

The euro's decline intensifies

HIGHLIGHTS

- United States: Winter delivers a blow to retail sales.
- U.S. consumer confidence falls again in March.
- Canada: Household debt continues to rise.
- Canada: Employment edged back in February.

A LOOK AHEAD

- Will the Federal Reserve stop describing itself as patient?
- United States: February is expected to show a decline in industrial output.
- The weather probably hurt U.S. housing starts.
- Canada: Manufacturing, wholesaler and retailer sales could see some difficulty for January.
- Canada: The total annual inflation rate could drop below the bottom of the range (1%).

FINANCIAL MARKETS

- U.S. stock markets worry about the strong dollar.
- Yields plunge in Europe as the European Central Bank starts to purchase securities.
- The Canadian dollar drops to US\$0.78 on another drop in oil prices.

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Graph of the week – The euro falls rapidly towards parity with the U.S. dollar



Sources: Datastream and Desjardins, Economic Studies

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NOTE TO READERS: The letters **K**, **M** and **B** are used in texts and tables to refer to thousands, millions and billions respectively.

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KEY STATISTICS OF THE WEEK

UNITED STATES

- Retail sales fell by 0.6% in February after drops of 0.8% in January and 0.9% in December. Automobile sales contracted by 2.5% after a gain of 0.5%. Apart from automobiles, many other categories of retailers recorded a slump in sales. The sharpest drops were at renovation centres, department stores and electronics stores. For the first time since May 2014, gas stations saw the value of their sales increase, by 1.5%. Grocery stores, sporting and leisure goods stores, and nonstore retailers are the only other categories that saw gains in February. Excluding cars and gasoline, sales dipped by 0.2% after a 0.1% downtick in January. As the consensus forecast was for retail sales to post slight growth, the tumble was a nasty surprise. It is increasingly obvious that the harsh weather conditions that have battered many parts of the United States since the beginning of the winter have encouraged consumers to stay home.
- The preliminary version of the University of Michigan consumer confidence index posts another decline. The index went from 95.4 in the final version for February to 91.2, its lowest point since November 2014. The Michigan index has lost 6.9 points in two months.
- Business inventories were stable in January after stagnating in December. Manufacturer inventories fell 0.4%, which was offset by a 0.3% increase at wholesalers. Retail inventories were unchanged from December. The relative weakness suggests that the change in inventories will make a negative contribution to real GDP growth in Q1 2015.

Francis Généreux
Senior Economist

CANADA

- The labour market lost 1,000 jobs in February after a gain of 35,400 jobs in January. The unemployment rate ticked up from 6.6% to 6.8%, mainly due to greater participation in the labour market. Despite February's dip in employment, the labour market trend is still quite good. The 6-month moving average is 18,900, which is compatible with economic growth of around 2%. However, the details of the results raise some concerns. First, Alberta lost 14,000 jobs in February due to significant declines in the natural resources and trade sectors. Second, the job losses reported in manufacturing are disappointing, given that we are relying to a great extent on that sector to support growth in this country.
- Canadian households continued to take on debt in Q4 2014. The ratio of their credit market debt to disposable income rose to 163.26%, a level not seen since 1990 when the statistic was first compiled. For now, the situation is not alarming, as debt service (interest payments made on loans) remains at a historic low. This observation is a little paradoxical given that the size of the debt is at a peak, but it is due to the very low interest rates. However, the main concern with the debt load is that interest rates will slowly go up at some point, a situation that could lead to a fairly rapid rise by Canadians' financial obligations.
- The number of housing starts fell from 187,000 units in January to 156,300 units in February. The multiple dwellings in urban areas segment reported a drop of 28,900 units in February. Single-family homes in urban areas were down by 2,300 units, while an increase of 500 units was recorded in rural areas. However, the data on multi-unit housing is always fairly volatile and large contractions are frequently followed by rallies. Under these conditions, we should expect the number of housing starts to increase significantly in March 2015, thanks to a spike in multiple-dwelling projects.
- The industrial capacity utilization rate rose to 83.6% in Q4 2014, up 0.4% from the previous quarter. Furthermore, the manufacturing utilization rate is at its highest point since the last recession.

