Deutsche Bank
Research

Australasia
Europe
Global
North America

Credit Strategy

IG Strategy

Date
15 June 2018

Draghi Conjures up a Dovish QE/CSPP Taper

Michal Jezek
Strategist
+44-20-754-55012

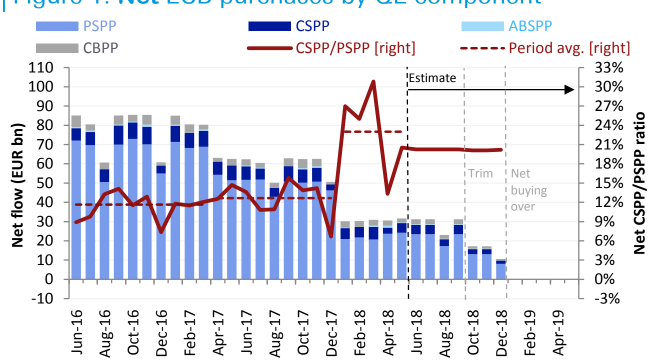
Aiming for a smooth exit

Mario Draghi has delivered a masterclass in central bank communication by managing to announce a taper but see financial conditions ease. Following his announcement, we summarise our latest views on what it means for corporate credit. Looking back, the decisions fit into our "stealth taper" hypothesis for the CSPP.

We project future net and gross QE flows and discuss possible fine-tuning later in the year. We highlight that the ECB still has the option to allow reinvestments across QE programmes later in the year, which would enable it to rotate some maturing PSPP paper into the CSPP next year. If no such rotation takes place, we show there will be an abrupt fall in CSPP flows come January while PSPP flows would remain relatively material due to much greater redemptions in the near and medium term.

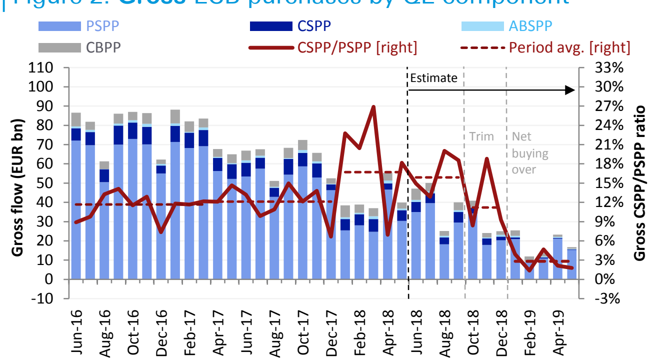
The conditionality of the taper combined with dovish forward guidance on rates and also dovish rhetoric at the press conference were a "vol. killer" that should at the margin be positive for risk premia, incl. credit spreads, while the negative technical of ending purchases was widely expected and largely priced in. In that context, we update our analysis of CSPP-eligible and ineligible bonds.

Figure 1: **Net** ECB purchases by QE component



Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Figure 2: **Gross** ECB purchases by QE component



Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Taper announced but no tantrum

Following the ECB's announcement of conditional QE tapering by the end of the year, we summarise our latest views on what it means for corporate credit. Looking back, the decisions fit into our "stealth taper" hypothesis for the CSPP.

Broadly, the conditionality of the taper combined with dovish forward guidance on rates and also dovish rhetoric at the press conference were a "vol. killer", with Draghi at one point effectively reminding the audience of the ECB put by stressing their ability to restart QE as and when needed. At the margin, that was positive for risk premia, incl. credit spreads, while the negative technical of ending purchases was widely expected and largely priced in, esp. after the Italy-led sell-off.

Even if net central bank purchases cease by the end of the year, **negative rates for longer** should support private demand for EUR IG paper as holding cash will continue to inflict pain. Also, the divergence of short rates could put greater pressure on **FX hedging costs** and make EUR credit relatively more attractive for foreign investors. Thus, while the absence of the ECB bid should in a narrow technical sense be negative for credit spreads, the dovish elements of the ECB decision have worked in the opposite direction. After all, Draghi's goal was to get out of QE while not tightening financial conditions and he may rightfully be pleased with himself.

