

weekly market view

macro strategy | 5 October 2018

This reflects the views of the Wealth Management Group

Editorial

Oil in the driver's seat

- **Global fundamentals remain supportive for risk assets, but a sharp rise in oil prices is a risk to the positive outlook. We do not expect prices to rise significantly from current levels.**
- **Equities:** US economic and earnings outperformance relative to Europe and rising share buybacks are likely to drive equities higher. Rising oil prices can potentially boost the energy sector.
- **Bonds:** We do not expect US 10-year Treasury yields to rise sustainably above 3.25%, given subdued inflation expectations. Rising oil prices and wages are key risks to this outlook.
- **FX:** The USD index has recovered above its 50- and 100-DMA; the next key resistance is over 1% higher. Gold is forming a base; a break of 1,210 could open the way towards 1,250.

What's new?

- **Oil in the driver's seat.** Oil prices have surged to a four-year high, with Brent crude rising 27% this year alone. The surge, which has taken prices to the top of our 12-month expected range of USD 65-85/bbl, has been primarily driven by concerns about a decline in supplies from Iran and Venezuela, which some believe other leading OPEC suppliers such as Saudi Arabia may not be able to replace. Higher oil prices have created winners and losers (see chart and more details on page 3).
- **We do not expect prices to rise significantly from here**, given the likely dip in demand in the world's biggest economies from even higher prices. However, even a temporary spike in prices close to USD 100/bbl or higher due to heightened geopolitical uncertainty in the Middle East would challenge our positive outlook on equities. Charts suggest Brent crude's next resistance is at the 2012 low of USD 88.50/bbl, 4% above current levels.
- **US 10-year yield hits seven-year high.** The yield rose as high as 3.23%, the highest since 2011, driven by a strong US economic data and Fed comments suggesting continued rate hikes. However, speculative short positions in US Treasuries are at their highest in 20 years, which should reduce the scope of a further significant rise in yields. Meanwhile, inflation expectations have remained subdued. While risks to yields going higher have increased, we believe there is a low probability of a sustained rise above 3.25% unless inflation picks up sharply (whether from rising oil prices and/or faster wage growth). The 10-year yield is testing a tough resistance around its 200-month moving average.
- **Asian equity downtrend intact.** Two weeks ago, we flagged the possibility of a consolidation in the MSCI Asia-ex-Japan index from oversold conditions after a 7-month downtrend. As it turned out, the subsequent rebound failed to extend toward resistance around the July 2018 high, which is a sign of potential weakness going forward. This, coupled with the break of a minor uptrend line from September, suggests the near-term downtrend remains intact. A break below the 2015 high, close to the 100-week moving average, could potentially lead to further declines.

What we are watching

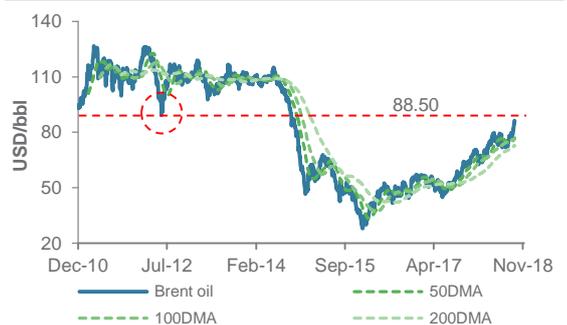
- **Italian budget.** Italy's disputes with the EU have hurt its bonds and Europe equities. An agreement would provide some support.

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Oil has surged to a four-year high and is close to the next resistance, which coincides with the 2012-low of USD 88.50/bbl

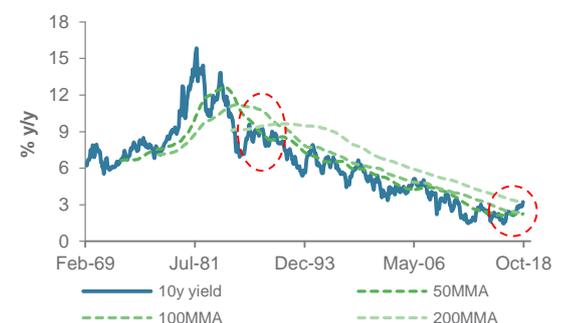
Brent crude oil



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

US 10-year Treasury yield is testing a tough resistance at the 200-month moving average; the yield last fell decisively below this trendline in 1987

US 10-year Treasury yield monthly chart



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

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What does this mean for investors?

