



ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

No. 90

Press Conference
Paris, 28 November 2011
11h (Paris time)

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For a video link to the press conference and related material:

www.oecd.org/OECD_Economic_Outlook

Summary of projections

| | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | | |
|--|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|-----|-----|
| | | | | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q4 / Q4 | | |
| Per cent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Real GDP growth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 1.7 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| Euro area | 1.6 | 0.2 | 1.4 | 0.7 | -1.0 | -0.4 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.7 |
| Japan | -0.3 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 6.0 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| Total OECD | 1.9 | 1.6 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 1.6 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| Inflation¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| year-on-year | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 2.5 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.2 | | | |
| Euro area | 2.6 | 1.6 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.2 | | | |
| Japan | -0.3 | -0.6 | -0.3 | 0.2 | -0.3 | -0.6 | -0.5 | -0.6 | -0.6 | -0.5 | -0.4 | -0.3 | -0.2 | | | |
| Total OECD | 2.5 | 1.9 | 1.5 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 | | | |
| Unemployment rate² | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.6 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 8.9 | 8.8 | 8.7 | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.4 | | | |
| Euro area | 9.9 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 10.1 | 10.2 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 10.4 | 10.4 | 10.3 | 10.2 | 10.1 | | | |
| Japan | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | | | |
| Total OECD | 8.0 | 8.1 | 7.9 | 8.0 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 7.9 | 7.8 | | | |
| World trade growth | 6.7 | 4.8 | 7.1 | 5.8 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 6.8 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 5.1 | 5.7 | 7.7 |
| Current account balance³ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | -3.0 | -2.9 | -3.2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Euro area | 0.1 | 0.6 | 1.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Japan | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total OECD | -0.6 | -0.4 | -0.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fiscal balance³ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | -10.0 | -9.3 | -8.3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Euro area | -4.0 | -2.9 | -1.9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Japan | -8.9 | -8.9 | -9.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total OECD | -6.6 | -5.9 | -5.1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Short-term interest rate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | | | |
| Euro area | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | | | |
| Japan | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | | | |

Note: Real GDP growth and world trade growth (the arithmetic average of world merchandise import and export volumes) are seasonally and working-day adjusted annualised rates. Inflation is measured by the increase in the consumer price index or private consumption deflator for the United States and total OECD. The "fourth quarter" columns are expressed in year-on-year growth rates where appropriate and in levels otherwise. Interest rates are for the United States: 3-month eurodollar deposit; Japan: 3-month certificate of deposits; euro area: 3-month interbank rate.

The cut-off date for information used in the compilation of the projections is 22 November 2011.

1. USA: price index for personal consumption expenditure, Japan: consumer price index and the euro area; harmonised index of consumer prices.

2. Per cent of the labour force.

3. Per cent of GDP.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

Country projections

Annual real GDP growth, in per cent

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Australia | 2.5 | 1.8 | 4.0 | 3.2 |
| Austria | 2.4 | 3.2 | 0.6 | 1.8 |
| Belgium | 2.3 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 1.6 |
| Canada | 3.2 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Chile | 5.1 | 6.6 | 4.0 | 4.7 |
| Czech Republic | 2.7 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 3.0 |
| Denmark | 1.7 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 1.4 |
| Estonia | 2.3 | 8.0 | 3.2 | 4.4 |
| Finland | 3.6 | 3.0 | 1.4 | 2.0 |
| France | 1.4 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 1.4 |
| Germany | 3.6 | 3.0 | 0.6 | 1.9 |
| Greece | -3.5 | -6.1 | -3.0 | 0.5 |
| Hungary | 1.3 | 1.5 | -0.6 | 1.1 |
| Ireland | -0.4 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 2.4 |
| Iceland | -4.0 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| Israel | 4.8 | 4.7 | 2.9 | 3.9 |
| Italy | 1.5 | 0.7 | -0.5 | 0.5 |
| Japan | 4.1 | -0.3 | 2.0 | 1.6 |
| Korea | 6.2 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.3 |
| Luxembourg | 2.7 | 2.0 | 0.4 | 2.2 |
| Mexico | 5.4 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| Netherlands | 1.6 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 1.5 |
| Norway | 0.3 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| New Zealand | 2.3 | 1.4 | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| Poland | 3.8 | 4.2 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| Portugal | 1.4 | -1.6 | -3.2 | 0.5 |
| Slovak Republic | 4.2 | 3.0 | 1.8 | 3.6 |
| Slovenia | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.3 | 1.8 |
| Spain | -0.1 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 1.3 |
| Sweden | 5.4 | 4.1 | 1.3 | 2.3 |
| Switzerland | 2.7 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 1.9 |
| Turkey | 9.0 | 7.4 | 3.0 | 4.5 |
| United Kingdom | 1.8 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.8 |
| United States | 3.0 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| Brazil | 7.5 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.9 |
| China | 10.4 | 9.3 | 8.5 | 9.5 |
| India | 9.9 | 7.7 | 7.2 | 8.2 |
| Indonesia | 6.1 | 6.3 | 6.1 | 6.5 |
| Russian Federation | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.1 |
| South Africa | 2.8 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 4.7 |

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

[Data in Excel](#)

EDITORIAL

The Policy Imperative: Rebuild Confidence

The global economy has deteriorated significantly since our previous Economic Outlook. Advanced economies are slowing down and the euro area appears to be in a mild recession. Concerns about sovereign debt sustainability in the European monetary union are becoming increasingly widespread. Recent contagion to countries thought to have relatively solid public finances could massively escalate economic disruption if not addressed. Unemployment remains very high in many OECD economies and, ominously, long-term unemployment is becoming increasingly common. Emerging economies are still growing at a healthy pace, but their growth rates are also moderating. In these countries falls in commodity prices and the slower global growth have started to mitigate inflationary pressures. More recently, international trade growth has weakened significantly. Contrary to what was expected earlier this year, the global economy is not out of the woods.

Many factors underpin this assessment. The headwinds of deleveraging in the financial and government sectors remain with us. Likewise, imbalances within the euro area, which reflect deep-seated fiscal, financial and structural problems, have not been adequately resolved. Above all, confidence has dropped sharply as scepticism has grown that euro area policy makers can deal effectively with the key challenges they face. Serious downside risks remain in the euro area, linked to the possibility of a sovereign default and its cross-border effects on creditors, and loss of confidence in sovereign debt markets and the monetary union itself. Another serious downside risk is that no action will be agreed upon to counter the pre-programmed fiscal tightening in the United States, which could tip the economy into a recession that monetary policy can do little to counter.

More than usual, world economic prospects depend on events, the nature and timing of which are highly uncertain. The projections presented in this Economic Outlook portray a scenario that rests on the assumptions that monetary policy remains very supportive (and, in some places, becomes more so), that sovereign debt and banking sector problems in the euro area are contained and that excessive fiscal tightening will be avoided. From the second half of 2012, confidence is assumed to recover gradually as it becomes clearer that worst-case outcomes have been avoided. Near-term output growth is subdued in the OECD economies and at below-trend rates in the major emerging-market economies, developments which are likely to be associated with further short-term weakening of sentiment and confidence. In some economies, especially the euro area, a mild recession is projected in the near term.

Alternative scenarios are possible, and may be even more likely than the baseline. A downside scenario would be characterised by materialisation of negative risks and the absence of adequate policy action to deal with them. An upside scenario could arise if policy action were successful in boosting confidence and no significant negative events occurred.

In the downside scenario, the implications of a major negative event in the euro area will depend on the channels at work and their virulence. The results could range from relatively benign to highly devastating outcomes. A large negative event would, however, most likely send the OECD area as a whole into recession, with marked declines in activity in the United States and Japan, and prolong and deepen the recession in the euro area. Unemployment would rise still further. The emerging market economies would not be immune, with global trade volumes falling strongly, and the value of their international asset holdings being hit by weaker financial asset prices.

What would be required for an upside scenario to materialise? A credible commitment by euro area governments that contagion would be blocked, backed by clearly adequate resources. To eliminate contagion risks, banks will have to be well capitalised. Decisive policies and the appropriate institutional responses will have to be put in place to ensure smooth financing at reasonable interest rates for sovereigns. This calls for rapid, credible and substantial increases in the capacity of the EFSF together with, or including, greater use of the ECB balance sheet. Such forceful policy action, complemented by appropriate governance reform to offset moral hazard, could result in a significant boost to growth in the euro area and the global economy.

An upside scenario also requires substantial and credible commitment at the country level, in both advanced and emerging market economies, to pursue a sustainable structural adjustment to raise long-term growth rates and promote global rebalancing. In Europe, such policies are also needed to make progress in resolving the underlying structural imbalances that lie at the heart of the euro area crisis. Deep structural reforms will be instrumental in strengthening the adjustment mechanisms in labour and product markets that, together with a robust repair of the financial system, are essential for the good functioning of the monetary union. By raising confidence, lowering uncertainty and removing impediments to economic activity, rapid implementation of such reforms could raise consumption, investment and employment.

If combined, stronger macroeconomic and structural policies might raise OECD output growth by as early as 2013. The largest benefits would be felt in the euro area, though these could take some time to emerge. Stronger activity and trade, and the consequent rise in asset values in the OECD economies, should boost activity in the emerging market economies as well.

In view of the great uncertainty policy makers now confront, they must be prepared to face the worst. The OECD Strategic Response identifies country-specific policy actions that need to be implemented if the downside scenario materialises: the financial sector must be stabilised and the social safety net protected; further monetary policy easing should be undertaken; and fiscal support should be provided where this is practical. At the same time, stronger fiscal frameworks should be adopted to reassure markets that the public finances can be brought under control.

Beyond this, a wide range of structural measures, which are desirable in their own right, will become urgent. While priorities vary from country to country, such policies include the removal of barriers in product and labour markets that inhibit economic activity and employment. Appropriate labour market policies are needed to deal with the consequences of unemployment which is turning from cyclical to structural, thereby sapping potential growth, hitting confidence and undermining public finances.

The difference between the upside and the downside scenarios reflects the impact of credible, confidence building policy action. Such action, as we have seen, requires measures to be implemented at the euro area level as well as at the country level throughout the OECD, especially in the structural policy domain. In the case of a downside scenario, policy action would clearly be needed to avoid the worst outcomes. But then the question arises of why policy efforts are not taken to deliver the upside scenario even if the worst case does not materialise. Why, in other words, should we settle for less?

