LIBERTY

Global Financial Markets Weekly Update

14 February, 2025

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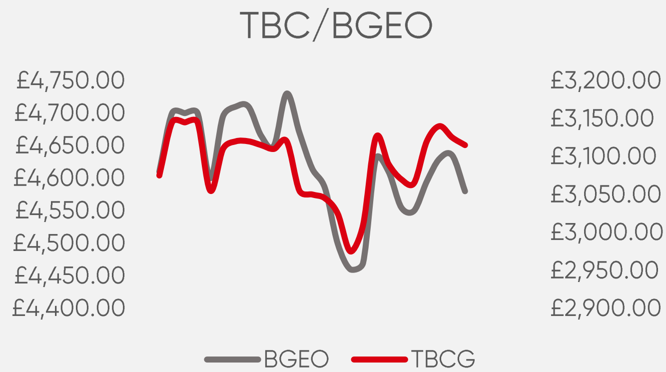
Quote of the week

> Learn as if you will live forever,
> live like you will die tomorrow.

Mahatma Gandhi

Executive Summary

- The DAX surged to 22,563, posting a 2.97% increase over the past five days, as investor optimism, corporate earnings strength, and macroeconomic stability drove German equities higher.
- The US Dollar Index (DXY) slipped to a fresh weekly low around 107.60, as investors reacted to economic data and expectations surrounding future Federal Reserve policy decisions.
- The consumer staples sector climbed to $823, recording a 2.54% increase over the past five days, as investors favored stable, defensive stocks amid shifting market conditions.

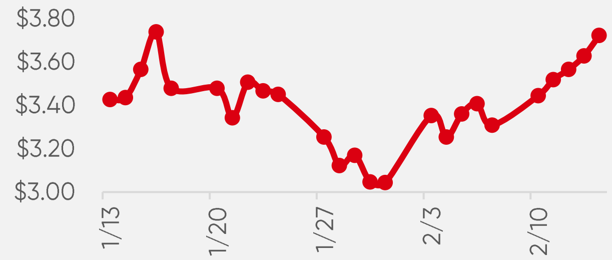


NAME	Ticker	Currency	Price	W/W chg%	P/E	EPS	Mcap '000
TBCG	TBCG	GBP	£33.40	4.38%	5.14	20.74	£1,860,706.87
BGEO	BGEO	GBP	£47.55	2.70%	3.16	31.30	£2,075,652.54
GCAP	CGEO	GBP	£12.12	1.00%	9.42	15.41	£459,833.43

Technology

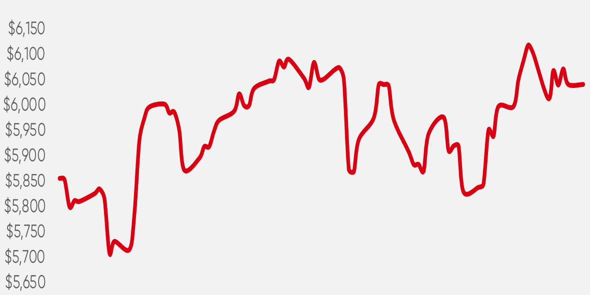
The technology sector climbed to $2,409, marking a 2.74% increase over the past five days, as investor confidence in AI, cloud computing, and semiconductor innovation continued to drive the market higher

Natural Gas



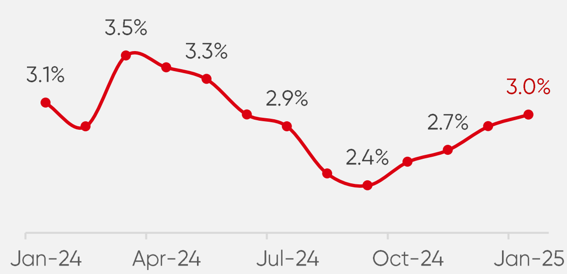
Natural gas surged to $3.72, recording an 8.07% increase over the past five days, as market dynamics shifted amid global energy demand fluctuations and geopolitical factors.

S&P 500



The S&P 500 closed the week at 6,115, marking a 0.8% increase over the past five days, as markets digested January's inflation data and shifting investor sentiment.

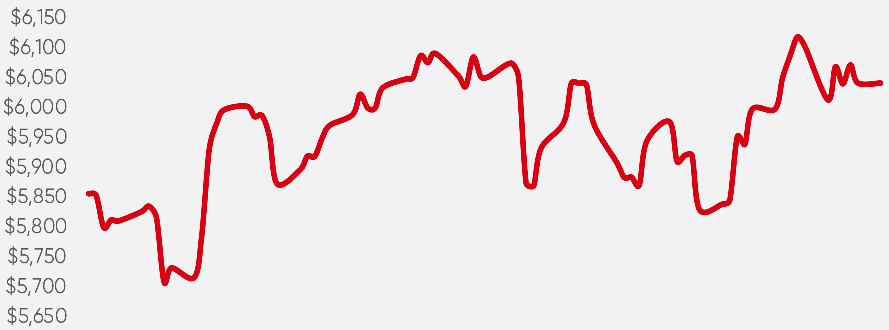
US Inflation Rate



In January 2025, U.S. inflation rose to 3% year-over-year, slightly above December's 2.9% and market expectations. The increase was driven by higher housing, food, and gasoline costs.

Indices

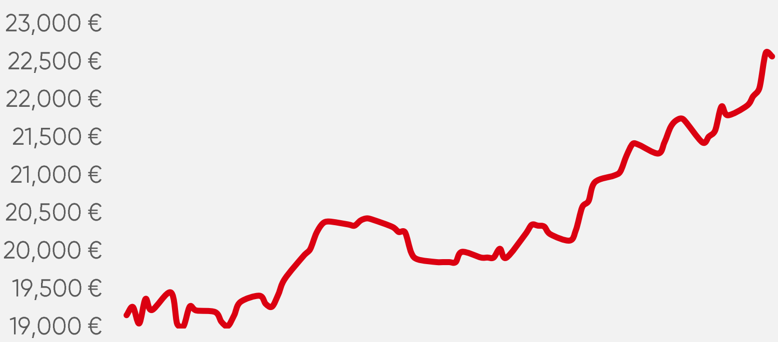
S&P 500



NAME	LAST
Communication Service	1.95%
Consumer Discretionary	0.93%
Consumer Staples	1.42%
Energy	-4.01%
Financial	1.22%
Health Care	1.74%
Industial	-1.91%
Materials	-0.22%
Real Estate	-0.32%
Technology	-3.57%
Utilities	-2.05%

The S&P 500 closed the week at 6,115, marking a 0.8% increase over the past five days, as markets digested January's inflation data and shifting investor sentiment. Despite a relatively quiet week in terms of percentage gains, the index continued to show resilience, supported by strong earnings, economic stability, and expectations for future Federal Reserve policy moves.
Investors closely analyzed the latest inflation data, which is playing a key role in shaping expectations for interest rate cuts later in the year. While inflation remains above the Fed's target, the steady decline in price pressures has reinforced market optimism that rate cuts could begin in the second half of 2025. However, uncertainty remains, as any signs of inflation stalling could lead to a more prolonged period of higher rates, which would weigh on equities.

