PFI Monthly

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Content

Financial markets monthly dashboard

Source: Bloomberg; Michal Stupavský, CFA

	February	YTD change	12 months change	Last value
Dollar index DXY	-0.7%	-0.8%	3.5%	107.61
EUR/USD	0.1%	0.2%	-4.3%	1.038
EUR/CZK	-0.6%	-0.6%	-1.3%	25.03
USD/CZK	-0.7%	-0.8%	2.5%	24.03
Global stock markets (MSCI All Country World)	-0.7%	2.6%	13.8%	
Developed stock markets (MSCI World)	-0.8%	2.6%	14.5%	
Emerging stock markets (MSCI Emerging Markets)	0.4%	2.0%	7.7%	
Frontier markets (MSCI Frontier Markets)	2.1%	2.8%	1.7%	
Global stock markets - Value (MSCI All Country World Value)	1.4%	5.5%	12.0%	
Global stock markets - Growth (MSCI All Country World Growth)	-2.6%	-0.1%	15.6%	
Global stock markets - Large Cap (MSCI All Country World Large Cap)	-0.6%	2.6%	14.7%	
Global stock markets - Mid Cap (MSCI All Country World Mid Cap)	-1.2%	2.5%	8.9%	
Global stock markets - Small Cap (MSCI All Country World Small Cap)	-3.3%	-0.9%	5.1%	
US (S&P 500)	-1.4%	1.2%	17.5%	5955
US (Magnificent 7)	-8.8%	-6.5%	38.5%	
US (S&P 500 Equal Weighted)	-0.8%	2.6%	11.0%	
US (NASDAQ)	-4.0%	-2.4%	18.2%	
Non-US stocks (MSCI All Country World ex-US)	1.3%	5.3%	7.2%	
Europe (STOXX Europe 600)	3.3%	9.8%	12.7%	
Japan (MSCI Japan)	-4.0%	-4.0%	-0.4%	
Emerging Asia (MSCI Asia ex-Japan)	1.0%	1.6%	12.1%	
China (MSCI China)	11.5%	12.6%	34.5%	
India (MSCI India)	-7.2%	-9.5%	-0.8%	
Latin America (MSCI Latin America)	-2.3%	6.9%	-21.8%	
Central Europe (CECEEUR)	6.4%	16.9%	23.0%	
Czech Republic (PX)	5.6%	12.2%	33.6%	1976
Global bond markets (Bloomberg Global-Aggregate)	1.4%	2.0%	3.2%	
Global government bonds (ICE BofA Global Government index)	1.8%	2.3%	1.7%	
US Treasuries (Bloomberg US Treasury index)	2.2%	2.7%	5.1%	
US Treasuries with maturity over 20 years (Bloomberg US Treasury 20+ Year index)	5.6%	5.9%	3.1%	
Global investment grade corporate bonds	1.6%	2.3%	5.5%	
Global speculative grade corporate bonds (high-yield)	0.8%	2.2%	11.0%	
EUR investment grade corporate bonds	0.6%	1.1%	6.8%	
EUR speculative grade corporate bonds (high-yield)	1.0%	1.7%	9.1%	
Czech government bonds (Bloomberg Czech Govt All > 1 Yr Bond)	0.2%	1.6%	3.4%	
Average global bond yield (Bloomberg Global-Aggregate Yield To Worst)	-0.12%	-0.14%	-0.28%	3.54%
US 10 year government bond yield	-0.33%	-0.36%	-0.06%	4.21%
US 2 year government bond yield	-0.21%	-0.25%	-0.65%	3.99%
Germany 10 year government bond yield	-0.05%	0.04%	-0.05%	2.41%
Germany 2 year government bond yield	-0.09%	-0.06%	-0.89%	2.03%
Czech Republic 10 year government bond yield	0.07%	-0.17%	0.16%	4.05%
Czech Republic 2 year government bond yield	0.18%	0.09%	-0.17%	3.54%
Average global investment-grade credit spread	0.05%	0.01%	-0.16%	0.90%
Average global high-yield credit spread	0.17%	-0.05%	-0.72%	3.24%
Global commodity markets (Bloomberg Commodity Total Return)	0.8%	4.8%	11.7%	
Crude oil Brent	-4.7%	-2.0%	-12.5%	73
Copper	4.5%	7.9%	11.6%	9359
Gold	1.3%	7.9%	39.4%	2849
Silver	-3.2%	6.8%	39.3%	31.2

Interview

Petr Smutný, Partner, Business Recovery Services, PwC Czech Republic

You are the leader of Business Recovery Services team at PwC in the Central & Eastern Europe region (CEE) with almost 30 years of consulting experience, specialising in independent business reviews and preparation of restructuring plans. Your team is widely regarded as the leading insolvency advisory practice in the Czech market. How did you get into this professional field and how has it evolved over the years?

I started working in 1992 and right at the beginning I got a few clients that nobody knew how to handle. During my secondment in the USA, this was pretty standard, a sort of "newbie, here's a difficult client, show us what you can do" approach. And I always managed somehow. In 1999, when I was considering what to do next, two departments opened at PwC Czech Republic: forensic audit and restructuring. So, I transferred to restructuring and my first assignment was the restructuring of Nová huť, where I spent three successful years of work.

The milestone was when LG.Philips went bankrupt in 2007 due to an investment in bad technology. Although everyone gave up on the company, we were able to propose a solution and negotiate settlement with the director of the factory in Hranice. Approximately 32 factories around the world fell into insolvency and it was the best showcase globally. Afterwards, when the crisis hit in 2009, I had a top team of experts at PwC with unparalleled experience, which is why we won all the big contracts.

The next major one was the restructuring of Kordárna, the first contract under the new restructuring law. New concepts were tested, the new law was applied, the company was successfully sold, and students are still writing their theses on this topic today. Thanks to this, we have become a benchmark of quality and reliability not only for creditors, but also for debtors, who know that we don't play any games and that we want to achieve a good result for both parties. The basis of our success is the stability, clarity and competence of our team.

After the crisis, new opportunities emerged, for instance in Slovenia, where we won all restructuring cases and sales. The banks there were in trouble, the percentage of non-performing loans (NPLs) was around 25% and the whole country was on the verge of bankruptcy (in comparison, our NPLs are around 2-3%). I figured that the New Ljubljana Bank could sell the outstanding loans for €800 million. And while the market standard was that the prices were around 5-10% of the portfolio value, we reached almost 30%. After this success, we were approached by other banks to apply this strategy in their case as well. I was almost living in Slovenia at that time and we had most of the business on the market. Therefore, the crucial element of this business is also the creativity of solutions – seeing opportunities where others only see obstacles.

Could you please elaborate on what the business recovery services are actually about and how it can help companies, especially those in financial troubles?

Approximately half of our business comprises insolvency advisory – we prepare reorganisation plans, manage sales processes and advise either debtors or insolvency practitioners, such as now at Liberty Ostrava. The other half focuses on non-insolvency restructuring. We help companies in payment difficulties to rebuild the confidence of banks and creditors, propose transformation measures and ensure their long-term viability. Last year, we successfully completed a number of distressed M&A transactions, mostly with strategic investors. In general, I would say that we specialise in non-standard situations under time, financial or other pressures – where methodical approaches are not enough.

What are the major differences between the business recovery services in the Czech Republic and other CEE countries?

The main difference is the complexity of the services we offer in the Czech Republic. The most advanced market besides us is Poland and Romania; other markets are small and significantly less sophisticated. In Poland, the insolvency business is not as well-developed as in the Czech Republic, but there are a lot of restructurings due to the size of the country. On the other hand, in Romania, creditors are not used to requiring IBR; it is one of the few countries where we operate as insolvency practitioners. In other countries, especially in former Yugoslavia, contracts in our field are very rare. We have had a number of successful projects in Slovakia. We have worked on modernising legislation there and, in general, the Slovak market is potentially very interesting. However, there are not many contracts or distressed transactions there.

As regards your consulting practice, which major trends have you registered since the pandemic period in 2020?

Some firms, especially in healthcare and retail, succeeded during the COVID-19 pandemic but were not prepared for such massive growth and ran into problems afterwards. Even though many countries have since created the institute of preventive restructuring, there are not many contracts in this area. Banks have healthy portfolios and low NPLs. While during the crisis we reached almost 10% of NPLs in the Czech Republic – in some places even 25%, today we are within 2%. These are isolated cases, perhaps driven by failed investments or generational change. Inflation has also played a role, with large price increases meaning higher demands on working capital. There are also companies that have been negatively impacted by anti-Russian sanctions or other reasons, but we do not observe a systematic trend. Occasionally, we deal with sales of distressed companies, for instance, recently with an owner with no heirs and a tax dispute, but even these tend to be rare cases.

Are there any significant general differences between large corporations and SMEs as regards their financial troubles and subsequent debt advisory/ restructuring efforts provided by your team?

If a Czech company is a subsidiary of, let's say, a German automotive group and the parent company goes into distress or insolvency, the implications can be huge. Implications such as the relationship between the parent company and its subsidiary and also the relationship of different legal regimes are addressed. Foreign groups also often use cash pooling, which can be lethal for the subsidiary, which thus has no cash in the account but only receivables from the parent company in distress. And if one does not know all the local rules and regulations, one can make bad decisions. Currently, we're working on a multi-billion-dollar company with offices in a number of countries. The size of a company does not automatically mean better processes or more transparency. Even large companies with billions in turnover can have very complex structures. For small companies, the work is similar, but with less financial potential.

What is your current typical advice to your clients in general to solve their excessive financial leverage? EBITDA enhancement, net working capital (NWC) optimisation, CAPEX optimisation or asset disposals? Or is it usually a combination of these actions which are generally aimed to boost free cash flow (FCF) generation?

