

Financial Market Report CEE

Volume 4 · October 2010

International Finance Market Data: Assessments and Expectations ZEW Economic Sentiment Indicator for Central and Eastern Europe, Supported by Erste Group Bank AG

ZEW, the Centre for European Economic Research, Mannheim, and Erste Group Bank AG, Vienna, carry out a monthly survey for Central and Eastern Europe, Austria, as well as the Eurozone, asking financial market experts for their assessments and expectations with regard to economic and financial market data. The results of the current survey, conducted between August 30 and September 13, 2010, are published in the October 2010 issue of the "Financial Market Report CEE." 72 financial market experts participated in this month's survey.

Economic Recovery in Central and Eastern Europe Slows Down

The economic expectations for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) decline by 3.2 points in September and reach the 17.3 points mark. However, nearly half of the survey participants do not predict any change regarding the development of the business cycle for the next half year in the CEE region. The predictions for the economic development in Austria worsen in the current survey by 16.2 points to 13.3 points. The expectations for the Eurozone improve slightly by 2.0 points to 17.7 points. The assessments of the current economic situa-

tion in the CEE region, Austria and the Eurozone are more cautious this month than in the previous survey. The respective indicators decrease by 5.7 points to minus 5.7 points for the CEE region, by 6.7 points to 11.1 points for Austria and by 1.9 points to minus 5.8 points for the Eurozone.

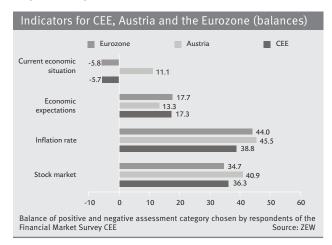
While the financial market experts expect a declining inflationary pressure in the CEE region on a six months time horizon, higher inflationary risks are prognosticated for selected CEE countries as well as for the Eurozone.

Economic Outlook for the CEE Region, Austria and the Eurozone

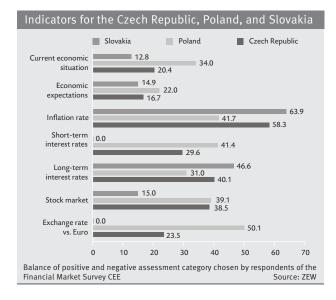
The ZEW-Erste Group Bank Economic Sentiment Indicator for Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) which is calculated as the balance of positive and negative assessments of the economic development on a six month time horizon declines by 3.2 points to 17.3 points in September. Nearly half of the survey participants do not predict any change regarding the development of the business cycle for the next half year in the CEE region. These "neutral" answers, however, do not flow into the calculation of the indicator. The economic expectations for Austria worsen in September by 16.2 points to 13.3 points. The sentiment indicator for the Eurozone, however, improves slightly this month. It rises by 2.0 points to 17.7 points.

The assessments of the current economic situation in the CEE region, Austria and the Eurozone are more cautious in September than in the previous month. The respective indicator for the CEE region decreases by 5.7 points to minus 5.7 points. The evaluation of the current business conditions in Austria declines by 6.7 points to 11.1 points. The indicator for the Eurozone worsens by 1.9 points to minus 5.8 points.

Following the financial market experts, the inflationary pressures in the CEE region on a six month time horizon will decline. Thus, the relevant indicator decreases by 7.0 points to 38.8 points. In contrast, higher inflationary risks are prognosticated for the Eurozone. The relevant balance rises by 7.0 points to 44.0 points. The respective inflation indicator for Austria remains nearly unchanged at the 45.5 threshold. More than half of the financial market experts predict that the stock market indices for the CEE region (NTX), Austria (ATX) and the Eurostoxx 50 will develop positively within the next six months. Even though the balances which reflect the expected development decrease slightly, they still remain distinctly positive. The indicator reflecting the expectations for the NTX reaches currently 36.3 points, the balance for the ATX stays nearly unchanged at 40.9 points and the indicator for the Eurostoxx 50 drops to 34.7 points.



Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia: Higher Inflation Rates Predicted



The economic sentiment indicator for the Czech Republic decreases in September more strongly than the sentiment indicators of all the other CEE countries. Consequently, it loses its leading position in this category. After a decline of 15.3 points the economic expectations reach a value of 16.7 points. The sentiment indicators for Poland and Slovakia decrease by 4.5 points to 22.0 points and by 2.6 points to 14.9 points, respectively. Thus, the indicator for Poland reaches the highest value in country comparison.

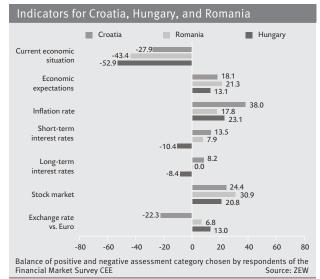
The assessment of the current economic situation in Poland also wins the first place among the analysed CEE economies. The respective balance rises by 10.4 points and currently reaches the 34.0 points threshold. The appraisal of the current business conditions in the Czech Republic increases by 6.6 points to 20.4 points. The respective indicator for Slovakia displays the highest climb this month in country comparison by 10.8 points reaching 12.8 points.