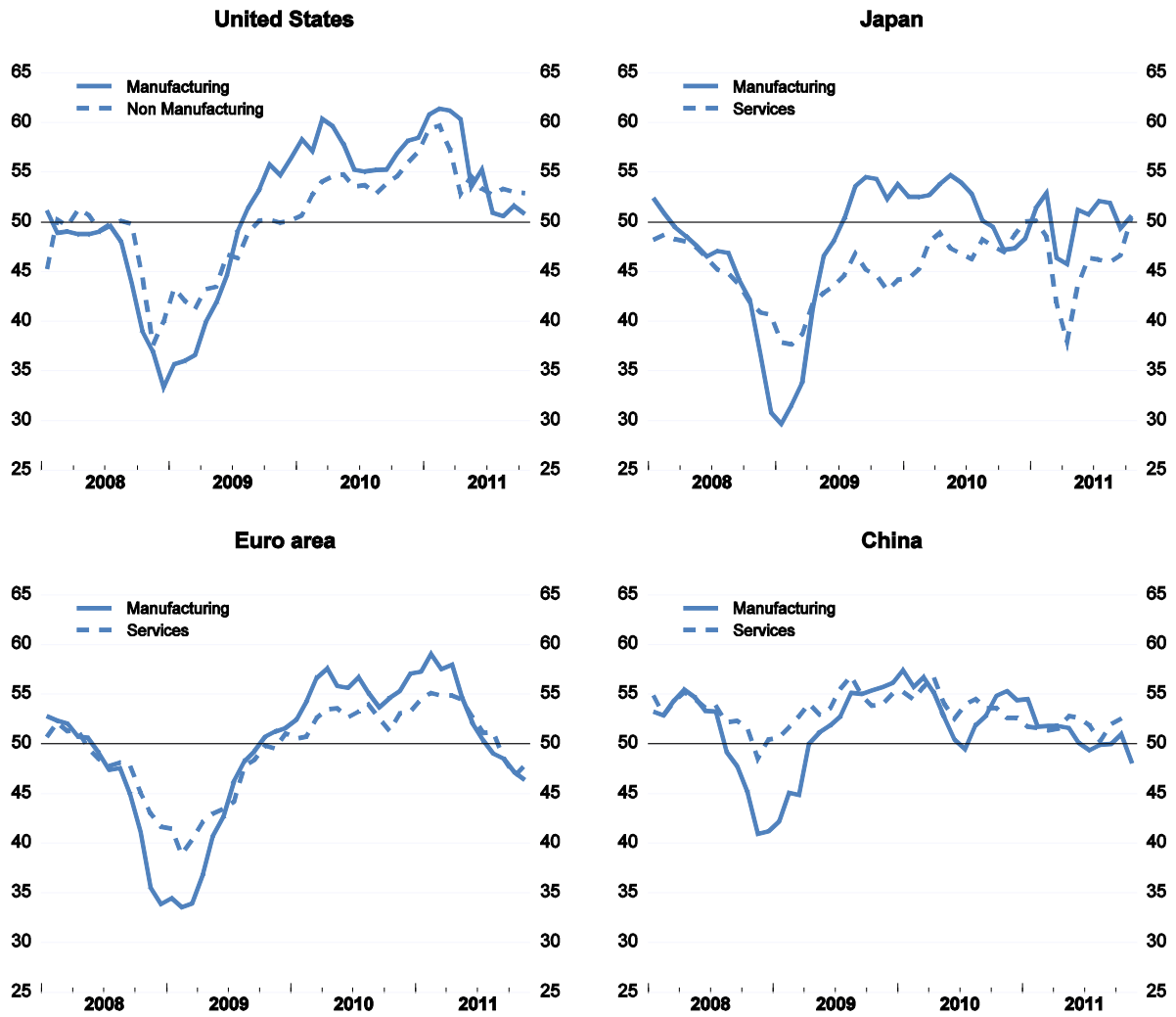
28 November 2011



Pier Carlo Padoan
Deputy Secretary-General and Chief Economist

Business confidence is weak

Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) for manufacturing and services



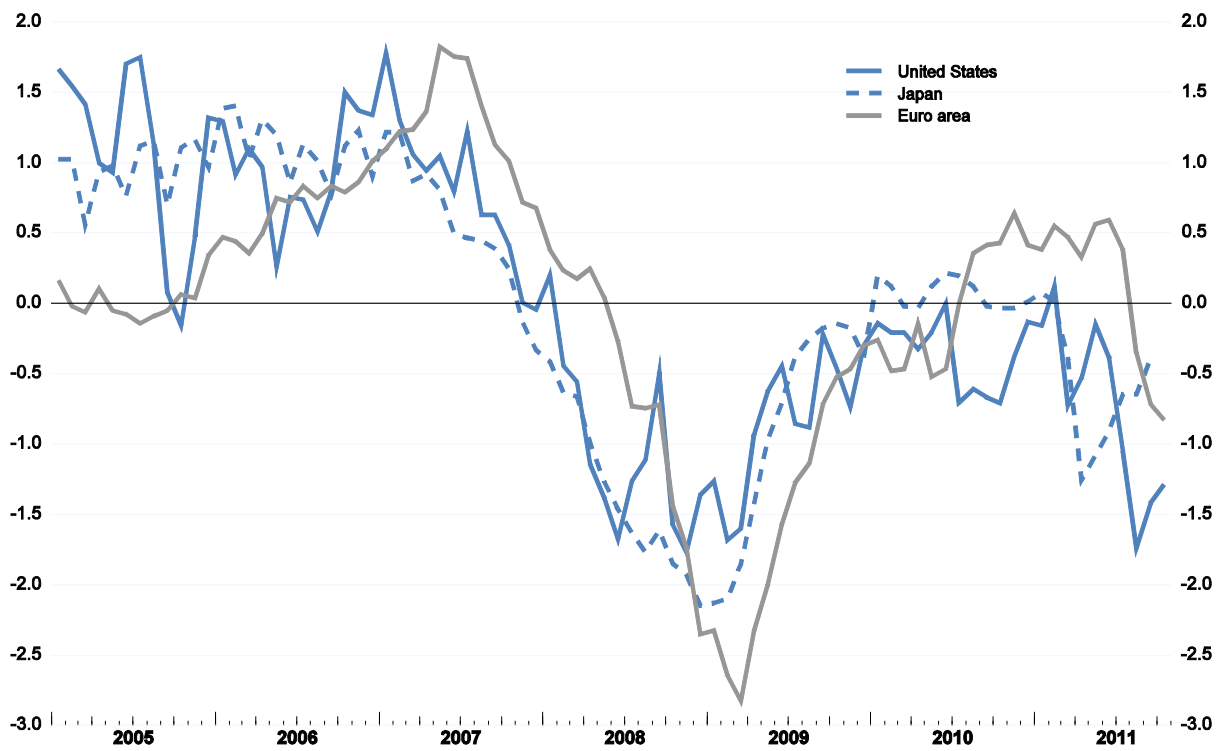
Note: Values greater than 50 signify an improvement in economic activity.

Source: Markit Economics Limited.

[Data in Excel](#)

Consumer confidence is deteriorating further

Consumer confidence indicators



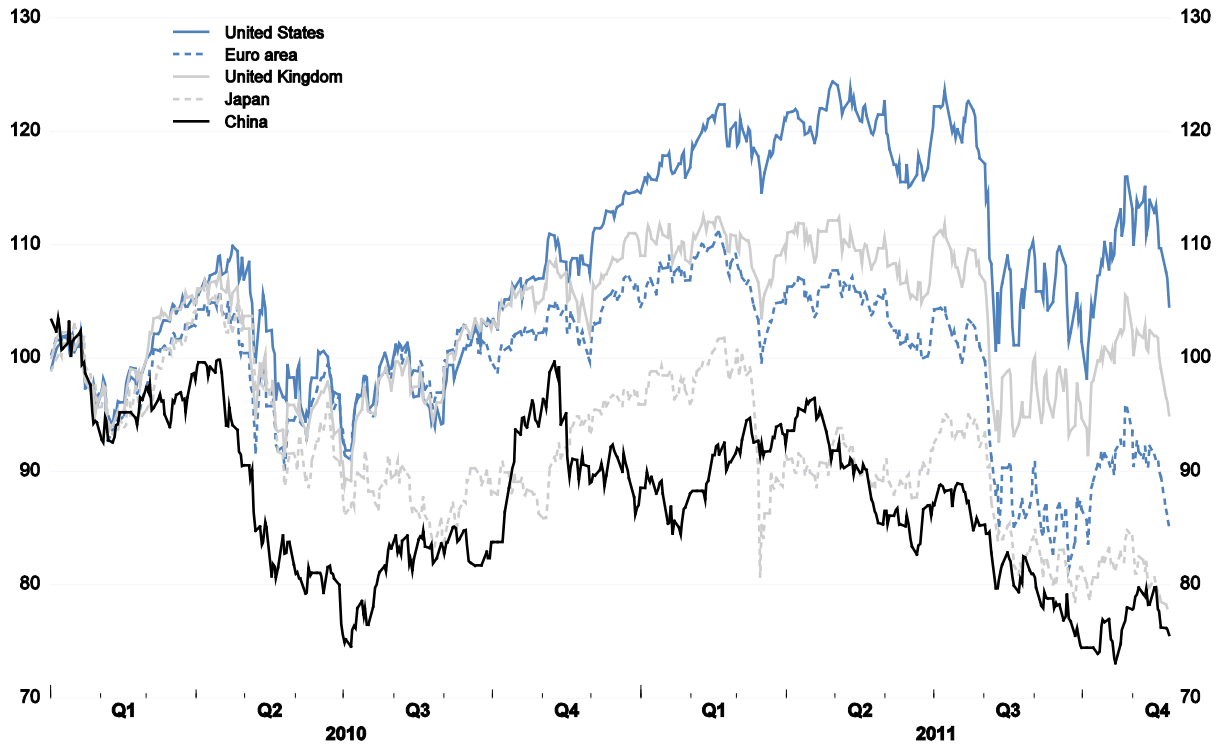
Note: Normalised at period average and presented in units of standard deviation. Values below zero signify levels of consumer confidence below the period average.

Source: OECD Main Economic Indicators.