One of the main priorities is cash – as they say "cash is the king". Then, of course, it depends on the specific situation. The company needs to be stabilised and set up properly to be viable in the long term. Another tool is finding an investor. If the owner doesn't have the strength, financial reserves and sufficient working capital, the banks no longer trust him. Sometimes it takes a dramatic move, such as selling even a part of the core business. And most owners don't want to do that.

You have led some of the largest restructuring projects in the Czech Republic. What are usually the biggest challenges within these projects?

I have long proclaimed that the biggest obstacle is usually the owner in the company management. When they get into trouble, they tend to complicate finding the optimal solution and turning the company around. I usually advise owners to take a holiday, go somewhere to get a tan and let us work. However, instead of listening to us, they often hold onto the company until the very end, when the working capital is consumed, minimising the possibilities of where else to reach, and making it all the more challenging. Complications can include a difficult legal structure, inappropriate ownership, liability or some instruments that are difficult to get out of.

Based on your professional experience, what are the key specifics of financial management in Czech companies? Are there any significant differences between CFOs of Czech companies and CFOs abroad?

I don't think there are significant specifics. For instance, many of our clients don't have a cashflow management system in place. They live in comfort, without addressing working capital surpluses or optimisation. In western countries, there is more pressure to maximise optimisation and make good use of resources. Many companies in our country are managed in an unsystematic way and the processes don't meet the 21st-century standards. When they run into difficulties, these outdated systems and processes are often the source of additional difficulties.

Your team is also responsible for non-performing loans (NPL) portfolio transactions in the CEE region. What are the key characteristics and the key players involved in this business?

The main wave took place in 2015, when banks were cleaning up and selling portfolios after the crisis. Not many NPLs could be found in the Czech Republic – rather single cases (single tickets). Large transactions were dealt with in Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, and Serbia; international firms set up branches there to service the NPLs. There were not many investors, perhaps up to ten. Some transactions were local, but most were funded from London or Western Europe. There were also banks, such as Deutsche Bank, which had teams buying portfolios. And then local platforms were created to service the portfolios. Today, the NPL transaction segment is virtually non-existent; the market has changed significantly. Banks used to sell loans for which they obtained 5% to 10% of their value, but now they often dispose of significantly more creditworthy loans, sometimes at face value. The situation in retail is different; banks sell non-performing loans regularly and the market is quite saturated.

You are also the President of the Turnaround Management Association (TMA) in the Czech Republic, which serves as an interdisciplinary platform for exchanging knowledge and experience between restructuring and insolvency practitioners. Under the auspices of TMA, you have been involved in the training of bankruptcy specialists at major banks, as well as a number of judges involved in insolvency proceedings. What is the mission and major goals of TMA under your leadership?

I want to bring together experts and create a platform for sharing experience. Then when these people meet on a case, they can communicate with each other and find consensus quickly. The fact that we have standardised resolution processes has proven to be very beneficial to the market and to creditors. Over the years, we have managed to create a community, practices and mechanisms for interconnecting bank creditors, legal advisers, economic advisers and the whole chain within the insolvency process. The Czech TMA is the longest and best functioning association in Central and Eastern Europe. It is also essential that we recruit people by mutual consensus who meet not only professional but also moral and ethical credentials.

BIO

Petr Smutný is a Partner at PwC in the Czech Republic and a leader of the Business Recovery Services team in CEE. Petr has over 30 years of consulting experience, specialising in Independent Business Reviews and preparation of restructuring plans. Petr has led some of the largest restructuring projects in the Czech Republic, operating in a wide range of industries including steel & machinery, automotive, mining, consumer goods and other industries. He has also participated in major restructuring projects in Slovakia, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia. Petr's team is widely regarded as the leading insolvency advisory practice in the Czech market. Petr has been engaged in all recent major insolvency cases in the market.

Petr led the project of financial restructuring of Hidria Group that was perceived as the landmark restructuring project in Slovenia. Petr also led two restructuring cases, which were both selected as the project of the year by the Europe Turnaround Management Association (TMA Europe) – complex restructuring services in insolvency trustee support of SAZKA a.s. and complex restructuring services in insolvency Preparation of distress M&A of company Kordárna a.s. Petr's team is also responsible for NPL portfolio transactions in the region, developing the NPL / NPA portfolio market and cooperating closely with local financial institutions and international investors. Among others, Petr has been involved in the project of €800m corporate NPL disposal in Slovenia and Croatia.

Petr is the President of the Turnaround Management Association in the Czech Republic, which serves as an interdisciplinary platform for exchanging knowledge and experience between restructuring and insolvency practitioners. Under the auspices of TMA, Petr has been involved in the training of bankruptcy specialists at major banks, as well as a number of judges involved in insolvency proceedings. As a member of an advisory body to the Czech Ministry of Justice, Petr is involved in reviewing and proposing legislative changes in the field of corporate insolvency.

Global macro insight of the month

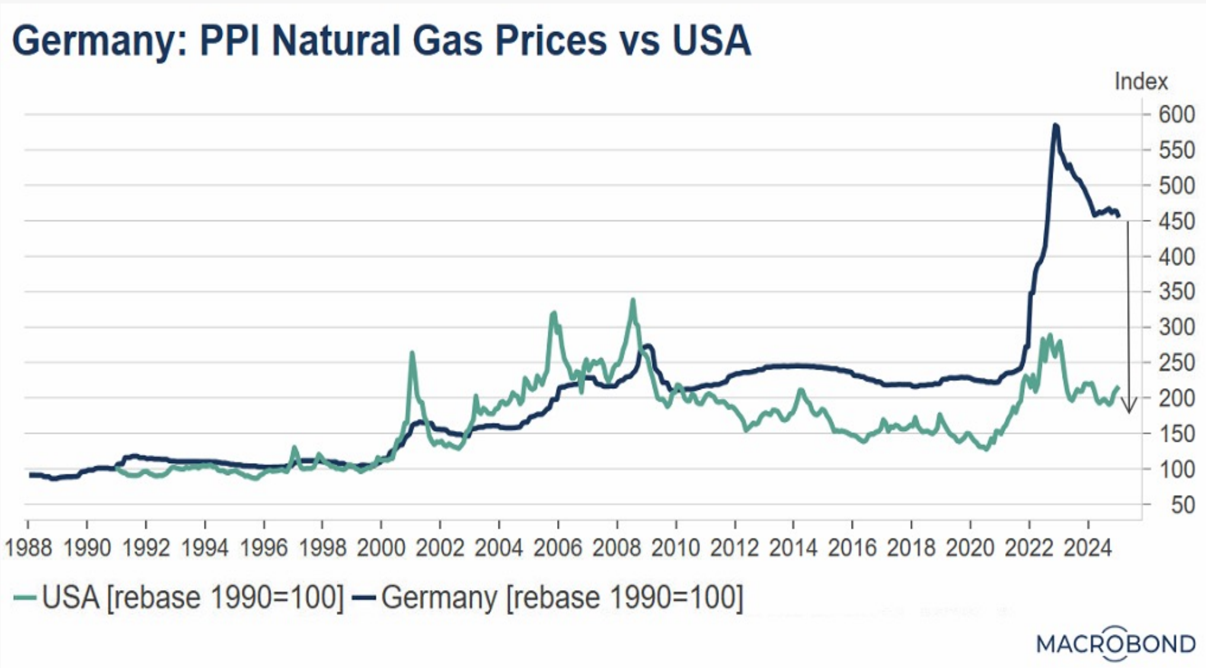
Europe must start counting on itself

Andre Chelhot, CFA
Chief Economist

Europe stands at a crossroads. The shifting global order, increasing geopolitical tensions, and economic challenges demand that Europe chart its own course. This means achieving energy independence, ensuring military self-sufficiency, fostering free and unified debt markets, reducing regulatory burdens, and adopting a federal structure akin to Canada's.

Energy Independence: Nuclear and Natural Gas

Europe's energy security is paramount. Dependence on foreign energy sources, particularly Russian gas, has proven to be a strategic liability. To counter this, Europe must invest heavily in nuclear energy, the most reliable and efficient means of achieving energy sovereignty. Additionally, it should develop its own natural gas infrastructure, tapping into domestic reserves and securing supply chains that do not rely on unstable regions. A unified energy strategy would ensure that no single member state is left vulnerable to external pressure.