Benoit P. Durocher
Senior Economist

FINANCIAL MARKETS

Is the euro headed for parity against the U.S. dollar?

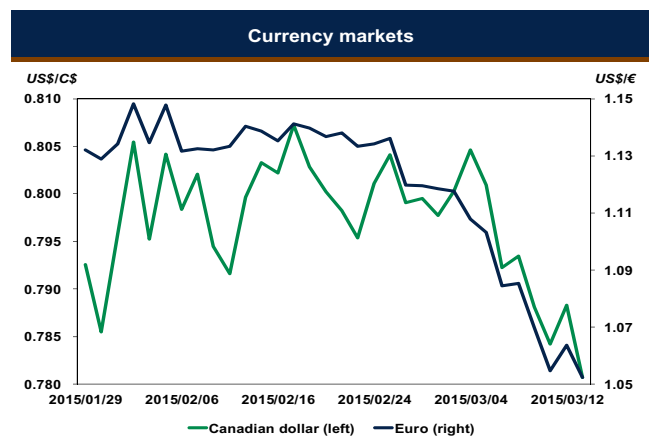
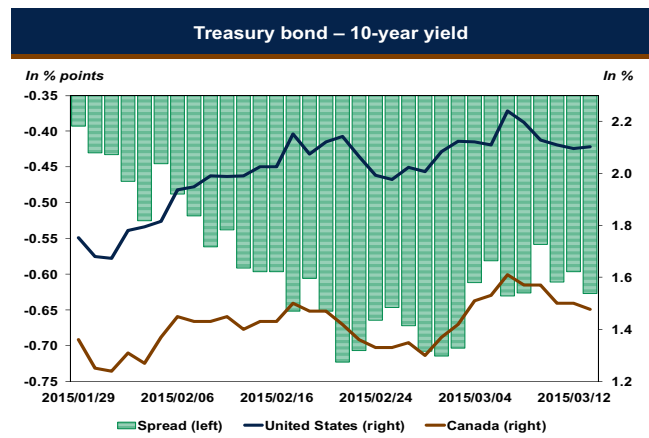
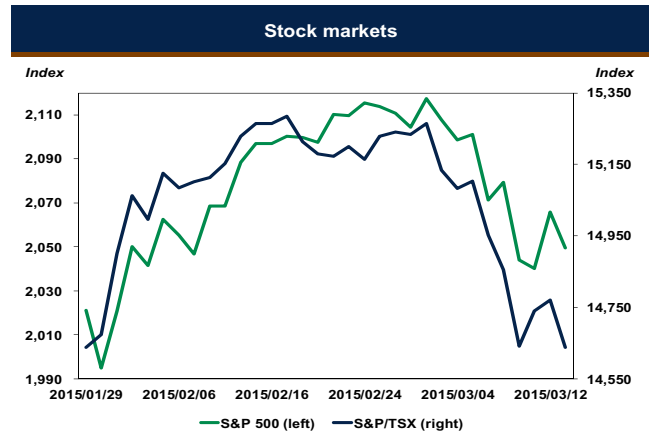
The stock markets continued to struggle in a week with little in the way of economic data. Tuesday's session was especially difficult, mainly because of the greenback's big surge, which raised concerns about the U.S. stock markets' profit outlooks. The markets are also edgy about the changes the Federal Reserve will make to its message at the March 18 meeting. The S&P 500 did recover a little as of Thursday, despite lower than anticipated retail sales figures in the United States, but was trading lower Friday. In Canada, the S&P/TSX took a hit, especially on Friday, when WTI (West Texas Intermediate) prices fell below US\$46/barrel.

The rebound in 10-year bond yields posted after U.S. employment figures were released last Friday was wiped out in just three sessions. Ten-year yields were oscillating just over 2.10% on Friday morning. The European Central Bank (ECB) started its securities purchases on Monday, which seems to have affected the global bond markets. The German 30-year yield plunged, hitting a low of 0.61% on Thursday, which is even below the yield on a U.S. 2-year bond. In Canada, yields tended to follow the path of U.S. yields. Job creation data came in fairly close to expectations, so it did not trigger upheaval on Friday; the 10-year yield settled in at 1.47%.