DAX



Ticker	Price	W/W %	P/E
RPI	$ 728.00	15.27%	--
PNN	$ 442.00	14.57%	--
SMWH	$ 1,281.00	13.85%	24.86
HBR	$ 233.10	-7.56%	24.01
STEM	$ 253.50	-8.06%	6.80
WIZZ	$1,248.00	-10.88%	5.39

The DAX surged to 22,563, posting a 2.97% increase over the past five days, as investor optimism, corporate earnings strength, and macroeconomic stability drove German equities higher. The index's rally was fueled by strong performances in industrial, financial, and technology stocks, as well as growing expectations that monetary policy adjustments could support economic growth in the Eurozone.
German markets benefited from resilient corporate earnings, particularly in the automotive and manufacturing sectors, where demand has remained steady despite global supply chain concerns. Additionally, easing inflationary pressures and improving business sentiment have further supported market confidence.
Despite these gains, investors remain cautious about geopolitical risks and global economic uncertainty, particularly in relation to interest rate policies and trade developments. However, the DAX's strong performance signals renewed investor confidence in the German economy and broader European markets.

Top Performing Sectors

Technology **2,409$/2.74%**

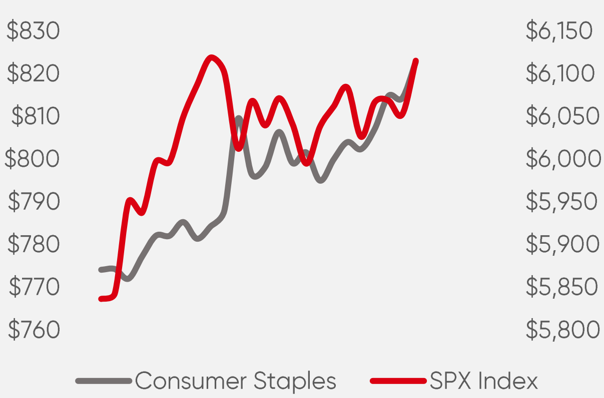
Ticker	Price	W/W %	EPS T12M	P/E	Vol. mln
KR	$ 61.64	5.01%	$ 3.80	13.37	$4.47
COST	$ 979.88	4.28%	$ 17.07	57.59	$1.88
WMT	$ 98.16	3.59%	$ 2.44	40.24	$16.41
MKC	$ 77.23	3.12%	$ 2.94	26.61	$1.46
SJM	$ 106.89	3.07%	$ 4.96	12.39	$1.35
BG	$ 76.13	-1.37%	$ 7.93	7.51	$1.47
SYY	$ 72.92	-2.47%	$ 3.91	16.81	$4.67
BF/B	$ 33.01	-2.68%	$ 2.12	15.49	$6.82
HRL	$ 29.98	-2.91%	$ 1.47	20.13	$11.60
WBA	$ 10.28	-13.40%	$ (10.24)	1.08	$91.51

The technology sector climbed to $2,409, marking a 2.74% increase over the past five days, as investor confidence in AI, cloud computing, and semiconductor innovation continued to drive the market higher. February has historically been a strong month for equities, and tech stocks are capitalizing on momentum fueled by earnings strength and long-term growth trends.

Investors remain bullish on tech, with a focus on diversification across high-growth sectors like AI development, cybersecurity, and data infrastructure. Companies leading in semiconductor manufacturing and enterprise software solutions have been among the biggest drivers of this week's gains, benefiting from strong earnings reports and positive future outlooks.

Despite concerns over interest rate policies and global economic uncertainty, the tech sector's fundamental strength and continued innovation have allowed it to outperform broader markets. As AI adoption accelerates and cloud computing demand remains high, investors are positioning themselves for long-term gains in the sector.

Consumer Staples **823$/2.54%**



Ticker	Price	W/W %	EPS T12M	P/E	Vol. mln
ABBV	$ 183.90	7.99%	$ 2.40	24.42	$11.93
HSIC	$ 80.00	6.71%	$ 2.45	22.54	$1.28
HCA	$ 329.91	5.38%	$ 22.18	15.03	$1.25
DGX	$ 163.10	5.04%	$ 7.78	20.09	$1.58
VRTX	$ 461.68	5.02%	$ (1.85)	39.42	$3.65
TECH	$ 73.55	-4.54%	$ 0.95	59.92	$0.94
MRNA	$ 39.42	-4.81%	$ (5.80)	--	$6.54
RMD	$ 236.18	-5.72%	$ 8.50	27.38	$2.60
ALGN	$ 219.11	-6.08%	$ 5.87	33.87	$1.21
DHR	$ 222.74	-9.38%	$ 5.33	40.13	$4.79

The consumer staples sector climbed to $823, recording a 2.54% increase over the past five days, as investors favored stable, defensive stocks amid shifting market conditions. With valuation remaining a key driver for sector performance, companies with strong pricing power and consistent demand have continued to attract investor interest.

One notable development this week is the increasing competition from international brands, particularly in the household goods and personal care markets. The emergence of Chinese brands in key consumer categories, such as diapers and packaged goods, has added new challenges for established U.S. companies. This shift highlights changing consumer preferences and price sensitivity, forcing legacy brands to adapt their strategies to maintain market share.