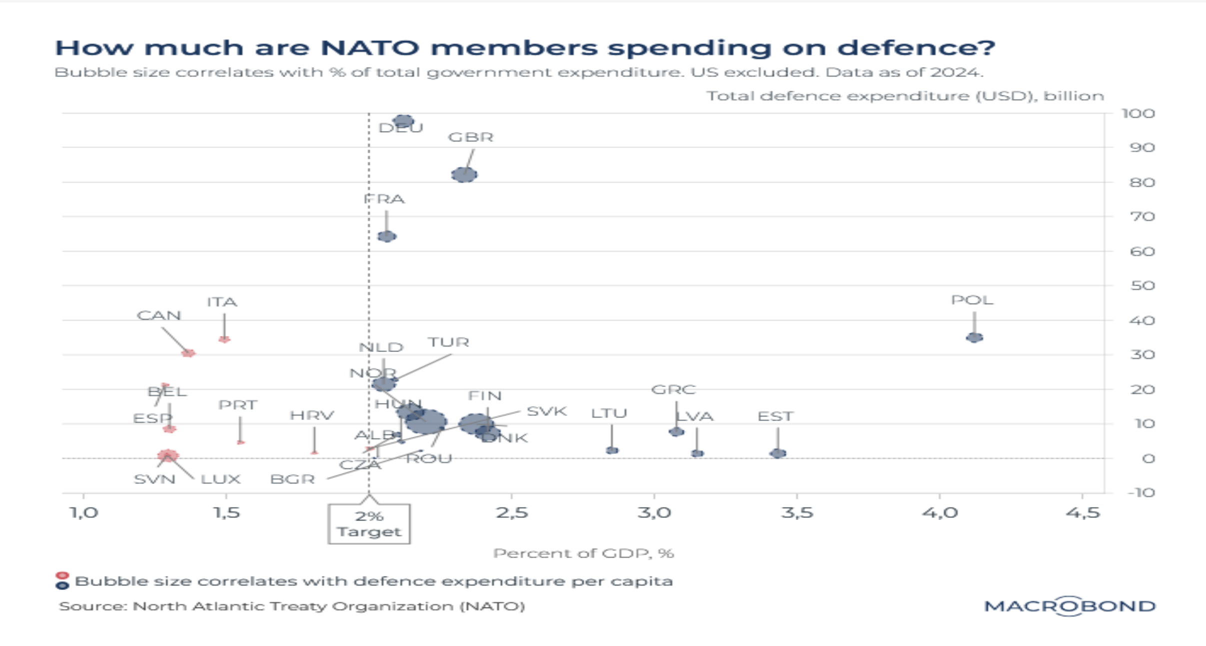
Defense Autonomy

European defense should not hinge on the United States. The continent must establish a cohesive military force capable of defending its interests independently. This requires a consolidated European defense budget, investments in modern military technology, and an industrial base capable of producing essential defense equipment. NATO can remain a strategic alliance, but Europe must be able to act decisively without relying on external powers. European countries must urgently raise their defense spending to a minimum level of 3.5% of GDP to match the spending of the USA. If NATO members were to **match U.S. defense spending as a percentage of GDP** the shortfall would be quite large.

Estimated NATO Defense Spending Shortfall to Match the U.S.:

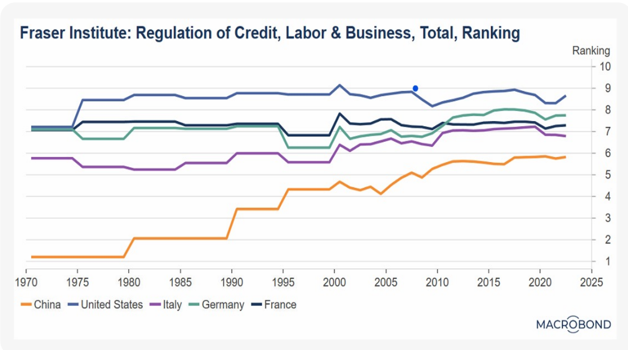
- Current NATO defense spending (2024): ~$1.3 trillion
- Required spending if all NATO members spent 3.5% of GDP: ~$2.3 trillion
- Shortfall: ~$1 trillion

Most NATO members are still **well below 3.5% of GDP**, with only **Poland and a few others exceeding** this level. The biggest shortfalls are in **Germany, Canada, Spain, Italy, and smaller European nations**, which would need to **more than double** their defense budgets to match the U.S. commitment.



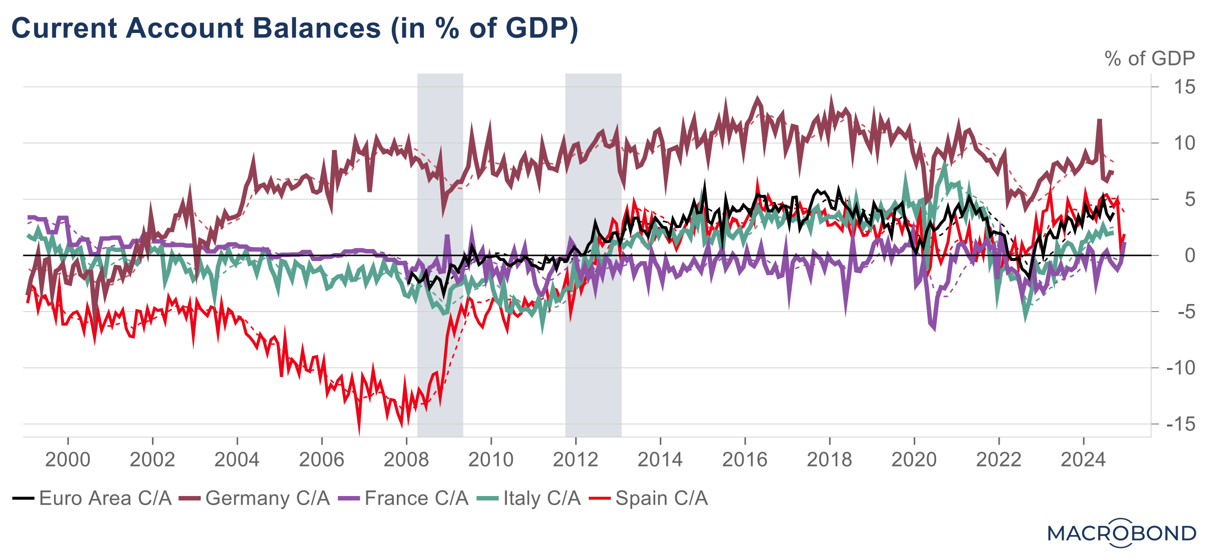
Economic Freedom and Deregulation

Europe's economic strength lies in its dynamic industries and entrepreneurial spirit, yet excessive regulation stifles growth. To unlock its full potential, Europe must embrace free markets and significantly reduce bureaucratic constraints. Cutting unnecessary regulations, streamlining business processes, and fostering competition will create a more resilient and competitive economy, and enhance productivity growth.

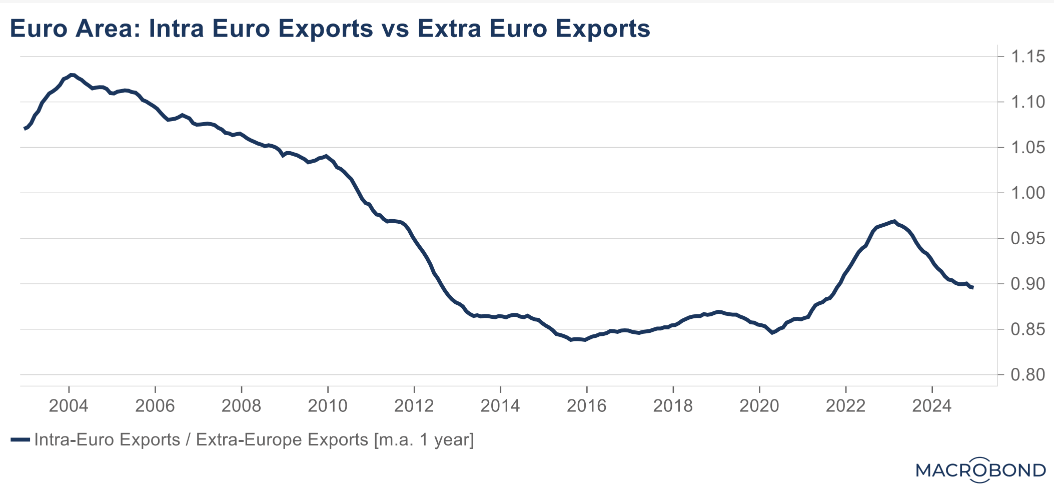


A New Economic Model: Balancing Internal Trade

Europe is wealthy with a sizeable net international investment position and a current account balance surplus of almost 5% of GDP. All main countries enjoy a current account surplus. The continent must shift its economic model to reduce its dependence on external trade and strengthen its domestic demand and internal markets. Northern European countries, which traditionally maintain high national savings and trade surpluses, must increase domestic consumption and import more from southern European economies. This rebalancing would create a more integrated European economy, ensuring that internal demand rather than external dependencies drive growth. A coordinated fiscal strategy should encourage investment in infrastructure, innovation, and productivity-enhancing sectors across all member states, fostering sustainable economic growth within Europe's vast internal market.

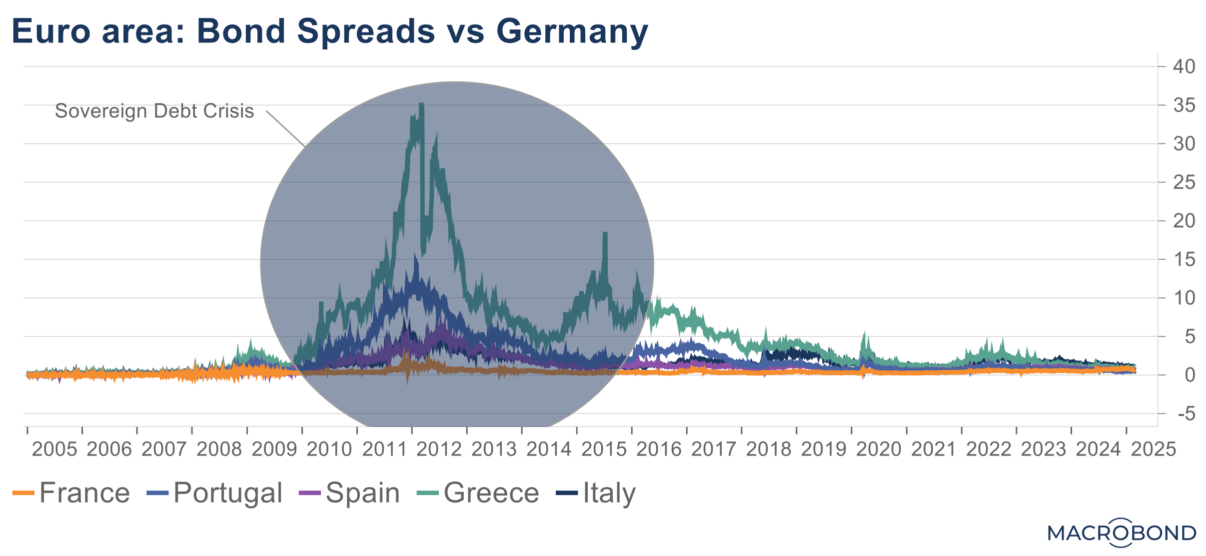


Jeffrey Sachs has long argued that Europe must adopt a strategy of greater internal economic integration to reduce its vulnerability to global shocks. Likewise, Mario Draghi has emphasized the necessity of coordinated fiscal policy and structural reforms to ensure sustainable growth across the European Union. Both economists highlight that Europe's long-term stability depends on policies that balance trade, investment, and consumption within the bloc rather than relying excessively on exports to external markets.