The U.S. dollar maintained last week's thrust, but disappointment with U.S. retail sales reined the dollar in on Thursday. Hurt by the onset of the ECB's securities purchases, the euro hit a new 12-year low at US\$1.0480. The pound hit a peak that dates back to 2007 against the euro, going to £0.70/€, but depreciated against the greenback, sliding below US\$1.48 on Friday. After a few calmer weeks, the Canadian dollar sank to US\$0.78, primarily penalized by a further drop in oil prices.

Jimmy Jean
Senior Economist

Hendrix Vachon
Senior Economist



A LOOK AHEAD



UNITED STATES

Monday March 16 - 9:15

February	m/m
Consensus	0.3%
Desjardins	-0.1%
January	0.2%

Industrial production (February) – Although the auto sector declined, industrial output increased 0.2% in January on a 2.3% jump in energy production. Last month’s unusually cold weather probably kept energy production from retreating. However, the auto sector likely contracted again in February, based on the 1.9% retreat in hours worked. February also seems to have been somewhat tough for the rest of manufacturing, as suggested by the decline by the ISM index and, in particular, the regional indexes. The labour dispute at West Coast ports, which lasted until the end of the month, also seems to be having some notable adverse consequences. We therefore expect industrial output and manufacturing production to dip 0.1%. The industrial capacity utilization rate should tick down from 79.4% to 79.3%. The New York Fed (Monday) and Philadelphia Fed (Thursday) regional indexes will give us a first glimpse of manufacturing’s strength in March.

Tuesday March 17 - 8:30

February	ann. rate
Consensus	1,040,000
Desjardins	1,035,000
January	1,065,000

Housing starts (February) – Housing starts remain very volatile, exacerbated by the growing weight of multi-unit housing. They dropped 7.1% in November, jumped by that amount in December, then retreated 2.0% in January. Another pullback is expected for February. Building permits have not advanced since October (although we are expecting a 2.1% rise in February); their relative weakness and, in particular, the weather problems that likely disrupted new construction point to another monthly decline. Employment in homebuilding also pulled back in February. We therefore expect housing starts to fall from 1,065,000 units to 1,035,000 units. However, a rebound is anticipated as of March. The NAHB index of homebuilder confidence will be released Monday.

Wednesday March 18 - 14:00

March	
Consensus	0.25%
Desjardins	0.25%
January 28	0.25%

Federal Reserve meeting (March) – Although economic growth eased off in the United States in the final quarter of 2014 and perhaps in the first quarter of 2015, the members of the Federal Reserve’s (Fed) monetary policy committee seem to have decided to make some changes to the statement that will be issued at the end of the meeting. Since Janet Yellen appeared before the two houses of Congress at the end of February, it has been fairly clear that the Fed wants to drop the notion of patience that has been acting as forward guidance by signalling that rates should not shift for the next two meetings. They could make this decision while doing as much as they can to reassure markets that the first rate increase is not yet imminent and stressing that they are primarily seeking to acquire some leeway. Janet Yellen could take advantage of the press conference following publication of the statement to get this message across. The statement should discuss the job market’s solid performance and temporary weakness in several economic indicators. In addition to Janet Yellen’s press conference, the Wednesday meeting will see the release of Fed leaders’ latest outlooks for economic growth, inflation, unemployment and key rate movement.

Thursday March 19 - 10:00

February	m/m
Consensus	0.3%
Desjardins	0.2%
January	0.2%

Leading indicator (February) – In January, the leading indicator posted its weakest monthly growth since August 2014. The stock market’s retreat, rise in jobless claims and slide in the manufacturing ISM offset the positive contributions from the interest rate spread and consumer confidence. Consumer confidence should give the leading indicator less support in February, while the ISM and jobless claims should once again take bites out of the monthly change. The stock market upswing and expected rise in building permits should still help the leading indicator gain 0.2%.


CANADA

Manufacturing sales (January) – After December’s 4.6% increase, merchandise exports excluding commodities retreated 0.4% in January. We can also expect the drop in oil prices to once again impact the value of sales by manufacturers of petroleum and coal products. On the other hand, the automotive product sector saw its exports surge in January, which should give manufacturing sales a boost. All in all, sales are expected to edge back.

