

Latin America Financial Services: European marketing feedback

Increased interest in Brazil was the main positive feedback

We spent several days meeting with investors across the continent on the back of our recent LatAm Financials conference (<u>note</u>). As we noted during the conference, there was increased interest in Brazil, given discounted valuations and a potential improvement on recent macro and political concerns. Itau continues to be widely held, while we also saw increased interest in higher beta names, such as B3 and XP. Outside Brazil, there was also healthy demand for Chile and Colombia banks on increased expectations that the macro outlook is improving and upcoming presidential elections in both countries could lead to more market friendly policies. Finally, there was more caution towards Mexico, given ongoing noise and uncertainty regarding potential tariffs from the US.

Itau remains a favorite among LatAm financial stocks

Investors see limited downside risks with Itau, given strong profitability and sufficient capital to support loan growth or additional dividends. Main risks are that the stock is well owned with limited upside risks, however, valuation is still reasonable with a strong carry that investors appreciate. Meanwhile, we sensed muted interest in Bradesco with little pushback to our Sell rating, given the recent lack of book value growth and concerns that a lower capital base than peers could limit the bank's ability to grow in a better macro scenario. Main concern to our cautious view is the bank's discount valuation at 0.7x 2025E P/BV, but we sensed that few investors were ready to make a valuation call. We did get some interest in Banco do Brasil, as profitability remains healthy and the stock is still trading below book value. The stock could also be in a good position to re-rate if the macro/political environment were to improve, although it may be too early to assume that. Finally, there was less interest in Santander Brasil, as profitability has already recovered and further improvements in ROE could be challenging in a higher interest rate scenario.

Interest in digital banks was mixed

While few questioned the long-term potential for NU, there remains uncertainty on the path of PIX financing and credit card yields, which can be a headwind for revenue growth. We met a mix of bullish investors that remain positive on the long term, but are not ready to increase positioning given the uncertainty, somewhat constructive investors that think valuation is looking attractive, but are not ready to

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step in given the short-term uncertainty, and a few bears that see downside risks to revenues and are still worried about asset quality deteriorating in a tougher macro environment. There has been increasing interest in Inter with the main concern typically around liquidity and that the stock does not always trade with fundamentals. Fundamentally, the growth opportunity looks interesting with the main concern typically around expense growth and if they will deliver on operating leverage.

Increased interest in capital markets

We sensed increased interest in capital market names, particularly if the macro/political environment can improve in Brazil, although some cautioned that it may be too early to assume that. The view from investors is that XP would benefit the most from a better macro environment, particularly if it can accelerate revenue growth and show operating leverage, while valuation looks attractive. There were some questions on a recent third party report about some of its Cayman structures, but most understood that these were typical structures used by financial institutions for market making, as the company highlighted at our conference (note). We also noted increased interest in B3, given its discounted valuation, buybacks, and dividend yield, while revenues and earnings are growing again. According to investors, recent rulings on goodwill also set a positive precedent for remaining lawsuits (note), while the main pushback was regarding potential competitive threats and still muted equity volumes. Finally, BTG remains a well owned name by several investors.

Light positioning on insurance

Investor positioning on insurance names seemed lighter relative to banks and capital market names within our coverage. While insurance stocks' fundamentals look fine, investors seem to prefer higher beta names at this point. On a relative basis, European investors favor BB Seguridade over Caixa Seguridade given the gap in valuation, while both companies are seen as safe hedges for high rates in Brazil. Main questions received on BBSE were earnings drivers into 2025 and views on potential contract renewal, while there were also questions about the rationale for CXSE's follow-on (note). Meanwhile, investors were well-aware of Porto Seguro's ongoing revenue diversification and growth levers, although still relatively under-owned. Finally, Qualitas is seen as a high-quality company, although some investors use it as funding to buy bank stocks.

Payments remain under-owned

We received limited interest on PAGS, STNE, and DLO, with the main question revolving on what would get the stocks to work. While most investors see valuations as undemanding, it was not clear what would get the stocks to work. Rising interest rates are viewed as headwinds for PAGS and STNE and slowing volume growth also appeared to be a concern. Investors noted that delays in Stone selling Linx (note) also reduced the possibility of a positive catalyst. Meanwhile, further declines in take rates was the main concern for DLO, as well as questions about the path of EBITDA margins.

Uncertainty about tariffs mostly kept investors out of Mexico

While there was heightened interest to meet Banorte at our conference, many investors

we spoke with preferred to avoid Mexico at the moment, given the ongoing uncertainty about the potential impact of tariffs from the US. As such, we sensed more interest in Gentera, as it is less tied to the formal economy, growth remains healthy, asset quality appears under control, and the bank should deliver solid earnings growth this year of more than 20%, at a discounted valuation of 5.6x 2025E P/E.

Interest in Chile and Colombia was mostly macro related

Several investors owned Chilean banks on expectations that presidential elections in November should lead to a market friendly outcome and a more favorable macro environment. Similarly, there was increased investor interest in Bancolombia, ahead of presidential elections in April 2026, although many felt that a potentially more favorable macro/political environment was already priced in with the stock up 32% this year. Furthermore, most agreed that lower interest rates should be a headwind for NIMs and profitability this year, limiting upside potential. Meanwhile, investors favored Credicorp on improving profitability, but with less clear views about the macro/political environment ahead of presidential elections in April 2026. Finally, while we do not cover the Argentine banks, investors were constructive about ongoing political reforms and an improving macro environment, but with concerns about potential FX depreciation.

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