We project future net and gross QE flows and discuss possible fine-tuning later in the year. As we highlighted in the past, the ECB still has the **option to allow reinvestments across QE programmes** later in the year, which would enable it to rotate some maturing PSPP paper into the CSPP next year. If no such rotation takes place, however, we show there will be an **abrupt fall in CSPP flows come January** while PSPP flows would remain relatively material due to much greater redemptions in the near and medium term. This divergence in flows would still be a negative for corporate bond spreads, although other factors might dominate the pricing action at that time.

Projecting net and gross QE/CSPP flows

As a reminder, we highlighted nearly two months ago a notable slowdown in the CSPP and posed the question whether there has been a "**stealth taper**" of corporate purchases. As Figure 3 shows, that question has remained legitimate ever since with a clear slowdown of purchases in Q2 vs. Q1.

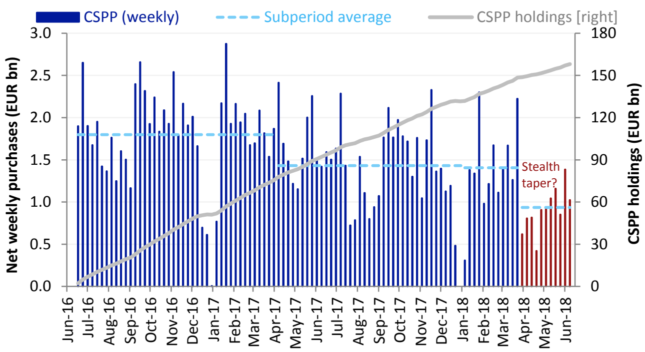
Figure 5 shows past **net purchases** across the QE and highlights the CSPP/PSPP ratio. In addition, it shows our projected future purchases based on the ECB announcement, with some subjective adjustments such as seasonally slower August and December. (To compensate for those, purchases in other months are bumped up so that on average targets are met.) However, these projections are relatively mechanical and as can be seen, for simplicity we assume that net CSPP and PSPP purchases are cut proportionately as the QE is tapered so that the net CSPP/PSPP ratio remains intact throughout.

Note that we estimate that by the year end, the ECB/Eurosystem will likely have over €180bn of corporate bonds on its books, which would be some 20% of the eligible universe.

Figure 6 then shows **gross purchases** (net purchases plus expected redemptions). As can be seen, given uneven redemptions, the CSPP/PSPP ratio fluctuates in Q4 and then drops close to zero in 2019. This means a relatively weak technical for corporate bonds. The same is shown in a different way in Figure 4, which compares the amount of CSPP and PSPP buying over time. Despite month-to-month fluctuations, there is a very clear decoupling early next year, showing precisely the point highlighted earlier. We would be surprised if the ECB did not at least discuss whether it needs to do anything about it.

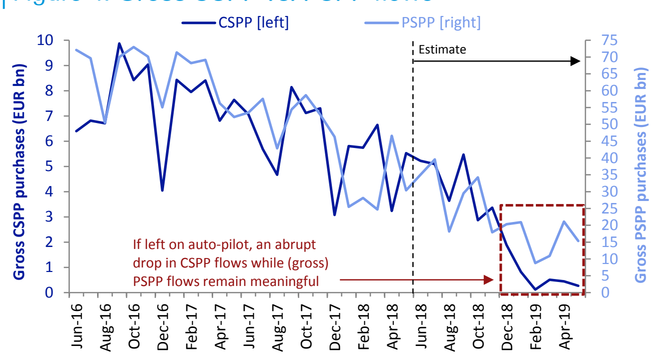
In any case, the corollary is that there are only a few months of meaningful corporate bond buying left and therefore the purchases themselves should have only a limited impact on spreads at this stage, unless the CSPP effectively gets an extension via reinvestments from the PSPP.