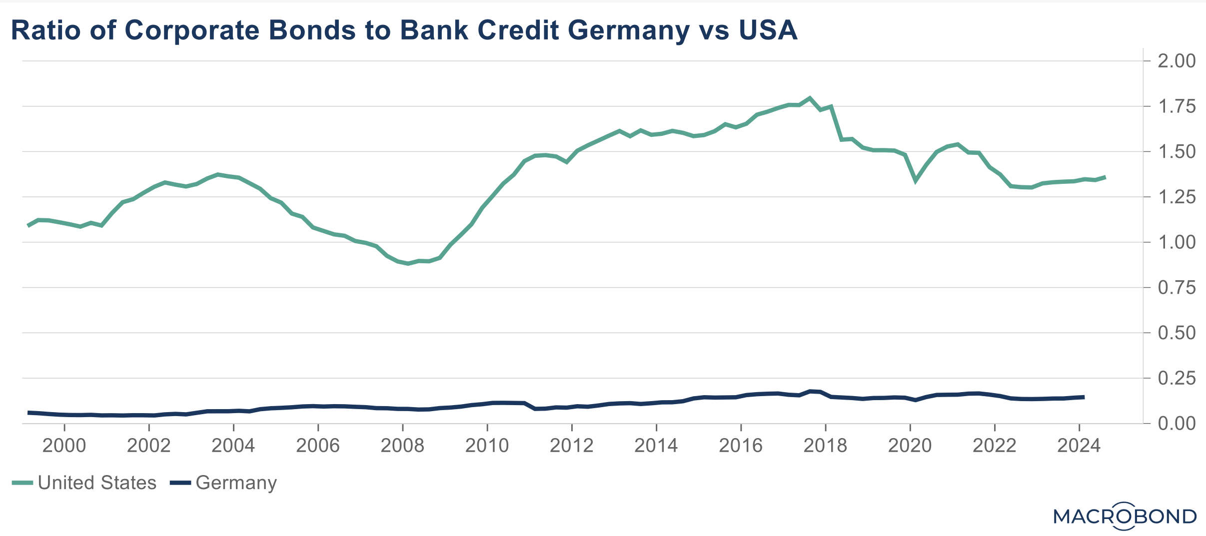


Fiscal Discipline and a Unified Bond Market

A European fiscal policy must impose strict budgetary discipline. Member states should be prohibited from running deficits. Instead, a pan-European fiscal policy should be adopted with equalization mechanisms that would ensure the feasibility of a fiscal union and financial stability across all member states. A unified bond market would further reinforce economic resilience, providing a stable and liquid financial system that benefits all members.



The creation of a unified bond market would place all countries on the same risk level, reducing fragmentation and fostering financial stability. This, in turn, would encourage the development of a deeper and more dynamic corporate bond market, similar to that of the United States, by providing a more stable funding environment for businesses across Europe.



Federal Europe: The Canadian Model

Europe's governance structure must evolve to ensure efficiency, stability, and strategic coherence. A federal system, inspired by Canada, offers the best framework. Under this model, defense, foreign affairs, and fiscal and monetary policy would fall under the jurisdiction of a European federal government, while all other matters remain with member states. This balance would preserve national identities while ensuring that critical decisions are made at the federal level.

A two-chamber system would provide fair representation. The Chamber of Deputies would allocate seats based on population and GDP, ensuring economic and demographic weight is reflected in decision-making. The Senate would grant each member state four representatives, ensuring smaller nations have a voice. Additionally, a European Federal Court would serve as the final arbiter on constitutional matters.

Country	Population (2024)	Deputies (1 per 500K, min. 3)	Senate Seats 4 seats per member state
Germany	83,445,000	167	4
France	68,402,000	137	4
Italy	58,989,700	118	4
Spain	48,610,500	97	4
Poland	36,621,000	73	4
Romania	19,064,400	38	4
Netherlands	17,942,900	36	4
Belgium	11,832,000	24	4
Greece	10,900,600	22	4
Czech Republic	10,639,700	21	4
Portugal	10,551,700	21	4
Hungary	10,397,200	21	4
Sweden	9,584,600	19	4
Austria	9,158,800	18	4
Bulgaria	6,445,500	13	4
Denmark	5,961,200	12	4
Finland	5,603,900	11	4
Slovakia	5,424,700	11	4
Ireland	5,343,800	10	4
Croatia	3,862,000	8	4
Lithuania	2,885,900	6	4
Slovenia	2,123,900	4	4
Latvia	1,871,900	3	4
Estonia	1,374,700	3	4
Cyprus	933,500	3	4
Luxembourg	672,100	3	4
Malta	563,000	3	4
Total	**449,206,200**	**902**	**108**

Conclusion

Europe must no longer depend on others for its energy, defense, or economic security. By embracing nuclear energy, securing natural gas supplies, building its defense capabilities, liberalizing its economy, and adopting a federal structure modeled after Canada, Europe can position itself as a strong, independent global power. The time for hesitation is over—Europe must count on itself.

All these policy initiatives would result in a political union where all citizens have EU citizenship and are all equal in a unified Europe.

Global macro insights of the month

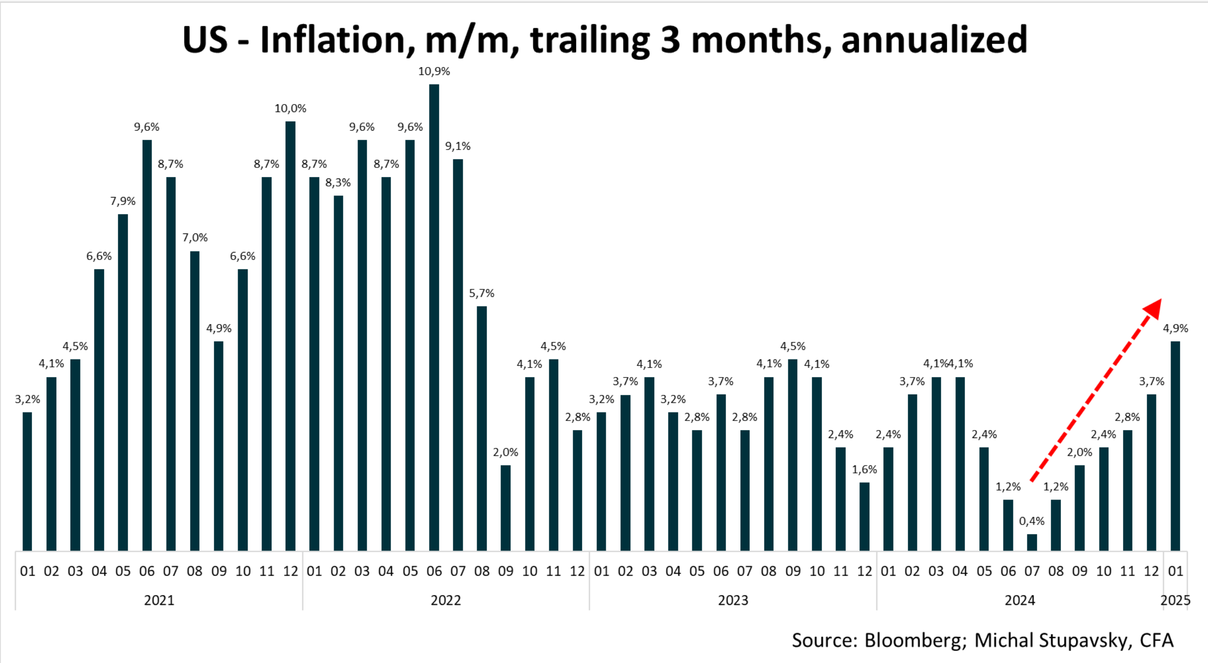
US inflation seems to be somewhat re-accelerating

Michal Stupavský, CFA
Head of Research

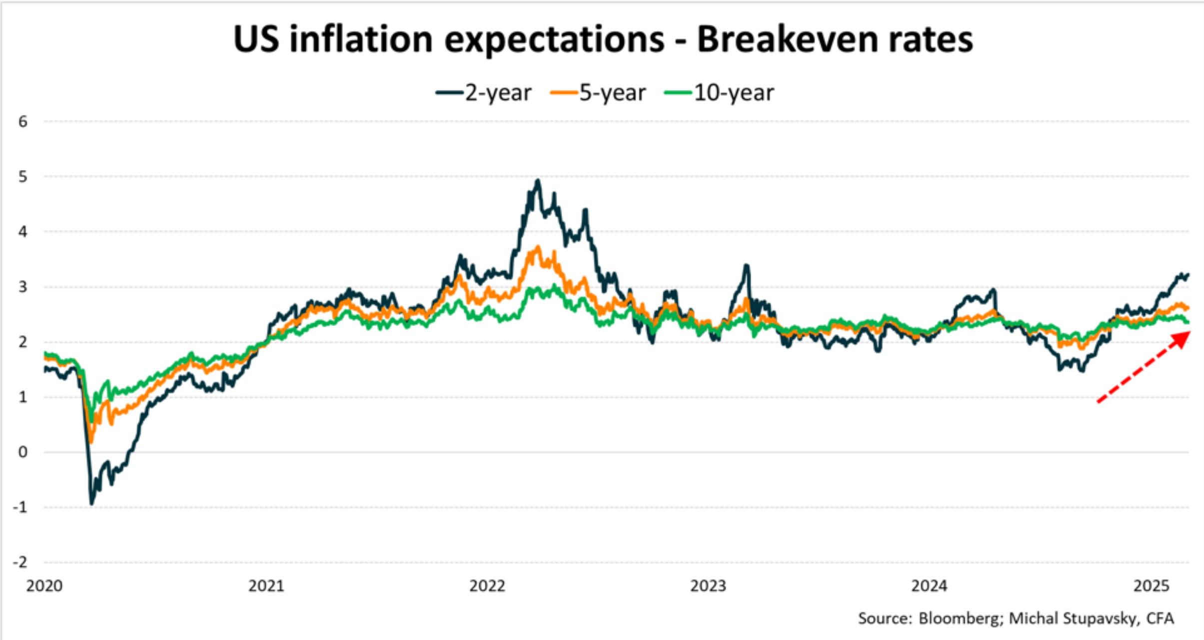
US inflation seems to be somewhat re-accelerating. The latest three month-on-month prints of the headline inflation were the following:

- November 2024 0.3%
- December 2024 0.4%
- January 2025 0.5%

These three figures give you an annualized value of 4.9% which is in fact the highest level since August 2022.