Wholesale trade (January) – January’s drop in merchandise exports excluding commodities also augurs poorly for movement by wholesale sales. Wholesale sales shot up in December, so we are likely to see a retreat for January. However, the trend for retail sales has been fairly good for the last few months and consumer confidence is holding close to its historic average, which should limit January’s dip by wholesaling.

Consumer price index (February) – According to the weekly surveys at the pump, gas prices rose 9.2% in February, putting an end to a seven-month run of slides. The increase in gas prices alone could generate a one-month increase of about 0.4% in the total consumer price index (CPI). In terms of seasonal price fluctuations, February usually gets an increase of about 0.4%, primarily due to higher clothing prices. However, if we factor in the last few months’ slight downtrend in the seasonally adjusted monthly change, we can expect the total CPI to gain 0.7% in February. The total annual inflation rate would go from 1.0% to 0.9%. The annual change in the Bank of Canada’s core index (CPIX) should stay close to 2%.

Retail sales (January) – January’s plunge in gas prices will reduce the value of service station sales. Moreover, the interim data indicates that new auto sales retreated substantially that month. However, the other retail components should go up in January. For one thing, the growing gift card phenomenon will boost many retailers’ sales. For another, consumer confidence remains fairly good and the labour market is showing satisfactory growth. Given the relatively high weight of service stations and car dealers in retailing, the value of total sales is still expected to drop in January.


OVERSEAS

Euro zone: Trade balance (January) – Euroland’s trade balance has improved sharply in the last few months; it has gotten a lot of help from the euro’s dizzying slide, as well as from falling oil prices and relatively weak domestic demand. This development is of course boosting the zone’s real GDP growth; another gain in January would be welcome.

Tuesday March 17 - 8:30

January	m/m
Consensus	n/a
Desjardins	-0.5%
December	1.7%

Wednesday March 18 - 8:30

January	m/m
Consensus	n/a
Desjardins	-0.2%
December	2.5%

Friday March 20 - 8:30

February	m/m
Consensus	n/a
Desjardins	0.7%
January	-0.2%

Friday March 20 - 8:30



January	m/m
Consensus	n/a
Desjardins	-0.8%
December	-2.0%

Wednesday March 18 - 6:00

January	y/y
Consensus	n/a
December	23.3


ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Week of March 16 to 20, 2015

Day	Hour	Indicator	Period	Consensus		Previous data
 UNITED STATES						
MONDAY 16	8:30	Empire manufacturing index	March	8.00	10.00	7.78
	9:15	Industrial production (m/m)	Feb.	0.2%	-0.1%	0.2%
	9:15	Production capacity utilization rates	Feb.	79.5%	79.3%	79.4%
	10:00	NAHB housing market index	March	57	n/a	55
	16:00	Net foreign security purchases (US\$B)	Jan.	n/a	n/a	35.4
TUESDAY 17	8:30	Housing starts (ann. rate)	Feb.	1,050,000	1,035,000	1,065,000
	8:30	Building permits (ann. rate)	Feb.	1,065,000	1,075,000	1,060,000
WEDNESDAY 18	14:00	Federal Reserve meeting	March	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%
THURSDAY 19	8:30	Initial unemployment claims	March 9-13	293,000	295,000	289,000
	8:30	Current account (US\$B)	Q4	-104.9	-110.0	-100.3
	10:00	Leading indicator (m/m)	Feb.	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
	10:00	Philadelphia Fed index	March	7.4	10.0	5.2
FRIDAY 20	10:20	Speech of the Atlanta Fed President, D. Lockhart				
	11:30	Speech of the Chicago Fed President, C. Evans				


 **CANADA**

MONDAY 16	8:30	International transactions in securities (\$B)	Jan.	n/a	-2.00	-13.55
TUESDAY 17	8:30	Manufacturing sales (m/m)	Jan.	-1.2%	-0.5%	1.7%
WEDNESDAY 18	8:30	Wholesale sales (m/m)	Jan.	-0.8%	-0.2%	2.5%
	8:30	Wholesale inventories (m/m)	Jan.	n/a	0.4%	1.0%
THURSDAY 19	---	---				
FRIDAY 20	8:30	Consumer price index				
		Total (m/m)	Feb.	0.8%	0.7%	-0.2%
		Excluding 8 most volatile (m/m)	Feb.	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%
		Total (y/y)	Feb.	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%
		Excluding 8 most volatile (y/y)	Feb.	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%
	8:30	Retail sales				
		Total (m/m)	Jan.	-0.8%	-0.8%	-2.0%
		Excluding automobiles (m/m)	Jan.	-0.4%	-0.4%	-2.3%