Figure 3: **Net weekly** ECB CSPP purchases



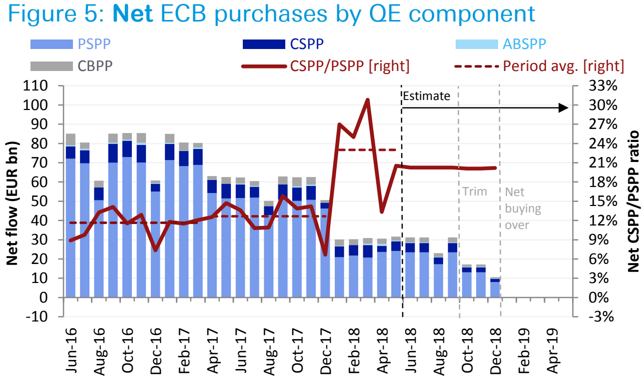
Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Figure 4: **Gross CSPP vs. PSPP** flows



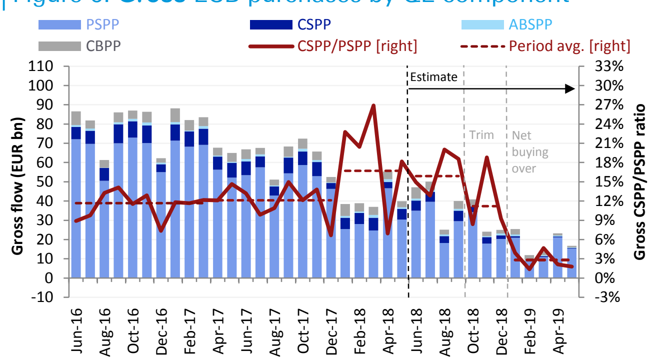
Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Figure 5: **Net** ECB purchases by QE component



Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Figure 6: **Gross** ECB purchases by QE component



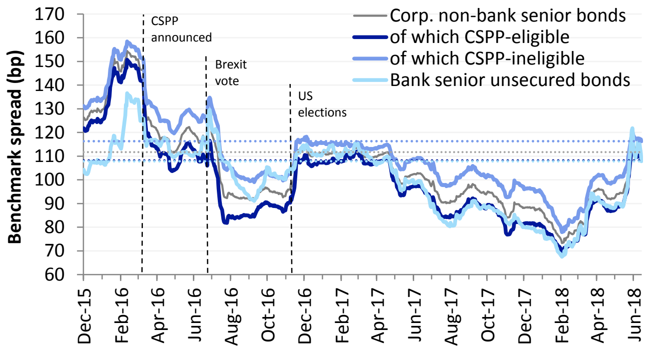
Source: Deutsche Bank, ECB

Review of pricing of CSPP-eligible vs. ineligible bonds

A quick look at Figures 7 and 9 shows that current spreads of CSPP-eligible and ineligible bonds are basically back at early 2017 levels, both in absolute terms and relative to each other. While the growth and policy environment is not identical, the similarity is that back then it was expected that QE would soon come to an end as Trump policies deliver more growth and inflation.

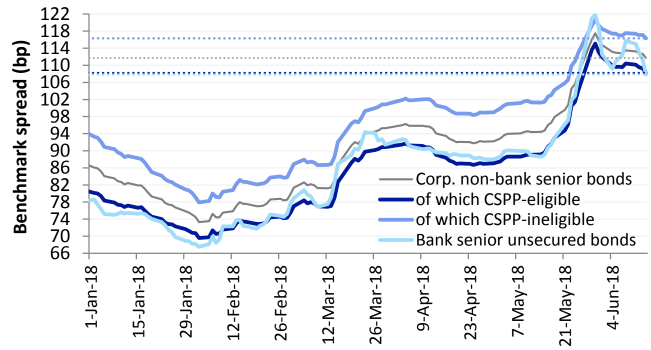
The relative pricing of eligibles and ineligibles is close to where we think it should be, on average. The underperformance of eligibles relative to ineligibles was driven by the Italy risk and contagion, albeit relatively limited, mainly to Eurozone names. Ineligibles benefitted from having lots of non-Eurozone names among them which were relatively more insulated from that. To us, the direct effect of phasing out the CSPP is worth "just a few basis points" for the eligible names, with other macro factors that drive credit becoming increasingly more important, including inflation and growth, rates or M&A trends.

