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Flows & Liquidity

Financial conditions impulse remains positive

- Our proxy for the financial conditions impulse remains positive, posing some upside risks for growth and inflation.
- The PBoC has been more contrarian than other central banks in terms of gold purchases.
- SEC's Wells notice to Robinhood should not pose an obstacle to an eventual spot ethereum ETF approval.

- After the release this week of the Fed's senior loan officer survey, along with the ECB's bank lending survey that was released a few weeks ago, financial conditions have again featured in our conversations. After the significant decline in respondents reporting a tightening in lending standards in both the US and the Euro area in the 1Q24 surveys, the latest survey suggested a modest tightening for the US in 2Q and a continued modest decline to close to zero for the euro area.

Global Markets Strategy

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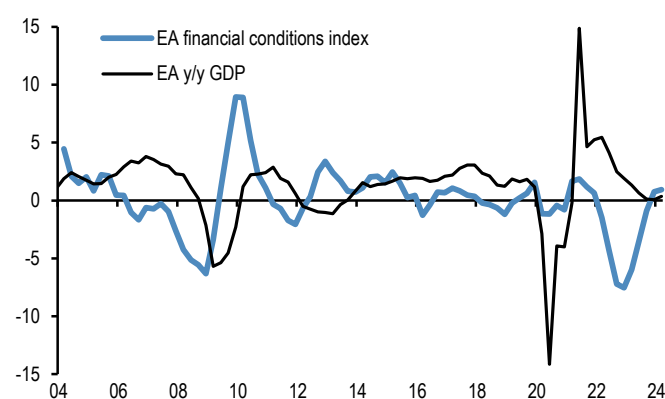
cator for the US along with y/y real GDP growth and Figure 5 shows the same for the Euro area. Looking at the relationship around the time of the financial crisis, the trough in the financial conditions index (i.e. peak tightening) preceded the trough in y/y real GDP growth by around 2 quarters, while in 2022 the financial conditions trough in 3Q22 was followed by a trough in y/y real GDP growth by one quarter. For the euro area, the 2008 trough in financial conditions occurred one quarter before the trough in real GDP growth, while the trough (peak tightening) in end-2011 preceded a trough in real GDP growth by more than a year. In the current conjuncture, the trough in financial conditions in 4Q22 was followed by a trough in real GDP growth after four quarters.

Figure 4: Financial conditions index and y/y real GDP growth for the US



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., J.P. Morgan.

Figure 5: Financial conditions index and y/y real GDP growth for the Euro area



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., J.P. Morgan.

after pausing for around a quarter in the aftermath of the SVB crisis, loan growth resumed from mid-July, paused again around year end before picking up from the first week of January. Since then, loan growth has averaged an annualized pace of around \$460bn. As we have argued previously, this growth is at least in part due to the liquidity offset from the declining use of the Fed's ON RRP facility that more than offset the rebuild of the TGA and the balance sheet contraction largely due to QT and helped avert a more protracted contraction in bank liquidity that would have weighed on lending growth. However, with much of the ON RRP facility having been unwound, loan growth at the YTD annualized pace is likely required just to offset the effect of ongoing QT. Indeed, in the euro area where QT and maturing TLTRO's have seen a contraction in reserves in the absence of an offset, loan growth has been largely flat since November 2022 (Figure 7). The level of outstanding loans in the euro area remains below its November 2022 level, though data for the first three months of the year suggests some signs of recovery with annualized loan growth of close to €135bn.

Figure 6: US commercial banks' loans and leases

Figure 7: Euro area bank lending to non-banks excluding general government



Source: ECB, J.P. Morgan.

- Another source of credit creation is through net issuance of debt securities. Figure 8 shows the monthly net issuance of US HG bonds for 2024 to-date, as well as for 2023 and the average for the previous five years. The significant strength of net issuance in January and February saw 1Q24 net issuance reach around \$310bn, the second strongest quarter since 2000 after 2Q20, though there appears to have been some front-loading of issuance as the pattern for the first four months is surprisingly similar to 2023 with a drop-off in the pace in March and April. Similarly, net issuance in Euro HG bonds has been similarly strong at around €109bn YTD, compared to 2023 issuance of €128bn ([European Credit Weekly](#), May 3rd), suggesting that while loan growth has remained muted credit growth via capital market issuance has been strong.

Figure 8: Monthly net issuance of US HG bonds



Source: Dealogic, J.P. Morgan.

- In all, the above suggests the financial conditions impulse remains positive, posing some upside risks for growth and

inflation.

The PBoC has been more contrarian than other central banks in terms of gold purchases

- This week's release on China's FX reserves revealed further slowing in gold purchases by the PBoC in April. Figure 9 shows that April saw the lowest monthly gold purchases since the PBoC started buying gold in November 2022. April reflects the second month in row the PBoC slowed its gold purchases considerably, perhaps in response to rising gold prices, thus pointing to contrarian behavior.

