sup>3</sup> See [A cross-market bond carry strategy](#), N. Panigirtzoglou, March 2006.

<sup>4</sup> See [Exploiting reversals in cross-market yield spreads](#), S. Mac Gorain, March 2012.

<sup>5</sup> See [Rule-based Fixed Income Monthly](#), S. Mac Gorain, November 2012.

<sup>6</sup> See [Using unemployment to trade bonds](#), S. Mac Gorain, November 2011.

### Brief description of the systematic duration signals

#### Duration signals<sup>2</sup>

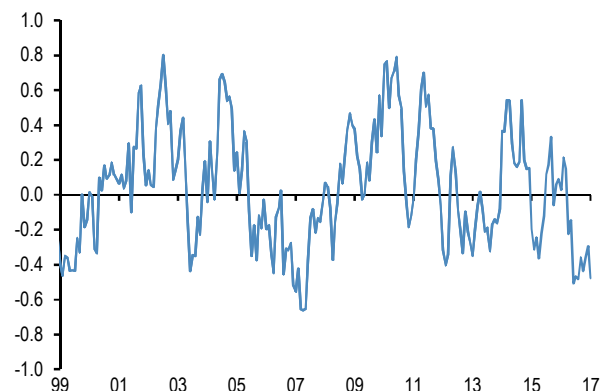
1. **Manufacturing PMI momentum:** Short duration in each country if both local country and global manufacturing PMI increased over past two months, long duration if both fell, and neutral otherwise.
2. **Earnings revision ratio momentum:** Short duration in each country if the local and global IBES equity earnings revision ratio increased over the past three months, long duration if both fell, and neutral otherwise.
3. **Bond price momentum:** Long duration if our total return swap indices are above both 1-month and 12-month average, short if below both 1-month and 12-month average, neutral otherwise.
4. **Equity price momentum:** Long duration in each country if local equity market is below its 6-month average, and short if it is above 6-month average (net of cash).
5. **Carry-to-risk:** Long duration if carry-to-risk (10Y – 3M slope) is above its 10Y average, short duration if below its 10Y average, with position size proportional to how far carry to risk is above or below average.

#### Cross-market signals

1. **Carry and carry-to-risk:** Overweight countries with high carry (10Y swap rate – 1M Libor rate), and overweight countries where carry is high relative to volatility<sup>3</sup>.
2. **Reversal** (change in curve slope): Overweight countries where curve (10Y - 1Y slope) has steepened most, relative to average over past 6M<sup>4</sup>.
3. **Real yield:** Overweight markets with high real yields, measured as 10Y swap rate less consensus forecasts of inflation over the next 10Y<sup>5</sup>.
4. **Unemployment:** Overweight countries where unemployment has been rising the most (current level less its average over the past 10 months)<sup>6</sup>.

#### Exhibit 1: Our overall duration signal increased short duration exposure

Weighted signal; positive numbers signals long duration, negative numbers short duration, and near zero signals neutral



Mika Inkinen  
(44-20) 7742 6565  
mika.j.inkinen@jpmorgan.com

The sell-off in bond markets in the second half of January, amid constructive economic data and a somewhat more hawkish outcome at the ECB meeting, took DM swap rates back to their mid-December peak (**Exhibit 2**). Our overall duration signal returned 0.1% on the month, with gains from shorts in GBP and EUR swaps only partially offset by losses on longs in NZD swaps.

## Cross-market

We also monitor a range of signals that we have found useful for cross-market allocation, and apply these to 10Y interest rate swaps across the same set of countries that we use for our duration signals. These include carry, both outright and adjusted for risk, the change in the curve slope, capturing a tendency of markets that have underperformed to catch up, real yields, and the unemployment rate relative to its 10M average.

On a relative basis, our cross-market signals tend to be quite slow moving. This month, however, the sell-off in bond markets saw a few notable shifts. **First**, the underperformance of NZD swaps since the US election has seen the curve steepen by most among the countries in our sample, meaning NZD swaps now rank second-highest by carry in addition to having by far the highest real yields (**Exhibit 3**). **Second**, despite low outright carry and real yields, risk-adjusted carry in CHF swaps is now second highest after SEK, which remains the highest carrying market (**Exhibit 4**).

In recent months, given the BoJ's introduction of its yield targeting regime, we have recommended a discretionary deviation from the signals by replacing JPY swaps with the next-lowest carrying market. In addition, given the offsetting positions among our real yield and carry-based signals, we have preferred to combine the signals by eliminating these offsets. **This month, this leaves us with longs in SEK, NZD and USD swaps vs. shorts in NOK, EUR and GBP swaps.**

Our cross-market signals started the year somewhat better after struggling in 2H16. Our **real yield** signal returned 1.2% in January, recouping some of the losses in 2H that left overall performance in 2016 at -1.2%, arising mainly from underperformance of SEK swaps vs. AUD swaps. Our **carry** and **carry-to-risk** signals, by contrast, were largely flat and returned -0.1% each, after returning 3.1% in 2016 despite struggling in the second half of the year. After eliminating offsetting positions as explained above, last month left us with longs in NZD and USD swaps vs. EUR and NOK swaps, which returned +0.6%. Since we began to combine the signals