Top Performing Sectors

Materials **958$/2.08%**

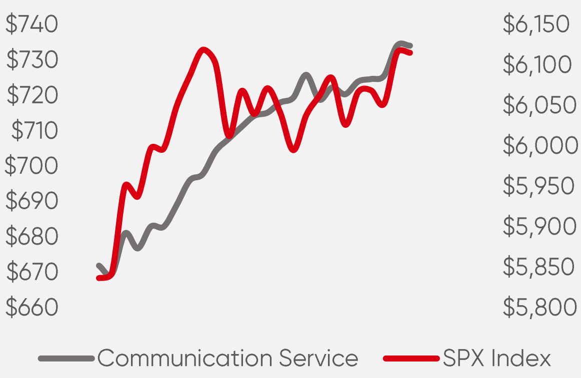
Ticker	Price	W/W %	EPS T12M	P/E	Vol. mln
BEN	$ 22.24	10.70%	$ 0.70	11.95	$22.38
IVZ	$ 19.23	9.08%	$ 1.18	14.65	$5.78
BLK	$ 1,075.50	5.39%	$ 42.45	26.85	$0.96
AJG	$ 301.82	4.25%	$ 6.67	38.15	$2.41
ERIE	$ 402.95	4.13%	$ 12.05	37.85	$1.59
USB	$ 47.78	-2.63%	$ 3.79	11.90	$11.18
AMP	$ 543.36	-3.59%	$ 33.68	15.22	$0.80
MSCI	$ 596.77	-3.86%	$ 14.09	42.81	$0.74
EG	$ 347.51	-4.83%	$ 64.48	5.65	$0.56
BX	$ 177.11	-5.16%	$ 3.64	48.15	$3.01

The materials sector advanced to $958, posting a 2.08% increase over the past five days, as investors navigated uncertainty surrounding potential U.S. tariffs and their impact on global supply chains. Despite concerns over trade policies and cost pressures, the sector showed resilience, benefiting from rising demand for industrial metals and construction materials.

With tariffs emerging as a major market-moving force, companies in the materials sector are assessing the potential implications for raw material costs, export demand, and supply chain disruptions. While protectionist trade policies could increase costs for U.S. manufacturers, they may also support domestic producers by reducing foreign competition in key commodity markets.

Additionally, global infrastructure investment and strong industrial activity have helped sustain demand for metals, chemicals, and building materials, providing stability to the sector. Price resilience in commodities like copper and steel has further supported sector-wide earnings expectations, despite broader macroeconomic concerns.

Communication Services **734$/1.91%**



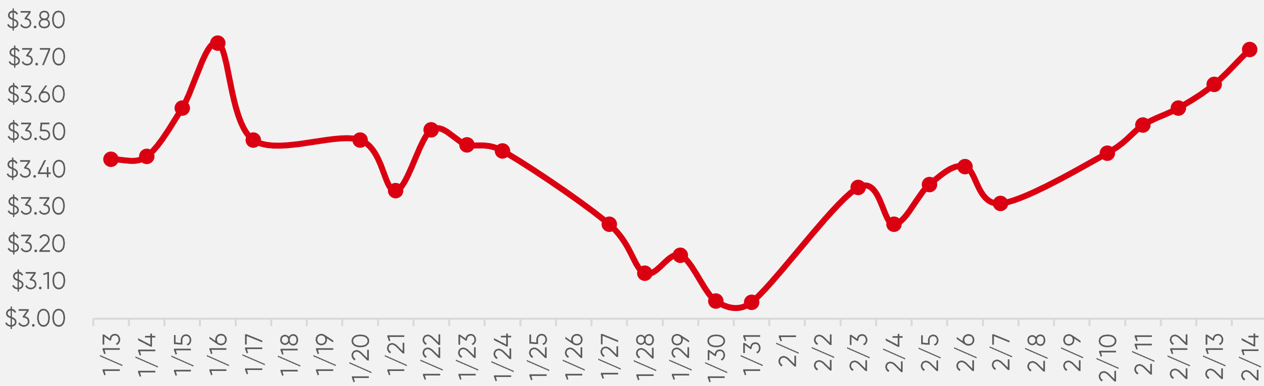
Ticker	Price	W/W %	EPS T12M	P/E	Vol. mln
TMUS	$ 232.97	6.59%	$ 9.70	23.52	$3.34
META	$ 689.18	6.44%	$ 24.61	28.55	$19.33
EA	$ 122.91	5.45%	$ 3.92	26.01	$6.59
MTCH	$ 35.70	4.82%	$ 2.34	15.94	$4.20
T	$ 23.73	4.45%	$ 1.49	10.32	$40.35
NFLX	$ 976.76	-0.08%	$ 20.28	49.80	$3.62
VZ	$ 39.39	-0.38%	$ 4.15	8.87	$45.19
PARA	$ 10.88	-1.72%	$ (8.22)	6.39	$6.73
CHTR	$ 345.49	-6.01%	$ 35.55	9.33	$2.81
CMCSA	$ 33.66	-10.53%	$ 4.16	8.88	$39.18

The communication services sector climbed to $734, marking a 1.91% increase over the past five days, as investors focused on diversification across sectors and stable revenue-generating industries. The sector continues to benefit from strong digital advertising trends, streaming growth, and the expanding role of AI-driven communication platforms.

With market uncertainty still present in 2025, communication services have remained a key area of investor interest, particularly for companies with strong content distribution networks, data-driven advertising models, and telecommunications infrastructure.

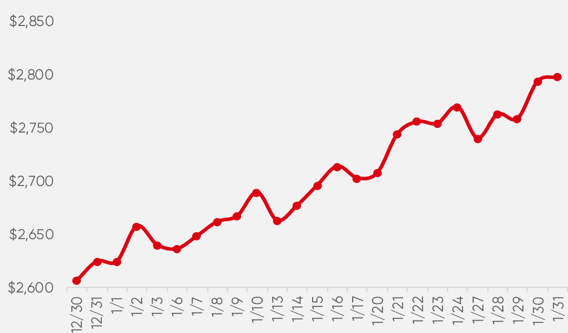
Commodities

Natural Gas



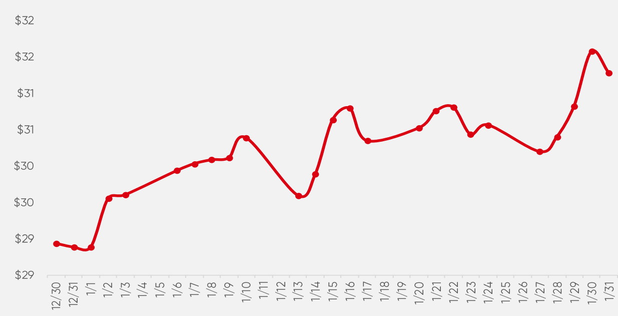
Natural gas surged to $3.72, recording an 8.07% increase over the past five days, as market dynamics shifted amid global energy demand fluctuations and geopolitical factors. The sharp rise in prices comes despite broader commodity market volatility, with oil prices sliding due to concerns over tariff-driven economic slowdowns.
The recent rally in natural gas has been fueled by colder-than-expected weather in key consumption regions, increasing demand for heating fuel. Additionally, global LNG (liquefied natural gas) exports remain strong, particularly to European and Asian markets, where natural gas is a critical energy source for industrial and residential heating.
Meanwhile, supply-side factors have also contributed to price strength. Production slowdowns in key U.S. shale regions, coupled with temporary infrastructure disruptions, have led to short-term tightening in supply, further supporting the upward momentum.