Figure 7: EUR IG bonds - **CSPP eligible and ineligible**



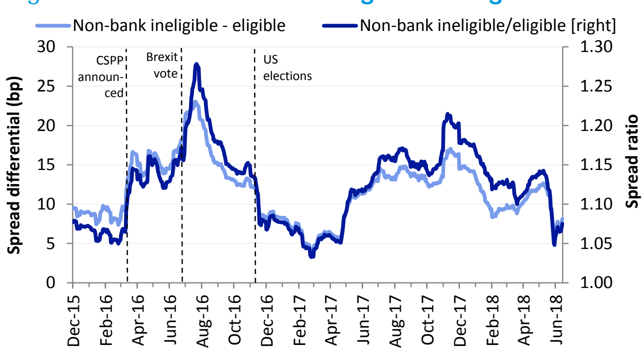
Source: Deutsche Bank, Markit

Figure 8: ...and YTD view only



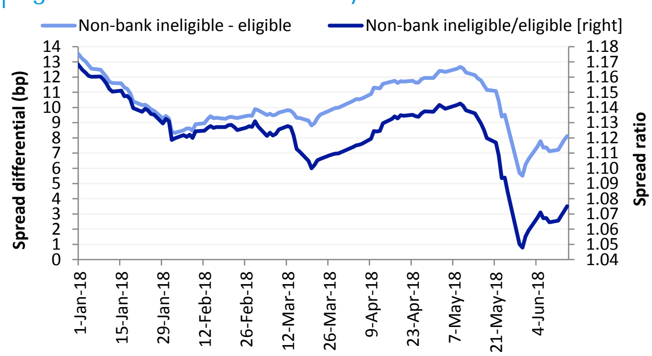
Source: Deutsche Bank, Markit

Figure 9: EUR IG non-bank **ineligible vs. eligible** bonds



Source: Deutsche Bank, Markit

Figure 10: ...and YTD view only



Source: Deutsche Bank, Markit

Appendix 1

Important Disclosures

*Other information available upon request

*Prices are current as of the end of the previous trading session unless otherwise indicated and are sourced from local exchanges via Reuters, Bloomberg and other vendors . Other information is sourced from Deutsche Bank, subject companies, and other sources. For disclosures pertaining to recommendations or estimates made on securities other than the primary subject of this research, please see the most recently published company report or visit our global disclosure look-up page on our website at https://research.db.com/Research/Disclosures/CompanySearch. Aside from within this report, important risk and conflict disclosures can also be found at https://research.db.com/Research/Topics/Equities?topicId=RB0002. Investors are strongly encouraged to review this information before investing.

Analyst Certification

The views expressed in this report accurately reflect the personal views of the undersigned lead analyst(s). In addition, the undersigned lead analyst(s) has not and will not receive any compensation for providing a specific recommendation or view in this report. Michal Jezek

Additional Information

The information and opinions in this report were prepared by Deutsche Bank AG or one of its affiliates (collectively "Deutsche Bank"). Though the information herein is believed to be reliable and has been obtained from public sources believed to be reliable, Deutsche Bank makes no representation as to its accuracy or completeness. Hyperlinks to third-party websites in this report are provided for reader convenience only. Deutsche Bank neither endorses the content nor is responsible for the accuracy or security controls of those websites.

If you use the services of Deutsche Bank in connection with a purchase or sale of a security that is discussed in this report, or is included or discussed in another communication (oral or written) from a Deutsche Bank analyst, Deutsche Bank may act as principal for its own account or as agent for another person.