On top of that inflation expectations have been increasing as well. For instance, 2-year breakeven inflation rate has increased by 70 basis points from 2.5% to 3.2% since the beginning of 2025.



That said, Fed seems to be on hold for the time-being, while the probability of a hike has somewhat increased as well.

Czech economy insight of the month

The importance of household consumption for economic growth

Ilona Švihlíková, PhD

Analyst

The Czech Statistical Office (CSO) confirmed that the Czech economy grew by 1 % in 2024. This low growth more resembling to stagnation was mainly driven by household consumption. As the state budget assumes the household consumption to remain the main contributor to economic growth, it is essential to analyze this GDP component in more depth.

The CSO states that on quarter-on-quarter basis the main engine in the 4th quarter of 2024 was the household consumption and the change of inventories. On the other hand, gross fixed capital formation and declining foreign demand represented a negative influence.

The year-on-year comparison reveals that it was the household consumption that contributed the most to the GDP growth (+1.9 percentage points). However, can the household consumption really contribute positively to growth, as to fulfil rather optimistic expectations of the growth for 2025? The state budget was originally planned for growth of 2.7 %, later downgraded. The Czech National Bank currently counts with only 2.0 %, however some financial institutions place their estimates even lower, e.g. due to increased geopolitical risks.

The current economic survey for February 2025 shows diverging trends by the business sphere and by households. Whereas the business segment views the future with more enthusiasm, as the confidence indicator increased to 98.0 points, the confidence indicator by households declined by 0.5 percentage points and fell to 96.6 points. The share of consumers expecting a worsening of the overall economic situation has increased for the third consecutive month. The share of consumers who believe that the current situation is not favourable for larger investments has not changed. However, it is apparent that the consumer confidence declined to the lowest level in the last twelve months. The households thus remain pessimistic about the overall economic outlook.

Inflation remains one of the important factors when considering the future development of household consumption. The data for January 2025 showed inflation near the tolerance band of the inflation target, reaching 2.8 %. However, what is worrying is especially the food inflation. The food prices continue to rise, reaching 5 % in January 2025. Taking into consideration that although the price dynamics has slowed down from the double-digit numbers, the high prices remain a reality.

So far, the decline of real wages has not been compensated and there is a huge question mark, when this will happen. Although real wages continue to increase (4.6 % in 3rd quarter 2024), there are serious doubts whether this tendency will continue. A decline of vacancies is visible in the Labour Office statistics – it is not a seasonal shift, when the number of vacancies is lower than the number of registered work-seekers. The industry, especially manufacturing, faces serious problems that are connected with both high prices of energy, the recession in Germany, the low growth in the EU as a whole and many geopolitical risks. The CSO confirmed that regarding the gross value added, the manufacturing industry contributed negatively, on year-on-year basis -0.6 percentage points.

There certainly is a space for increase in household consumption, which has been traditionally low in its share of GDP (under 50 %, usually hovering around 47-48 %). Household consumption level has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. However, the risks remain on the downside and it would be probably very unwise to count only on the household consumption to provide the engine of economic growth. A growth program is desperately needed. One of the most neglected sectors remains ownership housing that becomes unavailable even to the higher-middle class in Prague. This represents a chain reaction to flat rents. Construction of houses supported by the municipalities and provinces could be just the right incentive for renewing the growth in the Czech Republic.

Financial markets insight of the month

Are investors revolting against the idea of US exceptionalism?

Tomáš Pfeiler, CFA

Analyst

As of the start of the year, the US exceptionalism was the prevailing market narrative. Investors in general believed that Donald Trump's election victory will turbocharge already vigorous economic growth. Asset managers piled into US equities at unprecedented scale. The USD soared against the euro and yields on Treasuries surged. After two months money managers are looking for ruptures in this thesis. Are we witnessing a major market shift?

The Trump trade seems to have peaked one week prior to the inauguration. The 10Y UST yield climbed to 4,8 % and 10Y real yields rose to 2,3 % (both measures were at their 15M high). From this moment, however, the Trump trade has begun to unwind. When positioning becomes overstretched, it is susceptible to even the slightest sign of weakness in the underlying narrative.

At the initial stage, promises of the Golden age for America were enough to spur rally in equities. Nevertheless, money managers quickly realise that not every policy proposal is unequivocally beneficial to risky assets. Trump's administration fired the opening salvo of the new trade just one week after the inauguration. For investors, it was a wake-up call suggesting there are risks associated with the new administration and its unorthodox policy actions.

Recently, some economic activity indicators such as PMIs have started to exhibit signs of weakness. In past years investors accustomed to buoyant service sector readings. But February figures showed that services were not insulated from the overall deceleration. Obviously, recent data are not ample evidence that the economy is about to crash. Slowdown can neither be solely ascribed to Trump-related policy uncertainty.

There are some economists, who are convinced, that we are seeing delayed impact of the Fed's monetary policy restriction.

Nonetheless, these doubts about the growth momentum were sufficient to arrest the rise in UST yields. Yield of 10Y UST is 60 bps below its 2025 high. Disturbing fact is that this decline has clearly been real yield-driven. The yield of 10Y TIPS (market proxy for real yield) dropped 50 bps. Slump in real yields usually reflects pessimism about the economic outlook.

A reason for particular worry is that the macro-outlook is softening against the backdrop of unrelenting inflationary pressures. Inflation expectations in the US remain elevated. Fresh CPI readings also surprised on the upside. Thus, the probability of stagflationary scenario – a nightmare for all investors – is mounting (while still remains low). Asset managers seem to be more concerned about the growth perspective as market repriced the Fed's interest rate path. Fed funds futures imply there will be almost 3 cuts in 2025, up from 1 cut that market priced at the start of February.

For investors it is, however, too early to throw in the towel. Current data is not necessarily a harbinger of significant economic downturn. Most of Wall Street banks have not slash their GDP growth forecasts. Labour market is still robust. Furthermore, Donald Trump's tax cuts or deregulation have not happened yet. When approved, they will obviously support the US economic dynamism.

Recent underperformance of US stocks is a stark reminder that overcrowded trades are vulnerable to abrupt reversals. When investors are tilted heavily towards one idea, they become complacent. And complacency often precedes disaster. While an implosion in asset prices is far from inevitable, money managers should realize that market narratives are always temporary. Sticking to the particular narrative regardless of the changing circumstances, is clearly not the best investment strategy.

Banking sector insight of the month

What is on the mind of banking credit risk managers

Michal Mesík
Analyst

Last month, Prague hosted the 4th Annual Banking Credit Risk Summit, attended by the author of this article. The summit featured more than 60 participants and speakers from the risk management sector of various European banks. Topics ranged from risk culture to model risk management and validation, applications of AI in credit risk management, stress testing, Basel IV, and implementing the ESG framework.

This list provides a good overview of what is currently on the minds of risk managers. Here are some key takeaways and insights from the two conference days.

Risk culture

Culture is created through people with shared values, beliefs and behaviors. People at the top of an organisation are instrumental in shaping the culture. A wrong culture is dangerous, as it often erodes the organization from within. By the time signs of bad culture become visible, the bank may already be significantly damaged. Some of the biggest bank failures in recent history occurred when risk management became too commercial, with senior risk managers replaced by business-side personnel, prioritising risk-taking over accountability.

Regulatory reference: The ECB recently conducted a consultation on the Draft Guide on Governance and Risk Culture issued in July 2024, highlighting the importance of risk culture for banks.

AI applications in risk management

To employ AI efficiently in a bank, starting small may be more effective than aiming for a big bang. For successful AI implementation and risk mitigation, it is crucial to define use cases well and gradually expand the scope of AI applications. At each stage, human oversight should ensure the quality of AI outputs. One presenter shared her experience with automating model validation, where an LLM was trained on internal data. This involved rewriting code from SAS to Python and automating the drafting of model validation reports. Automation helped address a significant backlog in model validations, freeing the risk team from repetitive tasks.

Regulatory reference: More specific guidelines for AI in the financial sector are yet to come. Following the AI Act published in the Official Journal of the European Union in July 2024, the European Commission has launched a consultation on AI in the financial sector. Guidelines are expected in 2025.

ESG (environmental, social, green) and the credit cycle

Climate change and evolving regulations on ESG introduce new dimensions of financial and non-financial risks. To manage these risks adequately, banks need to align their business and operating models with the evolving regulations. ESG regulation increasingly demands the integration of ESG components into credit risk assessment. However, obtaining structured and long-term data is problematic and relevant data is often not available. While one certainly needs to understand the impact of ESG on all phases of the credit cycle, eventually ESG risks are about knowing your customer and understanding the challenges their business faces.

Regulatory reference: In January 2025 the EBA issued the Guidelines on the Management of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Risks, addressing ESG risk management processes as part of the broader risk management framework.