NOTE: Desjardins, Economic Studies are involved every week in the Bloomberg survey for Canada and the United States. Approximately 15 economists are consulted for the Canadian survey and a hundred or so for the United States. The abbreviations m/m, q/q and y/y correspond to monthly, quarterly and yearly variation respectively. Following the quarter, the abbreviations f, s and t correspond to first estimate, second estimate and third estimate respectively. (SA): Seasonally adjusted, (NSA): Non seasonally adjusted. The times shown are Daylight Saving Time (GMT - 4 hours).  Forecast of Desjardins, Economic Studies of the Desjardins Group.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Week of March 16 to 20, 2015

Country	Hour	Indicator	Period	Consensus		Previous data		
				m/m (q/q)	y/y	m/m (q/q)	y/y	
 OVERSEAS								
MONDAY 16								
Australia	20:30	Minutes of the Reserve Bank of Australia March meeting						
TUESDAY 17								
Japan	1:00	Leading indicator – final	Jan.	n/a		105.1		
Japan	1:00	Coincident indicator – final	Jan.	n/a		113.0		
Euro zone	6:00	Net change in employment	Q4	n/a	n/a	0.2%	0.6%	
Euro zone	6:00	Consumer price index – final	Feb.	0.6%	-0.3%	-1.6%	-0.3%	
Germany	6:00	ZEW survey – Current situation	March	52.0		45.5		
Germany	6:00	ZEW survey – Expectations	March	59.4		53.0		
Japan	19:50	Merchandise trade balance (¥B)	Feb.	-1,231.4		-406.1		
WEDNESDAY 18								
Italy	5:00	Trade balance (€M)	Jan.	n/a		5,756		
United Kingdom	5:30	Minutes of the Bank of England meeting						
United Kingdom	5:30	ILO unemployment rate	Jan.	5.6%		5.7%		
Euro zone	6:00	Trade balance (€B)	Jan.	21.3		23.3		
Euro zone	6:00	Construction	Jan.	n/a	n/a	-0.8%	-3.5%	
THURSDAY 19								
Japan	0:30	All industry activity index	Jan.	1.9%		-0.3%		
Switzerland	4:30	Swiss National Bank meeting	March	-0.25%		-0.25%		
Norway	5:00	Bank of Norway meeting	March	1.00%		1.25%		
Euro zone	6:00	Labour costs	Q4		n/a		1.3%	
FRIDAY 20								
Germany	3:00	Producer price index	Feb.	0.2%	-2.0%	-0.6%	-2.2%	
France	3:45	Wages – final	Q4	n/a		0.1%		
Euro zone	5:00	Current account (€B)	Jan.	n/a		17.8		
Italy	6:00	Current account (€M)	Jan.	n/a		5,177		

NOTE: In contrast to the situation in Canada and the United States, disclosure of overseas economic figures is much more approximate. The day of publication is therefore shown for information purposes only. The abbreviations m/m, q/q and y/y correspond to monthly, quarterly and yearly variation respectively. (SA): Seasonally adjusted, (NSA): Non seasonally adjusted. The times shown are Daylight Saving Time (GMT - 4 hours).