Deutsche Bank may consider this report in deciding to trade as principal. It may also engage in transactions, for its own account or with customers, in a manner inconsistent with the views taken in this research report. Others within Deutsche Bank, including strategists, sales staff and other analysts, may take views that are inconsistent with those taken in this research report. Deutsche Bank issues a variety of research products, including fundamental analysis, equity-linked analysis, quantitative analysis and trade ideas. Recommendations contained in one type of communication may differ from recommendations contained in others, whether as a result of differing time horizons, methodologies, perspectives or otherwise. Deutsche Bank and/or its affiliates may also be holding debt or equity securities of the issuers it writes on. Analysts are paid in part based on the profitability of Deutsche Bank AG and its affiliates, which includes investment banking, trading and principal trading revenues.

Opinions, estimates and projections constitute the current judgment of the author as of the date of this report. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Deutsche Bank and are subject to change without notice. Deutsche Bank provides liquidity for buyers and sellers of securities issued by the companies it covers. Deutsche Bank research analysts sometimes have shorter-term trade ideas that may be inconsistent with Deutsche Bank's existing longer-term ratings. Some trade ideas for equities are listed as SOLAR ideas on the Research Website (https://research.db.com/Research/) , and can be found on the general coverage list and also on the covered company ' s page. A SOLAR idea represents a high-conviction belief by an analyst that a stock will outperform or underperform the market and/or a specified sector over a time frame of no less than two weeks and no more than six months. In addition to SOLAR ideas, analysts may occasionally discuss with our clients, and with Deutsche Bank salespersons and traders, trading strategies or ideas that reference catalysts or events that may have a near-term or medium-term impact on the market price of the securities discussed in this report, which impact may be directionally counter to the analysts' current 12-month view of total return or investment return as described herein. Deutsche Bank has no obligation to update, modify or amend this report or to otherwise notify a recipient thereof if an opinion, forecast or estimate changes or becomes inaccurate. Coverage and the frequency of changes in market conditions and in both general and company-specific economic prospects make it difficult to update research at defined intervals. Updates are at the sole discretion of the coverage analyst or of the Research Department Management, and the majority of reports are published at irregular intervals. This report is provided for informational purposes only and does not take into account the particular investment objectives, financial situations, or needs of individual clients. It is not an offer or a solicitation of an offer to buy or sell any financial instruments or to participate in any particular trading strategy. Target prices are inherently imprecise and a product of the analyst ' s judgment. The financial instruments discussed in this report may not be suitable for all investors, and investors must make their own informed investment decisions. Prices and availability of financial instruments are subject to change without notice, and investment transactions can lead to losses as a result of price fluctuations and other factors. If a financial instrument is denominated in a currency other than an investor's currency, a change in exchange rates may adversely affect the investment. Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future results. Performance calculations exclude transaction costs, unless otherwise indicated. Unless otherwise indicated, prices are current as of the end of the previous trading session and are sourced from local exchanges via Reuters, Bloomberg and other vendors. Data is also sourced from Deutsche Bank, subject companies, and other parties.

The Deutsche Bank Research Department is independent of other business divisions of the Bank. Details regarding our organizational arrangements and information barriers we have to prevent and avoid conflicts of interest with respect to our research are available on our website (https://research.db.com/Research/) under Disclaimer.