According to the financial market experts the inflationary pressure on a six month time horizon increases in all three countries. Especially for Slovakia, the respective indicator increases significantly and reaches the highest value in this category with 63.9 points. The inflation indicators for the Czech Republic and Poland also rise in the current survey and reach the second and third place in this category with 58.3 points and 41.7 points, respectively.

The predictions of higher inflationary pressures correlate positively with the short-term interest rate forecast for the Czech Republic and Poland. The relevant indicator for the Czech Republic experiences the strongest growth in country comparison by 15.9 points reaching 29.6 points. Poland's short-term interest rate indicator reaches the highest value in this category with 41.4 points.

More than 60 percent of the experts are still convinced of an appreciation of the Polish currency against the Euro within the next six months. The respective indicator achieves the highest value of 50.1 points in this category.

Croatia, Hungary, and Romania: Cautious Stock Market Expectations



The optimistic economic expectations for Croatia, Hungary and Romania from the previous month slow down in this month's survey. The economic sentiment indicator for Croatia decreases by 6.3 points reaching 18.1 points. The economic outlook for Hungary displays the second highest decrease among all the analysed CEE economies by 10.4 points reaching 13.1 points. The indicator reflecting the expectations for the Romanian economy on a six month time horizon decreases more slightly by 4.8 points to 21.3 points.

While the current economic situation in Croatia and Hungary is evaluated more critically than in the previous month, the assessment of the current business cycle in Romania improves considerably. The respective indicators decline by 2.3 points to minus 27.9 points for Croatia and by minus 1.0 points to minus 52.9 points for Hungary. The balance which reflects the assessment of the current economic climate in Romania improves by 9.8 points to minus 43.4 points. Hungary and Romania take the last two places in this category.

The indicators reflecting the inflation expectations of the financial market experts within the next six months in Hungary and Croatia increase in September by 17.0 points to 23.1 points and by 4.6 points to 38.0 points, respectively. In contrast, the analysts are confident that Romania will be able to counteract the domestic inflation as the respective inflation indicator drops considerably by 14.0 points and reaches the lowest value in country comparison with 17.8 points.

The strong optimism of the previous months regarding the development of the Croatian stock indices, CROBEX ceases in September. The respective indicator declines by 25.6 points to a current value of 24.4 points. The stock market indicator for Hungary also displays a double-digit drop of 17.8 points.

Croatia remains in the September survey the only country for which the analysts prognosticate a depreciation of the domestic currency as its currency indicator is the only negative balance in this category amounting to minus 22.3 points.

Special Question: Fighting Shopping Recession in CEE with Shopping Centres

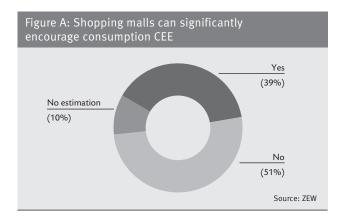
In 2009 many CEE countries suffered from a contraction in private consumption. According to the statistics of Eurostat only Austria and Poland experienced a growth in household consumption last year. While the Special Question of the April issue dealt with the development of the private consumption for the year 2010 in this issue of the financial market report the financial market experts were asked to give an opinion on a potential way to encourage household consumption in the CEE economies. In detail, the financial market analysts were asked to evaluate the influence of shopping malls on the development of household consumption. Although the construction of shopping malls boomed over the last decade in CEE, nowadays shopping malls seem to face several problems due to the recession. Can shopping malls therefore still encourage private consumption in the CEE region? And if yes, how will shopping malls differentiate themselves from each other and from other ordinary shops?

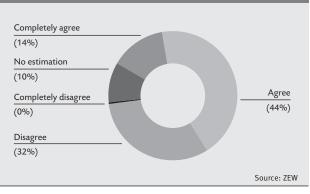
The results from this month's Special Question display a somewhat ambivalent opinion of the polled participants concerning the question whether the shopping malls will encourage private consumption in the CEE region. Slightly more than half of the financial market experts disprove the idea that shopping malls can significantly encourage private consumption through their variety of shops and products. In contrast, 39 percent of polled participants, are still convinced that shopping malls can promote private consumption in the CEE region.

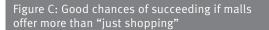
Considering the circumstances that the global crisis brought about, the financial market analysts have considerable reasons to cast doubt on the success of shopping malls. Recently many shopping malls in the CEE region encounter several problems such as finding enough occupants and trying to fight against decreasing rents. Hence, 58 percent of the financial market experts agree that lack of planning and vision will lead to chaotic development and an oversupply of shopping malls in CEE. This percentage of surveyed analysts does not believe in the survival of many shopping malls during the recession. 32 percent of the polled participants disagree with this statement.