United States: Quarterly economic indicators

	Ref. quart.	Level	Variation (%)		Annual variation (%)			
			Quart. ann.	1 year	2014	2013	2012	2011
Gross domestic product (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	16,294	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.3	1.6
Consumption (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	11,114	4.2	2.8	2.5	2.4	1.8	2.3
Government spending (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	2,899	-1.8	0.9	-0.2	-2.0	-1.4	-3.0
Residential investment (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	503.7	3.3	2.4	1.6	11.9	13.5	0.5
Non-residential investment (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	2,170	4.8	6.2	6.3	3.0	7.2	7.7
Business inventory change (2009 \$B) (1)	2014 Q4	88.4	---	---	72.7	63.6	57.1	37.6
Exports (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	2,121	3.2	2.1	3.1	3.0	3.3	6.9
Imports (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	2,597	10.1	5.5	4.0	1.1	2.3	5.5
Final domestic demand (2009 \$B)	2014 Q4	16,665	3.2	2.8	2.4	1.9	2.1	1.7
GDP deflator (2009 = 100)	2014 Q4	108.7	0.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.8	2.1
Labor productivity (2009 = 100)	2014 Q4	106.4	-2.2	-0.1	0.7	0.9	1.0	0.2
Unit labor cost (2009 = 100)	2014 Q4	104.9	4.1	2.6	1.7	0.3	1.7	2.1
Employment cost index (Dec. 2005 = 100)	2014 Q4	122.9	2.3	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.8	2.0
Current account balance (\$B) (1)	2014 Q3	-100.3	---	---	-400.3	-460.8	-459.3	-443.9

* New statistic in comparison with last week.

(1) Statistics representing the level during the period.

United States: Monthly economic indicators

	Ref. month	Level	Variation (%)			
			-1 month	-3 months	-6 months	-1 year
Leading indicator (2004 = 100)	Jan.	121.1	0.2	1.0	2.3	6.5
ISM manufacturing index (1)	Feb.	52.9	53.5	57.6	58.1	54.3
ISM non-manufacturing index (1)	Feb.	56.9	56.7	58.8	58.6	52.5
Cons. confidence Conf. Board (1985 = 100) (1)	Feb.	96.4	103.8	91.0	93.4	78.3
Cons. confidence Michigan (1966 = 100) (1)	March*	91.2	95.4	93.6	84.6	80.0
Personal consumption expenditure (2009 \$B)	Jan.	11,164	0.3	0.8	2.0	3.4
Disposable personal income (2009 \$B)	Jan.	12,246	0.9	1.9	2.6	4.2
Consumer credit (\$B)	Jan.*	3,328	0.3	1.3	2.8	6.9
Retail sales (\$M)	Feb.*	437,006	-0.6	-2.3	-1.6	1.7
Excluding automobiles (\$M)	Feb.*	348,370	-0.1	-2.0	-1.6	0.8
Industrial production (2007 = 100)	Jan.	106.2	0.2	1.0	1.6	4.8
Production capacity utilization rate (%) (1)	Jan.	79.4	79.4	79.1	79.3	78.1
New machinery orders (\$M)	Jan.	470,005	-0.2	-5.3	-15.8	-2.3
New durable good orders (\$M)	Jan.	236,305	2.8	-3.1	-21.2	5.5
Business inventories (\$B)	Jan.*	1,762	-0.0	0.1	0.7	3.4
Housing starts (K) (1)	Jan.	1,065	1,087	1,092	1,098	897.0
Building permits (K) (1)	Jan.	1,060	1,060	1,102	1,037	974.0
New home sales (K) (1)	Jan.	481.0	482.0	469.0	399.0	457.0
Existing home sales (K) (1)	Jan.	4,820	5,070	5,160	5,070	4,670
Construction spending (\$B)	Jan.	971.4	-1.1	-0.9	1.2	1.8
Commercial surplus (\$M) (1)	Jan.	-41,752	-45,601	-41,898	-40,655	-38,841
Nonfarm employment (K) (2)	Feb.	141,126	295.0	863.0	1,757	3,296
Unemployment rate (%) (1)	Feb.	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.1	6.7
Consumer price (1982-1984 = 100)	Jan.	234.7	-0.7	-1.3	-1.2	-0.2
Excluding food and energy	Jan.	239.9	0.2	0.3	0.7	1.6
Personal cons. expenditure deflator (2009 = 100)	Jan.	108.3	-0.5	-0.8	-0.8	0.2
Excluding food and energy	Jan.	108.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.3
Producer price (1982 = 100)	Feb.*	192.5	-0.1	-3.3	-4.5	-3.5
Excluding food and energy	Feb.*	190.5	0.1	0.5	0.8	1.5
Export prices (2000 = 100)	Feb.*	125.8	-0.1	-2.9	-5.0	-5.9
Import prices (2000 = 100)	Feb.*	126.7	0.4	-5.1	-8.8	-9.4

* New statistic in comparison with last week.