[Data in Excel](#)

Equity markets have been extremely volatile

January 2010 = 100



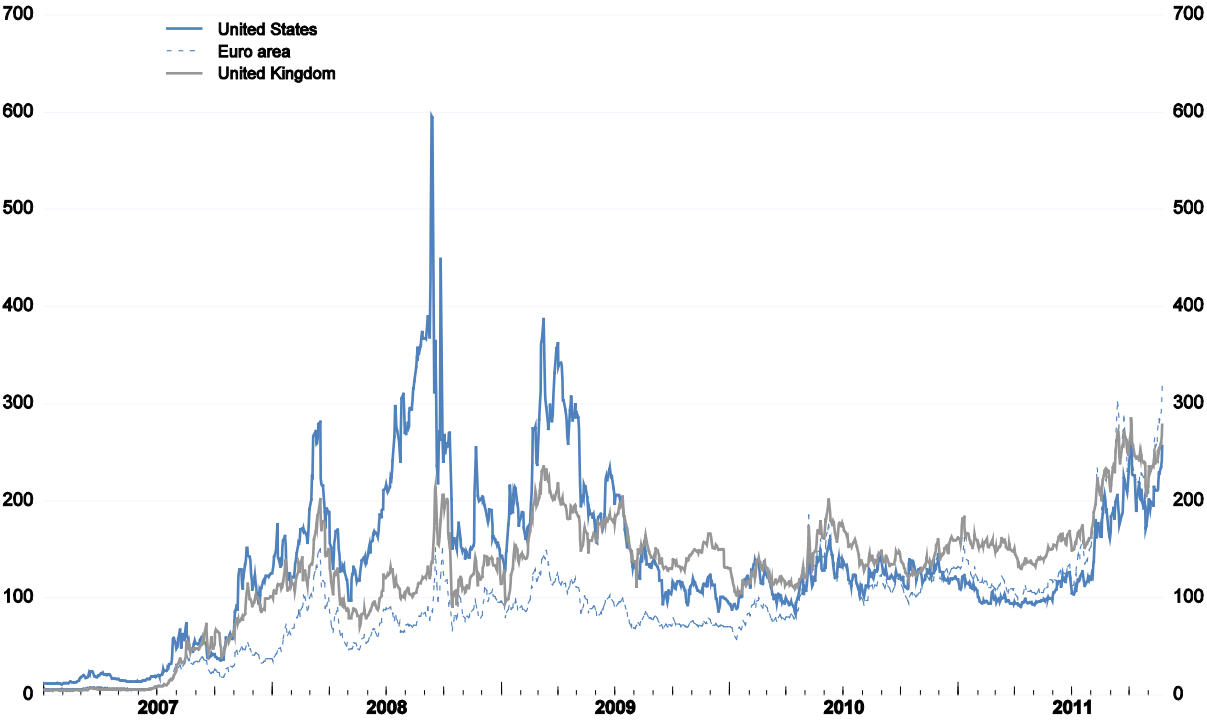
Note: Wilshire 5000, FTSE Eurotop 100, FTSE 100, Nikkei 225, Shanghai Composite. Last observation: 23-11-2011.

Source: Datastream

[Data in Excel](#)

Risk perceptions in the financial sector are on the rise

Bank credit default swap rates, basis points

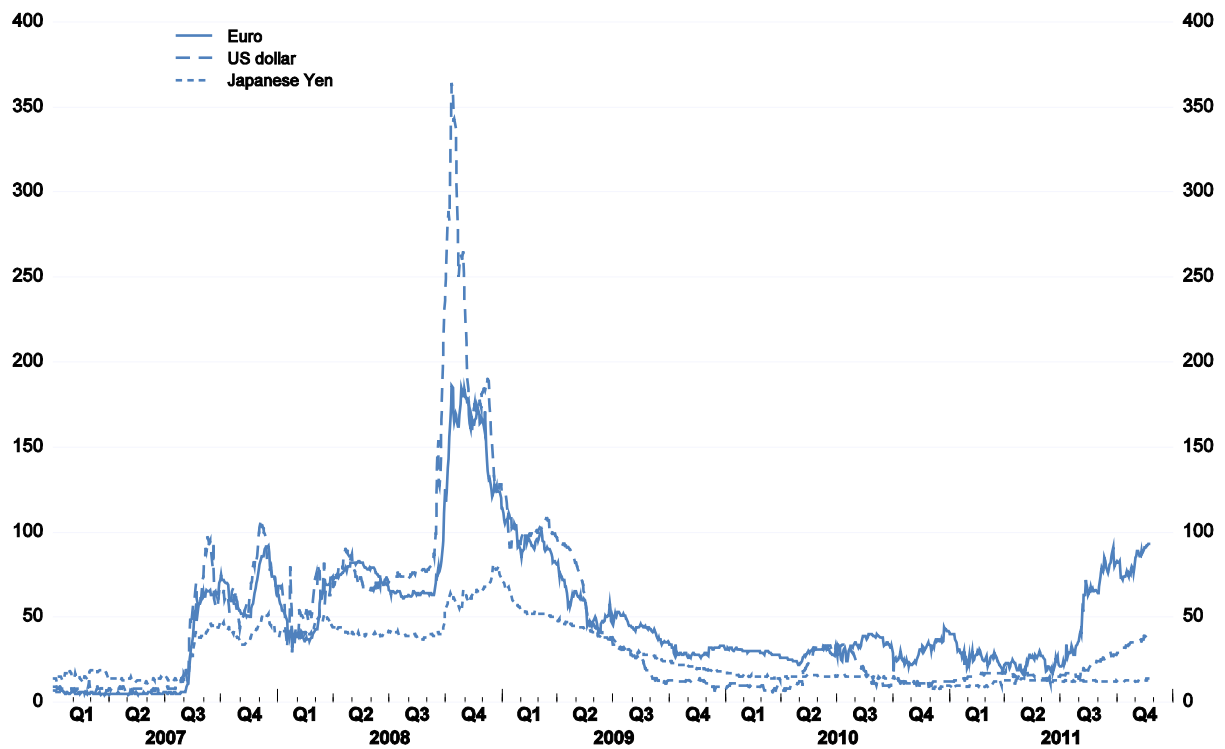


Note: Annual rates of five-year credit default swap contracts on very large banks, in basis points. Last observation: 23-11-2011.
Source: Datastream.

[Data in Excel](#)

Uncertainty in money markets is climbing

Money market spreads, basis points



Note: Three-month spreads; basis points. Spread between three-month EURIBOR and EONIA swap index for euro area; spread between three-month LIBOR and overnight indexed swap for the United States and Japan. Last observation: 23-11-2011.

Source: Datastream.

[Data in Excel](#)

Financial sector equities are significantly underperforming relative to non-financials

Financial and non-financial sector equity prices, difference in indices



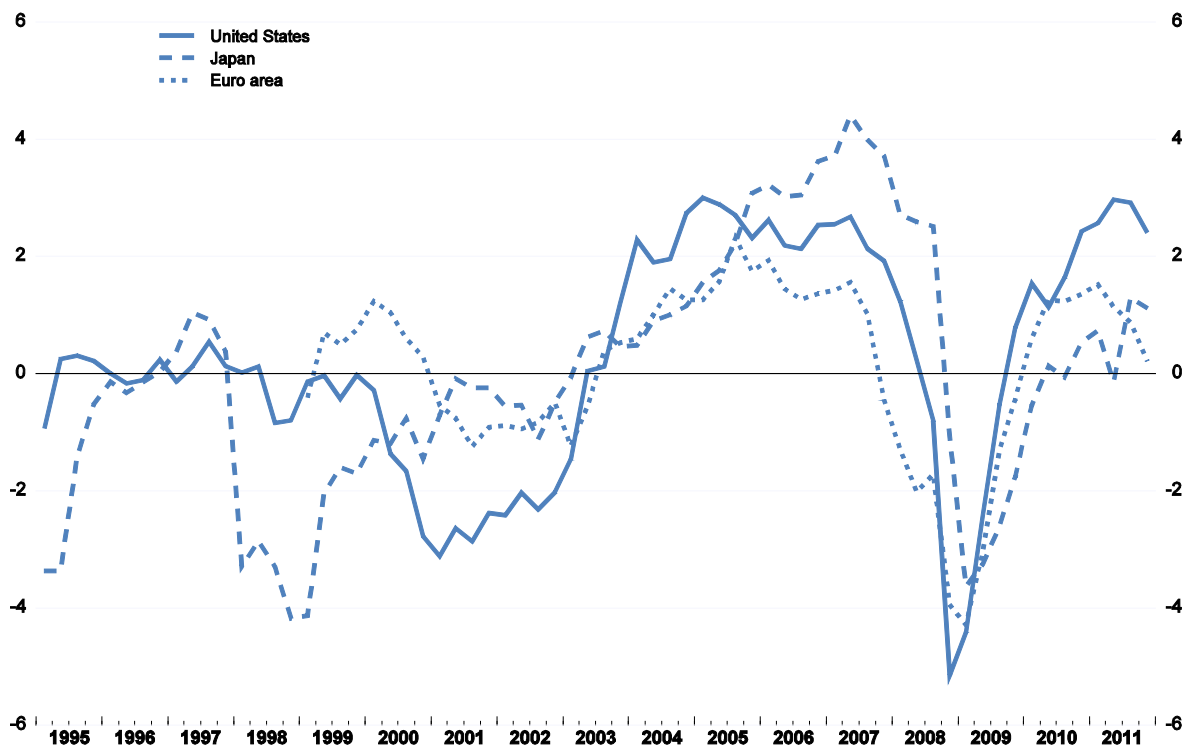
Note: Datastream financials index and non-financials index. Both indices are set to January 2010 = 100 and the difference is plotted. A fall of the index represents financial stocks doing worse as compared to nonfinancial stocks. Last observation: 23-11-2011.

Source: Datastream.