Figure 9: Monthly gold purchases by the PBoC

ETF Flow Monitor (as of 8th May)

Chart A3: Global Cross Asset ETF Flows

Cumulative flow into ETFs as a % of AUM



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., J.P. Morgan.

Chart A5: Global Equity ETF Flows

Cumulative flow into global equity ETFs as a % of AUM



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., J.P. Morgan.

Note: We include ETFs with AUM > \$200mn in all the flow monitor charts. Chart A5 exclude China On-shore (A-share) ETFs from EM and in Japan. We subtract the BoJ buying of ETFs.

Chart A4: Bond ETF Flows

Cumulative flow into bond ETFs as a % of AUM



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., J.P. Morgan.

Chart A6: Equity Sectoral and Regional ETF Flows

Rolling 3-month and 12-month change in cumulative flows

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Short Interest Monitor

Chart A7: Short interest on the EEM and EMB US ETF

Short Interest as a % share of share outstanding.



Source: S3, J.P. Morgan

Chart A9: Short interest on the SPY and QQQ US ETF

Short Interest as a % share of share outstanding. Last obs is for 3rd May 2024.



Source: S3, J.P. Morgan

Chart A8: Short interest on the LQD and HYG US ETF

Short Interest as a % share of share outstanding.



Source: S3, J.P. Morgan

Chart A10: S&P500 sector short interest

Short interest as a % of shares outstanding based on z-scores. A strategy which overweights the S&P500 sectors with the highest short interest z-score (as % of shares o/s) vs. those with the lowest, produced an information ratio of 0.7 with a success rate of 56% (see F&L, Jun 28, 2013 for more details).



Chart A11a: Cross Asset Volatility Monitor 3m ATM Implied Volatility (1y history) as of 7th May-2024

This table shows the richness/cheapness of current three-month implied volatility levels (red dot) against their one-year historical range (thin blue bar) and the ratio to current realised volatility. Assets with implied volatility outside their 25th/75th percentile range (thick blue bar) are highlighted. The implied-to-realised volatility ratio uses 3-month implied volatilities and 1-month (around 21 trading days) realised volatilities for each asset.

Asset	Current	Low	Low date	High	High date		Upside	Downside	Implied/realized volatility
S&P 500	13%	12%	23-Jan-24	19%	27-Oct-23		6%	1%	0.84x
EuroSTOXX	13%	12%	27-Feb-24	19%	20-Oct-23		7%	1%	1.00x
Nikkei 225	18%	15%	12-May-23	21%	26-Oct-23		3%	3%	0.84x
Hang Seng	22%	20%	14-Jun-23	25%	21-Aug-23		3%	3%	0.99x
MSCI EM	14%	11%	28-Mar-24	32%	26-Jan-24		18%	3%	0.75x
Gold	14%	10%	27-Feb-24	17%	15-Apr-24		3%	4%	0.82x
Oil (brent)	24%	22%	27-Mar-24	41%	13-Oct-23		1		

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Chart A11b: Option skew monitor

Skew is the difference between the implied volatility of out-of-the-money (OTM) call options and put options. A positive skew implies more demand for calls than puts and a negative skew, higher demand for puts than calls. It can therefore be seen as an indicator of risk perception in that a highly negative skew inequities is indicative of a bearish view. The chart shows z-score of the skew, i.e. the skew minus a rolling 2-year avg skew divided by a rolling two-year standard deviation of the skew. A negative skew on iTraxx Main means investors favour buying protection, i.e. a short risk position. A positive skew for the Bund reflects a long duration view, also a short risk position.



Source: J.P. Morgan.

Chart A11c: Equity-Bond metric map

Explanation of Equity - Bond metric map: Each of the five axes corresponds to a key indicator for markets. The position of the blue line on each axis shows how far the current observation is from the extremes at either end of the scale. For example, a reading at the centre for value would mean that risky assets are the most expensive they have ever been while a reading at the other end of the axis would mean they are the cheapest they have ever been. Overall, the larger the blue area within the pentagon, the better for the risky markets. All variables are expressed as the percentile of the distribution that the observation falls into. I.e. a reading in the middle of the axis means that the observation falls exactly at the median of all historical observations. **Value:** The slope of the risk-return trade-off line calculated across USTs, US HG and HY corporate bonds and US equities(see GMOS p. 6, Loeys et al, Jul 6 2011 for more details). **Positions:** Difference between net spec positions on US equities and intermediate sector UST. See Chart A13. **Flow momentum:** The difference between flows into equity funds (incl. ETFs) and flows into bond funds. Chart A1. We then smooth this using a Hodrick-Prescott filter with a lambda parameter of 100. We then take the weekly change in this smoothed series as shown in Chart A1. **Economic momentum:** The 2-month change in the global manufacturing PMI. (See REVISITING: Using the Global PMI as trading signal, Nikolaos Panigirtzoglou, Jan 2012). **Equity price momentum:** The 6-month change in the S&P500 equity index. As of 3rd May 24.