Global stocks fell amid rising US Treasury yields and oil prices, with Emerging Markets leading losses. The USD gained broadly, especially vs. EUR and Asian currencies, such as INR and IDR.

Equities: US outperformance likely to continue

- **US equities remained resilient**, led by the energy sector. US economic and earnings outperformance relative to Europe and rising share buybacks are supporting the market. Consensus forecasts see US corporate earnings rising by 23% in 2018 and 13% over the next 12 months, compared with 6% and 9% in the Euro area. The US remains our preferred equity market. There is scope for US earnings estimates to be revised higher, driven by the energy sector, which is benefitting from higher oil prices.
- **Euro area banks** have declined 4% over the past week due to concerns over increased risks in Italy and continued Brexit uncertainty. Nevertheless, there are increasing expectations of a rise in merger and acquisition activity as the region's larger banks seek to expand their pan-European footprint. The Euro area and Euro area banks remain core holdings for us.
- **Hong Kong equities extend slide**. While China is on holiday for the week, Hong Kong equities have receded amid weaker-than-expected China business confidence data (PMI), a weaker CNY and a deadlock in US-China trade talks. Investors have recently shifted focus from growth-oriented stocks to those offering valuation discounts. The consumer staples sector, which derives significant earnings from the domestic market, has been a steady performer, while utilities with stable earnings and dividend yields have outperformed due to their defensive nature. Both consumer staples and utilities are our preferred sectors.

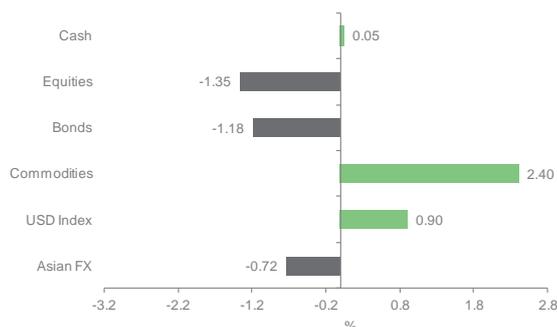
Bonds: Scope to switch from HY bonds to EM USD bonds

- **Oil powering HY bonds**. Developed Market (DM) High Yield (HY) bonds outperformed global bonds, as yield premiums declined sharply over the past week. The rise in oil has been a supportive factor, as it is a positive for energy sector HY bonds. However, this week's rally has pushed the yield premium offered by US HY bonds to the lowest level since 2007. The expensive valuation reduces the chance for future outperformance, in our opinion. We would use the current rally to take some profit on US HY bond holdings and rebalance towards EM USD government bonds, our most preferred area within bonds.
- **Italy drives volatility in European bonds**. German Bunds had a volatile week, as yields declined by nearly 10bps before recovering on rising Treasury yields. European yields have been under pressure from sub-par data and concerns around Italy (the yield differential between German Bunds and Italian government bonds rose to the highest since 2012). Further concerns around Italy's budget could delay ECB's monetary policy normalisation.

FX: USD close to next resistance

- **USD gains on strong data**. The USD (DXY) index recovered above its 50- and 100- day moving-average on stronger-than-expected private payrolls and services sector data. The index faces a strong resistance at the August high of 97.00. EUR/USD failed to sustain September's rebound and now faces next support at 1.1300.
- **Gold forming a base**. After falling 8% YTD, gold appears to be forming a base around USD 1,180/oz. We believe any break above USD 1,210/oz could open the way towards USD 1,250/oz. Sustained USD strength is a key risk to this view.

Benchmark (USD) performance w/w*



*Week of 26 September 2018 to 04 October 2018

Source: MSCI, JP Morgan, DJ-UBS, Citigroup, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered (Indices used are JP Morgan Cash, MSCI AC World TR, Citi World Big, DJ-UBS Commodity, DXY and ADXY)

S&P500 technical indicators remain the strongest

Technical levels of key market indicators as on 4 Oct.