[Data in Excel](#)

Financial conditions are generally tightening

OECD Financial Conditions Index



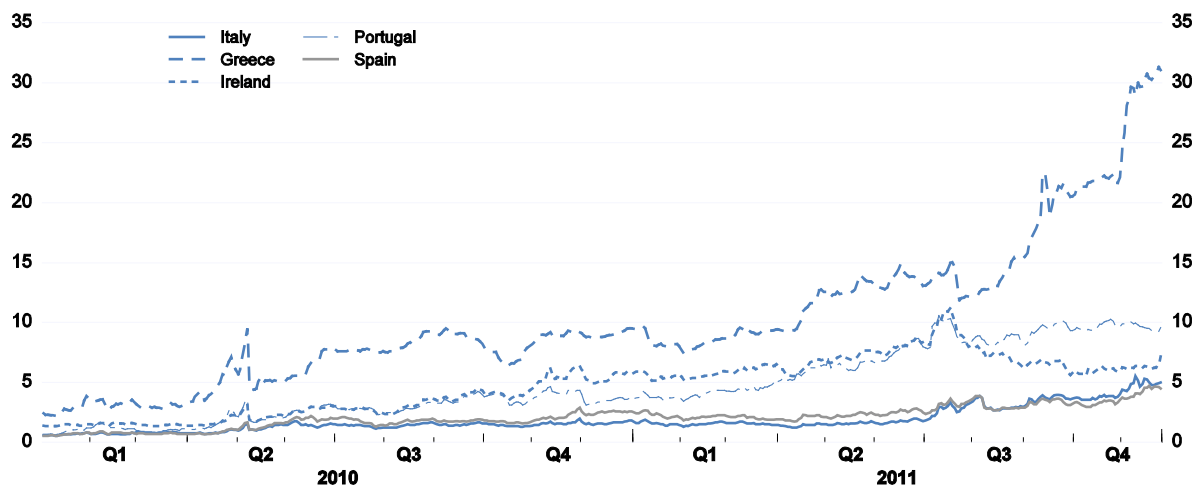
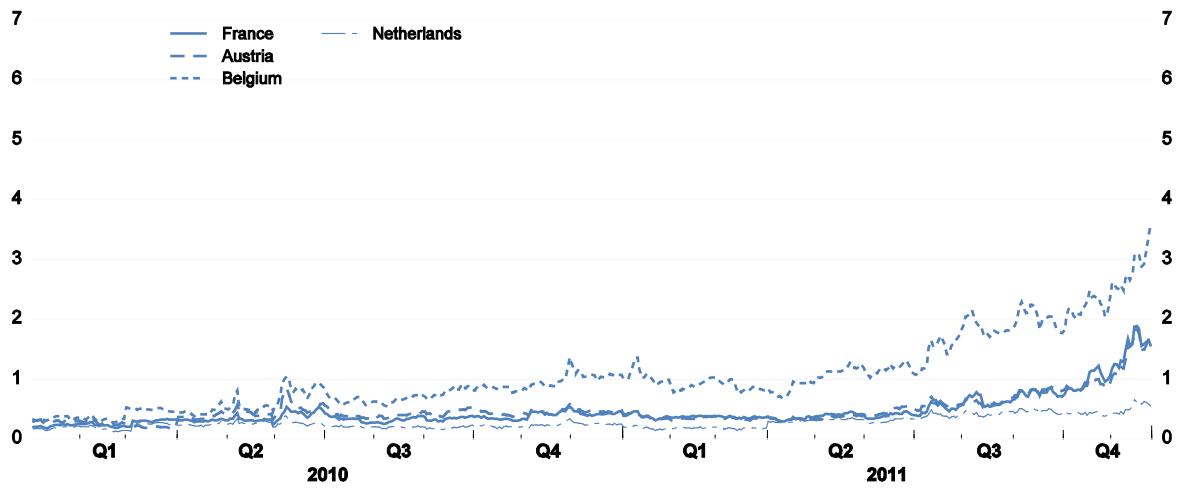
Note: A unit increase (decline) in the index implies an easing (tightening) in financial conditions sufficient to produce an average increase (reduction) in the level of GDP of ½ to 1% after four to six quarters. See details in Guichard et al. (2009). The estimation is done with available information up to 17 November 2011.

Source: Datastream; OECD Economic Outlook 90 database; and OECD calculations.

[Data in Excel](#)

Sovereign spreads continue to widen in the euro-area

10-year government bond yield spreads versus German Bunds, percentage points



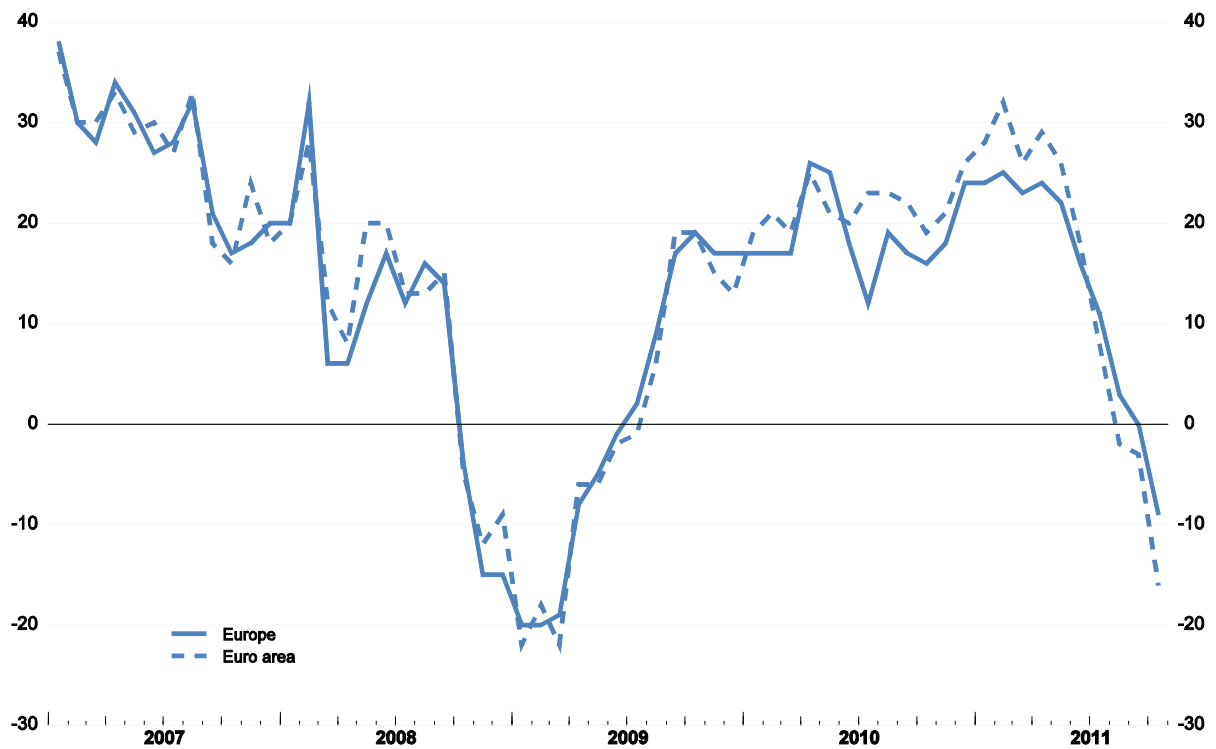
Note: Last observation: 24-11-2011.

Source: Datastream.

[Data in Excel](#)

European financial sector confidence is plummeting

Financial services confidence indicator, balances, in percentage points



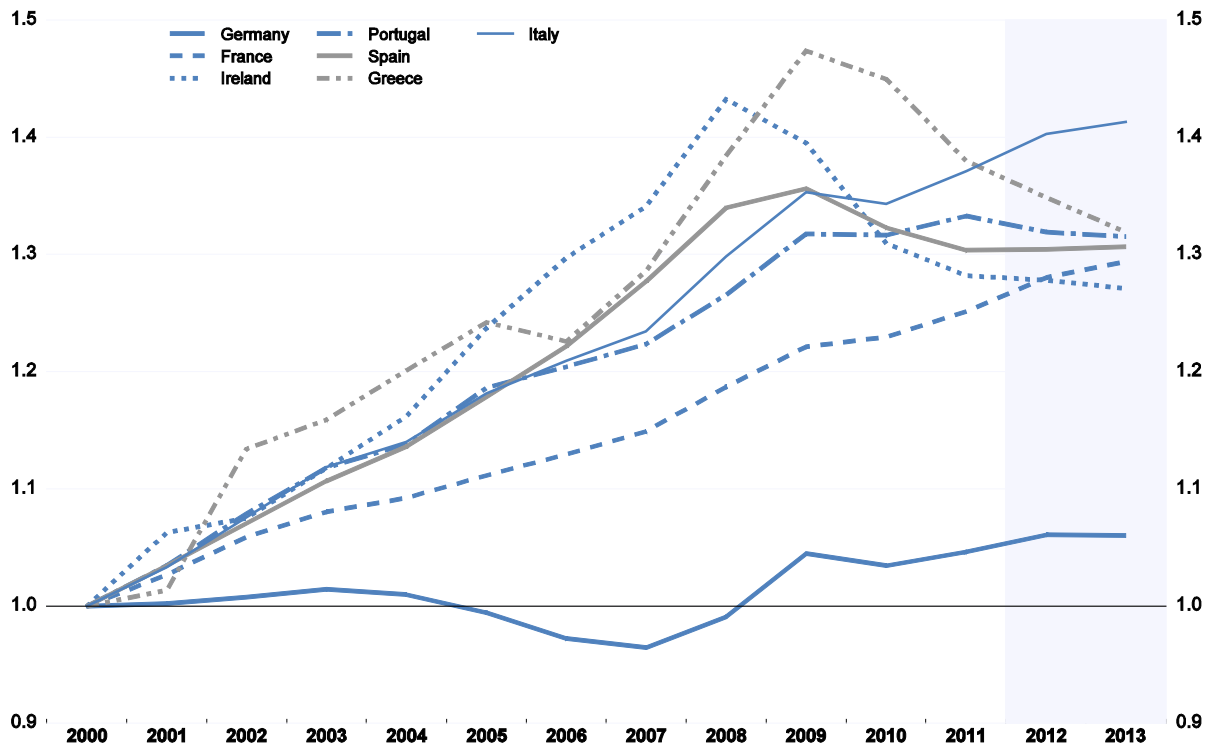
Note: The confidence indicator is the arithmetic average of the balances (in percentage points) for the questions on business conditions, and past and expected evolution of demand. Balances are differences between the percentages of respondents giving positive and negative replies. Data are not seasonally adjusted. Europe includes Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and the UK. Euro area includes Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

Source: European Commission, Business and consumer survey results, October 2011.