Gold



Gold surged to $2,959, posting a 3.2% increase over the past five days, as investors sought safety amid currency fluctuations and global economic uncertainty. The precious metal's rally was driven by inflation concerns, shifting interest rate expectations, and renewed demand for safe-haven assets.
The U.S. dollar's recent softness has provided additional support for gold, making it more attractive to international buyers.

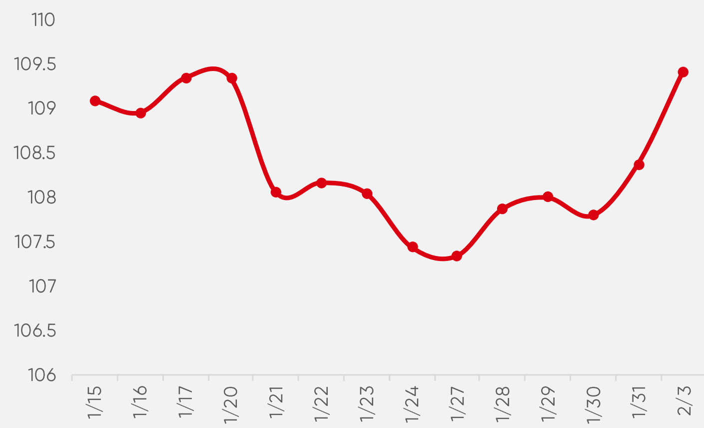
Silver



Silver surged to $34.03, marking a 5.23% increase over the past five days, as investor demand for safe-haven assets and industrial metals boosted prices. The metal outperformed gold this week, benefiting from both its role as a hedge against market volatility and its rising industrial applications.
The weaker U.S. dollar has supported silver's rally, making it more attractive to global buyers, while expectations of potential Federal Reserve rate cuts later this year have further increased investor appetite for precious metals.

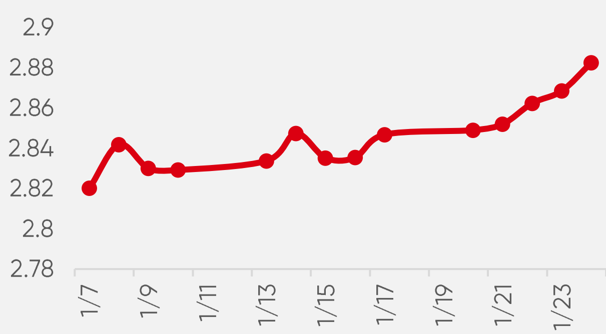
Currencies

US Dollar Index



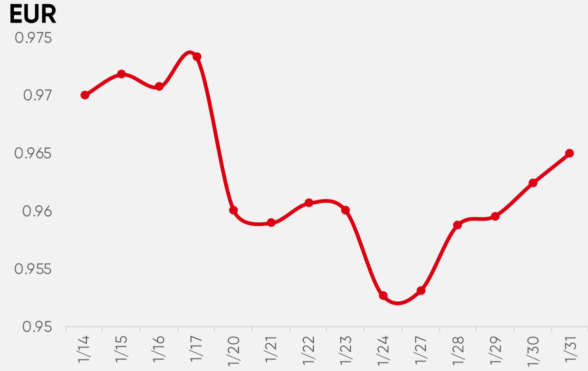
The US Dollar Index (DXY) slipped to a fresh weekly low around 107.60, as investors reacted to economic data and expectations surrounding future Federal Reserve policy decisions. While the dollar faced selling pressure amid shifting inflation expectations and market sentiment, analysts suggest that further downside could be limited as focus turns to upcoming Consumer Price Index (CPI) data and broader macroeconomic conditions.
The dollar's decline has been largely attributed to inflation-related uncertainty, with markets reassessing the likelihood of Federal Reserve rate cuts later this year. If upcoming CPI data shows stronger-than-expected inflation, it could reinforce the Fed's cautious stance on on rate reductions, potentially supporting the dollar in the near term. Conversely, a weaker inflation print could fuel expectations for rate cuts sooner than expected, adding to the greenback's decline.
Despite recent weakness, analysts point out that structural factors, including global risk sentiment and central bank policy divergence, continue to support the dollar's role as a safe-haven asset. With ongoing geopolitical uncertainties and shifting economic conditions, the DXY may find stability even as markets speculate on the timing of monetary policy adjustments.
Looking ahead, the US Dollar Index's trajectory will be heavily influenced by inflation data, Fed policy expectations, and global market movements. While short-term pressures remain, the dollar's resilience and safe-haven appeal suggest that any further downside may be contained unless inflation data significantly alters rate cut projections.

GBP



The British pound (GBP) remained relatively stable this week, with GBP/USD hovering around 1.2550, as investors awaited key economic data from both the UK and the US. The currency saw limited movement, reflecting market caution ahead of US retail sales figures and upcoming Eurozone GDP data.
The EUR/GBP pair weakened below 0.8350, suggesting that the pound has shown relative strength against the euro, supported by a more resilient UK economic outlook. While the Bank of England's monetary policy stance remains uncertain, expectations of a gradual slowdown in inflation and stable growth have helped support the currency's position.