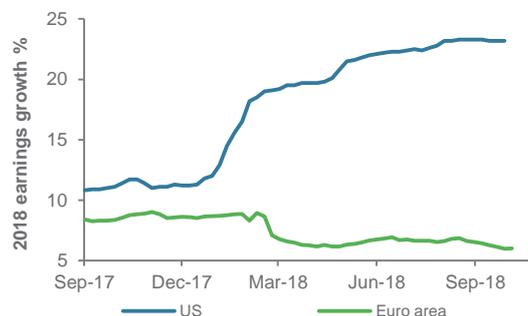
Index	Spot	1st support	1st resistance	Short-term trend
S&P500	2,902	2,873	2,972	↑
STOXX 50	3,375	3,343	3,426	→
FTSE 100	7,418	7,418	7,555	→
Nikkei 225	23,815	23,050	24,450	↑
Shanghai Comp	2,821	2,630	2,920	↑
Hang Seng	26,624	26,200	28,000	↓
MSCI Asia ex-Japan	628	618	659	↓
MSCI EM	1,010	998	1,054	↓
Brent (ICE)	85	80	90	↑
Gold	1,199	1,180	1,212	↓
UST 10Y Yield	3.19	3.01	3.27	↑

Source: Trading Central, Standard Chartered

Note: Arrows represent short-term trend opinions

US earnings expectations have significantly diverged from Euro area estimates this year, helping drive US equity outperformance

Consensus 2018 earnings growth estimates for the US and Euro area



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

USD index faces a crucial resistance at 97.00

USD (DXY) index



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Top client questions

Q1. Do you expect oil prices to rise further after hitting a four-year high? What are the implications of higher oil prices?

Brent crude oil prices rose to a four-year high above USD 85/bbl amid concerns about tightening supplies. We do not expect prices to rise significantly from current levels, at least on a sustained basis, as higher prices are likely to hurt global demand for oil and consumption-driven growth in most of the world's biggest economies in North America, Europe and Asia.

Drivers of higher prices: Brent crude oil prices surged 20% over the past two months, as investors focused on the likely curtailment of Iranian supplies once US sanctions take full effect from November. The Iranian sanctions come at a time when supplies from Venezuela, a major global exporter, continue to fall (Venezuelan output has halved to 1.26m bpd in September from around 2.4m bpd in January amid domestic political uncertainty).

Meanwhile, oil output in the US, which has emerged as one of the world's top three crude oil producers in recent years, has stabilised at around 11m bpd recent months primarily due to pipeline shortages. Slowing output growth and growing demand have led to US crude oil inventories falling almost a quarter from its record highs hit in mid-2017 (although inventories have risen marginally in recent weeks).

Historically, in times of supply constraints, OPEC's major "swing" producers, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have helped balance the market to prevent prices from rising significantly. However, in recent weeks, there have been growing concerns about dwindling spare capacity in OPEC's largest producers.

Our view: We assign around 70% probability of Brent crude oil trading within USD 65-85/bbl in the next 12 months because we believe even higher prices are likely to lead to a dip in demand (which would drag prices back to this range). However, we acknowledge there is an increasing likelihood of oil trading in a slightly higher range (USD 75-85/bbl) in the near term (our Global Investment Committee now assigns a 37% probability to oil trading in this range in the next 12 months, up from 25% a month ago).

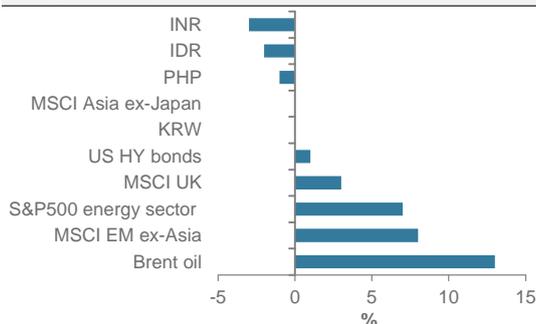
Besides Iran and Middle East geopolitics, the outlook for US-China trade tensions is also likely to play a key role in determining oil prices over the coming month. The deadlock in US and China could slow economic and oil demand growth in China, the world's biggest oil importer.