Macroeconomic fluctuations often account for most of the risks associated with exposures to instruments that promise to pay fixed or variable interest rates. For an investor who is long fixed-rate instruments (thus receiving these cash flows), increases in interest rates naturally lift the discount factors applied to the expected cash flows and thus cause a loss. The longer the maturity of a certain cash flow and the higher the move in the discount factor, the higher will be the loss. Upside surprises in inflation, fiscal funding needs, and FX depreciation rates are among the most common adverse macroeconomic shocks to receivers. But counterparty exposure, issuer creditworthiness, client segmentation, regulation (including changes in assets holding limits for different types of investors), changes in tax policies, currency convertibility (which may constrain currency conversion, repatriation of profits and/or liquidation of positions), and settlement issues related to local clearing houses are also important risk factors. The sensitivity of fixed-income instruments to macroeconomic shocks may be mitigated by indexing the contracted cash flows to inflation, to FX depreciation, or to specified interest rates – these are common in emerging markets. The index fixings may – by construction – lag or mis-measure the actual move in the underlying variables they are intended to track. The choice of the proper fixing (or metric) is particularly important in swaps markets, where floating coupon rates (i.e., coupons indexed to a typically short-dated interest rate reference index) are exchanged for fixed coupons. Funding in a currency that differs from the currency in which coupons are denominated carries FX risk. Options on swaps (swaptions) the risks typical to options in addition to the risks related to rates movements.

Derivative transactions involve numerous risks including market, counterparty default and illiquidity risk. The appropriateness of these products for use by investors depends on the investors' own circumstances, including their tax position, their regulatory environment and the nature of their other assets and liabilities; as such, investors should take expert legal and financial advice before entering into any transaction similar to or inspired by the contents of this publication. The risk of loss in futures trading and options, foreign or domestic, can be substantial. As a result of the high degree of leverage obtainable in futures and options trading, losses may be incurred that are greater than the amount of funds initially deposited – up to theoretically unlimited losses. Trading in options involves risk and is not suitable for all investors. Prior to buying or selling an option, investors must review the "Characteristics and Risks of Standardized Options", at http://www.optionsclearing.com/about/publications/character-risks.jsp . If you are unable to access the website, please contact your Deutsche Bank representative for a copy of this important document.

Participants in foreign exchange transactions may incur risks arising from several factors, including: (i) exchange rates can be volatile and are subject to large fluctuations; (ii) the value of currencies may be affected by numerous market factors, including world and national economic, political and regulatory events, events in equity and debt markets and changes in interest rates; and (iii) currencies may be subject to devaluation or government-imposed exchange controls, which could affect the value of the currency. Investors in securities such as ADRs, whose values are affected by the currency of an underlying security, effectively assume currency risk.

Deutsche Bank is not acting as a financial adviser, consultant or fiduciary to you or any of your agents with respect to any information provided in this report. Deutsche Bank does not provide investment, legal, tax or accounting advice, and is not acting as an impartial adviser. Information contained herein is being provided on the basis that the recipient will make an independent assessment of the merits of any investment decision, and is not meant for retirement accounts or for any specific person or account type. The information we provide is directed only to persons we believe to be financially sophisticated, who are capable of evaluating investment risks independently, both in general and with regard to particular transactions and investment strategies, and who understand that Deutsche Bank has financial interests in the offering of its products and services. If this is not the case, or if you or your agent are an IRA or other retail investor receiving this directly from us, we ask that you inform us immediately.

Unless governing law provides otherwise, all transactions should be executed through the Deutsche Bank entity in the investor's home jurisdiction. Aside from within this report, important conflict disclosures can also be found at https://research.db.com/Research/ on each company ' s research page. Investors are strongly encouraged to review this information before investing.

United States: Approved and/or distributed by Deutsche Bank Securities Incorporated, a member of FINRA, NFA and SIPC. Analysts located outside of the United States are employed by non-US affiliates that are not subject to FINRA regulations, including those regarding contacts with issuer companies.

Germany: Approved and/or distributed by Deutsche Bank AG, a joint stock corporation with limited liability incorporated in the Federal Republic of Germany with its principal office in Frankfurt am Main. Deutsche Bank AG is authorized under German Banking Law and is subject to supervision by the European Central Bank and by BaFin, Germany ' s Federal Financial Supervisory Authority.

United Kingdom: Approved and/or distributed by Deutsche Bank AG acting through its London Branch at Winchester House, 1 Great Winchester Street, London EC2N 2DB. Deutsche Bank AG in the United Kingdom is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and is subject to limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority and Financial Conduct Authority. Details about the extent of our authorisation and regulation are available on request.