[Data in Excel](#)

Rebalancing in the euro area also requires unit labour cost adjustments

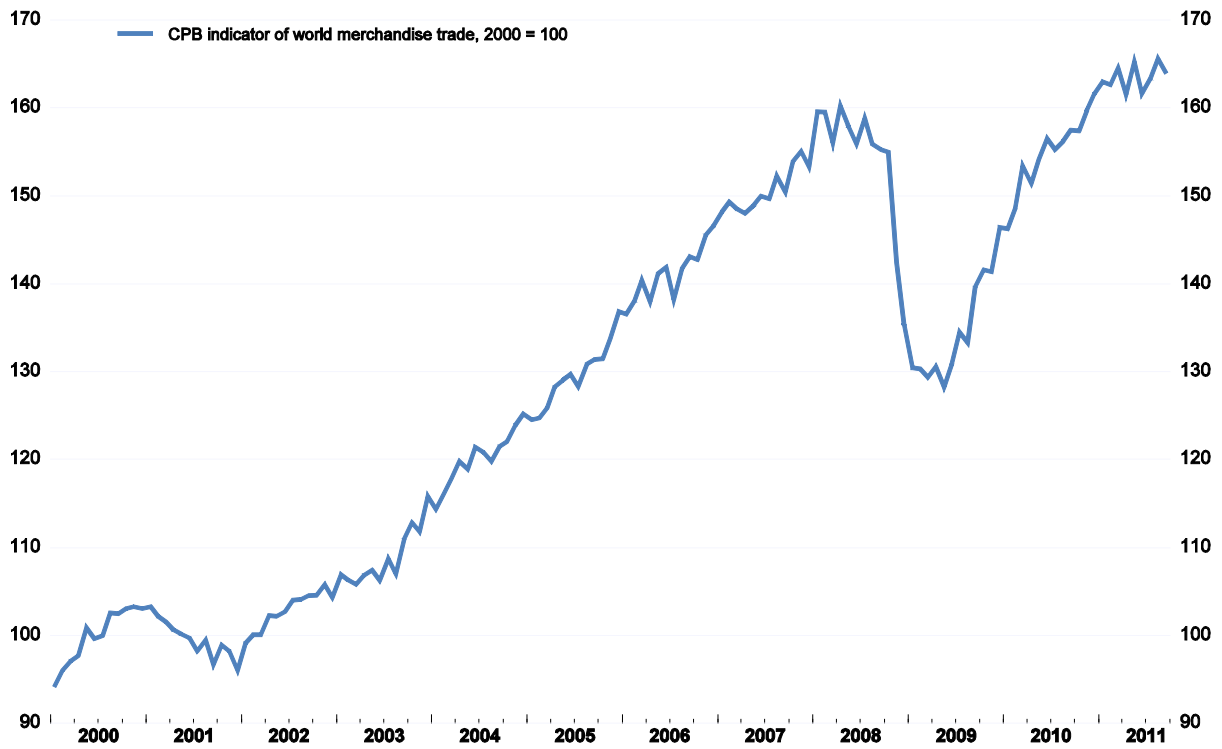
Unit labour costs, 2000 = 1



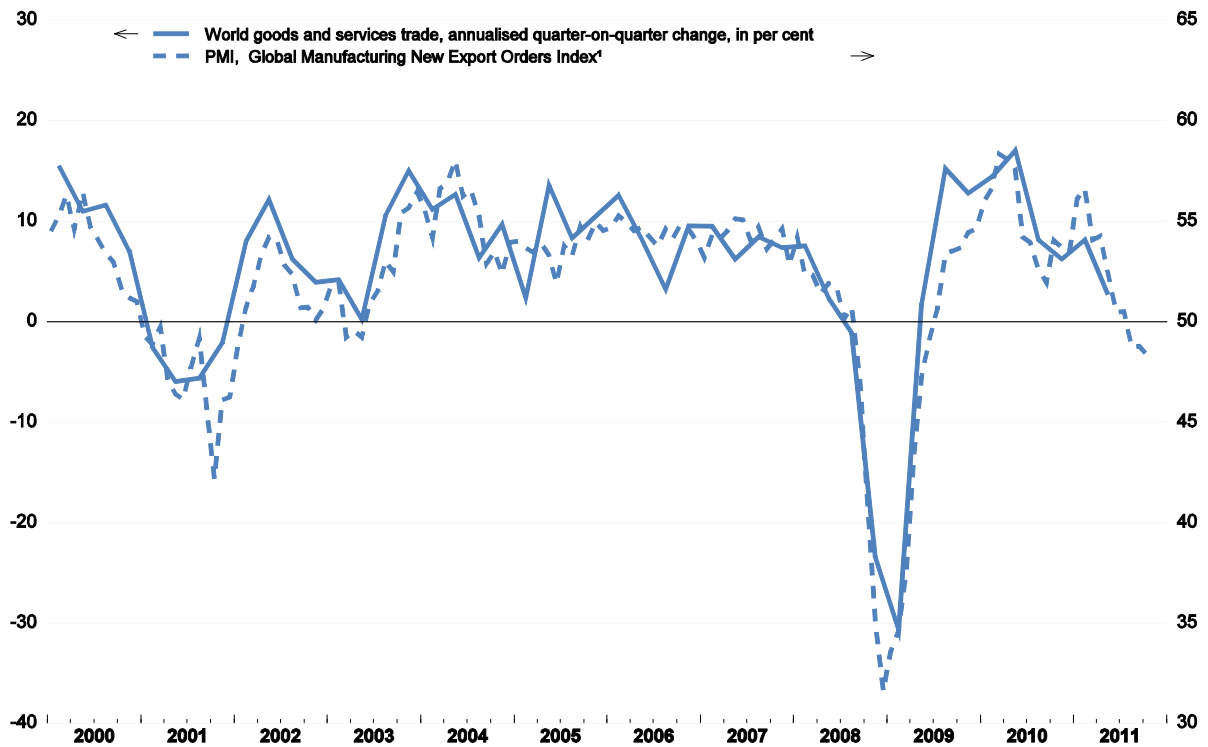
Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 Database.

[Data in Excel](#)

World trade is stagnant
 Various world trade indicators



Source: CPB.

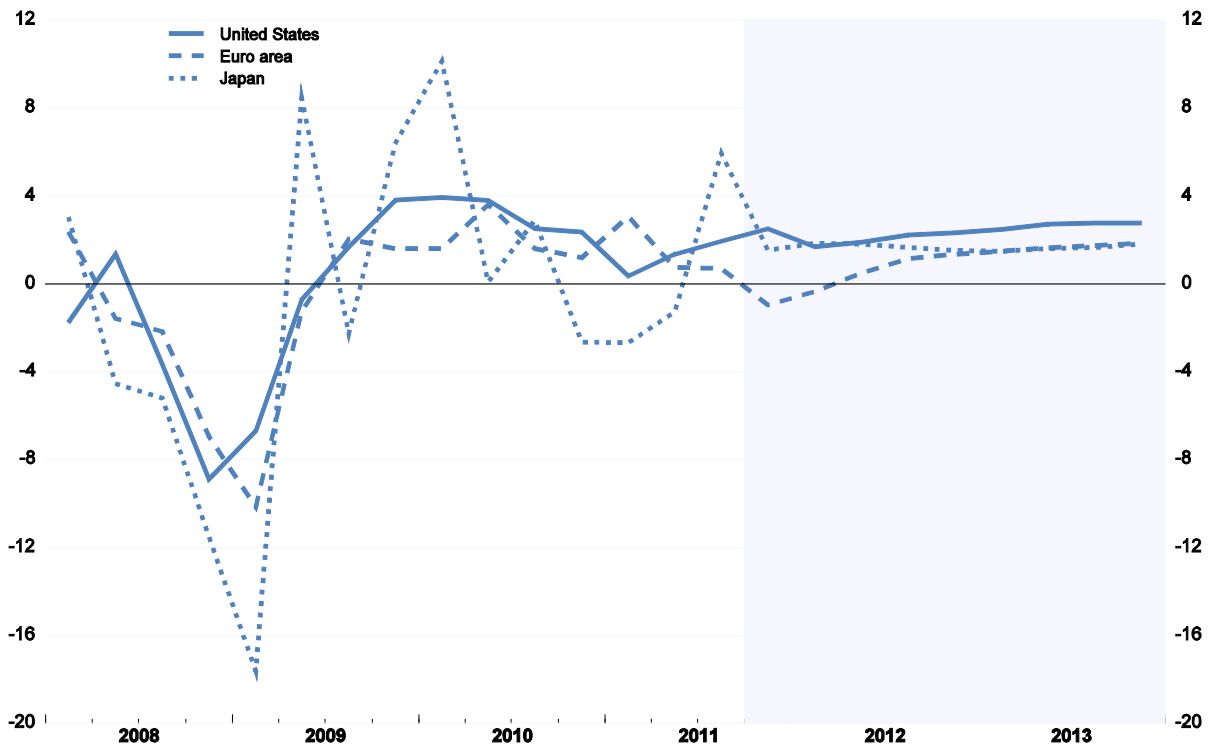


Note: 1. Values greater than 50 signify an increase in new export orders.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database; and Markit Economics Limited.

[Data in Excel](#)

The recovery is projected to resume only slowly
Annualised quarter-on-quarter real GDP growth, in percent

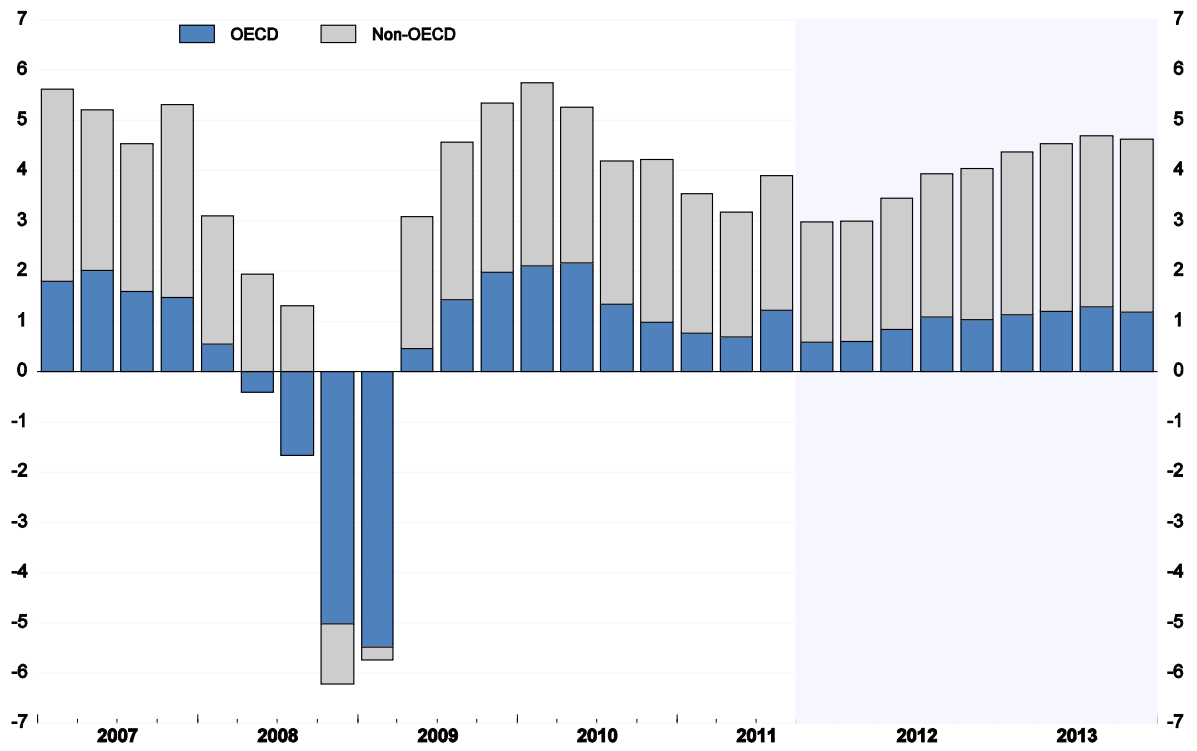


Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

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World growth will be sustained by the non-OECD countries