(1) Statistic shows the level of the month of the column; (2) Statistic shows the variation since the reference month.

Canada: Quarterly economic indicators

	Ref. quart.	Level	Variation (%)		Annual variation (%)			
			Quart. ann.	1 year	2014	2013	2012	2011
Gross domestic product (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	1,767,784	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.0	1.9	3.0
Household consumption (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	982,885	2.0	2.6	2.8	2.5	1.9	2.2
Government consumption (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	350,813	2.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.2	0.8
Residential investment (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	117,965	1.5	5.2	2.8	-0.4	5.7	1.7
Non-residential investment (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	194,449	-2.3	0.5	0.1	2.6	9.0	12.7
Business inventory change (2007 \$M) (1)	2014 Q4	8,017	---	---	7,433	12,368	7,437	10,911
Exports (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	560,663	-1.6	6.5	5.4	2.0	2.6	4.6
Imports (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	579,017	1.7	2.6	1.7	1.3	3.7	5.7
Final domestic demand (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	1,766,335	1.5	2.0	1.6	1.5	2.5	2.5
GDP deflator (2007 = 100)	2014 Q4	112.7	-2.4	1.2	1.8	1.3	1.6	3.4
Labour productivity (2007 = 100)	2014 Q4	107.2	-0.3	1.8	2.5	1.1	0.0	1.4
Unit labour cost (2007 = 100)	2014 Q4	113.6	0.0	0.6	0.9	1.3	3.0	2.1
Current account balance (\$M) (1)	2014 Q4	-13,917	---	---	-43,499	-56,255	-59,911	-47,195
Production capacity utilization rate (%) (1)	2014 Q4*	83.6	---	---	82.8	81.2	81.5	80.6
Disposable personal income (\$M)	2014 Q4	1,127,836	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.8	4.2	4.5
Corporate net operating surplus (2007 \$M)	2014 Q4	277,016	-11.3	6.7	9.0	-0.6	-4.2	15.4

* New statistic in comparison with last week.

(1) Statistics representing the level during the period.

Canada: Monthly economic indicators

	Ref. month	Level	Variation (%)			
			-1 month	-3 months	-6 months	-1 year
Gross domestic product (2007 \$M)	Dec.	1,655,573	0.3	0.5	1.0	2.8
Industrial production (2007 \$M)	Dec.	361,175	0.8	0.3	0.3	4.3
Manufacturing sales (\$M)	Dec.	52,391	1.7	-0.9	0.1	5.2
Housing starts (K) (1)	Feb.*	156.3	187.0	192.0	196.0	192.4
Building permits (\$M)	Jan.	6,129	-12.9	-17.8	-31.5	-13.6
Retail sales (\$M)	Dec.	42,081	-2.0	-1.9	-1.2	4.0
Excluding automobiles (\$M)	Dec.	31,798	-2.3	-1.6	-2.4	2.0
Wholesale trade sales (\$M)	Dec.	55,432	2.5	2.5	4.3	11.2
Commercial surplus (\$M) (1)	Jan.	-2,451	-1,218	-692.7	2,086	-221.1
Exports (\$M)	Jan.	42,611	-2.8	-4.1	-6.5	3.4
Imports (\$M)	Jan.	45,063	0.0	-0.1	3.6	8.8
Employment (K) (2)	Feb.*	17,886	-1.0	7.7	18.9	10.8
Unemployment rate (%) (1)	Feb.*	6.8	6.6	6.7	7.0	7.1
Average weekly earnings (\$)	Dec.	943.5	0.7	0.4	0.7	2.0
Number of salaried employees (K) (2)	Dec.	15,639	21.8	4.2	12.7	12.9
Consumer price (2002 = 100)	Jan.	124.3	-0.2	-1.3	-1.1	1.0
Excluding food and energy	Jan.	119.5	0.2	-0.6	0.5	1.9
Excluding 8 volatile items	Jan.	124.0	0.2	-0.3	0.7	2.2
Industrial product price (2002 = 100)	Jan.	108.2	-0.4	-2.3	-3.0	-2.2
Raw materials price (2002 = 100)	Jan.	90.5	-7.7	-19.7	-26.4	-21.8
Money supply M1+ (\$M)	Jan.	752,730	0.1	0.6	3.4	5.8

* New statistic in comparison with last week.