**Exhibit 2: The sell-off in rates in the second half of January took DM swap rates back to their mid-December peak**

Average 10Y swap rate\*, %

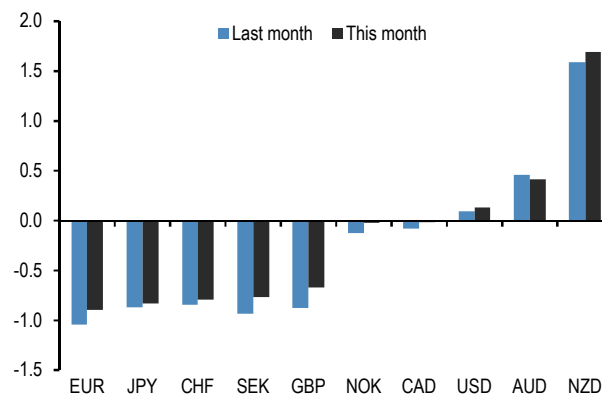


\* Simple average of USD, EUR, JPY, GBP, AUD, CAD, SEK, CHF, NOK and NZD swap rates.

Source: J.P. Morgan

**Exhibit 3: NZD swaps remain the highest real yielding market in addition to being one of the highest carrying markets**

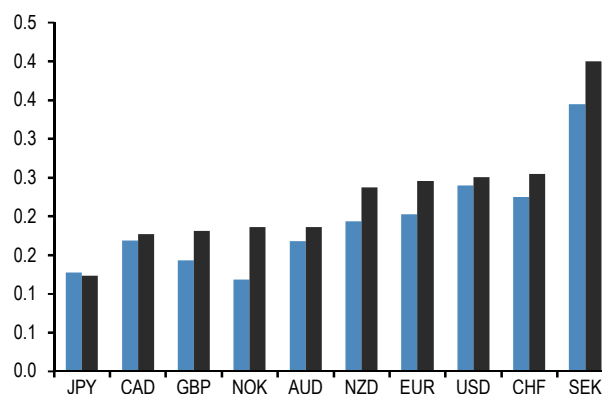
Countries ranked by real yield (10Y nominal swap rate less consensus forecast for inflation over the next 10Y); %



Source: J.P. Morgan

**Exhibit 4: Despite low outright carry and real yields, risk-adjusted carry in CHF swaps looks attractive**

Countries ranked by carry-to-risk (10Y - 1M rate scaled by volatility); unitless



Source: J.P. Morgan

in mid-2016, the cumulative performance of the combined trades since mid-2016 +0.3% compared to -1.0% and -0.4% for the carry and carry-to-risk signals, and -3.5% for the real yield signal.

## Euro rates volatility

In an earlier research note<sup>7</sup>, we had extensively discussed several rule based short gamma strategies based on macro and technical signals. In this section, we update our suite of systematic signals for outright volatility trading. We highlight that we do not develop our volatility views based on these rule based signals. Our views are developed based on macro and qualitative analysis and may not necessarily be in line with these rules based signals.

Our systematic volatility trading rules are classified into two categories: 1) Based on macro signals (PMIs, market liquidity, momentum in vol returns, etc); 2) Based on technical signals (ECB regime, implied/delivered vol ratio, richness/cheapness of implied based on its history). **Exhibit 5** summarizes these signals and what these signals pointed to at start of this month.

The macro signals are broadly unchanged since we published the research note in early November. The recent pick up in 10Y implieds has led to a positive momentum in vol returns from buying gamma and hence this signal indicates to go long. On the other hand, both liquidity and the metric are indicating towards a short gamma view. On the technical side, we remain in ECB QE and rates on-hold regime, which are indicative of short gamma positions. However, looking at the two other signals, ratio of implieds to delivered volatility is less than 125% and 3Mx10Y implieds is close to the middle of its last 1Y range which suggests a neutral stance in both the cases.

**Exhibit 6** shows the performance of these rule based strategies over the past few months and since Euro inception. Most of the macro indicators and the ECB regime indicator already highlighted a short gamma position at the beginning of January. Consequently, they have resulted in positive P&L as implieds declined during the month of January and delivered vol remained below inception implieds.

### Exhibit 5: We refresh our signals for systematic rule based trading Euro rates vol

Summary of various trading signals with a brief description and their current indications

	Strategy	Rule	Current positioning
1	Momentum in vol returns	Go long vol if 1M momentum in return from selling vol is negative; otherwise stay short	Long
2	Carry	Go long vol when swap RAC is below 30th percentile and rising; otherwise stay short	Short
3	Macro shock	Go long vol if 3M change in PMI is more than 1SD below average of changes; otherwise stay short	Short
4	Liquidity	Turn neutral on vol if the HH ratio is above 0.02; otherwise short vol	Short
	Combining 1 - 4	Apply equal weights to each strategy	Short
5	ECB regime	Buy vol during easing regimes; sell vol during on-hold and hiking regimes; requires ex-ante knowledge of ECB regime	Short
6	Ratio of implied to delivered volatility	Go long vol if ratio <66%; go short if ratio > 125%; otherwise stay neutral	Neutral
7	Fading extremes in implied	Buy vol when z-score below -1.5; sell when 1Y Zscore is above 1.5; otherwise stay neutral	Neutral
8	Combining 6) and 8)	Only buy low (sell high) when in an easing (on-hold/hiking) regime and Zscore < -1.5 (> 1.5)	Neutral