Contribution to annualised quarterly world real GDP growth, percentage points



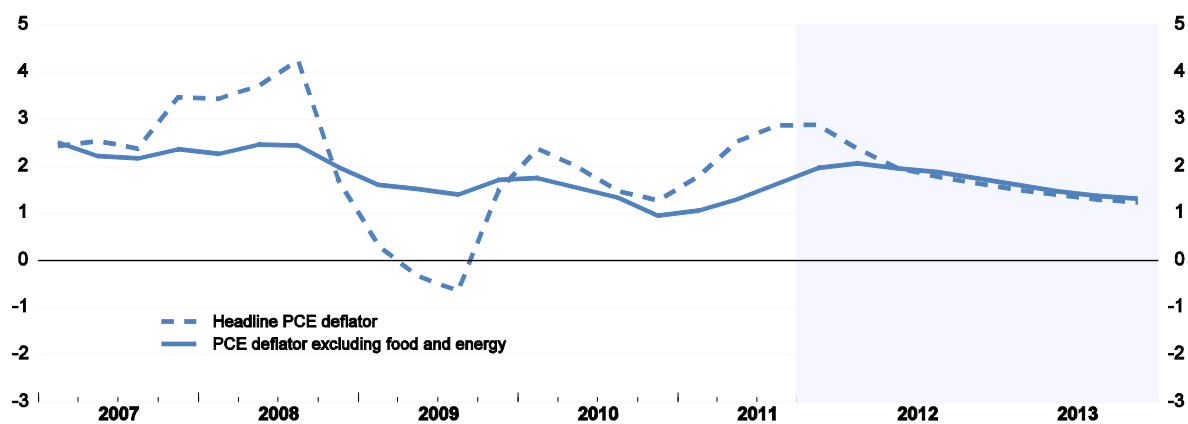
Note: Calculated using moving nominal GDP weights, based on national GDP at purchasing power parities.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

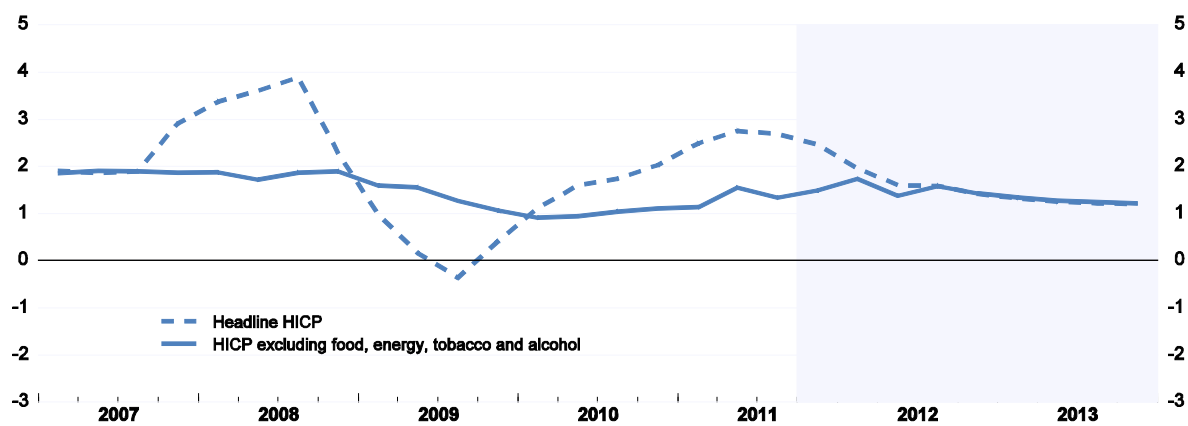
[Data in Excel](#)

Inflation is projected to moderate
Headline and core inflation, 4-quarter percentage change

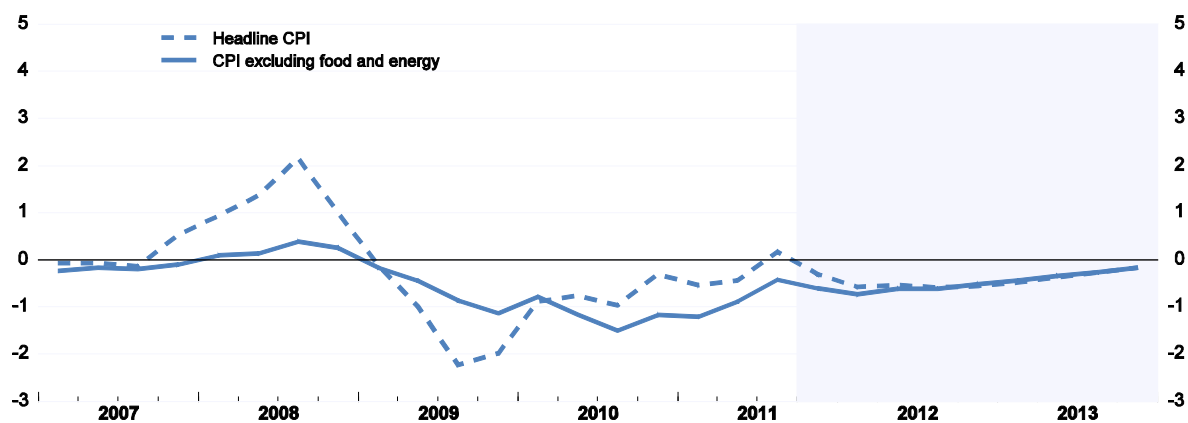
United States



Euro area



Japan



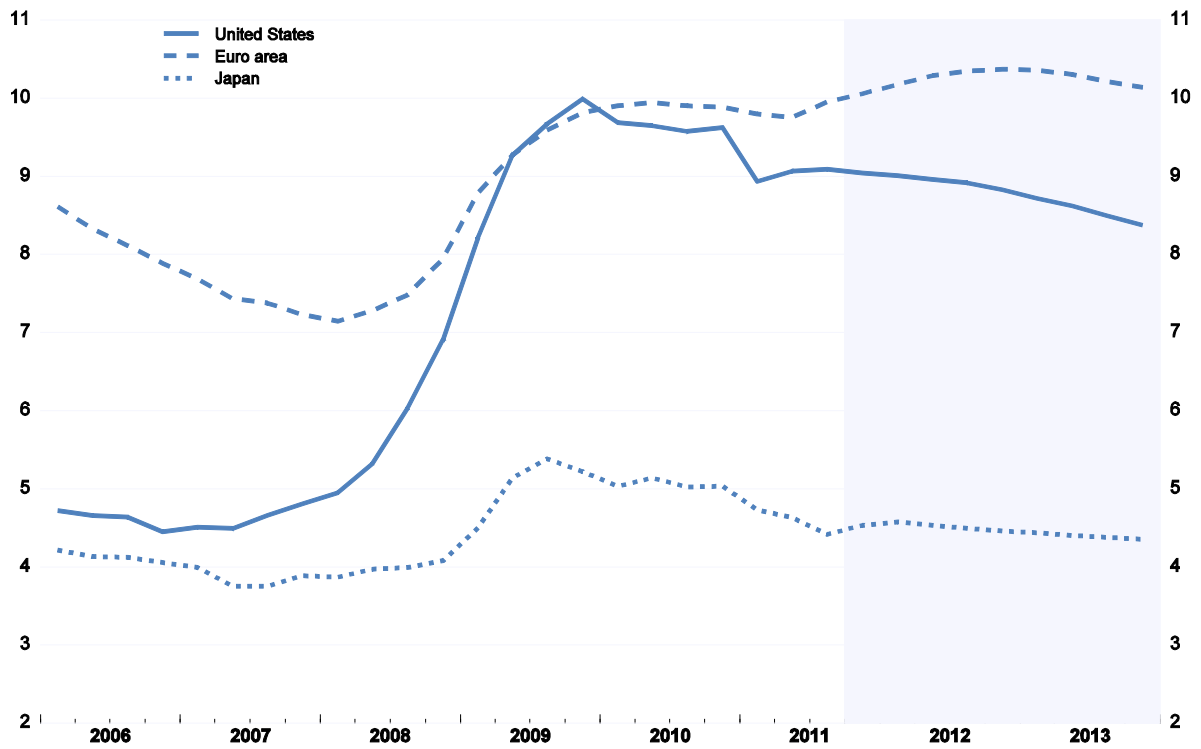
Note: PCE deflator refers to the deflator of personal consumption expenditures, HICP to the harmonised index of consumer prices and CPI to the consumer price index.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

[Data in Excel](#)

Unemployment is expected to remain high for an extended period

Unemployment rate, percentage of labour force

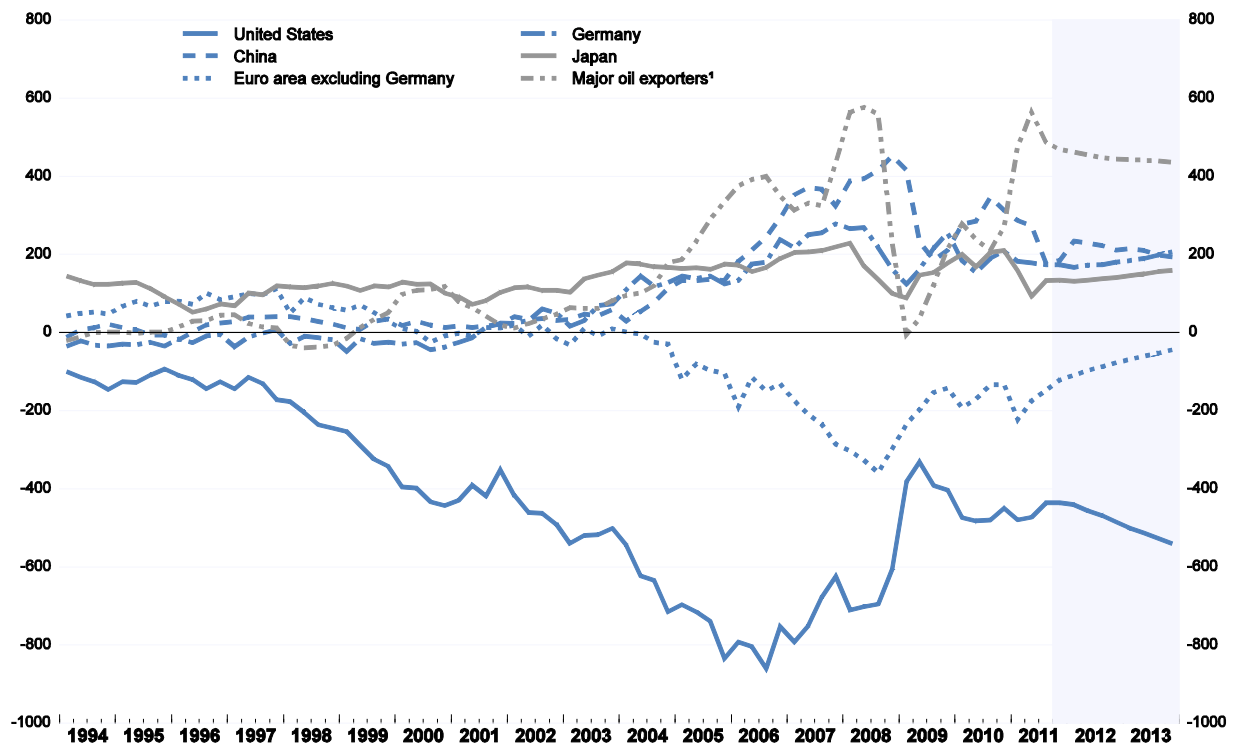


Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

[Data in Excel](#)