(1) Statistic shows the level of the month of the column; (2) Statistic shows the variation since the reference month.

Major financial indicators

	Previous data (%)						Last 52 weeks (%)		
	March 13	March 6	-1 month	-3 months	-6 months	-1 year	Higher	Average	Lower
United States									
Federal funds – target	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
Treasury bill – 3 months	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.01
Treasury bonds – 2 years	0.65	0.72	0.63	0.55	0.56	0.34	0.72	0.49	0.31
– 5 years	1.57	1.70	1.52	1.53	1.82	1.53	1.84	1.61	1.18
– 10 years	2.10	2.24	2.03	2.10	2.61	2.65	2.81	2.37	1.67
– 30 years	2.69	2.84	2.62	2.76	3.35	3.59	3.67	3.10	2.25
S&P 500 index	2,049	2,071	2,097	2,002	1,986	1,841	2,117	1,978	1,816
DJIA index	17,707	17,857	18,019	17,281	16,988	16,066	18,289	17,109	16,027
Gold price (US\$/ounce)	1,152	1,175	1,233	1,223	1,230	1,376	1,373	1,254	1,146
CRB index	211.69	220.69	229.19	243.75	281.90	302.88	312.93	274.52	211.69
WTI oil (US\$/barrel)	45.25	49.61	52.66	57.81	92.18	98.93	107.30	83.15	44.08
Canada									
Overnight – target	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.96	0.75
Treasury bill – 3 months	0.52	0.60	0.51	0.88	0.93	0.82	0.96	0.86	0.47
Treasury bonds – 2 years	0.56	0.63	0.43	0.96	1.16	1.01	1.17	0.97	0.39
– 5 years	0.86	1.00	0.73	1.31	1.70	1.61	1.79	1.42	0.59
– 10 years	1.48	1.61	1.43	1.76	2.24	2.39	2.55	2.03	1.24
– 30 years	2.12	2.23	2.07	2.30	2.76	2.93	3.04	2.58	1.83
Spread with the U.S. rate (% points)									
Overnight – target	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.71	0.50
Treasury bill – 3 months	0.50	0.59	0.50	0.86	0.91	0.77	0.93	0.84	0.45
Treasury bonds – 2 years	-0.09	-0.09	-0.20	0.41	0.60	0.67	0.73	0.48	-0.23
– 5 years	-0.71	-0.70	-0.79	-0.22	-0.12	0.08	0.11	-0.18	-0.82
– 10 years	-0.63	-0.63	-0.60	-0.34	-0.37	-0.26	-0.17	-0.34	-0.72
– 30 years	-0.57	-0.61	-0.55	-0.46	-0.59	-0.66	-0.29	-0.53	-0.71
S&P/TSX index	14,639	14,953	15,265	13,731	15,532	14,228	15,658	14,818	13,705
Exchange rate (C\$/US\$)	1.2809	1.2622	1.2449	1.1583	1.1094	1.1105	1.2752	1.1296	0.7807
Exchange rate (C\$/€)	1.3483	1.3688	1.4174	1.4434	1.4383	1.5451	1.5545	1.4442	0.8215
Overseas									
ECB – Refinancing rate	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.25	0.25	0.12	0.05
BoE – Base rate	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
BoJ – Overnight rate	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Germany: Bonds – 10 years	0.27	0.40	0.34	0.63	1.04	1.54	1.65	0.96	0.20
U.K.: Bonds – 10 years	1.71	1.98	1.67	1.80	2.55	2.66	2.88	2.30	1.36
Euro: Exchange rate (US\$/€)	1.0523	1.0845	1.1386	1.2462	1.2965	1.3915	1.3934	1.2823	1.0523
U.K.: Exchange rate (US\$/£)	1.4736	1.5038	1.5400	1.5721	1.6269	1.6647	1.7166	1.6210	1.4736

CRB: Commodity Research Bureau; WTI: West Texas Intermediate; ECB: European Central Bank; BoE: Bank of England; BoJ: Bank of Japan
 Note: Data taken at markets closing, with the exception of the current day where they were taken at 11:00 a.m.