Stress testing

In January 2025 the European Banking Association (EBA) published the scenario for a European-wide stress test exercise, to be completed by banks in the first half of 2025. The EBA conducts EU-wide stress testing every two years to assess risks and vulnerabilities in the EU banking system. Banks are required to fill in numerous templates with extensive data. While the EBA stress test helps design stress testing infrastructure, the scenarios are not tailored to specific institutions but enable comparisons among banks. True insights for a bank come from in-house developed stress testing programs. A representative of the domestic Česká spořitelna shared an inspiring approach to such an in-house stress testing, combining comprehensive internal stress testing with focused ad hoc stress tests and tailored-made ESG stress scenarios.

Regulatory reference: The EBA methodology on the 2025 EU-wide stress test provides further information on the currently ongoing regulatory stress test.

Future of banking regulations and emerging risks

Basel IV and its EU implementation through CRR III and CRD IV are coming into force, with impacts visible in Q1 2025 reporting of banks. Basel IV brings in total higher costs for banks, with the exact distribution depending on the business model and geography. However, as a panelist in discussion about Basel IV noted, the implementation costs of new regulations likely exceeded the ongoing costs for most of the banks. The panel members concluded that Basel IV is not the final station, and banking regulations will continue to evolve. Significant roll-backs of Basel IV implementation are unlikely, though some more flexibility can be expected as the U.S. and other countries postpone or abolish parts of the implementation. The European banking system is now safer than before, but not all risks are defined by regulation. Risk managers will need to use their imagination and think beyond existing schemes to capture emerging risks.

Regulatory reference: To read which risks currently concern the supervisors, look into ECB supervisory priorities for 2025-27.

In summary, the 4th Annual Banking Credit Risk Summit highlighted the critical areas of focus for risk managers, including risk culture, AI applications, ESG integration, stress testing, and the future of banking regulations. As the regulatory landscape continues to evolve, banks must adapt their risk management practices to address emerging risks and ensure resilience in an increasingly complex environment.

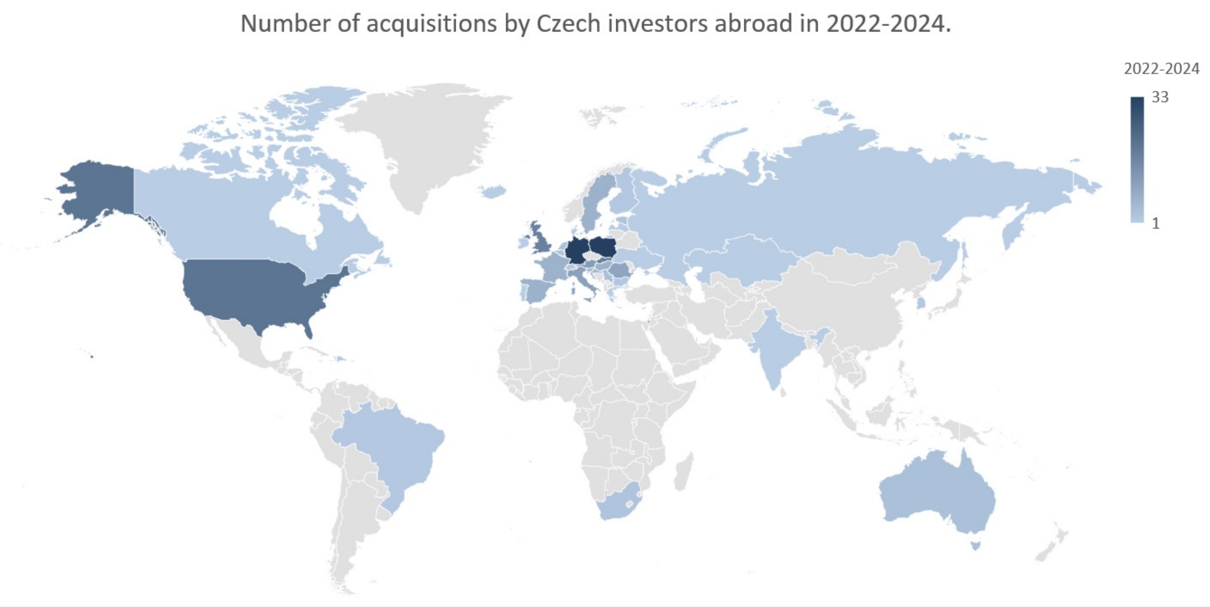
Czech M&A market insight of the month

Global footprint expansion of Czech companies through M&A

Tamara Lorencová
Analyst

Czech companies are increasingly expanding their international presence through mergers and acquisitions, reflecting growing confidence and strategic ambition. In recent years, cross-border M&A activity has gained momentum, particularly in the technology, media and telecommunications (TMT) sector, followed by biotechnology and medical, energy and consumer industries.

While Germany, Poland and Slovakia remain primary targets due to economic stability, geographical proximity and established business relations, Czech investors are also actively acquiring companies in the United States, Australia and selected Asian markets, signaling a broader push for global competitiveness.



Source: MergerMarket

Key sectors driving Czech M&A abroad

The TMT sector continues to lead Czech outbound investments, with a strong focus on digital transformation and consumer engagement. Livesport expanded its international portfolio with the acquisition of Spain-based BeSoccer Solutions, a football data platform, while KKCG strengthened its presence in digital services with the acquisitions of German company Avenga, an end-to-end software engineering and consulting platform, and Luxembourg-based financial software provider Neofacto.

The healthcare sector was also active in international expansion. FutureLife, a leader in fertility treatments, expanded its portfolio through several strategic acquisitions, including the Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine in the UK and Gynatal in Romania.

The defence industry continues to be a major focus of Czech M&A activity, with Czechoslovak Group (CSG) making a significant move by acquiring US ammunition manufacturer Kinetic Group, strengthening its global presence in defence manufacturing. Similarly, RSBC Investment Group expanded its defence portfolio last year with the acquisition of Austrian firearms manufacturer STEYR ARMS, which is now seeking further acquisitions in the US to strengthen its market position.

In the industrials sector, Daniel Křetínský's EP Corporate Group made a strategic entry into steel production by acquiring a stake in ThyssenKrupp's steel division.

The consumer sector has also seen significant activity. In 2024, Enterstore expanded into fashion with the acquisition of Swedish lingerie brand Miss Mary of Sweden, while HP TRONIC Zlín strengthened its retail presence with the purchase of Slovak electronics retailer NAY. Additionally, VAFO Group, a leading pet food producer, has been expanding its international footprint. In 2024, it acquired Austria's PetCo and Finland's Dagsmark Petfood, reinforcing its position in the European pet food market.

Czech investors on the global stage

A review of just a few of the many recent transactions highlights the increasing global ambitions of Czech companies, leveraging acquisitions to gain market access, enhance technological capabilities, and diversify their portfolios. Strategic and financial bidders have maintained a near balance (with a slightly higher proportion of strategic investors) in cross-border deals, highlighting a diverse approach to international expansion. The most active financial investors in terms of outbound acquisitions include PPF, EMMA Capital, and KKCG, reflecting a strong appetite for international expansion across industries.

With a growing number of Czech companies successfully integrating into global markets, this trend is set to continue, positioning the country as an increasingly influential player in international M&A.

Private equity insights of the month

Evolving secondaries: LP-leds and GP-leds

Diana Hricišáková

Analyst

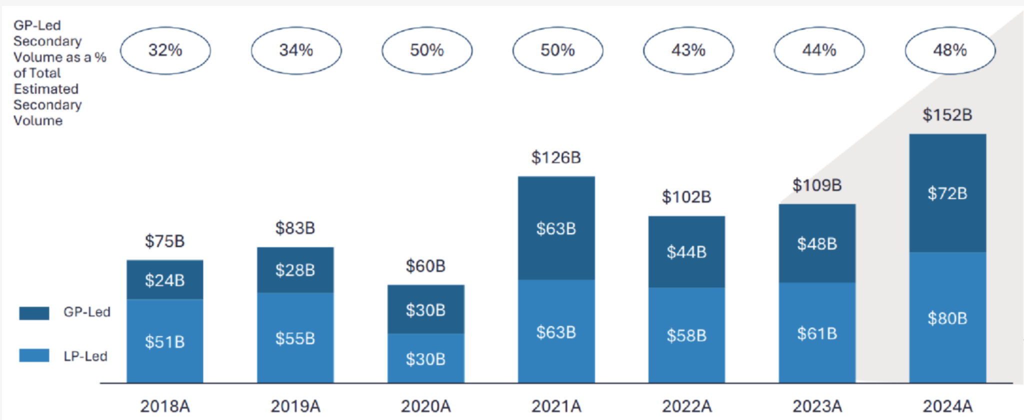
The secondary market in private equity has experienced rapid growth, reaching a record $152 billion in deal volume in 2024. A key driver of this expansion has been the rise of GP-led transactions, which now account for nearly half of the market, surpassing traditional LP-led secondaries in strategic importance. As we enter 2025, both structures remain critical tools for investors and fund managers seeking liquidity and portfolio management solutions.

LP-led secondary transactions involve limited partners (LPs) selling their fund stakes to secondary buyers. These deals provide liquidity to investors looking to rebalance portfolios, meet capital calls, or exit investments before a fund's natural termination. While LP-led secondaries remain a core segment of the market, they have faced growing competition from GP-led transactions, which offer more structured liquidity solutions tailored to fund managers' needs.

GP-led transactions have surged in popularity, comprising ~48% of total secondary volume in 2024, with continuation vehicles alone making up nearly half of all GP-led deals. These transactions allow general partners (GPs) to extend ownership of high-quality assets beyond a fund's original term by transferring them into a new vehicle, often backed by secondary investors, thereby avoiding forced exits that might not maximize value. GP-led deals have become attractive due to the constrained exit environment in recent years, as IPO and M&A markets have provided fewer liquidity opportunities. Secondary investors have responded positively, deploying larger commitments and showing strong appetite for "trophy" assets held in continuation funds.