Global imbalances will continue to be pronounced

Current account balances, in US\$ billions



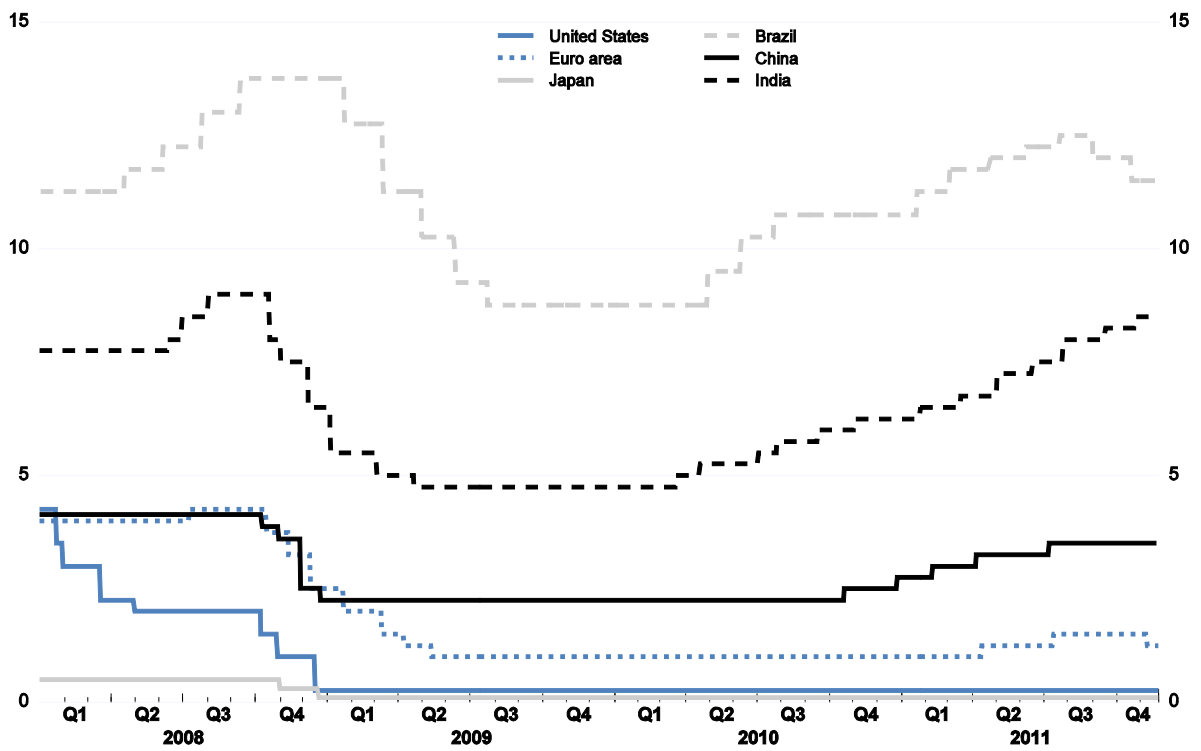
Note: 1. Includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Brunei, Timor-Leste, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Algeria, Angola, Chad, Rep. of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Nigeria and Sudan.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 Database; and OECD calculations.

[Data in Excel](#)

Policy interest rates are again becoming more accommodative in some countries

Policy interest rates, in percent

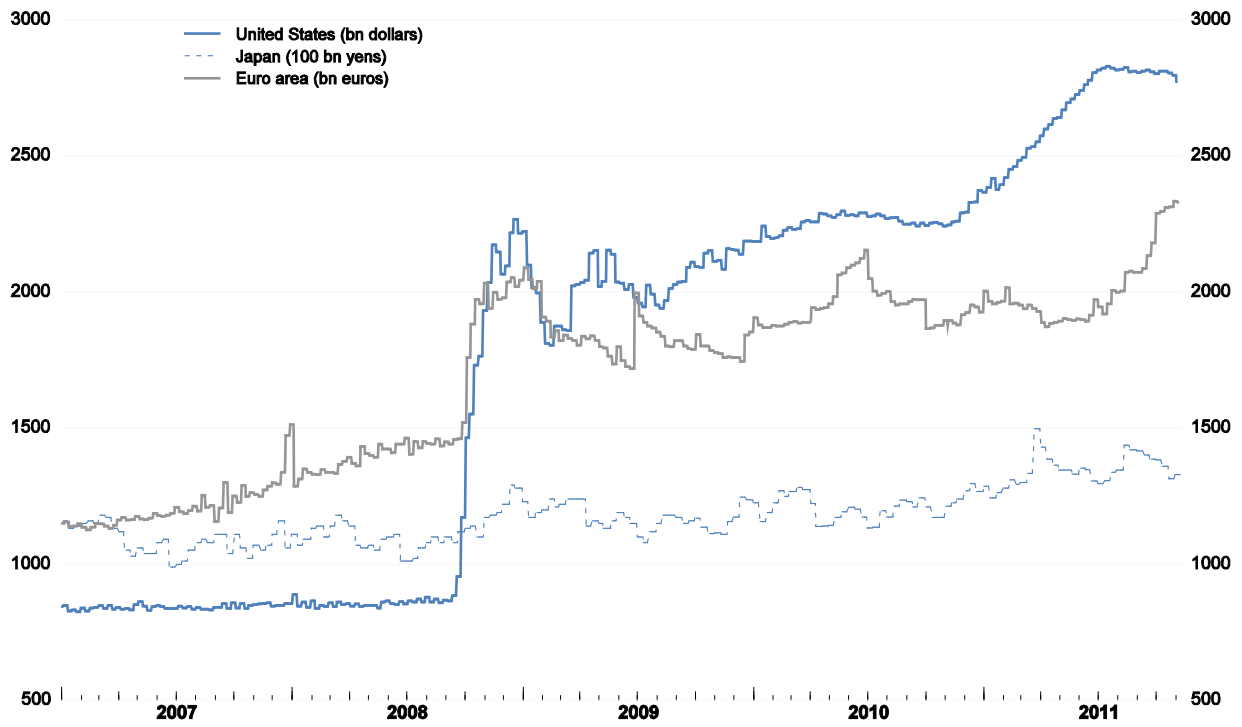


Source: Datastream; Central Bank of Brazil; Reserve Bank of India; and CEIC.

[Data in Excel](#)

Unorthodox monetary measures have been strengthened

Central bank liabilities, local currency

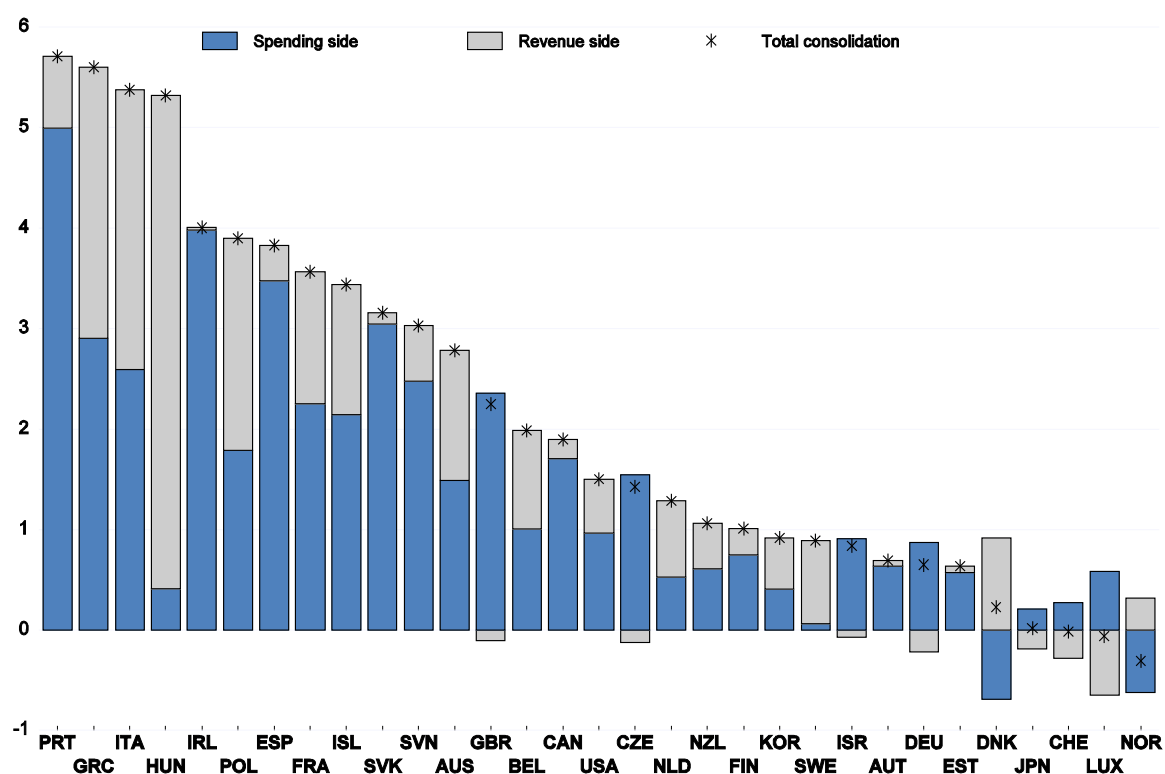


Source: Federal Reserve; Bank of Japan; European Central Bank.