### Exhibit 6: Recent performance of 3Mx10Y gamma based on various rule based signals

Returns as of 1 Feb 2017; bp of notional

	Holding period returns*							IR since 2000
	1M	3M	6M	12M	5Y	10Y	Since 2000	
Always short	11	3	-3	141	103	105	94	0.98
Vol momentum	5	-63	-138	-136	203	252	180	1.90
Carry	11	3	-60	71	184	233	159	1.68
Liquidity	5	23	17	68	113	114	102	1.44
PMI	11	3	-3	141	135	177	147	1.54
Combined	8	-9	-46	36	159	194	147	2.45
ECB regime	11	2	-9	20	48	124	101	0.9
Ratio of imp to deliv vol	-	-59	-95	82	77	136	94	0.8
Fading extremes in implied	22	71	0	-6	47	-17	-37	-0.3

\* Holding period returns for 1M - 12M; annualized returns for 12M and longer

<sup>7</sup> See [Systematic short gamma strategies to trade Euro rates vol](#) by Khagendra Gupta and Mika Inkinen, 15 November 2016.

Khagendra Gupta  
(44-20) 7134-0486  
khagendra.x.gupta@jpmorgan.com

**European Rates Strategy**  
Update on systematic rule based trading strategies  
06 February 2017

**J.P.Morgan**

Mika Inkinen  
(44-20) 7742 6565  
mika.j.inkinen@jpmorgan.com

## Exhibit A1: Current systematic model signals and recent performance

Signals and returns as at 1 Feb 2017.

Duration	Current signal by country											
	Weight	Euro area	Japan	UK	US	Australia	Canada	Sweden	Switzerland	New Zealand	Norway	Combined
PMI momentum	15%	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-0.8
Revision ratio momentum	15%	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-0.9
Bond price momentum	20%	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-0.9
Equity price momentum	15%	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	1	-1	-0.8
Carry to Risk	35%	0.0	-1.0	-0.7	0.5	1.3	0.2	0.9	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.2
Combined		-0.7	-1.0	-0.7	-0.5	0.1	-0.6	-0.3	-0.4	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5
Previous month		-0.5	-0.7	-0.7	-0.1	0.0	-0.4	-0.3	-0.7	0.4	0.0	-0.3

NB: Positive numbers signal a duration long, negative numbers a duration short, and 0 neutral. Combined signal can be thought of as a scalar relative to a risk budget - e.g. a coefficient of -0.2 would signal a short of 20% of risk limit.

Returns*, %								IR since 1998
1M	3M	6M	YTD	12M	5Y	10Y	Since 1998	
0.4	3.8	3.6	0.4	5.6	2.2	3.5	2.7	0.68
0.5	0.5	2.2	0.5	-2.8	1.2	4.5	3.3	0.77
0.0	0.7	-1.4	0.0	3.0	2.1	3.0	2.6	0.56
0.4	0.0	2.4	0.4	0.7	0.1	3.0	3.8	0.73
0.0	0.5	2.4	0.0	0.2	1.3	1.7	2.2	0.55
0.1	0.7	1.3	0.1	0.8	1.0	2.2	2.1	1.26

\* Holding period returns for 1M - 12M; annualized for 12M and longer.

Cross-market	Current basket			
	First pair		Second pair	
	Long	Short	Long	Short
Carry	SEK	JPY	NZD	NOK
Carry to Risk	SEK	JPY	CHF	CAD
Change in slope	NZD	JPY	AUD	CHF
Real yield	NZD	EUR	AUD	JPY
Unemployment change	NZD	EUR	AUD	USD

Returns*, %								IR since 1996**
1M	3M	6M	YTD	12M	5Y	10Y	Since 1996**	
-0.1	-2.1	-2.3	-0.1	1.6	-0.4	1.4	2.7	0.66
-0.1	-2.1	-2.0	-0.1	2.3	-1.1	1.4	2.3	0.61
0.8	-2.6	-1.9	0.8	-3.2	-3.1	-0.3	1.8	0.46
1.2	-2.0	-3.5	1.2	-1.0	0.8	1.8	1.4	0.44
0.0	-3.3	-3.3	0.0	-7.1	-0.7	-0.5	0.5	0.13

\* Holding period returns for 1M - 12M; annualized for 12M and longer; using two long-short pairs for each signal

\*\* Except for the real yield signal, which starts in 2004.



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Khagendra Gupta  
(44-20) 7134-0486  
khagendra.x.gupta@jpmorgan.com

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J.P.Morgan

Mika Inkinen  
(44-20) 7742 6565  
mika.j.inkinen@jpmorgan.com

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