Hong Kong: Distributed by Deutsche Bank AG, Hong Kong Branch or Deutsche Securities Asia Limited (save that any research relating to futures contracts within the meaning of the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Ordinance Cap. 571 shall be distributed solely by Deutsche Securities Asia Limited). The provisions set out above in the "Additional Information" section shall apply to the fullest extent permissible by local laws and regulations, including without limitation the Code of Conduct for Persons Licensed or Registered with the Securities and Futures Commission. .

India: Prepared by Deutsche Equities India Private Limited (DEIPL) having CIN: U65990MH2002PTC137431 and registered office at 14th Floor, The Capital, C-70, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex Mumbai (India) 400051. Tel: + 91 22 7180 4444. It is registered by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) as a Stock broker bearing registration nos.: NSE (Capital Market Segment) - INB231196834, NSE (F&O Segment) INF231196834, NSE (Currency Derivatives Segment) INE231196834, BSE (Capital Market Segment) INB011196830; Merchant Banker bearing SEBI Registration no.: INM000010833 and Research Analyst bearing SEBI Registration no.: INH000001741. DEIPL may have received administrative warnings from the SEBI for breaches of Indian regulations. The transmission of research through DEIPL is Deutsche Bank's determination and will not make a recipient a client of DEIPL. Deutsche Bank and/or its affiliate(s) may have debt holdings or positions in the subject company. With regard to information on associates, please refer to the "Shareholdings" section in the Annual Report at: https://www.db.com/ir/en/annual-reports.htm .

Japan: Approved and/or distributed by Deutsche Securities Inc.(DSI). Registration number - Registered as a financial instruments dealer by the Head of the Kanto Local Finance Bureau (Kinsho) No. 117. Member of associations: JSDA, Type II Financial Instruments Firms Association and The Financial Futures Association of Japan. Commissions and risks involved in stock transactions - for stock transactions, we charge stock commissions and consumption tax by multiplying the transaction amount by the commission rate agreed with each customer. Stock transactions can lead to losses as a result of share price fluctuations and other factors. Transactions in foreign stocks can lead to additional losses stemming from foreign exchange fluctuations. We may also charge commissions and fees for certain categories of investment advice, products and services. Recommended investment strategies, products and services carry the risk of losses to principal and other losses as a result of changes in market and/or economic trends, and/or fluctuations in market value. Before deciding on the purchase of financial products and/or services, customers should carefully read the relevant disclosures, prospectuses and other documentation. "Moody's", "Standard & Poor's", and "Fitch" mentioned in this report are not registered credit rating agencies in Japan unless Japan or "Nippon" is specifically designated in the name of the entity. Reports on Japanese listed companies not written by analysts of DSI are written by Deutsche Bank Group's analysts with the coverage companies specified by DSI. Some of the foreign securities stated on this report are not disclosed according to the Financial Instruments and Exchange Law of Japan. Target prices set by Deutsche Bank's equity analysts are based on a 12-month forecast period..

Korea: Distributed by Deutsche Securities Korea Co.

South Africa: Deutsche Bank AG Johannesburg is incorporated in the Federal Republic of Germany (Branch Register Number in South Africa: 1998/003298/10).

Singapore: This report is issued by Deutsche Bank AG, Singapore Branch or Deutsche Securities Asia Limited, Singapore Branch (One Raffles Quay #18-00 South Tower Singapore 048583, +65 6423 8001), which may be contacted in respect of any matters arising from, or in connection with, this report. Where this report is issued or promulgated by Deutsche Bank in Singapore to a person who is not an accredited investor, expert investor or institutional investor (as defined in the applicable Singapore laws and regulations), they accept legal responsibility to such person for its contents.