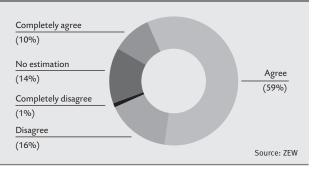
Despite the cautious outlook for the shopping malls, the majority of analysts, namely 69 percent, are still convinced that shopping malls are a long-term business and will have a good chance in withstanding the economic slowdown if they learn to differentiate themselves from other shopping venues. The idea behind differentiating themselves is to offer more than just the opportunity to shop in a shopping centre. Instead a shopping mall should offer an additional variety of services such as amusement parks, fitness centres and dining possibilities. For instance Galerie Harfa, a currently under construction shopping mall in Prague, tries to distinguish itselves by featuring a dinosaur-themed amusement park, among others.

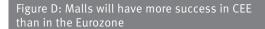
A significant portion of financial market analysts, namely 59 percent, are of the opinion that shopping malls will have more success in the CEE region than in the Eurozone. 25 percent of the polled participants regard the success of shopping malls in the CEE region to be smaller than in the Eurozone. *Melissa Li, Mariela Borell*











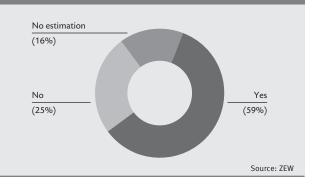


Figure B: Many malls will not survive the recession

ZEW-Financial Market	Survey: Septer	1ber 2010				
Current economic situation	good		acceptal	ole (normal)	bad	balance
Austria	22.2	(-6.7)	66.7	(+6.7)	11.1 (+/-0.0)	11.1 (-6.7)
Croatia	9.3	(+/-0.0)	53.5	(-2.3)	37.2 (+2.3)	-27.9 (-2.3)
Czech Republic	30.6	(+9.0)	59.2	(-11.4)	10.2 (+2.4)	20.4 (+6.6)
Hungary	7.5	(+3.8)	32.1	(-8.6)	60.4 (+4.8)	-52.9 (-1.0)
Poland	40.0	(+8.6)	54.0	(-6.8)	6.0 (-1.8)	34.0 (+10.4)
Romania	13.1	(+4.6)	30.4	(+0.6)	56.5 (-5.2)	-43.4 (+9.8)
Slovakia	27.7	(+9.0)	57.4	(-7.2)	14.9 (-1.8)	12.8 (+10.8)
CEE	11.3	(-2.7)	71.7	(-0.3)	17.0 (+3.0)	-5.7 (-5.7)
Eurozone	11.5	(-4.2)	71.2	(+6.5)	17.3 (-2.3)	-5.8 (-1.9)
		()				. ,
Economic expectations		prove		hange	worsen	balance
Austria	33.3	(-14.4)	46.7	(+12.6)	20.0 (+1.8)	13.3 (-16.2)
Croatia	38.6	(+2.0)	40.9	(-10.3)	20.5 (+8.3)	18.1 (-6.3)
Czech Republic	37.5	(-6.5)	41.7	(-2.3)	20.8 (+8.8)	16.7 (-15.3)
Hungary	32.0	(-1.3)	49.1	(-7.8)	18.9 (+9.1)	13.1 (-10.4)
Poland	40.0	(+3.3)	42.0	(-11.1)	18.0 (+7.8)	22.0 (-4.5)
Romania	36.2	(-7.3)	48.9	(+9.8)	14.9 (-2.5)	21.3 (-4.8)
Slovakia	31.9	(+1.4)	51.1	(-5.4)	17.0 (+4.0)	14.9 (-2.6)
CEE	34.6	(+1.9)	48.1	(-7.0)	17.3 (+5.1)	17.3 (-3.2)
Eurozone	35.3	(-3.9)	47.1	(+9.8)	17.6 (-5.9)	17.7 (+2.0)
Inflation rate	inci	rease	no c	hange	decrease	balance
Austria	50.0	(+/-0.0)	45.5	(+0.3)	4.5 (-0.3)	45.5 (+0.3)
Croatia	42.8	(+4.3)	52.4	(-4.0)	4.8 (-0.3)	38.0 (+4.6)
Czech Republic	60.4	(+4.2)	37.5	(+/-0.0)	2.1 (-4.2)	58.3 (+8.4)
Hungary	40.4	(-0.4)	42.3	(+17.8)	17.3 (-17.4)	23.1 (+17.0)
Poland	50.0	(+3.3)	41.7	(-2.7)	8.3 (-0.6)	41.7 (+3.9)