Despite these benefits, both LP-led and GP-led secondaries come with challenges. LP-led transactions can be subject to pricing discounts depending on the quality of the fund and market conditions, potentially leading to lower-than-expected returns for sellers. For GP-led deals, conflicts of interest can arise, as the same fund manager acts as both the seller and buyer of the assets, raising concerns about fair valuation. These transactions also tend to be more complex, requiring extensive structuring and investor alignment. Additionally, while continuation vehicles allow GPs to extend value creation, they may also be used to delay underperforming exits, which can be a risk if not executed transparently.

The secondary market is expected to grow further in 2025, with projected deal volume exceeding $175 billion. As continuation funds become more prevalent, the market share of GP-led transactions is expected to keep growing.



Source: Lazard

Private equity insights of the month

The retail revolution in private equity: A potentially risky bet?

Lukáš Baloga

Analyst

The democratization of private equity (PE) as an investment class is gaining momentum each year. Historically, PE was the exclusive domain of institutional investors and high-net-worth individuals. However, this landscape is shifting, making PE increasingly accessible to retail investors.

According to Bain & Company's 2023 Global Private Equity Report, retail investors—who collectively control half of the world's wealth—are now gaining exposure to PE. The key selling point remains performance: European leveraged buyouts (LBOs) have delivered an absolute IRR of 14.97% between 1987 and 2023, outperforming public benchmarks such as the MSCI World Index (8.77%) and the S&P 500 Index (9.69%) (returns measured in EUR).[1]

However, alongside the benefits, it is important to acknowledge key risks associated with greater retail participation in PE. These include corporate governance, valuation transparency, investor communication, liquidity constraints, and potential forced asset sales. As the retail inflow into PE grows, addressing these challenges will be critical to maintaining market confidence and sustainable expansion.

Reporting governance

Including retail capital as investors usually mean higher transparency comparing to traditional private investing model, where there's a "blocker" corporation that acts as a middleman between the investor and the company. Retail investors supported by government regulation may need to adopt more rigorous reporting standards (including additional tax and audit fees) that are akin to those of public companies which ich usually connected increasing costs for reporting.

Valuations

Including retail capital as investors often leads to necessity of greater transparency compared to the traditional private investment model, where a "blocker" corporation acts as an intermediary between investors and portfolio companies. Retail investors, supported by government regulations, may be required to adhere to more rigorous reporting standards, including additional tax and audit obligations. While these measures align PE more closely with public market standards, they also introduce higher administrative costs related to compliance and reporting.

Communication with investors

Enhanced investor relations strategies should include effective communication channels and dedicated teams to keep retail investors informed and engaged. These efforts help manage investor expectations and proactively address potential issues, fostering transparency and trust in the investment process.

Liquidity constraint and force sale

Investors have varying liquidity needs, with those requiring higher liquidity focusing toward investments with more flexible structures. This trend may drive an increase in secondary transactions, which can have accounting, reporting, and tax implications for both investors and portfolio companies. Reliable liquidity reporting is essential when targeting retail investors, as many retail-focused investment products operate on a subscription and redemption basis, requiring careful liquidity management and reporting.

PE investments typically have long-term horizons, spanning seven to ten years, with capital locked in for those periods. To accommodate retail capital, similar lock-in restrictions would be necessary; otherwise, firms might be forced to maintain excessive cash reserves or liquidate assets at inopportune times, potentially suppressing returns and amplifying market volatility. The financial crisis provided a stark example of this risk—illiquid assets held in structured investment vehicles were offloaded in fire sales, exacerbating market instability and triggering broader financial turmoil.

Conclusion

If retail-driven PE funds face liquidity strains, policymakers may feel pressured to intervene—just as they did with certain investment funds during the 2008 crisis. Should PE become increasingly reliant on retail capital, government bailouts may follow. And when that happens, PE will no longer be truly private.

Is this the new normal? Is this where we're heading?

[1] https://www.adlittle.com/en/insights/report/insight-state-european-private-equity-industry-

Behavioral finance insight of the month

Bounded rationality – when good enough takes precedence over the best

Jana Přílučíková, PhD

Analyst

Traditional financial theory assumes that individuals act rationally, seeking to maximize their utility by preferring more money to less, lower risk to higher, and immediate rewards over delayed ones. However, this rational model often clashes with the complexities of human decision-making, as studied by psychology—the science of mind and behavior. Psychological influences such as risk perception, cognitive biases, framing effects, and emotional responses play a crucial role in financial decision-making, often leading to deviations from the rational paradigm. Behavioral finance, which integrates psychology with financial theory, provides valuable insights into why individuals frequently act contrary to traditional economic assumptions.

Among the fundamental cornerstones of behavioral finance are **bounded rationality**, decision-making frameworks, dual-process thinking, heuristics and psychological biases, regret theory, prospect theory, value and probability weighting functions, cumulative prospect theory, and the disposition effect. In this article, we will take a closer look at the concept of bounded rationality. Bounded rationality is a central concept in behavioral finance, explaining why financial decisions often deviate from traditional economic predictions.

A fundamental concept in behavioral finance is bounded rationality, which challenges the assumption that individuals always make optimal financial choices. Instead of conducting exhaustive analyses of all possible options, people operate within cognitive and informational constraints, leading to decision-making that is satisfactory rather than optimal. This concept, introduced by Nobel laureate Herbert A. Simon, suggests that humans, due to limited cognitive resources and time constraints, adopt heuristics and mental shortcuts to navigate complex financial decisions.

Unlike the purely rational agents assumed in classical finance, real-world investors and consumers face time, information, and cognitive limitations. In practice, this means that individuals rely on simplified decision-making strategies, often referred to as heuristics. These heuristics, while efficient, can lead to systematic biases and errors.

Our brains must often process decisions in a simplified and shortcut-driven manner—otherwise, we would not be able to make choices in a reasonable timeframe. This can be seen in everyday decisions, such as choosing what to wear. With limited time, we opt for an outfit that meets our immediate needs rather than considering every possible combination in our wardrobe. In real life, individuals do not conduct complete cost-benefit analyses for every decision, as classical economic theory assumes. Instead, they choose the first option that sufficiently meets their needs, a process known as satisficing. This **satisficing** behavior—selecting an option that is "good enough" rather than the absolute best—extends into financial decision-making as well.

For example, when selecting a mutual fund investment, an ideal approach would involve analyzing thousands of funds, comparing fees, studying past performance, and assessing macroeconomic forecasts. However, for most investors, such exhaustive research is unrealistic due to time constraints, limited access to information, and cognitive overload. Instead, they rely on heuristics, recent trends, or familiar options rather than conducting a comprehensive analysis. These constraints contribute to bounded rationality, where financial decisions incorporate rational elements but are neither perfectly logical nor optimal. Bounded rationality, commonly represents a compromise—people make reasonable decisions based on what they know and can process, but these decisions are not necessarily optimal. The effects of bounded rationality can be observed in various financial behaviors, from everyday spending habits to large-scale investment decisions.

Logically, individuals should spend within their means and carefully plan their budgets. Yet, many people overspend using credit cards and accumulate debt despite high interest rates. Why? The immediate satisfaction of purchasing something often outweighs the abstract burden of future repayments.

Investors may rely on recent stock trends rather than conducting comprehensive market analysis, or they may stick to familiar investment options rather than exploring alternatives. When selecting a mutual fund investment, an ideal approach would involve analyzing thousands of funds, comparing fees, studying past performance, and assessing macroeconomic forecasts. However, such exhaustive research is unrealistic for most investors due to time constraints, information limitations, and cognitive capacity. These constraints lead to bounded rationality, where choices contain rational elements but are neither perfectly logical nor optimal. This is why investors may be prone to rely on heuristics, recent trends, or familiar options rather than conducting a thorough analysis.

While theory, one could analyze thousands of funds, compare fees, study performance history, and assess macroeconomic forecasts. However, such an exhaustive process is unrealistic for most investors due to limited time, information, and analytical capacity. Instead, decisions are often based on partial data, heuristics, and emotional influences. For instance, fear of loss often overrides rational evaluation, contradicting traditional financial models but aligning with behavioral finance's insights on loss aversion. Studies suggest that psychological pain from financial losses is approximately twice as strong as the joy of equivalent gains—a phenomenon we will explore in one of the upcoming Behavioral finance insight of the month. Loss aversion—a psychological tendency to fear losses more than valuing equivalent gains—can lead investors to hold onto underperforming stocks longer than rational analysis would suggest.

Bounded rationality helps us explain various market inefficiencies and anomalies that traditional financial theories struggle to justify. One such example is the persistent occurrence of speculative bubbles, where investors, influenced by cognitive biases and herd behavior, drive asset prices far beyond their intrinsic value.

Bounded rationality also challenges the Efficient Market Hypothesis (EMH), which assumes that markets always price assets correctly based on all available information. In reality, investor sentiment, cognitive shortcuts, and emotional reactions can lead to mispriced assets, creating opportunities for arbitrage that might not always be exploited due to psychological barriers and institutional constraints.

Recognizing bounded rationality does not mean accepting financial inefficiency as inevitable. Instead, it provides an opportunity for individuals and institutions to develop strategies that mitigate cognitive biases such as structured decision-making frameworks, diversifying information sources, and employing behavioral nudges to counteract emotional influences.

While human decision-making will never be perfectly rational, awareness of bounded rationality allows individuals and institutions to make more informed, strategic financial decisions, improving outcomes in both personal finance and broader economic systems. By acknowledging cognitive limitations and psychological influences, we gain a more realistic understanding of market behavior and individual financial choices.