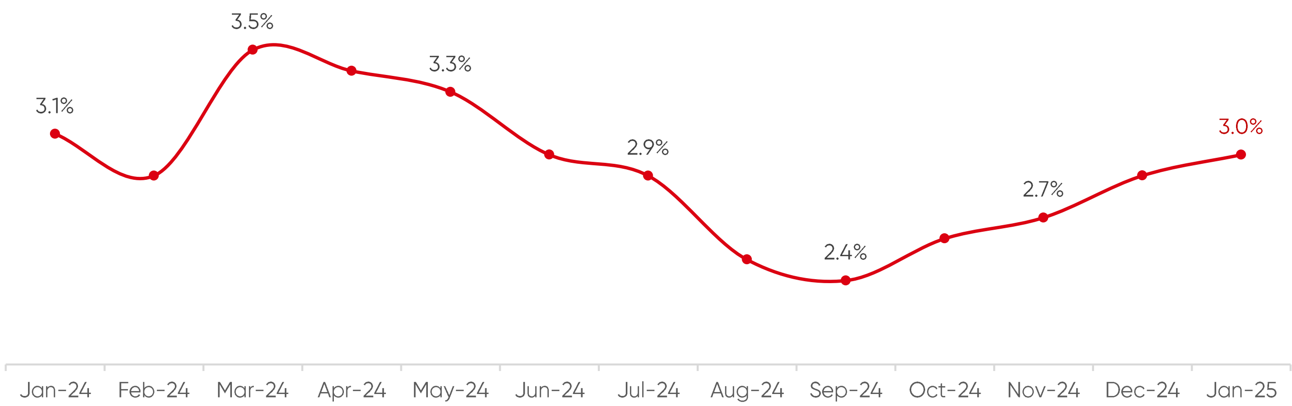
EUR



The euro (EUR) saw a modest recovery this week, buoyed by positive geopolitical developments and improved investor sentiment. The delay in U.S. tariffs and renewed optimism around easing trade tensions have provided some stability for the euro, helping it regain ground against the U.S. dollar and other major currencies.
Analysts note that while the euro has room for further correction, the recent rebound has been supported by favorable macroeconomic factors, including a slightly improved Eurozone outlook and expectations that the European Central Bank (ECB) will maintain a cautious policy stance.

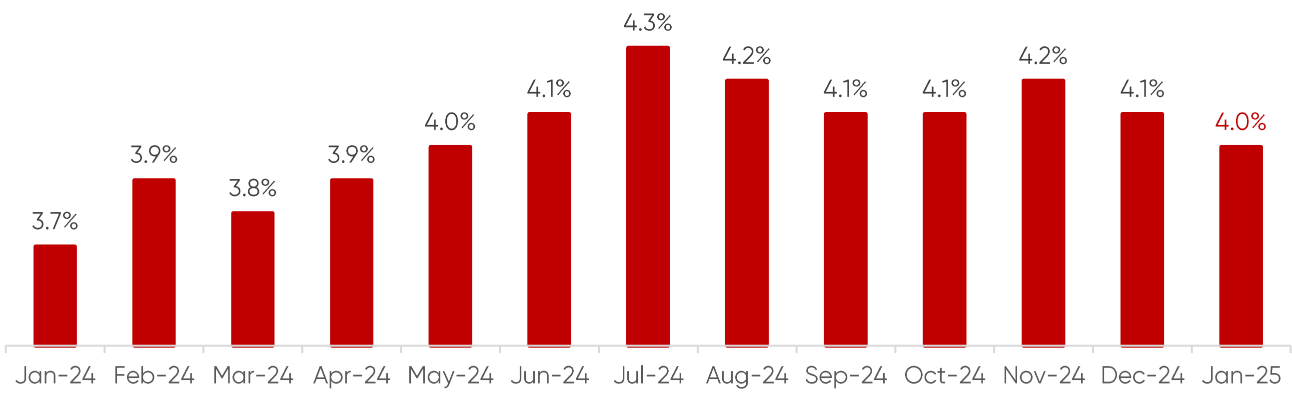
Macroeconomics

US Inflation Rate



In January 2025, U.S. inflation rose to 3% year-over-year, slightly above December's 2.9% and market expectations. The increase was driven by higher housing, food, and gasoline costs. The unexpected rise raises concerns over the Federal Reserve's monetary policy, as Chair Jerome Powell signaled that interest rate cuts remain unlikely in the near term. Financial markets reacted negatively, with Treasury yields climbing. President Trump blamed "Bidenflation" and called for immediate rate cuts, while economists warn that new tariffs on imports could push prices even higher.

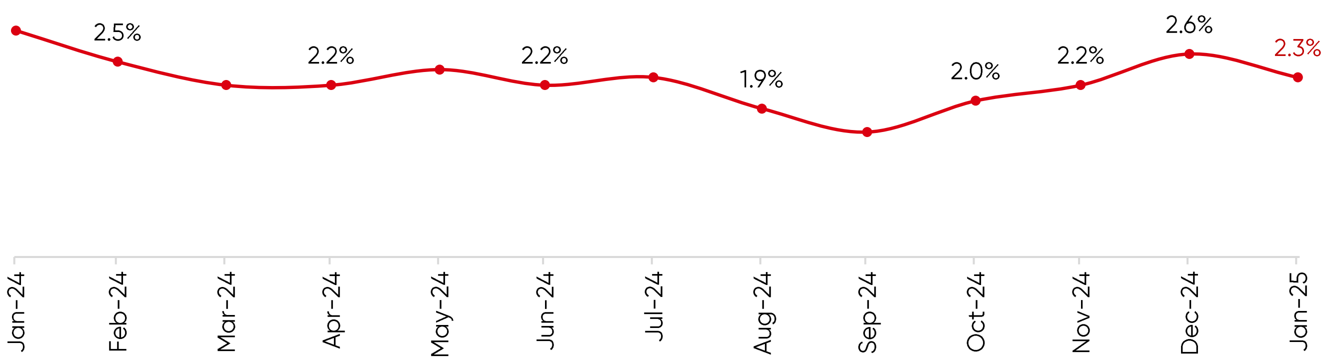
US Unemployment Rate



The U.S. economy added 143,000 jobs in January 2025, bringing the unemployment rate down to 4.0% from 4.1% in December. Job growth was led by health care (+44K), retail trade (+32K), and social assistance (+22K), while the mining sector lost 8,000 jobs. The pace of hiring has slowed compared to the 2024 average of 166,000 jobs per month. However, the labor market remains stable, with key sectors continuing to expand. Despite the slowdown, the overall employment picture signals resilience. Additionally, wage growth outpaced expectations, with average hourly earnings rising 0.5% month-over-month and 4.1% year-over-year, while labor force participation edged up to 62.6%.