Romania	37.8	(-9.9)	42.2	(+5.8)	20.0 (+4.1)	17.8 (-14.0)
Slovakia	66.0	(+9.5)	31.9	(-5.1)	2.1 (-4.4)	63.9 (+13.9)
CEE	44.9	(-5.1)	49.0	(+3.2)	6.1 (+1.9)	38.8 (-7.0)
Eurozone	48.0	(+4.5)	48.0	(-2.0)	4.0 (-2.5)	44.0 (+7.0)
Short-term interest rates	ince	rease		hange	decrease	balance
Short-term interest rates	[abs.]	[rel.]	[abs.]	[rel.]	[abs.] [rel.]	[abs.] [rel.]
Croatia	24.3 (+0.7)	25.0 (+4.3		62.5 (+0.4)		
Croatia Czech Republic	24.3 (+0.7) 36.4 (+18.2)	20.5 (+4.3		56.4 (+1.1)		
Hungary	25.0 (+6.8)	23.2 (+7.4		32.6 (-5.9)	35.4 (-3.2) 44.2 (+0.6	
	45.7 (-0.8)		, , ,		. ,	
Poland Romania	23.7 (-0.8)	42.9 (+2.3 24.2 (-17.0		45.2 (+7.4) 45.5 (+7.3)		
Eurozone	36.0 (-7.7)	24.2 (-17.0	60.0 (+5.8)	45.5 (+7.5)	4.0 (+1.9)	32.0 (-9.6)
	. ,		. ,		. ,	. ,
Long-term interest rates		rease		hange	decrease	balance
	[abs.]	[rel.]	[abs.]	[rel.]	[abs.] [rel.]	[abs.] [rel.]
Croatia	38.8 (+14.6)	39.4 (+18.7		27.3 (-14.1		
Czech Republic	53.4 (+2.3)	27.9 (+9.9		41.9 (-6.8)	13.3 (-0.7) 30.2 (-3.1	
Hungary	31.2 (-6.0)	29.5 (-1.2	, , ,	20.5 (-10.3		
Poland	46.6 (+13.2)	25.5 (-4.3		41.9 (+17.6		
Slovakia	58.2 (+3.4)	27.5 (-9.4		57.5 (+12.8		
Germany	57.1 (+6.0)		32.7 (-7.3)		10.2 (+1.3)	46.9 (+4.7)
Stock market indices	inci	rease	no c	hange	decrease	balance
EURO STOXX 50	54.3	(-5.3)	26.1	(+4.7)	19.6 (+0.6)	34.7 (-5.9)
ATX (Austria)	56.8	(-4.8)	27.3	(+9.4)	15.9 (-4.6)	40.9 (-0.2)
NTX (CEE)	56.8	(-1.3)	22.7	(-0.6)	20.5 (+1.9)	36.3 (-3.2)
CROBEX (Croatia)	43.9	(-16.1)	36.6	(+6.6)	19.5 (+9.5)	24.4 (-25.6)
PX 50 (Czech Rep.)	59.0	(+5.5)	20.5	(-5.1)	20.5 (-0.4)	38.5 (+5.9)
BUX (Hungary)	45.8	(-11.0)	29.2	(+4.2)	25.0 (+6.8)	20.8 (-17.8)
WIG (Poland)	58.7	(+0.6)	21.7	(-1.6)	19.6 (+1.0)	39.1 (-0.4)
BET (Romania)	56.5	(+0.1)	17.9	(-5.2)	25.6 (+5.1)	30.9 (-5.0)
SAX (Slovakia)	40.0	(-3.9)	35.0	(-4.0)	25.0 (+7.9)	15.0 (-11.8)
SBI 20 (Slovenia)	45.8	(-1.4)	37.1	(+1.0)	17.1 (+0.4)	28.7 (-1.8)
Exchange rates (vs. Euro)		eciate		hange	depreciate	balance
Kuna (Croatia)	15.5	(+0.9)	46.7	(+10.1)	37.8 (-11.0)	-22.3 (+11.9)
	43.1	(+2.3)	37.3 27.8	(-11.7) (-0.8)	19.6 (+9.4) 29.6 (+3.1)	23.5 (-7.1) 13.0 (-5.4)
				(-0.8.)		13.0 (-5.4)
Forint (Hungary)	42.6	(-2.3)				
Forint (Hungary) Zloty (Poland)	61.6	(-0.9)	26.9	(+4.0)	11.5 (-3.1)	50.1 (+2.2)
Koruna (Czech Rep.) Forint (Hungary) Zloty (Poland) Lei (Romania) US-Dollar						

Note: 72 Financial experts participated in the September survey which was conducted during the period 08/30/10-09/13/10. Analysts were asked about their expectations for the next 6 months. Numbers displayed are percentages (month-over-month percentage point changes compared to the survey in August in parentheses). Balances refer to the differences between positive and negative assessments.

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