Global implications: Global risk assets, including equities, are likely to be resilient as long as oil remains in our expected USD 65-85/bbl range. However, further sustainable gains in prices would challenge this constructive view as it would raise business costs, hurt global consumption and could lift inflation expectations, forcing the Fed to raise rates faster than current expectations. Meanwhile, currencies of oil-importing countries (i.e. INR, IDR and PHP in Asia) could remain under pressure as their current account deficits deteriorate due to rising import bills.

On the positive side, higher oil prices are supportive of EM ex-Asia and UK equities in the near term, given their larger exposures to the oil/energy producing sector. Developed Market (DM) High Yield (HY) bonds are also a likely beneficiary, although we believe valuations (yield premiums) are already relatively stretched, which should reduce the scope for further outperformance.

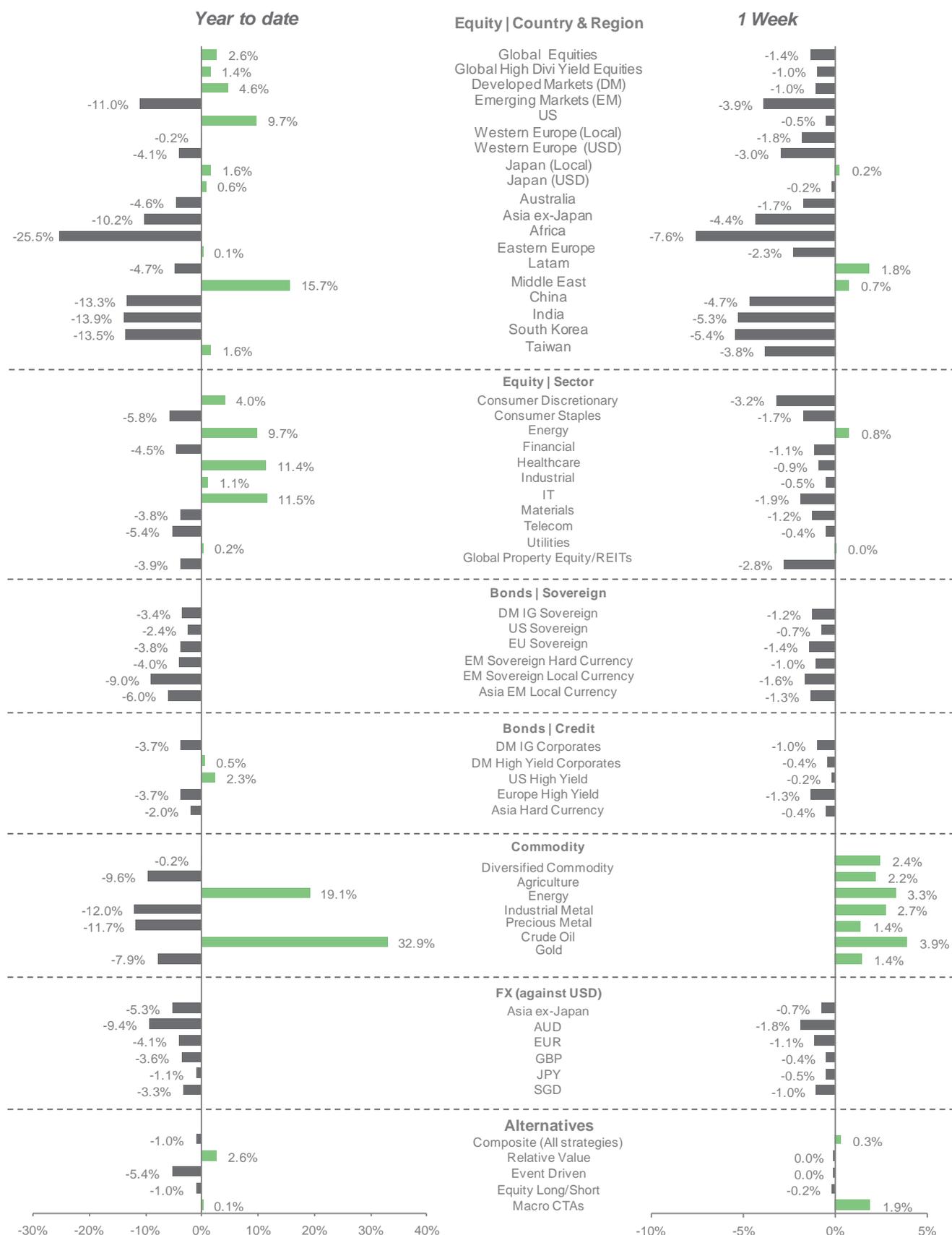
MSCI EM ex-Asia and global energy sector equities are likely beneficiaries of higher oil prices, while some Asian currencies are likely to remain under pressure as their current account deficits widen