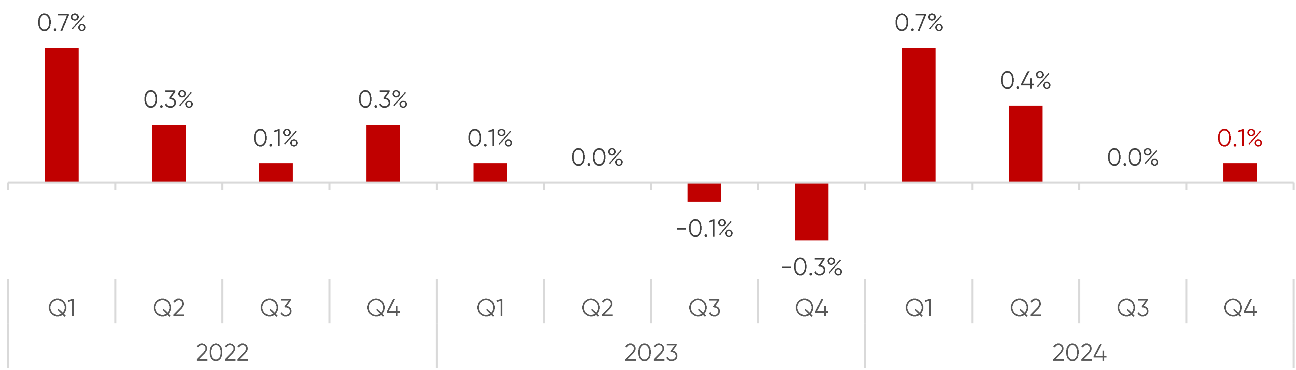
Macroeconomics

Germany Inflation Rate



Germany's inflation eased to 2.3% YoY in January 2025, down from 2.6% in December, driven by a slowdown in food inflation (0.8% YoY vs. 2.0% in December) and a 1.6% drop in energy prices. Service prices remained elevated at +4.0% YoY, with notable increases in social facility services (+10.1%) and insurance (+9.9%). Core inflation fell to 2.9%, marking a three-month low. On a monthly basis, CPI declined by 0.2%, reflecting seasonal drops in travel and clothing prices. The latest inflation data will be key for the ECB's upcoming rate decision, as policymakers assess whether easing price pressures justify a shift in monetary policy.

UK GDP Growth Rate (QoQ)



The UK economy grew by 0.1% in Q4 2024, avoiding a recession and beating expectations of a 0.1% contraction after stagnation in Q3. Growth was driven by a 0.2% rise in services and 0.5% in construction, while production shrank 0.8%, marking its fifth straight quarterly decline. Government spending, particularly in defense, health, and public administration, propped up the economy as private sector activity remained weak, with business investment falling 3.2% and exports down 2.5%. The Bank of England cut interest rates to 4.5% and halved its 2025 growth forecast to 0.75%, citing sluggish demand, high taxes, and trade uncertainty.

Forthcoming Calendar

Monday

Name	Currency	Forecast	Current
Trade Balance	EUR		16.4B
GDP (YoY)	JPY		1.20%
GDP (QoQ)	JPY		0.30%
Industrial Production (MoM)	JPY	0.30%	-2.20%
Housing Starts	CAD		231.5K

Tuesday

Name	Currency	Forecast	Current
RBA Interest Rate Decision	AUD	4.10%	4.35%
French CPI (MoM)	EUR	-0.10%	0.20%
CPI (MoM)	CAD		-0.40%
Unemployment Rate	GBP		4.40%
Labour Productivity	GBP	-0.80%	0.20%

Wednesday

Name	Currency	Forecast	Current
CPI (YoY)	GBP		2.50%
PPI Input (MoM)	GBP		0.10%
RBNZ Interest Rate Decision	NZD	3.75%	4.25%
Trade Balance	JPY		130.9B
German 10-Year Bund Auction	EUR		2.54%

Thursday

Name	Currency	Forecast	Current
Philadelphia Fed Manufacturing Index	USD		44.30
API Weekly Crude Oil Stock	USD		9.043M
30-Year TIPS Auction	USD		2.06%
Unemployment Rate	AUD		4.00%
German PPI (MoM)	EUR		-0.10%

Friday

Name	Currency	Forecast	Current
Manufacturing PMI	USD		51.20
Existing Home Sales	USD		4.24M
Manufacturing PMI	EUR		46.60
Retail Sales (YoY)	GBP		3.60%
GDP (YoY)	MXN	0.60%	1.60%

Upcoming Revenue Reports

Ticker	EPS Forecast	Forecast	Market cap
BHP	2.33	.	131.64B
BBSEY	0.1834	381.54M	12.95B
FRHC	.	.	9.76B
UFPI	1.24	1.42B	6.94B
NE	0.7288	871.36M	4.75B

Ticker	EPS Forecast	Forecast	Market cap
GOOG	2.12	96.7B	2.51T
GOOGL	2.12	96.69B	2.51T
MRK	1.81	15.47B	2.49.98B
PEP	1.95	27.95B	209.15B
AMD	1.08	7.54B	188.16B

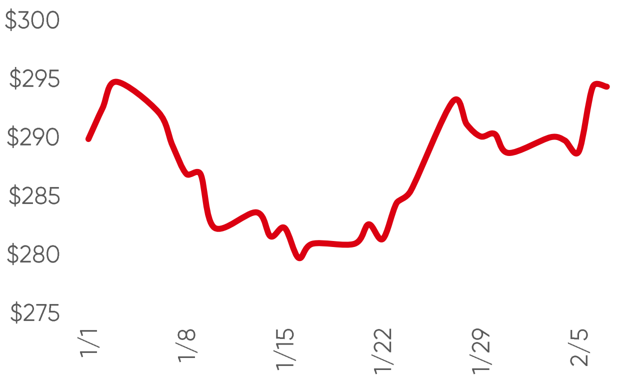
Ticker	EPS Forecast	Forecast	Market cap
NVO	0.8769	11.38B	364.09B
DIS	1.45	24.7B	204.46B
QCOM	2.97	10.93B	191.16B
ARM	0.25	761.71M	167.69B
BSX	0.6565	4.41B	150.86B

Ticker	EPS Forecast	Forecast	Market cap
AMZN	1.74	187.33B	2.5T
LLY	5.3	13.78B	730.32B
AZN	1.06	14.15B	215.23B
LIN	3.95	8.41B	208.48B
PM	1.5	9.5B	202.44B

Ticker	EPS Forecast	Forecast	Market cap
FTV	1.12	1.63B	28.22B
UI	1.86	510.41M	24.4B
DNKEY	0.4621	2.04B	24.23B
CBOE	2.14	527.51M	21.39B
BBD	0.0881	5.4B	20.97B