[Data in Excel](#)

Consolidation plans combine spending cuts with tax increases

Change in the underlying primary balance 2011-13, in per cent of potential GDP

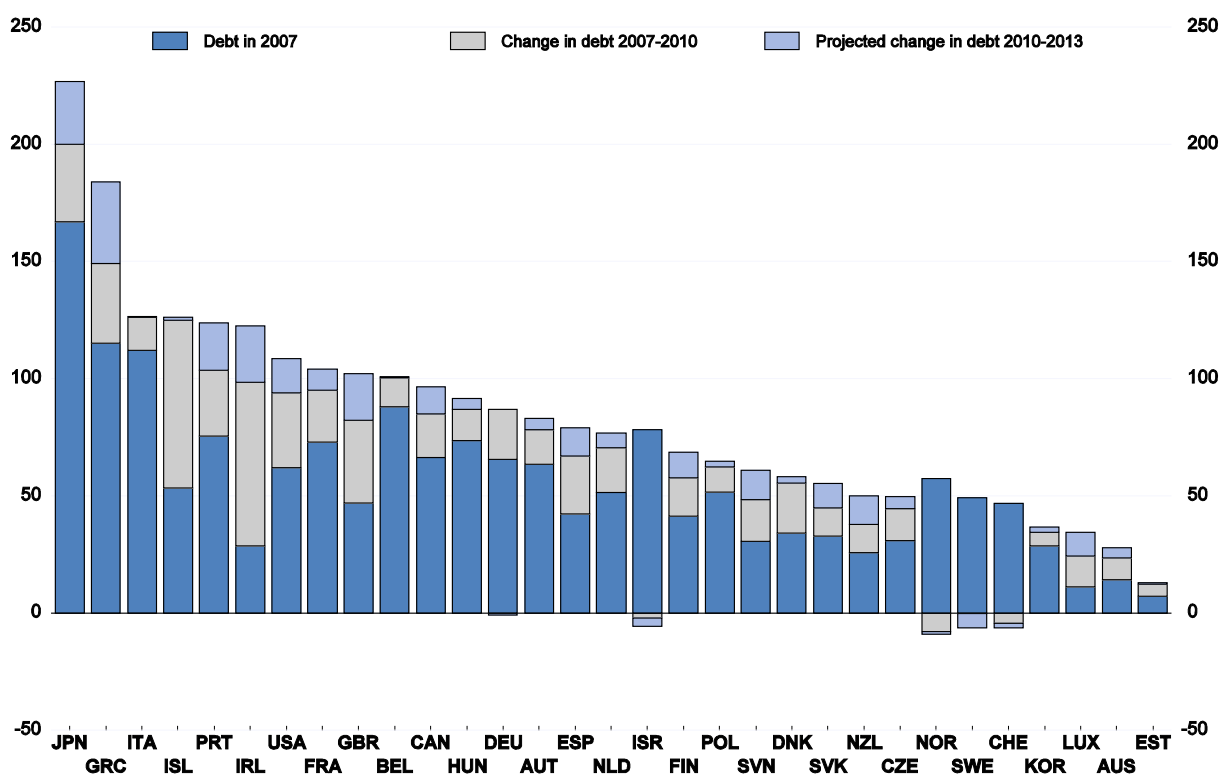


Note: Total consolidation is the projected difference in the underlying primary balance; revenue side is the projected increase in the underlying receipts excluding interest earned on financial assets; and spending side is the projected decline in the underlying primary spending excluding interest payments on debt.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database; and OECD calculations.

[Data in Excel](#)

Public debt is set to increase further
Government gross financial liabilities, in percent of GDP



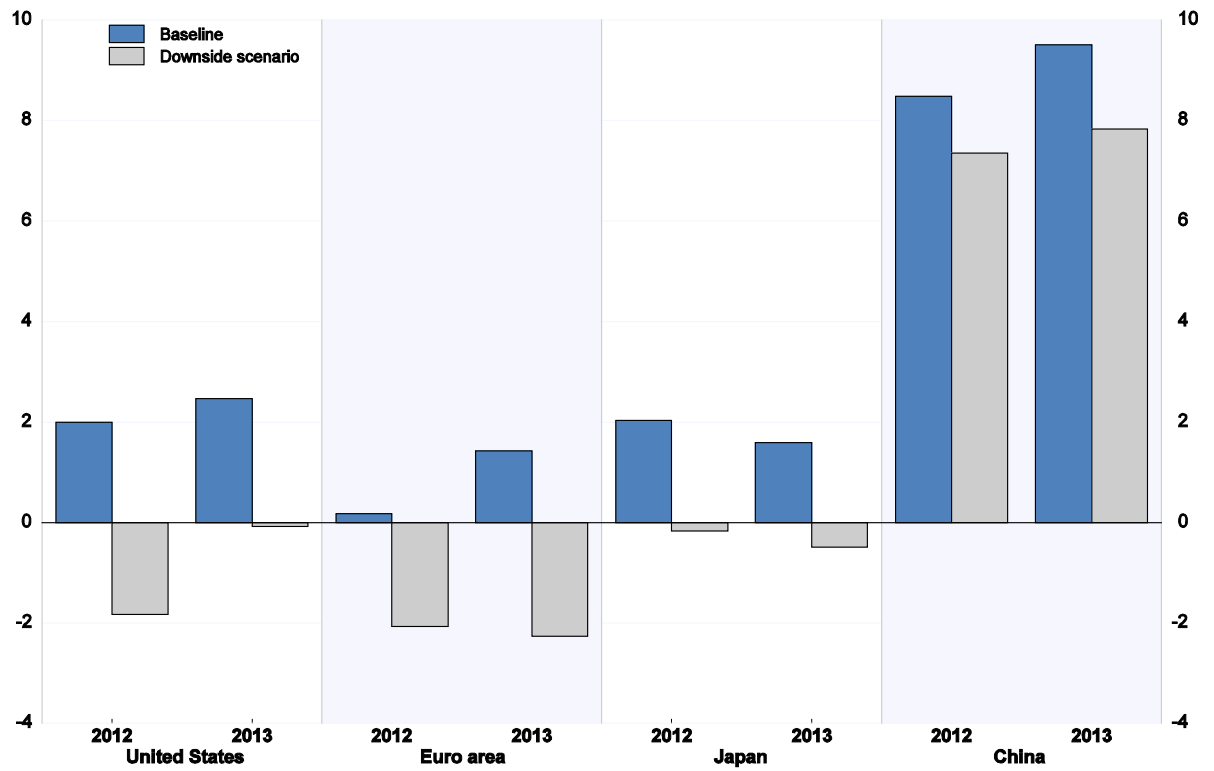
Note: Change in debt includes cumulated deficit for 2007-10 and 2010-13, debt-increasing equity participations in companies and the impact of GDP growth. For Norway cumulated deficits correspond to mainland only.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook 90 database.

[Data in Excel](#)

Downside scenario: Excessive US fiscal consolidation and intensification of euro-area crisis

GDP growth, percent per annum

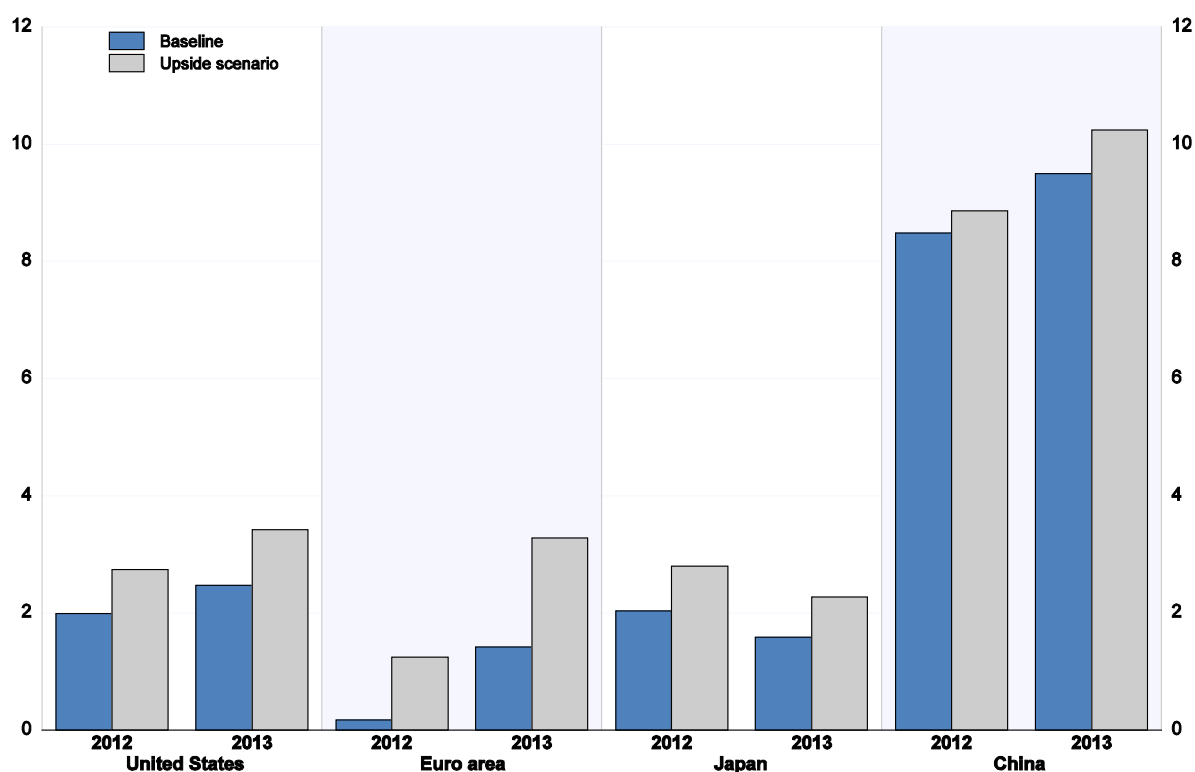


Source: OECD calculations.

[Data in Excel](#)

Upside scenario: Euro-area debt crisis successfully defused

GDP growth, percent per annum



Source: OECD calculations.

[Data in Excel](#)

Prerequisites for achieving the upside scenario

The euro area:

The 26 October package: a five-pronged approach to tackling the euro-area debt crisis.

1. Stabilisation by means of leveraging reserves in the European Financial Stability Fund (EFSF).
2. A voluntary exchange of Greek sovereign bonds by private investors, with a nominal 50% discount.
3. Shoring up the banking sector through recapitalisation.
4. Be ready to provide guarantees for term liquidity to the banking sector if needed.
5. Overhaul of euro-area governance, combined with substantive structural reforms.

These measures need to be followed up at the next ECOFIN Council on 9 December.

The United States:

Efforts need to be redoubled to reach an agreement on a credible fiscal programme.

The OECD Strategic Response

Identifies **country-specific policy measures** that could be implemented in the event of a relapse:

- **Fiscal support** backed by improved fiscal frameworks where public finances and confidence allows.
- **Monetary policy** easing where possible.
- **Structural reforms** to strengthen growth, lower unemployment and bolster confidence.