One-month performance of various assets impacted by rising crude oil prices, %



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Market performance summary*



*Performance in USD terms unless otherwise stated, YTD period from 31 December 2017 to 04 October 2018, 1 week period: 26 September 2018 to 04 October 2018

Sources: MSCI, JP Morgan, Barclays Capital, Citigroup, Dow Jones, HFRX, FTSE, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Economic & Market Calendar

	Event	Next Week	Date	Period	Expected	Prior
MON	CH	Caixin China PMI Composite	8-Oct-18	Sep	–	52.0
	CH	Caixin China PMI Services	8-Oct-18	Sep	51.4	51.5
	GE	Industrial Production WDA y/y	8-Oct-18	Aug	–	1.1%
	EC	Sentix Investor Confidence	8-Oct-18	Oct	–	12.0
TUE	GE	Exports SA m/m	9-Oct-18	Aug	–	-0.8%
WED	JN	Core Machine Orders y/y	10-Oct-18	Aug	2.1%	13.9%
	UK	Industrial Production y/y	10-Oct-18	Aug	–	0.9%
	US	PPI Ex Food and Energy y/y	10-Oct-18	Sep	2.6%	2.3%
THUR	JN	PPI y/y	11-Oct-18	Sep	2.9%	3.0%
	US	CPI Ex Food and Energy y/y	11-Oct-18	Sep	2.2%	2.2%
FR/SAT	IN	CPI y/y	12-Oct-18	Sep	–	3.7%
	IN	Industrial Production y/y	12-Oct-18	Aug	–	6.6%
	US	U. of Mich. Sentiment	12-Oct-18	Oct P	100.0	100.1
	CH	Exports y/y	12-Oct-18	Sep	8.7%	9.8%

	Event	This Week	Date	Period	Actual	Prior
MON	SK	Exports y/y	1-Oct-18	Sep	-8.2%	8.7%
	SK	Nikkei South Korea PMI Mfg	1-Oct-18	Sep	51.3	49.9
	EC	Unemployment Rate	1-Oct-18	Aug	8.1%	8.2%
	US	ISM Manufacturing	1-Oct-18	Sep	59.8	61.3
	US	ISM New Orders	1-Oct-18	Sep	61.8	65.1
TUE	AU	RBA Cash Rate Target	2-Oct-18	2-Oct	1.5%	1.5%
	EC	PPI y/y	2-Oct-18	Aug	4.2%	4.3%
WED	JN	Nikkei Japan PMI Composite	3-Oct-18	Sep	50.7	52.0
	UK	Markit/CIPS UK Composite PMI	3-Oct-18	Sep	54.1	54.2
	EC	Retail Sales y/y	3-Oct-18	Aug	1.8%	1.0%
	US	ADP Employment Change	3-Oct-18	Sep	230k	168k
	US	ISM Non-Manufacturing Index	3-Oct-18	Sep	61.6	58.5
THUR	IN	Nikkei India PMI Composite	4-Oct-18	Sep	51.6	51.9
FR/SAT	MX	Overnight Rate	5-Oct-18	4-Oct	7.75%	7.75%
	JN	Real Cash Earnings y/y	5-Oct-18	Aug	-0.6%	0.4%
	GE	Factory Orders WDA y/y	5-Oct-18	Aug	–	-0.9%
	GE	PPI y/y	5-Oct-18	Aug	–	3.0%
	IN	RBI Repurchase Rate	5-Oct-18	5-Oct	–	6.5%
	US	Change in Nonfarm Payrolls	5-Oct-18	Sep	–	201k
	US	Average Hourly Earnings y/y	5-Oct-18	Sep	–	2.9%

Previous data are for the preceding period unless otherwise indicated

Data are % change on previous period unless otherwise indicated

P - preliminary data, F - final data, sa - seasonally adjusted

y/y – year-on-year, m/m - month-on-month

Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered; key indicators highlighted in blue

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