Upcoming Opportunities

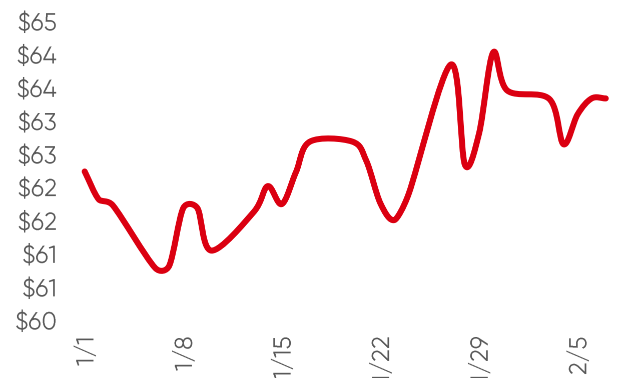
SAND



Sandstorm Gold (SAND), currently trading at $6.65, is set to release its next earnings report next week, with investors closely monitoring whether the company can deliver stronger results after a series of mixed reports. As a gold royalty and streaming company, Sandstorm's revenue is highly tied to gold price movements, mining production levels, and global demand for precious metals.

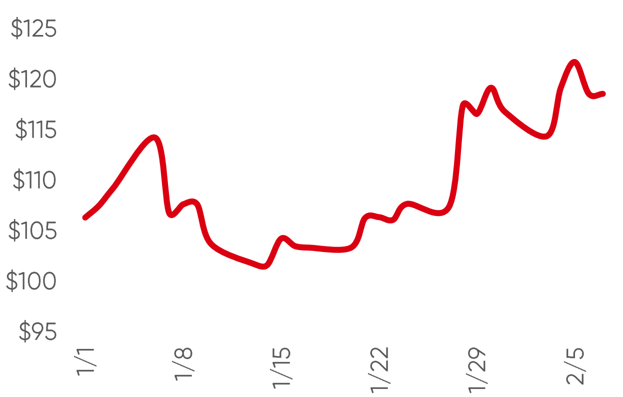
Despite fluctuating financial results in recent quarters, SAND has benefited from rising gold prices, with investors turning to safe-haven assets amid inflationary pressures and economic uncertainty.

CPRT



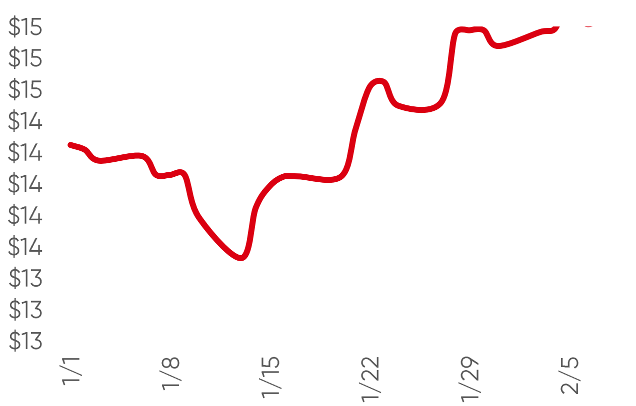
Copart (CPRT), currently trading at $59.83, is set to release its next quarterly earnings report, with investors closely monitoring its performance following a series of mixed financial results. As a leader in online vehicle auctions and salvage car sales, Copart has benefited from steady demand for used and damaged vehicles, but has also faced challenges related to macroeconomic headwinds, supply chain fluctuations, and pricing dynamics in the auto sector.

BAESY



BAE Systems (BAESY), currently trading at $6,307, is set to release its quarterly earnings report next week, with investors closely watching whether the company can maintain its strong growth momentum amid rising global defense spending. As one of the world's leading defense contractors, BAESY has benefited from high demand for military equipment, cybersecurity solutions, and aerospace innovations.

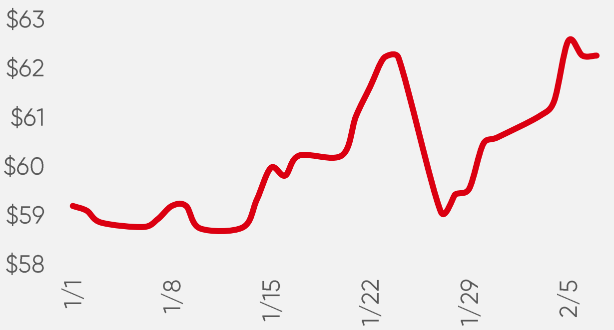
WMT



Walmart (WMT), currently trading at $105.05, is set to release its quarterly earnings report next week, with expectations high after nine consecutive positive earnings reports. As a leader in retail and consumer staples, Walmart continues to benefit from strong consumer demand, strategic e-commerce expansion, and cost efficiency measures that have helped it navigate inflationary pressures and shifting shopping trends.

Upcoming Opportunities

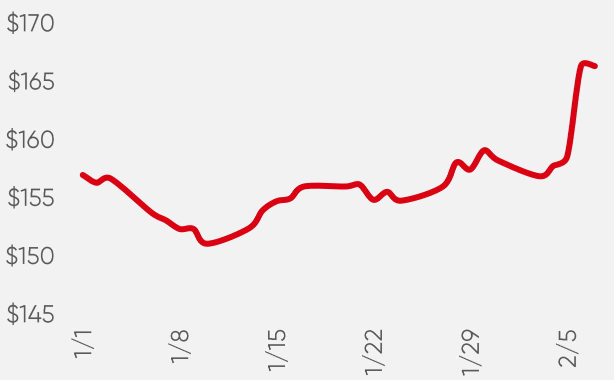
BKNG



Booking Holdings (BKNG), currently trading at $5,008.70, is set to release its quarterly earnings report next week, with expectations running high after nine consecutive positive reports. The company has benefited from strong post-pandemic travel demand, increasing international bookings, and a robust digital platform that continues to attract consumers and business travelers alike.

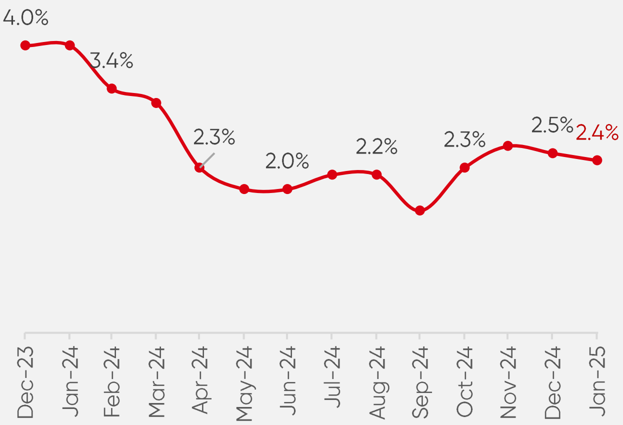
BKNG's dominance in the online travel industry has been reinforced by growing consumer confidence, strong leisure and corporate travel trends, and expanding partnerships with global hospitality providers.