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Blockchain technology and digital assets insight of the month

Bit Bybit: Turning crisis into progress after the largest ETH hack to date

Adrián Páleš

Analyst

On February 21, 2025, the crypto industry faced one of its most significant security incidents to date. $1.4 billion in Ethereum (ETH) and ETH derivatives were drained from Bybit, the world's second-largest crypto exchange, in an attack attributed to the North Korea-linked Lazarus Group.

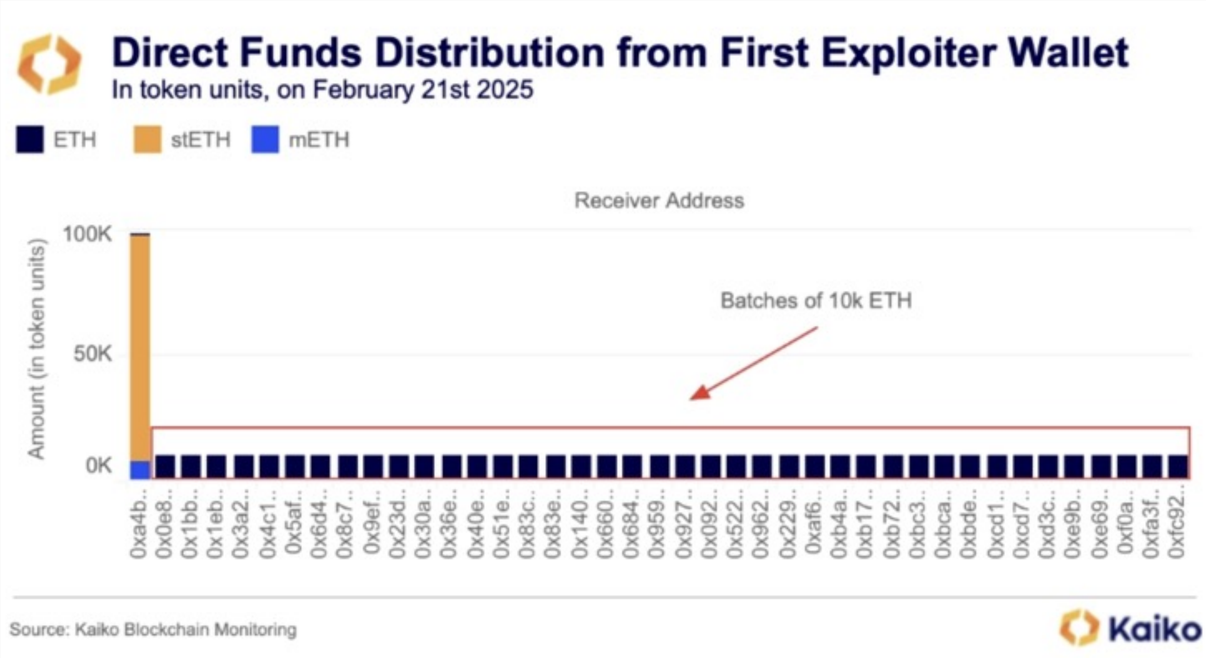
While the event was a major challenge, it has also sparked industry-wide discussions on security, transparency, and the future of exchange resilience. As the crypto market matures, this incident may serve as a turning point for strengthening security measures and reinforcing investor confidence.

Breaking down the attack

The exploit occurred between 15:00 and 16:30 UTC, during a routine transfer involving Bybit's ETH Multisig Cold Wallet. The attack was later identified as a manipulation of the transfer process, allowing unauthorized withdrawals before internal security measures could take effect.

Despite the attackers' attempts to obscure the movement of funds, blockchain transparency has allowed analysts to trace their path:

- 69 wallets were directly linked to the attackers.
- 449 intermediary wallets were used to distribute ETH, stETH, and mETH.
- Over 1,600 wallets have since interacted with the stolen funds.



While the attack was executed with precision, the rapid identification of the affected wallets has enabled exchanges and law enforcement agencies to take swift action, potentially limiting further illicit activity.

Market response and recovery

The market reacted quickly, with price shifts seen even before Bybit's official confirmation. Within an hour:

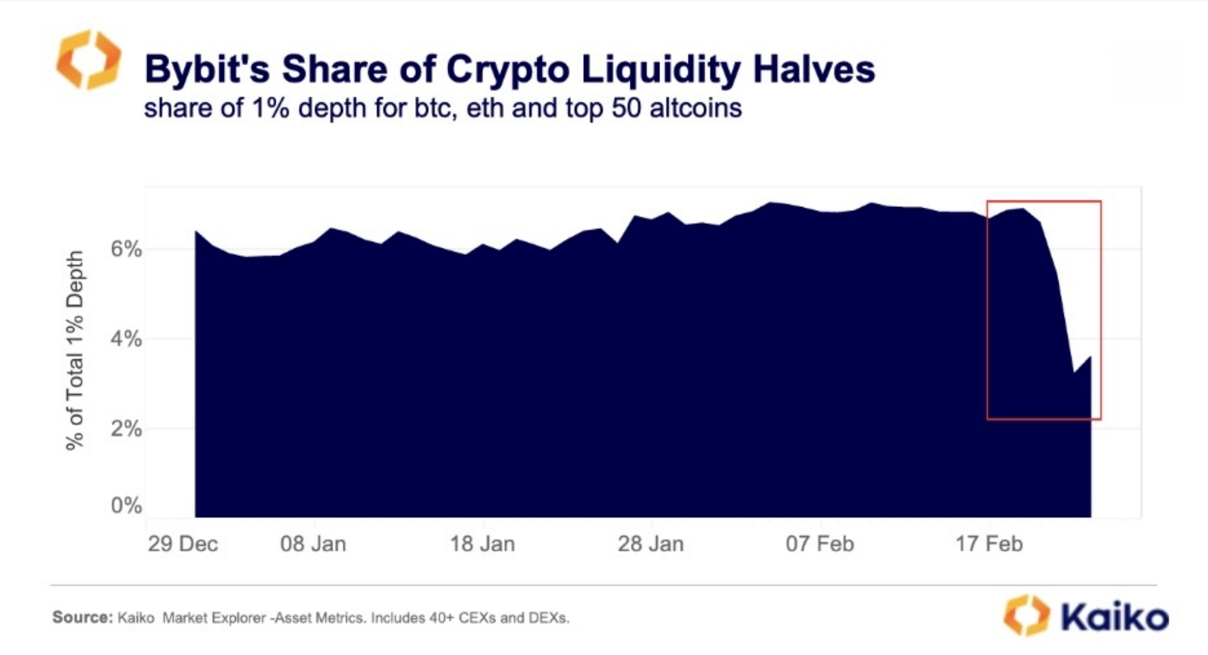
- Bitcoin (BTC) saw a 3% dip, reflecting broader caution.
- Ethereum (ETH) dropped 7%, given its direct connection to the breach.

However, the recovery was just as swift. Bybit's proactive response, including the repurchase of lost ETH and CEO Ben Zhou's reassurance that all client assets remained fully backed, helped stabilize market confidence.

While liquidity initially tightened as market makers adjusted their exposure:

- The 1% market depth for BTC, ETH, and the top 50 altcoins briefly fell from $68 million to $28 million before rebounding.
- Bybit's crypto liquidity momentarily declined from 5% to 2.6%, though recovery efforts have already shown signs of progress.
- Withdrawals exceeded $5 billion, but the exchange remains operational, with ongoing efforts to rebuild trust and restore normal trading activity.

The incident underscored the importance of rapid exchange responses, and Bybit's commitment to customer security has been widely acknowledged.



The industry's next steps: Strengthening security and trust

The Bybit attack has reignited conversations about how centralized exchanges (CEXs) can evolve to better protect user assets. Transparency and real-time monitoring have proven invaluable, but this event has highlighted the need for even stronger security protocols and proactive risk management.

In response, exchanges, regulators, and industry leaders are collaborating on next-generation security frameworks, focusing on:

- More advanced cold storage protocols to minimize attack vectors.
- Stronger compliance measures, balancing security with user experience.
- Enhanced real-time fraud detection to prevent future large-scale breaches.

At the same time, the event has accelerated interest in decentralized exchanges (DEXs), which offer users direct custody of their assets. This trend may lead to further innovation in hybrid models, blending the security of self-custody with the efficiency of centralized platforms.

Looking ahead: A more resilient future

Rather than shaking confidence in digital assets, the Bybit incident may ultimately drive meaningful improvements in exchange security and market resilience. The industry has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to adapt and emerge stronger from challenges, and this event is no exception.

With renewed commitment to security, regulatory collaboration, and user protection, the lessons from this attack are already shaping the future of safer, more transparent, and more robust trading platforms.

While challenges remain, the crypto industry's response to adversity continues to demonstrate its growing maturity, adaptability, and long-term viability. If anything, this event has reinforced the need for continuous evolution—ensuring that digital asset markets are not only secure but also built to withstand the tests of time.

[Source: https://research.kaiko.com/insights/bybit-hack-by-the-numbers]

About

Prague Finance Institute (PFI)

Non-profit organization affiliated with CERGE-EI

PFI aims to connect experienced and young finance professionals, including students, especially through educational and networking events

Our key activities

- **PFI Macro Anchor podcast** hosted by PFI Chief Economist Andre Chelhot, CFA
- **PFI Talks podcast** in cooperation with the daily E15 (e.g. Daniel Kahneman, Jeffrey Sachs, Aswath Damodaran, Marc Faber, Barry Eichengreen or Peter Oppenheimer)
- **Panel discussions** (roundtables)
- **Valuation Masterclass** (semester-long business valuation course)
- **Technical Analysis Masterclass** (unique six lectures on technical analysis)
- **Research** (PFI Monthly magazine)
- **PFI Scholarship**
- **Platform for sharing interesting job opportunities** in the financial sector
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