Taiwan: Information on securities/investments that trade in Taiwan is for your reference only. Readers should independently evaluate investment risks and are solely responsible for their investment decisions. Deutsche Bank research may not be distributed to the Taiwan public media or quoted or used by the Taiwan public media without written consent. Information on securities/instruments that do not trade in Taiwan is for informational purposes only and is not to be construed as a recommendation to trade in such securities/instruments. Deutsche Securities Asia Limited, Taipei Branch may not execute transactions for clients in these securities/instruments.

Qatar: Deutsche Bank AG in the Qatar Financial Centre (registered no. 00032) is regulated by the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority. Deutsche Bank AG - QFC Branch may undertake only the financial services activities that fall within the scope of its existing QFCRA license. Its principal place of business in the QFC: Qatar Financial Centre, Tower, West Bay, Level 5, PO Box 14928, Doha, Qatar. This information has been distributed by Deutsche Bank AG. Related financial products or services are only available only to Business Customers, as defined by the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority.

Russia: The information, interpretation and opinions submitted herein are not in the context of, and do not constitute, any appraisal or evaluation activity requiring a license in the Russian Federation.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Deutsche Securities Saudi Arabia LLC Company (registered no. 07073-37) is regulated by the Capital Market Authority. Deutsche Securities Saudi Arabia may undertake only the financial services activities that fall within the scope of its existing CMA license. Its principal place of business in Saudi Arabia: King Fahad Road, Al Olaya District, P.O. Box 301809, Faisaliah Tower - 17th Floor, 11372 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

United Arab Emirates: Deutsche Bank AG in the Dubai International Financial Centre (registered no. 00045) is regulated by the Dubai Financial Services Authority. Deutsche Bank AG - DIFC Branch may undertake only the financial services activities that fall within the scope of its existing DFSA license. Its principal place of business in the DIFC: Dubai International Financial Centre, The Gate Village, Building 5, PO Box 504902, Dubai, U.A.E. This information has been distributed by Deutsche Bank AG. Related financial products or services are available only to Professional Clients, as defined by the Dubai Financial Services Authority.

Australia and New Zealand: This research is intended only for "wholesale clients" within the meaning of the Australian Corporations Act and New Zealand Financial Advisors Act, respectively. Please refer to Australia-specific research disclosures and related information at https://australia.db.com/australia/content/research-information.html Where research refers to any particular financial product recipients of the research should consider any product disclosure statement, prospectus or other applicable disclosure document before making any decision about whether to acquire the product.

Additional information relative to securities, other financial products or issuers discussed in this report is available upon request. This report may not be reproduced, distributed or published without Deutsche Bank's prior written consent.

David Folkerts-Landau
Group Chief Economist and Global Head of Research

Raj Hindocha
Global Chief Operating Officer
Research

Michael Spencer
Head of APAC Research
Global Head of Economics

Steve Pollard
Head of Americas Research
Global Head of Equity Research

Anthony Klarman
Global Head of
Debt Research

Paul Reynolds
Head of EMEA
Equity Research

Dave Clark
Head of APAC
Equity Research

Pam Finelli
Global Head of
Equity Derivatives Research

Andreas Neubauer
Head of Research - Germany

Spyros Mesomeris
Global Head of Quantitative
and QIS Research

International Production Locations

Deutsche Bank AG
Deutsche Bank Place
Level 16
Corner of Hunter & Phillip Streets
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia
Tel: (61) 2 8258 1234

Deutsche Bank AG
Mainzer Landstrasse 11-17
60329 Frankfurt am Main
Germany
Tel: (49) 69 910 00

Deutsche Bank AG
Filiale Hongkong
International Commerce Centre,
1 Austin Road West,Kowloon,
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2203 8888

Deutsche Securities Inc.
2-11-1 Nagatacho
Sanno Park Tower
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-6171
Japan
Tel: (81) 3 5156 6770

Deutsche Bank AG London
1 Great Winchester Street
London EC2N 2EQ
United Kingdom
Tel: (44) 20 7545 8000

Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.
60 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
United States of America
Tel: (1) 212 250 2500