RIVN



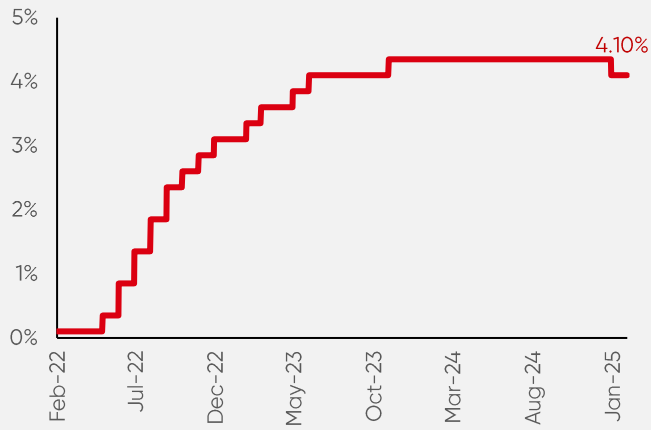
Rivian (RIVN), currently trading at $13.30, is set to release its next quarterly earnings report, with investors closely watching whether the EV maker can stabilize growth after a series of mixed results. The company has been at the forefront of the electric vehicle (EV) market, competing with industry leaders like Tesla and traditional automakers pivoting to EV production.

UK Inflation Rate



UK inflation stood at 2.5% in December 2024, slightly down from 2.6% in November, driven by easing prices in restaurants, hotels, and recreation. Inflation is expected to decline to 2.4% in January and remain stable in the first quarter of 2025 before rising to around 3.7% by mid-year due to higher energy prices and labor costs. Forecasts indicate a gradual decline toward 2.6% in 2026 and 2.2% in 2027, suggesting a steady path toward the Bank of England's 2% target.

Australia Interest Rate



The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) is expected to cut the monetary policy rate from 4.35% to 4.10%, marking the first reduction since 2020. This expectation is driven by slowing core inflation, strengthening the case for monetary easing. However, global uncertainties, including the impact of recent U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum, could influence the RBA's decision.

Story of the Week

Trump's Push for Ukraine-Russia Peace Talks Sparks Global Tensions

In a dramatic shift in diplomacy, former U.S. President Donald Trump has announced that negotiations to end the Ukraine-Russia war will begin immediately, following what he described as a "lengthy and highly productive" conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The decision has sent shockwaves through Ukraine, NATO allies, and European leaders, as the talks were initiated without Ukraine's direct involvement, raising concerns over sovereignty, regional security, and the balance of power in Eastern Europe.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed deep frustration at being excluded from the initial discussions, stating that any negotiations must involve Ukraine directly and prioritize its sovereignty. He warned that peace talks should only take place if there is a clear and enforceable plan to prevent further Russian aggression, rather than allowing Putin to dictate terms. Ukraine remains firm that any settlement should not come at the cost of its territorial integrity or independence.

European leaders have also voiced serious concerns over the U.S. approach, fearing that unilateral negotiations could embolden Russia and weaken NATO's position in Europe. Many have called for Ukraine and key NATO allies to be fully engaged in any future peace talks to ensure that a comprehensive, lasting resolution is reached. Some European officials have warned that if Ukraine is sidelined, it could set a dangerous precedent, giving Moscow leverage in future geopolitical disputes.

Amid the controversy, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has stated that "everything is on the table" to secure a peace deal. This has fueled speculation that the U.S. may consider reducing its troop presence in Europe, a move that would significantly alter NATO's security framework. While some argue that de-escalating tensions with Russia could bring long-term stability, others warn that such a shift could leave European allies vulnerable and weaken deterrence measures against further Russian expansion.

The announcement has left the international community on high alert, with world leaders carefully weighing the potential risks and benefits of Trump's proposed peace deal. The future of Ukraine, NATO's role in Europe, and the broader balance of power between Western nations and Russia are now in question.

As diplomatic maneuvering continues, the next steps in these high-stakes negotiations will be crucial. If handled improperly, this process could reshape global alliances, alter security strategies, and redefine how conflicts are resolved in the modern geopolitical landscape. The coming weeks will determine whether this initiative will lead to a genuine path toward peace—or a geopolitical realignment with lasting consequences for Ukraine and the world.

Definitions

- **Equities:** Shares of ownership in a company that give investors a claim on profits, often through dividends or stock price gains.
- **Bonds:** Loans to governments or companies, paying fixed interest over time, with repayment at maturity.
- **Commodities:** Basic raw materials like oil, gold, or crops, traded on markets to hedge or profit from price changes.
- **Currency Markets (Forex):** Global trading of currencies where investors profit from exchange rate changes between pairs like EUR/USD.
- **Interest Rates:** The cost of borrowing money, set by central banks, influencing economic activity and inflation.
- **Unemployment Claims:** The number of people filing for jobless benefits. Higher claims can signal economic weakness, impacting stock and bond markets.
- **Job Creation:** A measure of new jobs added to the economy, used as an indicator of economic growth and consumer spending strength.
- **GDP (Gross Domestic Product):** The total value of goods and services produced by a country. It's a key measure of economic health and growth.
- Consumer price index (CPI): measures the average change in prices over time for a basket of goods and services typically purchased by households, serving as a key indicator of inflation.
- **Monetary Policy:** Actions by central banks, like adjusting interest rates, to influence economic activity and control inflation.
- **FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee):** The branch of the Federal Reserve that sets U.S. monetary policy, affecting interest rates and economic growth.
- **Dovish Stance:** A policy outlook that favors low interest rates to stimulate economic growth, often boosting stock and bond markets.
- **Hawkish Stance:** A policy outlook that favors higher interest rates to curb inflation, which can slow economic growth and hurt stocks.
- **Inflation:** The rate at which prices for goods and services rise, reducing purchasing power. It influences central bank policies and market performance.
- **Consumer Spending:** The total amount of money spent by households. It's a major driver of economic growth and corporate earnings.
- **Treasuries:** U.S. government bonds considered low-risk investments, sensitive to changes in interest rates set by the Federal Reserve.

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